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**No. 233**

**How Indonesia Sees ASEAN and the World:  
A Cursory Survey of the Social Studies and History textbooks of  
Indonesia, from Primary to Secondary Level.**

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Singapore**

**22 February 2012**

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## Abstract

Over the past few years Indonesia's political landscape has altered somewhat as a result of the rise of new nationalist NGOs and mass movements, that have called upon the Indonesian government to take a stronger stand when defending Indonesia's national identity and position in ASEAN. Observers of Indonesian politics have asked if this marks the rise of hyper-nationalism in the country, and how this may affect Indonesia's relationship with its ASEAN neighbours. This paper looks at how Indonesia's school textbooks present the other countries and societies of ASEAN to ordinary school children in Indonesia, and looks at how Indonesian identity is framed in relation to the other countries around it. It argues that Indonesian school textbooks do indeed give a rudimentary but objective and correct view of the other countries in ASEAN, and that the rise of nationalism among some groups in Indonesia today cannot be attributed to the education that millions of Indonesian students are given on an annual basis.

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# **How Indonesia Sees ASEAN and the World: A cursory Survey of the Social Studies and History textbooks of Indonesia, from Primary to Secondary Level.**

## **I. How Indonesia Sees ASEAN: Perceptions of Indonesia's Neighbours Through Indonesian School Textbooks.**

Shadow-puppet theatre (*wayang kulit*) is a genre that is found in many parts of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia – though it is in Indonesia that the art form seems to have reached its peak.

Those familiar with Javanese or Balinese *wayang kulit* will be familiar with the character of the good, noble, foreign king: *Sebrangan Bagus*. Just where the character Sebrangan Bagus hails from remains an open question; though whenever he appears in the plays the puppet-master (*dalang*) who voices his dialogue will do so while affecting a *Malay/Malaysian* accent, in order to emphasise his *foreign-ness*. Then there are also the characters of the bad and evil foreigners, who come in the form of foreign-sounding *raksaksa*, monsters and assorted demons. What this tells us is that the Javanese and Balinese – and by extension Indonesian – view of their neighbours from abroad is a nuanced one, that mirrors the complexities of those who fall outside the fold of the nation and the territory of present-day Indonesia. Indonesia's perception of its ASEAN neighbours, this paper will argue, has always been a complex one.

The aim of this paper is to offer an overview of the primary and secondary textbooks of Indonesian schools, in the disciplines of Social Studies and History, in order to ascertain just how Indonesian school children are taught about their neighbouring countries and societies. It aims to look at the contents of these books and gauge just how much information is given to Indonesian students about the other countries of ASEAN, and whether this may (or may not) later affect the manner in which they – as members of Indonesian society – situate themselves in the region and impact upon the process of foreign policy-making in the country. Before we look at the contents of the school books in question however, it might be useful to look at Indonesia's positioning of itself vis-à-vis its neighbours from the beginning, going back to

Indonesia's emergence as an independent postcolonial state in the 1940s and how it viewed itself then.

Indonesia's independence struggle began in 1945 when the country's leaders Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta unilaterally declared Indonesia's independence during the closing stages of World War Two. Following the end of the war the Dutch returned to Indonesia in order to reclaim what was formerly their colony, only to find themselves engaged in a long and arduous war that failed to deliver the results they hoped for: By 1949 international opinion was in favour of Indonesia, and other Western countries – notably the United States of America – had made it abundantly clear that they were supportive of the new Indonesian Republic.

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of Indonesian nationalism where the idea of Indonesia came into being, albeit with boundaries that were somewhat ill-defined. One of the reasons why this was so was the long-standing historical relationship between parts of Indonesia – notably Sumatra – with other parts of the region – notably the Malayan Peninsula. Complicating matters further was the fact that the first generation of Indonesian nationalists were part of a wider world of letters where the ideas and ideals of nationalism were being discussed and shared with other nationalists, activists and intellectuals in British Malaya, the Straits Settlements and the Philippines.

Thus it was no surprise that as soon as Indonesia gained its independence the first generation of postcolonial leaders saw their country as the beacon of nationalism and independence for other parts of the archipelago as well. Sukarno's brand of nationalism was part of a wider wave of Third World nationalism then, which placed Indonesia in the ranks of the 'Newly-emerging forces' ('Nefos', as Sukarno termed them) against the 'Old established forces' (or 'Olefos').

Indonesia's view of the other countries of Southeast Asia then was shaped by the realities of the Cold War and *realpolitik* concerns. Historians of the country will note that it was during this period (1949 to 1965) that Sukarno attempted his delicate balancing act, bringing together the combined forces of Indonesian secular nationalists, Islamists and Communists in what was called the 'Nasakom' alliance

*(Nasionalisme-Agama-Komunisme)*. With three different (and sometimes competing) streams being so dominant in Indonesian society and politics then, it was hardly surprising that Indonesia viewed its neighbours through a somewhat fractured lens. The Communists of the Indonesian Communist party (PKI) were particularly critical of British Malaya, which included the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore, as well as British Borneo and Brunei; and regarded these colonies as the last vestiges of Western colonial power in the heart of Southeast Asia. When the plans for the creation of the Federation of Malaysia were mooted in 1961-63 Indonesia took a dim view of the proceedings, with the leaders of the PKI denouncing it as a neo-colonial construct.

During the brief confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) between Malaysia and Indonesia (1963-1965), Indonesia's view of Malaysia was a decidedly negative one. The failure of the confrontation, and the Allied powers' support of Malaysia and Singapore, meant that by 1965 the political landscape of Southeast Asia was more or less fixed, with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore assuming their places and identities that have remained more or less constant until today. In 1967 the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) solidified the geo-political boundaries of the region even further, with Thailand and the Philippines joining Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore as the founding states of ASEAN.

The ascendancy of President Suharto from 1968 meant that henceforth a 'special relationship' would develop between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in particular; where the elites of all three countries would remain in close, supportive contact with each other. It is undeniable that since the 1970s, the ASEAN region has become one of the most stable and conflict-free zones in the world; and in this respect ASEAN's success in peace-keeping has been matched only by the European Community (later the European Union).

In the wake of the fall of President Suharto, however, the 'special relationship' between Indonesia and its close neighbours has become strained somewhat; particularly following the financial crisis of 1997/98 and the rise of populist nationalist parties in the vast country. A succession of weak Presidencies followed, halted by the election of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), which

heralded the longest period of sustained civilian rule post-1965. However over the past decade Indonesia has also witnessed periods of instability as a result of inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, religiously-inspired acts of terrorism and the proliferation of new political parties, many of which are of a populist-nationalist background. As Indonesia regains its self-confidence, and as foreign investment begins to flow back into the country, new political parties are emerging – such as ex-General Wiranto’s *Hanura*, ex-General Prabowo Subianto’s *Gerindra* and Surya Paloh’s *Partai Nasional Demokrat* – that appeal time and again to the nationalist sentiments of ordinary Indonesians. Some of Indonesia’s prominent public intellectuals and commentators like Aboeprijadi Santoso have sounded the alarm at the rise of these new movements, warning that ‘*neofascist aspirations*’ could arise again, under the right (or rather, wrong) circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The past few years have witnessed a string of developments that have been worrying for some of Indonesia’s liberals and public intellectuals; notably the rise of civilian militias and groups like the *Laskar Merah-Putih*, which have been vocal in their demands that the rest of the region respect Indonesia’s position as the dominant power in the archipelago.<sup>2</sup> A series of protests, ranging from issues like the patenting of Indonesian batik cloth to Indonesia’s claim on some cultural performances and art forms as ‘uniquely Indonesian’, have led to protests outside several ASEAN

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<sup>1</sup> Re: Aboeprijadi Santoso: *Fascism in Indonesia: No Big Deal?* In The Jakarta Post, 20 July 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The *Laskar Merah Putih* was formed at the *Forum Bersama Laskar Merah Putih*, and its roots go back to the internal conflict within Indonesia following the fall of President Suharto in 1998 and the negotiations over the future independence of East Timor. Following its activities in East Timor and West Papua, the *Laskar Merah Putih* was formally launched by bringing together more than a hundred nationalist movements, NGOs and pressure groups at the first forum (*Forum Bersama LMP Ke-I*) that was held on 8 February 2004 at the Hotel Indonesia in Jakarta, Java. The first leader of the LMP was Eddy Hartawan. On 3 October 2010, the rank and file of the LMP were shocked to hear of the sudden death of the movement’s founder, who was brought to the OMNI International hospital, Tangerang, Banten, three days earlier complaining of extreme stomach pains and diarrhoea. Immediately after the death of Eddy Hartawan the LMP experienced a short split as two opposing factions emerged: One faction under the leadership of Syamsu Djalal convened an emergency meeting at the Taman Nasional Mini Indonesia and elected him as the new leader of the movement. However at the same time another larger faction led by Neneng A. Tuty also met at the same time and elected her as the leader of the LMP. With 24 Regional Centres (*Markaz Daerah*) and 285 branches (*Markaz Cabang*) behind her, and claiming the support of 2,600,000 members, Neneng A. Tuty claimed the right to take up the leadership of the *Laskar Merah Putih* and she was elected to serve as its *Ketua Umum* from 2011 to 2016. The *Laskar Merah Putih* remains an organic, grassroots organisation that aims to bring together the lower working-class elements of Indonesian society and to support the relationship between the Army, Police and the Indonesian state. Since its official formation in 2004 it has set up several out-reach programmes for further recruitment and training of the poor in Indonesia.

embassies – notably the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta; as well as attacks on companies and businesses owned by other ASEAN countries in and across Indonesia.<sup>3</sup>

Indonesian observers have tried to account for the rise of hyper-nationalism in Indonesia today, and wonder why some sections of Indonesian society have begun to show scepticism of ASEAN and its achievements thus far. In trying to account for how and why these developments have taken place, it is necessary to cover as many areas as possible, to seek out counter-factuals and falsifiabiles in order to ensure that our analysis proceeds from correct, verifiable premises. This paper will look at the primary and secondary-level history textbooks of Indonesia, and see how they present the rest of ASEAN to the young minds of the country.

## **II. Teaching Indonesians to be Indonesians: The teaching of Social Studies and History at Primary and Secondary Level Schools.**

- **Social Studies as taught at primary school level (*Sekolah Dasar*, SD):**

History is not taught as a specific subject at primary (*Sekolah Dasar* SD) level, and since the reform of the curriculum in 2006 (*Standar isi kurikulum nasional Republik Indonesia 2006*), the closest equivalent is the 6-year course on Social Studies (*Ilmu Pengetahuan Social IPS*), which is taught from SD level 1 to level 6.

The national SD curriculum has been set out by the central government following the reforms of 2006, and sets out a standardised list of subjects, themes, formats and templates that have to be abided by. As there is no standardised text book/s that are used across all of Indonesia, opportunities are given to local publishers to write school books that are then submitted to local authorities who in turn vet them, in order to

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<sup>3</sup> In 2010 the *Laskar Merah Putih* called upon the Indonesian government to withdraw Indonesia's ambassador to Kuala Lumpur after a dispute where three Indonesian coastal patrol personnel were detained by Malaysian coastal security; and in the course of their campaign the LMP attacked and damaged the main office of Malaysia's CIMB bank in Makassar, Sulawesi; and also surrounded the port of Makassar threatening to board and set fire to any Malaysian commercial vessels docked there. In 2011 its members besieged the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta several times and in October 2011 confiscated several Malaysian palm-oil extracting machines in the region of Sambas, Kalimantan, that straddles the Malaysian-Indonesian border, while claiming that Malaysian palm oil companies were operating illegally in Indonesia.



ensure that their contents abide by and comply with the requirements of the standardised curricula as set by the central government's Department of Education.

The textbooks we have looked at were sourced in Jakarta and Jogjakarta, located in West and Central Java respectively, and they conform to the standards set by the government authorities. These are the textbooks that are used in classes from level 1 to level 6 in the SD Primary Schools of Java and much of the rest of Indonesia.

A brief summary of the contents of the history books:

SD Level 1:

Social Studies (*Ilmu Pengatahuan Social IPS*) for SD level 1 is taught across two semesters: In the first semester the students are taught about themselves, self-identification and subject-relations in the context of the immediate family. This conforms to the stipulation of the 2006 curriculum reform that education has to be contextualised and that students have to be taught to link and situate their studies in their own surroundings and social context.

Standard 1 semesters 1 and 2 outline the framework of the basic family unit, and begins with the individual student who is taught to situate himself/herself in the context of his/her immediate family. The family unit is presented as nuclear, with both father and mother as well as children. Semester 1 concentrates on the child's position vis a vis his/her parents, then to his/her siblings.

Semester 2 focuses on the student's social relations with the world outside the immediate family unit, and develops the theme of social relations with neighbours and the neighbourhood.

While the nuclear family is presented as the norm, the textbook also notes that not all families are alike: There are divorced parents, single-parent families, orphans, etc. The book is sensitive to these particularities and notes that the normal family unit is only so by virtue of the preponderance of nuclear families in the country, but does not valorise the nuclear family as the exemplary/best model.

It is also interesting to note that by semester 2 students are also familiarised with the concept of working women, and the text is sensitive to the changing roles of women in Indonesian society. Though it does not touch on the role played by Indonesian women in the country's development and independence struggle, it notes that it is normal for women to work and to be in professions such as politics, business, education, the police and the armed forces.

Semester 2 ends with lessons on domestic hygiene, emphasising the need to clean the home and its immediate surroundings. Throughout the text the lessons are accompanied by images, model examples, test questions and thinking/debating points and exercises.

At level 1 there is still *no discussion of Indonesian history and no references to any of the neighbouring countries of the ASEAN region*. Indonesian society is discussed, but via the framework of the family and through the perspective of the individual student.

SD Level 2:

IPS for SD level 2 is taught over two semesters, and expands on the themes that were laid out in level 1. Again the focus is on the individual student, but from this point the work focuses on personal history and the importance of memory/remembrance.

Semester 1 focuses on the personal history of the student and teaches the value of historical documents, and all documents that relate to the identity of the individual student. It explains the meaning and significance of legal documents such as the birth certificate, identity card, and personal photos and documentation.

Semester 2 develops the theme further by explaining the importance of the identity documents of other members of the family, and the value of family heirlooms, photographs and legal documents. At this stage there is no mention of the state or the institutions of the state, and the focus is more on the value attached to such documentation. The family unit is further explained and the students are taught the meaning of family relations including cousins, in-laws, ancestors and descendants.

There is still no mention of Indonesia as a state and no elaboration of Indonesian history. But semester 2 begins by elaborating the features of Indonesian society and culture, and discusses the importance and value of inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony in the country. Indonesian society is presented as naturally plural, complex and internally differentiated, and students are taught that difference is a norm that is natural (*semulajadi*) and positive.

Semester 2 ends with brief descriptions of how plural and diverse Indonesia is, and concludes with tests to see how familiar the students are with the internal differences in their country. As in level 1 it ends with test-cases, modules, discussion/debating points and exercises.

SD Level 3:

IPS for SD level 3 is taught over two semesters, with semester 1 covering 4 chapters and semester 2 covering 5 chapters.

The focus at level 3 is towards the world outside the nuclear family of the student, and semester 1 begins with an elaboration on the natural world: It looks at the different types of terrain, climate, weather zones, etc. Semester 1 brings society and the natural world together, and explains the inter-relationship between the natural environment and society, emphasising the need for human beings to take care of the natural world in order to survive. Though this part of the course still does not talk about Indonesia or the country's history, it emphasises the fact that the natural world that is being studied happens to be Indonesian territory.

Semester 2 shifts the focus from the natural world to the social environment and gives a broad description of the jobs and professions that people do. It emphasises the importance of hard work (Chapter 2.2) and notes that industry, labour and professionalism are *Indonesian* traits and qualities (Chapters 2.3, 2.4)

Social relations are explained through the alienation of labour and money, and the use of money is discussed in the last two chapters (Chapters 2.4, 2.5). A brief mention is made of the types of currencies that are found in the world, and it is here that there is

the first mention of another ASEAN country apart from Indonesia, namely Thailand and its currency the Baht. (pg. 110). This is the first mention of any neighbouring country in the ASEAN region and it is notable that Malaysia, Singapore, and other countries are still not mentioned, and that the focus remains Indonesia-centric.

Semester 2 ends with the same familiar set of tests, debating/discussion points, questions and model examples. It ought to be noted that there is no gender bias in the discussion of society in semester 2, and in the text's explanation of jobs and professions it is noted that Indonesian women today are working in all the fields where men are to be found as well.

SD Level 4:

IPS for SD level 4 is taught over two semesters, with 6 chapters in semester 1 and 4 chapters in semester 2.

It is only from SD level 4 that students are taught about the history of Indonesia, albeit seen from the perspective of the student's own local region/province.

Semester 1 begins with a brief explanation about how to read maps, and to understand compass directions. Much of the first semester is again focused on the natural environment and habitat, and elaborates upon themes introduced at level 3. It explains the different sorts of landscapes and environments and also discusses the concept of natural resources. Interestingly it notes that *natural resources are the property of the state and the nation, and not individuals or private enterprises*. This theme is also expanded further in semester 2.

At level 4 the students are given their first introduction to the state of Indonesia and the value of Indonesian independence and republicanism.

Chapter 4 (pp. 56-71) begins by explaining the meaning of the national slogan *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, and again emphasises the need for inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony. The emphasis is on national unity through inter-ethnic cooperation and mutual support (pp. 70-71), which is not surprising considering

Indonesia's early history and the fact that its formative years witnessed many attempts to break up the newly constituted Indonesian Republic.

Much of chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with ethnic differences and the types of ethnic groups to be found in Indonesia. Interestingly it notes that Malays (*Melayu*) are one of the many ethnic groups in Indonesia, and maintains that Malays are found in provinces like North Sumatra (SUMUT), Riau, Jambi, Lampung, Bengkulu, and South Sumatra (SUMSEL). Malays are categorised as a *suku* (ethnic group) and it is explained to the students that the differences between the ethnic groups are cultural-linguistic, and not racial or biological.

It is also interesting to note that *none of the migrant communities that have settled in Indonesia since the 15th century are listed in any of the lists of officially recognised ethnic groups/Suku*, and as such in none of the provinces of Indonesia are Chinese, Indians, Arabs or Eurasians listed as a *suku* in their own right.

Chapter 6 of semester 2 (pp. 87-100) gives the first account of Indonesia's independence struggle though relatively little information is given about the circumstances of Indonesia's colonial era under the Dutch. Interestingly the '*heroes of the independence struggle*' who are profiled in chapter 6 are chosen from all the major parts of Indonesia, and they include: Kapitan Pattipura (Maluku, East Indonesia), R Wolter Monginsidi (Manado, Central Indonesia), I Gusti Ngurah Rai (Bali), Dr Sutomo (Subroto) (West Java), Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (Central Java), Nyi Ageng Serang, R. Otto Iskandar Dinata (West Java), Pangeran Antasari (Kalimantan).

The aim of the last chapters of semester 2 is to give students a broad overview of the initial beginnings of Indonesian nationalism, as told from the perspective of a postcolonial Indonesian republic. At this stage there is no discussion of the ideological background of these early nationalist pioneers, though again the text emphasises the role played by women (such as Nyi Ageng Serang) in the struggle for Indonesian independence.

SD Level 5:

IPS for SD level 5 is taught over two semesters, divided into 5 and 4 chapters respectively.

It begins by elaboration upon *what is history* and how history is to be documented, noting the differences between the pre-historic and historical eras.

Semester 1 looks at the histories of the kingdoms that existed in the Indonesian archipelago prior to the age of European colonialism and significantly it gives equal and ample attention to the Hindu-Buddhist polities that existed up to the 13th centuries.

Though at this stage there is little information given about the other neighbouring ASEAN countries in semester 1 there are long and relatively detailed accounts of some of the kingdoms whose political frontiers and spheres of influence extended beyond present-day Indonesia: Notably there are references to the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya, and the accompanying map of Srivijaya's domains (pg. 12) show that all of the Malayan Peninsula and Singapore were part of its territory. Another notable example is the Muslim kingdom of Aceh, and the map that accompanies it (pg. 15) also notes that Aceh included parts of the Northern Malayan Peninsula under its rule as well, notably the state of Kedah.

Other Indonesian kingdoms that are described include Banten, Demak, Tidore, Ternate and Gowa.

There are however, no references to the kingdom of Malacca that existed on the west coast of the Malayan Peninsula and whose area of influence extended across the Malacca Straits to East coast Sumatra and parts of Java.

Singapore is also not mentioned and there are no references whatsoever to the polity of Singapura or Tamasek. At this stage of the course there are no references to any of the other countries of ASEAN, and there is no mention of the historical contact and trading links with presently-constituted Thailand or Philippines.

The rest of semester 1 deals with questions related to geography and some preliminary elaborations of basic concepts in geography and the study of flora and fauna.

Semester 2 reiterates the themes of Indonesian republicanism as understood through the prism of cultural and ethnic pluralism and diversity.

Students are taught about the various forms of dress, culture and dance/music that are presented as Indonesian. Interestingly dances and performance arts like *Makyong* and *Joget* are claimed as Riau, and as such Indonesian. Crucially, the art form of *wayang kulit* is also claimed as Javanese and Balinese, and also Indonesian as well - despite the fact that shadow puppet theatre is also found in other ASEAN countries like Malaysia and Thailand, and further abroad in places like Turkey, South India and China.

It is also interesting to note that at level 5 SD the IPS textbooks still do not make any mention of the Chinese, Indians, Arabs and/or Eurasians who have settled in the archipelago for hundreds of years, and when the text discusses the need for inter-ethnic harmony for the sake of Indonesian unity, it specifically focuses on harmony between the pre-existing ethnic groups (*suku-suku bangsa Indonesia*) who are seen as naturalised Indonesians by virtue of their long-standing presence in the archipelago.

Chapters 5 and 6 extol the virtues of the independence struggle of 1945-49. It further mentions the biographies of the heroes of nationalism who were discussed at level 4, and adds new names and profiles, including Raden Kartini (Java), Imam Bonjol (Sumatra), as well as Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta.

Chapter 6 ends with an account of the war against the Dutch between 1945 to 1949, and mentions several Indonesian military and paramilitary leaders like General Sudirman and Bung Tomo, and gives an account of the battles of Jogjakarta and Surabaya.

At this stage however there is *no mention of the independence struggles that were taking place in other ASEAN countries like Burma, Vietnam or the Philippines*, or the

rise of nationalism in India and China. There are no references at all to the independence struggle fought in neighbouring Malaysia, and no mention of Southeast Asian nationalist leaders like Burhanuddin al-Helmy (Malaysia), Aung San (Burma) or Jose Rizal (Philippines.) Indonesian independence is thus treated as a specific and particular event.

SD Level 6:

IPS for SD level 6 students is taught over two semesters, divided into 3 and 4 chapters.

Semester 1 offers a general overview of the other countries in the region, and it is only at level 6 that students are introduced to other ASEAN countries including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

The introduction to the other ASEAN countries is found in chapter 1.2, following the chapter that explains the framework of the Indonesian Republic and the relations of power between the central republican government and the provincial/local governments. Much of chapter 1.1 is a basic explanation of the institutional framework of the Indonesian state, though the chapter does not address the contested formation of Indonesia during the war against the Dutch and the first decade of Indonesian independence up to 1959.

Chapter 1.2 looks at the other countries of ASEAN one by one, and notes that ASEAN was formed in 1967 as a result of the negotiations between the five original founder-states. The list however includes all the member states of ASEAN today, including also Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Brunei. There is, however, no mention of now-independent East Timor.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The descriptions of the various countries of ASEAN are divided as follows: Singapore pp. 25-26, Thailand pp. 27-28, Malaysia pp. 28-30, Philippines pp. 30-31, Brunei pp. 31-32, Cambodia pp. 32-33, Laos pp. 33-34, Vietnam pp. 34-35, and Myanmar pp. 35-36. Re: Asy'ari, Wahyudi and Sri Mintarti, *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial SD Untuk Kelas 6*, (Eds.) Dwi Kartika Wardhani and Maya Yulianti, Erlangga Publishers, PT Gelora Aksara Pratama, Jakarta, 2007.f.



Singapore is described in pages 25-26, as a republic with a democratically elected government. The account includes a description of the island state's environment, its location in the region (with an accompanying map) and a basic description of Singapore's multi-ethnic society. It notes that the Singaporean economy is based on manufacturing and the service sector and that it is a centre for banking and financial activities.

There is no mention of Singapore's transcultural connections with other parts of Indonesia, including the Riau-Lingga kingdom and other economic centres like Banka-Belitung. Interestingly, the description notes that Singapore has long since been a country of migration, though there is little comparison with Indonesia that has also been the home of other migrant communities. There is also no mention of Singapore's existence during the pre-colonial era and the pre-modern era when Singapore was part of the wider trading network established during the time of the seaborne Srivijaya kingdom.

Thailand is described in pages 27-28 and it is noted that it is a democratic state with a monarch. There is some description of the role of the monarch in Thailand, as well as an account of its economy which is described as being based on both agriculture and manufacturing. The account of Thailand lists the country's major export products, including rice and manufactured goods. But there is no accounting of the pre-modern polities of Thailand like Sukothai and Ayudhaya, and no mention of the diplomatic and trade relations between these pre-modern polities and their Indonesian contemporaries during the pre-modern era.

Malaysia is described in pages 28-30, and described as a constitutional democracy with a constitutional ruler, the Agong. The description of Malaysia is positive, and it notes that Malaysia shares a land border with Indonesia in Kalimantan. It notes that Malaysia's economy is dependent on agriculture as well as the manufacturing industry, and that Malaysia's exports include rubber, tin and manufactured goods as well as electronic goods.

There is however no mention of the long-standing historical and cultural ties between the two countries, or an explanation as to how and why *Bahasa Malaysia* and *Bahasa*

*Indonesia* are etymologically the same language. Likewise there is scant description of the culture, history and customs of the Malaysians, and no accounting of the fact that cultural practices and certain forms of material culture that is found in Indonesia is also shared with the communities of Malaysia, such as *batik*, *wayang kulit*, *ronggeng*, *joget*, *makyong*, etc. This may account for how and why many Indonesians still regard these art/cultural forms as distinctively and exclusively Indonesian, and may also explain why it has been relatively easy for nationalist movements in Indonesia to rally support for the anti-Malaysian campaigns, on the basis of the claim that Malaysia has 'stolen' these Indonesian items/ideas.

The Philippines is described between pages 30-31 and the account of the country notes that it is a democratic republic like Indonesia. Again there is a simple and concise account of its major exports and imports, but there is no mention of the period of closer diplomatic contact between the Philippines and Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly during the period when the 'Maphilindo' (Malaysia-Philippines-Indonesia) project was being discussed by leaders like Sukarno; or the Philippines' support of Indonesia's anti-Malaysian campaign during the confrontation with Malaysia (1963-1965).

Chapters 3 and 4 explore the geography of the world at large, and give simple and short descriptions of the various countries in East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe. The information given is rudimentary, accompanied by notes of climate and weather and the particular geographical features of other parts of the world.

The concluding chapter of semester 2 ends with a discussion on globalisation; what it means and what it entails for Indonesia.

Globalisation is presented as a *natural outcome of the modernisation and industrialisation process*, leading to a better connected world thanks to the new global communicative infrastructure that has been created.

However the concluding chapter also weighs the pros and cons of globalisation, and notes that while Indonesia has benefited from foreign capital investment, it has also

experienced the loss of its natural resources - which are consistently referred to as the wealth of the land and the people of Indonesia. Globalisation is therefore seen in a nuanced light, as a source of technology transfer, acquisition of new skills and much needed foreign capital, but also as a prime cause of environmental damage, pollution, social problems and above all a potential threat to the economic welfare of the republic and its people.

In this discussion of globalisation no distinction is made between Western or Asian Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and emphasis is laid on the protection of Indonesian culture, territory and society from aggressive and rapacious foreign agents and interests.

- Indonesian history textbooks at lower secondary level (SMP), levels 7 to 9.

From lower secondary level onwards History (*Sejarah*) is taught as a specific subject to all Indonesian students.

As in the case of the teaching of Social Studies (IPS) at primary level, the updated and revised history textbooks for lower and upper secondary levels reflect the changes that were brought about by the education reform process of 2006. As there is no standardised textbook for all of Indonesia, private entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to write and publish their own textbooks for SMP and SMA levels, as long as these textbooks conform to the standards that have been set by the curriculum reforms of 2006, and cover all the areas of interest and concern that were outlined in the 2006 reform plan.

The texts we have studied are in use in lower secondary schools in West and Central Java (Jakarta and Jogjakarta) and have met the requirements set by the 2006 education reform plan.

History taught at SMP Level 7:

The history course for SMP level 7 is divided into two semesters, and covers 4 main areas: The origins of society in Indonesia, the Hindu-Buddhist era, the Islamic/Muslim era; and the coming of Western colonialism to Indonesia.

The first chapter makes up the entirety of semester 1 and looks at the origins of the human race in the Indonesian archipelago.

Two observations can be made: Firstly the teaching of prehistory in Indonesia follows *Darwinian* lines and is predicated on the theory of human evolution. It is interesting to note that the theory of evolution is not glossed over or revised to suit prevailing conservative religious mores. Unlike some other Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan where evolutionary theory is no longer taught or sanctioned to be discussed in school, the Indonesian case shows continuity from the Suharto era with no concessions made to the conservative religious lobby in the country.

Secondly, in the accounting of the coming of the first human settlements to the archipelago the text clearly accepts the prevailing nomenclature of contemporary anthropology and notes that the first inhabitants of the archipelago were the Proto-Malays (*Bangsa Proto-Melayu*), and later the Deutero-Malays (*Bangsa Deutero Melayu*). The term 'Melayu/Malay' that is used here is generic and anthropological - rather than ethno-cultural - in its meaning and emphasis. This serves as the premise upon which the concept of the unity and similarity of the various ethnic groups of Indonesia (*keseragaman suku-suku Indonesia*) is later developed. The implication of this thesis is that the groups (like the Javanese) that later grew in numbers and dominance in relation to other smaller groups share the same genetic/biological origins as others.

Despite this early observation however it has to be noted that from the outset the text focuses on the geographical area of present-day Indonesia only. As such it leaves out the obvious fact that the proto-Malays and Deutero-Malays of Indonesia also share the same biological origins with the Malays of Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, etc.

The second semester covers the Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic/Muslim and Colonial eras, respectively. Equal attention is given to all three periods of Indonesian history, though in greater detail compared to their treatment at primary level. It is also interesting to note that again there are references to various Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms (such as Srivijaya) and Muslim kingdoms (such as Aceh and Riau) whose dominions extended into the Malayan Peninsula; but there are no references to Malacca, Singapura/Temasek or the kingdom of Brunei whose dominions extended to the territories of present-day Indonesia.

There is some discussion on the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Melayu (pp. 34-36) which was located somewhere close to the location of present-day Jambi, in Sumatra. Melayu is described as a seafaring kingdom engaged in maritime trade, with connections to the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit. The text notes that the Melayu prince Adityavarman was a Malay prince who, along with the rulers of Majapahit, took part in the conquest of Bali in the name of Majapahit. (pg. 35)

Though chapters 2 and 3 provide much more information and detail, their scope of interest extends only to the region of present-day Indonesia. There is some discussion of the coming of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam from South Asia and the Arab lands, and some emphasis on the geographically strategic location of Indonesia, but almost no reference to the other Southeast Asian kingdoms in the Malayan Peninsula, Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Laos etc that were contemporaneous with those that emerged in Indonesia.

The final chapter looks at the colonial era and delves into some detail about the circumstances of early colonisation in Indonesia. No comparisons are offered about the mode of colonisation in French Indochina, Spanish Philippines and British India, British Burma, British Malaya and the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore.

It is argued that Dutch colonisation laid down the foundations for what would later become the Indonesian nation-state, and though western colonialism is presented as self-serving and rapacious, there are also instances where it is credited for building the

foundational communicative and administrative infrastructure for the future Indonesian state.

As in the case of the IPS textbooks at primary school level, the level 7 history book is accompanied by exercises, questions, debating/discussion points, etc.

At level 7 the history books at SMP level are focused still on Indonesian society and history, primarily. Little information about other neighbouring countries is provided, and there is little discussion of the transnational contact and exchange – of commodities, cultures, languages, etc – between the precolonial Indonesian kingdoms and their regional counterparts. Notably missing in the last chapter's discussion of Dutch colonialism is the fact that colonialism also ended the long-pervasive culture of transmigration, movement and exchange across the archipelago.

History taught at SMP Level 8:

History taught at SMP level 8 is divided into 2 semesters and into 4 chapters.

Semester 1 looks at the development of the Indonesian state during the colonial era, and lays great emphasis on both the benefits and disadvantages of Western colonial rule as well as the native response to colonialism.

Chapter 1 outlines the mode of initial colonial contact and the growing shift in power relations between the Dutch and the local Indonesian power centres. The chapter covers the impact of colonialism across the Indonesian archipelago in a very comprehensive manner, and explains the eclipse of power of the kingdoms of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi in some detail. It ends with a commentary on the reaction against Dutch colonialism by local Indonesian intelligentsia, and the emergence of a pan-Indonesian political consciousness.

Chapter 2 begins with the development of early Indonesian vernacular education and the rise of the first Indonesian intellectual/activist class who opposed colonial rule in the country. It culminates with the rise of Pan-Indonesian nationalism and the

declaration of intent by the activists of Indonesia to struggle for independence in 1928.

The chapters do not provide much information about the rise of nationalism in India, China or other parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago that were contemporaneous, lending the impression that Indonesian nationalism emerged *sui generis*.

There are two important omissions: The omission of any reference to the nationalist struggles in British India, Burma and Malaya, and the omission of the role played by the migrant Asian communities in Indonesia in the independence struggle too, notably the vernacular Indonesian-Chinese press that was growing by the 1900s-1920s.

Semester 2 is divided into 2 chapters and the first (chapter 3) looks at the development of Indonesian nationalism in the period of Japanese occupation during World War Two. The Japanese administration is credited for its role in helping to create the Indonesian nationalist militia units such as *Pembela Tanah Ayer* (PETA) who later took up arms against the Dutch and Allied forces in the wake of Indonesia's unilateral declaration of independence in 1945.

Chapter 4 looks at the anti-Dutch war of independence from 1945 to 1949 and focuses on the numerous uprisings that took place in many parts of the archipelago. The two chapters highlight the role played by individual nationalist leaders like Sukarno, Muhammad Hatta, Dr Agus Salim, Dr Soepomo, Samaoen, Alimin, Husni Thamrin, etc.

The text also refers to the development and rise of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*), (pp. 52-53) and places the PKI in the same ranks as other Indonesian nationalist movements like the *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI), as part of the broader anti-colonial struggle.

There is scant mention of the atrocities committed by the Japanese towards the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia, and also little mention of the role played by the other ethnic migrant communities in the anti-colonial struggle of 1945-1949. Most of the national heroes of the war of liberation are ethnically native, and yet there is little

mention of the fact that the Dutch effort to re-colonise Indonesia between 1945 to 1949 was also undertaken with the help of some native Indonesian communities.

As in the case of the history book for level 7, the focus at level 8 is national, and most of the discussions that are found in the text focus on the region of present-day Indonesia. The other countries of Southeast Asia are not mentioned in any detail, and there is no mention of the anti-colonial uprisings and wars that were also being fought in the mid-20th century in countries like Burma, Vietnam and the Philippines.

### History as taught at SMP Level 9

The course is divided into 2 semesters, which are in turn divided into 3 and 4 chapters respectively.

By level 9, students are taught the history of Indonesia in a global context, and the focus is almost entirely on the developments in Indonesia and the wider world from the 1930s onwards, to the present.

Although the focus of the course is still Indonesia-centric, the approach is balanced by the contextualisation of events and developments in Indonesia during the period covered. Indonesia is placed in a global context and developments abroad are examined in terms of their short-term and long-term impacts on the country.

Semester 1 begins with a long account of the causes and factors that led to World War Two. (Throughout the courses from SD 1-6 to SMP 7-9 there is little discussion of the First World War and its impact on Indonesia and Asia.)

The first chapter looks at the rise of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy, offering brief explanations on the ideology of National Socialism (Nazism) and Fascism. It also looks at the rise of militarised Japan and Japan's role in Asia as an opponent of Western hegemony but also as an imperial state with imperial ambitions of its own.

Chapter 1.2 looks at the role of Japanese militarism in the rise of Indonesian nationalism, both before and during WWII.



The whole of chapter 2 (pp. 28-65) accounts for the Indonesian-Dutch war of independence and explains the rise of Indonesian nationalism and the birth of the Indonesian republic. It notes as well that even at the height of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict the relations between the two sides was seldom clear, with some Indonesian communities and polities siding with the Dutch colonial government and its armed forces.

Chapter 3 focuses on the immediate developments in Indonesia from 1949, and the formative years of the new Indonesian republic.

Semester 2 (chapters 4 to 7) deal with some of the more problematic aspects of Indonesian history, including certain events that were considered taboo during the New Order era (1968-1998). These include:

- Indonesia's annexation of Irian Jaya (West Papua) from the Dutch, which was seen by some scholars as an instance of Indonesian expansionism, and whose logic has been questioned on the grounds that historically and culturally West Papua has more affinity to Papua New Guinea;
- The revolt of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in Madiun, East Java (1948);
- The Darul Islam revolt and the rise of radical Islamic politics in Indonesia as a reaction to Sukarno's centralised rule, 'controlled democracy' and the rise of the PKI (1949);
- The confrontation with Malaysia (1963-65) and Indonesia's exit from the United Nations (1964);
- The Gestapu (30 September 1965) alleged 'coup' by the Indonesian Communists in the ranks of the Indonesian armed forces and the fall of Sukarno;
- The de-politicisation of Indonesian society during the New Order era of Suharto;
- Indonesia's problematic relationship with the West and its dependency on America and Western Europe during the New Order era;
- The fall of Suharto and the rise of the *reformasi* movement in 1998;
- Developments in Indonesia in the post-Suharto era to the present.

Almost all of the major events covered in chapters 4 to 7 occurred in Indonesia, with the exception of the confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) with Malaysia. This is also the only part of the semester where another ASEAN country – Malaysia – features prominently in the text as a whole, and three pages are devoted to the subject of the confrontation with Malaysia (chapter 5, sec 5, pp. 131-133.)

The official (post-2006 educational reform programme) account of how and why confrontation with Malaysia took place is as follows: From the Indonesian perspective it is stated that Indonesia did not object to the declaration of the plan to create the Federation of Malaysia, as announced by Malaya's Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on 27 May 1961. However the text claims that the three countries that took part in the confrontation (Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines) began a process of negotiation that led to the Manila Declaration, the Manila Accord and the Joint Malaysia-Indonesia-Philippines communiqué of 1963.

Crucially, the text places the blame and responsibility for confrontation on Malaysia, for its '*unilateral declaration of the creation of the Federation of Malaysia*' in 1963 without prior consultation with Jakarta and Manila. (pg. 132)

The text further elaborates that with the declaration of confrontation the Indonesian government stepped up its activities against Malaysia with the declaration of the *Dwi Kommando Rakyat* (Dwikora - Dual Peoples' Command) on 3 May 1964. From the Indonesian perspective the aggression against Malaysia was justified on the grounds that Malaysia – including Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak – was a puppet state (*negara boneka*) created by the British and that the Indonesian republican forces were committed to aiding the peoples' revolutionary movements in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah. (pg. 133)

No mention is made of the role played by the Indonesian Communist party (PKI) in goading the Sukarno government to go to war against Malaysia, or the PKI's demand then to create a '*fifth force*' known as the People's Militia made up of 15 million armed and trained volunteers.

However the sub-section on the confrontation with Malaysia ends on an objective and balanced note, and concludes that the confrontation was a failure that damaged both countries. (*'Timbulnya konfrontasi Indonesia-Malaysia ternyata merugikan kedua pihak'*, pg. 133)

The sub-section concludes with the frank assessment that Indonesia, and not Malaysia, paid the higher cost for the event: Indonesia's economy collapsed as a result of an international boycott, its international image was ruined as it was seen and cast in the light of an aggressor, and Indonesia was so effectively isolated that it later left the United Nations. (pp. 133-135). The chapter also adds on a final note that as a result of the confrontation, Indonesia was isolated from the West and was instead seen as being closer to the Communist/Soviet bloc, and that the only party that benefited from this new alignment was the Indonesian Communist Party (pg. 133).

Furthermore the text acknowledges the aggressive role played by Indonesia, and that Malaysia (including Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak) had adopted a largely defensive posture during the conflict. It also notes that Malaysia at no point engaged in any attacks or incursions into Indonesian territory, and that at no point did Malaysia represent an existential threat to the Indonesian Republic.

History as taught at SMA (Upper Secondary) Level 10:

From upper secondary level (SMA, Sekolah Menengah Atas) the teaching of history becomes more sophisticated.

The course is divided into two semesters, and is spread across six chapters. It is important to note that from SMA 10 onwards, Indonesian students are taught not only history, but also how to differentiate history from the other social sciences. Chapters 1 to 3 therefore focus more on the discourse of history and its role in the social sciences, rather than provide facts of history for the students to learn.

In chapter 1 for instance, students are taught about the different sources that are used by historians in their compilation of data: ranging from oral testimonies, artefacts, documents, books; and a distinction is made between the prehistoric era (prior to the

age of written documentation) and the historic era which begins with the use of written script and documentation.

Students are also taught to understand the distinctions between myths, legends and history; and emphasis is given to the value of myths and legends as part of the cultural patrimony of a nation, though they cannot be used to make verifiable/falsifiable claims. The text refers to the many myths and legends that abound in Indonesia, including the foundational myths of some of the ethnic communities of the archipelago, but students are again reminded that these myths do not contain facts – though they are valuable as sources of cultural identity and have to be taken as cultural capital. (pp. 59-78, chapter 3)

The second part of the course looks at the origins of the peoples who make up the ethnic groups of Indonesia, and it is here that the transnational contact with other communities is emphasised.

However it is interesting to note that there is no mention whatsoever of the transcultural contact between present-day Indonesia and its closest geographical-cultural neighbours, namely Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.

There is no mention of the kingdom of Malacca and its influence that stretched across the Malacca Straits to Sumatra; and there is no mention of any recorded contact between the kingdoms and polities of Kadaran (Kedah), Langkasuka, Trambalinga, Takola, Singapura/Temasek with other parts of Indonesia.

Instead emphasis is given to the prolonged contact between the polities of the Indonesian archipelago with the Indian subcontinent (chapter 5, pp. 123-129) and the kingdoms of Vietnam (chapter 5, pp. 120-123.)

Historical continuities are established between the Indonesian archipelago and India as well as Vietnam, and some emphasis is given to the spread of Hinduism and Buddhism between South and Southeast Asia.

History as taught at SMA Level 11:

At SMA level 11 the teaching of history is divided into two broad components: Social Studies (*Program Ilmu Sosial, PIS*) and Geography/Environment (*Program Ilmu Alam, PIA*)

History at level 11 is taught over two semesters, divided into 10 chapters.

Chapters 1 to 5 repeat much of what has already been covered in the history course at SMP level, albeit in greater detail. Following the earlier established format at SMP level, students are taught about the arrival of Hinduism and Buddhism to the Indonesian archipelago, and later the arrival of Islam to the region.

The Hindu-Buddhist and Muslim kingdoms and polities that are discussed in chapters 2, 3, and 4 are the same as those that have been discussed at SMP level, with the only difference being the details that accompany the descriptions.<sup>5</sup>

It is in the second semester that the history course at SMA level 11 becomes more global in its outlook, though again the historical developments that took place in the Southeast Asian region are given less emphasis compared to historical events and developments that took place further afield.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the history of colonialism in Indonesia though again there are few comparisons made to the other modes and models of Western colonialism in other Southeast Asian countries such as British Burma, British Malaya, the Straits Settlements, French Indochina and Spanish Philippines.

Chapter 7 focuses on both the benefits and disadvantages that accompanied Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, and gives a lengthy account of the nascent Indonesian nationalist movement that emerged as a reaction to Dutch colonial rule; though no comparisons are made with the Burmese, Malayan, Filipino and Vietnamese independence movements that occurred during the same period.

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<sup>5</sup> Re: Wayan Badrika, *Sejarah 1 Untuk SMA kelas XI- Program Ilmu Sosial*, (Eds.) Moch Ridhuan Muchlis and M Syafirudin, Erlangga Publishers, PT Gelora Aksara Pratama, Jakarta, 2006.a.

Chapter 8 delves into the period of Japanese rule in Indonesia during World War Two and culminates with the history of Indonesia's unilateral declaration of independence and the anti-colonial war of 1945 to 1949 that was fought against the Dutch.

Chapters 9 and 10 look at global developments between the late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and give a lengthy and detailed account of the various social and political revolutions in Europe, including the French revolution (pp. 239-244), the American revolution (pp. 244-249), the Russian revolution of October 1917 (pp. 249-253); and compares these to the Indonesian revolution and the rise of nationalism in Indonesia (pp. 253-256.)

Note that again Indonesia's development is compared to countries outside Southeast Asia, and no comparisons or parallels are drawn with the developments that took place in any of the countries bordering Indonesia.

For the second semester equivalent of the *Program Ilmu Alam* (PIA) component, much emphasis is given to the developments in Indonesia from 1949 to the New Order era of 1965 to 1998.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter 6 (pp. 206-224) deals with the hitherto taboo subject of the failed Communist 'coup' in 1965, and notes that much of the public's knowledge of what actually happened at the time had been distorted by previous generations of historians of the New Order era.

Interestingly, though the events of 1965 were indirectly related to the cessation of hostilities with Malaysia, there is no discussion of the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia between 1963-1965 at all.

As in the case of the *Program Ilmu Sosial* (PIS) component of the course, the PIA component is likewise focused almost exclusively on developments in Indonesia, and no mention is made of the other countries in the ASEAN region.

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<sup>6</sup> Re: Wayan Badrika, *Sejarah 1 Untuk SMA kelas XI- Program Ilmu Alam*, (Eds.) Moch Ridhuan Muchlis and M Syafirudin, Erlangga Publishers, PT Gelora Aksara Pratama, Jakarta, 2006.b.

History as taught at SMA Level 12:

History as taught at SMA level 12 follows the same format as at level 11, with the course taught over two semesters and divided into two components: Social Studies (*Program Ilmu Sosial*, PIS) and Geography/Environment (*Program Ilmu Alam*, PIA)

Social Studies in semester 1 is divided into 4 chapters, beginning from Indonesia's proclamation of independence to the New Order era of 1965-1998.<sup>7</sup>

Here emphasis is given on the nation-building process in Indonesia, notably during its formative first decade when the country experienced a string of local revolts and internal schisms as a result of the secessionist and autonomy movements in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and parts of Java. The tone of chapters 1 to 5 is centrist, with a strong emphasis given to the need to maintain Indonesia's territorial and national integrity.

It should be noted that there is comparatively little discussion on Indonesia's expansionist ambitions and little discussion of the reasons behind the annexation of both West Papua (Irian Jaya) and East Timor.

Semester 2 is likewise divided over 5 chapters and focus on the social developments in Indonesia during the New Order era (chapter 6, pp. 154-173), the fall of Suharto, and the *reformasi* era and the emergence of new populist democracy in Indonesia.

Chapter 7 (pp. 174-187) looks at the developments during the *reformasi* era and explain how and why Indonesia experienced the social, class, ethnic and religious divisions that it did in the first decade of the 2000s. A significant amount of attention is given to the discussion on social inequality, poverty (which is described as a consequence of unjust and inefficient government), ethnic violence and communitarianism. (pp. 181-185)

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<sup>7</sup> Re: Wayan Badrika, *Sejarah 1 Untuk SMA kelas XII- Program Ilmu Sosial*, (Eds.) Moch Ridhuan Muchlis and M Syafirudin, Erlangga Publishers, PT Gelora Aksara Pratama, Jakarta, 2006.c.

The final two chapters (chapters 8 and 9) position Indonesia in the landscape of global politics and notes that Indonesia's postcolonial development has been shaped in part by the realities of the Cold War. A short analysis of the Cold War and its causes as well as consequences is given in pages 198-207, and Indonesia's positioning of itself in the world stage is discussed (pp. 217-220).

Again, however, there is almost no mention of Indonesia's position in the ASEAN region or the role that ASEAN has played in the formation and later development of Indonesia as a Southeast Asian nation-state.

The final chapter looks at globalisation as a present-day phenomenon and notes Indonesia's role as a global player and part of an extended global family of nations. It maintains that Indonesia cannot distance itself from the forces and processes of globalisation, and notes that globalisation is the natural result of the development of the global economy; though it also notes the human and economic costs that globalisation has incurred on Indonesia and its people. (pp. 246-255)

The Geography/Environment (*Program Ilmu Alam*, PIA) component of History at SMA level 12 mirrors and complements the course outline of PIS, and semester 2 expands upon the subject of globalisation by giving an account of the new communicative infrastructure of the world economy, including the impact of the internet on Indonesian society.<sup>8</sup>

Note that at SMA levels X to XII the teaching of history in Indonesian school books reverts to its earlier Indonesia-centric approach, and there is less mention of the other countries of the ASEAN region in their contents. Occasional comparisons are made in passing to countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, but only in passing without any further elaboration. There are, however, no instances where any of the other neighbouring ASEAN countries are described in a negative/pejorative manner either.

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<sup>8</sup> Re: Wayan Badrika, *Sejarah 1 Untuk SMA kelas XII- Program Ilmu Alam*, (Eds.) Moch Ridhuan Muchlis and M Syafirudin, Erlangga Publishers, PT Gelora Aksara Pratama, Jakarta, 2006.d.



### **III. Conclusion: Indonesia's Perception of Itself and Its Neighbours Through Its History Books: Close, but Distant.**

Following the cursory overview of the form and content of the History textbooks used in parts of Indonesia today, a few tentative observations and conclusions can be made at this point:

- Firstly it has to be stated that *this was not intended to serve as an exhaustive study of all the history and social studies textbooks that are in use in Indonesia today*. As noted in the introduction, following the educational and curricula reforms of 2004 and 2006, Indonesia does not have a single 'official' history textbook that is used in all schools across the country, but rather allows local publishers to publish textbooks in various parts of the country that in turn can be used after they have been vetted by the authorities of the Ministry of Education, to ensure that they conform to the standardised template set by the 2006 educational reform bill.
- By and large Indonesian students are given their first introduction to the other neighbouring countries of ASEAN at primary school level, rather than secondary school level. The information that is given about countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines etc is rudimentary, but correct. The data provided gives the students a sense of the place and relative positioning of Indonesia vis-à-vis its neighbours, but there are fewer comparisons offered at the SMP and SMA levels.
- Though the history textbooks emphasise the factor of transnational contact and exchange of ideas in the formative development of Indonesia, there is little information given about the transnational exchange between the proto-Indonesian kingdoms and their Southeast Asian counterparts in the pre-colonial era. Notably absent from the textbooks are references to Malacca, Kadaran-Langkasuka, Trambalinga, Takola etc. As such it is difficult for Indonesian students to appreciate and understand the extent of cross-cultural contact and cultural overlap between Indonesia and its neighbouring societies.

- There is also an absence of detailed information about the other Asian communities that have settled in Indonesia since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and a neglect of the long-standing presence of Chinese, Indian, Arab and Eurasian communities in Indonesia. Though the books celebrate Indonesia's ethnic diversity in terms of the concept of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and recognises the *suku-suku bangsa* Indonesia, they remain silent on the question of the presence and contribution of other migrant communities to the nation.
- Finally, the only part of the course where another ASEAN country – Malaysia – appears in a significant manner in the discussion of the confrontation with Malaysia between 1963 to 1965. As noted earlier, the (now revised) account of the confrontation paints Malaysia in a more balanced and objective light and notes that it was Indonesia – and not Malaysia – that was the aggressor. The confrontation is depicted as an unfortunate event that was more detrimental to Indonesian interests, and in the end did nothing to improve Indonesian-Malaysian ties. It has to be said that Malaysia is presented in a very objective and fair manner here.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the rise of anti-Malaysian and anti-ASEAN sentiments in Indonesia today cannot be traced to the form and contents of the history textbooks that are used in the schools of the country. Notwithstanding the rise of nationalist NGOs, populist parties and militias in Indonesia today, the school books of Indonesia cannot be faulted in any way as they have not set the stage for such confrontational populist politics. Indonesia's history textbooks do look at the other neighbouring countries of ASEAN, but as remote and distant neighbours instead. The texts do not, in themselves, encourage the xenophobic and hyper-nationalistic sentiments that are found among some of the more violent and vocal nationalist movements in the country today.

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