

Identity Politics and the Delegitimization of Local Culture: A Case Study of FPI's Satire Against Dedi Mulyadi in the Context of Sunda Wiwitan

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to discuss the dynamics of identity politics and the practice of delegitimizing local culture through a case study of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) satirizing Dedi Mulyadi in the context of his defense of Sundanese culture, especially Sunda Wiwitan. This satire and criticism addressed to the FPI reflect differences of opinion on religious views and the fact that strengthening specific religious identities sometimes comes at the expense of local cultural diversity. This research also uses a qualitative approach by conducting a critical discourse analysis of various existing sources, including media coverage, character statements, and public documentation. The final results of this study show that the insinuation of Dedi Mulyadi, which is part of the identity politics strategy plan, seeks to negate local cultural values that are not by the majority's religious interpretation. In this context, Sunda Wiwitan is positioned as "the other," making it vulnerable to Delegitimization. The research of this study shows that the space for dialogue is significant, especially about religious identity and local cultural expressions as a foundation in a multicultural society in Indonesia.

Keywords: Identity politics, Delegitimization of Local Culture, Sunda Wiwitan, Dedi Mulyadi, Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Cultural Pluralism.

INTRODUCTION

Lately, we often hear the term identity politics, which society discusses in the real world and on social media—especially in the run-up to elections. Identity politics occurs when a specific identity, such as religion, ethnicity, or culture, is used to gain sympathy and support. It is also often used to attack other parties who are considered different.

This phenomenon is felt in the run-up to local elections, where religious or cultural issues are often used as sharp political weapons. Unfortunately, this strategy often sacrifices the values of diversity and tolerance, which should be maintained in a pluralistic society like Indonesia.

Identity politics can create social tension, damage brotherhood, and narrow the living space for local cultures that differ from the mainstream. One real example is the case of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)'s sharp criticism and satire of Dedi Mulyadi, the former Regent of Purwakarta who is known as a figure who defends and preserves Sundanese culture, including the Sunda Wiwitan traditional community.

During his leadership, Dedi Mulyadi actively revived local values through various cultural symbols, such as wayang statues, the greeting "Sampurasun," and his support for the Sunda Wiwitan community, which still maintains ancestral traditions. However, these efforts often met resistance from groups that considered these cultural symbols to conflict with religious teachings. One of them was the FPI, which openly criticized and rejected these cultural steps because they were considered to revive practices that were considered shirk.

This situation shows that identity politics can lead to efforts to delegitimize local culture, namely doubting or even rejecting the legitimacy of a culture simply because it differs from the dominant understanding. Indonesia was built on the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which should protect all cultural expressions and beliefs, including traditional traditions that existed long before the country was founded.

Therefore, we need to understand how identity politics works in the local context, mainly when religion is used to intervene in culture. This case is about Dedi Mulyadi versus FPI and reflects the narrative battle between preserving ancestral heritage and the dominant ideology that wants to standardize diversity.

Apart from the examples of cases mentioned above, we need to understand that identity politics does not only occur in large contexts such as national elections but can also grow at the provincial, city, and even everyday community levels. For example, identity politics can emerge in each region's citizen forums, social media, and policies. It can also infiltrate through language, symbols, or formal rules that ignore diversity. This topic is very relevant, especially for the younger generation who will live and contribute to a pluralistic society.

It is undeniable that provincial leaders like Dedi Mulyadi, who try to bring local culture into the public space, often face tremendous pressure from groups who feel that a specific identity—usually the identity of the majority religion—must be the basis for everything. In fact, in the context of Indonesia, which is rich in culture, we cannot force uniformity. These differences are born a wealth of values, traditions, and perspectives on life that complement each other.

As a society, we cannot ignore that a single narrative of "truth" can crowd out many cultural expressions. Therefore, this research is crucial to exploring how the practice of identity politics can profoundly impact local communities and how we can manage diversity to remain equitable and inclusive.

The Relevance of the FPI and Dedi Mulyadi Cases in the Context of the Relationship between Religion and Local Culture

This case is fascinating because it touches on a sensitive but important issue: the relationship between religion and culture in public life. In the context of Sundanese society, culture is not just a legacy of the past but also a part of identity and self-identity. When a leader like Dedi Mulyadi tries to revive local values, he is building an alternative narrative that positions culture as a positive force in development. However, this narrative clashes with groups who believe that local culture must first be "filtered" through the lens of religion. In this case, the FPI represents the view that only cultures that conform to their religious interpretations are worthy of preservation. As a result, cultures such as Sunda Wiwitan—which has its belief system—are often marginalized, even openly attacked.

This tension shows that cultural identity can be a victim when democratic space is not strong enough to protect the rights of indigenous communities. It also shows that religion—which should be a guide to life—is sometimes used as a political tool to maintain symbolic power.

On the other hand, this case is also very relevant because it shows how symbolic power works subtly but very powerfully. When the FPI Chairman rejected Sundanese cultural symbols such as "Sampurasun" or wayang statues, they tried to change the public's perception of cultural values. What was previously considered normal or even something to

be proud of could suddenly be seen as something wrong or deviant just because it was associated with a particular religious interpretation.

This can also be dangerous if we, as a society, do not respond to it with an open mind. Why is that? Because we can form stigmas and discrimination against different groups—especially against art and cultural activists, Indigenous groups, and existing cultural minorities. If there is no equal dialogue space, it will be easy to assume that only one version of culture and belief has the right to exist. In addition, we can also see how society is divided: some support the preservation of local culture, and some reject it on ideological grounds. This kind of tension is certainly not healthy if allowed to continue. Therefore, cases like Dedi Mulyadi and FPI are reflections of the importance of a democratic space that can reasonably protect cultural and religious diversity without dominating or eliminating each other.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the description above, this study was designed to answer several important questions, namely:

1. How are identity politics practices exploited to delegitimize local culture in Purwakarta?
2. What kind of discourse did the FPI construct to criticize or reject Dedi Mulyadi's cultural policies, especially when he was running for governor?
3. What are the impacts of this conflict on the existence of the Sunda Wiwitan indigenous community, and how does it affect relations between community groups?
4. What is the position of the state and society in responding to the tension between religion and culture in the context of local democracy?
5. What are the symbolic forms of local culture that have received much rejection or reduced meaning due to the intervention of identity politics?
6. How can the media (both mass media and social media) play a role in spreading or forming an opinion about the conflict between local cultures and specific religious interpretations?

7. To what extent is the role of the younger generation in efforts to maintain local culture amidst the pressures of identity politics?

The objectives of this research are:

1. Critically examines how identity politics can influence the relationship between religion and culture.
2. Analyzing the discourse strategies used by certain groups in delegitimizing local culture.
3. Provides a deeper understanding of how socio-political dynamics can emerge from this conflict.
4. Making a meaningful contribution to the discourse on protecting local culture amidst the pressure of dominant ideology.
5. Encourage cross-cultural understanding among the community, especially the younger generation, so they know that diversity is an asset, not a threat.
6. Identifying policy gaps or regulatory weaknesses that can make indigenous communities vulnerable to ideological pressure.
7. Formulate recommendations for local governments to be more responsive to diversity issues, especially those related to local culture and beliefs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Identity Politics

According to Manuel Castells (2010), identity politics is a process in which social identities are formed and mobilized in the context of power to achieve specific goals, both individually and collectively. The identities can be based on ethnicity, religion, or culture.

Meanwhile, Stuart Hall (1996) emphasized that identity is not fixed but a social construction formed by discourse and power relations. In the Indonesian context, identity politics is often mobilized in public and political spaces to highlight the dominance of the majority group over the minority, including in religious issues.

From the experts' opinions above, we can conclude that identity politics is a social and political process in which identity is formed, constructed, and mobilized in a

power relationship to achieve specific desired goals. The identity itself is dynamic, not fixed.

Identity politics is an approach in which individuals or specific groups establish political alliances based on social identities such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, or even culture. This politics greatly emphasizes the experiences, needs, and rights of groups marginalized or ignored by the dominant power.

Characteristics of Identity Politics

- a. based on collective identity: certain groups have the same experiences and similarities in a specific identity, so they want to be the saviors of that identity.
- b. Emancipatory goals: Certain groups and individuals also seek recognition in society, justice, and equality for the group.
- c. Criticism of dominant systems: for example, patriarchy in government and family, colonialism in certain countries or regions, racism in race, religion, and culture, or even capitalism, all of which are considered to be very oppressive and discriminatory towards specific groups and individuals.

Examples of Identity Politics

- a. The feminist movement highlights the female gender, which often feels inequality between men and women. Women demand the same rights as men.
- b. Civil rights movement in the US: This right is commonly heard with the term #blacklivematter, where black people are very oppressed by the white race
- c. LGBTQ movement: This movement is very encouraging of sexual identity in normal people; this movement is a movement of homosexuals.
- d. Religious or ethnic movements: Such as the rise of ethnic or religious nationalism in a local political context.

Pros and cons

Pro

- a. can help give victims and certain groups a voice so the wider community hears their voices.
- b. It can help correct structural injustice in society.

- c. It can strengthen solidarity and loyalty within the community to have closer relationships.

Counter

- a. can divide society that does not agree with specific groups or individuals, or social fragmentation
- b. can be used to manipulate politics, such as using groups in campaigns
- c. Risky of ignoring issues of a universal or class nature.
- d. Identity politics can be an essential tool of war in fighting for social justice. However, if not accompanied by dialogue and inclusivity, it can also cause polarization. A balanced understanding is important so that identity is not used as an exclusive tool or justification for discrimination against other groups.

2. Delegitimization of Local Culture

Edward Said (1978) explains that cultural Delegitimization refers to the process by which a local cultural or belief system is positioned as illegitimate, inferior, or contrary to dominant norms. The idea of *orientalism* explains how the hegemonic narratives of the dominant group often discredit local cultures.

According to Clifford Geertz (1973), in this context, local cultures such as Sunda Wiwitan are delegitimized because they are considered inconsistent with the majority religious interpretation. In a pluralistic society, local religions and cultures must be understood in a specific local context, not forcibly standardized.

Cultural Delegitimization can occur because dominant forces, through hegemonic narratives, give local belief cultures an unfair position. In a pluralistic society, it is essential to appreciate and understand cultural diversity contextually, not to standardize it by force.

Delegitimization of local culture is a process in which local culture, including traditional beliefs, practices, symbols, or identities, is considered invalid, wrong, deviant, or irrelevant by a dominant power, usually the state, majority religion, or a group with a particular ideology that corners it. Delegitimization can occur directly (through prohibition, political pressure) or indirectly (through stigma, stereotypes, or neglect in the media and policies).

Characteristics of Delegitimization of Local Culture

- a. Stigma attachment: Local culture is often labeled as polytheistic, old-fashioned, and not in line with public views.
- b. Removed from public spaces: Locally, local cultural symbols and practices are removed from all state facilities, such as schools and social media.
- c. Negated through hegemonic discourse: The dominance of certain narratives (e.g., religious narratives or narrow nationalism) marginalizes local cultures.
- d. Marginalization of Indigenous communities: Communities that practice these cultures are pushed to the margins socially and legally.
- e. There is an element of power: This process is often carried out by parties with a dominant position (state, mass organizations, religious majority, etc.).

Examples of Delegitimization of Local Culture

- a. Javanese Kejawen: often criticized for being "un-Islamic" even though it has existed for hundreds of years as a local spiritual expression.
- b. Papuan local culture: Their cultures, such as songs, dances, and traditional symbols, are often ignored or not considered in national curriculum education and are often marginalized
- c. sunda witan is a community that is marginalized because it is considered to deviate from a fanatical religious group. Cultural symbols such as Sampurasun or Wayang statues are attacked because they are considered to conflict with Sharia. This is a form of Delegitimization when legitimate cultural expressions are deemed unworthy of existence.

Delegitimization of local culture is a form of oppression of local culture that is often cornered with negative views and also erodes cultural diversity and local identity. This can happen because the power that has power must impose one interpretation for all groups without exception and then eliminate other local cultural expressions that do not match their views. Understanding this process is important to promote cultural justice and respect diversity in a pluralistic society like Indonesia.

3. Religion and Local Culture

Clifford Geertz (1973).—Religion as a Symbolic System Religion is a symbolic system that establishes a strong, comprehensive, and long-lasting mood and motivation in humans. Geertz saw religion as a system of meaning woven into symbols that help humans understand and live life.

Koentjaraningrat – Religion as Part of Cultural Elements Koentjaraningrat, an Indonesian anthropologist, stated that religion is one of the seven elements of universal culture, along with language, technology, art, knowledge systems, kinship, and economics.

Both experts above agree that religion cannot be separated from the context of local culture. In Indonesian society, religion and culture strengthen and unite, but in direct experience, there are often clashes when religious interpretations negate or delegitimize local cultural expressions. Therefore, contextual and historical understanding is fundamental to maintaining diversity.

Local culture and religion have an extended history of interaction, and the two elements cannot be separated just like that. Local culture often contains strong and distinctive religious elements that do not have to be by formal standards in major religions. Religion is also a form of expression of society, so local belief practices such as Sunda Wiwitan cannot be directly deviated but must be seen from the side and other identities and the social integration of the community.

Religion is a system of beliefs and spiritual practices practiced by all societies to regulate human relationships. The creator of religion usually teaches morals, worship, holy books, and rules of life. Culture is the whole way of human life, including values, norms, customs, language, arts, technology, and social systems passed down from generation to generation.

Characteristics of Religion

- a. It has a holy book and teachings written in it as a guide to life
- b. worship and rituals as a form of respect for the creator
- c. regulate ethics and morality in human behavior
- d. A religious community that practices these teachings.

Characteristics of Culture

- a. It is dynamic, and as time goes by, culture develops.
- b. learned from generation to generation and inherited socially, not from biological results
- c. Various forms: language, clothing, food, art, customs.
- d. Reflects the identity of a particular group.
- e. Interact and adapt to the environment and external influences.

The Relationship between Religion and Culture

- a. Religion often grows when discussed in the context of local culture, so each region's religious practices can be different even though the religion is the same.
- b. Culture can provide answers to understanding and practicing religion.
- c. In some cases, local cultures also adopt some elements of religion, and vice versa; religion absorbs cultural elements that society can accept.

Religion and culture cannot be separated because these elements influence and complement each other. Religion also provides good spiritual and moral values, while culture is a container for expressing religious teachings and packaging them according to each local culture. However, not everything runs smoothly. Conflicts can arise if one party is forced and harmed by several cases. Local cultures also take some elements of religion and vice versa. Religion also absorbs cultural elements that can be accepted by society.

4. Discourse and Critical Analysis

According to expert Norman Fairclough (1995), as a central figure in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), discourse reflects social reality and forms and reproduces power. Michel Foucault (1980) also emphasized that power works through physical violence and the production of knowledge and discourse that regulates what is considered legitimate and illegitimate.

Thus, when FPI uses several terms with theological themes, it attacks Sundanese cultural symbols because it builds a dominant discourse and pushes it aside. Discourse is a composition of thoughts, language, symbols, or narratives often

used in a social context to build meaning. Discourse is not just mere words but also reflects how someone thinks, ideologies, and has power in society.

Characteristics of Discourse

- a. Structured: It has a clear language or narrative direction and the direction it wants.
- b. Contextual: depends on the social, cultural, and political situation.
- c. Ideological in nature: has intrinsic values such as norms and beliefs of certain groups.
- d. Influencing perception: training people to think critically about a particular issue.
- e. It can be dominant or counter-dominant. There is a dominant discourse (mainstream) and a discourse that challenges it (resistance).

Example of Discourse

- a. The discourse that modernization is always depicted as leaving behind old culture and replacing it with foreign culture
- b. The idea that women should not pursue higher education because women's duties are only at home, this system was formed because of patriarchy.
- c. Critical analysis is an approach that reveals and evaluates in-depth structures of power, injustice, or hidden meanings behind specific texts, policies, or social practices. In social studies, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is often used to see how language and symbols are used to maintain or resist power.

Characteristics of Critical Analysis

- a. Uncovering power relations focuses on how power can work through certain symbols or languages.
- b. Reflective and evaluative: It must be able to explain and assess.
- c. Involving socio-political context: Analysis must be done within a specific historical and ideological framework.
- d. Revealing hidden meanings: Including bias, manipulation, or oppression that is not immediately apparent.
- e. Promoting social justice: Usually pro-vulnerable or marginalized groups.

Critical Analysis Example

- a. Analyzing how the government pays the media to report on certain Indigenous groups in order to justify state actions
- b. Criticize the term radical, which in the minority view can be a different understanding from the mainstream view

From the discourse and critical analysis, these two elements are essential in social sciences to understand what conflicts are occurring, injustice everywhere, and social problems experienced by society.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach that focuses on a deep understanding of social events in society, especially the dynamics of identity politics and the Delegitimization of local culture. The qualitative method was chosen because this study aims to discover the meaning, narrative, and deep understanding of the studied issues. In addition, the problems raised in this study are related to narratives, meanings, and symbols in socio-political conflicts, so a qualitative approach is more appropriate than a quantitative approach. Critical discourse analysis also allows researchers to understand how language reflects and shapes power and how identity politics operates to negate (delegitimize) local culture. By searching for data from various sources, researchers can see a broader picture from one side and the perspective of the media, figures, and public documents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Identity Politics as a Strategy of Hegemony and Social Influence

One of the main findings of this study is how certain actors use identity politics to maintain symbolic dominance in society. In this case, the FPI uses religious symbols to attack local cultural expressions, especially those championed by Dedi Mulyadi in preserving Sunda Wiwitan values.

According to Manuel Castells (2010), identity politics emerges when a particular group forms a collective identity as a tool for socio-political struggle. This identity is not neutral

but is formed in a power relationship. FPI uses Islamic identity with a particular interpretation as a tool to delegitimize cultural expressions that do not fit their perspective. In other words, identity politics is used as a tool for standardization and social control based on religious symbols.

This is where the narrowing of the meaning of diversity occurs: not only attacking figures like Dedi Mulyadi personally but going further—trying to erase the existence of local cultures that do not fall into the "legitimate" category according to their ideological criteria.

Sundanese Wiwitan

Local Identity Considered "Other" Sunda Wiwitan is a belief system of the Sundanese indigenous people that existed long before the arrival of major religions in Indonesia. This community holds spiritual values rooted in cosmology and ancestral philosophy but is often considered deviant because it does not conform to the formal religion recognized nationally.

FPI calls the practice of Sunda Wiwitan a "shirk" or a form of worship other than God that is contrary to their version of Islam. This shows that local cultural identities are placed in a marginal position. Edward Said (1978) calls this process othering, namely making a group "other" so that it can be discredited, considered irrational, or even inhumane.

In the context of Sunda Wiwitan, Delegitimization occurs not only in the form of rhetoric but also has social impacts: restrictions on religious freedom, difficulty in accessing population documents, and social discrimination at the community level.

International Comparison

Similar patterns of local cultural statements exist when put in a global context. Similar phenomena exist in the cases of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia, Myanmar in the Chinese community, and Rohingya in Uyghur. Despite the different cultural and religious backgrounds, there is a common thread.

Cultural minority groups are often victims of illegalization by dominant powers in the name of political ideology, nationalism, or religion. For example, they have experienced cultural and linguistic erasure through the country's educational and political systems for years. In Myanmar, the Rohingya people are considered "invalid" as citizens because of their religious identity. In the case of Sunda Wiwitan, the "non-sharia" discourse fits the tool to

erase non-dominant local narratives. These cases show that such conflicts are local issues and part of a global debate about cultural justice, minority rights, and power relations.

Attack on Cultural Symbols: Identity in Language

In the Identity Policy Discourse, Cultural Symbols play an important role in the struggle. "Sampurasun" uses traditional clothing by Dedi Mulyadi; the rejection of doll statues expresses the construction and control of language and symbols.

Michel Foucault (1980) stated that power is not always compulsive but also through the formation of knowledge and language. In this case, FPI created a discourse that the Sundang symbol is a form of polytheism, and this discourse spread through lectures and social media for popular mobilization. It is a cultural symbol initially considered Stammerbe but became a political burden. Even ordinary people also see sarcastic cultural expressions that were previously common because they are "controlled" by a discourse that combines symbols and moral dangers.

Role of Media

Neutrality Collapses in an Era of Polarization

In this context, mass media and social media have become a field of contestation of meaning. Research finds that some media help spread exclusive narratives and strengthen identity polarization. While more pluralist media try to provide space for counter-narratives, they are often attacked as not neutral or even "anti-Islamic." Social media has effectively spread content that marginalizes local culture in the digital space. People easily absorb content without verification, and it helps them form opinions that are far from common sense. As a result, there is a sharp social division between those who defend local culture and those who support uniformity in the name of religion. Digital literacy is an important issue because many people do not realize that the narratives they consume are part of a deliberate identity politics strategy.

Country Position

Neutral or Powerless?

One of this study's critical findings is the weak state support for local cultural communities. The state should protect all cultural expressions constitutionally recognized

within the framework of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. However, the state tends to be passive or even submits to pressure from certain groups that carry the agenda of identity politics.

The policies issued tend not to favor minority cultural groups. For example, the Sunda Wiwitan community still experiences difficulties in registering religion on their ID cards, difficulty in building places of worship, and lack of legal protection when they experience persecution. The state should be able to balance religious aspirations and the constitutional rights of citizens. In the context of multicultural democracy, the state should not submit to one interpretation of religion but must ensure a fair living space for all identity groups.

Latest Academic Discussions and Scholarship Participation

This study enriches the growing academic debate on pluralism, colonialism, and discourse theory. In postcolonial studies, the domination of local groups with dominant narratives is a form of colonial power in a new form (internal colonialism). Will Kymlicka's theory (1995) concerns the theory of multicultural citizenship, in which states must not only be neutral but must actively guarantee the cultural rights of citizens? In the Indonesian context, this means legal recognition, symbolic protection, and support for excluding local cultures. Furthermore, this study also critiques the majoritarian form of democracy: a democracy that empowers the majority but ignores the rights of the minority but is ignored, but ignored. An important contribution to this journal is to show how democracy can produce the tyranny of the majority without cultural justice.

The Role of The Younger Generation

Cultural change and integrated agents of democracy

The findings that have been very encouraging in this study are the emergence of youth solidarity and the beginning to recognize the importance of maintaining cultural heritage. There are still many young people trapped in digital polarization, but there are also positive initiatives in the form of artificial communities and cultural studies for social media-based conservation. However, this possibility must be reinforced by an education system that can communicate the value of low-point diversity. Local history curricula, cross-cultural training, and participatory learning approaches are strategies to build youth who recognize the importance of diversity. If the younger generation is not actively involved, the cultural narrative continues to be dominated by the dominant group.

Therefore, this study promotes guidelines to make young people the leading actors in maintaining local culture.

Strategic Recommendations

From the results and discussion above, the author formulates several strategic recommendations:

Regional Cultural Policy Reform

Local governments must create regulations protecting local cultural rights, including administrative and legal recognition of indigenous communities such as Sunda Wiwitan.

Inclusive Multicultural Education

The education curriculum must integrate the values of diversity and local cultural knowledge to form cross-identity understanding among the younger generation.

Strengthening Media Literacy and Alternative Narratives

Cultural communities and academics must engage in digital content production to build counter-discourse against single narratives.

Legal Advocacy and Protection of Cultural Rights

State institutions such as Komnas HAM must be more active in ensuring legal protection for local cultural communities that experience discrimination.

Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue Space

Governments and civil society must create dialogue forums that connect local religious and cultural figures to reduce prejudice and strengthen social cohesion.

Sub Chapter Conclusion

The findings and discussion in this study confirm that identity politics is an instrument of domination that can reduce the existence of local culture, both symbolically and structurally. Sunda Wiwitan is a real example of how indigenous communities can be marginalized through exclusive theological narratives.

This descriptive study critically contributes to academic discourse and public policy by analyzing this case from a comparative and theoretical perspective. It calls for building a democracy that is not only procedural but also substantive—one that respects and protects all cultural expressions as part of national identity.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Several gaps still need further attention in research that discusses identity politics and the Delegitimization of local culture. One major shortcoming is that although this study has provided an in-depth analysis of the conflict between the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Dedi Mulyadi regarding Sunda Wiwitan culture, there has not been much discussion of the long-term impact of cultural Delegitimization on the lives of local communities. Further research is urgently needed to explore how the stigma and discrimination experienced by the Sunda Wiwitan community affect their social identity, mental health conditions, and intercultural relations in the wider community. In addition, there needs to be a comparison with the experiences of other Indigenous communities in Indonesia who face similar challenges to see what patterns may emerge. This gap opens up great opportunities for more comprehensive research on how identity politics impacts various cultural contexts and localities.

Furthermore, the role of mass media and social media in shaping narratives about local culture has not been fully explored. Although it has been mentioned that media is a place for contestation of meaning, there has been no in-depth discussion of how media can strengthen or reduce tensions between cultural and religious identities. Future research needs to explore in more detail how social media algorithms influence public views of local culture and how the younger generation interacts with digital content related to their culture. This is important because, in today's digital era, the dynamics between media and society greatly influence how identities are formed, negotiated, and understood in everyday life.

In addition, the advocacy and legal protection aspects of local cultural communities have not been the primary focus of many studies. Future research should expand the scope of analysis by including how government policies and the role of legal institutions can be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities. In addition, it is also important to highlight the contribution of civil society in fighting for cultural rights that have often been neglected. With this approach, research is descriptive and can produce concrete and applicable recommendations for policymakers, activists, and other stakeholders to maintain cultural diversity in the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Therefore, these gaps indicate the

importance of a more comprehensive and cross-disciplinary approach to understanding the impact of identity politics on local culture while offering real and applicable solutions.

Another important aspect that has not been widely highlighted is the role of the younger generation in preserving local culture amidst increasingly complex pressures of identity politics. Although there are indications that they have the potential to be agents of change, there is still minimal research that explores their active involvement in preserving and reviving local culture. It would be very relevant if future studies examine more deeply the initiatives undertaken by young people, both in their communities and in the digital realm, to promote and celebrate their cultural heritage. In this regard, it is also important to reflect on how the national education system can be redesigned to include the values of multiculturalism, tolerance, and preservation of local culture in its curriculum. Education can be a strategic medium in instilling cultural awareness from an early age.

From a methodological perspective, the qualitative approach provides in-depth insights but cannot provide a picture that can be generalized more broadly. Therefore, it is important to complement this approach with quantitative methods such as surveys or statistical analysis to obtain data that can empirically strengthen the findings and arguments. By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, research will produce richer, more balanced, and more relevant data for various groups, including policymakers, educators, and cultural activists.

Moreover, it is also important to understand the dynamics between identity politics and globalization. In an increasingly connected world, global influence can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it provides opportunities to introduce local cultures to the international scene. Still, on the other hand, it can also lead to cultural homogenization that erodes local uniqueness. Research that examines how indigenous peoples respond to these global flows, how they adapt cultural values to the modern context without losing their identity, and how they use globalization to strengthen their existence would be invaluable. This perspective can broaden our understanding of local communities' challenges and opportunities in a changing world.

Overall, the study of identity politics and the Delegitimization of local culture cannot stop at the theoretical level and case analysis alone. This study must be able to go beyond

academic boundaries by contributing to efforts to preserve and protect local culture. Given the various gaps that have been described, it is clear that the study of identity politics is not only a scientific issue but also touches on aspects of social justice, cultural equality, and the future of national diversity. Therefore, all parties—academics, government, civil society, and local communities—need to synergize and commit to creating a just and inclusive space for all cultural identities in Indonesia. In that spirit, the preservation of local culture must be seen as part of efforts to build a pluralistic, tolerant, and socially just society in line with the noble ideals of the Indonesian nation.

In the future, research on identity politics and the Delegitimization of local culture must be directed to dismantle practices of cultural exclusion and domination and build alternative narratives that empower local communities. This narrative must position local culture not as a static legacy of the past but as a living entity that continues to develop and is relevant to the context of the times. Therefore, research must pay attention to cultural dynamics at the grassroots, including practices of adaptation, innovation, and resistance carried out by cultural communities in the face of global and local pressures.

In addition, it is important to facilitate dialogue spaces between various actors, such as government, indigenous communities, academics, artists, and the media, to formulate participatory cultural preservation policies and strategies. The involvement of local communities in cultural research and decision-making must also be a primary principle so as not to get caught up in a top-down approach that often does not answer real needs in the field.

Digital technology must also be a strategic tool to strengthen local culture. Online platforms can educate the public, document local knowledge, and expand the solidarity network between indigenous communities in various regions. However, for this to be effective, investment is needed in increasing community digital literacy, creative training, and evenly distributed technological infrastructure support.

Finally, preserving local culture must be part of a shared commitment to building a just, inclusive, and sustainable society. With an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach and a bias towards marginalized groups, efforts to understand and address the impact of identity

politics on local culture will have a stronger and more meaningful impetus for the future of the pluralistic Indonesian nation.

CONCLUSION

1. **Delegitimization of Local Culture as a Structural Impact of Identity Politics**

Through an in-depth analysis of the dynamics between the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Dedi Mulyadi, as well as in the broader context of the Sunda Wiwitan indigenous community, this study highlights how identity politics is not just a discursive socio-political phenomenon but also a fundamental tool for restructuring the boundaries of cultural acceptability in the Indonesian public sphere. In this case, identity politics is present in symbolic domination, which systematically targets local values inconsistent with specific religious interpretations. FPI's satire of Dedi Mulyadi cannot be read simply as a difference in ideological views but is a strategic and structured practice of delegitimizing the existence of local cultures that are not directly affiliated with the dominant identity. The rejection of the use of the "Sampurasun" greeting and wayang symbols and the defense of Sunda Wiwitan adherents express how cultural space is symbolically and rhetorically seized by hegemonic forces that use religious discourse as a tool of legitimacy.

By highlighting Sunda Wiwitan as the center of attention, this study shows how Indigenous communities can become victims of a dichotomy that is deliberately constructed between "the legitimate" and "the heretical," between "religion" and "culture," and between "majority" and "minority." In this dynamic, Sunda Wiwitan is positioned as an entity that must be "corrected," marginalized and even erased from public consciousness. This Delegitimization occurs through discourse mechanisms in the form of religious sermons, media narratives, and mobilization of public opinion on social media that lead to public perception that local values not based on the majority religion must be eliminated for the sake of the "purity" of faith. FPI consciously forms a narrative that certain cultural expressions that, in this case, represent the beliefs and cultural expressions of the Sundanese people are a threat to the faith of the people. This is a form of symbolic violence that relies on a social

agreement that only one legitimate identity can claim public space, namely the dominant religious identity. The discussion results show that FPI not only criticizes Dedi Mulyadi as an individual but also tries to dismantle the social and spiritual legitimacy of Sundanese cultural expressions widely accepted in local society.

This form of Delegitimization of local culture damages pluralism and threatens social cohesion. Society slowly splits when local culture is positioned as an inferior or "problematic" entity. Some feel entitled to determine which cultures deserve to exist and which do not, while other groups feel their identities are threatened and not recognized by the state or society. This creates a fragile social landscape where prejudice and intolerance become part of everyday life that is considered normal. Social media plays a central role in spreading this exclusive narrative. Rather than being a democratic space for sharing and dialogue, social media often becomes an arena for identity contestation won by groups with stronger discourse mobilization capabilities. Religious narratives that frame local culture as deviant are spread massively, and without adequate media literacy, society tends to accept this construction as "truth simply."

In addition, the state, which should act as a guardian of diversity, seems absent or is dragged into the majoritarian narrative. The Sunda Wiwitan community still experiences various forms of discrimination, ranging from difficulties in administrative recognition (such as the inclusion of religion on ID cards) to obstacles in building places of worship to marginalization in national cultural discourse. The state has not shown a firm commitment to guaranteeing local cultural rights as guaranteed in the constitution.

From all these findings, it can be concluded that identity politics, in this case, is not only to form opinions or influence perceptions but has become an institutionalized mechanism of social exclusion. In practice, the Delegitimization of local cultures such as Sunda Wiwitan damages pluralism and limits human rights to express themselves, have religion, and maintain identity. This is a significant challenge for the future of Indonesia's pluralistic democracy.

2. Identity Politics and Hegemony of Discourse on the Delegitimization of Local Culture

Looking at the findings above in a theoretical framework, it appears that the practice of delegitimizing local culture by hegemonic powers, such as that carried out by the FPI against Dedi Mulyadi and Sunda Wiwitan, is very much in line with what has been explained by thinkers such as Edward Said, Clifford Geertz, Stuart Hall, and Michel Foucault. In the concept of "Orientalism," Edward Said explains how dominant groups systematically shape discourse to define and control the "different." Sunda Wiwitan, in this case, is positioned as an exotic, mystical entity and does not conform to dominant norms, a form of othering that makes it vulnerable to exclusion and negative stereotypes.

Stuart Hall emphasized that identity is not a fixed and essential entity but a social construction formed through discourse and power relations. In this context, flexible and contextual local cultural identities are forced to confront religious identities positioned as "absolute truths." There is a clash between fluid and inclusive identities and rigid and exclusive identities. Religious discourse is used not as a bridge of understanding but as a means of control to determine what is considered sacred and deviant.

In his view of religion as a symbol system, Clifford Geertz asserts that religion and culture cannot be separated absolutely. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, both influence each other and shape the community's way of life. When cultural symbols such as "Sampurasun" or wayang statues are accused of idolatry, we are witnessing a form of elimination of a local symbol system that has been tested historically and spiritually. This shows that an exclusive approach to religion has the potential to damage social integration and cultural harmony that has been formed for a long time. Michel Foucault complements this understanding through the idea that power is not only present in the form of physical repression but also through the production of knowledge and control of discourse. In this case, the FPI produces a religious discourse that systematically defines local culture as "deviant." This discourse is then

disseminated through various social media, making it "common knowledge" that is rarely questioned. This form of power works subtly but effectively creates social inequality. Furthermore, Will Kymlicka's approach to multicultural citizenship emphasizes that a just democracy is not enough to be neutral towards identity; rather, it must be proactive in protecting and empowering minority identities. In the Indonesian context, the state must be more than just an observer in cultural and identity conflicts. The state must be actively present to guarantee the rights of communities such as the Sunda Wiwitan so that they do not continue to be victims of exclusive identity politics.

Theoretically, the Delegitimization of local culture, as experienced by the Sunda Wiwitan community, is a form of symbolic and structural violence. It does not simply remove culture from the public space and eliminates the validity of the community's spiritual and historical experiences. This shows the importance of building a counter-narrative (counter-discourse) that can restore local values, strengthen multicultural awareness, and challenge misleading ideological dominance.

Combining literature review with field findings confirms that building a pluralistic and just society is not a matter of discourse but of power structures, state regulations, media literacy, and collective awareness that continues to be built reflectively. Pluralism is not a natural condition of society but rather the result of a symbolic struggle that involves all elements of the state, civil society, academics, and the younger generation.

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