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RESUME AND RECOMMENDATION OF ICoNS 2016

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

ABOUT UNIVERSITAS INDONESIA
TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUSANTARA STUDIES

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Abstract

Nusantara is a concept referring to the pioneer of Indonesian establishment that offers a historical romance of tribes’ long journey in search of identity. Nusantara itself refers to the concept of diversity and the wealth which becomes the characteristic of people living in the Republic of Indonesia. In the development of Nusantara study all this time, the exposure of Nusantara study results in the world are still dominated by Indonesianists. On the other hand, some studies in Indonesia concerning the culture have been developed into regionally based study programs. This issue becomes the writer’s concern to describe the historiography of Nusantara study in a comprehensive and holistic way. The latest trend of Nusantara study is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study on a phenomenon occurring in Indonesia and being assumed as a global phenomenon. Ultimately, the study of Nusantara needs to be strengthened in this country because Indonesia is appropriate to host such study.

Keywords: historiography, Indonesia, Indonesianist, Nusantara.

Introduction

Nusantara and Indonesia are essentially the same but different. Diachronically, Nusantara is a concept referring to the pioneer of Indonesia that offers a historical romance of ethnic groups’ long journey in a region called Indonesia. As for Indonesia, it refers to the unity of region which has officially and historically become independent as a nation since August 17th 1945. On the other hand, synchronically, Nusantara refers to the concept of diversity and wealth, which becomes the characteristic of people living in the Republic of Indonesia.

For the academic field, Nusantara offers an incalculable opportunity for scientists to investigate the diversity in that republic. Nusantara offers an interaction between ethnic groups living on the islands (nusa ‘island’; antara ‘between’), even the allied ethnic groups living outside the territory of Indonesia, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei now, that even in the past was inseparable from Nusantara. Nusantara is a liquid (fluid) concept. Therefore, in this article revealing an overview of the development of this Nusantara Studies, the word Nusantara is used.

The Historiography of Nusantara Studies

The development of Nusantara Studies in the Netherlands certainly ranks first in the history of the development of Nusantara Studies. The culture of ethnic groups in Indonesia, at
that time it was referred to as the Dutch East Indies, got a lot of attention from the European since the 16th century. Along with the Dutch colonialism in the Dutch East Indies, the studies about the ethnic groups’ culture in the Dutch East Indies were more vigorously pursued by the Netherlands, particularly from the academicians such as at Universiteit Leiden.

Nusantara Studies in Netherland started with the field of language, ethnography, and law, particularly those were held at the university level. The study and teaching of Nusantara in these three areas were triggered by the pragmatic needs of colonial officials who controlled Nusantara. In the beginning, trainings by using sources of knowledge about Nusantara which were more easily found in the Netherlands were given in Delft in 1843, which were later moved to Leiden in 1864. Furthermore, in the period of 1864 to 1920, lectures about Indonesia, focusing on the fields of language, law, and ethnography of Indonesia, were held in Leiden, until in 1921 it was moved to Utrecht with a reason to provide refreshment and improve the academic performance. Thus, there arose a number of good influential Indonesianists both in the Netherlands and Indonesia who were nurtured by Leiden and Utrecht, such as C. van Vollenhoven, C.C. Berg, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, and J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong.

Threats towards the development of Nusantara Studies, particularly in Leiden, continued to occur. Starting from the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, the threats concretely could be felt. The fund expenditure to Indonesian Studies was more aimed for strengthening the expertise through the study and research at the graduate program, but did not strengthen the undergraduate courses. As a result, the interest of young people to learn Indonesia declined. If any students were interested in studying Indonesian Studies Program, they were drawn into the classical disciplines that were less desirable. This was certainly a harsh criticism for Leiden. In addition, the Dutch government program to improve the network of library services threatened the "conventional" libraries. At the end of 2011, KITLV and KIT, as the birthplaces of the Nusantara expertises, felt the effects caused by the subsidy cutting and transferring programs of physical library to e-library, ranging from reducing the literature reception until annihilating reading rooms in KITLV library.

Related to KITLV, there was a book from Vladimir I. Braginsky and Elena M. Diakonova (1999) published by KITLV discussing about the image of Nusantara in the works of Russian writers. The book contains admiration for the Russian people towards Nusantara which can be traced through the themes of literary works written by Russian writers. The themes about Nusantara are found in various works of Russian literature in the 19th century. E.E. Ukhtomsky, Konstantin Balmont, and A. Ballier are some writers whose works are presented in this book. They made a poem containing admiration for Indonesia's natural wealth, such as gamelan, the grandeur of Borobudur, and Wayang shows.

In Russia, Nusantara Studies was developing, despite the ups and downs of relationship between Russia and Indonesia occurred during the Old Order and New Order. At Moscow State University, there was Oriental Studies that has been active since the 1750s. In Oriental Studies, there is Institute of Asian and African Studies and an Indonesianists teaching there is Ludmila N. Demidyuk. Recently, Ludmila and Alexandr K. Ogloblin launched Russian-Indonesian Dictionary (the authors consisting of four people, the two have already dead, namely Igor I. Kasmadzhe and Vladimir N. Losyagin; Editor Jenny N. M.T. Hardjatno). Alexandr K. Ogloblin is actively teaching at Faculty of Orientalism, Saint-
Petersburg State University. His study of the Javanese language is referred to by many researchers.

France and Italy also become important places for the development of Nusantara Studies. France needs to be highlighted here as it has a “typical” view about the development of Indonesian studies. France’s interest towards Indonesia has been shown in the 15th and 16th century, such as taking a sailing trip to Nusantara in 1529, publishing the first map of Nusantara in 1540, and publishing Malay-France vocabulary book in 1604. France still found that Indonesia was attractive even though France lost to compete with the Dutch in the East Indies. At the beginning of the 19th century, the knowledge of Nusantara was gained by France from Indonesian studies books from the Dutch and Portuguese. In its development, Nusantara Studies is mostly done by the research institutions rather than universities. Five institutions were noted as actively studying Nusantara, which are Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, or EFEO (Far Eastern French School); Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Institute of Political Studies); Musée Guimet (Museum for Asiatic Archaeology); Ethno-Botanical Department at the National Museum of d'Histoire Naturelle (National Museum for Natural History); and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique or CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research). In addition, there was an academic institution named Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS / School of Higher Social Studies), who actively trained the research field of Nusantara Studies on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scales, and Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), which held Nusantara language and culture teaching.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the continent, after the Second World War, the Cold War opened up new opportunities for the area studies, including "herding" the development of Indonesian Studies to another country. The centralization of two parties “led” by the two superpowers, the United States and Russia, developed the area studies, the study was initially believed to be able to map the conflict between nations as a result of the Cold War and later was developed to map the conflict between regions. The interplay occurred. The Cold War led to the emergence of the United States’ needs to look for tactical views not only through the political science which had been a power of the United States to spread its influence, but also from the viewpoint of other disciplines. University is the right place to study regional conflicts. As the largest and most influential country in Southeast Asia, Indonesia attracted the United States so that Nusantara Studies became the major study that was assigned in the departments of Southeast Asia established in the United States universities under the name of Indonesian Studies. Cornell University in the United States became a reference for Indonesianists, which then developed Nusantara research and teaching which was different in traditions from the Netherlands. Thus, Area Studies was developed to bring Nusantara Studies into a new tradition, which was an interdisciplinary study. Nusantara Studies covered themes about the characteristics of Nusantara which were placed in interdisciplinary studies involving disciplines of language, literature, culture, history, and politics, as practiced by Benedict Anderson.

The United States is included in come later country, yet fast, develops Nusantara Studies, gives a “new” colour to Nusantara Studies other than "Dutch". The development of Nusantara Studies in the United States is divided into five periods, which are (1) the classic Indology, (2) the post-World War; (3) New Order; (4) the changes in generations
(generational change); and (5) the contemporary transition (Pepinsky, 2014). This periods actually show the development of Nusantara Studies in general worldwide. The Indology topics based on the research in the field of language and anthropology, as seen in titles such as "Bark Cloth in Indonesia" (1934), Ethnology of the Greater Sunda Islands (1935), and Islands and Peoples of the Indies (1943) by Richard Kennedy, who later laid the foundation of Indonesian Studies at Yale University, USA, in the 1940s, followed by the establishment of Southeast Asia Study Program (Council on Southeast Asian studies) at the university in 1947.

The Post-World War period, marked by the Cold War that triggered the development of Area Studies, was the booming period of Nusantara Studies in the United States. Cornell University’s role should be highlighted in advancing Nusantara Studies in the United States during this period, also under the banner of Indonesian Studies. Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP), which was held in 1956, was an attempt to develop a knowledge ground about Indonesia and shape Nusantara Studies program into more modern instead of examining the classical themes. Concrete efforts made to give postgraduate scholarships and courses at universities in the United States for those Indonesian Studies enthusiasts from Indonesia, translated important works about Indonesia, and published monographs, books, and journals. So, a massive number of Nusantara Studies enthusiasts in the world went to the United States, with no exception, from the Faculty of Humanities of Universitas Indonesia, pursued graduate studies in the United States. Books and monographs, works of Indonesia graduate research results were also published as a monograph of The Chinese of Sukabumi: a study of social and cultural accommodation by Mely G. Tan (1963) and the book of Social Changes in Yogyakarta by Sumardjan Selo (1962) which was his research dissertation at Cornell University. Journal of Indonesia was established in 1966 by the pioneers of Nusantara Studies at Cornell University, who were George Kahin, Ruth McVey, and Benedict Anderson.

Furthermore, the development of Nusantara Studies abroad is shifted to Asia and the Asia Pacific region, mainly to Australia, Singapore, Japan, and Korea. This is what is referred to as the transitional period of (generational change) developer generation of Nusantara Studies.

For Australia, Indonesia is a country with cultural, geographic, social, and political diversities; Australia’s closest and largest neighbour; major trading partner and an important member of ASEAN; countries with mature democracy; the country is forecasted to be the seventh largest country in the world (Lacey, 2009); the country with the largest Muslim population and Christians larger than Australia; An important partner of Australia from the Asia Pacific region in managing strategic issues in the areas of security, population mobility, public health, transnational crime, and environment preservation; as well as the main tourist destination of Australians. Nusantara Studies’ condition in Australia was up and down, seen from the periods of Indonesian Studies development in Australia, which was the initial period (1955 to 1970), characterized by the active research about political and strategic views of Indonesia in respect of communism; the stagnation period (1970-1985), which was the decline of Nusantara Studies in Australia as a result of the economic recession in Australia; a period of increased Nusantara research activities (1985-2002), characterized by its active assessment in the areas of economic, political, strategic thinking, and Indonesian
the second decline of Indonesian Studies (2000-current), which on one hand was to popularize the study of terrorism as a result of terrorism acts directed at the United States and Australia, but, on the other hand, triggered a fall of Australian interest to study Nusantara.

Meanwhile, in Japan, there are 26 institutions, most of them are colleges, which organize Indonesia Study Program, including the institutions or research centres of Indonesian Studies. The first layer developers are generally come from the alumnus of Indonesian prestigious study centres in the Netherlands, such as Koji Miyazaki and Mikihiro Moriyama; United States, such as Takashi Shiraishi; and Australia, such as Toru Aoyama. Others, particularly the younger generation, were taught at universities in Japan and a handful was in Indonesia. Japan also has prepared second layer Indonesianists who are currently capable in the international arena, such as Asako Shiohara, Masashi Furihata, Kyoko Funada, and Hisanori Kato.

In Singapore, Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS), founded in 1968, becomes a leader in the production of the idea of Nusantara. Indonesian Studies Program at ISEAS promotes the study of Nusantara through conferences, workshops, seminars, and print-based publications and the Internet, which provides input for the government, business communities, academicians, and international organizations on the latest development of Indonesia. Meanwhile, National University of Singapore (NUS), in addition to offering modules of Indonesian language learning in Centre for Language Studies, established Indonesia Study Group as a place to discuss what trend is happening in Nusantara, including working with ISEAS as the main network.

Thus, it has become a fact that many research institutions and universities develop Nusantara Studies outside Indonesia. No less than forty countries around the world currently have Nusantara Studies Program, mostly found in colleges. Indonesian Studies has evolved from the former basic research into an applied study as the current trend; from a deep and contextual study to be a comprehensive and inclusive study; from a monodisciplinary approach into Region Studies, until now becomes a discipline based approach, but does not abandon the interdisciplinary nature; from covering humanity topics up to be contemporary; and from aiming just for the sake of Indonesia to be a laboratory for global problems.

**Nusantara Studies Expose**

In the development of Nusantara Studies, the exposure of Nusantara Studies’ results in the world is still dominated by Indonesianists. The Indonesianists actively engaged in Indonesia study centres are generally at the university level. Thoughts launched about Nusantara depart from their point of view respectively. Meanwhile, many Indonesianists on the first layer have aged so that the new generation should be nurtured. Take an example from Benedict Anderson (USA), John Ulrich Wolff (United States), Max Lane (Australia), Wim Stokhof (Netherlands), Ben Arps (Netherlands), George Quinn (Australia), Takashi Shiraishi (Japan), James Fox (Australia), Alexandr Ogloblin (Russia), and Stephen James Oppenheimer (English).

On the other hand, Indonesian Studies concerning culture has been developed in the regionally based courses. Surely this is correlated with the perspective of Indonesia or Indonesian interests in it, so this will further strengthen Nusantara Studies. Thus, the
important thing to be held is echoing the perspective of Nusantara in Nusantara Studies in their own country for Indonesian own interests and global interests through some efforts as follows.

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