**Book Review**

# THE DILEMMA OF MULTICULTURALISM

Reviewer: Lilis Mulyani[1]
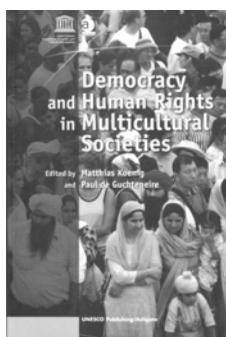
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"…for they mix but do not combine…there is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political unit (Furnivall, 1956, p 304).

At a glimpse, there seems to be no conflict between the concepts of democracy and human rights with multiculturalism since the essence of democracy and human rights is the respect to plurality and differences. The three concepts have actually grown in the last decade as the main feature of modern nation-state. As the complexity of our society grown deeper, democracy and human rights concepts have given –at least- some answers on how to manage differences among the people within the society.

Multiculturalism has characterized the face of modern societies in almost every parts of the world today. However, multiculturalism in itself poses vulnerabilities. Claims of groups of ethnic, religious or language minorities have intensively conveyed their voice to get better respect and protection from the State. Those claims mostly associated with experiences of discrimination and inequality.

The root of discrimination and inequality can mostly be tracked back to their distinct identity, whether deriving from ethnics, languages or religions. Giddens has rightly pointed out that these distinctions are not

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[1]Researcher at Research Center for Society and Culture (PMB) The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). Contact: lilismulyani@yahoo.com.

"neutral" (1989, p 244) as most policies made on these issues are mostly the "reflection of one hegemonic culture" (Fenton, 1999, p 173).

This book tries to disentangle the process of negotiating differences in many countries by using public policy approach. Proposed models of public policies in each country of case studies were aimed to understand that within States with multicultural societies, the government shall act as the balancer between different groups posing their own claims for identity.

The book consists of introduction part and another three sections. Editors in the first section have interestingly unfolded the conceptual framework used by contributors. The first section is about the ethno-nationalists movements, which focuses on the transformation of nation-states from the classical to modern nation-states as changes of globalization, technology of mass communication and transportation gives new meaning to ethno-nationalists movements. The second section is about linguistic diversity, focuses the discussion on the argument that language rights is not merely part of collective or minority rights, but most importantly it contains basic rights for individuals the same with other rights such as the freedom to expression. These new meaning of language rights has been part of socialization of the rights through international or regional human rights regimes. The third section is about religious diversity, which focuses on how religious groups claims for recognition have posed another challenge to modern nation-states.

### *Public Policy and Contested Claims: The Language of Power*

The first section of the book explores how ethno-nationalist movements react through extreme actions against public policy made by the government. Public policies as we know it work as "instruments of governance, ideological vehicles and as agents for constructing subjectivities and organizing people within systems of power and authority" (Shore and Wrights, 1997, p 35). Furthermore, policy-making process is then the place where different claims of groups' interests contested each other. By this means, it is important to see who has the power "to define" (Shore and Wright, 1997, p 18). In this particular, public policy making is actually the means of homogenization to a certain extent as it is the majority who holds power to define "which cultures, languages or religions" would be recognized in that particular State.

This process has mostly excluded some minority groups due to many reasons. And these groups as the contributors in the first section have shown, has partly resist to their exclusions through violence. And claims

were then formed based partly or fully on these exclusion, discrimination and unequal treatment deriving from ethnic, language or religious differences and their distinct identity aiming for separation if their rights were not to be protected and respected. Democracy, in this meaning, gives ways for these minority groups to have their representation in the public policy making process. Meanwhile, human rights give the standards of protection for those having no representation in these processes.

The particular case studies of the Basque, the Northern Ireland, and the PKK (Kurdish) in Turkey show that when their interest of non-discrimination is included in the public policy making as one form of State's recognition, the level of violence decreased significantly (Diez-Medrano, p ). Furthermore, conflict management strategies for these ethno-nationalist movements "lies in policy objectives and how political and institutional recognition" (Wolff, p 62) and the flexibility of these policies upon the groups (Martinez-Hererra, p 56).

### The Notion of Human Rights as Cultural Agents

Language rights have been acknowledged limitedly as part of minority or collective rights (de-Verennes, p 116). Contributions in this section argue that language rights are actually real basic individual rights since it serves as "implication for identity" (Holt and Packer, p 128).

The creation of State in the first place requires certain measures of uniformity, particularly a *lingua franca,* and local languages in most cases considered to be inefficient. In their early experiences, most countries believe that creating a nation entails necessity to homogenization of culture, including in language. However, the wave of human rights socialization through international and regional human rights regimes is indeed gives new support to the claims of language minorities against the State's homogenization of language. In this particular process, the notions of human rights placed itself as cultural agents where speaker of endangered or minority language and religious minority are able to pursue their rights both in private and public areas.

Relevant regional standards of the protection of language rights is also provided in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as Holt and Packer explain in their contribution in this section. Accordingly, the protection of these rights is the obligation of the State, while acting as the balancing agents for different interests and will of the general (majority) and the minority. However, sometimes the legislations made by the government were not sufficient enough for the protection of these minority languages (Cilevics, p 179). Moreover, Henrard shows that

tensions sometimes occurred between human rights standards provided by international and regional human rights regimes with the State's process of democratization (p 209). Furthermore, policies related to language rights are usually interpreted differently in its practice (Romaine, p 233).

### *Religious diversity and the Role of Religious Organizations*

In the third section, the issue of religious diversity is mostly connected to religious organizations. Religious clashes are usually being organized and came out with other groups' political or economic interests escalated in violent religious conflicts (Eisenstadt, p 247). Meanwhile, according to Riis, "religious pluralism" modes are of the consequences of the process of nation-building (p 251).

The existence of religious pluralism as it is being respected in the England and Wales prisons is also of interesting case studies in this particular (Beckford, p 267-281). The recognition and respect given by – not only the State- but mostly major religious organization in the State (in this case the Anglican Church) is indeed influential in developing the culture to respect religious pluralism.

Contributors in this section suggest that instead of moving towards secularization, most countries have now tried to give places to religious organizations within the public arenas. Religious diversity is not merely individual private matters, and recognizing religious diversity in public areas might work as "suitable" policy to answer the claims for religious rights.

### *The Significance of the Book*

The book finds its importance as many States in transition for democracy face similar problems of growing groups' claims and growing ethno-nationalists movements, as a consequence of democratization and human rights internalization process. These claims are mostly elevated into separatist movements such as those in Indonesia or Thailand. We witness that there has been a "revolution of identity" where previously soft groups boundaries has become hardened to create unnegotiated symbolic boundaries and these groups in the societies has return to their smaller primordial solidarity.

The book provided wide ranged of models in managing multiculturalism in States according to democratic and human rights principles. Nonetheless, in the end governing diversity in modern nation state has become a relative action, depend on the context of the State. Even

with the existence of international or regional standards, there would be different solutions taken by different States. The book left huge and unfinished "homework" on how to create a standard on governing diversity for countries in transition to democracy such as those in Asia.

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