

THE FRAGMENTATION OF INDONESIA

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project paper is my own except for quotations and summaries, which has been duly acknowledged.

17 May, 2002

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohamad Nizan Monamad', with a large, sweeping flourish on the left side.

Mohamad Nizan Monamad

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this project paper is to assess whether the "nation-forging" and "state-fragmenting" processes are similar, mutually reinforcing, inter-linked, hostile and amicable twins or the two sides of the same coin. The paper is also to assess the external and internal factors that influence the process of "nation-forging" and "state-building" of Indonesia, which brought about "state-fragmenting" processes that saw the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Therefore, the study discusses historical perspectives of "nation-forging" and "state-building" processes carried out by Sukarno and Suharto as well as leaderships in the post-Suharto era. The scope of this paper mainly focuses on the question of why the "nation-forging" and "state-building" of Indonesia were deeply flawed. The paper argues that Indonesia case was considered an unfinished "nation-forging" experience (cultural phase) when Suharto introduced the "state-building" process (political phase) much too early through various internal policies such as transmigration policy that was seen by outer islands population as 'colonialism of Javanese' (by non-Javanese Muslim) and Islamization (by non-Javanese Christian). The paper argues that as a result of incomplete "nation-forging" and Javanese hegemony in the "state-building" of Indonesia, the process of "nation-forging" (building Indonesianness) and the "state-building" (non-Islamic and secular modern economic system) have become incompatible especially after the recent Asian financial crisis in 1997. That contributed to the collapse of the Indonesian economy, rendered the central government feeble, flared communal conflicts, and reignited secessionism. This change has set in motion the country's fragmentation. Whether the current Indonesian political leadership has both the will and imagination to arrest the fragmentation process remains to be seen. The paper contributes to the field of international political economy by empirically demonstrating that (1) "nation-forging" and "state-fragmenting" processes are fundamentally similar, have to be complementary, mutually reinforcing and interlinked, especially in multiethnic, multireligious societies like Indonesia. They are the two sides of the same coin. The balancing of the sides matters. The overloading of one side at the expense of the other can lead to imbalance of the weight and disfiguring of the design. Indonesia, like the coin, was conceived correctly but the forging of the coin was fatally flawed, because of Sukarno and Suharto's inability to balance "nation-forging" and "state-building".

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