



UNDERSTANDING THE INDONESIAN SOCIETY'S VALUES OF LIFE THROUGH TRADITIONAL GAMES

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Abstract

The research aims to develop international economic cooperation in ASEAN. However, to be able to develop it, it is crucial for each country involved in such cooperation to understand the cultural background of other countries engaged in the international economic cooperation. This approach tries to avoid an error in product marketing strategies or other social conflicts that may weaken social stability in certain countries. The aspect of cultures which need to be understood is the values of life. In the context of Indonesian culture, the values of life can be expressed through traditional games. Indonesian traditional games consist of indoor/outdoor activities and songs. Traditional games are not only from Java, but also from Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. The games contain the values of religion, character education, environment, ways of life, and social relationship. Besides, the games illustrate daily activities of Indonesian people related to their own region. Traditional games show the characteristics of Indonesian society. Hopefully, through cross cultural understanding, it will be easier for other countries to develop good cooperation with Indonesia. These countries can establish good relationship in many aspects for the Economic ASEAN Community 2015.

Keywords: Values of Life, Indonesian Society, Traditional Games

Introduction

International cooperation requires understanding concerning the world view followed by its partners so as to establish synergism, benefit one another, and maintain each life value of other countries in order to create a safe and prosperous ASEAN economic community. Plans for long-term establishment of the ASEAN Community according to a Summit consist of three pillars, namely: (i) ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), (ii) ASEAN Security Community (ASC), and (iii) ASEAN Socio-Culture Community (ASCC). Transnational cultural understanding can describe the social situation in those involved countries concerning economic integration because society serves both as the actors and the economic goals. In Indonesia, one of the social-cultural conditions of its people is reflected in traditional games. These games contain traditional ways of life of Indonesian society. Views of life are a part of culture that consists of ideals, virtues, and attitudes (Widagdhho, *et. al.*, 2001).



Methodology

This is descriptive-qualitative research. The data collection technique was done by conducting the sample technique of literature studies. The data consist of examples of traditional games that represent the major islands in Indonesia.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were performed through typology. The identified data concerning the values of life reflected in traditional games were grouped according to certain aspects. The data collected were then reduced by separating unrelated data to get the primary data. The data were discussed by employing the descriptive-qualitative approach.

Results

Table 1 presents examples of Indonesian traditional games:

Table 1. Indonesian Society's Values of Life

| No. | Name of Game | Identification | Life Values Taught |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Batewah (South Kalimantan) | 1) This game illustrates "tiwah"-a traditional ceremony in Kalimantan- which is a ceremony held by spearing the sacrificial animal to escort dead relatives to heaven. 2) In this game, the sacrificial animal is replaced by piles of wood. 3) The game is not based on gender. 4) Nobody loses or wins. The game ends after all of the participants feel tired. | 1) Trust and relation to the life after death 2) Educating the next generations earlier to ask them continue the tradition and to make them willing to sacrifice. 3) Underlining equality. 4) Orientating to mutual happiness, not competition. |
| 2. | Pam Semambu (East Sumatera) | 1) One of the participants acts as a "juru bagi". 2) When the "juru bagi" wants to come and plays, then she/ he will put one hand on the floor. 3) Before opening his/ her hand, a punished player has to ask for permission first. | 1)Emphasizing on working divisions and leadership within a teamwork 2)Following certain procedures, being in order, and having a bureaucracy. 3)Upholding both ethics and permission. |
| 3. | Bobot (Bengkulu) | 1) A reconstruction of farmers' life. 2) The wood selected is "nilo" wood or wood that has dead. | 1) Hoping for independent generation, and young labors 2) Respecting the nature and the environment, trying not to damage environment when |

| No. | Name of Game | Identification | Life Values Taught |
|-----|--|---|---|
| | | | working. |
| 4. | Ancong-ancong (Maluku) | 1) This game is played with other family members before going to bed or after finishing their dinner. 2) The participants select two people unanimously. 3) The game does not allow the participants to cheat and feel angry when they lose the game. | 1) The importance of family relationship and family harmony 2) Emphasizing on democratic attitudes and mutual agreement. 3) Loving honesty and tolerance in accepting defeat. |
| 5. | Gobak Sodor (Java) | 1) This game is performed in groups. 2) A team will defend its team during the game. | 1) Prioritizing cooperation. 2) The attitude to prioritize their own group tends to be dominant. |
| 6. | Sunda Manda (Sumatera, Java, Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi) | 1) In this game, the area/ box (called "field") owned by a group should not be trampled by the group's opponent. 2) The selection of the box is done by throwing "gacu" (a stone) with the player's back faces the boxes (the field). 3) Putting a sign of ownership onto the box with the image of a star in the box. 4) Providing a small space for other players to jump in their field box | 1) Orientating to land ownership and property rights. 2) Believing in efforts and lucky. 3) Maintaining the owned land area strictly. 4) Promoting tolerance, flexibility, compromise, and flexible rules. |

In short, how to play the games listed in Table 1 are explained as follows. (Cahyono 2009; Husna 2009).

Batewah is played by boys or girls. The number of the players is 3-8 people, consisting of one player that serves as a guard and 2 players that serve as a "penewah" (the ones that hide). This game requires pieces of wood of about 30 cm length and 3 cm width. The wood is arranged into a cone-like shape. In addition, there is a piece of wood that is used to throw. Each participant that serves as a thrower tries to hit the piles of wood from the position which is 4 meters away from the piles. If the piles of wood collapse, the player in charge (the guard) has to rearrange the piles of wood, while the other players hide.

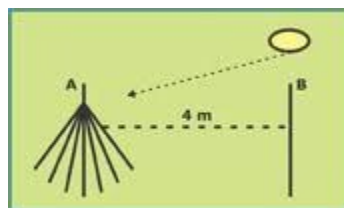
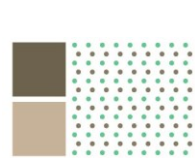


Figure 1. Wood arranged in Cone-like shape in Batewah Game



Pam Semambu is played by three or more children who sit while putting both of their hands and lying prone on the floor. One acts as “juru bagi”. She/he puts his hand on the floor. “Juru bagi” will pat each player’s back hand one by one, anti-clockwise, while singing the Pam Semambu song. Each time the song ends indicates the end of patting on the participants’ back hands. Then, the participants may take his/ her hand out of the game and put them cross their chest hugging their shoulders and so on and so forth until there is only one hand left facing down on the floor. The owner of the hand is declared lost and is required to select and open one of the other players’ hands.

Bobot is made of two wooden rods of about 150 cm length (can be grasped by children’s fingers), then at the bottom of the rods, about 100 cm of it, the same wood of about 50—75 cm length is crucified on it. It serves as a place to pull wood that has been tied by using rattan or wood roots. Bobot is used to pull firewood of 3-4 meters in size.

Ancong-ancong is played by 5-10 boys or girls aged 5-8 years. One is selected as a “perangkak” (creeper) and the other one is chosen as a leader. “Perangkak” takes the position to creep and the leader gives signs to the other players to put their palms on the back of the “perangkak”. The other players sing the “ancong-ancong” songs. “Perangkak” is responsible to guess the owner of the hand that is put on his/ her back. This game is done before going to bed in the living room or the dining room.

Gobak Sodor consists of two groups, the guard group and the opponent group. Each person in the guard group composes layers by marching backward while stretching their arms so that the opponent group cannot pass the layers. One more guard is in charge in the center line and moves perpendicularly from the other guards. The distance among the guards is as far as 5 steps and the distance to the side is as far as 4 steps. The regions between the game and the guard lines are marked by chalk. One of the guards’ legs must remain above the guard line. If an opposing player is touched by a guarding player, the player loses. Victory will be obtained if the guards’ group succeeds to touch the entire players of the opponent group.

Sunda Manda is usually played by two or more children. The game area is square which resembles a plus sign or a tree that is divided into several plots called “sawah” (rice field). Usually children play this game on the flat ground or on the cement floor. Each player holds 'gacuk'. Gacuk is a flat object with a small size of about 4-5 cm and is usually made of tile fragments. Players take turns to throw gacuk on the picture consisting of boxes on the ground, then jump up and down on one foot around the existing boxes, and try to get as many boxes as possible. A player who has the most boxes will be the winner.



Discussion

Batewah game describes the *tiwah* tradition. The tradition aims to escort the spirit of the dead to the heaven. The tradition requires an animal to be sacrificed to honor that spirit. Batewah develops in South Kalimantan which natural conditions consist of forests and fields. Children play the game by using equipment such as piles of wood (not cans or tiles) because it is easier to find them. Usually, wood serves as firewood. The use of firewood teaches children to keep the nature (i.e. forest), since it has facilitated their life. Wood arranged in a cone-like shape is a symbol of a sacrificial animal. Through it, that the people of South Kalimantan believe in the existence of the creator of the nature is reflected. They believe that there is life after death. This game also gives the message to the young generation to preserve the tradition of *tiwah*.

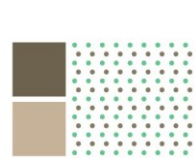
Batewah is played by men and women. It reflects the people of South Kalimantan who respect other human beings, regardless their gender. They understand the obligations and the rights of each participant. This game is made for entertainment, not competition. There is neither a winner nor a loser. Based on the game, it is shown that the South Kalimantan people like intimacy between its people. They love togetherness and being happy together.

Pam Semambu illustrates the life of people in East Sumatra. “Juru bagi” demonstrates a leader and the participants of the game demonstrate society members. For people in East Sumatra, the existence of a leader is significantly crucial. In working world, they require clear working divisions. They work both individually and in groups. Working in groups is coordinated by a leader. In the coastal areas, there is a working relationship between fishermen and *tauke* (boss) (Suhartono 2007). Usually, fishermen work in groups and sell their catch to *tauke*. *Tauke* may serve as the capital owner.

In Pam Semambu game, if large number of participants joins the game, “juru bagi” sits in the middle of the circle. That part reflects that a leader should unite with his/ her people. “Juru bagi” pats the participants’ back hands in order and in accordance with the procedures. It shows the attitude of East Sumatra people who like order and obeys the bureaucracy (the leader). The participant who loses in this game has to excuse first to open the folded hands of the other participants. It illustrates that the people of East Sumatra uphold ethics and politeness.

Bobot game describes farmers’ life in Bengkulu. Children are trained to live independently. After school, they gather wood for firewood. The wood used usually is the one from trees that have stopped growing. That suggests that their parents train them solve their own problems and preserve trees. Through the Bobot game, the children are trained to work since they are young.

Ancong-ancong is played before going to bed. The game is usually played in the living room or dining room. The game shows intimacy between family members in North Maluku. They use the game to interact one another, foster harmony, and maintain domestic harmony. They express



their longing, gather again after all the family members have carried out their own activities. The leader and the “perangkak” in this game are selected through mutual agreement. This way shows that the people of North Maluku prioritize decision-making by consensus. The people of North Maluku also uphold the value of honesty in everyday life. This is reflected in the attitude of the game players who do not want to cheat, but accept their defeat with equanimity.

Gobak Sodor is played in groups. Javanese people like “*gotong royong*” or working together. “*Gotong royong*” is usually done when building public facilities, cleaning up neighborhoods to celebrate the Independence Day, and other traditional or religious celebrations. They tend to side with the group in which they are placed. Therefore, the sense of family relationship in each group is quite large.

Sunda Manda game describes Indonesia's agrarian society. The player who has the most "sawah" will be the winner. For an agrarian society, fields are not only meant for agriculture, but also the most precious treasure. Therefore, the fight is to have the fields, as illustrated in the Sunda Manda game. Players should not be stepped on "fields" belong to other players reflecting Indonesia wants official status of land ownership. In addition, landowners will keep the soil well. Society of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Sulawesi and Kalimantan believe in the results of operations and luck. It was seen as a throw back to *gacuk* while rice boxes. Although each player did not allow another player stepping on his field, they would give them little room for other players to jump aboard. It shows the respect among fellow tolerance, flexible, willing to compromise, and not rigid in socializing.

Conclusions

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the values of Indonesian society are reflected in traditional games can be seen from how to play, equipment and soundtrack game. The values of life in the form of a way of life, including the creator of the trust, acknowledged the existence of life after death, preserving nature and tradition, tolerance and mutual respect and appreciation between people, love the togetherness and harmony, develop consensus, and mutual help, and crave peace as well as a fair and wise leader.

These values are consistent with the view of life in Indonesia, called Pancasila. Pancasila consists of five precepts: (1) the divinity of the Almighty, (2) a just and civilized humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy led by the wisdom of representative deliberation, and (5) social justice for all Indonesian people.

Traditional game contains values Indonesian society that can serve as a bridge to get to know and understand the social and cultural condition in Indonesia. With this understanding, it is expected to minimize the risk of conflict between Indonesia and other ASEAN countries. Thus, ASEAN and Indonesia can work together smoothly to realize the ASEAN economic community, prosperous and secure.



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