

ETHNIC GROUPS, DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT SITUATION IN NUNUKAN*

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Abstrak

Pada tahun 2000, Nunukan diresmikan sebagai kabupaten baru dalam wilayah administratif Provinsi Kalimantan Timur. Peranan kabupaten baru ini semakin meningkat sebab sebagai “*transit zone*” ke Tawau (Sabah), Nunukan juga menjadi lokasi pemulangan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia dari Malaysia pada tahun 2002. Permasalahan yang timbul untuk setiap wilayah perbatasan adalah terjadinya praktik penyelundupan manusia dan barang serta berbagai jenis komoditas lainnya. Keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana ikut mempengaruhi penanganan pemulangan TKI yang tidak terencana dengan baik. Sebagaimana lazimnya daerah perbatasan (*border areas*) sebagai lokasi mencari pekerjaan, kehadiran berbagai kelompok etnis memicu kecemburuan, sebab dominasi yang menyolok di sektor perekonomian dan posisi sosial antara warga setempat dengan para pendatang. Homogenitas kelompok etnis, penguasaan sumber-sumber alam dan permasalahan TKI (apabila tidak ditangani dengan tepat) dapat berakibat negatif terhadap perkembangan kabupaten yang baru ini.

In 2002, Nunukan was authoritative as new regency in East Kalimantan. The role of this new regency become more important for its function as a “*transit zone*” to Tawau (Sabah) and Nunukan is also used as a transit place for TKI (Indonesian Labor Force) that being deported from Malaysia in 2002. Other problems that may occur in border areas are human smuggling and commodities smuggling. For Nunukan, the major difficulty in handling the TKI deportation was this regency has no sufficient infrastructure to cope the amount of TKI. The increase of its migrant population puts more burdens on the local government. The present migrants from of various ethnic groups were set enviousness that causes a striking domination in economic sector and social lives. These kinds of homogeneity which related to ethnicity, resources and occupation may create negative effects to the Nunukan’s development.

Keywords: Nunukan, Transit zone, Border areas, Ethnic groups

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INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on three major related issues in Nunukan, East Kalimantan namely: ethnic groups, development and potential for conflict that may occur in the coming years. The importance of these issues in Nunukan's setting are highlighted by its role as a new regency lying along border lines with various ethnic groups, it with limited resources for absorbing job seekers either from Nunukan, East Kalimantan or other migrants. The increase in its migrant population puts more burdens on the local administration making it more difficult to cope with the complexity of existing issues. The change from sub-district to district in 2000 was difficult. New development patterns have to be adopted stemming from social, economic and political pressures, simultaneously attempting to ensure external conditions from provincial and central levels of government did not increase Nunukan's burdens. These phenomena are being examined then related them Indonesian society today; where ethnic and religious issues are easily ignited and finally manifested in riots, violence, conflict and enmity as can be observed also elsewhere in Kalimantan, Maluku, Riau, etc..

Currently more people in Nunukan are out of work; their numbers are increased by returning workers from Malaysia who are also jobless yet still stay in the district; migrants dominate the government and economic sectors; and smuggling of goods (electronic and logs) is on-going. These factors combined with strong ethnic sentiments have the potential to escalate into unavoidable conflict among the members of the Nunukan community if no solutions are found in the coming years. Data presented in this paper based mainly on fieldwork carried out in August 2001.

When researching ethnic groups, it is important to verify information volunteered. For example on my first field trip to Nunukan in August 2001, I received misleading information, when I asked a person in Samarinda, whether I could meet the Dayak people in City of Nunukan. He replied convincingly "do not worry *Pak* you will meet them over there as well as in Kalimantan". My first impression was, for those who deal with ethnic studies will be confused with the answer, because Kalimantan for long time has been [occupied] not simply by the Dayaks but also by other ethnic groups. I sought to clarify this information. *First*, did the man provide me with a correct reply that "all people living in City of Nunukan are Dayaks"? *Second*, who was the man and which ethnic group did he belong to? Or he was the man whose attachment to the Dayak people.

The above prelude seems indisputable for common people who are not interested in studying ethnic composition; ethnic struggles and mainly ethnic conflicts have emerged around us frequently in the last ten years. The majority of people who are not interested in studying ethnic composition have become aware of ethnic struggles and conflicts that have emerged only in the last ten years, particularly those issues currently involving 'indigenous' and 'foreigners' (*Us versus Them*) such as experienced among the Dayaks and the Madurese in West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan. A stereotype assumption

that only one ethnic group dominates an island could be misleading. Truly, if we believe that Kalimantan is inhabited by the Dayaks and Nunukan by the Tidungs, it will demarcate and ignore the existence of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, focusing too much discourse on the experiences of the Dayaks over their land rights has to be careful in the current social turmoil. It could generate hostility toward those who are considered to be ruining the unity of the Dayaks' social fabric and related aspects of their existence. Thoughts on the existence of the Dayak people, but to address the matter logically is to reposition an appropriate paradigm, to recognize physical and social spaces and rights of all of the citizens to live together in multiethnic country such as Indonesia. From the political dimension, government's recognition of the existence and rights of all ethnic groups, by making many reviews on useless laws, legislations and stipulations, concerning who are the ethnic groups in Indonesia, should be valued as a historical necessity in current Indonesian social and political chaos.

Depending mostly on agriculture for their livelihood, the Tidungs occupy 5 administrative areas of Nunukan, respectively: Sembakung, Lumbis, Sebatik, Krayan and Nunukan. Most of Nunukan's people are Muslim. Before January 2000, Nunukan was the sub-district of Bulongan, but with the issue of Law No. 47 of 1999 Nunukan was officially established as a new district. Located along the border areas between East Kalimantan and Sabah, East Malaysia, Nunukan is like a 'promised land' for migrants from outside Kalimantan – like people from Adonara, East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara who first started entering the area in 1956 simply to find a place to work. A group arrived in Nunukan aboard a vessel constituting the beginning of the movement of people from Adonara into this area. Since then, the period of military clashes between Indonesia and Malaysia has resulted in more military and armed forces personnel being sent to Nunukan. Internal crisis, particularly economic crisis that hit Indonesia in the middle of July 1997 has pushed more people to come to Nunukan and use it as a stepping stone to find jobs in Sabah. Today, Nunukan is in process of developing various projects and recruiting manpower to meet its target as a new district. More jobs constructing roads, oil palm plantations, buildings and other infrastructures are encouraging competition among job seekers.

ETHNIC GROUPS IN NUNUKAN: CONDITION IN 2001

Based on Law No. 47 of 1999, issued on 7 June 2000, Nunukan, previously a part of Bulongan and classified as sub-district (*kecamatan*), now has its new administrative status as district (*kabupaten*). The Nunukan administrative territory covers 14,657.7 km² and consists of 5 sub-districts: Sebatik (821.17 km²), Lumbis (2,656.5 km²), Sembakung (2,457.7 km²) and Krayan (3,114.2 km²). Overall, Nunukan has 212 villages with a variety of ethnic groups living together, ranging from the Tidungs, the Javanese, migrants from South Sulawesi, the Dayaks, the Melayu and Banjar peoples, etc. Geographically, Nunukan has its boundary at Sulawesi Sea in the East,

Sarawak in the West, Sabah in the North and Bulongan and Malinau in the South. From demographic perspectives, Nunukan's population in 1999 amounted to 81,472 with an approximate population growth rate of 2.89 percent annually. Population density was around 5.59 persons per square kilometer. The number of incoming people (especially job seekers) to Nunukan according to ethnic background, shows that between 1998-2000, people from South Sulawesi made up 54,294 of the total, followed by people from Flores, East Nusa Tenggara, numbered at 15,107 and the rest from Java and other provinces.

Nunukan, at the end of the Bulongan monarchy (1700-1958) and during the Dutch Colonial Administration constituted part of Bulongan district, with center of government located in Tanjung Selor, including the abundant natural resources of East Kalimantan territory. In 1999 Nunukan's annual income reached Rp 402.06 billion, with revenues from oil and gas contributing up to Rp 300.73 billion. Also in 1999 the economic growth rate of Nunukan was 4.68 percent. The major contributors were the agricultural sector (62.3 percent) and mining and other natural resources (25.43 percent), while trading, services and other small sectors contributed 8.8 percent, 1.6 percent and less than 1 percent respectively (Kabupaten Nunukan Dalam Angka, 1999:155-156).

What do we mean by the term ethnic group?. Conventionally, an ethnic group is linked to some "traits" that distinguish it from another. Examples of these traits are: customs, values, culture, language, material culture, territory, dress, arts, descent, etc. Jary-Jary (1991:202) defined an ethnic group as "a group of people sharing an identity which arises from a collective sense of a distinctive history. Each ethnic group possess their own culture, customs, norms, beliefs and traditions. There is usually a common language". Eriksen (1993:10) defined ethnic group as a group "which they are not - in other words, in relation to non-members of the group". An ethnic group could be identified from their language, political organization, culture, etc. Sian Jones, as cited by Andaya (1999:3) views ethnic groups as "fluid, self-defining systems that are embedded in economic and political relations. Furthermore, Jones explains that ethnic identity is constructed through habitus which forms and is shared by commonalities of practice".

Name of ethnic groups are also linked to locations (physical space) where they live. Names of ethnic groups in Kalimantan are similar to the place names where people reside. Among the Dayak people with various sub-ethnics, we could identify some similarities between names of groups and names of sites where they come from like: Kenyah, Belusu, Basap, Punan, Bahau, Tanjung (Hundage), Sengai, Aoheng (Penihing) Teggalan and others (Summer Institute of Linguistic/SIL, 1999). One 'ethnic group' who occupy areas along the Sembakung and Subuka Rivers, coastal sites, interior of Malinau and small 'islands' around Tarakan is called "Tidung or Tidong". Tidung or Tidong is assumed to be the 'majority ethnic group' residing in border areas of Nunukan (Haba, 2001). According to Rajah (1990:116) "Borders, as is well recognized, are essentially arbitrary in nature though they may coincide with natural

or geographical features. However, perhaps the most important consideration that makes operating along border areas a strategic necessity is the fact of the border itself, that is, a line of demarcation between *two sovereign nations*".

Nunukan, located in the border areas of East Kalimantan and Sabah, East Malaysia is often called "Texas" by some visitors and local residents. It attracts people from various provinces searching for a better life. However, the local government and security apparatus do not have any power to cope with rapid social change and the problems associated with large and sudden increases in population. The arrival of different groups of people causes a number of troubles like gambling, drunkenness, robbery, smuggling and other crimes. Nunukan's "Texas frontier" aspect is enhanced by the scarcity of bureaucrats and regulators in its administration and government. There is a tendency for the local administrative staff to apply this allusion to problems of public order, crime, and other complicating issues in the methods adopted to handle them. One internal threat emerging today that perhaps creates 'instability' in Nunukan and its neighboring state (Tawau-Sabah); is the driving away of many (illegal) workers from Malaysia, and the high incidence of people living in Nunukan who were suffering from mental disorders.

Factors encouraging people to enter Nunukan could be examined through information available; and what reason Nunukan is being used as a 'home base' for many job seekers particularly after 1945 Independence. *First*, since economic crisis descended upon Indonesia in mid July 1997, workers who lost their jobs were coming to seek jobs as laborers in Malaysia's neighboring state, Tawau. Lack of job opportunities has pushed some workers using Nunukan as a transit zone before entering Sabah, either legally or illegally, while others stay permanently in Nunukan. *Second*, Nunukan during the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia in 1960s became a headquarters for Indonesian military troops. After confrontation, more troops and military personnel, with their families, preferred living there. Since that time, family reunions, job seekers, increases in development programs are putting Nunukan on the list as a 'promised land' for people from other provinces. The main targeted city for jobs seekers from Flores, East Nusa Tenggara as well as other districts is Tawau. Development activities in Tawau-Sabah are stable and steady economic growth makes it possible for this neighboring state to employ more Indonesian workers, particularly in oil palm plantations.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: SOME EXPERIENCES

Development (*pembangunan*) is a widely known concept during the New Order. As there are some definitions and concepts of development, here, I would briefly underline development as a positive concept rather than a normative concept. Hettne (1996:20) defined development as "how the actual process of economic and social change affects the relations between ethnic groups and between ethnic groups and state power". In the Indonesian context, during the New Order, development

was used to designate various government programs designed to alter life of many Indonesians. Comparing Soeharto's era and "*Orde Lama*" the focus for development underwent substantial changes from politics to economy. To a certain extent, the New Order has besides, created economic growth as its highest achievement ever, but at the same time, the regime has misused power for its own interest. Ethnic minorities suffered as they were deprived of their belongings and rights and left without economic and political certainties.

It is a debatable point that 1945 Constitution, Chapter 33 (before amendment) gave the state too much power to plan and facilitate policies, especially in attempts to bring realistic improvements in the welfare of Indonesian citizens. Under Soeharto who was repressive and centralistic in nature, rights of powerless groups, including "*masyarakat hukum adat*", "*masyarakat tradisional*", "*masyarakat terasing*" and "*peladang berpindah*" (names given from center of power, just to prove its hegemony and authority) have been ignored. These powerless groups basically suffered from many policies issued by Soeharto's regime. If I take the Dayak people (also the Tidungs) in Kalimantan to represent ethnic groups in outer islands, this indicates that Soeharto was inconsistent with his policies partly because he resisted the 1945 Constitution as well. As *adat* law communities, the Dayak people who occupy sites with abundant natural resources, nowadays live below poverty line when compared with *Hak Pengusahaan Hutan/HPH* or Forest Concession Holders and mining investors. For many ethnic minorities, experiencing frustration "because of a general lack of recognition and denial of human dignity" (Visser 2000:10) is a common phenomenon in this country. The New Order development strategies have attracted many foreign investors to exploit millions hectares of forest, mineral resources and palm estates. This exploitation also greatly benefited Soeharto and his cronies rather than ethnic minorities (see Warren 1986). Local ethnic groups like the Tidung people and the Papuans, who rely heavily on forest products (e.g. rattan, honey, resin, bird's nest, etc) for their subsistence, are starving and being threatened to refrain from exploiting their vicinity.

Word "modernization" was a popular term under Soeharto's regime – how to alter people's life from traditional to modern. But behind that paradigm ('tricky politics') many ethnic groups did not have resources to develop their own lives, cultures and identities (cultural ignorance). The Dayaks, for instance, were struggling to get their rights to manage and exploit land and forest around their communities, but always confronted by resistance from bureaucrats and military. One way of ignoring the Dayaks' territorial rights was using the National Land Body's (BPN) standard, that land without a certificate issued by BPN must be owned by the state.

As seen in this case, Hettne (1996:20) notes that "The modernization process is enforced by the security concerns of the ruling elite" could be seen as justification for Soeharto's political conduct while he was in power. At that time, socialization standardization and security measures were popular and commonly practiced. Soeharto argued that Indonesian people were citizens who really needed direction (*petunjuk*

dari bapak) rather than being given the freedom to organize themselves. During Soeharto's era, the best way to secure national development and stability was deemed to be the forcible exercise of power. Pressure and intimidation of its people by national government occurred in various ways including economic development. Despite Hettne's (1996:21) use different term of "internal colonialism"; it remains an appropriate term to clarify what the New Order did to its people especially in political arena. All policies drafted and issued in Jakarta (center versus periphery) basically undermined the people, as those who reside far from the center were categorized as "backward", "illiterate", even as "people who know nothing" (Haba 1998). This constituted a strategy of the New Order to weaken the masses and strengthen the central power. In this case, Soeharto applied a hegemonic of meaning toward his people as well.

Kalimantan like Aceh, Riau and Irian Jaya (Papua) are rich islands that have been exploited excessively over the last 25 years by Multi National Corporations and foreign companies. This pattern of exploitation includes illegal logging and mining practices that cause poverty both for people in the islands and also for future generations. During the massive exploitation of logging and mining exploration, with the arrival of skilled migrants from outside Kalimantan and from overseas to work in trading sectors, control of economic activities in Kalimantan (including Bulongan) began to shift toward these migrants. Along with the ratification of "Sosek Malindo Treaty" (Social and Economic Cooperation) between Indonesia and Malaysia, more opportunity is available in distant regions of East Kalimantan and West Kalimantan (Sarawak and Sabah), so that Nunukan (East Kalimantan) and Entikong (West Kalimantan) are becoming transit zones for entering Sabah and Sarawak, either legally or illegally. A tragic effect of the economic crisis emerging in the middle of July 1997 was that more people lost their jobs and domestic labor force was swollen by job seekers whose numbers increase dramatically every year. As a consequence, skilled laborers from outside Kalimantan dominate and take over jobs in both government and private sectors. Since that period (my preliminary prediction) 'hidden hostilities' between local peoples out of jobs or in work places dominated by those assumed to be others (*Us versus Them*) are unavoidable.

DEVELOPMENT AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

This section deals with the 'predicted' outcome in the case of Nunukan, based on its existing social and economic conditions. If local government does not plan to create new jobs and 'secure' space for the Tidungs in the long run social conflict might erupt. Conflict can be distinguished generally as follows: (1.) Conflicts take place through a series of fights, one after another, (2.) Conflicts emerge when some adversaries coalesce as allies against other adversaries, (3.) Crosscutting issues are raised like divisions by region or class that cut across religious differences, (4.) Contentious issues presumably superimposed by one group on another (Kriesberg 1982:27). The quotation below from a former sub-district head at the one day seminar

at the University of Mulawarman in August 2001 illustrated that social enmity is scattered throughout the Dayaks (?) toward "the others". Feelings of insecurity among the locals could be allayed if the resource managers work and plan toward conflict resolution. Feelings of insecurity among the locals could be perpetuated and conflict continued if the resource managers continue their current exploitative practices.

This does not mean that the Tidungs do not realize their current condition as "quests for their homeland", but it is a way for channeling aspirations and unrest that at the moment seems directed either at Peoples Representative Council or at local government level. Hettne (1996:21) noted that "The range of economic problems that may influence ethnic relations is great indeed like: struggle for scarce resources, regional imbalances, infrastructure investments with a great impact on indigenous economic systems, labor-market conflicts, distributions conflicts, etc". Concerning "internal colonialism" idea, current ethnic groups in Aceh, Riau, Kalimantan and Irian Jaya are still experiencing the same policies exercised by Soeharto. There is a close relationship between economic structures; government policy and ethnic distribution that stimulates direct tensions, which are directly linked to economic development and its consequences for the local people. Hettne (1996:21-22) further stated "Most problem associated with uneven development affect all societies, but in multiethnic societies they are more severe and tend to be become permanent. There may be so called spread-effects within ethnic group".

I would argue that conflict in Nunukan, based on the reasoning in this paper, could take place, if social and economic conditions in surrounding provinces and Nunukan in particular are still unchanged. In fact, there are many areas for potential conflict regarding the control of (natural) resources such as land, forest products and jobs available or social and economic imbalance within the Nunukan society. As stated earlier, the great numbers of migrants entering Nunukan, at the same time bring a new burden for this regency. Policies of development issued by local government have not yet shown that they are taking the side of the Tidungs. It is not my intention to advise local government to draft legislation or law to fully protect the Tidungs and provide them with some privileges, but, beyond question, the educational background of the Tidungs (mostly primary and secondary graduates at best) limits their opportunities to compete in a scarce labor market.

Another ethnic resentment, for instance, emerged at the election for choosing the head of Nunukan District (the current head of district is a Bugis). Grass root demands (if it was possible) that position should be in the hands of the Tidungs or Dayak people. To heal the political loss, local elites devised a strategy to allocate position of vice-governor to the Dayak and head of People's Representative Council to the Tidung. This political bargaining underlines that the Tidungs and the Dayaks are fully aware that top political positions are supposed to be in their control, especially in the regional autonomy era. Regrettably, outcome of the general election, political consensus at provincial level and money politics played a significant role in determining such important positions in Nunukan and elsewhere. Division of power at executive

level is the best solution to reduce ethnic tensions among Tidungs and non-Tidungs at least for the time being in Nunukan.

In economic sector, working ethic of South Sulawesi people is enabling them to have better living conditions compared with the locals, even with other ethnic groups from East Nusa Tenggara, the Javanese and the Dayak people, not to mention the Chinese in Nunukan. Acciaioli (1989:325) in his analysis of Bugis community in Lindu, Central Sulawesi argues that what distinguished them from other migrant cultures is not simply their motivation to enter unexploited economic niches but, their overwhelmingly successful “efforts to restructure local economic, social, political and cultural relations so as to exert economic domination and impose cultural hegemony”. What is being stated here can be investigated on the social screen, that they are the owners of transportation and shops and subsequently they are forming a new class as ‘landlords’ in Kalimantan and Nunukan. One factor enabling the South Sulawesi migrants to succeed is the pattern of self-help and toughness in confronting challenges.

If we look at Lamijong market, large numbers of traders (retailers and street money changers) are from South Sulawesi living around Nunukan. In describing this situation, a Tidung complained “Nunukan has been seized by the *BBM*” (*Bugis, Buton and Makassar*). From public discussion, the occupation of Pulau Sebatik by the migrants for agriculture has generated ethnic sentiment, because the site used to be hunting ground. Today it has been abandoned by local hunters and forest products collectors; and agricultural products harvested from Sebatik are sold everyday in Nunukan and Tawau. Pushed deep into the interior by the expansion of migrants, the Tidungs continue to rely on fishing, farming, hunting wild animals and collecting forest products for their livelihood with small numbers working in government and private sectors.

Potential conflict may arise from the exploitation of Pulau Sebatik that causes further destruction of its ecosystem. Doubtful of current development effects, the Tidungs accuse the local government of being “powerless and presumably supporting *KKN*” – as the district head is a Bugis – so that he does not have the guts to stop further deterioration and exploitation of the site. To counter the accusation from the Tidungs, the local bureaucrats argue “such practices have been taking place long before they were installed as decision makers”. In other words, infiltration and occupation of Pulau Sebatik had nothing much to do with local government policy, but in local officials’ opinion, it derived mainly from migrants who are pioneering opening up of the area.

The gradual loss of their main means of subsistence could be taken as a ground for creating social unrest by the Tidungs if in the long run, migrants keep on taking over fertile land and other living resources. Foundation for social unrest is not only because of the loss of sites where people could subsist, but more importantly, the Tidungs claim that Nunukan is falling into the hands of ‘internal colonizers’, and that

¹ Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme (KKN) or Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism.

these sites are a major part of their (ethnic) identity and entity. Arguments of change in the use of environment and its abuse are identical with policy of marginalization of the local people. The marginalization of local people and further destruction of environment could create “ethnic rebellions” (Markakis, 1991). Markakis’s views seem far from any possibility for ethnic conflicts in Nunukan, but his thoughts of “marginalization” and its consequence in this study should be taken into consideration as well.

At regency level, development strategy that has been drafted and ratified by the Regional People’s Consultative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah/ DPRD*) seems to benefit non-Tidung people. Here, it is not intended to undermine those policies or defend the local government, but to open competition to get more projects done in Nunukan such as: infrastructure, bridges, roads, offices and others. Only big companies or skilled business groups could win these bids. Complaints from the Tidungs show that they are not in a position to compete with outsiders even in road and building constructions, therefore all jobs are handled by the companies and workers from Balikpapan and Samarinda. In the broader sense, access to the decision-makers is more open to outsiders than to the locals with their low skill levels, lack of capital and limited bargaining position. Consequently, it seems that economic development so far is controlled by a particular group close to the bureaucrats.

Jealousy among the Tidungs described in the following quotation, is linked with educational opportunity. “If government does not prioritize us to have jobs with more financial support, in the coming years, it is quite difficult for us to have educated Tidungs”. What does it mean in local context? As a ‘majority group’ in their own land, yet lacking opportunities, there is no serious attempt from the local government and institutions involved to help the Tidung children to a better education outside of Nunukan. Subsequently this will leave them behind compared with migrants’ children. Thus in Nunukan, official scheme for allocating works, education and opportunity are classified as “protective discrimination”. But without political will to seek for a breakthrough, hope for the future will fade for the Tidungs who reside with ‘the others’ and they will continue to face uncertainty.

Some examples can be drawn from what has occurred in Irian Jaya, Aceh, Kalimantan and Riau over the last 5 years that point to social and economic unrest (real or imaginary as Eriksen applied it). Ethnic conflicts in Sambas, West Kalimantan (Soewarsono, 2000:62-87) and Sampit, Kuala Kapuas and Pangkalan Bun (Central Kalimantan) basically rooted in the overwhelming control of land and forest by the outsiders, forest concession holders, transmigration programs, oil palm plantations, mining exploration, etc. Knowing themselves as “original residents” in the areas with long history of self-sufficiency and sovereignty, the arrival of “the others” is really a big threat for rights, subsistence, identity and entity of the Tidungs. Ethnic conflict emerged in Riau and Bagansiapiapi, Batam (2000, 2001), Bengkulu (2001) and in Perawang (2002) triggered by struggles to get jobs, local Melayus protests against the companies, negative reaction against central government on regional autonomy policies,

gambling, and lastly, a simple case of fighting between two young men from different ethnic backgrounds (Minangkabau and Melayu). The latter case was blown out of proportion as a means of using ethnic sentiment for starting the mass riot.

Conflict that is still taking place in Maluku erupted in January 1999 previously happened between a taxi driver and a passenger, but has since been engineered as a religious dispute between Muslims and Christians. From the above explanation on ethnic conflict we can discern that ethnic conflict that occurs frequently in Indonesia mainly generated by: cultural incompatibility, different perceptions among others, fighting to control natural resources, etc. Concerning the introduction of regional autonomy (Hidayat-Firdausy, 2002), various conflicts, either religious or ethnic, seem to be increased. One major element ignites conflict between ethnic groups is the phenomenon of "ethnic resurgence". Ethnic awareness about who they are among distinctive "others" emerges in Asian Pacific regions such as Australia and Papua New Guinea. The impact of this resurgence has coincided with the struggle for reformation in social and political realms that has been occurring in Indonesia since 1998. Main issue in ethnic demands is to give them back their rights seized by the whites (the glory of the past). These demands for restoration of rights are more strongly expressed and felt in those instances where the existence and rights of the adat law community have been marginalized by various actions of the Indonesian Government against its own citizens.

Relying on local resources, Nunukan government attempts to exploit forest, mining and other resources in its territory. Depending still on 'General Budget Allocation' or *Dana Alokasi Umum/DAU* from central government, Nunukan government tries to apply their fixed revenue to develop this regency. On one side, as a new district, struggling to meet all demands it is hampered by two major handicaps: human resources to exploit natural resources and the limitation of financial resources for upholding various development plans. One 'policy' to be accepted is to allow the incoming people from other places to live and work there, as they are not coming and putting burden to the Nunukan people, but also creating jobs in trading, construction, transportation and agricultural sectors.

The existence of the Bugis for example, besides creating jobs also stimulates "ethnic sentiment" from the Tidungs. Hidden unrest and enmity toward "the others" could be seen in this phrase "*Kalau binatang buruan sudah tidak ada, manusialah yang kami buru. Kalau tidak ada lagi pohon yang kami tebas, manusialah yang kami tebas*" (literally translated means, if there is no animal for hunting, human being will be the victim. When we do not have forest to stay alive, man will be slaughtered). From various discussions with the Tidungs, most of the informants clearly expressed their resentment. Resentment that refers to "the others" who control all resources (such as buying and selling land, building lavish houses in poor vicinities, etc) is mounting. Clearly, process of marginalization (as some informants pointed out) has been happening in the last five years. They showed a clear example of land use within and outside of Nunukan that belongs to South Sulawesi residents that is used for shops and business activities.

The question they posed was: if everybody from outside could buy whatever they wanted to possess here without any intervention by government, what should the locals do in the face of such massive pressure from “strangers in our land”? Some reminded me of the recent conflicts in Palangkaraya and Sambas, that resulted from “seizing the Dayaks possessions in front of our eyes, and the government is actually behind this action”. If it is so then development that aims to create social justice and improve the welfare of the people is at a crossroad in a broader context, conflict, hostility or violence has to be understood as a logical consequence of social, economic and political circumstances and calculation by people in power (Tambiah 1996:30).

CLOSING REMARKS

Majority of population in Nunukan are the Tidungs or the Tidongs. Some local peoples argue that the Tidungs are an ethnic group as the Kayans, the Benuahs and other ‘original’ groups living in Kalimantan. Presumably, others consider that Tidungs previously derived from the Dayaks but because their descendants converted to Islam (see Tirtosudarmo 2000:126—127), this has resulted in the alteration of their name to Tidung (see Djuweng 1996:6-7, 26—27). Experts from Summer Institute of Linguistics / SIL consistently underline in its linguistic findings on Kalimantan that Tidung/Tidong is really an ethnic group like other Dayak groups.

As an ethnic group who is living far away from the center (Jakarta), Nunukan has suffered from relative neglect from provincial and central governments in their development plans. Local bureaucrats in Samarinda argued that far distance between Samarinda to interior Kalimantan combined with lack of transportation should be considered as a main handicap in developing areas such as Nunukan. This is understandable, but what is not is the acceptance of the general development paradigm introduced during Soeharto’s era; where top-down policy was so popular, resulting in the neglect of ‘voice of the losers’ – ethnic minorities like the Tidung people. Bottom up approaches that are maybe more difficult to implement and are more appropriate to the aspirations of those at grassroots have been put aside.

Soeharto’s regime maintained a centralistic policy in which Jakarta determined policies and regions complied fully. Centralistic policy, authoritarian rule and suppression during 32 years did not empower people, rather it paralyzed them and created an internal colonialism within the society. Soeharto was able to establish a notion of total dependence on Jakarta by the regions. This political behavior resulted in the weakness of regions’ creativity, today, where the culture of dependency under the New Order still affects local governments in the regional autonomy era. Soeharto focused mainly on economic growth and a strategy to improve standard of living of many Indonesians through Five Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun*). But we have to acknowledge that the adat law community (*masyarakat hukum adat*) like the Tidungs are still living below the poverty line, despite having natural resources with the potential to be exploited (Wignjosoebroto 1998:56—58).

Avoiding recognizing the existence and rights of adat law community in Kalimantan generally and among the Tidungs in particular will encourage a new and long drawn out crisis. Even though Basic Agrarian Law No. 5 of 1960 officially acknowledged the existence and rights of the adat law community (indigenous or traditional community), when Soeharto came to power in 1965, he essentially started to alter the Law, so that the rights of ethnic groups were put under tight control (see also Law No. 5 of 1979 about 'Village Government'). This policy enabled the New Order to take over forest, land and other resources in the land occupied by the indigenous people or adat law community. Under Soeharto who used military as his 'arms' for oppression, ethnic groups lost their courage to ask for their rights. Changes in political style have started to unfold in Indonesia since Soeharto's fall and the rise of reform movements. Ethnic resurgence happens everywhere around the country with demands for restoration of land, a share in revenues collected from oil, gas, forest products and mining, remind provincial and central governments that time has come for them to reorient development plans and strategies.

Clearly, lack of good preparation before the establishment of regional autonomy the beginning of January 2001, created tensions between district and provincial levels, regions versus central government. Ethnic conflict as frequently happens in Kalimantan and other parts of Indonesia has its correspondence with the New Order development policies. Current conditions in Nunukan – where people from other provinces are staying without jobs, fertile land such as Sebatik under exploitation by South Sulawesi migrants, the acceptance of thousands of illegal workers from Malaysia currently living jobless in Nunukan, and predictably, more people coming to Nunukan in the long term, combined with mounting internal problems in border areas – is likely to cause either ethnic or religious conflicts if these contentious problems remain unsolved.

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