

Probing the effectiveness of 'Operasi Yustisi'

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Being a lecturer at the University of Indonesia and a holder of a Ph.D. from a prominent Japanese university, plus always being a good citizen, I had never imagined that one day I would have to face some kind of *operasi yustisi*, the name for measures adopted by Jakarta's government to control the in-flow of newcomers into the city.

Last year, on a very early December morning, I was walking briskly in a busy train station of a big city, trying to catch public transportation, in order not to be late to give a lecture as a guest speaker in a private university. I had just gotten off the train when three tall men stopped me.

Two of them were in street clothes, while the other one was wearing a police uniform. They asked me to show them my resident ID card.

I was reluctant to show them this because at the time I still believed that the country respected an individual's privacy, including the right not to be exposed. I demanded they give me a good reason for the right to ask for my KTP.

After arguing for several minutes while I stressed my

rights for privacy and they stressed their rights to ask any person to show them their ID card, my only choice was to show them my card.

The above experience with *operasi yustisi* did not happen in Jakarta. It was in Tokyo during my 10-month stay as an academic research fellow in Japan.

Many illegal workers in Japan are doing work that cannot or will not be done by the country's people. As a foreigner, one faces institutionalized barriers when entering the society. And being a member of the globalizing world, the never-ending flow of people, goods and money is also one characteristic of this globalization. But now it is accompanied with this barrier to flow.

Naoki Yoshihara, an urban sociologist in Japan, also found a similar situation, where in this globalizing world, people are showing a tendency to exclude others who are different. During more than seven years of field research in Bali, Yoshihara saw an increasingly deepening of Balinese identity among native Balinese through their efforts of *Ajeng Bali* — a move to awaken consciousness among themselves to remem-

ber again their best qualities.

This move cannot be separated from the fact that there has been an increasing number of workers from other islands — mainly in the working sectors where young Balinese have been losing interest, such as farming, cloth printing, the making of souvenirs or other blue-collar jobs.

In addition, as a result of the Bali bombings, the number of foreigners visiting Bali has been significantly reduced. Combined with the *Ajeng Bali* movement, Yoshihara has found that it is becoming more difficult for people from other islands to receive a permanent-stay permit, which is indispensable for those who want to make their living in Bali.

What is happening in an industrially advanced country such as Japan, or in a tourism-based economy of an exotic island such as Bali, can also be witnessed in Indonesia's biggest city — Jakarta.

In today's world, work itself is almost natural. You cannot live without working, and you have to work in order to live. Yet for the people who want to settle in Jakarta, it sounds contradictory. They want to come to Jakarta to find work in order to live

and not just they themselves but also family members — but to stay in Jakarta they have to be able to produce proof that they have jobs in the city. In the end, they simply cannot be in the city.

Looking at *operasi yustisi*, the proponents argue that it is a must to protect the city from those who will become problems for the society, while the opponents bring out the issue of human rights. Very few of us realize that it is also a form of exclusion due to a globalizing world.

This institutionalized form of exclusion occurs not only at the level of a city, but also at the level of an area (such as in the case of Bali), or even at the level of a nation.

In the case of Jakarta, any form of *operasi yustisi*, without any other simultaneous measures from other areas supported by more comprehensive policies from the government, will result in simple exclusion, which in the end only increases the number of the city's undocumented residents.

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