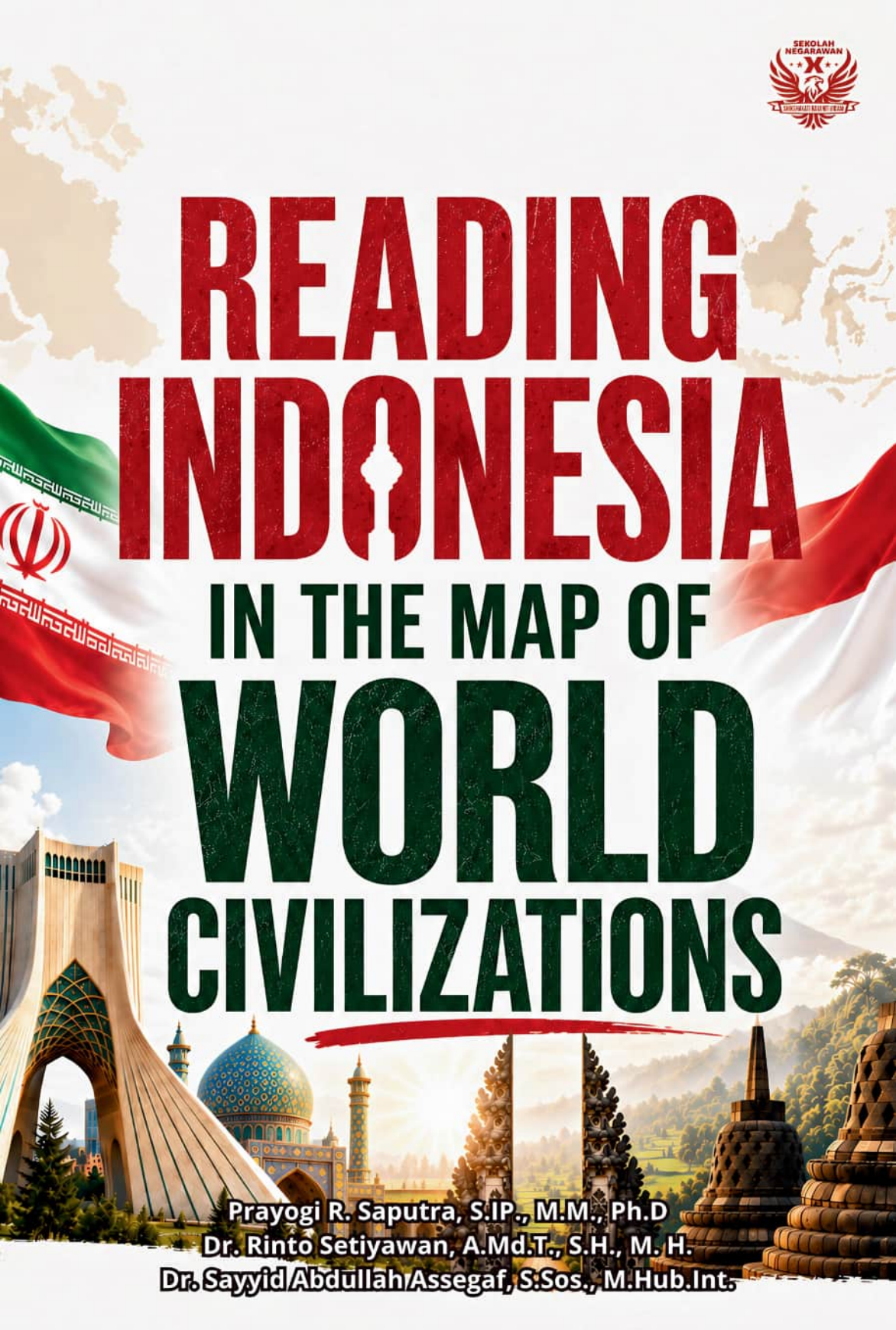
READING INDONESIA IN THE MAP OF WORLD CIVILIZATIONS



Prayogi R. Saputra, S.IP., M.M., Ph.D
Dr. Rinto Setiyawan, A.Md.T., S.H., M. H.
Dr. Sayyid Abdullah Assegaf, S.Sos., M.Hub.Int.

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IN THE MAP OF WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

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Prayogi R. Saputra, S.IP., M.M., Ph.D
Rinto Setiyawan, A.Md.T., S.H., M.H., CTP.
Sayyid Abdullah Assegaf, S.Sos., M.Hub.Int.

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Malang, Indonesia

SEKOLAH
NEGARAWAN
SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

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Authors:
Prayogi R. Saputra, S.IP., M.M., Ph.D
Rinto Setiyawan, A.Md.T., S.H., M.H., CTP.
Sayyid Abdullah Assegaf, S.Sos., M.Hub.Int.

Editor:
Azizatul Nur Imamah, S.Pi

Illustration
Risma Farah Hamidah, S.M

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Malang - INDONESIA

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SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

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FOREWORD

All praise is due to Allah SWT, who has blessed humanity with life, reason, knowledge, and the opportunity to read the signs of our times, learn from history, and improve the life we share. May peace and blessings always be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, his family, his companions, and all those who strive to uphold trust, justice, knowledge, and the common good of humanity.

This book begins with a concern about Indonesia—not as a complaint about governments, political parties, political elites, or particular events, but with a deeper question:

After more than eight decades of independence, do the Indonesian people truly own their state, or are they still too often treated as a source of periodic legitimacy for structures of power that claim to act in their name?

Indonesia has all the formal attributes of a modern state. It has territory, a population, a government, a President, a constitution, a parliament, elections, security institutions, armed forces, courts, a bureaucracy, diplomatic institutions, a national flag, and international recognition. Under international law, there is no question that the Republic of Indonesia is a legitimate and sovereign state. But formal independence does not necessarily mean that the deeper promise of independence has been fulfilled.

The existence of a national government does not automatically mean that the people truly own the architecture of the state. Elections alone do not guarantee that popular sovereignty is reflected in every process through which laws are made, the economy is managed, knowledge is developed, technology is controlled, education is shaped, and the nation's future is decided.

That question is where this book begins.

Sekolah Negarawan believes that Indonesia's problems cannot be explained simply by asking whether a particular leader is good or bad. Leaders do not emerge from a vacuum. They are shaped by people, values, education, culture, social structures, economic systems, political institutions, constitutional design, and the historical experiences of the nation that produces them.

A crisis of leadership, therefore, cannot be separated from a crisis of humanity, a crisis of values, and a crisis in the relationship between the people and the state.

The Indonesian cultural thinker **Emha Ainun Nadjib, widely known as Cak Nun**, has long sounded an alarm about this condition. He has reminded us that the decline of a civilization can begin with leadership that has lost its sense of value—not only in government, but also in society, culture, education, economics, and even religion and *'ibadah mahdhah*.

When leadership loses its commitment to trust, knowledge, empathy, and responsibility toward human beings, society gradually loses its sense of direction.

Cak Nun has also reminded us that Indonesia cannot be understood only from the centers of political power. In his early work, *Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya*, he offered a powerful suggestion: Indonesia must also be understood through its villages, its people, and the everyday spaces where values are actually lived and tested.

A state is not experienced only through constitutional articles, presidential palaces, parliaments, ministries, or courts. It is experienced through the everyday lives of its people—when they seek an education, earn a living, encounter the law, practice their faith, access technology, and struggle to preserve their dignity.

This is one of the moral starting points of this book.

But moral concern alone cannot change the direction of a nation. History shows that major transformations need institutions if they are to survive beyond a single generation.

Iran offers an important experience in this regard. Following the 1979 Revolution, Imam Khomeini helped lay the foundations of a new constitutional order through the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The most important lesson for us is not the Iranian system itself. Indonesia does not need to copy Iran.

The deeper lesson is that a civilization needs the courage to translate its values into institutions—to build a constitutional framework capable of connecting what a society believes with the way its state is governed.

This is one of the reasons Sekolah Negarawan puts forward the idea of a **Fifth Amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia**.

The proposal is not an attempt to reproduce Iran's Constitution or alter Indonesia's constitutional identity. It is a constitutional effort to ask whether the ideals of independence can be realized more fully through a state architecture that genuinely places the people at the center of sovereignty.

But this leads to another question:

If Indonesia is to be understood through its people, what kind of world has shaped those people?

That question takes us beyond the narrow boundaries of national history.

Indonesia did not begin only on 17 August 1945. The Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on that date, but the people who would become the Indonesian nation had already been shaped for centuries by encounters with civilizations from across the world.

Long before European colonialism arrived, the Nusantara was connected to networks stretching across Arabia, Persia, India, China, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean.

Trade brought more than goods. It carried religion, language, knowledge, technology, culture, scholarly traditions, political ideas, social structures, and human interests.

In the history of Islam in Indonesia, Arab networks played an important role in preaching, education, trade, scholarly genealogies, and the formation of religious identity. Connections with Persia

and India also left deep traces in the culture, language, literature, Sufism, and intellectual traditions of the Nusantara.

Yet history must be read honestly.

Every civilizational network can carry knowledge and benefit. It can also carry interests, social authority, cultural hierarchies, and political influence. For that reason, this book makes an important distinction between **Islam as revelation and Arabs as historical actors**.

Islam is a source of universal values. Arabs, Arab elites, Arab states, and particular Middle Eastern networks, however, are historical actors. They can bring knowledge and benefit, but they can also have interests, limitations, and political agendas—just as every other nation and civilization does.

This distinction is not a rejection of the Arab world. It is an attempt to protect the distinction between Islam and the actions of human beings who happen to speak Arabic or come from Arab lands.

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, but not every Arab interest represents the will of Allah. Likewise, criticism of particular Arab interests should never be confused with criticism of Islam itself.

From the sixteenth century onward, the Nusantara entered another phase of global encounters.

Portugal arrived through the spice routes. Spain competed for influence in the archipelago. The VOC grew from a trading corporation into a political and military power. Dutch colonial rule built an administrative system whose legacies can still be traced

in law, bureaucracy, economics, education, and the way the state relates to its people.

The Japanese occupation transformed patterns of social mobilization and military organization. After independence, Indonesia once again found itself caught in the currents of global power, particularly during the Cold War and the geopolitical upheavals surrounding 1965.

Today, the landscape has changed again.

The People's Republic of China has become increasingly significant through trade, technology, industry, finance, infrastructure, energy, critical minerals, and global supply chains. Russia must also be examined in proportion to the evidence of its actual role and influence.

And the story does not end with major powers.

Indonesia is also shaped by international financial institutions, global corporations, consulting firms, educational systems, media, digital technologies, data, algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, transnational religious networks, and domestic elites who open, regulate, or benefit from relationships with global powers.

In other words, Indonesia has never existed outside the world.

That is why the title of this book—**Iran Will Not Understand Indonesia If It Does Not Understand the World**—should not be read as an attempt to elevate Indonesia or lecture Iran.

It is an invitation to understand Indonesia through the wider world that has shaped its people, its leadership, its society, and its state.

Iran is chosen as a partner in this dialogue not because Indonesia should imitate its political system, nor because Sekolah Negarawan seeks to export or import a particular school of thought.

Indonesia and Iran have different histories, constitutions, religious traditions, societies, and systems of government. Those differences deserve to be respected.

But Iran has a civilizational experience worth studying.

Iran possesses a long intellectual tradition and a history of confronting foreign intervention, economic pressure, geopolitical conflict, and efforts to preserve national identity, scientific capacity, sovereignty, and dignity.

None of this needs to be copied.

It needs to be understood.

In this book, **Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei** is presented not simply as a religious or political figure, but as part of a broader Iranian experience of spirituality, the defense of the *mustadh'afin*, national resilience, constitutional continuity, and the preservation of strategic direction amid geopolitical and economic pressure.

The discussion of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is therefore not merely a discussion of an individual. It is part of a larger question:

How do leadership, constitutional order, values, and national resilience interact in a changing world?

Cak Nun and Sayyid Ali Khamenei are not presented as equivalents. They emerged from different historical circumstances, held different positions, and served different social and political roles.

Cak Nun reads Indonesia's wounds from within the lives of its people, its villages, its culture, and its spiritual traditions.

Sayyid Ali Khamenei reflects Iran's experience of preserving values, national dignity, and state resilience under sustained external pressure.

They are presented here as **two different civilizational mirrors**.

Cak Nun can help Iranian readers see Indonesia's concerns from within. Iran's experience, in turn, can help Indonesians reflect on how spirituality, historical consciousness, and values-based leadership may contribute to the resilience of a nation.

This book is not an anti-government pamphlet. Nor is it anti-Western, anti-American, anti-Chinese, anti-Russian, anti-Arab, or anti-foreign propaganda.

Every country should be examined proportionately—through evidence, contribution, interests, and the actual impact of its relationship with the Indonesian people.

Nor is this book an invitation to foreign intervention.

Indonesia must determine its own future through its people, knowledge, dialogue, and constitutional

mechanisms. Iran is not being asked to show Indonesia the way, much less to determine the form of the Indonesian state.

What this book proposes is a different kind of relationship: **a legitimate, open, peaceful, dignified, and knowledge-based dialogue between civilizations.**

Such dialogue should bring together history, ideas, technology, leadership, economics, and humanitarian challenges without requiring either nation to surrender its sovereignty or identity.

Sekolah Negarawan does not position *pesantren*, *hawzah*, and universities as formal programs at the center of this effort. They are part of a wider ecosystem of knowledge and society—institutions that can be studied, engaged, and challenged through meaningful dialogue.

The primary orientation is the **People's Path (*Jalur Rakyat*)**: a search for and strengthening of networks that genuinely nurture, educate, defend, protect the rights of, and preserve the dignity of the people—networks that refuse to abandon those they are meant to serve.

This book rests on a simple conviction:

The revival of a nation does not begin with the seizure of power. It begins with values that save and dignify human beings.

People whose dignity is protected will strengthen their families, villages, and communities.

Healthy communities will strengthen the nation.

And a nation grounded in values, knowledge, and trustworthy leadership can build a state in which

the people are truly recognized as the holders of sovereignty.

The framework proposed is:



Within this framework, Islam is not presented as a political symbol or merely as a marker of state identity. It is understood as a source of values: *tawhid*, trust, justice, consultation, knowledge, responsibility, protection of the vulnerable, solidarity with the oppressed, and the pursuit of the common good.

The revival of Islamic values means little if it does not produce justice in the lives of ordinary people. It should not be reduced to the expansion of religious symbols within structures of political power.

The authors recognize that this book deals with questions that are broad, sensitive, and open to disagreement.

Not every question can be answered definitively. Not every historical event leaves behind complete evidence. And not every relationship of power can be reduced to a simple division between right and wrong.

For that reason, this book does not ask its readers to accept every argument uncritically.

It asks them to **test the arguments**—against archives, documents, data, constitutions, scholarship, and the lived experiences of different nations.

Truth must stand above the need to prove ourselves right.

To academics, religious scholars, strategic studies centers, policymakers, intellectuals, students, and members of civil society in Tehran, Qom, and across the Islamic Republic of Iran, we extend our appreciation for engaging with this work.

May this book open the door to an honest conversation about people, values, history, leadership, the state, and civilization.

Our hope is simple.

May Indonesia and Iran learn to understand one another without seeking to dominate one another.

May they learn from one another without becoming copies of one another.

May they respect their differences without allowing those differences to become barriers to cooperation.

And may they cooperate without sacrificing their sovereignty or identity.

Throughout this book, readers will encounter one thread connecting four major ideas.

Cak Nun reminds Indonesia to return to the human being, the people, and values as the foundations of national life.

Imam Khomeini demonstrates that civilizational transformation requires the courage to translate values into a constitutional order.

Sekolah Negarawan proposes the **Fifth Amendment** as an Indonesian constitutional endeavor—an effort to continue searching for a form of the state that places the people at the heart of sovereignty, in accordance with Pancasila and the ideals of independence.

And **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** offers an example of how leadership seeks to preserve constitutional continuity, sovereignty, and national resilience amid a changing world.

These connections are not intended to equate Indonesia with Iran, nor to place the figures discussed in this book on the same historical or political plane.

Quite the opposite.

They demonstrate that **every nation must find its own path**.

What can be learned is not another country's system, but the courage to connect values, human beings, constitutional order, leadership, and the state into a coherent civilizational project.

Ultimately, every body of knowledge will be judged by the good it brings to humanity.

Every form of leadership will be judged by its commitment to the people.

Every state will be judged by the justice it delivers.

And every civilization will be judged by its ability to preserve human dignity.

May Allah SWT guide this endeavor, protect it from the arrogance of knowledge and the temptations of power, and make it a small contribution to the pursuit

of justice, the protection of humanity, and the advancement of the common good—for Indonesia, Iran, the Muslim world, and humanity as a whole.

Jakarta, Indonesia
Rinto Setiyawan

Founder of Sekolah Negarawan

Executive Summary

Civilizations are not built solely by natural wealth, territorial size, population, military power, or technological advancement. All of these elements matter, but none of them, by themselves, guarantees the strength or endurance of a civilization. History shows that the rise and fall of a nation are ultimately determined to a great extent by the quality of its people, the values that guide their collective life, and the leadership that directs them.

Human beings build society. From society emerges leadership. Leadership builds and operates the state. Through the state, a nation determines whether power will be used to protect its people or whether the people themselves will become objects of power. When values weaken, leadership loses its sense of trust and responsibility, and the state becomes increasingly distant from its people, civilizational decline can take place even while all formal institutions remain standing.

Indonesian Muslim intellectual and cultural figure **Emha Ainun Nadjib, widely known as Cak Nun**, has long warned that one of the causes of civilizational decline in Indonesia, and perhaps in the wider world, is a crisis of leadership. This crisis does not occur only within the state and government, but also within social life, culture, education, economics, religious leadership, and even the practice of *'ibadah mahdhah*. His warning points to the fact that a crisis of leadership is not simply about who occupies a formal position. It can emerge when those who lead lose their

moral orientation, intellectual depth, sense of responsibility, and empathy for the suffering of the people.

This book begins with that concern, but does not stop at criticizing individual leaders. Sekolah Negarawan raises a more fundamental question:

How does a nation shape its people and produce its leaders?

Is leadership determined solely by an individual's personal qualities, or is it the result of a long historical process that shapes values, education, culture, social structures, economic systems, constitutional arrangements, state institutions, and a nation's relationship with the wider world?

This question matters because leadership does not emerge from a vacuum. Leaders are shaped by their societies. Societies are shaped by their values and historical experiences. The state, in turn, can regulate, strengthen, or even undermine the process through which people and leadership are formed.

Indonesia is recognized as one of the world's largest Muslim-majority countries. It has a President, a constitution, a parliament, elections, security institutions, armed forces, courts, a national bureaucracy, diplomatic relations, internationally recognized territory, and sovereign status within the international system. From a formal perspective, Indonesia possesses almost all the institutional features expected of a modern state.

Yet Sekolah Negarawan raises a deeper question:

Have the Indonesian people truly become the owners of their state, or have they merely become a periodic source of legitimacy for structures of power?

This question is not intended to deny the existence of the Republic of Indonesia or diminish its status as a legitimate state. What is being questioned is the **substantive relationship between the people and the state**. Are the people genuinely positioned as the holders of sovereignty and the owners of the architecture of power, or are they called upon mainly during elections and then once again distanced from the process of determining the nation's direction?

In Cak Nun's thought, Indonesia cannot be understood merely from the centers of power. Even in his early work, *Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya*, he suggested that Indonesia must be understood through its villages, its people, and the everyday spaces where values are tested in real life. The state does not exist only within the constitution, presidential palace, parliament, ministries, or courts. The state exists in the lived experience of its people: when they seek education, earn a living, practice their faith, encounter the law, receive public services, and struggle to preserve their dignity.

Cak Nun also reminds us that modern Indonesia emerged from a collection of kingdoms, sultanates, indigenous communities, villages, and various forms of social life that already possessed their own values and systems of leadership. When these older worlds were brought together into the form of the republic proclaimed on 17 August 1945, Indonesia simultaneously entered a globalized world of modern

values, ideas, law, social structures, economics, and institutions.

The problem was that this transformation took place with extraordinary speed. A nation that had lived for centuries within diverse social systems, kingdoms, sultanates, and local communities suddenly had to exist as a modern republic amid a global struggle for power. Indonesia entered the world system while its society, state, and leadership were not yet fully prepared to understand the consequences of globalization.

This lack of preparedness was not limited to technology or economics. It also concerned values, knowledge, constitutional understanding, education, leadership, and the ability of the people to understand a changing world.

The challenge has become even greater in the modern era, when globalization no longer takes place only through trade and diplomacy, but also through media, data, digital technology, algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, education systems, popular culture, and the global competition over knowledge and perception.

For this reason, this book advances a central thesis:

Iran will not understand Indonesia if it does not understand the world that has shaped Indonesia.

The "world" in this book does not refer merely to the current constellation of international relations. It refers to the entire network of civilizations, religions, trade, knowledge, power, colonialism, technology, and geopolitics that, over centuries, has shaped the

Indonesian people, Indonesian society, Indonesian leadership, and the architecture of the Indonesian state.

Indonesia did not emerge from an isolated historical space.

Long before European colonialism arrived directly, the Nusantara was already connected to extensive global networks. The Indian Ocean trade routes connected the archipelago with Arabia, Persia, India, China, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and many other regions.

Trade brought more than goods. It carried religion, knowledge, languages, technology, culture, scholarly traditions, commercial systems, patterns of political authority, and social relationships that helped shape the societies of the Nusantara.

In the history of Islam in Indonesia, Arab networks played an important role in preaching, trade, education, scholarly genealogies, language, intellectual traditions, and the formation of religious identity. Connections with Persia and India also left significant traces in the culture, trade, Sufism, language, literature, and religious expressions of the Nusantara. Meanwhile, relations with China shaped trade, technology, communities, culture, and various aspects of social life over a long period of time.

Yet this book does not approach these networks romantically or in simplistic black-and-white terms. Every global network can bring knowledge, benefit, and renewal, but it can also carry interests, social hierarchies, cultural authority, influence, and particular ways of viewing the societies with which it interacts.

For this reason, Sekolah Negarawan makes a clear distinction between **Islam as revelation and Arabs as historical actors**.

Islam is understood as a primary source of values, carrying universal principles of *tawhid*, trust, justice, knowledge, consultation, the protection of the vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good.

Arabs, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Europeans, Japanese, Americans, Russians, and other peoples are historical actors, each possessing their own contributions, interests, achievements, and limitations.

Islam cannot be held responsible for the interests of Arab individuals, Arab elites, Arab states, or particular Middle Eastern networks. Conversely, Arabs should not be idealized simply because the Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language.

This distinction is essential so that the sanctity of revelation is not confused with the interests of human beings acting within history.

Following these early encounters, a major transformation took place in the sixteenth century when Portugal entered through the maritime spice routes. Spain also competed for control of the spice islands. The VOC subsequently emerged as a trading corporation that acquired governmental, economic, and military power. The Dutch East Indies continued this process through colonial administration, law, bureaucracy, education, social classification, extractive economics, and hierarchical relations between rulers and society.

Dutch colonialism left behind more than roads, buildings, archives, and administrative boundaries. It

also left ways of understanding the people, bureaucratic practices, legal systems, economic structures, and patterns of political authority, some of which continued to influence Indonesia after formal colonial rule had ended.

The Japanese occupation introduced a different pattern of power. Japan mobilized society, established organizations, expanded military structures, and accelerated the emergence of groups that later played important roles in the independence process. Yet the occupation also brought violence, exploitation, and immense suffering.

After independence, Indonesia once again entered the arena of global conflict through the configuration of the Cold War. Indonesia became an important arena of ideological, economic, diplomatic, and strategic competition.

The political events surrounding 1965 cannot be adequately understood merely as an internal Indonesian affair. They must be examined alongside the context of the Cold War, global power relations, diplomatic operations, economic interests, and declassified documents.

Entering the twenty-first century, the **People's Republic of China** has become increasingly influential in trade, technology, industry, finance, infrastructure development, energy, critical minerals, and global supply chains. This role must be assessed on the basis of evidence—without anti-China prejudice, but also without ignoring the possibility of dependency and unequal relations.

The **Russian Federation** is discussed proportionately, insofar as historical evidence and actual relations demonstrate a verifiable role. The **United States** is examined primarily in relation to the Cold War, the political configuration surrounding 1965, the global economy, technology, education, security, and the international system.

Arab states and contemporary Middle Eastern networks are likewise examined through religious, educational, philanthropic, economic, social, and cultural relations, as well as their evolving influence in Indonesia.

Beyond these countries, Indonesia's development has also been influenced by international financial institutions, multinational corporations, consulting firms, international organizations, global media, digital technologies, data platforms, Artificial Intelligence, education systems, knowledge standards, transnational religious networks, and domestic elites who open, regulate, or benefit from relationships with various global powers.

It is within this context that this book examines **Structural Colonialism** and **Invited Colonialism**.

Contemporary domination does not always arrive through armies and territorial occupation. It can operate through contracts, debt, concessions, technological dependency, control over data, educational standards, market penetration, knowledge dominance, or policies that grant external powers excessive room to influence domestic affairs.

Invited Colonialism refers to a condition in which external domination gains access not only through pressure from outside, but also through invitations, concessions, compromises, dependency, or decisions made by domestic elites.

Under such circumstances, foreign powers do not always have to force their way through the state's door.

The door may already have been opened from within.

Yet this book is not written to search for enemies or to accuse any single nation of being the sole source of Indonesia's problems. It is not anti-Western, anti-American, anti-Chinese, anti-Russian, anti-Arab, or anti-foreign propaganda.

International interaction is an unavoidable reality for every nation.

The real question is whether Indonesia possesses the people, knowledge, values, leadership, and state architecture necessary to manage its relationship with the world independently, fairly, and in the interests of its people.

This is where **formal independence must be distinguished from substantive independence**.

Formal independence is marked by a constitution, a flag, a government, territory, diplomacy, and international recognition.

Substantive independence requires the capacity of a nation to determine its own development, master knowledge and technology, safeguard its resources, govern its data, shape its education system, manage its

economy, and ensure that its people remain the holders of sovereignty.

Sekolah Negarawan argues that Indonesia has achieved formal independence, but continues to face Structural Colonialism and the marginalization of the people from parts of the state's architecture.

Therefore, Indonesia's problems cannot be resolved merely through changes in individuals or governments. A system will continue to reproduce similar patterns of leadership if the values, education, economic structures, social culture, and institutional design that produce that leadership remain unchanged.

In this book, **Cak Nun is presented as an alarm for Indonesia**.

He reads Indonesia's wounds from within—from the village, from its people, its culture, its religious life, and everyday experience. He reminds us that the people can be abandoned by the state, leaders can lose their empathy, religion can lose its depth, and a nation can enter globalization without adequate preparation in values and knowledge.

From the Iranian perspective, **Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei** is presented as a reflection of Iran's experience in building civilizational resilience.

The discussion of his leadership includes spirituality, inner strength, *tawakkul*, values-based leadership, steadfastness in confronting global pressure and hegemony—including Iran's prolonged confrontation with United States policy—and solidarity with the oppressed, or the *mustadh'afin*, without limiting such solidarity to any particular group or sect.

From this perspective, Muslims should not regard themselves as separate communities without responsibility toward one another. The suffering of one part of the ummah should awaken the conscience of another.

The understanding that the Muslim community is like one body becomes a source of solidarity, moral responsibility, and support for those who are oppressed.

Yet this book does not equate Cak Nun with Khamenei. They emerged from different histories, positions, functions, traditions, and systems of governance.

Cak Nun is presented as a mirror that reads Indonesia's wounds from within its society. He speaks from the realms of culture, popular spirituality, villages, and everyday life.

Khamenei is presented as a mirror of Iran's experience in preserving national dignity, Islamic identity, continuity of values-based leadership, and resilience in the face of global pressure.

They are not two figures who are intended to be institutionally equated. Rather, they are **two different civilizational mirrors**.

Cak Nun helps Iran understand Indonesia's concerns and wounds from within Indonesian society. Khamenei's leadership experience helps Indonesia reflect on how spirituality, steadfastness of values, and awareness of the oppressed can become sources of national resilience.

This book does not invite Indonesia to imitate Iran's constitutional system, does not promote the

export of any particular school of thought, and does not ask Iran to interfere in Indonesia's domestic affairs.

The differences in the histories, societies, constitutions, and traditions of the two countries must be respected.

What Sekolah Negarawan proposes is **legitimate, open, peaceful, dignified, and knowledge-based civilizational cooperation**.

Such cooperation is neither governmental intervention nor an attempt to engineer political power. It is a space for dialogue through which history, humanity, values, leadership, constitutional affairs, technology, Artificial Intelligence, economics, and the challenges facing the Muslim world amid global transformation can be studied together.

Sekolah Negarawan also does not position *pesantren*, *hawzah*, or universities as the primary formal programs of cooperation. These institutions are part of a broader social and intellectual ecosystem that can be studied, engaged in dialogue, and examined according to their commitment to serving the people.

The primary focus of this book is to build the **People's Path (*Jalur Rakyat*)**—to identify and strengthen networks and communities that genuinely nurture, defend, educate, fulfill the rights of, and preserve the dignity of the people, rather than contributing to their abandonment.

The broader framework proposed by this book is:



Within this framework, Islam is not merely a formal identity or a symbol of the state. It is positioned as a source of values concerning *tawhid*, trust, justice, knowledge, consultation, responsibility, the defense of the vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good.

The revival of Islamic values has meaning only when it can save and uplift human beings, restore society, strengthen the people, cultivate trustworthy leadership, and ensure that the state does not become an instrument of domination.

Ultimately, this book rests upon an interconnected chain of thought: **civilization is built by human beings. Human beings are shaped by values. Values develop through history. History is shaped by encounters among different civilizational networks. From human beings emerges leadership. Through leadership, the state is formed. And through the state, a nation determines whether its people will become the holders of sovereignty or merely a source of legitimacy for power.**

Therefore, Iran will not understand Indonesia merely by reading its government, elections, economic statistics, or diplomatic relations.

Iran must understand the world that has shaped the Indonesian people, the Indonesian nation, its wounds, its leadership, and the architecture of its state.

Through this understanding, Sekolah Negarawan invites the **Islamic Republic of Iran** to build a civilizational partnership that respects the sovereignty of both nations, rejects intervention, honors differences in schools of thought and constitutional systems, and places knowledge, spirituality, justice, and solidarity with the people at the foundation of cooperation between Indonesia, Iran, the Muslim world, and humanity.

Statement of Position

This book is presented from the position of Sekolah Negarawan as an independent intellectual space seeking to understand Indonesia through the relationship between human beings, values, history, leadership, the people, and the architecture of the state. Sekolah Negarawan is not a state institution, political party, opposition organization, formal religious educational institution, or conventional academic institution. It is an intellectual endeavor to understand why Indonesia, despite having achieved formal independence and possessing all the institutions of a modern state, has yet to fully discover a form of state in which the people are genuinely positioned as the owners of the structures of power.

All analyses, interpretations, theses, and recommendations presented in this book are the intellectual responsibility of the authors and Sekolah Negarawan. This book does not represent the official position of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, any state institution, organization, religious group, or other institution in either country.

The position of this book is not anti-state. It recognizes the Republic of Indonesia as a legitimate and sovereign state, with its own territory, government, constitution, diplomatic relations, and international recognition. What is critically examined is not the existence of Indonesia as a state, but the relationship between the state and its people: whether the people

have truly been placed at the center as the holders of sovereignty, or whether they are still too often treated as a periodic source of legitimacy for structures of power.

For this reason, this book is not intended as an anti-government pamphlet, nor is it directed at attacking any particular administration. A change of government does not necessarily resolve structural problems when the institutional design, governing culture, economic structure, educational system, value framework, and power relations that produce them remain unchanged. This study therefore focuses on structures rather than individuals alone; on the design of the state rather than merely the replacement of rulers; and on the historical processes that shape leadership rather than solely on the conduct of leaders during a particular period.

Nor is this book written from an anti-Western, anti-American, anti-Chinese, anti-Russian, anti-Arab, or anti-foreign position of any kind. Every nation and civilizational network has its own contributions, interests, achievements, failures, and limitations. Each actor is examined proportionately, based on evidence, historical context, and the actual nature of its relationship with Indonesia.

The Netherlands is examined in the context of colonialism and its institutional legacy. Portugal and Spain are examined in the context of early maritime expansion. Japan is examined in the context of occupation and mass mobilization. The United States is examined primarily through the Cold War configuration, the events surrounding 1965, the social

and economic order, technology, education, and the global system. The People's Republic of China is examined through contemporary trade, industry, infrastructure, financing, technology, critical minerals, and global supply chains. The Russian Federation is discussed insofar as available evidence demonstrates a verifiable historical or contemporary role. Arab, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and broader Middle Eastern networks are examined through religion, trade, culture, education, knowledge, social authority, and the historical interests associated with them.

In examining the relationship between religion and history, this book draws a clear distinction between Islam as revelation and human beings as historical actors. Islam is positioned as a primary value framework encompassing *tawhid*, *amanah*, justice, knowledge, consultation, responsibility, the protection of the vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good. Arabs, Arab elites, Arab states, Middle Eastern networks, Persian societies, and other Muslim communities, however, remain historical actors who may bring knowledge and benefit, but who also possess their own interests, limitations, and the possibility of acting contrary to Islamic values.

Therefore, criticism of the actions of Arab individuals, Arab elites, Arab states, or particular Middle Eastern networks cannot be equated with criticism of Islam. Likewise, reverence for the Qur'an and the Arabic language does not require unconditional glorification of every Arab actor throughout history. This distinction is necessary both to preserve the

integrity of the faith and to maintain intellectual honesty in reading history.

This book also does not advocate that Indonesia imitate Iran. The Republic of Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have different histories, societies, constitutions, religious traditions, social structures, and experiences. Iran's experience can be studied, but it cannot simply be transplanted into Indonesia. Iran's constitutional system is not an export commodity, just as Indonesia's experience cannot be imposed upon Iran.

Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei is presented in this book as a reflection of Iran's experience with spirituality, inner resilience, *tawakkul*, value-based leadership, solidarity with the *mustad'afin*, Muslim consciousness, and steadfastness in confronting global pressure and hegemony. He is not presented as an institutional model that Indonesia must adopt.

Likewise, Emha Ainun Nadjib, widely known as Cak Nun, is presented as an Indonesian alarm bell—someone who reads the wounds of the nation from within the lived experience of its people. His reflections on the crisis of leadership, the abandonment of the people, the state that has yet to become a home for its citizens, Indonesia's unpreparedness for globalization, and the importance of reading Indonesia from its villages and everyday spaces serve as a moral and civilizational point of entry. Cak Nun is not equated with Khamenei. They represent two different historical experiences and spheres of service.

This distinction is important so that Indonesia–Iran dialogue does not turn into personality cults, the

export of constitutional systems, sectarian competition, or the pursuit of ideological legitimacy. Instead, this book seeks a mature dialogue—one capable of learning from another society's experience without surrendering the intellectual sovereignty and identity of either nation.

The concepts of formal independence, structural colonialism, the displacement of the people from the architecture of the state, and *Invited Colonialism* are presented as analytical theses, not as criminal accusations or determinations of liability against particular actors. These concepts are used to examine structures of power that allow external interests to gain influence through economic dependence, resource concessions, debt, technology, data, education, media, knowledge, contracts, and decisions made by domestic elites.

Invited Colonialism, in particular, is not intended to claim that Indonesia has been recolonized in the legal sense of international law. The term refers to circumstances in which domination or dependency gains access through invitations, policies, compromises, concessions, or decisions originating from within the country itself. This concept must be tested against facts and must never be used as a substitute for research with suspicion.

This book rejects conspiracy theories as a method of inquiry. Sensitive claims concerning the involvement of states, institutions, corporations, religious networks, intelligence agencies, or political elites must be supported by archives, official documents, empirical data, academic sources, or other verifiable evidence.

Where an issue remains contested, it must be presented as a matter of debate rather than transformed from allegation into certainty.

This book also does not call upon foreign actors to intervene in Indonesia's domestic affairs. Sekolah Negarawan respects the sovereignty of Indonesia and Iran, the principle of non-intervention, international law, and the right of every nation to determine its own constitutional path. The dialogue proposed here is not intended to engineer political power, support a change of government, build hidden networks of influence, or interfere with domestic governmental processes.

The cooperation proposed is legitimate, open, peaceful, dignified, and knowledge-based civilizational cooperation. It may take the form of historical dialogue, intellectual exchange, research, comparative constitutional studies, technological development, artificial intelligence, economics, human development, leadership, and the strengthening of value systems that serve the people.

Sekolah Negarawan does not position *pesantren*, *hawzah*, or universities as the primary formal programs of cooperation. These institutions may form part of the wider social and intellectual ecosystem to be studied, engaged in dialogue, or examined in terms of their commitment to the people. Sekolah Negarawan, however, is not an institution seeking to establish formal religious education programs or conventional academic networks as its primary objective.

The chosen orientation is the **People's Path**. The People's Path means identifying, understanding,

connecting, and strengthening those nodes of society that genuinely care for the people, defend them, educate them, fulfill their rights, protect their dignity, and refuse to abandon them. Such nodes may take many forms: families, villages, communities, religious scholars, cultural figures, professionals, economic actors, social institutions, knowledge centers, or parts of the state that continue to serve with integrity.

Sekolah Negarawan places human beings and the people at the center, while viewing the state as an instrument of civilization. The state must neither be worshiped as an end in itself nor weakened to the point that it loses its ability to protect its people. The state must be strong enough to safeguard sovereignty, yet sufficiently restrained so that it does not usurp the sovereignty of the people.

Within this framework, the proposed path of transformation does not begin with the seizure of political power, but with the restoration of values and the saving of human beings:



The revival of Islamic values envisioned here does not mean the formalization of religious symbols, the export of a particular sectarian tradition, or the use

of religion to legitimize the dominance of officeholders. It means bringing trustworthiness into leadership, justice into law and the economy, knowledge into decision-making, consultation into the exercise of power, protection for the vulnerable, and the common good into the administration of the state.

It is from this position that this thesis is presented. Not from outside Indonesia to judge Indonesia, but from within a deep concern for the fate of the Indonesian people; not to ask Iran to show Indonesia the way, but to invite Iran into dialogue as a nation that itself possesses a profound historical experience, resilience, spirituality, and struggle against global domination. Not to build hostility toward the world, but to ensure that Indonesia is capable of engaging with the world on sovereign terms.

Ultimately, the position of this book is simple and firm:

Human beings must be protected before power is expanded. The people must be restored as the owners of sovereignty before the state is strengthened. Values must be revived before systems are redesigned. History must be read honestly before the future is engineered. And cooperation among nations is worthy only when it respects sovereignty, rejects domination, and serves justice and the common good of the people.

A. Paradigm and Methodological Note

This manuscript is built upon a framework that understands human beings, value systems, the people, leadership, the state, history, and civilization as interconnected elements. Indonesia is not examined merely as a modern state established on 17 August 1945, but as the outcome of a long historical journey in which the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago have interacted with religion, trade, knowledge, political power, colonialism, technology, and various networks of world civilizations.

Accordingly, this manuscript does not rely on a single academic discipline as its sole analytical lens. It brings together perspectives from civilizational studies, history, constitutional law, international relations, economics, institutional studies, technology, education, religion, culture, and leadership. A multidisciplinary approach is necessary because Indonesia's challenges cannot be adequately explained as problems of power, economics, law, religion, or history in isolation.

The central paradigm of this manuscript may be expressed as follows: **civilization is built by human beings. Human beings are shaped by value systems. Value systems develop through history. History is shaped by encounters among different civilizational networks. Leadership emerges from human society. States are shaped through leadership. And through the state, a nation determines whether its people become the holders of sovereignty or merely a source of legitimacy for political power.**

This framework is not intended to suggest a wholly linear cause-and-effect relationship. In reality, human beings, values, history, leadership, the state, and civilization influence one another in reciprocal ways. The state may be shaped by its people, but the state also shapes people through education, law, economics, media, technology, and public policy. Likewise, value systems may shape leadership, while leadership can strengthen, transform, or undermine the values of society.

This paradigm is employed to avoid the tendency to explain the challenges of a nation solely through the qualities of individual leaders. This manuscript recognizes the importance of a leader's moral character and capabilities, but does not regard leaders as emerging independently from the society and systems that produce them. Leadership is understood as the product of an interaction among personal qualities, education, culture, social structures, governmental processes, constitutional design, economic interests, and historical legacies.

Therefore, the methodological question posed by this manuscript is not merely, **"Who leads Indonesia?"** The more fundamental questions are: **"What kind of human beings are shaped by Indonesian society and the Indonesian state? What kind of system selects its leaders? And what structures determine the limits of their actions?"**

1. Human Beings as the Center of Analysis

This manuscript places **human beings at the center of analysis, rather than the state**. The state is understood as an instrument established to safeguard human life, dignity, security, justice, and the common good. The state is necessary, but it is not the ultimate purpose of civilization.

Accordingly, the success of a state should not be measured solely by governmental stability, economic growth, the existence of elections, institutional completeness, or international recognition. A state must also be assessed by the condition of the people who live within it: whether they have access to justice, education, livelihoods, legal protection, meaningful spaces for deliberation, knowledge, and the ability to participate in determining the direction of their common life.

The term **"the people"** in this manuscript is not used merely as a statistical category or as a collection of voters. The people are understood as human beings who, in both moral and constitutional terms, are the **holders of sovereignty**. Therefore, the question of the people's disappearance from the architecture of the state is understood as a substantive problem: the people may remain named in the constitution and called upon during elections, yet they may not necessarily exercise meaningful control over the structures of power.

2. Islam as a Foundational Value System

This manuscript approaches **Islam as a foundational value system**, rather than as a identity that must be uniformly formalized. Islam is understood

through the values of **tawhid, amanah, justice, knowledge, deliberation, responsibility, balance, protection of the vulnerable, solidarity with the oppressed, and the pursuit of the common good**.

The term **"foundational"** indicates that values precede structures. State institutions, law, technology, economics, education, and political power must ultimately be assessed according to the values they serve. A system may appear modern and efficient without necessarily being just. An institution may employ religious symbols without necessarily fulfilling its trust and responsibility.

Therefore, the **revival of Islamic values** discussed in this manuscript does not mean transferring Iran's constitutional system to Indonesia, exporting a particular *madhhab*, reducing religion to political symbolism, or placing the state under the control of religious groups. Rather, it means bringing Islamic values into the way human beings are educated, leaders exercise authority, power is governed, economies are developed, knowledge is pursued, and the people are protected.

The framework of transformation proposed in this manuscript is:



This framework demonstrates that renewal does not begin with the seizure of the state. It begins with **human beings, value systems, and the spaces of everyday life in which human beings are formed**.

3. Distinguishing Revelation from Historical Actors

One of the central methodological principles of this manuscripts is to distinguish **religion as a source of values from human beings as historical actors**. Islam is understood as revelation. Meanwhile, Arab, Persian, Indian, Chinese, European, Japanese, American, Russian, and other peoples and societies are understood as historical actors. Each historical actor may contribute knowledge, trade, technology, culture, and other forms of benefit.

At the same time, every historical actor may also bring particular interests, forms of dominance, social hierarchies, influence, and the limitations inherent in human affairs.

Through this principle, the contribution of Arab networks to Islamic propagation, education, trade, chains of scholarly transmission, and the formation of Islamic identity in the Indonesian archipelago is fully acknowledged. However, the actions of Arab individuals, Arab elites, Arab states, or particular Middle Eastern networks are not automatically regarded as representations of Islam.

Conversely, criticism of Arab historical actors should not be treated as criticism of Islamic revelation. The Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language, but this fact does not make every political, cultural, or

economic interest of Arab groups identical with the will of God.

The same principle is applied to Iran. The experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the thought of Sayyid Ali Khamenei may be studied as historical, spiritual, political, and civilizational experiences. However, these experiences are not treated as institutional truths that Indonesia must reproduce or adopt wholesale.

4. Historical-Structural Approach

This manuscript adopts a **historical-structural approach**. History is not understood merely as a sequence of dates, figures, wars, and changes of political power. Rather, history is examined as a process through which structures are formed, reproduced, and carried forward beyond the period in which they originally emerged.

Colonialism, for example, is not understood solely as the occupation of territory by a foreign power. It is also examined through its legacies in law, bureaucracy, extractive economic systems, education, social classification, elite mentality, and the ways in which the state perceives and governs its people. Some of these legacies may continue to shape society even after formal colonial rule has ended.

Through this approach, the manuscript distinguishes **formal independence from substantive independence**. Formal independence is marked by territory, government, a constitution, a national flag, diplomatic relations, and international recognition.

Substantive independence, by contrast, requires the people and the state to possess the capacity to determine their own development, master knowledge and technology, safeguard their resources, protect their data, and exercise meaningful control over their economic and constitutional structures.

The term **"structural colonialism"** is used to examine patterns of domination that persist or develop through structures rather than through direct territorial occupation. Meanwhile, **"Invited Colonialism"** is used to examine situations in which external influence gains access through invitations, concessions, policies, compromises, dependencies, or decisions made by domestic elites.

Both concepts are treated as **analytical tools, not political slogans**. Their use must be supported by evidence concerning the actors involved, the mechanisms through which influence operates, the interests at stake, the resulting impacts, and causal relationships that can be examined and tested.

5. Indonesia as the Product of Global Encounters

Indonesia is not examined as a nation shaped entirely from within itself. The Indonesian archipelago has long been connected to **Arabia, Persia, India, China, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and the wider Indian Ocean networks** long before the direct arrival of European colonial powers.

Subsequently, Portugal, Spain, the VOC, the Dutch East Indies, Japan, the United States, the People's Republic of China, and various other powers influenced

Indonesia's historical trajectory in different ways and at different periods. The Russian Federation is discussed only to the extent that evidence demonstrates a substantive historical or contemporary role.

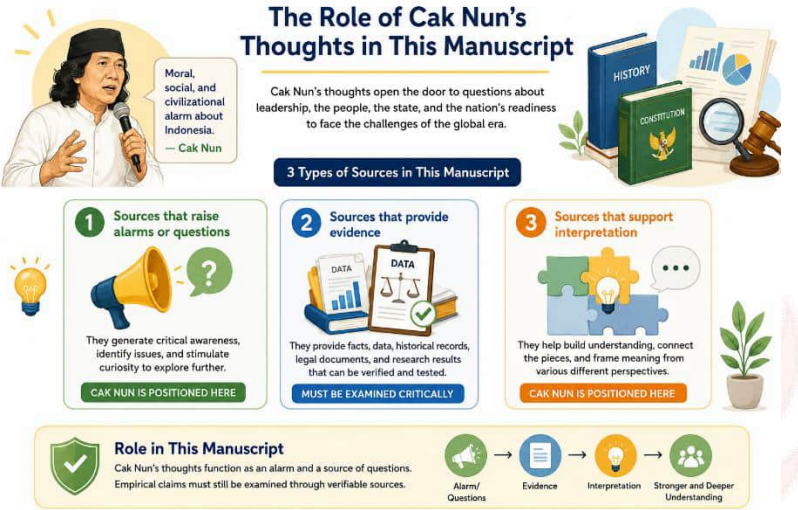
Beyond states, this manuscript also examines the role of **international financial institutions, global corporations, international organizations, consulting firms, media, education systems, religious networks, digital technologies, data, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and domestic elites**.

This approach does not assume that every form of external influence constitutes colonialism. The exchange of knowledge, trade, diplomacy, technology, and international cooperation are normal features of relations among nations.

An analysis of colonialism becomes relevant only when there is evidence of **domination, structural inequality, dependency, loss of control, or the transfer of benefits in ways that disadvantage the Indonesian people**.

Accordingly, the central question is not simply, **"Does this influence originate from outside the country?"** The more important questions are: **"How is the relationship structured? Who controls the decisions? Who receives the benefits? Who bears the risks? And do the people of Indonesia retain meaningful sovereignty?"**

6. Cak Nun as an Alarm, Not the Sole Basis of Evidence



The thought of **Emha Ainun Nadjib, widely known as Cak Nun**, is used in this manuscript as a **moral, social, and civilizational alarm** concerning Indonesia.

His reflections on the crisis of leadership, the abandonment of the people, the state that has yet to fully become a home for its people, the need to understand Indonesia from the village level, and the nation's unpreparedness in confronting globalization, modernization, the struggle for knowledge, and artificial intelligence serve as entry points for formulating the questions examined in this manuscript.

However, Cak Nun's thought is **not treated as a substitute for historical data, legal evidence, or academic research**. His statements function as critical intuitions and cultural readings that must subsequently

be examined against historical records, constitutional provisions, empirical data, and social realities.

Accordingly, this manuscript distinguishes among **three functions of sources**:

- Sources that raise alarms or generate questions;
- Sources that provide evidence;
- Sources that help develop interpretations.

Cak Nun is primarily positioned within the **first and third functions**. Empirical claims, however, must still be examined and substantiated through sources that can be independently verified.

7. Sayid Ali Khamenei as a Mirror of Iran's Experience

Sayid Ali Khamenei is presented in this manuscript as a mirror of Iran's experience in **spirituality, resilience, tawakkul (reliance upon God), values-based leadership, solidarity with the *mustad'afin* (the oppressed and marginalized), the understanding of Muslims as one body, and steadfastness in the face of global pressure and hegemony.**

His thought is not presented as a doctrine that Indonesia must accept. Rather, it is examined within the context of **Iranian history, the Islamic Revolution, Iran's constitutional structure, international pressure, and the Iranian people's struggle to preserve their sovereignty.**

The comparative methodology employed here is not **"imitating Iran,"** but rather **"learning through**

difference." Iran's experience is used to raise questions for Indonesia, such as: How can spirituality be preserved within state leadership? How can a nation maintain its dignity amid global pressure? How can solidarity with the oppressed transcend sectarian boundaries? And how can knowledge, technology, resilience, and sovereignty be brought together?

Iran's answers are not automatically Indonesia's answers. Every lesson must be interpreted according to **Indonesia's own history, society, constitutional framework, and the needs of its people.**

Cak Nun and Khamenei are not presented as a pair of figures who are to be equated. **Cak Nun reads Indonesia's wounds through the lens of culture and the lived experience of the people, while Khamenei reflects Iran's experience of state leadership and civilizational resilience.** Both therefore serve as sources of reflection from different historical positions.

8. The People's Path Approach

This manuscript uses the term **"People's Path"** rather than simply **"community-based approach".** The term *community* may refer broadly to a social group or collective. By contrast, the **People's Path** carries a clearer standard of solidarity and commitment to the people.

The People's Path means identifying and building networks and nodes that genuinely **care for the people, defend their rights, educate and empower them, fulfill their basic needs, safeguard their dignity, and do not contribute to abandoning or orphaning the people.**

These nodes may exist within families, villages, communities, social organizations, cultural groups, professional circles, economic institutions, *pesantren*, universities, knowledge centers, or even within parts of the state apparatus. However, institutional status does not automatically make a particular node part of the People's Path. The measure is its **actual conduct and commitment to human dignity and the interests of the people.**

Pesantren, *hawzah*, and universities are not positioned as the primary formal programs of cooperation proposed by Sekolah Negarawan. Rather, these institutions are understood as part of a broader ecosystem that can be engaged in dialogue and critically examined to determine whether they genuinely **educate, care for, defend, and strengthen the sovereignty of the people.**

9. Levels of Claims and Academic Caution

This manuscript makes a clear distinction between several types of statements.



First, verified facts, namely statements supported by documents, archives, official data, or academic research that can be independently examined.

Second, interpretations, namely explanations concerning the meaning, relationships, or consequences of particular facts. Interpretations must be presented as analytical conclusions, rather than being disguised as facts.

Third, inferences, namely conclusions drawn from a number of facts even when the direct relationship between them is not explicitly established by the sources. Inferences must be appropriately qualified and must not be presented with a level of certainty greater than the available evidence allows.

Fourth, normative theses, namely propositions concerning how the state, leadership, and relations among nations ought to be structured. Normative theses represent the position put forward by Sekolah

Negarawan and remain open to debate and critical examination.

Fifth, research hypotheses, namely propositions that warrant further investigation but cannot yet be treated as established conclusions.

This distinction is particularly important when discussing **the events of 1965, intelligence networks, global corporations, the influence of international financial institutions, Middle Eastern networks, technology, data, and artificial intelligence**. The strength of the language used must always be proportionate to the strength of the evidence available.

10. Sources and Hierarchy of Evidence

This study draws upon several categories of sources.

First, primary sources, including constitutions, laws and regulations, decisions and resolutions of state institutions, court judgments, treaties, colonial archives, diplomatic documents, declassified records, official speeches, government reports, organizational records, and official statistical data.

Second, academic literature, including books, journal articles, dissertations, research reports, and publications by research centers with clearly established methodologies.

Third, publications by international organizations, financial institutions, corporations, technology companies, and relevant policy institutions. Such sources are used with due

consideration of the institutional interests and perspectives of their authors or issuing bodies.

Fourth, intellectual works, speeches, interviews, and statements by figures such as Cak Nun and Sayid Ali Khamenei. These sources are used to understand paradigms, values, moral diagnoses, and civilizational experiences, rather than being automatically treated as factual evidence for every historical claim.

Fifth, contemporary open-source data and publicly available materials that can help map developments in economics, technology, media, education, data, and international relations. Open sources must be cross-checked against other sources when they concern sensitive or consequential claims.

When sources conflict, this manuscript does not select a source simply because it supports the thesis being advanced. **Disagreements must be acknowledged, the credibility of each source must be assessed, and conclusions must be calibrated to the level of certainty supported by the available evidence.**

11. Rejection of Conspiracy Theories

This manuscript rejects conspiracy theories as a substitute for research. The fact that states, corporations, international institutions, domestic elites, or religious networks have particular interests does not, in itself, prove the existence of a coordinated conspiracy.

To establish claims of **coordination, intervention, operations, or particular interests**, evidence is required concerning the relevant actors,

objectives, mechanisms, timing, relationships, and concrete actions. **Similar outcomes do not necessarily prove a shared plan.**

This approach is essential to ensure that criticism of **structural colonialism** and **Invited Colonialism** does not turn into unfounded suspicion. **The sharpness of the diagnosis must be accompanied by the discipline of evidence.**

12. Approach to Contemporary Facts

For contemporary issues such as technology, artificial intelligence, data, government policies, economic cooperation, investment, diplomatic relations, and geopolitical conflicts, the manuscript must rely on up-to-date sources.

Any claim that may change over time must be rechecked when the relevant chapter is written or updated. Investment figures, ownership structures, technology policies, positions held by public officials, legal regulations, and developments in ongoing conflicts should not rely solely on outdated knowledge.

Terms such as "allegedly," "according to the available documents," "as far as the evidence indicates," or "remains contested" should be used whenever the level of certainty is not conclusive. Such caution is not a weakness in the argument. It is an essential part of scholarly integrity.

13. Comparative Approach: Indonesia-Iran

The comparison between Indonesia and Iran is not intended to determine which country is better.

Rather, comparison is used to identify differences in historical experience, choices, resilience, failures, and potential lessons.

Each comparison must take into account differences in the historical formation of the state, religious and sectarian traditions, constitutional structures, relations between the state and religious scholars, social conditions, experiences of colonialism and revolution, geopolitical positions, and the respective social structures of the two countries.

Therefore, Iranian concepts or institutions cannot be mechanically transferred to Indonesia. What can be exchanged are **knowledge, experience, questions, principles, and lessons drawn from reflection.**

14. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This manuscript recognizes that the history and civilization of Indonesia encompass an exceptionally broad field. Not every kingdom, community, region, sect, trade network, or international actor can be examined in depth.

The selection of actors is based on their relevance to the central theses concerning formal independence, structural colonialism, the exclusion of the people from the architecture of the state, Invited Colonialism, and the revival of Islamic values.

This manuscript also does not claim that all of Indonesia's problems originate from foreign influence. Domestic elites, national policy choices, internal conflicts, political culture, social inequality, and institutional failures are equally important factors.

External influence becomes relevant to the concept of structural colonialism only when it intersects with domestic structures that allow domination to take place. Therefore, any discussion of external powers must always be accompanied by an examination of the responsibility and role of domestic actors.

15. Methodological Purpose

The purpose of this methodology is not to produce a narrative that is entirely neutral in the sense of being free from values. This manuscript openly takes a position in favor of human dignity, the people, justice, knowledge, sovereignty, and the common good.

However, commitment to these values must not come at the expense of intellectual honesty. Data that contradict the thesis must still be acknowledged. The contributions of actors who are subject to criticism must still be recognized. The weaknesses of those who are supported must also be examined critically.

Accordingly, objectivity in this manuscript is not understood as the absence of values, but as the willingness to apply the same standards of evidence to all actors.

Based on this paradigm and methodology, the thesis is constructed so that Indonesia is understood through its people; the people are understood through human beings and their value systems; value systems are understood through history; history is understood through networks of global civilizations; and the state is evaluated according to its ability to safeguard the sovereignty of the people.

Ultimately, this methodology is intended to ensure that the Indonesia–Iran dialogue does not rest upon romanticism, suspicion, personality cults, propaganda, or short-term political interests. Dialogue must be built upon knowledge, evidence, respect for differences, and the courage to examine history honestly.

It is through this way of thinking that Sekolah Negarawan presents its thesis—not to offer a final answer, but to provide a framework that can be examined and tested in understanding how values shape human beings, how human beings produce leadership, how leadership builds the state, and how the state determines whether civilization will protect its people or abandon them.

B. Framework for Reading This Report

This manuscript is structured as a unified argument. Each chapter is not an isolated discussion, but part of a thesis that develops progressively. Therefore, readers are encouraged to understand the manuscript as a continuous line of thought, rather than as a collection of separate essays on history, constitutional law, religion, or international relations.

When a chapter is read in isolation, there is a risk that the reader may arrive at an incomplete conclusion. For example, the discussion of the Arab world is not intended merely as a discussion of Arabs. The discussion of the Netherlands is not simply a history of colonialism. Likewise, the discussions of the United States, the People's Republic of China, the Russian

Federation, and Iran are not standalone analyses of bilateral relations. All of them form part of a broader effort to understand how various networks of global civilization have shaped Indonesian people, Indonesian leadership, and the architecture of the Indonesian state.

Similarly, the discussions of the constitution, structural colonialism, Invited Colonialism, the exclusion of the people from the architecture of the state, and the revival of Islamic values are not intended as separate issues. All of these concepts are interconnected and form a single analytical framework for understanding Indonesia's journey as a nation.

Readers should also understand that this manuscript does not begin its analysis with the state. The state is not the starting point of the argument.

The conceptual framework is as follows:



This sequence indicates that the renewal of a nation does not begin with the seizure of power or institutional change alone. The state is the outcome of a much longer process. Values shape human beings. Human beings shape society. Society produces leadership. Leadership builds the state. The state then determines whether the people truly become the owners

of sovereignty or merely a source of legitimacy for political power.

Therefore, when this manuscript discusses the state, what is ultimately being discussed is the human being. When it discusses the constitution, what is being tested is its commitment to the people. When it discusses history, what is being sought is not merely a chronology of events, but the process through which values, leadership, and structures of power have been formed.

Readers are also expected to clearly distinguish between the three layers of analysis used throughout this manuscript.

The first layer is historical: the examination of facts, documents, archives, developments in political power, economics, colonialism, diplomacy, and international relations that have shaped Indonesia from its early history to the contemporary era.

The second layer is analytical: the examination of how these historical facts have shaped state structures, the relationship between the people and political power, the education system, the socio-economic order, bureaucratic culture, and various forms of structural colonialism that may continue to develop into the present.

The third layer is normative: the proposals of Sekolah Negarawan concerning the direction of renewal, grounded in Islamic values, the strengthening of human beings, the restoration of the people as the owners of sovereignty, and the development of a state oriented toward the common good.

These three layers must be read together. Readers are discouraged from drawing normative conclusions without understanding their historical foundations, or from drawing historical conclusions without understanding the normative objectives being pursued.

When reading the figures cited throughout the manuscript, readers are also expected to understand the particular function each figure serves within the overall argument.

The thought of Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) is used as a moral and social alarm concerning the condition of Indonesia. His reflections on the people, villages, leadership, globalization, the state, and humanity provide an entry point for examining Indonesia's problems from within the lived experience of its people.

By contrast, the thought of Ayatollah Sayid Ali Khamenei is used as a mirror of Iran's experience with spirituality, national resilience, values-based leadership, solidarity with the mustad'afin, and the ability to preserve national dignity amid geopolitical pressure. His presence in this manuscript is not intended as an invitation for Indonesia to adopt Iran's constitutional system or follow a particular sectarian tradition.

These two figures are neither presented for direct comparison nor treated as equivalent. They serve as two mirrors emerging from two different historical experiences. Cak Nun helps readers understand Indonesia's wounds from within the lived experience of its people. The experience of Sayid Ali Khamenei helps readers examine how a nation seeks to preserve its

values, identity, and sovereignty in confronting global challenges. Both enrich the perspective of this manuscript, but neither is treated as a sole source of truth.

Readers should also understand that the term "world" in this manuscript does not refer solely to relations among states. The "world" encompasses the networks that have shaped Indonesia, including Arab, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, VOC, Dutch colonial, Japanese, American, Chinese, and Russian influences; international financial institutions; global corporations; digital technology; artificial intelligence; media; education; international organizations; Middle Eastern networks; and domestic elites interacting with these various forces.

Thus, when this manuscript states that Iran cannot understand Indonesia without understanding the world, "the world" does not mean geographical space alone. It refers to the historical networks through which Indonesia has been shaped.

Readers are likewise discouraged from understanding structural colonialism or Invited Colonialism as accusations directed at any particular state. These concepts are analytical tools for examining how dependency, domination, or influence can operate through law, economics, education, technology, data, media, debt, contracts, international standards, or decisions made by domestic elites—without necessarily involving military occupation.

Similarly, the term "People's Path" is not intended merely as a slogan. The People's Path is a way

of understanding Indonesia through networks and nodes that genuinely care for the people, defend their rights, educate them, fulfill their rights and needs, safeguard their dignity, and do not contribute to abandoning or orphaning them. The People's Path may be found in villages, families, communities, social institutions, the business sector, cultural spaces, state institutions, and various other forms of social life.

This manuscript also does not ask readers to search for parties to blame. Indonesia's history has been shaped by complex interactions between internal and external factors. Readers are therefore encouraged to avoid reducing these complexities to oppositions between good nations and evil nations, East and West, Islam and non-Islam, or the people and the state. Such approaches would obscure precisely the complexity that this manuscript seeks to understand.

Instead, readers are invited to assess every actor according to the same standards: to what extent does an actor contribute to knowledge, justice, the common good, and the strengthening of the people's sovereignty, and to what extent does an actor contribute to domination, dependency, or the weakening of a nation's ability to determine its own destiny?

Ultimately, this manuscript does not ask readers to accept every argument presented. On the contrary, Sekolah Negarawan invites every reader to test, critique, enrich, and refine its theses on the basis of historical evidence, developments in knowledge, the experiences of individual nations, and their respective intellectual traditions.

The dialogue envisioned here is not a dialogue aimed at determining who wins. It is a dialogue capable of expanding our understanding of how human beings, values, history, leadership, and the state shape one another in the course of a civilization's development.

If readers follow this entire line of reasoning, the central thesis of the manuscript will become clearer as a whole.

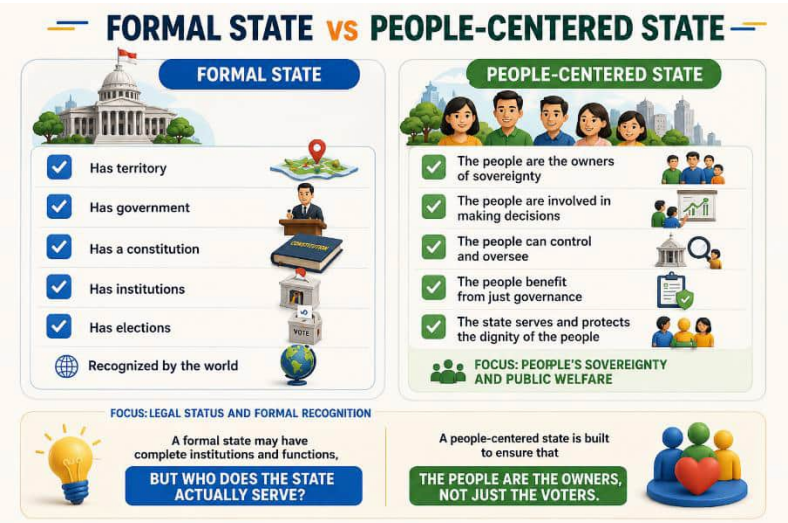
Indonesia cannot be understood solely through its government. Indonesia cannot be understood solely through its constitution. Indonesia cannot be understood solely through its colonial history. Indonesia cannot be understood solely through Islam as the religion of its majority. Indonesia must be understood through the human beings shaped by the long historical encounter of diverse global civilizations.

Therefore, to understand Indonesia is to understand the world that has shaped the Indonesian people. From human beings emerges leadership. From leadership, the state is built. And through the state, a nation determines whether its people truly become the owners of sovereignty.

Through this framework, Sekolah Negarawan invites academics, scholars, strategic studies centers, policymakers, and civil society in the Islamic Republic of Iran to enter into a dialogue grounded in knowledge, respect for the sovereignty of each nation, the courage to examine history honestly, and a shared commitment to building a civilization that is more just, more humane, and more dignified.

Introduction

A. Indonesia as a Formally Complete State



Indonesia is formally a state. It possesses a recognized territory, a population, a government, a constitution, a President, a parliament, judicial institutions, armed forces, police, a bureaucracy, elections, diplomatic relations, a flag, a currency, and status as a subject of international law. The Republic of Indonesia is recognized as part of the community of nations and performs the functions generally associated with a modern state.

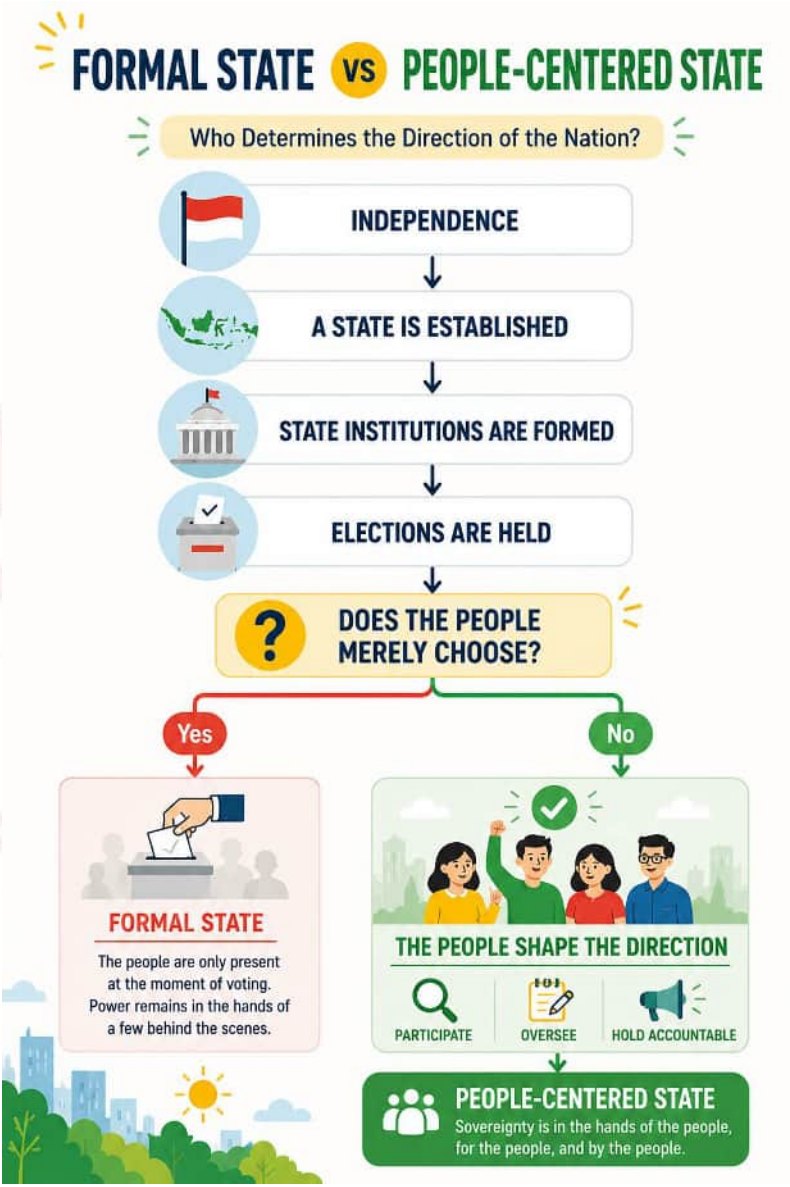
Nothing in this report is intended to deny this reality. Indonesia is not a territory without a government, a nation without a constitution, or an entity lacking international recognition. The Proclamation of 17 August 1945 marked the establishment of the

Republic of Indonesia as an independent state and constituted an important milestone in the long struggle to liberate the Nusantara from colonialism.

Yet the formal existence of a state does not automatically answer the more fundamental questions: For whom is the state established, who owns it, and how should power within it be exercised?

A state may possess a complete set of institutions, but institutional completeness does not necessarily demonstrate that the people have become the owners of power. A state may hold elections, but the conduct of elections does not necessarily guarantee that the people control the direction of the state once their votes have been cast. A state may have a constitution declaring that sovereignty rests with the people, but such a declaration is not necessarily fully translated into the institutional architecture and actual practices of power.

It is at this point that the distinction between a formal state and a people-centered state becomes significant. A formal state is a state that fulfills the legal, administrative, institutional, and international-recognition requirements of statehood. A people-centered state, by contrast, is a state that genuinely places the people as the owners of sovereignty, the owners of the direction of development, and the primary reference point for the exercise of all public power.



A people-centered state is not merely a state that uses the word "people" in its constitution. It is a state that designs its entire structure of power to ensure that

the people do not merely vote, but also have a meaningful position in determining, overseeing, correcting, and exercising control over the course of the state.

It is from this perspective that this report begins. Indonesia is not being questioned as a state under international law. What is being questioned is whether Indonesia has fully succeeded in finding a form of state that is substantively owned by its people.

This question does not constitute a rejection of the Republic of Indonesia. On the contrary, it is part of the responsibility to ensure that independence does not stop at a change of flag, a change of rulers, or diplomatic recognition, but genuinely brings freedom and dignity to the human beings who live within it.

B. Cak Nun as an Alarm about a State That Has Not Yet Become the People's Home

On various occasions, Emha Ainun Nadjib, or Cak Nun, has expressed a statement that sounds simple but contains a profound civilizational critique: "Hopefully, one day you will have a state of your own."

This statement should not be read literally as a denial that the Republic of Indonesia is a state. Cak Nun was not presenting an argument concerning international law, rejecting the Proclamation of 17 August 1945, or claiming that Indonesia has no government.

The statement is better understood as a moral and civilizational alarm. Indonesia does formally have a

state. But have the Indonesian people truly had a state in the substantive sense? Do the people experience the state as a shared home that protects, nurtures, educates, fulfills their rights, safeguards their dignity, and provides them with space to determine their own future? Or is the state more often experienced as a distant, vertical, and administrative structure that approaches the people primarily when it needs their legitimacy, obedience, taxes, votes, or sacrifices?

This question is important because the state does not exist only in constitutional texts and institutional structures. The state also exists in the everyday experiences of its people.

The state is present when a child gains or loses access to the right to education. The state is present when farmers face prices, land, fertilizer, markets, and import policies. The state is present when workers work, when fishermen go to sea, when indigenous communities defend their living spaces, when citizens encounter the law, when families access public health services, and when people bear the consequences of economic decisions they never had the opportunity to formulate.

Therefore, the existence of a state cannot be assessed merely by the grandeur of government buildings, the orderly conduct of official ceremonies, the number of regulations, or the regularity of elections. The state must be assessed by the extent to which people experience power as working for them, rather than merely operating in their name.

Even in his early work, Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya (Indonesia as Part of My Village), Cak Nun had already suggested that Indonesia cannot be understood solely from the centers of power. Indonesia must also be understood from the village, from human beings, from the people, and from the spaces of everyday life where values are truly tested.

This way of reading Indonesia is important to the present report. Indonesia must not be viewed solely from Jakarta, the presidential palace, parliament, ministries, courts, national statistics, or official statements. Indonesia must also be understood from the places where people live, work, worship, care for their families, endure crises, and sustain their hopes.

If the state appears complete from the center but is not felt to be present in villages, homes, markets, schools, workplaces, and the everyday spaces of the people, then the state may already be formally complete, but not yet civilizationally fulfilled.

Sekolah Negarawan begins from this concern. Yet this report does not stop at the complaint that the state has failed to side with the people. It seeks to investigate the deeper roots of the problem: Is this condition caused by the conduct of leaders, the system of government, constitutional design, the colonial legacy, economic structures, global influences, the prevailing value system, or the complex interaction among all of these factors?

C. Leadership Crisis and the Decline of Civilization

Cak Nun reminds us that one of the causes of the decline of civilization in Indonesia, and perhaps also in the wider world, is leadership. This problem does not occur only within government. A leadership crisis can also emerge in social life, the economy, culture, education, and even religion and the practice of mahdhah worship.

This warning is important because society often reduces leadership to formal positions. In reality, leadership exists in every sphere of life. Parents lead families. Teachers lead the educational process. Ulama lead religious communities. Entrepreneurs lead economic organizations. Intellectuals shape the way people think. Cultural figures shape social sensitivity. Public officials lead state administration. The President and the highest institutions of the state shape the direction of national life.

When leadership loses its values, the resulting damage does not remain confined to a single institution. It spreads into the way people understand power, honor, wealth, knowledge, religion, and the people themselves.

A leadership crisis emerges when public office is no longer understood as a trust (amanah), but as an investment in power. It emerges when individuals spend enormous amounts of money to obtain political office and then regard that office as a means of recovering their investment. It also emerges when leaders speak in the name of the people while having

little understanding of the suffering experienced by those they lead.

Cak Nun criticizes a condition in which leaders have never experienced the poverty endured by ordinary people, never truly shared in the hardship of social suffering, never experienced the uncertainty of making a living, and never felt the anxieties faced by ordinary families, yet still possess the authority to make decisions that increase their suffering.

This criticism does not mean that someone must experience every form of suffering endured by the people before being qualified to lead. What is at issue is the loss of empathy, inner depth, and the capacity to understand the realities of other people's lives.

A leader who has never experienced hunger can still stand up for the hungry if that leader possesses faith, knowledge, empathy, and a sense of responsibility. Conversely, someone who once lived in poverty may forget that experience after gaining power. Therefore, social experience matters, but moral character and value orientation are far more decisive.

From this emerges one of the central moral theses of this report: Indonesia's crisis is not merely a crisis of systems, but also a crisis of value-based leadership.

However, the leadership crisis cannot be explained solely as a personal failure. Leaders are shaped by educational systems, culture, economic structures, candidate-selection mechanisms, the financing of political power, institutional design, media, technology, social networks, and the values prevailing within society.

When the cost of obtaining power becomes excessively high, power can easily turn into a transaction. When political parties prioritize electoral victory over the formation of statesmen, the state risks producing officeholders without a deeper sense of statesmanship. When education focuses primarily on producing workers and degree seekers, a nation may lack the people capable of carrying the trust and responsibility of civilization.

Therefore, replacing leaders without reforming the system that shapes and selects them risks merely changing faces without changing direction.

Conversely, reforming the system without developing the quality of human beings is also insufficient. Constitutions, institutions, and procedures may be well designed, but they are ultimately operated by human beings. A good system can be corrupted by people who have lost their values. Good people, meanwhile, can also be constrained or broken by a system that forces them to submit to stronger interests.

This report therefore does not choose between reforming human beings and reforming systems. Both must be pursued as part of a single process: Values shape human beings → human beings produce leadership → leadership builds the state → and the state, in turn, shapes human beings through law, education, the economy, technology, and culture.

D. From the Kingdoms of the Nusantara to the Modern Republic

Modern Indonesia emerged from an exceptionally complex historical landscape. Before becoming a republic, the Nusantara consisted of kingdoms, sultanates, indigenous communities, villages, trading regions, centers of religious learning, and various forms of social organization, each possessing its own rules and systems of values.

According to Cak Nun, when the various kingdoms and communities of the Nusantara were eventually united into the republican state proclaimed on 17 August 1945, Indonesia underwent more than an administrative transformation. Indonesia also entered a process of globalization of values and ideas.

The republic is a modern form of state that emerged from particular intellectual and historical traditions. Democracy, parliament, written constitutions, citizenship, national bureaucracy, positive law, elections, the separation of powers, and modern administrative systems did not emerge uniformly from the entirety of the Nusantara's local historical experience.

These concepts are not inherently detrimental. Some represent the outcome of humanity's long historical development in its efforts to restrain power, protect rights, prevent arbitrary rule, and organize collective life. However, adopting a particular form of state always requires the corresponding readiness of its people, values, knowledge, institutions, and culture.

The challenge was that Indonesia entered the modern republican form of state amid enormous historical pressures. Independence emerged after a long period of colonialism and military occupation. The new state had to simultaneously defend its territory, unite a highly diverse population, establish a bureaucracy, organize an economy, confront internal conflicts, and survive within an international order that was soon divided by the Cold War.

In other words, Indonesia entered the global order before its internal foundations were fully prepared.

The nation had to practice modern democracy without having undergone a long process of developing a mature civic culture. It had to operate a national bureaucracy while inheriting significant elements of the colonial administrative system. It had to build an independent economy while its productive structures remained dependent on extractive patterns. It had to establish a national education system while large segments of the population still lacked adequate access to knowledge.

Indonesia also had to integrate diverse systems of values—including local traditions, religion, customary law, the legacy of kingdoms, colonial legacies, nationalism, modernism, and global developments—into a single state architecture.

These challenges did not end with independence. Globalization continued to expand and penetrate increasingly deeper layers of social life. In the past, globalization operated through trade, maritime

networks, religion, warfare, colonialism, and diplomacy. Today, it operates through technology, data, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, financial systems, global supply chains, social media, algorithms, education, language, popular culture, and control over knowledge.

If foreign influence during the colonial period could often be identified through armies, ships, trading companies, and colonial administrations, contemporary influence may operate through digital infrastructure, technological standards, contracts, debt, data, software, education systems, consultants, and industrial dependencies.

For this reason, a question raised by Cak Nun becomes increasingly relevant: What do human beings, the people, governments, and the state actually need?

Human beings need values, knowledge, livelihoods, dignity, security, responsible freedom, and space to grow. The people need a state that protects, educates, nurtures, fulfills their rights, and provides meaningful opportunities for participation. Government needs a mandate, capacity, legitimacy, knowledge, and mechanisms of accountability. The state needs a constitution, institutions, governance, strength, and a civilizational direction.

Problems emerge when these needs become conflated. The state may claim that it needs stability, but stability may then be used to restrict the people. Government may claim that it needs authority, but authority may not be accompanied by accountability. Markets may claim that they require freedom, while

economic freedom produces domination. Technology may be presented as an instrument of progress, while people gradually lose control over their data, their work, and even the way they think.

Therefore, the state cannot be understood merely as a collection of institutions. The state is a constitution, an algorithm of power, a system of governance, a distribution of authority, and an architecture of collective life.

The constitution determines where power originates. The algorithm of power determines how power is acquired, distributed, exercised, and maintained. The system of governance determines how resources, knowledge, technology, and public services are managed. The architecture of collective life determines who is protected, who is heard, who receives the benefits, and who bears the burdens.

Thus, the problems of the state do not exist only within constitutional articles. They also exist within practice, incentives, mechanisms for selecting leaders, campaign financing, economic relations, technological control, information structures, and the culture of power.

E. Globalization, Modern Warfare, and Artificial Intelligence

Indonesia today is facing more than economic globalization. It is confronting a war of knowledge, a technological war, a war of narratives, a data war, and a global competition over artificial intelligence.

Modern warfare is not always characterized by direct military attacks. A nation can lose its sovereignty without losing its territory. It may retain its government, flag, and constitution while losing the capacity to determine the direction of its economy, technology, education, information, and culture.

A nation can become dependent on technologies it does not control, on data stored by other parties, on educational systems that do not correspond to its civilizational needs, on financing arrangements that constrain its policy choices, and on media systems that shape public perceptions through opaque algorithms.

Artificial intelligence (AI) amplifies all of these challenges. AI is not merely a tool for accelerating work. It is transforming how knowledge is produced, decisions are made, information is disseminated, work is structured, warfare is conducted, and human beings understand themselves. A country that lacks the necessary knowledge, regulations, infrastructure, data, ethical framework, and human capacity will become a passive user of technologies whose direction and underlying values are determined by others.

Therefore, Indonesia's lack of preparedness for AI is not merely a matter of insufficient computers, data centers, or programming experts. The deeper question is whether Indonesia possesses the value system necessary to determine the purposes for which AI should be used. Does the state understand the people's data as part of national sovereignty?

Does the education system produce human beings who are capable of thinking, rather than merely

using tools? Will technology strengthen the people, or will it instead widen the distance between the people and the centers of power?

Without answers to these questions, modernization may produce technical progress without civilizational independence.

Indonesia may become a vast market for global technologies without becoming a shaper of technological direction. It may have millions of digital users without having meaningful control over its data and algorithms. It may possess modern infrastructure while remaining dependent on the knowledge, capital, equipment, and standards of others.

Under such circumstances, colonialism no longer necessarily appears in its classical form. It can evolve into structural colonialism—a form of domination operating through economic systems, technology, law, education, data, media, and knowledge.

Such domination may even gain access through decisions made from within the country itself. This is what this report refers to as Invited Colonialism: a condition in which external dependence or influence gains access through domestic policies, concessions, contracts, compromises, and decisions made by domestic elites.

This concept is not an accusation against any particular country. It is an analytical tool for examining any relationship by asking: Who makes the decisions? Who receives the benefits? Who bears the risks? And do the people still retain meaningful control over their own future?

F. Sekolah Negarawan Thesis: A Formal State Is Not Necessarily a People's State

Sekolah Negarawan advances the thesis that Indonesia has achieved formal independence, but, in an ideal sense, has not yet fully realized the form of a people's state.

This thesis does not mean that all state institutions have failed, that all leaders have failed to serve the people, or that the entire course of independence has produced no meaningful achievements. Indonesia has made substantial progress, built institutions, expanded access to education, developed its economy, preserved territorial unity, and endured various crises. However, these achievements do not eliminate the need to examine the fundamental design of the state.

Are the people merely voters, or are they genuinely the owners of sovereignty? Does popular sovereignty end once votes are cast, or does it continue to be present throughout the processes of lawmaking, oversight, management of national wealth, and determination of the direction of national development?

Do political parties function as instruments for civic education and the articulation of the people's aspirations, or do they function primarily as gateways to the pursuit of political power? Does parliament exercise the people's mandate, or the mandates of political parties and campaign financiers? Does the bureaucracy serve and nurture the people, or does it

instead preserve the distance between those who govern and the society they govern?

These questions are not intended to produce a rejection of the state. Their purpose is to seek a form of state that is more faithful to the principle of popular sovereignty.

For Sekolah Negarawan, a people's state should meet at least three criteria:

- First, the people must be genuinely positioned as the source and owners of sovereignty, rather than merely as a periodic source of legitimacy.
- Second, all institutions of power must be bound to the purposes of protecting human beings, delivering justice, advancing knowledge, and serving the common good.
- Third, the state must possess the capacity to safeguard its sovereignty from both internal and external domination without becoming a form of power that oppresses its own people.

A people's state is not a weak state. It must be sufficiently strong to safeguard its territory, resources, technology, data, security, and direction of national development. Yet such power must remain constrained by the constitution, values, knowledge, and mechanisms of accountability to the people.

Within this framework, change does not begin with the seizure of political power. Change begins with values and human beings.

The proposed sequence is:



Islam here is not a symbol of government or an instrument for legitimizing power. Islam is positioned as a source of values concerning tawhid, amanah, justice, knowledge, shura, the defense of the vulnerable, and maslahah.

A people's state can only be built when the human beings who operate it possess these values. Conversely, values can endure only when the state protects the spaces in which human beings are formed—such as the family, village, education, culture, religion, knowledge, and social life.

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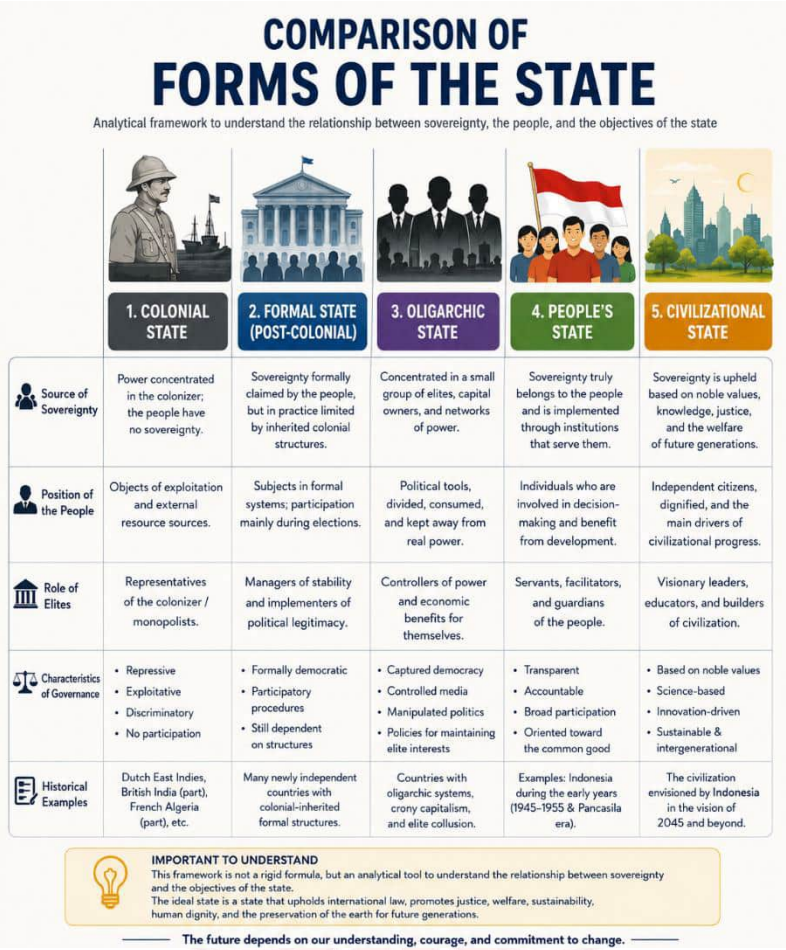


G. Khamenei as a Reflection of Iran's Spirituality and Resilience

From Iran, this report presents Ayatollah Sayid Ali Khamenei as one of the reflections of a nation's experience in seeking to connect spirituality, values-based leadership, national resilience, and the consciousness of the Muslim community.

This discussion is not intended to portray Iran as a country without problems, nor to suggest that the entirety of Iran's experience can be applied to Indonesia. Indonesia and Iran have different histories, societies, constitutions, schools of Islamic thought, and constitutional structures.

Nevertheless, Iran's experience remains important to examine. Iran has faced geopolitical pressure, economic sanctions, security threats, narrative warfare, technological isolation, and competition among global powers. In confronting these circumstances, Iran's leadership has placed considerable emphasis on inner resilience, spirituality, trust in God (tawakkul), scientific knowledge, and the ability to stand independently.

Sayid Ali Khamenei emphasizes that young people can only stand against the Pharaohs of the present age when they possess inner strength, faith, conviction, trust in God, and a strong relationship with Allah.

This idea contains a civilizational message: material strength without inner strength can easily lose its direction, while inner strength without knowledge and material capacity may be unable to adequately protect the community.

Within this framework, spirituality is not an escape from the world. Spirituality becomes the foundation for courage, resilience, discipline, the pursuit of knowledge, and the defense of the oppressed.

This experience is relevant to Indonesia, which is confronting globalization, the war for knowledge,

digital technology, and artificial intelligence. Indonesia cannot merely pursue technical advancement. The nation needs people who are capable of mastering technology without being controlled by it, engaging with the world without losing their identity, and cooperating with other nations without surrendering their sovereignty.

In this report, Khamenei is also presented as a reflection of the awareness that the Muslim community is one body, and that the defense of the mustad'afin should not be confined by sectarian boundaries. Human suffering does not lose its significance simply because its victims belong to a different school of Islamic thought, ethnicity, nation, or region.

However, once again, this experience is not presented as an instruction for Indonesia to follow Iran's system. What is sought are values, questions, experiences, and lessons that can be brought into dialogue with the needs of the Indonesian people.

Cak Nun and Khamenei are not equated. Cak Nun reads Indonesia's wounds through the realms of culture, villages, the people, and social spirituality. Khamenei reflects the experience of state leadership and Iran's civilizational resilience. They are presented as two different mirrors that can help make the Indonesia–Iran dialogue deeper than a merely diplomatic relationship.

H. Iran Will Not Understand Indonesia Without Understanding the World

The title of this report is both a thesis and a method of analysis. Iran cannot understand Indonesia if Indonesia is viewed only through its government. Iran also cannot understand Indonesia solely through diplomatic relations, trade, economic statistics, the Muslim population, elections, or changes in the presidency. Indonesia must be understood through the world that has shaped it.

Before European colonialism, the Nusantara region was already connected to Arabia, Persia, India, China, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean networks. These networks brought trade, religion, knowledge, languages, cultures, scholarly lineages, social authority, and various interests.

Portugal and Spain later entered through maritime expansion. The VOC emerged as a colonial corporation. The Dutch East Indies developed systems of administration, law, bureaucracy, extractive economics, education, and social classification. Japan entered through military occupation and mobilization.

After independence, Indonesia entered the configuration of the Cold War. The United States, the Soviet Union, China, and various other powers had interests in Indonesia's direction. The events of 1965 must be examined within both domestic and global geopolitical contexts, based on archives, documents, and evidence that can be verified.

In the contemporary era, China has become involved through the economy, technology, industry, financing, infrastructure, critical minerals, and supply chains. Russia is discussed only insofar as available evidence demonstrates a substantive role. Arab states and networks in the Middle East have been present through religion, education, philanthropy, trade, culture, and social influence.

Beyond states, Indonesia has also been shaped by international financial institutions, global corporations, technology companies, data systems, media, education, consultants, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and domestic elites who manage Indonesia's relationships with these various networks.

Therefore, Indonesian history is not merely a history of foreign colonialism. It is also a history of how domestic actors have received, resisted, adapted, invited, or utilized influences from the wider world.

This is where domestic responsibility must not be concealed. Not every problem in Indonesia can be attributed to foreign powers. External domination can only operate effectively when domestic structures, policies, or elites provide pathways for it to do so.

Reading the world that has shaped Indonesia means examining the interaction between external and internal factors. Without this perspective, analysis risks falling into two extremes: blaming the world for all of Indonesia's problems, or assuming that Indonesia has been entirely free from global influence. Neither is adequate.

I. Cooperation between Indonesia and Iran Is Not Sufficiently Built through Governments Alone

Relations between states generally begin and are managed through governments. Official diplomacy, agreements, trade, investment, security cooperation, education, and cultural exchanges require the involvement of state institutions. However, civilizational cooperation cannot be sustained solely through governmental channels.

Governments can change. Diplomatic priorities can shift. Economic interests can rise and fall. Civilizational relations require a deeper foundation: people, communities, knowledge, values, culture, and the living networks that exist within society.

Therefore, this report does not speak only about Indonesia's relationship with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It speaks about the possibility of an encounter between the experiences of the Indonesian people and the experience of the Iranian nation.

However, the pathway envisioned here is not merely a "societal pathway" in the general sense. Sekolah Negarawan uses the term people's pathway.

The people's pathway means seeking and building relationships with networks that genuinely nurture the people, defend their rights, educate and empower them, fulfill their basic needs, preserve their dignity, and do not contribute to abandoning or orphaning the people.

These networks may exist within or outside official institutions. They may also be found in villages, communities, families, social organizations, professional circles, cultural spaces, knowledge centers, economic institutions, state institutions, pesantren, universities, or religious institutions. However, institutional names and forms do not automatically demonstrate commitment to the people. The measure is tangible work.

Sekolah Negarawan does not position cooperation with pesantren, hawzah, and universities as its primary formal program. These institutions are part of an ecosystem that can be engaged in dialogue and examined for their commitment to the people, but the primary purpose of this report is not to establish formal religious education networks or conventional academic cooperation.

Its primary objective is to establish a foundation for a legitimate, open, peaceful, dignified, and knowledge-based civilizational partnership.

Such a partnership is not intended to export Iran's constitutional system, spread a particular school of Islamic thought, influence Indonesia's domestic political affairs, or invite foreign intervention. Iran is not being asked to show Indonesia the path it should take. Nor does Indonesia come to lecture Iran.

The two nations are invited to learn from one another. Indonesia can learn from Iran's experience of resilience, spirituality, intellectual self-reliance, defense of the mustad'afin, and courage in confronting global pressure. Iran can learn from Indonesia's diversity,

Nusantara traditions, the experience of Islam developing through culture, and the struggle to build a state within a plural society. Yet this entire process of learning must take place without either side surrendering its intellectual sovereignty.

Civilizational cooperation is healthy only when each side is capable of learning without blindly imitating, respecting without idolizing, criticizing without degrading, and cooperating without seeking to dominate.

J. Conclusion of the Chapter

This report begins with a paradox. Indonesia is formally a complete state. Yet this formal completeness does not automatically make the people the true owners of political power. Indonesia has achieved independence, but it continues to face colonial legacies, structural dependency, a crisis of leadership, unpreparedness in confronting technological change, and the marginalization of the people from parts of the architecture of the state.

From within Indonesia, Cak Nun serves as an alarm that the state has not yet fully become a home for its people, and that the decline of civilization cannot be separated from a crisis of values-based leadership.

From Iran, the leadership experience of Sayid Ali Khamenei provides a reflection on the relationship between spirituality, inner resilience, sovereignty, the courage to confront hegemony, and the defense of the oppressed.

These two reflections are not equated. Both are used to open a deeper dialogue concerning human beings, the people, leadership, the state, and civilization.

From this point, the central thesis of this report begins to take shape. Iran will not understand Indonesia without understanding the world that has shaped the Indonesian people, Indonesian society, Indonesian leadership, and the architecture of the Indonesian state.

Yet understanding the world is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is to find a path through which Indonesia can engage with the world while preserving its sovereignty, develop its people through a system of values, restore the people as the true owners of political power, and discover a form of state that genuinely becomes a shared home.

This report is therefore not a call to hate the world. It is a call for Indonesia to understand the world without losing itself, cooperate without surrendering its sovereignty, absorb knowledge without becoming a follower, and build the state without removing the people from the center of national life.

From this point, Indonesia–Iran cooperation is intended to begin—not from an ambition to control another state, but from the courage to read history honestly, strengthen human beings, revive values, and build a people's pathway toward a just and dignified civilizational partnership.

SEKOLAH
NEGARAWAN
X
SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter I
The World's Misreading of Indonesia

A. Indonesia as a Global Statistic

The world knows Indonesia through several broad descriptions that are, in essence, accurate. Indonesia is regarded as a country with a very large population, an archipelagic nation, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, an important electoral democracy, a member of the G20, a major power in Southeast Asia, a vast market, and one of the countries increasingly taken into account in the Indo-Pacific configuration.



These descriptions are not fabricated. Indonesia is indeed the world's fourth-most populous country,

consists of more than 17,000 islands, and has the largest economy in Southeast Asia. Indonesia is also part of the G20, a forum that brings together the world's major advanced and emerging economies. By these measures, Indonesia appears to be a country that cannot easily be ignored.

Its population reflects the scale of its workforce, consumers, and market potential. Its geographical position makes Indonesia important for trade routes, maritime security, energy, and regional connectivity. Its natural resources place Indonesia within global supply chains for food, energy, minerals, industry, and technology. Its Muslim population makes Indonesia an important point of reference in the Muslim world. Yet statistics have their limitations.

Statistics can show how many people live in a country, but they do not necessarily explain how those people are treated by their state. Statistics can show economic growth, but they do not automatically explain who controls the benefits of that growth. Statistics can show the number of voters, but they do not explain the extent to which voters control political power after an election has ended.

Statistics can also show the number of state institutions, the number of laws, the size of the territory, mineral reserves, levels of digital consumption, the number of internet users, or the size of gross domestic product. Yet these figures do not, by themselves, explain whether the people are the actual owners of the structures that produce all those numbers. This is where the world's first mistake in reading Indonesia occurs.

The world often assumes that the size of a country automatically explains the depth of its state. Indonesia becomes important because it is large, not because it is understood. Indonesia is counted, but it is not necessarily read.

Indonesia appears in economic tables, market projections, demographic analyses, security assessments, and investment reports. Yet Indonesians are often reduced to consumers, workers, voters, platform users, data owners, or recipients of government policies.

When Indonesia is understood primarily as a statistic, the question of the people as the owners of the state tends to disappear. What emerges instead are questions such as how large its market is, how stable its government is, how open it is to investment, how secure its trade routes are, how abundant its resources are, and how strategic its geographical position is.

All of these are legitimate questions. However, they are questions about Indonesia's usefulness to the world. This manuscript asks a different question: What is the usefulness of the Indonesian state to the Indonesian people themselves?

B. Indonesia as a Market and Diplomatic Partner

In international relations, Indonesia is often viewed as a necessary partner. Major powers need Indonesia because of its geographic position, large population, natural resources, influence in Southeast Asia, and ability to maintain relations with various blocs of power.

Indonesia has a tradition of foreign policy that seeks to preserve its room for maneuver amid competing major powers. It is also active in various international and regional forums. As a result, many countries view Indonesia as a relatively open, pragmatic, and important partner for regional stability.

In the economic sphere, Indonesia is viewed as a large market. A market does not simply mean a place to sell goods. In the modern economy, a market also means labor, data, human attention, consumption patterns, financing needs, sources of raw materials, space for infrastructure development, and a place for the application of technology.

When a country is viewed primarily as a market, the people living within it can easily be understood according to their purchasing power. Citizens become consumers. Villages become distribution territories. Education becomes a means of producing labor. Data becomes a raw material. Culture becomes a market preference. The state becomes a manager of the investment climate.

Such a way of understanding Indonesia does not necessarily arise from bad intentions. States need trade, investment, technology, and economic cooperation. No modern nation can completely isolate itself from the global system.

The issue is not whether Indonesia should cooperate with the world. The issue is from what position that cooperation is conducted.

Does Indonesia engage as a nation that understands the needs of its people, possesses

knowledge, protects its data, controls its resources, and determines the direction of its industries? Or does Indonesia engage primarily as a market open to goods, capital, technology, knowledge, and standards formulated outside itself?

The difference between these two positions is decisive. Cooperation conducted by a sovereign nation can strengthen the capabilities of its people. Cooperation conducted by a nation without a clear direction can deepen dependency.

Investment can build industries, but it can also lock a country into the lower levels of global value chains. Technology can accelerate public services, but it can also transfer strategic data and knowledge to other parties. International education can expand knowledge, but it can also shape people who understand the needs of the global system better than the needs of their own people.

The world usually measures the success of its relations with Indonesia through trade value, investment volume, the number of agreements, projects built, or the stability of diplomatic relations. Sekolah Negarawan proposes an additional measure: do these relationships make the Indonesian people more sovereign, or do they make them increasingly dependent?

C. The Misconception of Reading Indonesia Merely as the World's Largest Muslim-Majority Country

Indonesia is often described as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. This designation is demographically accurate and carries significant importance.

Islam is deeply embedded in the history, culture, language, education, family life, social organizations, and everyday lives of a large majority of the Indonesian people.

International sources have also long recorded Indonesia as the country with the world's largest Muslim population. However, the designation "the world's largest Muslim-majority country" can also be misleading if it is not properly explained.

According to the demographic data presented in the infographic, Indonesia ranks first because of the size of its Muslim population.

Based on the data shown, Indonesia has approximately 247.3 million Muslims, more than Pakistan, which ranks second with approximately 246.05 million Muslims, India with approximately 226.06 million, and Bangladesh with approximately 161.8 million.

Thus, Indonesia is not merely a country with a Muslim majority, but also the country with the largest absolute Muslim population in the world.



This first-place position carries moral and civilizational consequences. Indonesia has a very large Muslim population, extensive human resources, a long

tradition of Islamic scholarship, and religious and social organizations that have significant influence on the lives of its people. Therefore, the question concerning Indonesia cannot stop at the pride that "Indonesian Muslims are the largest Muslim population in the world." The more fundamental question is: What does this large population produce?

If Indonesia is home to approximately one-eighth of the world's Muslims, then it also carries a significant responsibility to demonstrate how a large Muslim population can be translated into human quality, social justice, strong education, an independent economy, trustworthy governance, advanced knowledge, and protection for vulnerable groups. A large population should become a civilizational potential, not merely a demographic statistic.

However, having a large Muslim population does not automatically mean that Islam has become the primary value system guiding the administration of the state. A religious majority does not, by itself, produce justice, trustworthiness, consultation, protection for the vulnerable, equitable access to knowledge, or leadership that genuinely empathizes with the people.

Islam may appear as a population identity, social symbol, calendar, clothing, governmental language, ritual, and source of moral legitimacy. Yet the presence of symbols is not necessarily the same as the functioning of values.

A nation may be deeply religious in its personal life while remaining insufficiently just in its legal

system. It may have numerous houses of worship while allowing economic inequality to persist.

It may honor religious scholars while failing to build a tradition of knowledge that liberates the people. It may use religious language in political competition while treating political power as a transaction.

Therefore, the world would be mistaken if it assumed that the size of Indonesia's Muslim population alone explains the direction of Indonesian civilization.

Another misconception arises when Indonesian Islam is understood merely as a "moderate," "tolerant," "traditionalist," "modernist," or other category constructed within geopolitical discourse. Such categories may be useful within certain limits, but they can also reduce Indonesian Islam to an object of classification.

The more important question is whether Islam is capable of becoming a value system that protects human beings, strengthens the people, restrains power, shapes leadership, and establishes justice.

In this report, Islam is not positioned merely as a statistical marker indicating that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim. Islam is positioned as a primary source of values through which human beings, leadership, the economy, law, technology, and the state can be evaluated.

By this measure, Indonesia cannot be satisfied with being praised as the country with the world's largest Muslim population. Indonesia must also have the courage to ask whether its Muslim community possesses the strength of knowledge, economic

independence, value-based leadership, solidarity with the oppressed, and the capacity to build a state that truly becomes a home for all its people.

D. Visible and Invisible Colonialism



The world finds it easier to recognize colonialism when it appears in visible and tangible forms. Territorial occupation, military aggression, blockades, bombings, foreign troops, the destruction of infrastructure,

displacement, starvation, detention, and the killing of civilians create images that are difficult to conceal. For this reason, the suffering of Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Libya is more readily understood through the frameworks of conflict, intervention, war, humanitarian crisis, or geopolitical competition. However, these countries should not be treated as though they share identical legal and historical conditions.

Palestine faces an occupation-related situation that is specifically recognized in the terminology of the United Nations. Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continue to be officially referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Meanwhile, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Libya have different histories and configurations involving civil war, external intervention, cross-border attacks, occupation during particular periods, proxy conflicts, institutional collapse, or governmental transitions.

These distinctions are important so that human suffering is not used rhetorically without sufficient precision. Indonesia is not experiencing the same circumstances.

There are no foreign troops openly occupying the entirety of Indonesian territory. Indonesia is not experiencing a nationwide civil war. Its major cities are not subjected to daily bombardment. Its government has not collapsed. Ports, airports, schools, universities, courts, markets, industries, and state administration continue to function. From the outside, therefore,

Indonesia appears normal. It is precisely this normality that can conceal deeper problems.

Forms of domination over a nation do not always operate through territorial control. They can also operate through control over direction. A country may still possess its flag, government, elections, parliament, and military, yet lose the ability to determine what should be taught, what technologies should be developed, how resources should be managed, who controls data, what values shape its people, and whose interests its economy ultimately serves.

Visible colonialism directly takes control of territory. Invisible colonialism can diminish a nation's capacity to control its own life.

Visible colonialism uses weapons. Invisible colonialism can operate through contracts, debt, concessions, standards, curricula, regulations, technology, data, media, consumer culture, campaign financing, and dependence on external knowledge.

Visible colonialism generates resistance because the adversary can be identified. Invisible colonialism is more difficult to resist because it can appear in the form of modernization, efficiency, investment, assistance, innovation, progress, or market necessity.

However, not every contract is colonialism. Not every debt constitutes colonization. Not every foreign technology represents domination. Not every investment harms the people. Not every international standard undermines sovereignty. The necessary measure is the power relationship within them.

Who formulates the rules? Who possesses the knowledge? Who controls the assets? Who stores the data? Who determines the prices? Who captures the added value? Who bears the social and ecological risks? Can Indonesia change or terminate such relationships sovereignly?

If a relationship strengthens knowledge, industry, technology, national capacity, and the welfare of the people, that relationship may constitute healthy cooperation. If a relationship creates dependency, removes control, transfers benefits away from the people, and leaves the burdens to them, then it must be examined as a possible form of structural colonialism.

E. The Deeper Structure That Is Rately Examined

The world sees Indonesia's government, but rarely examines its algorithm of power. The world sees elections, but does not always examine the mechanisms of candidacy, campaign financing, relationships among financiers, political parties, the media, bureaucracy, and elites. The world sees parliament, but may not examine who determines the legislative agenda. The world sees economic growth, but does not necessarily examine ownership structures, control over value chains, technological dependence, and the distribution of benefits.

The world sees that Indonesia's Constitution states that sovereignty is in the hands of the people. Yet the world rarely asks how that sovereignty is translated after the people cast their votes.

Do the people have mechanisms to determine the strategic direction of the state? Can they correct those in power other than by waiting for the next election? Do representative institutions truly represent the people, or are they more responsive to party structures? Are natural resources managed as the property of the people, or as objects of negotiation among the state, corporations, and elites?

This is the deeper structure that is rarely examined. Formally, the people are present within the Constitution. Practically, the people may remain outside the center of decision-making.

Formally, power comes from the people. Practically, the path to power may be determined more by political parties, capital, elite networks, popularity, the media, and technology.

Formally, the state controls resources for the prosperity of the people. Practically, the people may be the last to enjoy the benefits and the first to bear the consequences of the damage.

This situation does not necessarily arise from a single plan. It may emerge from the intersection of multiple systems: colonial legacies, constitutional weaknesses, campaign costs, inequality of knowledge, economic structures, bureaucratic culture, global influence, and domestic interests.

Therefore, structural colonialism must not be understood merely as foreign action against Indonesia. Structural colonialism is a relationship between external forces and domestic structures that enables domination to persist.

External actors may offer capital, technology, markets, or knowledge. However, the decisions to accept, regulate, limit, and distribute their benefits still involve domestic actors. This is where the concept of Invited Colonialism becomes meaningful.

Domination can gain access because the door is opened from within. Domestic elites may invite dependency through policies that lack long-term strategy, unbalanced concessions, the surrender of data, neglect of technology transfer, dependence on consultants, or the creation of regulations that protect the interests of capital more than those of the people.

Foreign powers do not always have to conquer a state if some of their interests can be advanced through the people, laws, and institutions within that state itself.

F. Crisis of Leadership That Does Not Appear in Statistics

Statistics can record the number of elections, the number of candidates, voter turnout, the number of political parties, the composition of parliament, and changes in government. However, statistics are difficult to use to measure integrity and trustworthiness. Statistics can record the number of schools, but they cannot easily measure a teacher's moral courage. Statistics can record the number of places of worship, but they cannot easily measure the spiritual depth of their leaders. Statistics can record government expenditure, but they cannot easily measure a public official's empathy toward the people who bear the

consequences of their policies. This is where Cak Nun's critique of leadership becomes relevant.

A crisis of leadership does not always appear in the form of a coup, major corruption, or the collapse of government. It can emerge through insensitivity that becomes habitual. Leaders continue to speak about the people, but do not experience the people's lives. Policies continue to be made, while social suffering appears only as data and presentation material.

Under such circumstances, people are not always oppressed through violence. They can be orphaned through indifference.

People are orphaned when they have nowhere to turn for help. They are orphaned when justice becomes too expensive. They are orphaned when education fails to shape their future. They are orphaned when their land, livelihoods, data, and living spaces become objects of policy without meaningful participation.

People are also orphaned when religious leaders lose the ability to guide the community beyond ritual. When religion is used merely to justify groups, positions, and interests, religious leadership also loses its civilizational function. Therefore, Indonesia's leadership crisis cannot be adequately addressed through technical education, management training, or generational replacement alone. Indonesia needs value-based leadership.

Value-based leadership is not leadership that merely knows how to quote religious teachings. It is leadership that combines spirituality, knowledge, empathy, courage, justice, and responsibility.

A value-based leader understands that power is not a reward, but a burden. Such a leader does not see the people as electoral numbers. Such a leader does not see the state as a corporation. Such a leader does not see technology as an end in itself. Instead, the leader places all these instruments at the service of protecting human beings.

A crisis of this kind does not appear in economic rankings or diplomatic indexes. A country may be respected by the world, accepted by markets, and active in global forums, yet still experience a vacuum of leadership within itself.

G. Globalization and AI as a New Battlefield

Globalization was once understood primarily as the growth of trade, capital mobility, the flow of goods, human travel, and the exchange of information. Today, globalization has entered a deeper layer.

Globalization shapes language, knowledge, desires, attention, culture, preferences, perceptions, and the way human beings understand reality.

Digital technology accelerates this process. Global platforms are not merely tools for communication; they also influence what information becomes visible, who gets heard, which behaviors are rewarded, and where human attention is directed. Artificial intelligence expands this process even further.

AI can support education, healthcare, government, industry, research, defense, and public services. However, AI also concentrates power in the hands of those who possess data, computing capacity,

capital, models, infrastructure, and technical expertise. The issue of AI is therefore not merely a matter of technological sophistication, but also a matter of sovereignty.

UNESCO has identified data sovereignty, rights, integrity, equality, privacy, and cultural sovereignty as important dimensions of discussions on AI ethics and governance. These concerns demonstrate that AI can affect not only efficiency, but also human agency, culture, and the ability of communities to control their own data and values.

A nation without data will depend on those who possess it. A nation that possesses data but lacks computing capacity will depend on infrastructure providers. A nation that has infrastructure but lacks models and knowledge will remain a user. A nation that possesses all these capabilities but lacks a value system may create technologies that ultimately harm human beings.

Therefore, the AI battlefield is not merely a competition to build the largest model. It is a competition to determine whose values are embedded in systems, whose language is understood, whose history becomes data, whose interests are optimized, and what kind of human beings are ultimately being shaped.

Indonesia faces the risk of becoming a vast AI market without becoming one of the actors determining the direction of AI.

Hundreds of millions of Indonesians generate language, images, voices, behaviors, choices, locations,

social relationships, and economic data. These data have strategic value. However, if Indonesia does not possess a mature legal, technological, ethical, and institutional architecture, Indonesians may become producers of digital raw materials without controlling the value added generated from them.

This pattern resembles the old extractive economy: raw materials leave the country, value is created elsewhere, and the final products are then sold back to the communities that produced the raw materials.

The difference is that today's raw materials are not limited to minerals and natural resources. They also include thoughts, languages, cultures, attention, behavior, and human data. This is where globalization and AI become a new battlefield.

The battle does not always involve weapons. Instead, it concerns control over knowledge, decisions, narratives, data, and the future of humanity.

Indonesia cannot confront this battlefield simply by expanding internet connectivity or importing technology.

Indonesia needs value-based leadership and a state architecture capable of answering fundamental questions: Who owns the people's data? For what purposes is AI used? Who is accountable when algorithmic decisions harm human beings? How can Indonesia's language, history, and culture be protected? How can the people receive economic benefits from the data and knowledge they generate? How can the state

use technology without turning its people into objects of surveillance?

These questions cannot be answered by the market alone. They also require constitutional principles, public policy, knowledge, ethics, and civilizational leadership.

H. Why Iran Needs to Read Indonesia More Deeply

Iran can easily read Indonesia as a friendly country with a large Muslim population, an economic partner, a Southeast Asian power, and an important country in various international forums. All of these perspectives are useful, but they are not sufficient.

If Iran only reads the Indonesian government, it will understand the diplomatic structure, but not yet understand its people. If Iran only reads religious organizations, it may understand social institutions, but not necessarily understand the wounds experienced by Indonesian people. If Iran only reads the market, it will see economic opportunities, but may not see the structural colonialism that this report seeks to examine.

Iran needs to understand that Indonesia does not live under open warfare, but that does not mean all dimensions of its sovereignty have been fully secured.

Indonesia does not face military occupation, but it faces struggles over values, knowledge, technology, data, resources, education, and the direction of development. Indonesia does not experience a physical blockade, but it may experience technological and industrial dependency. Indonesia has not lost its

government, but it still faces the question of who actually controls the country's priorities.

Iran also needs to understand that Indonesia is not an empty space waiting to be taught from the outside. Indonesia has its own history of Islam, kingdoms, sultanates, pesantren, culture, ulama, intellectuals, popular movements, and experience of statehood. Therefore, Iran does not come as a model to be copied.

The Iranian experience becomes relevant as a mirror, particularly in relation to spirituality, national resilience, scientific independence, the defense of the mustad'afin, and the courage to confront hegemony. But a mirror is not a blueprint. Indonesia must find its own form.

Indonesia–Iran dialogue will be valuable if it helps Indonesia strengthen its ability to understand itself, rather than replacing one form of dependency with another. Iran must also be willing to read Indonesia through its villages, its people, its human beings, and its social wounds—not merely through elites, ceremonies, and official relations.

Therefore, Indonesia–Iran cooperation cannot be confined to government diplomacy. Cooperation requires Jalur Rakyat—relationships with nodes that genuinely nurture, educate, defend, fulfill the rights of, and refuse to abandon the people.

This path is not a means of interfering in domestic political power. It is a space for a legitimate, open, peaceful, and knowledge-based civilizational dialogue.

I. Conclusion of the Chapter

The world's misreading of Indonesia does not stem from the fact that all the labels used to describe it are wrong. Indonesia is indeed the world's largest Muslim-majority country, an important democracy, a member of the G20, an archipelagic nation, a major market, and a strategic partner.

The problem lies in assuming that all of these labels are sufficient. These labels describe Indonesia's scale, but they do not explain the depth of its challenges. They describe Indonesia's position in the world, but they do not explain the position of its people within their own state.

The world sees a stable state, but rarely sees how its people may lose meaningful control over power. The world sees a growing market, but rarely sees the dependencies that accompany it. The world sees technological progress, but does not necessarily see the transfer of data and knowledge away from national control. The world sees elections, but does not always examine the costs and algorithms of power operating behind them.

Indonesia is not being colonized in the same form as nations that have experienced occupation, military attacks, civil war, or institutional collapse. Their suffering is real and must not be reduced to mere analogy. Yet the absence of open warfare does not mean the absence of domination.

Domination over Indonesia can operate through values, morality, culture, economics, law, regulation, education, technology, data, domestic elites, and

leadership that has lost its value orientation. Therefore, Indonesia's independence cannot be protected solely through armed forces, borders, and diplomacy. Independence must also be protected through knowledge, values, data sovereignty, leadership, the Constitution, technology, the economy, and a state architecture that places the people as its rightful owners.

In the era of globalization and artificial intelligence, a nation can retain its territory while losing its future. It can retain its government while losing control over its decisions. It can continue to be called independent while living within systems whose direction and values are determined by others.

This is the Indonesia that the world rarely reads. And this is why Iran will not understand Indonesia unless it understands the world that shapes the Indonesian people, their values, their leadership, and their state.

SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter II
Indonesia Has Never Found Its Form of State

A. Formal State and Substantive State

Indonesia is a legitimate state. This statement is not a matter of debate in this report. The Republic of Indonesia has territory, a population, a government, a constitution, state institutions, armed forces, police, diplomatic relations, and international recognition. Indonesia is part of the international community, enters into treaties, administers government, collects taxes, establishes laws, and protects its territory. In terms of international law, Indonesia fulfills the elements of a state.

However, a state does not possess only a formal dimension. It also has a substantive dimension. The formal dimension determines whether an entity has territory, a population, a government, sovereignty, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. The substantive dimension addresses different questions: for whom is the state established, from where does power derive its legitimacy, who controls the structures of power, and what values provide direction for the administration of the state?

It is here that Sekolah Negarawan distinguishes between the formal state, the substantive state, and the people's state.

A formal state is a state that possesses legal instruments, government, institutions, symbols, and recognition. A substantive state is a state that not only

exists legally, but also possesses a direction, value system, capacity, and structure consistent with the purposes for which it was established. A people's state, meanwhile, is a substantive state that genuinely places the people as the owners of sovereignty and the owners of the architecture of power.

This distinction is important because a state can be formally complete while remaining substantively unfinished. A state may have elections, a parliament, a President, ministries, courts, and security forces, but all of these institutional components do not automatically make the people the owners of the state.

The people may be described as the holders of sovereignty, yet be involved primarily during elections. After their votes are cast, the direction of the state may be determined largely by political parties, officials, bureaucracies, capital owners, interest groups, media networks, and various other centers of power that the people cannot always control.

Thus, the question raised by Sekolah Negarawan is not whether Indonesia has a state. The question is whether Indonesia has found a form of state that enables its people to genuinely own their state.

A people's state cannot be built merely through a declaration that sovereignty rests with the people. Sovereignty must have a body, a structure, mechanisms, and living channels through which it can operate. The people must be present not merely as a word in the Constitution, but as the owners of the mandate, the owners of national wealth, the source of the direction of

development, the overseers of power, and the party capable of correcting the state.

Without structures that give concrete expression to this position, popular sovereignty risks remaining an abstract principle. The people are recognized, but have no effective instruments. Power is elevated, but not given a form.

B. Why International Recognition Is Not Enough

International recognition is necessary for a state's existence within the international system. Without recognition and the capacity to conduct foreign relations, a nation would face difficulties in protecting its territory, conducting trade, entering into treaties, protecting its citizens, and carrying out various other international functions. However, international recognition only answers the question of whether a state exists within the community of nations. It does not answer whether its people genuinely own that state.

The world may recognize a government without knowing how deeply its people participate in the structures of power. The world may observe elections taking place without examining the costs of candidacy, political parties' dependence on capital, the quality of representation, or the people's limited ability to correct the exercise of power after elections have ended.

International recognition also does not guarantee that a state has been freed from structural dependency. A state may hold seats in various international organizations while remaining dependent on

technology, financing, industry, knowledge, food, energy, data, and standards determined by others.

A state may even conduct active diplomacy while lacking a development direction genuinely formulated according to the needs of its people. Therefore, independence cannot be measured solely by the presence or absence of foreign troops. Independence must also be measured by a nation's ability to determine its own goals, master knowledge, develop technology, manage its resources, protect its data, educate its people, and establish foreign relations on a sovereign basis.

Sekolah Negarawan does not reject international cooperation. No modern nation can exist entirely apart from the world. What is being questioned is Indonesia's position within such cooperation.

Does Indonesia engage with the world as a nation that understands its own needs and civilizational direction? Does Indonesia possess the capacity to assess the benefits, risks, and dependencies arising from each relationship? Does the state ensure that cooperation with the world strengthens its people, rather than merely increasing the gains of elites?

A state recognized by the world is not necessarily a state owned by its people. A state may even be better known and more respected abroad than it is experienced by its own people.

This is where formal recognition must be followed by the discovery of a substantive form of state. Indonesia is not enough to be recognized by the world. Indonesia must also be recognized by its own people as

a home that protects, educates, nurtures, provides for, and gives them a real position as its rightful owners.

C. The People as Residents, Not Owners of the State

One of Indonesia's deepest problems is the transformation of the people into mere residents, voters, taxpayers, consumers, workers, and recipients of government policies.

A resident is a person who lives within the territory of a state. A voter is a person who casts a ballot. A taxpayer is a party that fulfills fiscal obligations. A consumer is someone who purchases goods and services. A worker is a person who provides productive capacity.

All of these categories are important. Yet none of them, by themselves, makes a person an owner of the state.

The people are the source of sovereignty. The state is established in their name, derives its resources from them, exercises its power to protect them, and should be accountable to them for all of its actions.

Yet in the practice of the modern state, the people can lose this position. They continue to be called the people, but are primarily treated as residents who must be governed. They are expected to obey the law, pay taxes, follow procedures, cast their votes, and accept decisions.



The people may elect their representatives, but they do not necessarily have control over what those representatives do. They may elect a President, but this does not automatically give them a role in determining who surrounds the President, what interests influence policy, or how the state's strategic contracts are formulated.

They may voice criticism, but they do not always have effective mechanisms to change the direction of power before the next election. They may seek legal remedies, but access to justice often requires financial resources, time, knowledge, and resilience that not everyone possesses.

Under such conditions, the people exist as a source of legitimacy, but do not genuinely exist as a living structure of the state.

The people become important when their votes are needed, but can easily be forgotten once power has been established. The people are praised as the holders

of sovereignty in speeches, but are not always involved in determining policies that transform their land, employment, education, data, and the future of their children.

Cak Nun describes such a condition through the idea of people being abandoned. The people have a state, but do not experience the state as nurturing them. They have leaders, but do not feel understood. They have laws, but do not necessarily experience justice.

An orphan is not merely a child who has biologically lost their parents. In a social sense, people can be made orphans when those who are supposed to nurture them instead distance themselves, neglect them, or take advantage of them.

Therefore, a people's state must be built by transforming the position of the people: from objects of policy into owners of the state's direction; from consumers of government programs into shapers of their own needs; from voters into holders of constitutional control; and from residents who are governed into a sovereign people.

D. From the Kingdoms of the Nusantara to the Modern Republic

Indonesia did not emerge from a single kingdom, a single local nation, a single social system, or a single ancestral experience. Before the republic, the Nusantara was a space inhabited by kingdoms, sultanates, indigenous communities, villages, trading centers,

networks of ulama, and various forms of leadership that developed according to their respective histories.

Each region had different relationships between leaders, the people, religion, land, customary law, trade, and the outside world. Some kingdoms built their power around maritime networks. Others were rooted in agriculture. Some developed as centers of Islamic trade and scholarship. Others possessed more collective customary structures.

When the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on 17 August 1945, these diverse social worlds were brought together into the form of a modern state.

This unification was a major historical achievement. Without the ability to build a shared national identity, the Nusantara could have fragmented into smaller territories that would have been more vulnerable to domination by external powers.

Yet unification into a republic also created a conceptual problem that has not been fully resolved.

The Republic of Indonesia emerged from a society whose traditions of governance had largely not been shaped by the modern republican system. Concepts of citizenship, a national parliament, elections, political parties, centralized bureaucracy, national law, and modern separation of powers entered a society that had lived for centuries within structures of kingdoms, sultanates, customary communities, villages, and religious communities.

Cak Nun reminds us that when Indonesia became a republic, it simultaneously entered a globalization of values and ideas. Indonesia did not

merely replace colonial rulers with a national government. It entered a system of concepts that had developed through the experiences of the modern world.

The republic, democracy, parliament, nationalism, the rule of law, economic development, modern administration, and national education opened many possibilities for independence. However, these concepts did not automatically take root in the everyday lives of the people.

Indonesia adopted the form of the modern state faster than it developed the human beings and culture capable of fully sustaining it.

As a result, many modern institutions were built upon older patterns of power. Modern elections could operate through patronage relationships. Political parties could function like miniature kingdoms. Modern bureaucracies could preserve feudal distance. Republican law could be exercised through colonial patterns of thinking.

Democracy may possess modern procedures while continuing to operate through relationships shaped by aristocracy, oligarchy, conglomerates, and bureaucracy. Thus, Indonesia's problem is not merely a choice between monarchy and republic. The deeper question is whether the chosen form of state genuinely corresponds to the purposes of independence, the needs of the people, and the challenges of the world.

The republic must not be preserved merely as a name. It must continually be examined to determine whether res publica—the public affair, the common

good—is genuinely under the control of the people or has been captured by an alliance of elites.

E. State, Globalization, Modernization, Modern Warface, and AI

When the Republic of Indonesia was born, the world was undergoing profound transformation. The Second World War had just ended. Classical colonialism was increasingly being challenged. The Cold War soon divided the world into various ideological blocs and competing interests.

The newly independent Indonesia had to defend its territory, build its government, unite a diverse society, overcome poverty, and simultaneously determine its position within the global configuration.

Indonesia was not granted the historical luxury of building its state in a period of peace and stability. The Republic was born directly into global competition.

This condition continued, although in changing forms. Economic globalization connected Indonesia to global markets, capital, technology, and supply chains. Modernization transformed villages, families, employment, education, and the way people understood their lives.

Modern warfare also no longer takes place solely through physical battles. War can be waged through economics, information, technology, culture, currency, financing, data, media, sanctions, and control over knowledge.

Today, artificial intelligence has expanded this battlefield even further. AI influences knowledge production, employment, education, public services, defense, industry, media, and decision-making processes.

In confronting these transformations, a state needs more than institutions. It needs architectural intelligence.

A state must understand who controls technology, who owns the data, where algorithms derive their values, how automated decisions affect the people, and whether Indonesia is merely becoming a market or is capable of becoming a creator.

Without adequate preparedness, Indonesia may enter globalization and the age of AI as a major consumer, but not as a sovereign nation.

Indonesia may have millions of technology users without having control over its infrastructure, models, and data. It may develop digital services while depending on foreign companies for critical systems. It may utilize AI without understanding the values and interests embedded within it.

Therefore, the form of the state must be capable of addressing challenges that the founders of the republic could not even have imagined.

The Constitution must not merely regulate relations among state institutions. It must also provide direction for the governance of data, technology, knowledge, the environment, natural resources, and the protection of human beings.

A state that cannot adapt may lose its sovereignty without losing its territory. It may continue to exist formally while its strategic decisions become dependent on systems designed by others. This is why the question of the form of the state is not merely a matter of historical nostalgia. It is a question about the future.

F. What Do Human Beings, the People, the Government, and the State Need?

Cak Nun raises fundamental questions about the needs of human beings, the people, the government, and the state. These four must not be conflated.

Human beings need a dignified life. They need knowledge, livelihoods, freedom, security, family, spiritual space, opportunities for growth, and protection from arbitrary power.

The people need a shared structure that ensures these human needs are not destroyed by power, the market, dominant groups, or foreign interests. The people need just laws, an empowering education system, an economy that protects them, technology that liberates them, and leadership that nurtures them.

The government needs authority to provide public services, manage resources, formulate policies, maintain order, and carry out the people's mandate. However, governmental authority must be limited, directed, and held accountable.

The state needs a constitution, institutions, capacity, defense, financing, knowledge, and long-term strategy. The state must be strong enough to face

internal and external pressures, but it must not become a power that stands above the people.

The error occurs when the needs of the government are treated as identical to the needs of the state, and the needs of the state are then automatically assumed to be identical to the needs of the people.

The government may need stability in order to function, but stability must not become an excuse for silencing the people. The state may need investment, but investment must not sacrifice sovereignty, the environment, or the rights and livelihoods of communities. The government may need data, but this need does not justify unlimited surveillance.

The state, moreover, cannot be understood merely as a collection of institutions. The state is a constitution, an algorithm of power, a management system, and an architecture of shared life.

The constitution determines who owns power. The algorithm of power explains how power is acquired, distributed, maintained, and corrected. The management system determines how resources and public services are administered. The architecture of shared life determines the position of human beings, the people, the government, the market, state authorities, and institutions of power. A good form of state must be capable of aligning all of these needs.

One deviation in the direction of the state occurs when the goal of justice is reduced to mere prosperity. Prosperity is certainly important. No state can ignore the welfare, production, income, employment, and economic capacity of its people.

However, prosperity separated from justice can become growth for some, luxury for elites, and economic statistics that fail to save the people.

A state may record high economic growth while allowing inequality to persist. It may build massive infrastructure while displacing people without justice. It may increase investment while reducing its people to cheap labor or spectators on their own land.

Within the Islamic value framework, prosperity cannot stand alone. Prosperity must emerge from justice, trustworthiness, protection of property, protection of human dignity, social responsibility, and the defense of the vulnerable.

Justice is not the enemy of prosperity. Justice is the foundation that gives prosperity civilizational meaning.

Without justice, prosperity merely shows that wealth has increased. With justice, prosperity demonstrates that human life has truly been protected and uplifted.

G. Value Precede the Constitution

The Constitution is important, but the Constitution is not the starting point of political life. Before human beings formulate a constitution, they already carry values, interests, beliefs, fears, hopes, and particular ways of understanding power.

The Constitution is created by human beings. It reflects how human beings understand the state, the people, justice, freedom, power, and the purpose of living together.

Therefore, constitutional change will not resolve every problem if the people who formulate and implement it continue to carry the same value system as the system they seek to reform.

A constitution can limit terms of office, but it does not automatically eliminate greed. A constitution can distribute power, but it does not automatically produce trustworthiness and responsibility. A constitution can guarantee rights, but it does not necessarily create the moral courage to uphold them. A constitution can declare that sovereignty belongs to the people, but it does not automatically make those in power willing to submit themselves to the people. This is where values precede structure.

Sekolah Negarawan places Islam as a primary value system. The term primary does not mean that Islam is to be used as an instrument to impose an identity or establish the dominance of a religious group. Islam is positioned as a source of values that precedes institutional design, including tawhid, amanah, justice, knowledge, musyawarah, responsibility, protection of the vulnerable, and maslahah.

Islam as a value system does not begin with the addition of religious symbols. It begins with the way human beings understand power as an amanah, wealth as a trust, knowledge as a responsibility, the people as those who must be cared for, and the state as an instrument for upholding justice.

As a nation with a very large Muslim population, Indonesia knows the Prophet Muhammad SAW, honors his name, recites shalawat, commemorates his birth,

studies the hadith, and acknowledges his prophethood. Yet this recognition often remains confined to technical, ritual, symbolic, and religious-identity dimensions.

The Nubuwwah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW has not yet been fully translated into the foundation of public ethics and the architecture of the state.

Amanah has not yet truly become the primary measure of leadership. Justice has not yet become the foundation of prosperity. Musyawarah has not yet fully become the spirit of decision-making. The protection of the vulnerable has not yet become a measure of state success. Knowledge has not always been placed above the interests of power. Wealth, technology, data, law, and the economy have not yet been entirely managed as an amanah for the maslahah of the people.

This statement does not mean that Islam is absent from Indonesian life. Islam lives within families, mosques, pesantren, traditions, culture, organizations, and the personal lives of millions of people. Many ulama, teachers, leaders, and ordinary people sincerely strive to live according to Islamic values.

However, the presence of Islam as a religion within society does not automatically make Islam the value system of the state and civilization.

Here lies one of Indonesia's deepest problems. Islam is often acknowledged as an identity, but it has not yet been fully employed as a standard by which power is judged. The Prophet Muhammad SAW is acknowledged as the Messenger of Allah, but the example of his Nubuwwah has not yet become an

algorithm of leadership, law, economics, technology, education, and the protection of the people.

Therefore, the revival of Islamic values must not be reduced to adding religious symbols, expanding the formalization of religious law, or competing for political office on behalf of groups claiming to represent Islam. The revival in question is a transformation in the way human beings understand amanah, justice, knowledge, power, wealth, the people, and the future.

Values do not replace the Constitution. Values give direction to the Constitution. The Constitution then gives form, limits, mechanisms, and accountability to the values that are intended to be realized.

Therefore, the state of the people can only be discovered when values and structures are built together. Values without structure risk remaining mere advice. Structure without values risks becoming an efficient machinery of power that has lost its purpose.

H. Before the Amendments: The MPR Existed, but the People Had Not Yet Become a Living Structure

Before the amendments to the 1945 Constitution, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) was positioned as the highest state institution. The MPR was understood as the embodiment of the entire Indonesian people and had the authority to establish the Constitution, determine the broad outlines of state policy, and elect the President and Vice President.

Theoretically, this structure gave a prominent place to the concept of popular sovereignty. The

President received a mandate from the MPR and carried out the direction established by the MPR. However, the existence of the MPR did not automatically make the people a living structure within the state.

The fundamental question is how the will of the people was formed, channeled, and controlled. Who constituted the MPR? Through what mechanisms did its members obtain their mandates? How independent was the MPR from the influence of the government, political parties, the military, the bureaucracy, or elite groups?

An institution may be described as the embodiment of the people, yet it may still fail to function as an institution belonging to the people if the process through which it is constituted does not provide the people with genuine sovereignty.

In practice, before the Reform Era, the MPR's formally elevated position was not always accompanied by the people's ability to control it. Executive power, bureaucracy, power structures, and the configuration of government could diminish the MPR's function as a forum for the people's deliberation.

In other words, the issue is not simply whether the state has a highest institution. The deeper question is whether that institution truly lives as a structure of popular sovereignty.

The people are not merely meant to be represented. They must have a real constitutional relationship with their representatives, with decisions, and with mechanisms of accountability.

If representatives cannot be corrected, mandates cannot be evaluated, and major state decisions have no

living connection to the will of the people, then representative institutions risk becoming merely symbolic.

Therefore, Sekolah Negarawan does not propose a simple return to the pre-amendment structure. What it seeks is not nostalgia for the former MPR, but the discovery of a new form through which the people can possess a living structure within the state.

I. After the Fourth Amendment: More Institutions, Yet the People Became Increasingly Invisible

The amendments to the 1945 Constitution following the Reform Era were undertaken to limit power, strengthen democracy, clarify the distribution of authority, expand the protection of rights, and establish better mechanisms of oversight.

These changes produced several important developments. The President came to be elected directly by the people. Presidential terms were limited. The Constitutional Court was established. The Regional Representative Council (DPD) was introduced. The powers of state institutions were reorganized. Constitutional guarantees of human rights were expanded.

All of these represent important constitutional achievements that must not be overlooked. However, institutional reform also produced new problems. The MPR was no longer positioned as the highest state institution. The relationship of mandate between the MPR and the President changed. The state policy

guidelines no longer had the same constitutional form. Power was distributed among various institutions, but no single structure emerged that placed the people, in a living and meaningful way, as the owners and source of direction of the state.

Institutions multiplied, procedures multiplied, and legal mechanisms multiplied, yet the people may have found it increasingly difficult to see where their sovereignty actually resides.

The President gained direct electoral legitimacy, but presidential nominations remain dependent on political parties. The DPR gained electoral legitimacy, but its members operate within party discipline. The DPD was established to represent the regions, but its constitutional authority remains limited. The Constitutional Court safeguards the Constitution, but operates through cases brought before it and within the boundaries of its constitutionally defined authority.

No single institution can easily be described as the living home of popular sovereignty. Sovereignty appears to be dispersed, yet within that dispersion, the people may actually lose a tangible place from which to exercise and hold it.

Popular sovereignty has consequently been reduced to direct elections. It is as though once the people have elected the President and their representatives, the question of sovereignty has been settled.

Yet elections are only one instrument. Elections determine who obtains office, but they do not necessarily determine how power is exercised, what

interests influence it, or how the people can correct strategic decisions.

After the amendments, Indonesia developed a system that is more democratic in procedural terms, but not necessarily one that provides greater constitutional clarity regarding the people as a constitutional structure of sovereignty.

Democracy can develop into an extremely costly electoral competition. The need for political financing can strengthen the relationship between power and capital. Political parties become the primary gateways for nominations. Media and technology shape public perceptions. The bureaucracy retains administrative power. Capital owners possess economic influence.

From the interaction of these forces, democracy can become an alliance of oligarchy, aristocracy, conglomeration, and bureaucracy.

Oligarchic forces control resources and access to power. A new aristocracy emerges through families, dynasties, networks, and the inheritance of influence. Conglomerates possess the capacity to shape markets, media, financing, and policy. The bureaucracy controls administration, data, permits, and the implementation of decisions.

Political parties become the intermediaries among these forces, but they do not always function as instruments of the people. As a result, the people retain the right to vote, yet the choices available to them have already passed through a filtering process shaped by structures that they do not fully control.

J. State, Government, Apparatus, and the People

One of the sources of confusion in public life is the failure to distinguish between the state, the government, the state apparatus, and the people.

The state is the overall architecture of law, territory, institutions, people, and sovereignty. The government is the entity that, for a certain period of time, is entrusted with the authority to carry out executive and administrative functions. The state apparatus consists of the instruments of the state responsible for defense, security, law enforcement, and public service. The people are the holders of sovereignty and the reason for the existence of the state.

The government is not the state as a whole. Criticism of the government is not the same as an attack on the state. A change of government does not mean a change of state.

The state apparatus is not the owner of the state. The apparatus exercises significant authority because it is entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding law, security, and sovereignty. However, such authority derives from the constitution and must ultimately be accountable to the people.

The people are also not a party standing outside the state. The state is not the government on one side and the people on the other. The people constitute a fundamental element of the state and are its moral owners.

When the government considers itself synonymous with the state, criticism can easily be treated as a threat. When the state apparatus equates

obedience to the government with obedience to the state, constitutional boundaries can become blurred. When the people are regarded merely as those who must be governed, sovereignty is reduced to administration.

A people-centered state requires these distinctions to be clear. The government must be strong enough to carry out its mandate, but it must not take over ownership of the state. The state apparatus must be firm in upholding the law, but it must not become an instrument of political interests. The people must obey laws that are just, while retaining the right to correct and hold the state accountable.

Such a relationship requires a constitution that does not merely distribute powers, but also establishes the moral direction of every exercise of authority.

The state must not become the property of the government. The government must serve as the executor of the state. The state must not become the property of the apparatus. The apparatus must serve as the guardian of the people and the constitution. The people must not merely become objects of governance. The people must become the holders of the mandate and the ultimate purpose of the state.

K. Administrative Leadership and the Loss of the State's Direction

A modern state needs administrators. Government cannot function without the ability to prepare budgets, manage bureaucracy, develop

infrastructure, organize public services, and enforce the law. However, a state cannot be adequately led by administrators alone.

An administrator ensures that the system functions. A civilizational leader determines where the system should go. An administrator asks how a program should be implemented. A civilizational leader asks why the program is necessary, what values it serves, and what kind of human being it seeks to shape.

When leadership is reduced to administration, a state can become extremely busy without knowing its direction. Budgets are absorbed, projects are completed, applications are developed, and performance indicators are achieved, yet the people do not necessarily become more sovereign.

Indonesia needs leaders who understand humanity, the people, government, the state, the constitution, the algorithms of power, history, technology, and the future of the world.

Within one of the lines of thought opened by Cak Nun, the term "king" does not necessarily have to be understood as a ruler who inherits power through lineage. The king can instead be understood as a figure who possesses profound knowledge, a broad sense of responsibility, and the capacity to understand the complexities of the world so that a nation can anticipate globalization. This idea does not necessarily constitute a call to return to monarchy.

The more important question contained within it is this: Does electoral democracy produce people who best understand the state and its future, or merely those

who are most capable of winning the competition for power?

Democracy promises government based on the will of the people. However, when the choices of the people are shaped by capital, media, popularity, data manipulation, dynasties, and party transactions, democracy can lose its substance.

Under such circumstances, leaders may be chosen not because they understand the problems of the world most deeply, but because they are the most capable of navigating the electoral algorithm.

Criticism of democracy is not a reason to abandon democracy. Such criticism should instead be used to improve democracy so that it can produce statesmen.

A nation needs more than officials who win elections. It needs civilizational leaders who understand that every decision made today will shape its people and its state for generations to come.

A civilizational leader does not merely manage a term of office. Such a leader thinks in terms of the nation's long history. Such a leader does not merely protect popularity, but protects direction. Such a leader does not merely manage growth, but upholds justice. Such a leader does not merely use technology, but determines the values that technology must serve.

L. The Fifth Amendment of Sekolah Negarawan as the Search for a People-Centered State

The concept of the Fifth Amendment developed by Sekolah Negarawan is not intended as a rejection of all the achievements of the Reformasi era. Nor is it an attempt to mechanically restore Indonesia to the institutional structure that existed before the constitutional amendments. The Fifth Amendment should instead be understood as a search for the form of a people-centered state.

The fundamental question is not what institutions should be added, but how the people can be restored to the architecture of the state. Do the people need a structure capable of formulating their long-term aspirations? How should the people's mandate be translated into a national direction? How should the highest state institutions be held accountable? How can power be controlled without weakening the state?

The Fifth Amendment must also respond to changes in the world. A constitution can no longer be concerned only with the classical distribution of political power. It must also provide direction concerning data sovereignty, technological control, artificial intelligence, environmental protection, strategic resources, the digital economy, and the protection of future generations.

Sekolah Negarawan proposes that the people must once again be positioned not merely as voters, but as owners of the state. The state needs a structure

capable of connecting the will of the people with the nation's long-term direction.

A national direction must not change simply because a government changes. The development of science, technology, industry, education, defense, and culture requires continuity. Yet continuity must never become a justification for unchecked power.

Therefore, a people-centered state must combine popular sovereignty, deliberation, the separation and distribution of powers, continuity of national direction, the protection of rights, and genuine accountability.

The Fifth Amendment is not an end in itself. It is an instrument for building a state that is more consistent with the purposes of independence.

A constitution cannot save a nation without people of integrity. Yet people of integrity also require a constitutional structure that does not force them to submit to a system that is fundamentally flawed.

Constitutional reform must therefore proceed together with the renewal of values, education, culture, the economy, and leadership.

The sequence of transformation begins with values:



Within this framework, the Fifth Amendment is not merely a legal project undertaken by constitutional elites. It is part of a broader search for how **values, human beings, the people, leadership, and the state can once again be connected**.

M. The Lesson of Imam Khomeini: Civilizational Transformation Requires a Constitutional Foundation

From the perspective of modern constitutional history, the experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran provides an important example of how a nation's fundamental transformation does not end with the success of a revolution or a change of government. Imam Khomeini viewed fundamental change as requiring constitutional legitimacy in order to establish a sustainable system of governance. Accordingly, following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran not only established a new government but also formulated the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was subsequently approved through a popular referendum. The Constitution became the foundation for the administration of the state while also serving as an instrument for translating the ideals of the revolution into an institutional framework.

For the author, the most important lesson from this experience is not the specific form of Iran's constitutional system, but the recognition that civilizational transformation requires a constitutional foundation. A nation needs more than the spirit of

change. It also needs a constitution capable of preserving the continuity of its national direction, regulating the relationship between the people and the state, limiting power, and ensuring that the values being pursued do not remain merely slogans.

It is within this framework that the experience of Imam Khomeini has academic relevance for Indonesia. Its relevance does not lie in the substance of Iran's Constitution, which naturally emerged from Iran's own history, culture, and constitutional system, but in the courage to make the constitution an instrument of national transformation. Every nation has both the right and the responsibility to develop its own constitutional form in accordance with its history, philosophy, and the needs of its people.

This perspective is consistent with the Fifth Amendment proposed by Sekolah Negarawan. The Fifth Amendment is not intended to imitate the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran or to adopt another country's constitutional system. Rather, it is a constitutional effort to refine the governance of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia so that it moves closer to the ideals of independence embodied in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

If Imam Khomeini viewed the constitution as a means of constructing a post-revolutionary state order, Sekolah Negarawan views the constitution as a means of refining Indonesia's post-Reformasi democratic journey. The two emerged from fundamentally different historical contexts, yet they reveal one common

principle: a nation's great transformation requires the courage to reorganize the relationship between values, the people, leadership, and the state through constitutional instruments.

Thus, the Fifth Amendment should not be understood as a short-term political agenda, but as part of the search for a people-centered state capable of responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century without abandoning Indonesia's national identity. The Iranian experience demonstrates that a constitution can become an instrument of civilizational development when it is built upon values genuinely embraced by its society. This lesson can inspire Indonesia to continue refining its own constitutional architecture on the foundations of Pancasila, the history of independence, the cultural heritage of the Nusantara, and the aspirations of the Indonesian people.

N. Conclusion of the Chapter

Indonesia has become a state in the formal sense, but it has not yet completed the process of discovering a substantive form of state that is genuinely owned by its people.

Before the constitutional amendments, the MPR was positioned as the highest state institution, yet the people did not necessarily live within the MPR as a living structure of sovereignty. After the amendments, institutions and mechanisms increased, but the people have arguably found it even more difficult to identify a tangible place where their sovereignty is actually exercised.

Elections have developed, but campaign costs have increased. Political parties have become the primary gateway to power, yet they have not always functioned as instruments of the people. The government receives direct electoral legitimacy, but public policy can still be influenced by alliances among oligarchs, emerging aristocracies, conglomerates, and bureaucratic networks.

Indonesia has also entered globalization, modernization, the war for knowledge, digital technology, and artificial intelligence without first resolving the fundamental questions concerning human beings, the people, government, and the state.

Therefore, the question of the form of the state is not merely a question of institutional names. It is a question of architecture.

Who owns the state? Where does power come from? How is the mandate granted? How is the nation's long-term direction determined? Who controls technology and data? How can the people correct those in power? What values should guide national development?

At a deeper level, however, Indonesia's problem is not merely that its Constitution remains imperfect, that its institutions are not yet properly balanced, or that its constitutional system has not produced the right kind of leadership. Indonesia has not yet found the form of a people-centered state because the value system that should shape its people, leadership, and state has not yet been fully realized in collective life.

As a nation with one of the world's largest Muslim populations, Indonesia knows the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, honors his name, recites blessings upon him, commemorates his birth, studies the Hadith, and recognizes his prophethood. Yet this recognition often remains confined to technical, ritual, symbolic, and religious-identity dimensions.

The Prophetic example of Muhammad ﷺ has not yet been fully translated into the foundation of public ethics and the architecture of the state.

Trustworthiness (amanah) has not yet become the primary measure of leadership. Justice has not yet become the foundation of prosperity. Deliberation (shura) has not fully become the spirit of decision-making. The protection of the vulnerable has not yet become a central measure of state success. Knowledge has not always been placed above political interests. Wealth, technology, data, law, and the economy have not yet been fully managed as trusts for the public good.

This does not mean that Islam is not alive in Indonesia. Islam lives within families, mosques, pesantren, traditions, culture, organizations, and the personal lives of millions of people. Many scholars, teachers, leaders, and ordinary citizens sincerely strive to live according to Islamic values.

Yet the life of Islam as a religion within society does not automatically transform Islam into the value system of the state and civilization.

This is where Indonesia's deepest problem lies. Islam is often recognized as an identity, but it has not yet

been fully used as a standard by which power is evaluated. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is recognized as the Messenger of God, but the Prophetic example has not yet become the governing logic of leadership, law, economics, technology, education, and the protection of the people.

Therefore, the revival of Islamic values must not be reduced to adding religious symbols, expanding the formalization of religious law, or competing for political office in the name of Islam. The intended revival is a transformation in how human beings understand trust, justice, knowledge, power, wealth, the people, and the future.

Indonesia must also correct the distortion whereby justice is reduced to mere prosperity. Prosperity is important, but prosperity that is not born of justice can become wealth for a small minority, luxury for elites, and growth statistics that fail to save the people.

A people-centered state does not choose between justice and prosperity. Prosperity must be the fruit of justice. Within an Islamic value framework, economic development must rest upon trustworthiness, the protection of property, the protection of human dignity, balance, responsibility, and solidarity with the vulnerable. The state must not merely generate wealth. It must ensure that wealth serves the common good.

Indonesia does not need the return of a monarchy based on lineage. Yet Cak Nun's reflection on the possibility of a "king" who possesses the deepest understanding of the world raises a question that cannot

be ignored: Is the existing system capable of producing civilizational leaders?

This nation needs more than administrative officials. Indonesia needs people who understand history, the world, values, the people, the Constitution, the algorithms of power, globalization, and AI—people who are not merely capable of running the state, but who understand where the state should be going.

It is from this need that the Fifth Amendment of Sekolah Negarawan derives its meaning. The Fifth Amendment is not merely a revision of constitutional articles. It is a search for a form of state that restores the people as owners, places justice at the foundation of prosperity, restrains power, and prepares Indonesia to face a changing world.

Yet even the Fifth Amendment will not be sufficient if it merely changes institutions without transforming values. A constitution can regulate power, but it cannot by itself produce trustworthiness. Institutions can constrain officials, but they cannot automatically create just human beings. Technology can accelerate government, but it cannot determine whom government ultimately exists to serve.

Therefore, the search for a people-centered state must begin with the revival of Islam as a value system, continue through the preservation of human dignity and the strengthening of the Muslim community, the reform of villages and the spaces in which people live, and the awakening of the nation, ultimately leading to the rediscovery of popular sovereignty within the state.

Indonesia has not completed the search for its form of state because Indonesia has not completed the formation of its human beings. Indonesia has not completed the formation of its human beings because Islam has not yet been fully brought to life as a civilizational value system capable of directing public ethics, leadership, justice, law, economics, knowledge, technology, and the protection of the people.

This is the unfinished work of history. It is not merely about building state institutions, but about bringing Prophetic values into public life without turning religion into an instrument of power; not merely declaring the people to be the holders of sovereignty, but building structures that genuinely nurture and protect them; not merely pursuing prosperity, but establishing justice so that prosperity becomes a shared inheritance.

Indonesia has never fully completed the search for its form of state. Ultimately, this incompleteness reflects the fact that the nation has not yet completed the task of making Islam a living value system of its civilization.

Chapter III
Iran Once Found a Form State: Spirituality, Leadership, and Civilizational Resilience



Indonesia and Iran have followed different historical trajectories. Indonesia emerged as a republic from the convergence of kingdoms, sultanates, villages, indigenous communities, European colonialism, Japanese occupation, and the struggle for independence. Iran developed from a long Persian civilization, experienced dynastic rule, a constitutional revolution, the Pahlavi monarchy, foreign intervention, and the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

These differences mean that the two countries cannot be compared mechanically. Institutions that developed within Iran's historical experience cannot simply be transplanted into Indonesia. Likewise,

Indonesia's experience cannot serve as the sole standard by which Iran is judged. Yet difference does not eliminate the possibility of learning from one another.

Iran is important to this manuscript because the country once undertook a serious search for a form of state. That search unfolded through debates over royal authority, the position of the people, the role of religious scholars, law, constitutionalism, sovereignty, national independence, and the relationship between religion and government.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Iran began limiting monarchical authority through constitutional arrangements and representative institutions. In 1979, Iran once again transformed its form of state through the Islamic Revolution. The Islamic Republic that subsequently emerged sought to bring together Divine sovereignty, the people's right to determine their social destiny, religious leadership, elections, representative institutions, and the distribution of state power.

This experience does not mean that Iran has discovered a perfect and permanently completed form of state. Every political system continues to face tensions, criticism, social change, and gaps between constitutional ideals and their implementation. However, Iran demonstrates a willingness not merely to replace rulers, but to reconsider the foundations of the state, the sources of legitimacy, the position of the

people, the direction of law, and the objectives of its civilization.

In this sense, the title of this chapter states that Iran once found a form of state. "Found" does not mean that Iran achieved final perfection. Rather, it means that Iran was willing to formulate a political form that it considered consistent with its own historical experience, value system, and civilizational aspirations.

A. Persia dan Monarki Konstitusional

Before the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iran—still referred to as Persia in much of the international literature—was governed as a monarchy. During the Qajar Dynasty, royal authority faced economic pressures, foreign intervention, concessions to external interests, weak administration, and growing dissatisfaction among merchants, religious scholars, intellectuals, and various segments of society.

Out of this situation emerged the Persian Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. This revolution was not merely a rebellion aimed at replacing a particular monarch. It was a struggle to transform the relationship between power, law, and the people.

The 1906 Constitution established the National Consultative Assembly, or Majles-e Shorā-ye Melli. Article 2 of the Constitution stated that the assembly represented the entire people of Persia and that, through the assembly, the people participated in the affairs of

state and the country's economy. Its members were elected from Tehran and the provinces. In this way, the people began to acquire a constitutional position within the structure of the state, even though the monarchy itself was retained.

This transformation was significant. Previously, monarchical power rested primarily on dynastic authority and the personal prerogative of the monarch. With the emergence of a constitution and a representative assembly, political power began to be constrained by law, legislative processes, representation, and mechanisms that were no longer entirely subject to the personal will of the king.

The Persian monarchy did not immediately become a full democracy. The authority of the monarch, the royal court, elites, foreign powers, and various social groups continued to play significant roles. Nevertheless, constitutionalism introduced the principle that the state could no longer depend solely on the will of the ruler.

The king remained, but political authority could no longer be understood as an unlimited personal right.

This marked an important stage in Iran's search for a form of state. The country did not immediately abolish its entire monarchical legacy. Instead, it began constructing a structure that allowed the people, law, representative institutions, and social groups to enter the process of governance.

This experience offers an important lesson: transforming the form of a state does not always have to

begin by eliminating every existing structure. Change can begin by limiting power, establishing representation, transforming the sources of legitimacy, and compelling government to submit to a constitution.

Yet Iran's experience also demonstrates that a constitution on paper does not automatically guarantee that power can be effectively controlled. A constitution still requires people, institutions, social forces, and leadership willing to uphold and defend it.

B. The People within Persia's Constitutional Structure

The significance of the Persian Constitutional Revolution lies not merely in the creation of a legal document. The revolution introduced the people as an element with a recognized position within the state.

Article 2 of the 1906 Constitution explicitly positioned the Majles as the representative of the entire Persian people. This formulation was not yet identical to the modern concept of popular sovereignty in all its later developments, but it demonstrated a profound shift: the people were no longer merely inhabitants governed by the king. They were increasingly recognized as a constituency that had to be present in the decision-making process of the state.

The establishment of the Majles also transformed the way political power was conceived. The state was no longer understood solely in terms of the king, the royal

court, ministers, the military, and state officials. It began to contain a space in which representatives of the people could deliberate on laws, budgets, policies, and matters of public interest.

In subsequent constitutional arrangements, Iran also developed a Senate as a second chamber intended to complement the National Consultative Assembly. Some members of the Senate were elected, while others were appointed by the monarch. This structure reflected a compromise between monarchical authority and representative elements.

This compromise may be criticized because the people did not yet control the entire political structure. Historically, however, it demonstrates that Iran had begun searching for an answer to a question that Indonesia also continues to face: How should the people be incorporated into the architecture of the state?

Iran did not immediately discover a perfect answer. Competition among the monarch, the Majles, religious scholars, elites, and foreign powers continued. Yet the people had entered the language of the constitution and the institutional structure of the state.

This is fundamentally different from merely declaring that a government works for the people. Constitutionalism requires the people to be given an institutional form: representatives, assemblies, rights, legislative processes, and meaningful capacity to influence the direction of the state.

The lesson for Indonesia is not that the constitutional structure of Persia in 1906 should be replicated. The deeper lesson is that the people cannot be honored merely through political rhetoric. The people need a structure.

During the constitutional monarchy, Iran began constructing such a structure, even though it remained limited and marked by intense conflict. Indonesia, which has long declared that sovereignty rests in the hands of the people, must likewise continue to examine whether its people truly possess a living constitutional structure—or whether they appear primarily through elections.

C. The Islamic Revolution as a Transformation of the Form of State

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 did not merely overthrow Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Revolution brought the monarchy to an end and established a new form of state: Islamic Republic of Iran.

This transformation carried significance far beyond a change of dynasty. The monarchy was abolished. A new constitution was drafted. The relationship between the people, religion, leadership, law, and the state was reformulated.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran declares Iran's form of government to be an Islamic Republic. It also establishes Islamic principles as the

foundation of its social, cultural, and economic institutions. At the same time, it provides for elections for the President, parliament, and local councils, as well as referendums on certain matters.

One of its most significant formulations is found in Article 56. The Article states that absolute sovereignty over the world and humanity belongs to God, while God has granted human beings sovereignty over their own social destiny. No one may deprive human beings of this Divine right or subordinate it to the interests of any particular individual or group. The people exercise this right through the mechanisms established by the Constitution.

This formulation illustrates Iran's attempt to reconcile two concepts that are often regarded as contradictory: Divine sovereignty and the right of the people to determine their own social destiny.

Divine sovereignty is not formulated as a means of removing human beings from the constitutional order. Rather, the human right to determine one's social destiny is understood as a right granted by God. Therefore, no individual or group may legitimately deprive the people of that right.

At the institutional level, the Iranian Constitution divides state power into legislative, executive, and judicial branches operating within the framework of the leadership of wilāyat al-amr. Parliament consists of representatives of the people elected by direct and secret ballot. The President is elected by popular vote. The

Constitution also affirms that the affairs of the country are to be administered on the basis of public opinion expressed through elections and referendums.

This structure demonstrates that the Islamic Republic is not defined solely by the existence of religious leadership. It also incorporates representative institutions, elections, a President, parliament, councils, the judiciary, and various other constitutional mechanisms.

However, the system also contains internal tensions that should not be overlooked. The Supreme Leader possesses extensive constitutional authority. The Guardian Council reviews legislation for conformity with Islam and the Constitution and plays a role in the vetting of electoral candidates. Institutions elected by the people operate alongside institutions whose legitimacy is derived through religious and constitutional mechanisms.

Iran, therefore, cannot adequately be described solely as an electoral democracy or solely as a government of religious scholars. Its form of state constitutes a distinctive arrangement that seeks to bring together republicanism, Islam, popular participation, and religious leadership.

It is also important to emphasize that constitutional ideals are not always identical to the entirety of political practice. Like other states, Iran faces debates concerning participation, freedom, representation, accountability, and the limits of

authority exercised by state institutions. These debates themselves demonstrate that the form of a state is not static. It continues to be tested by society and by history.

For Sekolah Negarawan, the most important aspect of Iran's experience is not the specific details of its institutions, but the seriousness with which the Iranian nation reformulated the foundations of the state following the Revolution.

Iran did not stop at replacing the Shah. Iran confronted deeper questions: What values should form the foundation of the state? Who possesses the right to determine society's destiny? How should the people participate? What place should Islamic law occupy? And how should leadership safeguard the direction of civilization?

Indonesia does not have to agree with all of Iran's answers. However, Indonesia can learn from the seriousness with which those questions were asked.

D. Khamenei and Spirituality as the Foundation of Youth Resilience

In Iran's post-revolutionary experience, Sayid Ali Khamenei places spirituality not as a supplementary element, but as a source of civilizational strength.

In various speeches and statements addressed to young people and university students, he emphasizes faith, sincerity, sacrifice, self-confidence, and trust in Allah (tawakkul) as inner resources necessary to

confront the challenges of the times. In the "Second Phase of the Revolution" Statement, spirituality is expressed through values such as sincerity, sacrifice, trust in Allah, and confidence in oneself and society.

Within this perspective, young people are not merely a productive workforce or an age group to be prepared for the labor market. Youth are the bearers of the future of civilization. They need knowledge, technical capabilities, discipline, and courage. Yet none of these capacities is sufficient without inner strength.

Technology can provide tools. Knowledge can provide capabilities. Organization can provide collective strength. But spirituality determines the purpose for which all these capacities are used.

Khamenei uses the image of the "Pharaohs of today" to describe forces that oppress human beings, dominate nations, seize resources, or impose their will.

Within his framework of thought, young people cannot stand against forces of such magnitude through anger or technical capability alone. They need faith, trust in Allah, a strong relationship with God, and inner steadfastness. His official website repeatedly connects the ability to stand against tyrannical powers with spirituality and reliance upon Allah.

This perspective is relevant to Indonesia. Indonesia is entering an era in which young people face globalization, artificial intelligence, technological dependence, narrative warfare, transformations in

employment, environmental degradation, and the concentration of economic power.

If young people are shaped merely to become users of technology and workers within existing systems, they may possess skills but lack direction.

If young people are given religious enthusiasm without knowledge, they may possess courage but lack the capacity to transform reality. Civilizational resilience therefore requires the integration of spirituality, knowledge, technology, organization, and service to the people.

This is one of the lessons Indonesia can draw from Iran's experience: a nation under pressure needs more than equipment and material capabilities. It also needs human beings who possess a moral reason to endure.

E. Khamenei and the Critique of Concessions to American Hegemony

One of the important themes in Khamenei's thought is his criticism of the assumption that Iran's problems with the United States can be resolved through unilateral concessions.

In his view, negotiations are not inherently wrong. Diplomacy is an integral part of relations between states. However, negotiations become dangerous when one side makes tangible concessions

while the stronger party offers only disproportionate promises or continues to introduce additional demands.

In explaining Iran's logic in dealing with the United States government, Khamenei's official website presents the criticism that the American side may accept immediate concessions while failing to deliver the promised concessions in return. In other speeches, he has argued that Iran's problems with the United States will not be resolved through negotiations alone if demands continue to expand from one issue to another.

This criticism does not have to be accepted as a universal truth applicable to every diplomatic situation. It emerges from Iran's own historical experience, which includes economic concessions during the monarchical period, foreign intervention, the 1953 coup, external support for the Shah's government, the Iran–Iraq War, sanctions, and prolonged geopolitical rivalry. As a point of reflection, however, this perspective is important for Indonesia.

A nation without a clear direction may regard every compromise as pragmatism. Yet not every compromise produces peace or equitable benefits.

Concessions may be necessary in diplomacy. No international relationship can function without some exchange of interests. However, concessions must be made from a position that is conscious, measured, and sovereign.

A nation must understand what can be negotiated and what must not be surrendered. Territory,

the dignity of the people, data sovereignty, the capacity to determine its own laws, strategic resources, scientific independence, and the future of succeeding generations must not be treated as commodities for short-term exchange.

Iran's experience suggests that hegemonic powers may not necessarily be satisfied after receiving a single concession. Dependence can generate further demands because the stronger party recognizes that the weaker party has increasingly limited alternatives.

For Indonesia, this lesson must not be interpreted as automatic hostility toward the United States or any other major power. Indonesia needs constructive relations and broad international cooperation.

The lesson is that cooperation must be supported by strategic state intelligence, national capabilities, and clearly defined boundaries. Without these, diplomacy can gradually become a process of continuous adjustment to the preferences of the stronger party.

Resilience does not mean rejecting every compromise. Resilience means not losing oneself in the process of compromise.

F. Defending the Oppressed Regardless of Sect

Another important aspect of Khamenei's thought is his rejection of limiting solidarity on the basis of sectarian affiliation.

In his statements to the Ahlulbayt World Assembly, he has emphasized that, in defending the oppressed, Iran does not determine its support on the basis of the religion or sect of those being defended. In various speeches, he has pointed to Palestine as an example: the majority of Palestinians are Sunni, yet Iran continues to regard supporting them as a moral responsibility.

The Ahlulbayt World Assembly has also stated that Iran's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is rooted in the Shia community, does not differ in principle from its support for Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which are rooted in Sunni society. Within this framework, the criterion for solidarity is not sectarian affiliation, but one's position in relation to oppression.

This principle is also reflected in Iran's constitutional framework. Article 154 states that the Islamic Republic supports the just struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors throughout the world, while at the same time affirming non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. The Constitution also places support for the mustad'afin among the principles guiding its foreign policy.

There is, of course, international debate over how this principle is implemented, which actors receive support, and what consequences such policies have for regional conflicts. This manuscript does not need to accept every aspect of Iran's foreign policy uncritically.

What matters here is the underlying value: human suffering does not become less meaningful simply because the victims belong to a different sect.

For the Muslim world, this principle is particularly important. Sunni–Shia divisions have repeatedly been used to divert the attention of Muslims from questions of colonialism, injustice, poverty, and domination. When each community defends only the suffering of its own group, the oppressed remain divided and weakened.

Indonesia, as a Sunni-majority country, needs to examine this experience without sectarian fear. Studying Iran does not mean becoming Shia. Acknowledging Iran's support for Palestine does not mean accepting every Iranian policy.

Conversely, Iran must also understand that Indonesia has its own traditions, social structures, and sectarian sensitivities. Dialogue can only develop when neither side uses solidarity as a means of imposing its identity upon the other.

The defense of the mustad'afin should unite the Ummah, not become another gateway for competition over influence.

G. The Muslim Ummah as a Single Civilizational Identity

The Iranian Constitution states that all Muslims constitute a single Ummah and that the government has

a duty to strengthen brotherhood and to work toward unity within the political, economic, and cultural life of the Muslim world.

Khamenei has also repeatedly called upon Muslims to transcend non-fundamental differences and strengthen the unity of the Ummah. He has described the problems faced by Palestine, Yemen, Bahrain, and other regions as wounds within the body of the Muslim world.

The idea of the Ummah as one body does not mean erasing nations, states, languages, cultures, or schools of Islamic thought. Rather, it means that political boundaries and differences in jurisprudence must not eliminate moral responsibility.

A Muslim in Indonesia does not have to abandon their Indonesian identity in order to care about Palestine. An Iranian Muslim does not have to abandon their Persian identity in order to defend the people of Yemen. Civilizational unity does not mean uniformity.

Unity means recognizing that the Ummah faces a number of shared challenges, including poverty, scientific and technological underdevelopment, war, economic domination, environmental destruction, Islamophobia, sectarian conflict, and technological dependence. However, the concept of a single Ummah must also be safeguarded from becoming an instrument of geopolitics.

States may use the language of Islamic unity to expand their influence. Groups may use the suffering of

the Ummah to accumulate legitimacy. Therefore, solidarity must always be evaluated according to genuine commitment to human beings, integrity, and respect for the sovereignty of other nations.

For Sekolah Negarawan, consciousness of the Ummah must be developed through the jalur rakyat. This means that solidarity should not merely be proclaimed by governments, but should be realized through networks and social nodes that educate, nurture, protect, and empower the people.

The Ummah as a single civilizational identity is not a project for expanding the power of any one state. Rather, it is the recognition that the progress of one part of the Ummah should strengthen the others, while the suffering of one part must never be treated as a distant concern.

H. The Difference Between Civilizational Leadership and Administrative Leadership

Iran's experience illustrates the distinction between administrative leadership and civilizational leadership.

Administrative leaders manage government, budgets, institutions, projects, and public services. These functions are essential. A state cannot function without orderly and effective administration.

Civilizational leaders, however, operate within a broader horizon. They safeguard the long-term

direction of the nation, its value system, identity, resilience, and the relationship between the present generation and the future.

Within Iran's constitutional structure, the President exercises executive authority within the areas defined by the Constitution. Parliament exercises legislative authority. The judiciary performs judicial functions. Meanwhile, the Supreme Leader plays a role in determining general policies, supervising their implementation, holding supreme command of the armed forces, and exercising other constitutional powers.

This structure can certainly be debated. Questions concerning the concentration of power, oversight, representation, and accountability remain relevant. Nevertheless, the underlying purpose can be understood as an attempt to ensure that the affairs of the state are not managed solely according to the terms of successive governments, but are also guided by a form of leadership intended to preserve the nation's ideological and civilizational direction.

Indonesia does not need to establish an identical office. However, Indonesia needs to answer the same fundamental question: who safeguards the direction of the state beyond five-year terms of office?

The President holds a mandate to govern. Parliament operates within a defined term. Political parties function within electoral competition. The bureaucracy administers the machinery of government.

But who ensures that the development of science, technology, education, culture, defense, and national character remains coherent and continuous across generations?

Administrative leaders tend to work according to targets that can be achieved within their term of office. Civilizational leaders must consider the consequences of decisions over several decades.

Administrative leaders ask whether a project has been completed. Civilizational leaders ask whether the project strengthens the people.

Administrative leaders calculate growth. Civilizational leaders ensure that growth is rooted in justice.

Administrative leaders adopt technology. Civilizational leaders determine the values that technology must serve.

Indonesia needs leaders who do not merely understand the administration of government, but who also understand human beings, world history, the Constitution, technology, geopolitics, economics, religion, and the future of the people.

I. Indonesia Does Not Need to Imitate Iran, but It Needs to Learn from Its Seriousness

The greatest lesson from Iran is not that Indonesia should establish an Islamic Republic with the same institutional design. Indonesia does not need to

adopt wilāyat al-faqih, the Guardian Council, the Assembly of Experts, or Iran's constitutional structure.

Indonesia has its own history. Indonesia emerged from a highly plural society, a different colonial experience, a predominantly Sunni tradition, diverse kingdoms and sultanates, Pancasila, and its own distinctive constitutional compromises.

Mechanically applying the Iranian system to Indonesia would not only be unrealistic, but would also contradict the principle that every nation must find its own form of state based on its history and the needs of its people. However, rejecting imitation does not mean rejecting the opportunity to learn.

Indonesia can learn from Iran in at least four respects.



First, Iran demonstrates that changing rulers is not enough without transforming the architecture of the

state. The 1979 Revolution did not end with the fall of the Shah. A new Constitution was drafted, and the sources of political legitimacy were reformulated.

Second, Iran demonstrates that a state requires a clearly articulated value system. Values must not remain merely ornamental. A value system must be reflected in law, institutions, education, the economy, and the direction of public policy.

Third, Iran demonstrates the importance of leadership that thinks in terms of civilization, not merely administration. Leadership must safeguard long-term direction, spirituality, self-reliance, knowledge, and resilience.

Fourth, Iran demonstrates that a nation under global pressure requires inner strength. Self-reliance cannot be built through military power or industry alone. It requires human beings with conviction, discipline, knowledge, courage, and a willingness to make sacrifices.

Indonesia can learn from this seriousness without accepting all of Iran's answers. Indonesia must develop its own form of a state that genuinely belongs to its people. Islamic values can serve as a foundation for human development and leadership, but they must not be used as an instrument for the domination of any particular school of thought or group.

Indonesia must also ensure that learning from Iran does not create a new form of intellectual or strategic dependency. The purpose of civilizational

cooperation is not to replace a Western orientation with an Iranian orientation. Its purpose is to strengthen Indonesia's capacity to think independently and determine its own path.

Iran should serve as a mirror, not as a new authority over Indonesia's imagination.

J. Chapter Conclusion

Iran and Indonesia have both confronted fundamental questions about the form of the state, but they have answered them through different historical paths.

Iran began its constitutional search under the monarchy. The 1906 Constitution limited some of the Shah's powers and established the Majles as a representative institution of the people. The 1979 Islamic Revolution subsequently abolished the monarchy and established an Islamic Republic that sought to bring together the sovereignty of God, the right of human beings to determine their own social destiny, popular participation, religious leadership, and republican institutions.

This form of state is not without its problems. No state fully embodies the ideals expressed in its constitution. Nevertheless, Iran has demonstrated the courage to formulate the foundations of its state on its own terms and to place its value system, leadership, and

civilizational direction within its constitutional architecture.

Sayid Ali Khamenei represents one important reflection of this experience. Khamenei emphasizes spirituality, inner strength, trust in God (tawakkul), knowledge, and a strong relationship with God as foundations for the resilience of the younger generation. He warns that concessions to hegemonic powers do not necessarily resolve disputes when demands continue to expand. He also places the defense of the oppressed above sectarian differences and calls for an awareness of the Muslim Ummah as one body.

Indonesia does not need to imitate Iran. Indonesia does not need to replicate its institutional structure, follow its school of thought, or adopt its geopolitical strategies in their entirety.

However, Indonesia can learn from Iran's seriousness in recognizing that a change of government is not enough without transforming the architecture of the state; transforming the architecture of the state is not enough without value-based leadership; and value-based leadership cannot endure without human beings who possess spirituality, knowledge, and inner strength.

Iran has sought to answer a fundamental question: how can religion, the people, leadership, and the state be brought together within a coherent architecture?

Indonesia must find its own answer. The lesson from Iran is not a ready-made solution, but rather the courage to refuse to leave the design of the state to the directionless course of history.

Indonesia must ask its own questions with the same seriousness: What values should form the foundation of the state? How should the people be positioned as its true owners? Who should safeguard the nation's long-term direction? How should technology and power be governed? And what kind of human beings must be formed for the nation to face the challenges of the world?

If Indonesia merely imitates Iran, Indonesia will lose itself. Yet if Indonesia refuses to learn simply because it fears differences in schools of thought and political systems, Indonesia will also lose the opportunity to understand an important experience within the Muslim world.

Civilizational cooperation requires the maturity to learn without copying, respect without glorifying, criticize without demeaning, and cooperate without surrendering sovereignty.

Iran has, at a particular point in its historical journey, found a form of state that it believes corresponds to its value system and historical experience. Indonesia has not yet completed its search for a form of state that genuinely belongs to its people.

This difference is not a reason for Iran to instruct Indonesia on what it should become. On the contrary, it

is precisely a reason for the two nations to engage in dialogue—so that Indonesia can learn from Iran's seriousness, and Iran can understand that Indonesia must build its own path.

SEKOLAH NEGARAWAN
SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter IV
Formal Independence and Structural Colonialism

A. Indonesian Independence and Structural Decolonization

The Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, represents one of the most important events in Indonesian history. Through the Proclamation, the Indonesian people declared their independence, rejected the continuation of colonial rule, and established the Republic of Indonesia as a sovereign state.

The significance of this event must not be diminished. Indonesian independence was not an ordinary administrative event, nor was it merely a change of rulers. Indonesian independence was the result of a long struggle involving the sacrifices of the people, resistance, diplomacy, warfare, education, culture, and the awakening of national consciousness.

Through the Proclamation, the Indonesian people declared that they were no longer colonial subjects, but a nation with the right to determine its own destiny.

Therefore, this manuscript does not question Indonesia's independence. The Republic of Indonesia is a legitimate state. Direct colonial rule has ended. Indonesia has territory, a constitution, a national government, armed forces, police, judicial institutions, diplomatic relations, and international recognition.

However, acknowledging Indonesia's independence does not close the door to a more fundamental question: did the end of colonial rule automatically mean the end of all colonial structures?

This question is important because colonialism did not operate only through foreign armies, territorial occupation, and colonial governments. Colonialism also constructed systems of law, bureaucracy, administration, education, economy, culture, ways of thinking, social hierarchies, and particular relationships between rulers and the people.

When the colonizers left, the structures they had built did not necessarily leave with them. It is here that Sekolah Negarawan distinguishes between formal independence and structural decolonization.

Formal independence marks the end of direct colonial rule and the birth of a national state. Structural decolonization is a much longer process of dismantling, reassessing, transforming, and rebuilding the systems that were previously shaped according to the needs of colonial rule.

Structural decolonization encompasses law, bureaucracy, administration, the economy, education, technology, knowledge, culture, value systems, leadership, and the relationship between the state and the people.

Formal independence answers the question of who governs. Structural decolonization addresses a deeper question: for whom is government exercised, what values guide it, and have the structures of the state

truly been transformed from instruments of control into instruments that serve and care for the people?

A nation may be independent while continuing to use laws originally designed to control a colonized population. A state may have a national bureaucracy while preserving an administrative culture that remains distant from the people. A government may be led by its own citizens while its economic and intellectual orientation remains dependent on the needs of external actors.

Thus, the Proclamation was the gateway to independence, not the end of the entire process of decolonization. Independence must continue to be realized through structural transformation so that the people do not merely move from the status of colonial subjects to citizens, but truly become the holders of sovereignty.

B. The Colonizers Left, but the Structures Remained

Colonialism was not built merely to occupy territory. It was designed to control people, command resources, regulate production, secure the flow of profits, and maintain the stability of colonial rule. To achieve these objectives, colonialism established an extensive system encompassing law, taxation, bureaucracy, security, territorial administration, education, trade, land ownership, social classification, and the structure of relations between rulers and society.

Within the colonial system, the people were not positioned as the owners of the state. They were regarded as a population to be governed, a labor force

to be utilized, taxpayers, suppliers of commodities, consumers, and objects of surveillance.

The colonial state was not built to care for the people. It was built to manage territory and its population so that the interests of those in power could be maintained.

When Indonesia gained independence, the new state faced extremely difficult circumstances. The Republic needed laws, government offices, civil servants, security institutions, record-keeping systems, taxation, administration, and various instruments of governance. Under revolutionary conditions and with limited resources, some colonial structures continued to be used.

The use of inherited structures during a transitional period was understandable. A newly established state could not possibly build all of its institutions from the ground up within a short period of time. The problem arose when structures that should have been transitional were never fundamentally re-examined.

Foreign officials could be replaced by national officials, while the way the people were perceived remained unchanged. Colonial languages could be replaced by Bahasa Indonesia, while power relations remained vertical. Government could be administered by Indonesians themselves, while the people continued to be treated as objects of administration. This is where the distinction between the nationalization of administrators and the decolonization of structures becomes important.

The nationalization of administrators means that positions and institutions previously controlled by foreign powers are subsequently held and managed by the nation's own people. Structural decolonization means transforming the objectives, value system, power relations, and mechanisms of governance so that all institutions genuinely serve the people.

Without decolonization, Indonesians can reproduce colonial logic in governing fellow Indonesians. Such a condition does not always arise from malicious intent. It can develop through habit, education, organizational culture, interests, incentives, or an inability to imagine a different form of state.

Nevertheless, the consequences remain serious. The people may continue to encounter the state as a structure before which they must petition, obey, wait, and prove themselves. Government may continue to view society from above. Bureaucracies may remain more accountable to their superiors than to the people they are supposed to serve.

The colonizers may have left, but the distance between the state and the people can remain. This is one reason why formal independence does not automatically produce a negara rakyat. Structures inherited from colonialism may persist not only in laws and institutions, but also in the mentality of the people who operate them.

C. Visible and Invisible Colonialism

Visible colonialism is relatively easy to recognize. It arrives with a name, a flag, an army, warships,

fortresses, colonial companies, foreign governments, and an administration that openly distinguishes between rulers and colonial subjects. Under classical colonialism, the people know who controls them. Power has a different face, speaks a different language, and represents interests that are easier to identify.

Visible colonialism seizes territory. It controls land, ports, plantations, mines, labor, and trade routes. It uses violence to enforce obedience and protect colonial interests. Invisible colonialism, however, operates differently.

Colonialism does not always require foreign armies. It does not always arrive under a foreign flag. It does not even necessarily identify itself as colonialism. Invisible colonialism can operate through values, morality, ethics, culture, education, law, regulation, economics, technology, data, media, algorithms, lifestyles, standards of knowledge, and the way people understand progress.

Classical colonialism controls the land. Structural colonialism can control how a nation understands its own land. Classical colonialism directly extracts raw materials. Structural colonialism can create a system in which a nation exports raw materials, imports added value, and eventually accepts such dependency as something normal.

Classical colonialism imposes the culture of the ruling power. Structural colonialism can cultivate a sense of inferiority, causing a colonized nation to voluntarily regard the values, knowledge, language, and lifestyles of others as inherently superior to its own.

It is within this context that Cak Nun's statements regarding contemporary colonialism should be understood. When Cak Nun says that Indonesia today is colonized by America "a hundred times more" than it was under Dutch colonial rule, the statement should not be treated as a statistical measurement or a quantitative historical conclusion. Rather, it is a form of cultural language used to describe the depth of invisible colonialism.

In the past, colonizers arrived with names, flags, armies, and colonial administrations. Today, domination can operate through systems of values, markets, regulations, education, technology, data, lifestyles, social falsehoods, media, consumer culture, and domestic elites.

More dangerously, there may be no actor openly declaring itself to be a colonizer. The people themselves may not even realize that they are losing their sovereignty.

Individuals may feel free because they have countless choices of products, entertainment, and information, while their desires and choices are being shaped by systems they do not understand. A state may consider itself independent because it has a national government, while its economic, technological, and educational policies remain dependent on standards determined beyond its own borders.

The people may feel sovereign because they elect their leaders, while their choices, perceptions, and knowledge are influenced by capital, media, technology, and algorithms that lack transparency.

Classical colonialism generates resistance because the adversary can be identified. Structural colonialism is more difficult to resist because it may appear in the form of progress, efficiency, modernization, investment, innovation, reform, or global necessity.

However, caution remains necessary. Not every foreign influence constitutes colonialism. Not every investment, technology, regulation, educational system, or cultural exchange represents a form of colonial domination.

A relationship may be understood as moving toward structural colonialism when it creates domination, dependency, loss of control, transfer of benefits away from the people, and an inability of a nation to determine the direction of its own development.

The question, therefore, is not merely where a system comes from. The deeper questions are who controls it, who benefits from it, who bears the risks, and whether the people retain the ability to determine their own future.

D. Colonial Law, Bureaucracy, and Administration

Colonial law was designed to serve the needs of colonial rule. Its primary purpose was not to deliver justice to the population, but to maintain order, protect the interests of those in power, collect taxes, regulate labor, control trade, and prevent resistance. Within such a system, law operated vertically.

The state stood above, while the people remained below. State authorities exercised broad powers, while the population faced significant limitations in defending their rights.

After independence, some colonial laws remained in force in order to prevent a legal vacuum. This decision can be understood as a practical necessity during the early years of the newly established state.

However, legal decolonization cannot be achieved merely by replacing old laws with new ones. Colonial ways of thinking can continue to survive within national law.

A law may be enacted after independence while still operating on the assumption that citizens are subjects to be suspected, regulated, and controlled. The state may be granted extensive powers, while the people are required to prove that they are entitled to protection.

In a state that genuinely belongs to its people, law should serve as an instrument of justice. Law must protect human beings from arbitrary power, including arbitrary actions by the state itself.

In practice, however, access to law can be expensive, complicated, slow, and distant from the people. Those with financial resources, access, connections, and knowledge may be able to use the legal system more effectively than ordinary citizens.

This condition demonstrates that the problem of law does not lie only in legal texts, but also in the architecture of access and implementation.

Colonial bureaucracy was likewise built upon vertical relationships. Officials were accountable to their

superiors. Information was controlled from the center. People were required to approach government offices, fulfill numerous administrative requirements, wait, and petition for what they needed.

If such patterns persist, a national bureaucracy can remain distant from the people. Public services may be treated as something granted by the government rather than as rights to which the people are entitled.

Documents, permits, data, and procedures can become sources of bureaucratic power. The people, who should be the true owners of the state, may instead find themselves placed in a position where they must seek permission from the state simply to conduct their lives. The decolonization of bureaucracy means transforming this orientation.

Bureaucracy must move from control to service, from secrecy to transparency, from accountability to superiors toward accountability to the people, and from procedural compliance toward meeting human needs.

Digitalization does not automatically produce decolonization. A colonial bureaucracy transferred into an application remains a colonial bureaucracy.

People may no longer have to stand in line at government offices, but they may instead encounter digital systems that lack transparency, are difficult to challenge, and provide no identifiable human authority who can be held accountable. The physical queue is merely transformed into an algorithmic queue.

Therefore, the reform of law and administration must always return to one fundamental question: does

the structure make the people more protected, more empowered, and closer to justice?

E. The People as Objects of Regulation

One of the defining characteristics of a colonial state is the positioning of the people as objects. The people are counted, mapped, classified, taxed, their labor directed, and their living spaces regulated. They are not positioned as the owners of power, but as people to be managed so that the machinery of government can function. The language of colonial administration can continue to survive within the modern state.

The people are described as program targets, beneficiaries, objects of development, policy targets, database entries, taxpayers, voters, workers, consumers, or service users.

All of these categories may be necessary for administrative purposes. However, when the entire relationship between the state and the people is constructed solely through such categories, the people lose their rightful position and moral standing.

The people are not merely recipients of programs. The people are those who should determine what programs are needed. The people are not merely a source of tax revenue. The people are the owners of the purposes for which those taxes are used.

The people are not merely voters. The people are the owners of the mandate and must have the ability to oversee, evaluate, and correct those whom they elect.

The people are not merely providers of data. The people possess dignity, privacy, rights, and legitimate interests in the data generated through their lives.

When the state sees the people merely as objects of regulation, institutions will operate from the top down. Policies are formulated for the people, but not always with the people.

Under such conditions, the people may experience what Cak Nun describes as a process of being "orphaned."

The people have a government, yet do not feel cared for. They have laws, yet do not always receive justice. They have state apparatuses, yet do not always feel protected. They have representatives, yet do not feel represented.

The people are required to fulfill their obligations, while their rights may be delayed, made difficult to access, or subjected to negotiation. A state that genuinely belongs to its people must reverse this relationship.

The people must not remain merely objects of development. They must become the owners of the direction of development. It is not enough for the people to be consulted only after policies are nearly complete. They must have constitutional and social structures that enable their will to be present from the very beginning.

Decolonizing the relationship between the people and the state means transforming the people from a population to be managed into owners to be served.

F. Leadership Crisis as a Structural Legacy

Colonialism did not only leave behind laws and bureaucracy. Colonialism also shaped a particular type of leadership. Within the colonial structure, local leaders were often used as intermediaries between the rulers and the people. Their primary task was not to represent the people, but to ensure that orders were carried out, taxes were collected, labor was available, and order was maintained.

Such a relationship shaped a form of leadership that was accountable upward rather than downward.

If this legacy is not dismantled, national officials may remain more concerned about their superiors than about the suffering of the people. Success is measured through compliance, stability, budget absorption, project completion, and the achievement of administrative indicators.

The people remain present, but merely as targets. Indonesia's leadership crisis, therefore, cannot be explained solely as a matter of individual moral weakness. It is also the result of a structure that produces administrative leaders without a civilizational direction.

An administrative leader may be capable of carrying out instructions and programs. Yet such a leader may not necessarily be capable of determining whether those instructions and programs are consistent with justice, sovereignty, and the needs of the people.

A leader may be extremely busy pursuing development without asking who actually benefits from it. Such a leader may encourage investment without

examining who loses their land and living space. Such a leader may adopt technology without questioning who controls the data and algorithms behind it.

Under such conditions, leadership loses control over the direction of the nation. It is here that Cak Nun's critique of the leadership crisis acquires its structural meaning.

Cak Nun reminds us that civilizational deterioration can occur when leadership in social life, culture, education, the economy, and even religion loses its values and its capacity for moral direction.

Such a crisis does not necessarily mean that the state ceases to function. The state may continue to function, but without moral direction.

A leader may appear humble, wise, religious, and close to the people, while the policies pursued still lack empathy for human suffering.

Social hypocrisy becomes part of structural colonialism when the appearance of morality is used to conceal continuing injustice.

Decolonizing leadership means changing the direction of accountability. A leader cannot be accountable only to the President, political party, superior, financiers, or bureaucratic structure. A leader must be accountable to the people, the Constitution, truth, and Allah.

An independent nation requires leaders who are not only capable of managing administration, but who also understand humanity, history, values, the world, technology, and the future of civilization.

G. Why Structural Colonialism is More Difficult to Recognize

Structural colonialism is more difficult to recognize because it does not always have a single actor, a single center of command, or a single grand design. It can emerge from the interaction of various laws, policies, economic interests, technologies, habits, educational systems, media structures, cultural influences, and decisions made by elites.

Each element may appear normal when examined separately. Debt is understood as financing. Investment is understood as development. Technology is understood as progress. Regulation is understood as legal order. Education is understood as skills development. Media is understood as freedom of information.

All of these can indeed bring benefits. However, when they operate within an unequal relationship, their combined effect can produce dependency, loss of control, transfer of wealth, and the weakening of a nation's ability to determine its own direction.

Structural colonialism is also difficult to recognize because its actors may come from within the country itself.

Domestic elites may benefit from the existing system. Bureaucracies acquire power through procedures. Conglomerates obtain concessions and access. Political parties obtain financing. Media institutions gain markets. Intellectuals may acquire

positions by legitimizing directions determined by centers of power.

Under such conditions, external powers do not need to control everything directly. Their interests can be advanced through laws, contracts, policies, and domestic actors.

Structural colonialism also does not always produce suffering that is immediately visible. Some parts of society may experience increased consumption. Infrastructure may expand. Cities may grow. Technology may become more widely available. Products may become increasingly diverse.

Yet behind such progress, national productive capacity may weaken, data may be transferred beyond national control, living spaces may shrink, inequality may deepen, and the future may become increasingly dependent on systems that the nation itself does not control.

For this reason, structural colonialism cannot be measured solely through economic growth or the scale of physical development.

It must be understood through the distribution of power.

Who determines the direction?

Who controls knowledge?

Who possesses the technology?

Who captures the added value?

Who bears the damage?

Do the people have the capacity to correct and transform these relationships?

Structural colonialism also cannot be resisted through symbolic nationalism alone.

Flying the national flag, expressing love for the homeland, and cultivating national pride are important. Yet a nation may be highly nationalistic in its symbols while remaining dependent in technology, data, the economy, education, law, and knowledge.

Decolonization requires real capabilities. It requires people who are capable of thinking, laws that uphold justice, a sovereign economy, mastery of technology, protected data, a bureaucracy that cares for the people, and leadership with a clear direction.

H. Chapter Conclusion

The Proclamation of August 17, 1945 formally liberated Indonesia from colonial rule. The significance of this event is legitimate, profound, and must never be diminished. Yet Indonesia's independence did not automatically complete the process of decolonization.

The colonizers may leave, while the laws, bureaucracy, administration, economy, education, ways of thinking, and power relations they established continue to survive.

Foreign officials may leave their positions, while the state continues to treat the people as objects. Government may be administered by the nation's own people, while its structures of power continue to operate according to a logic of control.

Colonialism today is also not always visible through foreign troops and flags. It can operate through values, morality, ethics, culture, markets, regulations,

education, technology, data, media, algorithms, lifestyles, social hypocrisy, and leadership that has lost control over the direction of the nation.

It is in this sense that Cak Nun's statement that Indonesia is colonized by America "a hundred times more" than during the Dutch colonial era should be understood. The statement is neither a statistical figure nor a quantitative comparison of historical suffering.

It is a cultural alarm: in the past, the colonizer had a name, a flag, an army, and an administration. Today, domination can operate without identifying itself as colonialism, while the people themselves may not always realize that their values, choices, knowledge, and future are being shaped by forces beyond their control.

However, structural colonialism cannot be attributed entirely to foreign powers.

Structural colonialism can be continued, adapted, and reinforced by domestic elites who benefit from the system. It can be reproduced by national officials, national bureaucracies, national corporations, national media, educational institutions, religious organizations, and Indonesians themselves.

For this reason, decolonization is not a project of hatred toward other nations. Nor is decolonization merely about replacing foreigners with Indonesians.

Decolonization is the transformation of purposes, values, power relations, and structures so that they genuinely serve the people.

Law must be transformed so that justice stands above the maintenance of political order. Bureaucracy must be transformed so that public service becomes a

form of care. Administration must be transformed so that the people are no longer treated as objects. Leadership must be transformed so that officials are not merely obedient upward, but accountable to the people and to Allah.

Indonesia has not yet completed its search for a state that genuinely belongs to its people because the process of structural decolonization remains unfinished.

The people have formally moved from being colonial subjects to becoming citizens. Yet they have not always become the owners of the architecture of power. The state has become national, but its laws, bureaucracy, education, economy, technology, values, and leadership have not yet been fully directed toward the genuine independence of the people.

The work of independence must therefore continue. Independence cannot be defended solely through territory, the national flag, armed forces, and diplomacy. Independence must also be realized through the nation's capacity to master its own values, knowledge, law, economy, technology, data, culture, and the direction of its leadership.

Formal independence was proclaimed on August 17, 1945. Structural decolonization is a civilizational task that every generation of Indonesians must continue and complete.

Chapter V
Invited Colonialism: When Colonialism is Invited by Domestic Elites

A. From Forced Colonialism to Invited Colonialism

In the past, colonialism came in a form that was relatively easy to recognize. It arrived through ships, weapons, armies, trading companies, foreign administrators, monopolies, forced concessions, control of ports, seizure of land, and territorial occupation.

The people could see who had arrived, who governed them, and who took the wealth produced from their land. The colonizers had a name, a flag, a language, armed forces, and a system of government distinct from the society they controlled.

In this form, colonialism operated primarily through coercion from outside. A foreign power entered the territory of a nation, suppressed resistance, and then established laws, administration, and an economic system designed to serve its interests. Modern colonialism, however, does not always arrive in the same way.

Modern colonialism does not always require open warfare. It does not have to lower a nation's flag or replace its government. It may not even need to force its way through the door, because the door can be opened from within.

Colonialism can gain access through regulations, investment, contracts, concessions, financing, debt, technology, digital platforms, data management,

financial institutions, consulting firms, international standards, and development policies formulated by domestic elites. It is under such conditions that Sekolah Negarawan uses the term *Invited Colonialism*.

Invited Colonialism refers to a condition in which domination or dependency gains access not only through external pressure, but also through invitations, decisions, compromises, concessions, or the opening of access from within the country itself.

External powers continue to pursue their own interests. However, those interests do not operate alone. They require domestic actors who provide legality, facilities, protection, information, access, and justification.

Old colonialism broke down the door of the state. *Invited Colonialism* enters through a door that has already been opened by those inside the house.

This distinction is important because responsibility can no longer be placed entirely on external actors. When domination operates through national policies, official contracts, legislation, permits, or decisions made by public officials, the question is no longer merely who entered, but also who invited them and for whose interests the door was opened.

However, this term must be used with caution.

Not every investment constitutes colonialism. Not every debt constitutes colonization. Not every form of technological cooperation, use of foreign consultants, international contract, or involvement of global financial institutions constitutes domination.

Modern nations require capital, knowledge, markets, technology, financing, and international cooperation. Closing oneself off from the world is not sovereignty; it can instead lead to isolation and underdevelopment. The real issue lies in the structure of the relationship that is created.

Does Indonesia retain control over its decisions? Do the people receive the benefits? Are the risks distributed fairly? Are knowledge and technology transferred? Can the state modify or terminate the relationship? Do the people know the substance and consequences of policies made in their name?

If a relationship strengthens national capabilities, develops knowledge, improves welfare, and safeguards sovereignty, then it constitutes healthy cooperation.

However, if that relationship undermines control, creates dependency, transfers benefits to a limited group, and places the risks upon the people, then it deserves to be examined as a form of *Invited Colonialism*.

B. Domestic Elites as Gateways for External Power

Foreign powers do not always directly understand the entire social, legal, and economic structure of a country. To gain effective access, they require intermediaries.

In the history of classical colonialism, such intermediaries could take the form of local rulers, merchants, aristocrats, bureaucrats, or social groups that benefited from their relationships with colonial powers.

In the modern era, the forms may change. Intermediaries may appear as public officials, politicians, political parties, bureaucrats, business actors, consultants, intellectuals, media institutions, professionals, or other institutions capable of shaping public policy and public opinion.

Domestic elites occupy a strategic position because they understand the language, laws, culture, power structures, and needs of their own society. They also have access to the state, information, resources, and decision-making processes.

If these elites possess integrity and a strong national orientation, international relations can be used to strengthen the state. They can negotiate technology transfer, labor protection, equitable benefit-sharing, industrial development, capacity building, and the mastery of knowledge.

However, when elites lose their sense of direction, relations with external powers can become gateways for domination.

Policies may be formulated to accommodate the needs of investors rather than the needs of the people. Regulations may be relaxed without adequate safeguards. Concessions may be granted for excessively long periods. Contracts may bind the state under conditions that are difficult to change. Data may be opened without adequate protection of sovereignty. Debt may be undertaken without a productive strategy.

Under such conditions, domestic elites may not necessarily believe that they are inviting colonialism. They may regard their actions as development,

modernization, efficiency, or pragmatism. This is precisely where the danger lies.

Invited Colonialism does not always occur through conscious betrayal. *Invited Colonialism* can emerge through ignorance, haste, lack of capacity, short-term orientation, conflicts of interest, or the belief that there is no alternative.

Elites may also invoke the needs of the people as justification. In the name of creating jobs, the state may grant unequal concessions. In the name of investment, environmental protections may be weakened. In the name of digitalization, the people's data may be entrusted to systems beyond national control. In the name of acceleration, oversight mechanisms may be reduced.

Development is ultimately measured by how quickly projects are implemented, rather than by how much the sovereignty of the people is strengthened.

Domestic elites become gateways for external power when they understand the needs of capital better than the suffering of the people, respond more quickly to the demands of investors than to the grievances of citizens, and fear losing market confidence more than losing the trust of the people.

Under such conditions, external powers do not need to govern Indonesia directly. They only need to influence the people and institutions that possess the authority to make decisions.

C. Investment, Debt, Concessions, and the Loss of the People's Sovereignty

Investment is an important part of development. A country requires capital to build industries, infrastructure, energy systems, technology, employment opportunities, and various other economic necessities.

Debt is not inherently harmful either. Financing can help a country accelerate development, respond to crises, or build productive capacity whose benefits exceed its costs.

Concessions may also be necessary to regulate the use of resources, develop facilities, or grant management rights within specific limits and for specific purposes.

The problem does not lie in the instruments themselves, but in the power relations created through those instruments.

Investment can strengthen the state when it creates industries, high-quality employment, technology transfer, human resource development, and domestic added value.

However, investment can also create dependency when Indonesia merely provides land, raw materials, low-cost labor, tax incentives, and legal protection, while technology, decision-making, profits, and knowledge remain controlled by other parties.

Debt can serve as an instrument of development when it is used productively and managed responsibly. However, debt can become an instrument of control

when it restricts policy space, creates financial dependency, or forces the state to adjust its priorities to the interests of its creditors.

Concessions can provide certainty in the management of resources, but they can also transfer control over public resources to limited groups for excessively long periods.

In all of these circumstances, the people are often the actors furthest removed from the decision-making process.

Contracts are formulated by governments, corporations, banks, legal experts, and consultants. The people experience the consequences through changes in their living spaces, prices, employment, the environment, taxation, or the quality of public services.

In the name of the people, the state enters into agreements. Yet the people do not always know their contents, risks, or the distribution of their benefits. It is here that the sovereignty of the people can gradually erode.

Sovereignty is not lost only when a state loses its territory. Sovereignty can also be diminished when strategic decisions are locked into contracts that are difficult to alter, public resources are managed without meaningful public control, or economic policies are shaped by financing requirements.

A state may continue to have a parliament and a government, while its range of policy choices becomes increasingly restricted by economic commitments already made.

Under such conditions, the next government may assume office without fully acquiring the freedom to determine the nation's direction. It inherits contracts, debts, concessions, and obligations established by previous governments.

The people may elect a new government, while some strategic policies remain bound by decisions they do not fully understand. For this reason, every investment, debt arrangement, and concession must be examined through several fundamental questions.

Does the relationship strengthen the nation's capabilities or deepen its dependency? Is there a transfer of knowledge and technology? Who receives the greatest benefits? Who bears the economic, social, and ecological risks? Does the state retain the authority to correct or restructure the relationship?

Development must not be measured solely by the amount of capital that enters the country. Development must be measured by the increasing capacity of the people and the state to determine their own future.

D. Data, Technology, and Platforms as New Forms of Colonialism

During the era of classical colonialism, the resources being contested were primarily land, agricultural commodities, minerals, labor, and trade routes. In the digital era, data has become one of the most important resources.

The people generate data every day. Such data comes from communications, transactions, locations,

education, health, employment, consumption, travel, social relationships, entertainment, and civic participation.

Under such conditions, a succeeding government may assume office without fully acquiring the freedom to determine the nation's direction, because it inherits contracts, debts, concessions, and obligations established by previous governments.

Those who control data possess significant power to understand society. Those who control algorithms can determine how that data is processed. Those who control platforms can determine the rules of interaction, what information becomes visible, and what forms of behavior are rewarded. Therefore, technology and digital platforms are not merely economic instruments. They are structures of power.

Digital colonialism can emerge when the people of a country become sources of data, markets, users, and objects of influence, while having little or no control over the infrastructure, algorithms, and purposes for which those systems are used.

The people produce the digital raw materials. Other actors transform them into knowledge, profit, and power.

This pattern resembles the old colonial economic model, in which raw materials were extracted from colonized territories, processed into high-value products, and then sold back to the societies from which those materials originated. The difference is that today's digital raw materials are generated from human life itself.

The language, faces, voices, habits, locations, social relationships, and choices of the people can become resources for technological development. Yet the people do not always receive proportional benefits, nor do they always know how their data is being used.

Invited Colonialism occurs when the state opens access to these resources without first establishing adequate protection, technological capabilities, and data sovereignty.

In the name of convenience, governments may use platforms they do not control. In the name of efficiency, public data may be placed within external systems. In the name of innovation, technologies may be adopted without sufficient understanding of how they operate or what risks they create.

Technological dependency may then come to be regarded as unavoidable. Yet technology always carries values and interests. The design of a system determines who has control, who can see, who can modify, and who bears responsibility when harm occurs.

Artificial intelligence further expands these challenges. AI can help the state improve public services, research, security, healthcare, and education. However, AI can also intensify surveillance, discrimination, information manipulation, and dependency on models developed according to the languages and values of other civilizations.

A state without sufficient technical capacity will struggle to audit algorithmic decisions. A state without its own infrastructure will depend on external

providers. A state without high-quality data will rely on systems that may not adequately understand its society.

Digital sovereignty, therefore, does not mean rejecting foreign technology. Digital sovereignty means possessing the capacity to choose, evaluate, audit, modify, and determine the limits of its use. Technology must remain an instrument of the people. The people must not become the raw material of technology.

E. The Domestic Leadership Crisis That Invites External Power

Invited Colonialism is ultimately not merely a matter of economic or technological policy. *Invited Colonialism* is a matter of leadership.

A nation whose leaders possess knowledge, courage, and a strong orientation toward values can cooperate with the world without losing control. Conversely, a nation with weak leadership can easily regard every offer as an opportunity that must not be refused.

A leadership crisis emerges when public officials do not understand history, fail to recognize the structure of the world, lack mastery of technological issues, and have little sensitivity to the suffering of the people.

Such leaders may view development only through the figures of investment, economic growth, the number of projects, and international recognition.

They do not examine whether such development strengthens or weakens the people. They do not ask who controls the knowledge, data, and profits. They fail to

recognize that short-term concessions can create long-term dependency.

Cak Nun offers a strong critique of leadership that does not experience or understand the suffering of the people. Leaders may pay a high price to obtain public office, yet fail to understand the lives of the people who must bear the consequences of their policies.

When public office is obtained at great financial cost, power can come to be regarded as an investment that must generate returns. Public office is no longer understood as an amanah, but as a means of accumulation.

Under such conditions, external interests can easily gain access because they possess capital, technology, networks, and the capacity to provide benefits to elites.

The doors of the state are opened not because the people need them to be opened, but because the structure of power requires financing, support, projects, and the legitimacy of apparent success.

In Cak Nun's strong language, if this direction is allowed to continue, the people will be pushed into two groups: those who have access to public office will be tempted to become robbers, while those without access to power will be forced to become beggars.

This statement is not intended as a rigid sociological classification. It is a moral critique of a system that turns public office into a means of taking, while reducing the people to those who must continually ask.

Those within the structure of power have access to budgets, permits, projects, concessions, information, and networks. Power provides opportunities to take more than what one is rightfully entitled to.

Meanwhile, the people outside the structure of power may be forced to depend on assistance, subsidies, projects, charity, intermediaries, or relationships with elites.

Social assistance is, of course, necessary under certain circumstances. The state has an obligation to protect vulnerable people. The problem arises when the people are continuously maintained in a condition of dependency while the structures that produce poverty remain unchanged.

The people are given assistance, but not sovereignty. They are given projects, but not capabilities. They are given temporary access, but not structures of ownership.

Under such conditions, elites take in the name of development, while the people are left asking merely to survive.

Invited Colonialism flourishes within such a system because the interests of domestic elites and external powers can converge. Elites obtain investment, projects, financing, and legitimacy. External powers obtain access, markets, data, resources, or influence.

The people receive promises, limited employment opportunities, compensation, or assistance, but they do not always receive sovereignty.

For this reason, resisting *Invited Colonialism* requires a renewal of leadership. Leaders must be

capable of rejecting short-term gains when those gains undermine the future of the nation.

Leaders must understand that not everything called development constitutes progress, not every form of modernization constitutes independence, and not every form of cooperation creates an equal relationship.

F. Why *Invited Colonialism* Is More Dangerous than Old Colonialism

Old colonialism was extremely brutal, but relatively easier to recognize. The people knew that a foreign power was controlling their territory and extracting its wealth.

Invited Colonialism is more difficult to recognize because it operates through legal structures and the language of development. Contracts are officially signed. Laws are enacted by national institutions. Permits are issued by Indonesian officials. Projects are inaugurated in the name of the people's interests. Formally, the entire process may appear legitimate.

However, legality is not always synonymous with justice. A decision may comply with formal procedures while still producing dependency, inequality, and the transfer of control.

Another danger lies in the increasingly blurred boundary between external and domestic actors. Under classical colonialism, the colonizer and the colonized were relatively easy to distinguish. Under *Invited Colonialism*, domestic elites become part of the structure of domination.

The people may then struggle to determine where resistance should be directed. Does the problem lie with investors, the government, legislation, consultants, banks, corporations, or the entire structure of relationships formed among them?

Invited Colonialism is also more dangerous because it can be accepted as a rational choice. Society is told that there is no alternative to a particular investment, a particular form of debt, a particular technology, or a particular model of development.

Dependency is then presented as a necessity. The absence of national capacity is used as a justification for continuing not to build national capacity.

Each time the state becomes dependent, that dependency is used to justify the next dependency.

Another danger is the erosion of awareness. The people may feel that they are experiencing progress as they use new technologies, infrastructure, and products. Yet they may not see that data, profits, decision-making power, and knowledge are being transferred to centers of power beyond their control.

Old colonialism generated anger because its suffering was visible. *Invited Colonialism* can create temporary comfort that conceals the gradual loss of sovereignty.

However, to say that *Invited Colonialism* is more dangerous does not mean that old colonialism was less severe. Classical colonialism brought violence, exploitation, humiliation, and immense suffering.

Rather, *Invited Colonialism* is more difficult to recognize, prove, and resist because it operates through

legitimate systems, through a nation's own elites, and through society's own desire for progress.

The enemy does not exist entirely outside the nation. Part of it lives within the nation's own ways of thinking, interests, and structures.

G. Indonesia as a Formally Independent State Vulnerable to Inviting New Forms of Colonialism

Indonesia is formally independent. There is no foreign colonial government directly controlling the country's entire territory and state administration. However, formal independence does not automatically make Indonesia immune to new forms of domination.

Vulnerability emerges when the state has not yet fully found its form, when the people have not yet become the true owners of the structure of power, when decolonization remains incomplete, and when leadership loses its sense of direction.

Indonesia possesses vast natural resources, a large market, a substantial population, a strategic geographic position, and highly valuable data. All of these make Indonesia important to global economic powers and other international actors.

External interests in Indonesia are a natural reality. Every country and corporation has its own strategy for securing markets, raw materials, technology, and influence.

The task of the state is not to demand that external actors have no interests of their own. The task

of the state is to ensure that those interests do not override the interests of the people.

Indonesia becomes vulnerable, however, when its development direction is not formulated independently. The state may accept every offer because it has no clear priorities of its own. Projects may be determined by the availability of financing rather than by the needs of the people.

Indonesia is also vulnerable when its political system requires enormous financial resources. The dependency of elites on capital can influence the policies they pursue after obtaining power.

Another vulnerability lies in weaknesses in knowledge and technology. A state without sufficient technical capabilities will struggle to negotiate on equal terms. It becomes dependent on consultants to understand contracts, on vendors to understand technological systems, and on external parties to operate strategic infrastructure.

Under such conditions, Indonesia may have a functioning government, but it does not fully possess the knowledge required to control its own decisions.

Indonesia is also vulnerable when the people are separated from the decision-making process. Strategic policies are formulated as matters reserved for elites, while the people receive explanations only after decisions have already been made.

The absence of meaningful participation makes it easier for elites to open the door because there is no living structure through which the people can hold them accountable and correct their decisions.

For this reason, *Invited Colonialism* is not merely a matter of Indonesia's relations with foreign states or corporations. The concept is also a consequence of an unfinished form of state.

If the people truly become the owners of the state, every strategic contract must be accountable to them. If the state has a clear direction, investment must follow national priorities. If leadership is grounded in values, short-term interests must never be allowed to sacrifice future generations.

Closing the door to Invited Colonialism, therefore, does not require isolation. It requires strengthening human capacity, knowledge, the Constitution, technology, leadership, and the sovereignty of the people.

H. Chapter Conclusion

Old colonialism came through coercion. New forms of colonialism can enter through invitation. They can gain access through regulations, investment, debt, concessions, contracts, technology, data, digital platforms, financial institutions, and consultants. Yet none of these instruments can become channels of domination without a door being opened from within.

For this reason, *Invited Colonialism* is not merely a story about foreign powers. It is also a story about the crisis of domestic leadership.

When elites fail to understand the suffering of the people, public office becomes a means of accumulation. When the state has no clear direction, every offer is called development. When knowledge and technology

are not mastered, dependency is treated as an unavoidable reality.

In Cak Nun's moral language, such a system can push those with access to power toward becoming robbers, while forcing those without access to become beggars.

This metaphor does not rigidly divide society into two groups. Rather, it warns that a broken system can turn public office into an opportunity for taking, while reducing the people to those who must continually ask.

It is not enough to provide the people with assistance. They must be given sovereignty. It is not enough to treat the people as a source of labor. They must gain ownership, knowledge, and added value.

It is not enough to regard the people merely as users of technology. They must have rights over their data, knowledge, and digital future.

Investment, debt, concessions, and technology do not have to be rejected. However, all of them must be placed under the interests of the people and the direction of Indonesia's civilization.

Sovereignty is not the ability to isolate oneself from the world. Sovereignty is the ability to cooperate without losing control, to receive knowledge without losing direction, to utilize capital without surrendering the future, and to harness technology without turning the people into its raw material.

Indonesia remains vulnerable to *Invited Colonialism* because its formal state has not yet fully become a state that genuinely belongs to its people. The

doors of power remain more accessible to elites, capital owners, and networks of interest than to the people as the rightful holders of sovereignty.

Therefore, overcoming *Invited Colonialism* cannot be achieved through nationalism, restrictions on investment, or contractual changes alone. What must be transformed is the architecture that allows limited interests to speak in the name of the entire nation.

Indonesia needs civilizational leadership capable of distinguishing between development and dependency, between cooperation and domination, and between modernization and the surrender of sovereignty.

Such leaders can emerge only from human beings shaped by a system of values. Within the Islamic value system, public office is an *amanah*, not an investment. Wealth is a trust, not an instrument of domination. Knowledge is a responsibility, not a justification for power. The people are those who must be cared for and nurtured, not treated as a market, objects of policy, or a source of legitimacy.

The way out of *Invited Colonialism*, therefore, does not begin with hostility toward external actors. It begins with internal transformation: developing human beings, cultivating trustworthy leadership, restoring the people as the owners of the state, mastering knowledge and technology, and ensuring that every relationship with the world produces justice and *kemaslahatan*.

Invited colonialism can only be stopped by a nation that is no longer willing to open the doors of its sovereignty in exchange for short-term gains.

Chapter VI
From Early Global Networks to Maritime Colonialism

A. The Nusantara in the Indian Ocean Network

The Nusantara did not begin its relationship with the world when European powers arrived. Long before the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch entered the archipelago, the peoples of the Nusantara were already part of networks of trade, religion, knowledge, and culture that connected different regions of the world.

The sea was not a boundary that isolated the islands of the Nusantara. On the contrary, it was a route that connected them with other societies.

The Indian Ocean trade network connected East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, India, Southeast Asia, and China. It did not consist of a single linear route. Rather, it was formed by ports, trading centers, maritime kingdoms, monsoon winds, merchant communities, ships, lingua francas, and social relationships that developed over centuries.

Through these networks, goods moved from one region to another. Spices, camphor, aromatic woods, forest products, gold, textiles, ceramics, metals, and various other commodities were traded across the seas. Yet goods were not the only things that traveled.

Alongside trade came religions, ideas, languages, maritime technologies, knowledge of the stars and winds, artistic forms, literature, commercial law,

payment systems, patterns of port-city development, and ways of understanding the world.

The maritime networks connecting East Asia with the Middle East through India and Southeast Asia had long served as spaces of cultural and religious exchange. UNESCO describes maritime routes as part of networks that facilitated not only the exchange of goods, but also the transmission of knowledge, beliefs, languages, and cultures among societies.

For this reason, the pre-European Nusantara cannot be portrayed as an isolated region waiting to be discovered by the world. Its peoples were already engaged in long-distance trade, developing ports, receiving newcomers, building maritime kingdoms, and positioning themselves at the crossroads of international interests.

The term "discovered," which is often used in narratives of European expansion, must therefore be examined critically. Europe may only have acquired more systematic knowledge of the Nusantara during a particular historical period, but the Nusantara had long existed as part of an interconnected world.

Arab, Persian, Indian, and Chinese merchants, together with the peoples of Southeast Asia, had already moved through these maritime networks before European fleets were able to establish direct control over oceanic routes.

Thus, the Nusantara's early relationship with the wider world should not be described as colonialism. These relationships primarily took the form of trade, migration, intermarriage, the spread of religion, the

formation of communities, and the exchange of knowledge.

However, the fact that these relationships were not colonial does not mean that they were entirely free from interests and power.

Every trade network has its centers and peripheries. Every port has groups that exercise greater influence. Every community brings its own values, interests, and ways of understanding the world. Early global networks could enrich the Nusantara, but they could also create social hierarchies, cultural authority, and certain forms of dependency. For this reason, the history of the Nusantara's interconnectedness with the world must be understood without falling into two extremes.

The first is the tendency to regard every external influence as a form of colonization. Such an interpretation ignores the fact that the peoples of the Nusantara actively selected, adapted, and transformed the various influences that reached them.

The second is the tendency to romanticize all pre-European networks as entirely equal and peaceful relationships. Trade also brought competition, monopolies, conflict, the formation of elites, and struggles over access to ports and commodities.

From the beginning, the Nusantara was not a passive object. The Nusantara was an active participant in global networks, while at the same time serving as a space where diverse interests converged.

B. Arab, Persian, Indian, and Chinese Networks of Trade, Religion, and Culture

Relations between the Nusantara and the Arab world developed through maritime trade networks connecting the ports of the Middle East with India, Southeast Asia, and China.

Arab merchants did not always sail directly from the Arabian Peninsula to every part of the Nusantara. Many connections operated through interconnected networks involving ports in India, Sri Lanka, the Strait of Malacca, Sumatra, Java, and other regions.

Within these networks, the identities of merchants could not always be neatly separated. A merchant might come from Persia but use Arabic as a language of communication. Muslim communities from India might carry traditions already influenced by Arab and Persian cultures. Trade, religion, and culture frequently overlapped.

Historical studies of Islam in Southeast Asia show that the spread of Islam took place through maritime networks connecting the Middle East, southern India, Southeast Asia, and China. These routes enabled Islamic influence to reach the region through multiple directions and communities rather than from a single source.

Arab networks made significant contributions to the history of the Nusantara. Through these networks developed trade, religious language, Islamic education, pilgrimage to Mecca, chains of scholarly transmission

(*sanad*), religious texts, and connections with centers of learning throughout the Islamic world.

In later developments, connections with the Hijaz, Yemen, and various parts of the Arab world also helped shape the genealogies of ulama, educational institutions, religious authority, and the social identities of certain communities in the Nusantara. However, this book does not equate Arab networks with Islam as divine revelation.

Arab communities are historical actors. Islam is a source of values. This distinction is important because the actions of particular Arab merchants, elites, kingdoms, states, or networks do not automatically represent the teachings of Islam. Conversely, the major contributions of Arab communities to the history of Islam in the Nusantara should not be dismissed simply because every historical actor also has interests of their own.

Relations with Persia were also important, although their traces often emerged through more complex routes. Persian influence can be found in literature, language, court traditions, Sufism, religious concepts, and intellectual networks that traveled through India and Muslim trading centers.

Persia was not merely a geographical region. In the history of the Islamic world, Persia was a major center for the production of knowledge, philosophy, literature, administration, art, and religious thought. Some of these elements reached the Nusantara directly, while others arrived after interacting with Indian cultures or the Arab world.

For this reason, not every influence commonly described as Arab actually originated entirely from Arab societies. The Islamic world had long been a space of interaction among Arab, Persian, Turkish, Indian, African, Central Asian, and many other peoples.

India occupied an especially important position within the Nusantara's networks. India–Nusantara relations had developed long before the arrival of Islam and left lasting influences on religion, kingdoms, language, literature, art, architecture, law, and concepts of power.

As Islamic networks expanded, Indian ports once again played an important role as hubs for trade, the spread of religion, textiles, and human mobility. Merchants and ulama from Gujarat, the Coromandel Coast, Bengal, and other regions interacted with communities in Sumatra, Java, and other parts of the archipelago.

Relations with India demonstrate that external influences did not always arrive in a pure or isolated form. The Islam that reached the Nusantara had already interacted with Persian and Indian traditions, as well as with coastal societies. The culture that subsequently developed was not a copy of any single center, but the result of adaptation and transformation by the peoples of the Nusantara.

China also has a long history of relations with Southeast Asia. Maritime trade connected Chinese ports with Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. Quanzhou, for example, developed into an important center of East

and Southeast Asian maritime trade networks between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

From China came ceramics, textiles, metals, technology, merchants, and migrant communities. From the Nusantara came spices, forest products, aromatic materials, and other commodities sought by international markets.

These relationships contributed to the formation of Chinese communities in various port cities. Through intermarriage, trade, and social interaction, some of these communities became part of local societies.

Like Arab, Persian, and Indian networks, Chinese networks brought both benefits and interests. They expanded trade and technological exchange, but they could also generate economic competition, concentrations of access, and privileged relationships with ruling elites. For this reason, all early global networks should be examined according to the same standard.

The question is not merely what a particular people brought to the Nusantara, but how the peoples of the Nusantara received, rejected, adapted, and transformed those influences.

External influences never entered an empty space. They encountered the values, interests, conflicts, and intelligence of local societies.

The Nusantara was not merely a place where foreigners passed through. It was a space in which new cultures were created.

C. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: The Nusantara in Travelers' Accounts

Before European powers were able to enter and directly control Asian trade routes, European knowledge of the Nusantara developed through the accounts of merchants and travelers, as well as through maps and travel writings.

In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo traveled home from East Asia and stopped in the region of Sumatra. The accounts attributed to him became one of the sources that introduced parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago to European readers.

Such travel accounts cannot be treated as entirely objective representations. Travelers viewed other societies through the language, interests, knowledge, and prejudices of their time. Place names could change through repeated copying and transcription. Stories they heard could become intertwined with direct observations. Religious and cultural differences could also produce inaccurate judgments.

Nevertheless, these accounts remain important because they demonstrate that the Nusantara had already entered the European geographical imagination before the direct arrival of colonial powers.

In the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta—a Muslim traveler from Morocco—visited Samudra Pasai during his journey toward China. Although he was not a European traveler, his account is highly important in demonstrating that the Nusantara was already connected to the wider Islamic world at that time.

The presence of travelers from different regions shows that the ports of the Nusantara were not isolated territories. They were part of international travel routes, centers of trade, and spaces where people from diverse backgrounds encountered one another.

Travelers' accounts helped shape the world's knowledge of the Nusantara's wealth, geography, religions, kingdoms, and commodities. Yet the production of knowledge is not an entirely neutral activity.

Geographical knowledge can facilitate trade. Knowledge can expand relationships. But it can also become a foundation for expansion.

As knowledge of territories, ports, commodities, wind patterns, and structures of power became more extensive, powers with military capabilities could use that knowledge to control trade routes. It is here that the relationship between knowledge and power becomes visible.

Before a territory can be colonized, it must first be mapped, described, classified, and incorporated into the knowledge system of those who seek to enter and control it.

Travelers do not automatically become colonizers. Nor are travel accounts inherently colonial documents. However, the accumulation of knowledge about Asia helped Europe construct an image of the East as a space of trade, wealth, religious expansion, and territorial ambition.

At this stage, the Nusantara was still understood primarily as part of the broader Asian trade network.

European powers had not yet established control over the seas and major ports.

A major transformation occurred when this accumulated knowledge converged with advances in navigation, weaponry, ocean-going ships, royal capital, and the ambition to control trade.

D. The Portuguese and the Gateway to Maritime Colonialism

The arrival of the Portuguese marked an important transformation in the Nusantara's relationship with the European world. The Portuguese did not come to Asia merely to participate in trade under the rules already established by Asian merchants. They came with the objectives of finding a direct maritime route, reducing dependence on intermediary networks, spreading their religion, and gaining control over high-value trade.

After Portuguese fleets reached India, they began establishing a network of fortresses, ports, and military bases. Their strategy did not always require control over vast inland territories. Control over strategic maritime points was considered sufficient to influence and control trade.

The Portuguese conquest of Malacca in 1511 marked a major turning point. Malacca was not merely a city. It was one of the principal hubs connecting the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, the Spice Islands, India, the Middle East, and China.

By controlling Malacca, the Portuguese sought to gain control over one of the most important trade routes in Southeast Asia.

However, control over Malacca did not mean that the Portuguese immediately controlled the entire Asian trading network. Muslim, Indian, Chinese, Javanese, Malay, and other merchant communities could redirect their trade toward different ports. Asian trading networks were highly adaptive and could not easily be controlled by a single power.

The Portuguese then moved toward the Maluku Islands, the principal source of cloves and an important center of the global spice trade. It was here that trade increasingly began to transform into maritime colonialism.

Ordinary merchants had to operate within the rules of ports and the authority of local rulers. The Portuguese, however, brought armed ships, fortresses, treaties, and the capacity to use violence to impose their interests.

Trade was no longer conducted solely through bargaining among merchants. It was now backed by cannons, naval fleets, and state power.

Yet the Portuguese did not always act through conquest alone. They also formed alliances with local kingdoms, exploited existing conflicts, and offered military assistance to one side against another. This pattern would later become one of the defining characteristics of colonialism in the Nusantara.

External powers were rarely capable of controlling vast territories through their own strength

alone. They required information, alliances, interpreters, suppliers, local elites, and actors willing to open the door. Maritime colonialism, therefore, brought together **external coercion and internal conflict** from the very beginning.

The Portuguese did not create all the rivalries that existed within the Nusantara, but they were able to exploit those rivalries to expand their influence.

The Portuguese presence also brought Catholic missionary activities. Trade, state power, and religious expansion cannot be entirely separated from one another in this historical context.

However, as previously emphasized in discussing Islamic networks, religion must be distinguished from the behavior of states and historical powers.

Portuguese violence, monopolistic practices, and ambitions for power cannot simply be treated as representing Christianity as a whole. These were the actions of state and colonial authorities that used religion as one element of legitimacy and identity.

E. Spain and the Struggle for the Maluku Islands

Spain entered Asia through a different route from Portugal. While the Portuguese moved eastward around Africa and across the Indian Ocean, the Spanish sailed westward across the Atlantic and later the Pacific. The rivalry between these two Iberian kingdoms was not confined to Europe and the Americas, but eventually extended into the Asian archipelago.

Following the Magellan expedition and subsequent voyages, Spain established connections with the Maluku Islands. The rivalry then became intertwined with conflicts among local kingdoms, particularly Ternate and Tidore.

Portugal established relations with one power, while Spain aligned itself with another. Local conflicts acquired a global dimension, while global rivalries entered into local structures of power.

This situation demonstrates that colonialism did not always arrive as a single foreign power confronting an entire local society.

Foreign powers could enter societies through alliances. They offered weapons, trade, protection, or political and military support to one side. In return, they gained access, fortresses, monopolies, and influence.

Such relationships should not be interpreted simplistically as acts of betrayal by local elites. The kingdoms of the Nusantara had their own interests, threats, and strategic calculations. They sought to use foreign powers to confront their rivals.

Such relationships should not be interpreted simplistically as acts of betrayal by local elites. The kingdoms of the Nusantara had their own interests, threats, and strategic calculations. They sought to use foreign powers to confront their rivals.

Local actors might have intended to use foreign powers to serve their short-term interests. Yet foreign powers were also using local conflicts to establish long-term positions of influence.

This experience represents an early form of the pattern that this book later refers to as *Invited Colonialism*.

Colonialism does not always enter through a door broken down by force. Sometimes, the door is opened through agreements, requests for assistance, and alliances.

Of course, this modern concept cannot be mechanically applied to every event of the sixteenth century. The nature of kingdoms, law, and sovereignty at that time differed significantly from those of the modern state.

Nevertheless, the underlying pattern can be recognized: external powers gained influence through the needs and conflicts of domestic elites.

The Portuguese–Spanish rivalry in the Maluku Islands also demonstrates how spices transformed the archipelago into an object of global competition.

Commodities that were part of the local economy and everyday life became sources of enormous profit in global markets.

The distance between places of production and consumer markets generated exceptionally high value. Powers that controlled both the sources of commodities and their distribution routes could obtain enormous profits.

For this reason, control over the spice trade was not merely a matter of commerce. It became a matter of geopolitics.

F. VOC as a Colonial Corporation

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Dutch established the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or VOC. The company was founded in 1602 through the merger of several Dutch trading companies.

The VOC archives recognized by UNESCO record the company as an organization established in that year, which subsequently developed an extensive network of trade and administration.

The VOC was not an ordinary company. It was established to reduce competition among Dutch merchants, consolidate capital, strengthen the Dutch position against the Portuguese and other European powers, and gain control over Asian trade.

However, the VOC was granted powers that extended far beyond ordinary commercial activities. It could enter into treaties, build fortresses, maintain armed forces, wage war, appoint officials, and exercise functions normally associated with a state. The VOC was therefore both a corporation and a governing and military power.

The existence of the VOC illustrates one of the earliest forms of convergence between capital and sovereignty. The company did not merely operate under state policy. It was granted the authority to exercise power in the interests of both commerce and the Dutch state.

The spice trade became a foundation for the establishment of administration, coercion, monopoly, and territorial control.

The VOC sought to control the production and prices of spices. To achieve this objective, the company established monopoly contracts, destroyed crops considered excessive, punished violations, deployed armed fleets, and subordinated local centers of power. Yet the VOC did not gain control over the entire Nusantara at once.

Its power expanded gradually through fortresses, ports, treaties, warfare, debt, succession conflicts, and involvement in local kingdoms. Once again, external power made use of internal structures.

When disputes over succession, conflicts between kingdoms, or financial needs arose, the VOC could offer assistance. Such assistance was then repaid through territory, monopolies, trading rights, or political dependency.

This demonstrates that colonial power was not built through weapons alone. Colonial power was also built through contracts.

Weapons coerced those who resisted. Contracts bound those who cooperated. The VOC demonstrates how a corporation can become an instrument of colonialism when the interests of capital are supported by political authority, law, and military force. This experience remains highly relevant to the modern world.

Contemporary corporations are certainly not identical to the VOC. Most do not possess their own armies or formal authority to wage war. Nevertheless, global corporations can still exercise considerable power

through capital, technology, data, markets, intellectual property, and the ability to influence regulation.

The history of the VOC, therefore, is not merely a history of the past. It serves as a warning that economic power can transform into political power when the state loses control and domestic elites open the door without adequate safeguards.

G. From the Spice Trade to Territorial Control

Trade did not initially have to result in colonization. Merchants could arrive, buy and sell goods, stay temporarily, establish communities, and operate under the rules of local authorities. Such relationships had existed in the Nusantara for centuries.

The transformation began when merchants sought to determine who was allowed to sell, to whom goods could be sold, how much could be produced, and what prices producers were required to accept.

When trade was backed by military force, economic relations were transformed into relations of power.

Monopoly required surveillance. Surveillance required an apparatus of control. That apparatus required bases. Bases required territory. Territory required administration. It was through this process that the spice trade gradually developed into territorial control.

European powers did not arrive with the immediate capacity to control the entire Nusantara. They built their power from strategic points and

gradually expanded their influence through trade relations, treaties, conflicts, and administration.

Ports became fortresses. Warehouses became centers of power. Contracts became sources of governing authority. Debt became an instrument of dependency. Trading companies transformed into governments. Yet this transformation did not take place without resistance.

Kingdoms, local communities, merchants, ulama, and various groups throughout the Nusantara resisted, negotiated, redirected trade routes, and fought against expanding colonial power.

The fact that colonialism eventually expanded does not mean that local societies accepted it passively. Colonialism required prolonged violence precisely because it continuously encountered resistance.

Nevertheless, colonial powers possessed certain advantages, including international capital networks, armed ships, corporate organization, the capacity to establish binding treaties, and experience in combining trade with warfare.

They also possessed the ability to transform local conflicts into opportunities for expansion. From this phase onward, the Nusantara increasingly shifted from being a space of global trade into an arena of global competition. Spices were no longer merely commodities. The Nusantara itself became a foundation for the construction of power. The sea was no longer merely a route of exchange. The Nusantara became an arena of warfare and control.

Local kingdoms were no longer dealing merely with merchants. They were confronting corporations endowed with the powers of a state.

This transformation laid the foundation for the colonial system that would later expand more extensively under the Dutch East Indies.

H. Chapter Conclusion

Before European colonialism arrived directly, the Nusantara was already part of the wider world. Arab, Persian, Indian, Chinese, East African, and various Southeast Asian societies were connected through the Indian Ocean and South China Sea networks.

These networks carried goods, religions, languages, knowledge, technology, cultures, chains of scholarly transmission (*sanad*), and social exchange. For this reason, the history of the Nusantara should not begin with the arrival of Europe.

The Nusantara was not an empty territory waiting to be discovered. It was a civilizational space with its own kingdoms, ports, trade networks, knowledge, religions, and international relations. Yet these early global networks should not be romanticized either.

Every network brought both benefits and interests. Trade could generate prosperity, but it could also create hierarchies and competition. Religion could bring values and knowledge, while the people who carried it could still possess their own social and political interests.

Arab, Persian, Indian, and Chinese communities must therefore be understood as historical actors. Their contributions should be acknowledged, their interests examined, and their influences assessed proportionally.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, travelers' accounts demonstrated that the Nusantara was becoming increasingly present within the world's geographical knowledge. Such knowledge opened new relationships, but it later also became part of the foundations for expansion.

In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese entered Asian trade routes with maritime and military power. The conquest of Malacca altered the regional balance of power. Spain subsequently entered the struggle for the Maluku Islands, linking local conflicts with global rivalries.

The presence of Portugal and Spain marked an important transformation: trade was increasingly backed by fortresses, cannons, alliances, and ambitions for monopoly.

The VOC brought this transformation to a more organized level. The VOC was a trading company endowed with governing and military powers. Through contracts, warfare, monopolies, debt, and intervention in local conflicts, the VOC transformed trade into colonial power.

From this point, the progression becomes clear:



However, this progression should not be understood as a process imposed entirely from outside. European powers also gained access through rivalries, political needs, and alliances with local elites.

The history of maritime colonialism therefore brought together two elements: the ambitions of global powers and the vulnerabilities of domestic structures.

This lesson remains relevant today. The world always brings both opportunities and interests. Interconnectedness does not necessarily have to result in colonialism. Trade, knowledge, technology, and cooperation can strengthen a nation.

However, when a nation loses its direction, fails to master knowledge, allows elites to open doors without accountability, and surrenders control over strategic resources, interconnectedness can turn into domination.

The Nusantara was once a space of global trade before it became a colonial territory. This transformation did not happen in a single day. It unfolded as trade became monopoly, monopoly was protected by

violence, and violence eventually produced control over government.

Understanding Indonesian colonialism, therefore, must begin before the Dutch East Indies. It must begin with the transformation of the maritime world that carried the Nusantara from a space of civilizational encounters into an arena of global struggles for power.

SEKOLAH NEGARAWAN
SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter VII
The Dutch East Indies and the Legacy of Colonial Institutions

A. From the VOC to the Dutch East Indies

Dutch power in the Nusantara did not begin as a colonial government that controlled the entire territory of Indonesia at once. It developed gradually through trade, monopolies, fortresses, warfare, treaties, debt, intervention in conflicts among kingdoms, and control over strategic economic centers.

The VOC became the early foundation of this process. It was not merely a commercial enterprise that bought and sold commodities. The VOC was granted the authority to enter into treaties, maintain armed forces, build fortresses, wage war, appoint officials, and administer territories. VOC archives reveal the formation of a central government in Batavia, regional administrations, judicial institutions, trade records, hierarchical correspondence, contracts with local rulers, and reporting systems that positioned Batavia and the directors in the Netherlands as centers of control.

This structure brought commercial interests together with political power. Trade required monopoly. Monopoly required surveillance. Surveillance required an apparatus of control and administration. Administration required territory, population, information, law, and a chain of command. Through this process, a trading company gradually transformed, in practice, into a colonial state.

When the VOC was dissolved at the end of the eighteenth century, its assets, debts, territories, contracts, archives, and networks of power did not simply disappear. Much of this legacy was taken over by the Dutch state. This transition marked a shift from corporate colonialism to state colonialism.

The Dutch East Indies subsequently developed into an increasingly centralized, extensive, and administrative colonial government. The colonial authorities no longer sought merely to control particular ports or sectors of trade. They sought to regulate territory, population, land, production, taxation, law, security, education, and bureaucracy.

The transition from the VOC to the Dutch East Indies is important because it demonstrates that colonialism did not end with the extraction of commodities. Colonialism developed into a system that regulated the broader life of society.

The VOC required profit. The Dutch East Indies required an administrative state capable of ensuring profit, stability, and obedience over the long term.

The colonial administrative state was not established to make the people of the Nusantara the owners of power. It was designed to make territory legible, populations countable, land mappable, produce extractable, resistance observable, and decisions from the center enforceable down to the local level.

From the colonial perspective, the people were not the owners of the state. They were a population to be classified and managed.

For this reason, the most important legacy of the Dutch East Indies was not merely its roads, buildings, railways, plantations, or collections of laws. Its most important legacy was the form of relationship it created between the state and human beings. The state stood above as the regulator, while the people remained below as objects of administration.

After Indonesia gained independence, the names of many institutions, laws, officials, and the purposes of the state changed. Yet this vertical relationship did not automatically come to an end.

B. Colonial Law and Population Administration

Colonial law was developed within a society divided according to status, origin, race, community, and the interests of government. The Dutch East Indies operated under a plural and fragmented legal system. Different population groups could be placed under different laws, courts, and forms of legal treatment. Studies of colonial legal practices show that legal pluralism in the Dutch East Indies did not merely reflect the diversity of society; it also formed part of the colonial government's method of classifying and regulating the population.

These divisions helped the colonial authorities implement their administrative strategies. The population was not treated as one equal people, but as separate legal groups occupying different positions.

Europeans were placed within a particular legal structure. Groups classified as Foreign Orientals could be subject to different regulations. Indigenous

populations were placed under legal and judicial regimes shaped by customary law, colonial government policies, and the requirements of local administration.

Under such conditions, law was not merely an instrument for resolving disputes. Law became an instrument for classifying power.

By determining which group a person belonged to, the law determined which court had jurisdiction, what rights could be exercised, what forms of evidence were accepted, and what position an individual occupied within the structure of colonial society.

Population administration therefore had a meaning far broader than simply recording identity. It became a means through which the colonial state created the categories it needed to govern.

The population was recorded so that its resources could be extracted, its mobility regulated, its occupations identified, its obligations determined, and its relationship with authority monitored.

The colonial state sought to make a complex society legible to its administration. Kingdoms, villages, customary communities, religious networks, and social relationships that possessed their own internal logic were translated into bureaucratic categories. Regional heads, customary leaders, aristocrats, and local elites were incorporated into the colonial chain of government.

This process did not always eliminate local institutions. On the contrary, the colonial government often preserved and utilized certain institutions as long as they could assist in maintaining control.

In various regions, the Dutch used a combination of direct and indirect rule. Under indirect rule, local elites or rulers were retained but incorporated into the colonial structure and directed to implement the interests of the colonial government.

This approach allowed colonialism to operate with a limited number of European officials. The colonial state did not need to administer every village through Dutch officials. Instead, it relied on regents, local chiefs, aristocrats, and domestic intermediaries to carry out orders, collect taxes, organize labor, and maintain order.

As a result, the people often did not confront Dutch officials directly. They confronted local elites who implemented colonial policies. This is one of the important roots of structural colonialism. Foreign power operated through domestic faces.

Under such conditions, the people could experience oppression at the hands of individuals from their own society, while the structure that granted authority and determined its objectives originated from the colonial government.

This relationship also shaped patterns of accountability. Local officials were more accountable to their superiors within the colonial chain of command than to the communities they governed.

Success was measured by whether orders were carried out, revenues and produce were collected, order was maintained, and resistance was prevented.

The people were not treated as the source of the mandate. They were treated as a population to be managed.

This way of thinking can survive beyond independence if population administration continues to be used primarily to monitor, restrict, collect from, and govern the people rather than to fulfill their rights.

A modern state certainly requires population data. Without data, the government would struggle to provide education, healthcare, social protection, and public services. The question, however, is whether the people are recorded so that the state can better care for them, or so that the state can more easily control them.

Administration in a state that genuinely belongs to its people must reverse the colonial purpose. Population data should not be an instrument for placing human beings under state power, but a foundation through which the state can be held accountable for fulfilling the rights of every person.

C. Taxation, Land, and Plantations

For the colonial government, land was not merely the living space of communities. Land was a source of production, revenue, commodities, and power.

The peoples of the Nusantara had diverse relationships with land. Land could be managed through families, villages, kingdoms, customary communities, *ulayat* rights, or various other forms of tenure that did not always correspond to modern concepts of individual ownership.

The colonial government translated this diversity into categories that suited its administrative and economic needs.

Land had to be identifiable, classified, allocated, taxed, leased, or used for commodity production. In this process, the social and spiritual relationships between communities and their land could be reduced to questions of administrative rights and economic value.

One of the most well-known phases was the implementation of the Cultivation System, or *Cultuurstelsel*, in the nineteenth century. Under this system, villages and farmers were required to provide land, labor, or specified produce for export crops. The system generated substantial revenue for the Dutch government, while placing obligations and risks upon local communities.

The colonial state used its bureaucracy and local elites to ensure that production targets were met. Local leaders became intermediaries between government demands and farmers.

This demonstrates that the colonial economy did not operate separately from administration. Taxation, land, labor, and production were integrated into a single chain of power.

The government required data on villages, population numbers, land area, agricultural output, and productive capacity. This information became the basis for determining obligations.

The people did not occupy an equal position in determining what crops should be planted, how great

their obligations should be, what prices they would receive, or how risks would be distributed.

Under such a system, land—the foundation of the people's lives—was transformed into an instrument of colonial revenue.

Large plantations subsequently expanded and became connected to capital, trade, infrastructure, and international markets. Roads, railways, ports, and communication networks were developed to support the movement of commodities and the interests of the colonial government.

This infrastructure development is often regarded as one of the legacies of colonial progress. It is true that the Dutch East Indies built roads, railways, irrigation systems, ports, cities, and various economic facilities. However, such development must be understood in relation to its primary purpose.

Colonial infrastructure was not built primarily to make the people the owners of the economy. It was built to ensure that territories could be accessed, commodities could be transported, production could be controlled, and state power could move more efficiently.

A road could benefit local communities while simultaneously being built for extractive purposes. Both realities can exist at the same time.

For this reason, interpretations of the colonial legacy should avoid two extremes. It would be inaccurate to deny all the physical development that took place. Yet it would be equally inaccurate to regard such development as evidence that colonialism existed to promote the welfare of the people.

The questions that must be asked are: who determined the development, whose interests was it designed to serve, who received the added value, and who bore the burden?

Colonial land policies also left a long institutional legacy. Research on colonial land-tenure systems in urban areas demonstrates that the formal and informal regimes developed during the Dutch East Indies period created structural differences in ownership whose traces could persist into the postcolonial era.

Land subsequently became one of the areas in which the modern state continues to confront the people. The state brings maps, certificates, permits, concessions, and claims made in the name of development. The people bring histories of possession, customary practices, livelihoods, ancestral graves, social relationships, and economic dependence.

If the state recognizes only what can be proven through administrative documents, communities living under traditional systems of land rights may lose their standing.

It is here that land law can continue a colonial logic: what is considered real is what the state can read, while the lived experience of the people must conform to administrative categories.

Taxation also has two faces. In a state that genuinely belongs to its people, taxation represents the contribution of citizens toward financing the common good. Taxation gains legitimacy because the people are the owners of the state and have the right to know and determine how public revenue is used.

In a colonial state, taxation is an instrument for financing the government and the interests of rulers over a population that does not possess comparable control.

The central issue is not the obligation to pay, but the relationship between taxation, ownership of the state, and accountability.

If the people are required to pay but do not possess meaningful control over budgets and public policy, the fiscal relationship may remain fundamentally vertical.

The state collects from the people, while the people must ask for their rights to be fulfilled. Decolonizing taxation means transforming this relationship.

Taxation must not be understood as a modern form of tribute paid to those in power. It must be understood as a public amanah, whose entire use can be scrutinized and held accountable to the people.

D. Colonial Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is one of the strongest institutional legacies of the Dutch East Indies. Its vast territory, diverse population, and limited number of European officials required the colonial government to establish an orderly administrative chain. Instructions from the center had to reach the regions, while information from villages had to be collected and transmitted upward.

The archives of the VOC and the colonial government demonstrate the importance of correspondence with superiors, resolutions, daily

reports, financial records, judicial documents, contracts, and local administration. This archival structure reflects a system of government strongly oriented toward reporting and deference to higher authority.

From such a system emerged a bureaucratic culture that placed superiors at the center of accountability.

Officials were evaluated according to their ability to carry out instructions, maintain order within their territories, collect revenues, regulate the population, and report conditions to their superiors.

The people were not the source of the mandate. Therefore, the colonial bureaucracy had no reason to place the satisfaction and sovereignty of the people as its primary measure of success.

Within the governmental chain, European officials worked alongside indigenous officials. Regents, *wedana*, *camat*, village heads, and various local structures were incorporated into the administrative hierarchy.

The colonial government utilized the traditional authority of local elites to perform functions of the state. However, once local elites became incorporated into the colonial structure, the orientation of their leadership changed.

Leaders who had previously maintained social and moral relationships with their communities could become officials required to fulfill government targets.

Their positions depended on the recognition and evaluation of their superiors. As a result, upward loyalty could become more decisive than downward

responsibility. This is one of the roots of bureaucratic leadership in Indonesia.

Bureaucratic leaders are not necessarily corrupt or incompetent. They may work hard, maintain discipline, and master administrative procedures. Yet the structure trains them to ask: What are the superior's instructions? What are the targets? How should the report be prepared?

The question of what the people actually need can become secondary. Colonial bureaucracy also created a symbolic distance between officials and society. Public office carried status, clothing, titles, spaces, protocols, and authority.

Such distance served the interests of power because it made orders easier to enforce. The people learned to respect office, fear administration, and regard officials as those who possessed the power to grant or deny access.

After independence, the symbols may have changed, but excessive reverence for public office can remain.

Officials can more easily become those who are served rather than those who serve. Offices, protocols, official vehicles, escorts, and various facilities become symbols of status.

People entering a government office may feel as though they are entering a space belonging to officials rather than a house of public service built with the people's money.

The language of bureaucracy also reflects this relationship. The people must submit applications,

obtain permits, fulfill requirements, wait for dispositions, and receive approval.

Some procedures are, of course, necessary. The state must ensure order, security, and justice. However, when procedure becomes an end in itself, bureaucracy loses its function of care and stewardship.

The people are forced to adapt themselves to the system, while the system does not consider itself obligated to adapt to human needs.

The administrative state then measures success through the completeness of documents rather than the resolution of the people's problems.

A report may be declared complete even though the problem remains unresolved. A budget may be considered successfully implemented because the funds have been spent, even though the benefits are not felt by the people. A program may fulfill its indicators even though the human beings it was intended to serve experience no meaningful change. It is here that administration can replace reality.

For Sekolah Negarawan, bureaucracy is not merely a neutral machine. The design of bureaucracy reflects how the state views human beings.

If the people are regarded as objects, bureaucracy will build systems of control. If the people are regarded as the owners of the state, bureaucracy will be built as a system of service, care, and accountability.

E. The Legacy of the Administrative State in Modern Indonesia

Modern Indonesia inherited the need for an administrative state. A country with a vast territory and a large population cannot function without bureaucracy, law, data, budgets, and systems of government. The problem is not the existence of administration. The problem arises when administration becomes the center of the state, while the people are pushed to the margins.

The state then comes to be defined by its capacity to regulate rather than by its capacity to fulfill rights. Success is measured by the number of regulations, programs, institutions, applications, documents, meetings, and budgets. The more the state regulates, the more strongly it feels that it is present.

Yet for the people, more regulations do not necessarily mean greater protection. More applications do not necessarily make public services easier to access. More institutions do not necessarily make accountability clearer.

The administrative state tends to view human problems as matters of classification. Poverty becomes a number. Unemployment becomes a percentage. Land becomes a parcel. The people become identification numbers. Suffering becomes an entry in a database.

Data is essential. Without data, the state cannot formulate appropriate policies. Yet when data replaces direct encounters with human beings, the state may

know the scale of suffering without understanding its meaning.

Officials may see poverty through screens, tables, and presentations. Yet they do not smell the dampness of a home, experience the uncertainty of an unstable income, or understand the humiliation felt by a person who must repeatedly ask for assistance.

Administration creates distance, making suffering appear objective and manageable. Yet that same distance can also diminish empathy.

Another legacy is the centrality of permits. Under colonial logic, the state had to know about and control various activities of the population. After independence, licensing systems remain necessary to protect public safety, the environment, spatial planning, and the public interest.

However, permits can become instruments of domination when the state assumes that every aspect of the people's lives becomes legitimate only after receiving bureaucratic approval.

The state then possesses enormous power to determine who may work, use land, operate a business, build, move, or gain access to opportunities.

If such authority is neither transparent nor subject to meaningful correction, licensing becomes a source of rent-seeking, discrimination, and dependency.

The people must then seek proximity to officials in order to obtain what should rightfully be theirs or what should be available to them through fair and equal opportunity.

This condition strengthens patronage. The state is no longer experienced as a system that operates on the basis of rights, but as a network of people who must be approached.

The legacy of the administrative state is also visible in the tendency to treat the government as identical to the state.

Criticism of officials may be regarded as an attack on institutions. Disobedience toward a particular policy may be interpreted as disloyalty to the state.

Yet the government is only the temporary administrator of power, while the state is a common home that belongs to the people.

If the government controls the definition of the state, the people lose the space to correct those in power in the name of their own love for the country.

The administrative state can also expand through digitalization.

Technology promises faster services, transparency, data integration, and efficiency. Yet digitalization does not automatically transform a colonial mentality.

If digital systems are designed from the perspective of bureaucracy, the people must still adapt themselves to the categories and procedures established by the state.

Decisions may even become more difficult to challenge because they are made by algorithms or systems that lack transparency.

In the past, the people confronted desks and officials. Today, they may confront a screen that rejects

their application without explanation. Colonial administration can transform into algorithmic administration.

For this reason, decolonizing the administrative state cannot be achieved simply by replacing paper forms with applications. What must change is the position of human beings within the system.

Technology must make it easier for the people to obtain their rights, not strengthen the state's capacity to monitor and control them.

F. Bureaucratic Leadership and Distance from the People

The legacy of the administrative state gave rise to a bureaucratic form of leadership. Bureaucratic leaders view their primary task as implementing rules, programs, and targets. They master procedures, understand the chain of command, and are capable of keeping organizations functioning. Such capabilities are necessary. Without administrators, government would descend into disorder. However, bureaucratic leadership becomes a problem when the entire meaning of leadership is reduced to administrative competence.

Leaders then cease to determine direction. They merely manage the system they have inherited. They ask whether the budget has been spent, rather than whether justice has been realized. They ask whether a project has been completed, rather than whether the people have become more sovereign. They ask whether regulations have been obeyed, rather than whether those regulations protect human beings.

Cak Nun reminds us of a crisis of leadership that occurs not only within structures of power, but also in social life, culture, education, the economy, and even religion. In the context of the colonial legacy, this crisis can be understood as the severing of the relationship between leaders and the suffering of the people.

Officials live within the world of administration. The people live within reality. Officials receive reports stating that public services are functioning. The people experience rejection. Officials read figures of economic growth. The people experience rising prices and difficulties in finding work. Officials see maps of land. The people see homes, rice fields, ancestral graves, and their family histories.

When leaders trust reports more than the lived experiences of the people, administration defeats reality. This distance is not merely physical. It is a distance of morality and knowledge.

Leaders may visit villages, enter markets, or speak with communities, yet still fail to understand them if these encounters are reduced to ceremony and political image-building.

Being close to the people is not a matter of frequently appearing alongside them. True closeness is the ability to allow the suffering of the people to change the way decisions are made.

Colonial leadership was oriented upward. It sought recognition from the centers of power. Leadership in a state that genuinely belongs to its people must be oriented toward amanah. Such leadership is

accountable to the human beings it leads, to the Constitution, and to Allah.

Within the Islamic value system, public office does not elevate a person above the people. On the contrary, public office increases the burden of accountability.

A leader has no right to demand service because of his or her position. That position is entrusted to the leader so that he or she can serve more broadly. Yet the bureaucratic mentality can reverse this relationship. The higher the position, the more service the officeholder receives.

The people stand and wait, while officials have special access. The people must explain their needs, while officials are not required to explain their decisions. The people are required to be transparent, while those in power preserve secrecy. This is the form of a state that more often demands to be served than serves its people.

This condition is not merely a matter of the behavior of particular officials. It is the product of structures, protocols, organizational culture, and the way society itself perceives public office.

Society can also help preserve a colonial mentality when it glorifies officials, seeks personal proximity to those in power, grants them special treatment, and assumes that personal access is more effective than rights. Decolonizing leadership therefore requires transformation from both directions.

Officials must abandon the mentality of rulers. The people must abandon the mentality of subjects. The people are not subordinates of the government. The

people are the owners of the mandate. Leaders are not the owners of the state. They are the bearers of an amanah.

G. From a Regulatory State to a Caring State

The legacy of the Dutch East Indies cannot be erased merely by changing terminology or repealing a number of laws. What must be transformed is the fundamental paradigm governing the relationship between the state and the people.

The colonial state regulated society so that power and extraction could function. A state that genuinely belongs to its people regulates society so that justice and the common good can be realized.

The difference does not lie in whether rules exist. A state that belongs to its people still requires law, bureaucracy, taxation, population administration, and land management. The difference lies in their purpose and ownership.

In a colonial state, law protects the structure of power. In a state that belongs to its people, law must protect human beings, including from the abuse of power.

In a colonial state, taxes are collected from the population. In a state that belongs to its people, taxation is managed as an *amanah* that must be accounted for to the owners of the state.

In a colonial state, land is mapped so that it can be controlled and exploited. In a state that belongs to its people, land administration must safeguard livelihoods,

justice, productivity, the environment, and the rights of future generations.

In a colonial state, data is used so that the population can be controlled. In a state that belongs to its people, data is used so that human rights can be fulfilled and public policy can be held accountable.

A caring state is not a state that indulges its people or removes personal responsibility. Care means ensuring that power works to develop human capabilities, protect the vulnerable, expand opportunities, uphold justice, and prevent domination.

A caring state does not make the people permanently dependent on assistance. It builds structures that enable the people to stand on their own. A caring state does not merely distribute programs. It ensures that the people possess knowledge, tools, ownership, employment, access to justice, and bargaining power. In this sense, a caring state is fundamentally different from a paternalistic state.

A paternalistic state regards the people as children who are incapable of thinking for themselves and must therefore be directed from above. A caring state recognizes the people as the owners of the state and uses power to strengthen their capacity to exercise their sovereignty.

Care does not eliminate freedom. It creates the conditions necessary to ensure that freedom is not enjoyed only by those who are wealthy, educated, and well-connected. Within the Islamic value system, a caring state must stand upon amanah and justice. Power

is not exercised to glorify public officials, but to safeguard human beings.

The transformation from a regulatory state into a caring state requires constitutional reform, legal renewal, bureaucratic reform, technology that serves the interests of the people, and values-based leadership. Yet none of these transformations will succeed if the people continue to be positioned merely as objects.

The people must be incorporated into the living structure of the state. They must have the capacity to determine its direction, oversee public budgets, correct public policies, scrutinize the actions of state authorities, and hold public officials accountable.

Ultimately, the decolonization of institutions is the democratization of ownership of the state.

H. Chapter Conclusion

The Dutch East Indies built an administrative state. It possessed laws, bureaucracy, taxation, population registration, land administration, plantations, state apparatuses, courts, and chains of command. Yet this entire structure was not built to make the people the owners of the state. It was built to control territory, regulate the population, extract resources, maintain stability, and secure colonial profits.

The VOC laid its foundations through trade, contracts, fortresses, and corporate governance. The Dutch East Indies subsequently expanded these foundations into a more centralized and administrative form of state power.

The people were mapped so that they could be regulated. Land was recorded so that it could be allocated and exploited. Taxes were collected to finance the colonial government. Bureaucracy was organized so that directives from the center could be implemented. Local elites were used as intermediaries between colonial power and society.

The most important legacy of this structure was the positioning of the people as objects of regulation. After Indonesia gained independence, many laws, institutional names, and public officials changed. The state acquired different constitutional objectives. The people were recognized as the holders of sovereignty. Yet the mentality of the administrative state could continue to survive.

The government may still perceive itself as standing above the people. Bureaucracies may still be more accountable to their superiors than to the human beings they are meant to serve. Law may still be more easily utilized by those who possess capital and access. Taxation may still feel like a vertical obligation when the people lack adequate control over how public revenue is used.

Land may still be understood primarily through maps, permits, and concessions, while the lived histories of communities are treated as obstacles to development.

Population administration may still reduce human beings to numbers, categories, and targets of public policy. Digitalization can even reinforce this pattern when the people are merely transferred from bureaucratic desks to opaque algorithmic systems. The

crisis of bureaucratic leadership is also part of this legacy.

Leaders are trained to obey upward, fulfill targets, maintain stability, and prepare reports. They are trained to administer effectively, yet may lose the capacity to understand civilizational direction and the suffering of the people.

The state can therefore become extraordinarily busy without always knowing for whom all that activity is being carried out. For this reason, Indonesia's decolonization must reach its deepest institutions.

Law must be transformed from an instrument for maintaining the order of power into a pathway to justice. Bureaucracy must be transformed from a machinery of control into a system of service and care. Taxation must be restored as an amanah entrusted by the people. Land must be managed as living space and a source of the common good, rather than merely as an object of concession.

Population administration must be used to fulfill rights, not to expand surveillance. Technology must make it easier for the people to obtain justice, rather than making the decisions of those in power increasingly difficult to challenge.

Leadership must also be decolonized. Leaders must not regard public office as a source of prestige that entitles them to be served. The dignity of leadership arises only from the willingness and capacity to bear an *amanah* and serve the people.

In a state that genuinely belongs to its people, public officials are not rulers over the population. They

are the executors of the mandate entrusted to them by the owners of the state. Indonesia has not yet fully found the form of a state that genuinely belongs to its people because parts of the colonial administrative state continue to survive within its law, bureaucracy, taxation, land governance, technology, and leadership.

The historical task is not to abolish every institution inherited from the past, but to transform its direction, values, and relationships of power.

From a state that regulates the people to a state governed by the mandate of the people.

From a bureaucracy that demands to be served to a bureaucracy that serves and cares for the people.

From leadership accountable upward to leadership accountable to the people, the Constitution, and Allah.

Only through such a transformation can independence move beyond the end of the Dutch East Indies and become the birth of a state that genuinely belongs to the people of Indonesia.

Chapter VIII
Japan: Occupation, Mobilization, and the Militarization of Society

A. The Japanese Military Occupation

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia lasted far less time than Dutch colonialism. Yet its shorter duration did not mean that its impact was insignificant. Within only a few years, Japan transformed the ways in which society was governed, mobilized, disciplined, and positioned in relation to power.

While the Dutch East Indies gradually built an administrative state through law, bureaucracy, taxation, population registration, plantations, and territorial administration, Japan arrived in the midst of war. Its primary objective was not to build a stable, long-term colonial government, but to control territory, secure resources, manage the population, and support the war effort. Its form of rule was therefore different.

Dutch colonial rule tended to operate through extensive administration, social classification, law, and bureaucratic chains of command. Japan operated through military command, rapid mobilization, strict discipline, propaganda, labor organization, and the sacrifice of society for the purposes of war.

The Japanese occupation demonstrated how quickly the state could penetrate almost every sphere of social life.

Power did not merely regulate government and the economy. It also regulated language, information,

education, organizations, labor, production, human movement, and even the ways in which people were expected to demonstrate their loyalty.

Within such a system, the people were not regarded as the owners of sovereignty. They were regarded as a source of labor, instruments of mobilization, providers of production, members of organizations, and a mass population to be directed.

Military occupation required rapid obedience. Debate, *musyawarah*, objections, and individual rights were regarded as potential obstacles to the objectives of war. The relationship between rulers and the people was therefore built around command.

Those in power determined the objectives. The apparatus delivered instructions. Social organizations carried out mobilization. The people obeyed, contributed their labor, fulfilled targets, and bore the consequences.

Under wartime conditions, every dimension of life could be subordinated to a single overarching objective determined from above. That objective was presented as serving the common interest, yet the people did not occupy an equal position in defining it.

Japan arrived with the rhetoric of liberating Asia from Western colonialism. Yet the promised liberation did not automatically produce popular sovereignty. The colonial ruler changed, but society remained positioned as an object of power.

This experience is important to this book because it demonstrates that rejecting Western colonialism does not, by itself, create a state that genuinely belongs to its

people. A power that arrives in the name of liberation can establish a new form of domination if the people still do not become the owners of the structure of power.

The fundamental issue, therefore, lies not merely in the origin of those who rule. The question is how power is structured, what values it serves, and where the people are positioned within it.

B. Propaganda and Mass Mobilization

Military power cannot rely on physical coercion alone. It also requires narratives that enable society to understand, accept, or at least adapt itself to the objectives of those in power. Propaganda therefore became an important part of the Japanese occupation.

Japan sought to present itself not as a new colonial power, but as the leader of an Asian resurgence. Western colonialism was portrayed as a force that had to be removed, while Japan positioned itself as the "elder brother" leading the peoples of Asia toward a new order.

This language of brotherhood carried the power of unity. Indonesian society had indeed experienced Dutch colonialism and possessed a strong desire for independence. Japan sought to connect its wartime interests with these aspirations.

Propaganda worked by transforming meaning. Occupation was called liberation. Mobilization was called service. Sacrifice was called honor. Obedience was called loyalty. Hardship and suffering were presented as part of a greater struggle.

Under such conditions, language did not merely describe reality. Language shaped the reality that the people were permitted to see.

Propaganda taught that the objectives of the state stood above individual experience. If someone suffered, that suffering had to be understood as sacrifice. If society lost its freedom, those restrictions were justified in the name of a greater interest. This pattern has enduring relevance.

Modern power can also use the language of development, stability, unity, security, progress, or national interest to ask the people to accept policies they did not formulate.

This does not mean that every use of such language constitutes propaganda. A state genuinely requires development, unity, security, and stability. Yet these grand terms can become instruments of domination when they are used to conceal suffering, suppress criticism, or justify sacrifices that are not shared fairly.

Japan demonstrated that the masses could be mobilized not only through threats, but also through the creation of identities, common enemies, grand objectives, symbols, ceremonies, slogans, and the repetition of messages.

The people were encouraged to feel that they were part of a historical project. Yet that project remained defined by those in power.

Mass mobilization transformed human beings from individuals with their own needs, judgments, and will into members of a collective formation. Human

worth was measured by one's willingness to follow the common direction.

Under such conditions, disagreement could easily be interpreted as disloyalty. Doubt could be regarded as weakness. Criticism could be treated as a threat to the greater objective.

The legacy of propaganda is not merely the state's ability to disseminate information. Its deeper legacy is the belief that the people can be directed through narratives constructed by the center of power.

The state no longer feels obligated to explain the whole reality. It only needs to shape the perception necessary for its policies to be implemented.

It is here that propaganda converges with administrative and command-based leadership. Leaders do not need to listen to the people if they believe they already know the greater objective. The people need only be given a narrative that persuades them to move in the direction determined by those in power.

C. People's Organizations and Command Discipline

The Japanese occupation established and utilized various organizations to connect the military government with society.

Organizations became important instruments because the Japanese authorities could not directly administer the entire population. Those in power needed intermediary structures capable of transmitting

orders, mobilizing people, organizing labor, disseminating propaganda, and enforcing discipline.

Through these organizations, the people gained new experiences in mobilization and social organization. They participated in meetings, training exercises, formations, collective activities, resource collection, and various forms of service directed by the military government.

Some of these organizational experiences later became important in the process of achieving independence. People acquired skills in organizing, public speaking, leading groups, building networks, and practicing collective discipline.

Indonesian figures also gained a certain degree of space to communicate with wider sections of society. Within closely supervised limits, organizations established during the occupation could become spaces for the development of political awareness, administrative experience, and networks of leadership. Yet these benefits must not obscure the primary purpose for which such organizations were created.

People's organizations during the Japanese occupation were not established to make society the owner of power. They were established to make society easier for those in power to mobilize.

Their organizational structures followed the logic of command. Orders moved from the top downward. Members received assignments. Targets had to be met. Discipline was measured through obedience and willingness to sacrifice.

The people gained organizations, but they did not necessarily gain sovereignty. This distinction is important. The existence of organizations does not automatically mean democratic participation. An organization may be extensive, have a large membership, and involve society in numerous activities while still functioning primarily as an instrument for transmitting the will of the center.

Under such conditions, participation does not mean having the capacity to determine direction. Participation means taking part in implementing a direction that has already been determined.

This experience can persist within the modern state when community organizations, social institutions, or governmental structures are established not to absorb and represent the will of the people, but to mobilize support for particular policies.

The people are gathered, given instructions, asked to participate, and presented as evidence of public support. Yet they are not genuinely given the space to determine the objectives themselves.

Command discipline can also shape the way leadership is understood. Leaders are considered successful when they are able to make everyone move uniformly, rapidly, and without asking too many questions.

Musyawarah then comes to be regarded as a source of delay. Criticism is treated as a disruption to unity. Diversity of opinion is seen as an organizational weakness.

Yet a state that genuinely belongs to its people requires a different form of discipline. Discipline must not mean blind obedience. It must arise from awareness, responsibility, and an understanding of shared objectives.

The people may need to act quickly during emergencies, but emergency conditions must not become a permanent justification for depriving them of their sovereignty.

The state requires the capacity for command in certain areas, particularly defense, security, disaster response, and crisis situations. Yet the logic of command must not dominate the whole of social life.

If the entire state is governed like a military barracks, human beings will lose the space to think, to disagree, and to correct those in power.

D. Social Militarization

Militarization does not merely mean an increase in the number of soldiers or weapons. Social militarization is the penetration of military ways of thinking, discipline, symbols, command structures, and the logic of war into the life of society.

During the Japanese occupation, society was widely exposed to drills, formations, salutes, commands, group-based organization, and preparations designed to make people ready to carry out military objectives.

The human body itself became part of the exercise of power. The ways people stood, marched, saluted, participated in drills, worked, and gathered

were regulated. Discipline was not confined to the mind; it was instilled through bodily habits and routines.

Social militarization fostered the idea that a good society is one that is orderly, uniform, obedient, and ready to be mobilized.

Order is, of course, necessary. A state cannot function in chaos. Yet order built solely through fear and command produces human beings who obey without awareness. Society may appear disciplined while losing its capacity to exercise moral judgment.

Within the military, commands occupy an important position because circumstances often require rapid action. Yet when this logic is extended into the whole of civilian life, personal responsibility can disappear.

People may feel that they no longer need to judge what is right or wrong because they are merely following orders. This is where the profound danger of social militarization lies.

Great harm can be carried out by ordinary people when each individual regards himself or herself as merely a small part of a chain of command. No one feels responsible for the consequences as a whole.

Those in power issue orders. Officials translate them into instructions. The apparatus carries them out. Organizations mobilize. The people follow. At every level, individuals believe they are merely performing their assigned duties. Under such conditions, power can produce immense suffering without any individual at the lower levels feeling that he or she owns the decision.

The experience of forced labor and labor mobilization demonstrates the danger that arises when human beings are valued primarily according to their usefulness to the state.

The bodies of the people become a source of labor. Their time becomes the property of those in power. Human safety and human life can be sacrificed for objectives determined from above.

Militarization also changes the standards by which leadership is judged. A leader is considered strong when he or she is tough, decisive, fast, and capable of compelling obedience. Doubt, empathy, and a willingness to listen may be regarded as weaknesses.

Yet firmness without justice can become cruelty. Speed without knowledge can produce grave mistakes. Obedience without values can lead to destruction.

Civilizational leadership requires courage and firmness, but both must remain subordinate to amanah, justice, knowledge, and the protection of human beings.

E. The Legacy of the Japanese Occupation in How the State Views the People

The legacy of the Japanese occupation did not consist entirely of institutions that survived directly into the postwar period. Part of its legacy lived on in the experience and imagination of power.

Japan demonstrated that Indonesian society could be mobilized on a massive scale. The population could be organized, divided into groups, assigned targets, directed in the use of its labor, and asked to sacrifice personal interests for the objectives of the state.

This experience could influence how the post-independence state viewed the people. The people were no longer seen merely as a population to be regulated, as in the legacy of the Dutch administrative state. They could also be seen as a mass to be mobilized. It is here that the Japanese legacy converges with the Dutch legacy.

The Dutch left behind a bureaucracy that regulated the people. Japan left behind the experience of an apparatus and organizations capable of mobilizing the people.

The combination of these two legacies could produce a state with the administrative capacity to record, classify, collect from, and regulate the population, while simultaneously possessing the bureaucratic capacity to mobilize, standardize, and demand sacrifice.

The people could then find themselves caught between two positions, neither of which recognized them as owners of the state. As objects of administration, the people were regulated. As a mass to be mobilized by the government, the people were directed. In both situations, the direction continued to be determined from above.

The state could mobilize the people through development campaigns, national movements, social programs, or political agendas. Society could be asked to participate, practice gotong royong, make sacrifices, and demonstrate loyalty.

Gotong royong is an important value within Indonesian society. Yet gotong royong loses its meaning when it is transformed into the mobilization of labor without musyawarah and without a fair distribution of benefits.

Sacrifice can also be a virtue. Yet the state must not continuously demand sacrifice from the people while elites enjoy protection and benefits.

In a state that genuinely belongs to its people, sacrifice must arise from awareness and justice. Those who possess greater power and resources must bear a greater share of the burden.

The legacy of mobilization becomes dangerous when the people are called upon only when the state needs their support, labor, votes, taxes, or sacrifice. Once the objective has been achieved, the people are once again distanced from decision-making.

They are mobilized, but they are not given ownership. They are asked to defend the state, but they are not given meaningful control over its direction. They are asked to work for development, but they do not always become the primary beneficiaries of its results.

It is here that the people become "orphaned" once again. The state remembers them when it needs their labor, but does not always care for them when they face suffering.

F. Command Leadership and the Danger of Treating the People as a Mass to be Mobilized

Command leadership has a legitimate place under certain circumstances. War, natural disasters, public health crises, security threats, and emergencies require rapid decision-making and clear coordination. However, command leadership becomes dangerous when it is transformed into the general model of governing the state.

Under this model, leaders believe that they possess the most accurate understanding of the nation's objectives. Society is regarded as not sufficiently capable of understanding the situation and therefore expected simply to follow directions.

Criticism is regarded as an obstacle. Musyawarah is seen as a source of delay. Differences are perceived as threats to unity. Obedience becomes a measure of nationalism.

Such leadership can appear effective. Programs move quickly. Society moves in a uniform direction. Administrative targets are achieved. Yet effectiveness is not always the same as correctness.

A train can move very quickly in the wrong direction. Administrative and command-based leaders may be capable of moving the state forward, but civilizational leaders must determine whether that direction protects human beings, strengthens the people, and upholds justice.

The greatest danger arises when the people are viewed merely as a mass. A mass has no individual faces. The suffering of one person is regarded as insignificant compared with a greater objective. Human rights can be sacrificed because the state claims to represent the interests of millions.

In the language of statistics, the loss of a few people may be regarded as a cost. In the language of civilization, every human being possesses a dignity that must never be ignored.

A state that genuinely belongs to its people must not erase the individual in the name of the masses. Yet neither should it allow individualism to destroy the common good.

The challenge is to build a relationship that recognizes human beings as individuals with inherent dignity while also recognizing them as part of a people with social responsibilities.

Command leadership tends to regard the people as instruments. Leadership in a state that genuinely belongs to its people regards them as owners.

Owners may be asked to make sacrifices, but they must understand the purpose, be given space for musyawarah, and possess the capacity to correct decisions. An instrument does not need an explanation. An owner must be given accountability.

In this context, Cak Nun's critique of leadership becomes important. A civilization can deteriorate when its leaders lose the ability to feel the suffering of the people. Command-based power makes it easy for leaders to view human beings from a distance. The

people appear merely as numbers that can be moved, directed, and sacrificed.

Civilizational leaders must resist this tendency. They must continue to see the human face behind the numbers, the family behind every policy, and the life behind every target.

Leadership is not the ability to make the people obey. Leadership is the ability to build awareness, bear an amanah, and direct collective strength without diminishing human dignity.

G. From Mobilization to People's Participation

The experience of mobilization during the Japanese occupation demonstrated that the Indonesian people possess a remarkable capacity for collective action. Under certain circumstances, society can demonstrate extraordinary discipline, solidarity, courage, and sacrifice.

These capacities later played an important role in the struggle for independence. Experiences of organization, training, networking, and mobilization contributed to the formation of Indonesia's social and military strength. Yet an independent state must not stop at the capacity to mobilize its people.

Mobilization is different from participation. Mobilization moves from the center toward the people. Participation moves from the people into the decision-making process. In mobilization, the objective has already been determined. The people are asked to help achieve it.

In participation, the people take part in determining the objectives, the methods, the distribution of burdens, and the measures of success. Mobilization may be necessary in emergencies. Yet the long-term life of the state must be built through participation.

The people must not continuously be positioned as a development workforce, a mass of voters, program participants, or recipients of instructions.

They must become the owners of knowledge, the owners of direction, and the owners of the structure itself. The transformation from mobilization to participation requires institutional reform.

Musyawarah must not be reduced to a formal ceremony. It must have real consequences for decision-making. Representation must not end with elections. Representatives must be open to correction and held accountable.

People's organizations must not be turned into instruments for mobilizing support. They must possess the independence to criticize and oversee the state. The state must also distinguish between discipline and submission.

A disciplined people understand their responsibilities. A submissive people have no space to evaluate the orders they receive.

A state that genuinely belongs to its people requires discipline that arises from knowledge and awareness, not from fear. Within the Islamic value system, obedience to leaders cannot be separated from

obedience to truth and justice. Public office does not grant an absolute right to mobilize human beings.

Leaders must engage in musyawarah, uphold amanah, avoid injustice, and account for every sacrifice they ask the people to make. The experience of Japanese mobilization must therefore be transformed into a lesson, rather than inherited as a model.

The capacity to move together must be preserved. But the direction of that movement must belong to the people.

H. Chapter Conclusion

The Japanese occupation was brief, but it left behind an intense experience of power. Japan arrived as a military government in the midst of war. Society was governed through command, propaganda, organizations, discipline, labor mobilization, and sacrifice.

The people were no longer merely a population to be administered. They became a mass to be mobilized. Propaganda constructed overarching objectives. Organizations translated those objectives into action. Command structures ensured that orders were carried out. Social militarization disciplined both the bodies and minds of human beings.

Some of these experiences in organization and training later contributed to the struggle for independence. Society acquired networks, skills, discipline, and experience in organizing groups. Yet this legacy also carried dangers.

The state could learn that the people could be mobilized through narratives, symbols, organizations, fear, and grand objectives. Those in power could come to believe that participation simply meant a willingness to follow orders.

It is here that the Japanese legacy converges with the legacy of the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch built a bureaucracy that regulated the people. Japan expanded the experience of state apparatuses and organizations in mobilizing the people.

The combination of these two legacies could produce a state highly capable of recording, classifying, governing, and mobilizing, yet still unable to position the people as the owners of sovereignty.

The people are called upon when their labor is needed. They are mobilized when support is required. They are asked to make sacrifices when the state faces a crisis.

Yet they are not always given an equal position in determining the direction, distributing the burdens, and enjoying the benefits.

A crisis of leadership emerges when leaders regard their ability to mobilize the masses as proof that they represent the people. Yet a people in motion are not necessarily a sovereign people.

Obedience does not necessarily mean consent. Uniformity does not necessarily mean unity. Speed does not necessarily mean correctness. Sacrifice is not necessarily just.

Indonesia requires the capacity for mobilization in times of emergency, but the state must not be built as a permanent state of emergency.

A state that genuinely belongs to its people must move from mobilization to participation, from command to musyawarah, from obedience to awareness, and from imposed sacrifice to responsibility shared fairly.

The people are not an army permanently waiting for orders. They are the owners of the state. The state apparatus is not an instrument for mobilizing the masses in the interests of those in power. It exists to protect the people and the Constitution.

A leader is not a commander over every dimension of human life. A leader is the bearer of an amanah, obligated to explain the direction, listen to the people, bear responsibility for the consequences of decisions, and ensure that the objectives of the state are not achieved at the cost of human dignity.

The Japanese legacy, therefore, must not be understood merely as a history of occupation. It must also be understood as a civilizational warning: a state capable of mobilizing its people is not necessarily a state that genuinely belongs to its people.

A state that genuinely belongs to its people is born only when the collective strength of society is built through awareness, musyawarah, justice, and genuine ownership over the direction of their shared life.

Chapter IX
The United States, the Cold War, 1965, and the New Order

A. Indonesia in the Cold War

During the Cold War, Indonesia was not a small country on the margins of global attention. Indonesia had a large population, an extensive territory, important natural resources, a strategic position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and significant political influence in Asia and across a world undergoing decolonization.

Indonesia's geographical position placed it along major maritime routes connecting East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Australia, and the Pacific. Its wealth of oil, gas, minerals, plantation commodities, and other natural resources further increased its economic and strategic importance. As a newly independent state with considerable influence among the nations of Asia and Africa, Indonesia's political direction was seen as capable of affecting the regional balance of power. For this reason, the major powers never viewed developments in Indonesia as purely domestic affairs.

The United States viewed Indonesia within the context of the global struggle against communism. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China also maintained relations with and interests in Indonesia. Meanwhile, President Sukarno sought to create a political space that was not entirely subordinate to either the Western bloc or the communist bloc, although

toward the final years of his presidency, Indonesia's relations with the United States and other Western countries deteriorated significantly.

Domestically, Sukarno sought to maintain a balance among three major political forces through the concept of Nationalism, Religion, and Communism, or Nasakom. The Indonesian Army, the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), Islamic groups, nationalists, the bureaucracy, and other forces existed within an increasingly tense political relationship.

The PKI had developed into one of the largest communist parties in the world outside the communist states. The Army regarded this development as a threat to its institutional position and ideological standing. At the same time, Sukarno increasingly relied on maintaining a balance among these competing forces in order to sustain his leadership.

United States government documents from before September 1965 show that Washington viewed developments in Indonesia with considerable concern. American intelligence and diplomatic assessments described the growing influence of the PKI, Sukarno's increasing closeness to communist powers, and the possibility that Indonesia could move further away from Western countries. Yet these documents also indicate that the situation in Indonesia was understood as a complex arena of internal competition, rather than as a process entirely controlled from abroad.

Indonesia's Confrontation against the formation of the Federation of Malaysia further worsened relations with the United States and its allies. From Sukarno's

perspective, Malaysia represented a British neocolonial project. For the United States and Britain, Indonesia's policy heightened concerns that the country was moving toward an increasingly radical position that could potentially destabilize Southeast Asia.

Thus, on the eve of 1965, Indonesia stood at the intersection of four major tensions:



First, there were internal tensions among the PKI, the Army, Islamic groups, nationalists, and other forces. Second, there were tensions between President Sukarno and parts of the Army leadership over the direction of the state and the distribution of power. Third, there were regional tensions arising from the Confrontation with Malaysia. Fourth, there was the global rivalry among the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China.

The events of 1965 cannot be fully understood if any one of these layers is removed. If they are interpreted solely as an internal conflict, the influence of the Cold War disappears from view. If they are interpreted solely as a foreign operation, the actions and

responsibilities of domestic actors are erased. If they are interpreted solely as an ideological conflict, the struggles for power, institutional rivalries, and social tensions across different regions become invisible.

For this reason, this book uses the term "the 1965 configuration." The term emphasizes that the events emerged and developed through the convergence of multiple forces, interests, decisions, fears, and actions that cannot be reduced to a single actor or a single cause.

B. 1965 as a Geopolitical Turning Point

The September 30 Movement, on the night of September 30 and the early hours of October 1, 1965, abducted and killed several senior Army leaders. Major General Soeharto subsequently took control of Army forces in Jakarta, suppressed the movement, and gradually consolidated an increasingly powerful position.

The full identity of those who planned the movement, the distribution of responsibility, the extent of the PKI leadership's involvement, its relationship with elements of the military, and President Sukarno's knowledge of the events remain subjects of historical debate. American intelligence documents themselves reveal changes and uncertainties in assessments of what actually occurred. One CIA study from 1968 characterized the movement primarily as an attempt to purge the Army leadership rather than as a straightforward plan to overthrow the entire Sukarno government.

For this reason, this book does not establish a single definitive version of the entire origins of the September 30 Movement. Conclusions must remain proportionate to the evidence. Its consequences, however, are clearer.

The Army under Soeharto succeeded in seizing the initiative. The PKI was accused of being the principal force behind the movement. Organizations, members, sympathizers, and individuals considered to be associated with the PKI subsequently became targets of mass arrests, violence, killings, detention, and social exclusion.

Declassified American diplomatic documents show that the United States Embassy received detailed reports concerning the killings and repression of the PKI and organizations considered affiliated with it. These documents record that American officials were aware that a campaign of violence was underway, including arrests and executions of PKI leaders and members.

The exact number of victims remains disputed. Estimates vary because no comprehensive national record exists, many killings took place outside judicial processes, and experiences differed significantly across regions. This book therefore does not present any single figure as an absolute certainty. What cannot be denied is that the violence occurred on a massive scale and created social wounds that extended across generations.

For the United States, the changes that followed October 1, 1965, were regarded as a highly significant strategic reversal. Official United States foreign-relations documents portrayed the destruction of the

PKI as a major transformation in the orientation of Indonesian power and as an opportunity to move Indonesia away from Sukarno's political direction and toward closer relations with Western countries.

Declassified documents also demonstrate that the United States was not merely a passive observer. American officials discussed requests from elements of the Indonesian Army for assistance in the form of communications equipment, medical supplies, rice, and potentially small arms. A November 1965 memorandum referred to such requests as assistance to the Army in its confrontation with the PKI. Other documents record the approval and rapid delivery of certain forms of assistance, including communications equipment regarded as capable of supporting the coordination of Army command.

These facts support the conclusion that the United States government was aware of the Army's actions against the PKI and provided certain forms of material and political support within that context.

However, this evidence does not, by itself, prove that the United States designed the September 30 Movement or controlled the entirety of the violence that followed. Such claims would require direct evidence of planning, command, and execution that cannot be established solely from documents concerning assistance and political support. This distinction is crucial.

There is evidence that the United States sought the weakening of the PKI and a change in the orientation of political power in Indonesia.

There is evidence that American officials regarded the Army's actions as a development favorable to United States strategic interests. There is evidence that certain forms of assistance were provided to the Army.

Yet questions concerning who planned each part of the events, who controlled each wave of violence, and how decisions were made across different regions require more detailed historical investigation.

Using methodologically disciplined language, it can be said that the United States was an important actor within the international configuration of 1965 and supported the consolidation of anti-PKI forces following the events of October 1. However, the direct responsibility of domestic actors for abductions, killings, detentions, and the construction of the new regime must not be erased by treating foreign powers as the sole explanation.

The year 1965 became a turning point because Indonesia's geopolitical direction fundamentally changed from that moment onward. The Confrontation with Malaysia was brought to an end. Relations with Western countries improved. Indonesia rejoined the United Nations. The new government became increasingly open to foreign assistance, financing, investment, and international economic cooperation.

This transformation was not merely a change in foreign policy. It became a transformation in the architecture of Indonesia's political power, economy, and society.

C. 1965 as a Constitutional and Social Wound

The events of 1965 are often understood as a shift in political power: the PKI was destroyed, Sukarno's power weakened, and Soeharto gradually emerged as the center of a new government. Yet their impact went far deeper.

The year 1965 constituted a constitutional wound because the transfer of power did not take place solely through fully open and normal constitutional mechanisms, but through an emergency of power, military force, the restructuring of institutions, and the construction of a new legitimacy amid violence and fear.

Soeharto did not immediately become President on October 1, 1965. The transition occurred gradually. The Army took control of security, restricted President Sukarno's room for maneuver, dissolved the PKI, consolidated support, and acquired an institutional foundation through a series of decisions issued by the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS).

This process demonstrates that a constitution does not operate in isolation from the actual distribution of power. The legal text may remain in place, yet the meaning of power changes when one institution controls security, information, organizations, and the authority to determine who is considered a threat.

After 1965, anti-communism was no longer merely a position held by those in power. It developed into a foundation for restructuring the state. MPRS Decree No. XXV/MPRS/1966 dissolved the PKI, declared it a prohibited organization, and banned the propagation of communism and Marxism-Leninism.

The decree subsequently produced long-term consequences for law, education, politics, culture, and the lives of people associated with the PKI.

These restrictions did not stop with organizations directly involved. In practice, stigma extended to families, descendants, former detainees, artists, teachers, workers, farmers, and individuals who, because of local circumstances or social conflicts, were accused of having connections with communism. It was here that the social wound deepened.

Society did not merely lose human lives through killings and detention. People also lost the ability to speak openly about their experiences. Fear was passed down within families. Identities were concealed. Children learned that certain histories were not to be questioned. Violence produced silence.

The state subsequently constructed a single official narrative that served as a foundation for the legitimacy of the government. The Army was positioned as the savior of the nation from the communist threat, while the complexity of the events, regional variations, and the suffering of victims struggled to find space within the official account.

A nation certainly needs a shared memory. Yet a memory constructed solely by those who prevailed can become an instrument of power.

When history cannot be examined and questioned, the people lose one dimension of their sovereignty: the right to understand the past that shaped their state. The wound of 1965 was therefore also a moral wound.

Many people were punished without trial. Social, religious, and economic relations, as well as local conflicts, became intertwined with anti-PKI operations. In several regions, community organizations and civilian groups also participated in the violence. American diplomatic documents even recorded statements by local organizations expressing their intention to kill PKI members they had captured.

This reality demonstrates that state violence is not always carried out solely by formal state apparatuses. The state can create a category of enemies, provide legitimacy, shape the surrounding climate, and then allow members of society to commit violence against one another.

The people, who should collectively be the owners of the state, were divided into those considered worthy of protection and those regarded as people who could be eliminated.

From the perspective of Sekolah Negarawan, this represents one form of the disappearance of the people from the architecture of the state. The state no longer sees every human being as a person possessing dignity and rights. Group identity becomes the basis for determining who is recognized as part of the people and who is excluded from protection.

The year 1965, therefore, must not be treated merely as an episode in an ideological war.

The year 1965 was a test of law, leadership, religion, society, and humanity. Is the state still obligated to protect those it considers dangerous? Can a person be punished without due process of law? Can

guilt be inherited by a family? Can state security be built through the suppression of truth? These questions have yet to be fully resolved.

D. The New Order and the Stability State

The New Order built its primary legitimacy on the promise of restoring security, order, and the economy.

After a period of conflict, hyperinflation, international confrontation, and the violence of 1965, stability held enormous appeal. Many people wanted a more orderly life, manageable prices, a functioning government, and an end to open conflict. Stability was not, in itself, a misguided objective.

The state cannot protect its people if the government remains in a constant state of crisis. Development requires certainty. The economy requires the capacity for planning. The people need a sense of security.

Yet stability can become an ideology when every issue is judged according to whether it disrupts or preserves those in power.

The New Order built a highly centralized state. The military acquired an extensive political and social role through the doctrine of dwifungsi (dual function). The bureaucracy became an important instrument of political control. Political parties were simplified. Civil society organizations, the media, universities, labor, and village life were placed within structures of supervision.

Elections continued to be held, but they did not function as a fully open competition for political power. The government possessed significant advantages through the bureaucracy, the military, regulations, organizations, and control over information.

The stability state therefore retained the formal institutions of democracy while limiting the possibility of political transition and meaningful correction of the center of power.

Within the stability state, the people were viewed in two ways. First, they were objects of development who had to be directed, educated, and mobilized to achieve economic targets. Second, they were objects of security who had to be monitored so that they would not become a source of disruption to the government. The Dutch and Japanese legacies converged once again.

From the Dutch East Indies came the legacy of an administrative state that recorded, regulated, collected from, and controlled the population. From the experience of the Japanese occupation came the capacity for mobilization, command, mass organization, and sacrifice in the name of state objectives.

The New Order brought these two legacies together within a developmental and security state. The bureaucracy regulated the people. The state apparatus monitored the people. Political parties mobilized the people. Development became the overarching objective that provided legitimacy for the entire structure.

Criticism could be regarded as an obstacle to development. Land conflicts could be treated as disturbances to stability. Workers' demands could be

regarded as threats to the investment climate. Differences of opinion could be framed as security risks.

Stability therefore came to mean more than the absence of violence. Stability meant the state's control over society.

From the perspective of administrative leadership, such a condition could appear successful. Programs were implemented, economic growth was achieved, infrastructure was built, and the government remained in power for a long period.

Sekolah Negarawan, however, asks a different question: Were the people increasingly becoming the owners of the state, or were they increasingly becoming objects of development and security?

E. Foreign Capital and Development

The change of government after 1965 was followed by a major shift in economic policy. The new government moved away from an economy that had become increasingly confrontational toward the West and toward stabilization, the restoration of relations with international financial institutions, foreign aid, and greater openness to foreign investment.

Law No. 1 of 1967 on Foreign Investment became one of the principal symbols of this transformation. Enacted on January 10, 1967, the law established a new legal foundation for the entry of foreign direct investment into Indonesia.

Opening the economy to foreign capital cannot simply be interpreted as a surrender of sovereignty. At the time, Indonesia was facing an extremely severe

economic crisis, high inflation, limited access to financing, weak industrial capacity, and extensive development needs.

Investment, aid, and economic cooperation could contribute to economic recovery. Stabilization policies also succeeded in substantially reducing inflation over the following years and created a foundation for economic growth. American intelligence documents recorded progress in stabilization beginning in 1966, as well as the growing role of aid and investment within Indonesia's new economic orientation. Yet this opening must also be understood as part of a new geopolitical configuration.

United States government documents show that Washington viewed economic assistance not merely as a humanitarian or economic measure, but also as a means of supporting Indonesia's new political orientation. Official memoranda linked support for the stabilization program with the need to sustain a political and leadership direction considered favorable to American interests and the security of Southeast Asia.

In one 1967 document, the United States Embassy even described Indonesia as a setting for a "controlled experiment in modernization," involving multilateral assistance, technocratic intermediaries, and concerns over corruption, abuses of power, and tendencies toward militarism. Such language demonstrates that Indonesia was viewed not merely as a recipient of assistance, but as a society whose path of modernization could be influenced and observed.

This does not mean that all Indonesian economic policies were dictated by the United States. Indonesian technocrats, government officials, military figures, business actors, and other domestic forces possessed their own roles, interests, and ideas.

The documents do, however, demonstrate that Indonesia's modernization became a space where domestic interests converged with the agendas of donor countries.

It is here that the relationship with the concept of Invited Colonialism must be understood carefully. Foreign capital is not automatically colonialism. Foreign assistance does not automatically eliminate sovereignty. Indonesia needed economic recovery.

Yet such relationships can become problematic when the direction of development is shaped more by the requirements of creditors, investors, and the international order than by the needs and interests of the people.

A 1967 American intelligence assessment stated that Indonesia's stabilization program and economic policies were, to a significant extent, designed to meet the demands of foreign creditors. Other documents noted that although the IMF viewed Indonesia's economic progress positively, the lives of ordinary people did not automatically improve; food prices remained high, and fundamental social problems remained unresolved.

Here we can see the distinction between macroeconomic stabilization and social justice. A state may succeed in managing inflation, debt, and

investment while its people continue to struggle with prices, land, wages, and inequality.

Development cannot be measured by growth alone. The fundamental question is who owns the benefits of development and who bears its costs.

F. The Security State and Control over the People

After 1965, anti-communism developed into the foundation of a security state. The threat of communism was not used merely to assess particular political parties. It became a broad category that could be used to regulate education, employment, culture, the press, labor unions, farmers' organizations, university life, and social activities.

A security state operates according to a logic fundamentally different from that of a state that genuinely belongs to its people. A state that belongs to its people begins with the assumption that the people are the owners of the state, possessing rights, a voice, and the capacity to correct those in power.

A security state begins with the assumption that society contains potential threats that must be identified, monitored, and controlled.

Under such conditions, data concerning population, organizations, employment, family backgrounds, and political histories become instruments for determining the degree of trust the state places in an individual.

The people are not judged solely on the basis of their actions. They may also be judged according to family connections, past organizational affiliations,

place of residence, social relationships, or suspected ideological tendencies. Control also operates through fear.

Not everyone needs to be arrested in order for society to become obedient. It is enough for people to understand that criticism may have consequences for their employment, education, security, or families.

In this way, power enters the human mind. The people begin to censor themselves.

The security state also transforms the relationship between the state apparatus and the people. The apparatus does not merely protect public security from acts of violence. It may also acquire the function of determining the boundaries of governmental activities, organizations, and forms of thought considered safe for the state.

When security expands into surveillance over the entire life of the state, the apparatus can transform from the protector of the people into the supervisor of the people.

This does not mean that the state does not require a strong security apparatus. Indonesia faces real threats, conflicts, separatism, violence, and security challenges.

Yet the power of the state apparatus must always be constrained by law, accountability, and the position of the people as the owners of the state.

Security must not be understood merely as the security of the government. Security must mean human security—freedom from violence, poverty, fear, arbitrary power, and the loss of rights.

The New Order more often associated security with state order and the continuity of development. Within this framework, groups that disrupted government policies could more easily be positioned as threats to the state.

The distinction between the government and the state became blurred. Criticism of the government was regarded as a threat to stability. Resistance to projects was considered an obstacle to development. Disputes with the state apparatus could be interpreted as disobedience to the state.

When the government controls the definition of who constitutes a threat, the people lose the safe space necessary to correct those in power.

G. Stability Leadership and the Price Paid by the People

Soeharto's leadership succeeded in building an image of a government that restored order after a period of political and economic turmoil. His administration established long-term stability, expanded international economic relations, built infrastructure, increased production, and achieved substantial economic growth during several periods.

These achievements are part of history and need not be erased simply because the New Order is subject to criticism. Yet every form of stability comes at a cost, and the distribution of that cost must be examined.

Who gained security?

Who lost their voice?

Who benefited from economic growth?

Who lost their land?

Who gained access to education and economic opportunities?

Who lived under the stigma of oligarchic power?

Under stability-oriented leadership, success may be measured by the state's ability to control conflict. Yet conflict that disappears from the surface is not necessarily resolved. It may simply be suppressed, displaced, or buried within society.

People who cannot speak are not necessarily in agreement. A society that does not demonstrate is not necessarily prosperous. A quiet media landscape does not necessarily mean the absence of injustice.

Stability can also cause leadership to lose its mechanisms of correction. When a government remains in power for too long, the bureaucracy, political parties, the military, business interests, and elite families can form networks of interests that protect one another.

Leaders may then receive information that has already been filtered. Criticism is treated as a threat. Success is reported upward, while suffering remains

trapped below. It is here that the crisis of leadership discussed by Cak Nun becomes particularly relevant.

A leader may appear administratively successful while losing the capacity to feel the suffering of the people. Such a leader begins to see human beings as development statistics, labor, populations to be brought under order, or masses to be mobilized.

Stability-oriented leadership becomes dangerous when stability is valued more highly than justice. Justice certainly requires order. But unjust order merely freezes inequality in place. Prosperity also requires stability. Yet prosperity built upon the suppression of the people's voice can become luxury for the elite and statistics that fail to save human lives.

Another price paid is the narrowing of the meaning of leadership itself. Leaders are considered successful when they are capable of keeping the state under control, rather than when they are capable of cultivating a sovereign people.

Independent citizens may be regarded as difficult to control. Critical organizations may be considered dangerous. Regions demanding justice may be seen as threats to national unity.

The state then comes to prefer an obedient people over a mature and sovereign people. Yet the purpose of the state is not to produce submission. The purpose of

the state is to cultivate human beings capable of exercising their sovereignty through knowledge, values, and responsibility.

H. United States: An Important Actor, Not the Sole Explanation

The discussion of the United States must avoid two extremes. The first is to deny that the United States played an important role in Indonesia's transformation after 1965.

Official documents show that the United States regarded the destruction of the PKI and the rise of the Army as strategically favorable developments. The United States was aware that violence was taking place, provided certain forms of support to the Army, assisted the economic stabilization program, and encouraged closer relations with the Soeharto government.

The second extreme is to portray the United States as the sole force controlling the entire course of events. Such a view overlooks Indonesia's internal conflicts, the decisions of the Army leadership, the actions of civil society organizations, the rivalry among Sukarno, the PKI, and the military, as well as the regional variations in the violence.

Such an interpretation may also unintentionally absolve domestic elites and institutions of moral responsibility. Foreign powers may encourage, support, provide assistance, disseminate information, or derive benefits from events. Yet Indonesians themselves still made decisions and carried out actions on the ground.

A more responsible position, therefore, is to recognize that the United States was an important actor within the Cold War configuration, supported anti-PKI forces, welcomed Indonesia's changing political orientation, and assisted in the consolidation of the new government.

Yet the history of 1965 is not a story about the United States alone. The history of 1965 is also a story about the weaknesses of Indonesia's state architecture, elite rivalry, ideological conflict, fear, violence, the role of the military, the role of civilian organizations, and a society that lacked sufficiently strong constitutional protections when the state designated part of its own people as enemies. This interpretation is more consistent with the thesis of Sekolah Negarawan.

Structural colonialism and Invited Colonialism do not occur merely because external powers have interests. Structural colonialism and Invited Colonialism emerge when domestic structures create openings, elites derive benefits, and the people lack the power to correct the decisions made in their name.

I. Chapter Conclusion

During the Cold War, Indonesia was a country of immense strategic importance. Its geopolitical position, natural resources, population, and political influence made Indonesia's direction part of the wider global rivalry.

The events of 1965 became a turning point because they transformed not only the domestic balance

of power, but also the geopolitical, economic, and institutional orientation of the state.

The PKI was destroyed as a political force. President Sukarno gradually lost power. The Army under Soeharto became the center of the new state. Anti-communism developed into a foundation of political power, law, education, and security.

Declassified documents show that the United States was aware of the campaign of violence against the PKI, welcomed the outcome of the shift in power, and provided certain forms of assistance to the Army. The United States government subsequently supported the stabilization and modernization programs of the Soeharto government because they were regarded as consistent with American strategic interests in Southeast Asia.

However, this evidence is not sufficient to transform the history of 1965 into a theory that the entire course of events was designed and controlled by the United States.

Domestic actors retained their own responsibility. The Army carried out the suppression and constructed a new architecture of the state. Certain civil society organizations participated in the violence. The government constructed a new basis of legitimacy. The bureaucracy, education system, law, media, and society subsequently reproduced anti-communist narratives and structures for decades.

After 1965, Indonesia entered a new architecture of political and economic power.

The state was built around stability, security, development, openness to foreign capital, international assistance, and centralized leadership. This architecture produced certain forms of progress. The economy was stabilized. Infrastructure was built. The government developed greater planning capacity. International relations were restored. Yet the price paid by the people was also immense.

Some people lost their lives, freedom, livelihoods, identities, and the right to tell their own history. Society lived under surveillance. Criticism was restricted. Public participation in the life of the state was controlled. The people were positioned simultaneously as objects of development and objects of security.

For Sekolah Negarawan, therefore, the question is not whether stability is necessary. The question is: stability for whom, built by what means, and who pays its price?

Stability-oriented leadership can protect the people from disorder. Yet it can also protect those in power from the people.

A security state can prevent violence. Yet it can also turn the people into subjects of permanent suspicion.

Foreign capital can contribute to development. Yet it can also create dependency when the state lacks direction, knowledge, and structures of accountability to the people.

The year 1965 demonstrates the profound consequences of the weakness of a state that genuinely belongs to its people. When the people lack a living and

meaningful place within the architecture of the state, their fate can be determined by elite conflicts, armed institutions, geopolitical interests, and narratives they have no power to correct.

The deepest lesson of this period is not merely that the United States had strategic interests, or that communism and anti-communism once confronted one another.

The lesson is that a state that does not place human beings above ideology can easily sacrifice its own people.

A state that fails to limit the power of its security apparatus can transform protection into surveillance. A state that places stability above justice may appear strong while preserving wounds that are inherited by future generations.

Indonesia cannot build a state that genuinely belongs to its people by erasing the history of 1965, justifying every action of one side, or replacing one form of propaganda with another. Indonesia must examine the archives, acknowledge suffering, distinguish fact from speculation, and restore the principle that every human being is entitled to the protection of law.

Within the Islamic value system, no human being should be punished merely because of suspicion, family connections, or group identity. Power must not take away the right to life without justice. Security must never be separated from amanah.

For this reason, addressing the wounds of 1965 is not merely a task of history. It is a constitutional and civilizational task.

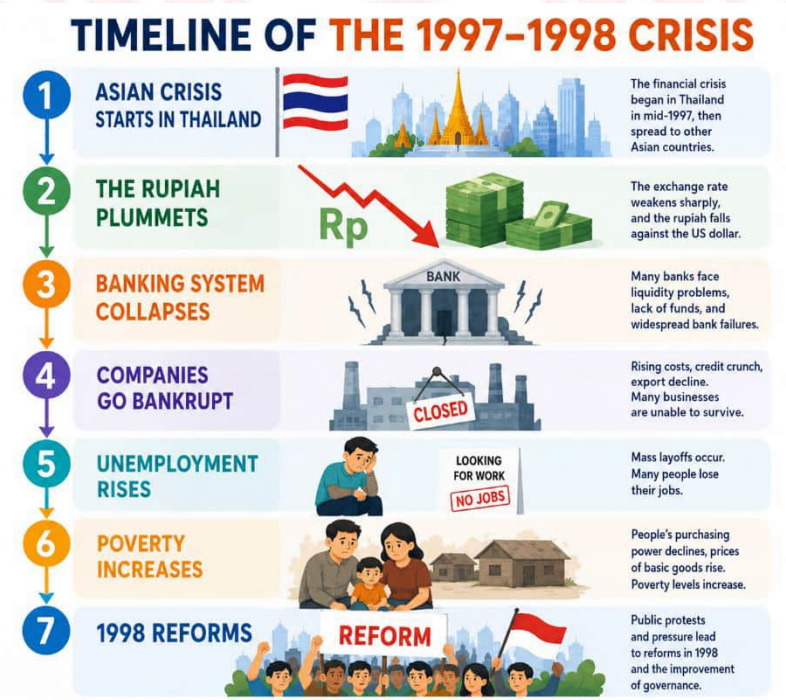
Indonesia must ensure that the state never again determines who is worthy of being recognized as part of the people and who may be excluded from its protection. The people must remain human beings possessing inherent dignity, even when the state accuses them of being enemies.

Only through this principle can stability be transformed from an instrument of control into a condition in which justice, prosperity, and the sovereignty of the people can grow together.

Chapter X
The 1997 - 1999 Crisis, International Financial Institutions, and Economic Reform

A. The Monetary Crisis and the Collapse of the New Order

The 1997–1998 crisis did not merely shake the exchange rate, the banking system, the business sector, and state finances. It also shook the political and constitutional order that had sustained the New Order for more than three decades.



Before the crisis, the Soeharto government derived much of its legitimacy from political stability, economic growth, infrastructure development, inflation control, and its ability to maintain power over an extended period. Stability became the foundation of relations among the state, the bureaucracy, the military, the business sector, and the people. Yet beneath that stability lay significant vulnerabilities.

The relationship between political power and economic interests was deeply intertwined. The business sector developed through a combination of market mechanisms, state protection, licensing, concessions, family connections, proximity to the center of power, and access to financing. The banking system expanded rapidly, but its supervision and governance were not always capable of keeping pace with that expansion.

When the Asian financial crisis began to spread in 1997, weaknesses that had previously been obscured by growth and stability became increasingly visible. The rupiah depreciated sharply, the burden of private-sector foreign debt increased, confidence in the banking system declined, capital flowed out of the country, companies struggled to meet their obligations, and economic activity weakened.

Bank Indonesia records the 1997 crisis as part of the Asian monetary crisis that prompted changes to the exchange-rate system, the closure of troubled banks, and the restructuring of the banking sector. The accompanying banking crisis subsequently generated

enormous costs for rescue and recovery. The monetary crisis became an economic crisis.

Companies reduced production or ceased operations altogether. Unemployment increased. Prices of basic necessities surged. People's purchasing power declined. Poverty increased. World Bank studies estimated that Indonesia's gross domestic product contracted by more than 13 percent in 1998, while various measurements indicated a substantial increase in poverty during the crisis. Yet the people did not bear only the economic consequences.

The crisis demonstrated that when relations among the state, banks, corporations, and government officials fail, the costs of rescue can be transferred to society at large. Corporate debt became a national crisis. Weak supervision became a fiscal burden. Decisions made by elites resulted in rising prices, job losses, and uncertainty for people who had never participated in formulating those policies. It was here that the crisis became a test of the sovereignty of the people.

The people bore the consequences of the economic system, yet did not necessarily possess the power to determine how that system was constructed. When the crisis arrived, the people were once again asked to bear the burden of recovery, while not always becoming the principal actors in determining the direction of reform.

The crisis also destroyed one of the New Order's primary sources of legitimacy. The stability state could no longer guarantee stability. The developmental state could no longer sustain growth. A leadership that had

appeared powerful for decades suddenly seemed unprepared to confront economic changes moving rapidly through international financial markets.

The economic crisis then converged with a crisis of leadership, demands for democratization, and growing dissatisfaction with corruption, collusion, nepotism, repression, and the concentration of power.

The student movement, public pressure, conflicts among elites, and the worsening economic situation accelerated the end of Soeharto's government in May 1998.

The collapse of the New Order, therefore, cannot be explained solely by the exchange rate or monetary policy. Rather, it resulted from the convergence of economic vulnerability, concentrated political power, a crisis of legitimacy, the suffering of the people, and the state's declining ability to sustain the order it had constructed.

The crisis demonstrated that economic sovereignty cannot be built merely through slogans of nationalism or the strength of government. A state that appears powerful can lose its room for maneuver when its financial system, debt, corporations, and technology are not built on sound and accountable foundations.

B. The IMF and Policy Restructuring

As the crisis worsened, the Indonesian government sought support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In October 1997, the government submitted a Letter of Intent outlining the policies it intended to implement in the context of its request for

financial assistance. The document was an official document of the Indonesian government published by the IMF with Indonesia's consent.

The IMF's involvement should not be understood through two extremes. The first is to view the IMF as a neutral savior that merely provided technical solutions without bringing with it a particular policy paradigm, interests, or policy conditions.

The second is to view the IMF as a foreign power that single-handedly created the crisis and imposed the entire reform agenda without the involvement of the Indonesian government and domestic elites. Both interpretations oversimplify reality.

Indonesia was indeed facing a severe crisis and required liquidity support, the restoration of confidence, banking restructuring, debt resolution, and international cooperation. The IMF possessed the resources, experience, and institutional position to assist in this process. Yet financial support came with policy conditions and a broader reform agenda.

The IMF's initial program included tightening and adjustments in macroeconomic policy, banking restructuring, the closure of banks considered unsound, the dismantling of certain monopolies and special privileges, changes in governance, and structural reforms across various sectors. Subsequent programs were continually revised through a series of Letters of Intent and memoranda on economic policy covering budget management, corporate debt, bank restructuring, privatization, and other institutional reforms.

Formally, these policies were presented and agreed to by the Indonesian government. It would therefore be inaccurate to portray them as though every decision had been made by the IMF without the involvement of the Indonesian state. Yet it would also be inaccurate to regard the relationship as one between entirely equal parties.

A state in crisis has far less room for maneuver. When its currency is collapsing, reserves are weakening, market confidence has disappeared, and financing is urgently needed, its bargaining power is not the same as under normal circumstances.

Under such conditions, international financial institutions, creditors, and financial markets can exert considerable influence over the direction of policy.

The important question is not merely whether the government legally agreed to the program. The question is: How freely can consent be given when a state is under immense economic pressure? Yet this question must not be used to erase domestic responsibility.

The crisis did not strike a completely healthy state. Indonesia's banking system, private-sector debt, relationships between political power and conglomerates, regulatory oversight, and domestic governance all contained genuine weaknesses. The IMF did not create all of these vulnerabilities.

Nor should the IMF program be judged as a single package that was either entirely correct or entirely mistaken.

Some reforms were necessary to improve governance, address troubled banks, restrict special privileges, strengthen transparency, and restore confidence. However, the initial design of the program also faced criticism, including over the assumption that the crisis could be managed as a relatively moderate case of financial contagion, when Indonesia's crisis ultimately developed into a far deeper economic, banking, and social collapse. In later reflections, the IMF itself acknowledged that the initial program had been built on assumptions that did not fully correspond to the depth of the crisis.

It is here that analytical discipline becomes essential.

International institutions must not be turned into scapegoats to conceal the failures of Indonesian elites. Yet the government must also not use the need for assistance as a justification for surrendering the direction of policy without public debate and accountability to the people.

Indonesia's relationship with the IMF demonstrates that economic sovereignty is not determined merely by whether a country has its own government. Sovereignty is also determined by the state's ability to confront a crisis without losing its entire capacity to choose its own course.

C. Liberalization, Restructuring, and Privatization

The economic reforms undertaken during and after the crisis encompassed a broad agenda. Banking restructuring became one of its central components. The

government closed, took over, merged, or recapitalized banks experiencing serious difficulties.

These measures were necessary because the banking system sustains payments, savings, credit, and broader economic activity. A collapse of the banking system without state intervention could have caused even greater damage. Yet the rescue of the banking sector also raised fundamental questions of justice.

Who received protection? Who bore the losses? Should bank owners who took excessive risks bear a proportionate share of responsibility? Why should private failure become a public burden?

These questions demonstrate that a financial crisis is not merely a technical matter. It is also a question of the distribution of power, risk, and responsibility.

In addition to banking restructuring, the reform agenda included the liberalization of trade and investment, the removal of various monopolies and special privileges, reform of state-owned enterprises, and the privatization of certain state assets.

Liberalization can bring benefits. Greater competition can reduce monopolies, expand choice, improve efficiency, and eliminate special privileges granted to groups close to those in power. Transparency and market discipline can also help correct some of the economic practices that characterized the New Order.

Yet liberalization also carries risks when a country opens its economy while domestic capacity remains weak.

National companies already weakened by the crisis may be forced to compete with far stronger foreign capital. Assets that have lost value because of the crisis may be sold under unfavorable conditions. Control over strategic sectors may shift when the state is in urgent need of funds.

Privatization likewise cannot be judged in simplistic terms. State ownership does not automatically guarantee efficiency, justice, or policies that serve the interests of the people. State-owned enterprises can become spaces for bureaucracy, rent-seeking, or the interests of a small group.

Conversely, private ownership does not automatically produce better services or a more equitable distribution of benefits. Private companies are profit-oriented and may neglect public-service obligations unless they are subject to strong regulation.

The question, therefore, is not simply whether ownership should be public or private. The questions are: Who exercises control? How are they held accountable? And whose interests are served by the management of strategic assets?

Privatization becomes problematic when it is undertaken merely to meet short-term fiscal targets without considering long-term sovereignty, public access, and the role of strategic sectors in national development. Likewise, liberalization becomes dangerous when the market is treated as a mechanism that is inherently superior to public decision-making.

Markets can provide price signals and encourage efficiency. But markets do not, by themselves, have an obligation to protect the vulnerable, promote equitable development, develop disadvantaged regions, or safeguard technological sovereignty. The state remains necessary to determine the direction of development.

Within the framework of Sekolah Negarawan, the central question of economic reform is not whether Indonesia should reject markets and foreign capital. The question is whether the market is placed under the objectives of a state that genuinely belongs to its people, or whether the state itself is placed under the demands of the market.

D. The People Bear the Crisis, the Elites Shape the Reform

The 1997–1998 crisis revealed a fundamental imbalance between those who bore the consequences and those who determined the direction of the response.

The people bore the burden of inflation, job losses, declining incomes, lost savings, difficulties in accessing education and healthcare, and growing social uncertainty.

Yet the principal negotiations took place among the government, the central bank, the IMF, the World Bank, creditors, technocrats, business owners, banks, and government officials.

The people were invoked as the reason for reform, but they were not always participants in shaping its design.

Social protection programs were subsequently developed to mitigate the impact of the crisis. International assistance also included poverty alleviation programs and social policy reforms. The World Bank acknowledged that the crisis brought decades of economic growth to an end and prompted the provision of structural support and poverty alleviation programs.

These programs were important. The state must indeed assist its people in times of emergency. Yet social assistance cannot substitute for sovereignty.

It is not enough for the people merely to receive compensation after policies have already been decided. They should have a meaningful role in determining the direction of development, the distribution of risk, the use of public funds, and institutional reform.

If the people merely receive assistance while the system itself continues to be determined by elites, then the relationship between the state and the people does not fundamentally change.

The people remain objects of policy intervention. During a crisis, they are positioned as vulnerable groups who must be rescued. After the crisis, they once again become workers, consumers, voters, taxpayers, and targets of government programs.

They do not necessarily become the owners of the country's economic direction.

It is here that the crisis becomes part of the broader thesis of this book. A formal state may make decisions in the name of the people, while the people themselves still lack a sufficiently strong constitutional

structure through which they can shape strategic decisions.

The crisis did not create this condition. It merely revealed it more clearly.

E. Leadership Reform and Electoral Democracy

The end of Soeharto's government opened the Reformasi era. Press freedom expanded. The number of political parties increased. Elections became more open and competitive. Presidential power was limited. Decentralization was expanded. Human rights received stronger constitutional protection.

The 1945 Constitution was subsequently amended in four stages, in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. These amendments restructured relations among state institutions, introduced presidential term limits, established the Constitutional Court, created the Regional Representative Council (DPD), strengthened constitutional guarantees of rights, and introduced the direct election of the President.

These reforms represented a major transformation. The people gained greater freedom to speak, organize, vote, criticize, and change governments. The New Order security state could no longer operate in the same form. Yet electoral democracy is not the final stage in building a state that genuinely belongs to its people.

Elections give the people the power to choose public officials. But ownership of the state requires more than voting. The people must have the power to influence the direction of public policy, demand

accountability, correct the exercise of political mandates, oversee public budgets, and ensure that state institutions are not captured by political parties, financiers, political families, the bureaucracy, or networks of vested interests.

Reformasi shifted the source of governmental legitimacy more firmly toward elections. Yet the power to determine who can become a candidate remains largely in the hands of political parties. Parties require financing, organizations, media access, candidates, and networks. When campaign costs are high, the relationship between political parties and capital becomes increasingly important. As a result, democracy can develop into a marketplace of power.

Candidates need the support of political parties. Political parties need funding. Financiers seek access to policymaking. Media organizations have economic interests. The bureaucracy possesses administrative resources. Political families possess established names and networks. The people still vote, but the choices available to them have already been shaped by the system before they enter the voting booth.

Electoral democracy can therefore expand freedom while simultaneously creating new forms of dependency among public officials. Reformasi succeeded in opening political competition, but it did not automatically transform the algorithm of power.

F. Leadership Reform or Merely Procedural Reform?

Reformasi changed many rules, institutions, and procedures. Yet the deeper question is whether

Reformasi also transformed the people and the leadership responsible for governing the state.

A system may transition from authoritarian rule to competitive elections while its underlying culture of power remains intact.

Public office can still be viewed as a source of prestige, access, projects, and personal accumulation. Political parties can function as vehicles for elites. The bureaucracy can remain more accountable to superiors than to the people. The security apparatus can remain difficult to hold accountable. Power can continue to be shaped by transactional interests. Under such conditions, Reformasi changes the procedures through which power changes hands, but does not fully transform the meaning of power itself.

New Order leaders derived their legitimacy from stability and development. Leaders in the Reformasi era derive their legitimacy from elections. Yet both can govern the state administratively without embodying civilizational leadership.

An electoral leader may be highly skilled at winning votes, building a public image, managing coalitions, and mastering the media. Yet these abilities do not automatically mean that the leader understands history, value systems, geopolitics, technology, data, the Constitution, and the future of the people.

Democracy produces election winners. A state that genuinely belongs to its people requires statesmen.

A statesman does not merely think about how to obtain and retain public office. Sekolah Negarawan

understands public office as an amanah to shape the future of the nation.

In times of crisis, values-based leadership should ask not only how markets can be restored, but also how justice can be upheld.

Not only how banks can be rescued, but also who must be held accountable.

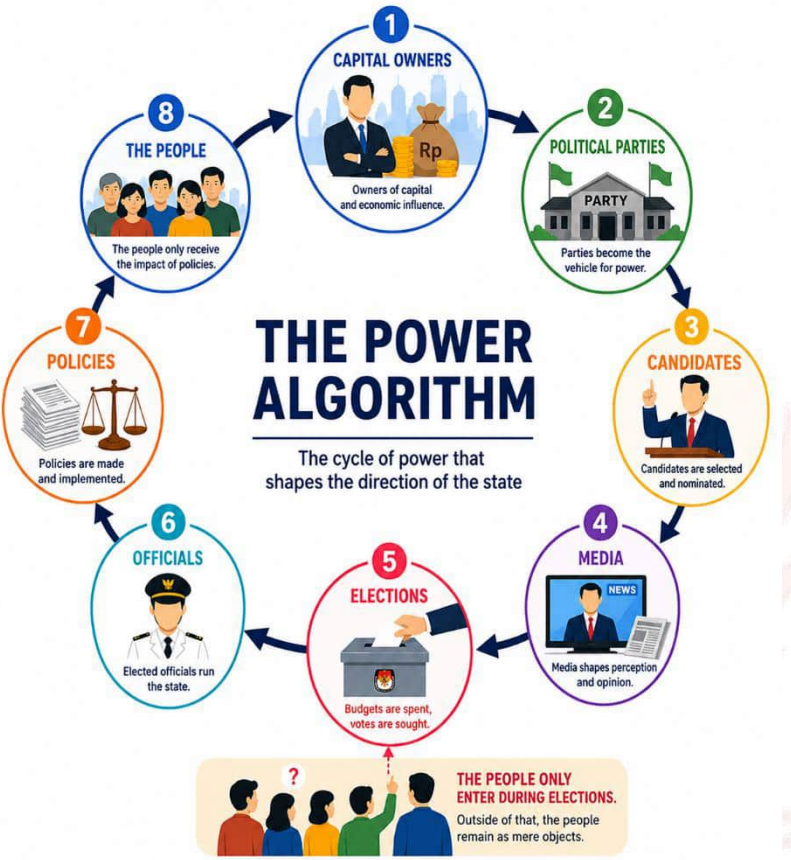
Not only how investment can be brought back, but also how the people can gain greater capabilities, ownership, and added value.

Not only how creditors' confidence can be restored, but also how the people's trust in the state can be rebuilt.

Procedural reform is not enough without leadership reform. Yet leadership reform is also insufficient if it speaks only of personal morality. The systems of government, political financing, political parties, media, bureaucracy, and law must be designed so that people of integrity can enter, endure, and serve without being forced to conform to a broken system. Therefore, both people and systems must be reformed together.

G. Democracy, Oligarchy, Aristocracy, Conglomerates, and Bureaucracy

Democracy promises that the people determine who holds power. Yet democracy can lose its substance when various centers of power form alliances that become stronger than the people themselves.



Oligarchy emerges when economic resources and political power are concentrated in a small group capable of influencing state decisions.

A new aristocracy emerges when power is passed down through families, dynasties, established names, personal connections, elite education, and social networks.

Conglomerates possess the capacity to influence markets, media, campaign financing, employment, and public policy through concentrated wealth. The bureaucracy controls administration, data, procedures, permits, budgets, and the implementation of decisions.

Political parties connect these forces to the gateway of electoral power.

Such alliances are not always formed through secret meetings or a single coordinated plan. They can emerge organically through mutually reinforcing interests.

Politicians need capital. Financiers need favorable policies. Bureaucracies need political protection. Dynasties need political parties. Media organizations need markets and access. Political parties need popularity.

Each acts according to its own interests, yet the combined result can be a structure that distances the people from the state.

The people may still have a vote, but after the election, power operates within networks that are difficult for them to enter.

In Cak Nun's terms, this condition risks creating a system in which those with access to public office are tempted to take, while those without access remain dependent and continue to ask. Democracy then produces two opposing currents. At the top, public office becomes a pathway to access budgets, projects, concessions, information, and regulation. At the bottom, the people become dependent on assistance, personal connections, temporary projects, informal employment, and the goodwill of elites.

This is not intended as a rigid classification, but as a critique of democracy when it is not accompanied by a distribution of ownership and a system of values.

Democracy without a system of values can become a competition for control over the instruments of the state.

Democracy without economic justice can be captured by capital. Democracy without an educated and politically aware citizenry can be manipulated through information, identity, fear, and material assistance. Democracy without structures of accountability can end at the ballot box. The problem, therefore, is not democracy itself. The problem is a democracy that fails to restore the people as the owners of the state.

H. Why Reformasi Has Yet to Become a Reform of the Form of the State

The 1998 Reformasi brought about major changes, but it did not fully become a reform of the form of the state. It restructured relations among state institutions, expanded freedoms, limited presidential power, and opened the way for electoral democracy. Yet Reformasi has not fully answered a fundamental question: Where are the people located within the architecture of the state after they have cast their votes?

Popular sovereignty continues to be interpreted largely as the right to vote. A living institutional structure has yet to emerge that enables the people to formulate the nation's long-term direction, oversee political mandates, hold their representatives accountable, and exercise meaningful control over national wealth, data, technology, and strategic policies.

Economic reform has also not fully resolved the relationship between markets and the people. Liberalization, privatization, investment, and restructuring can improve efficiency and governance. Yet without the direction of a state that genuinely belongs to its people, these processes can reinforce the concentration of economic power. Political reform opened competition. Yet costly political competition can strengthen oligarchy.

Decentralization brought authority closer to the regions. Yet it can also decentralize corruption, political dynasties, and patronage when not accompanied by effective accountability.

Media freedom opened greater space for information. Yet concentrated media ownership and platform algorithms can create new centers of influence. Reformasi therefore remains incomplete because it has transformed the procedures of the state more extensively than it has transformed the ownership of the state.

A state that genuinely belongs to its people requires more than freer elections. It also requires a people equipped with knowledge, institutional structures, economic capacity, access to justice, and the power to determine the nation's direction.

Reforming the form of the state must connect democracy with justice, freedom with responsibility, markets with sovereignty, and elections with the people's ownership of the state.

I. International Financial Institutions and the Limits of Sovereignty

The 1997–1998 crisis demonstrated the significant role that international financial institutions can play when a state loses its capacity to finance and stabilize itself. The IMF, the World Bank, bilateral creditors, and the donor community provided funding, expertise, and policy support. Without external assistance, recovery might have been more difficult. Yet such assistance also created relationships of power.

Financial institutions and donors have their own standards, paradigms, conditions, and measures of success. Recipient countries have their own needs, but they do not always possess equal bargaining power.

This relationship should not automatically be understood as colonialism. International financial cooperation can help states address genuine problems. Yet it becomes a question of sovereignty when the range of policy choices narrows and the people lack sufficient space to understand, scrutinize, and challenge the direction being agreed upon.

IMF documents show that Indonesia's program consisted of a series of policy commitments made by the Indonesian government in the context of financial assistance. In 1999, the IMF noted that the initial support took the form of a Stand-By Arrangement, which was subsequently augmented and later replaced by an Extended Arrangement.

Legally, the government remained the party that requested and signed the agreements. Yet from the

perspective of power and accountability, a fundamental question remains: To whom is the government accountable for these choices?

To creditors?

To the market?

To parliament?

Or to the people who will ultimately bear the consequences?

Sovereignty does not mean that a government is free to make any policy it wishes without regard for the wider world. Sovereignty means that the people, through the state, possess the capacity to understand their choices, determine their priorities, and consciously bear responsibility for the decisions they make.

If strategic policies are formulated in spaces far removed from the people, then even when they are signed by a national government, they do not necessarily reflect the sovereignty of the people.

J. Chapter Conclusion

The 1997–1998 crisis was not merely a crisis of exchange rates, banking, and debt. It was a crisis of the form of the state. The crisis revealed that the New Order's economic system had been built through close relationships among the state, the bureaucracy, the military, conglomerates, banks, and political power. When that system collapsed, the people bore enormous consequences.

The rupiah collapsed. Companies ceased operations. Jobs disappeared. Prices rose. Poverty increased. The lives of the people were transformed by

economic decisions they had not previously had the power to determine.

Under these circumstances, the government sought support from the IMF and other international financial institutions. This assistance helped provide financing, restructuring, and a framework for recovery. Yet it also came with an extensive policy agenda and demonstrated how narrow a state's room for maneuver can become when it is in crisis.

International institutions, therefore, need not be portrayed as entirely malevolent foreign forces. They operate according to their own mandates, paradigms, and institutional interests. Yet Indonesia must not transfer its own responsibility to them.

Weaknesses in the banking system, debt, corruption, relationships between political power and conglomerates, inadequate oversight, and economic dependency were domestic problems that had developed before the IMF program began.

The crisis emerged from the convergence of domestic vulnerabilities and external shocks. Likewise, Reformasi emerged from the convergence of public pressure, elite conflict, market forces, creditors, international institutions, and the state's need to save itself.

Reformasi opened the way for electoral democracy and greater political freedom. These changes must be recognized as major achievements. Yet Reformasi did not automatically restore the people as the owners of the state.

The people gained the right to vote, but the choices available to them are shaped by political parties, capital, media, political dynasties, and the algorithm of power. Institutions multiplied, yet popular sovereignty continued to struggle to find an institutional form through which it could truly operate. Democracy can become an alliance of oligarchy, aristocracy, conglomerates, and bureaucracy when it is not guided by a system of values.

Under such conditions, Reformasi merely changes the procedures through which elites are selected. The state continues to operate through networks of power that remain difficult for the people to control.

The greatest lesson of the 1997–1998 crisis is that economic sovereignty cannot be built through the rhetoric of nationalism alone. Sovereignty requires a sound banking system, knowledge, industry, technology, responsible fiscal governance, effective oversight, capable leadership, and the ability of the state to withstand external pressure without losing its direction. Yet economic sovereignty must not remain merely the sovereignty of the government. It must become the sovereignty of the people.

The people who bear the costs of a crisis must have a place in determining the direction of reform. The people who pay for rescue and recovery must know who is responsible. The people who are asked to accept economic adjustments must receive justice and protection.

For this reason, Reformasi remains unfinished as long as the people are merely voters, taxpayers, workers, consumers, and recipients of assistance. As long as capital can enter the spaces of decision-making more easily than the people. As long as public office becomes an investment, law becomes an instrument of transaction, and democracy becomes a pathway for alliances among elites.

Genuine Reformasi must go deeper than procedural change. It must also transform the ownership of the state. It must restore the people as the owners of the mandate, the direction of development, national wealth, data, technology, and the future.

Within the Islamic value system, a crisis must never become an opportunity for the powerful to take even more. A crisis is a test of amanah. Burdens must be shared justly. Public wealth must be protected. The vulnerable must be given priority. Decisions must be grounded in knowledge and accountability.

Prosperity must not be separated from justice. Markets must not be placed above human beings. International institutions must not replace the sovereignty of the people. Governments must not use emergencies as a means of escaping accountability.

The 1997–1998 crisis brought down the New Order. Yet bringing down a government is not the same as discovering the proper form of the state.

Reformasi opened the door to democracy. The next task is to ensure that through that door, the people truly enter the state—not merely old and new elites exchanging places.

Chapter XI
China: Economy, Technology, Industry, and Contemporary Supply Chains

A. China in Indonesia's Contemporary Economy



Indonesia's relationship with the People's Republic of China is one of the most important economic relationships in contemporary Indonesia. China is present not only as an export destination or a source of imports, but also as a source of investment, technology, industrial machinery, infrastructure, financing, logistics, industrial parks, and as part of the supply chains connecting Indonesia to global markets.

This position did not emerge suddenly. China's industrial rise over the past several decades has transformed the structure of the global economy. China has developed from a low-cost manufacturing base into a major power in manufacturing, trade, infrastructure, technology, renewable energy, electric vehicles, telecommunications, batteries, and the digital economy.

This transformation has brought China increasingly closer to Indonesia's development needs. Indonesia requires capital, machinery, technology, processing industries, infrastructure, export markets, and the capacity to transform natural resources into higher-value products. China possesses industrial capital, corporations, production technologies, logistics networks, and a market of enormous scale. The convergence of these interests has produced a rapidly expanding relationship.

Official data show that China has become Indonesia's largest source of non-oil and gas imports. From January to June 2025, Indonesia's non-oil and gas imports from China reached approximately USD 40 billion, accounting for nearly 40 percent of total non-oil and gas imports. These imports consisted primarily of

mechanical machinery, electrical equipment, vehicles, and industrial components. During the same period, China also remained one of Indonesia's most important trading partners.

This reality has two implications.

First, the relationship with China provides capital goods, equipment, and components required for Indonesia's industrialization. Machinery and production technologies can accelerate factory development, increase processing capacity, and support the expansion of the manufacturing sector.

Second, a high degree of dependence on capital goods and components from a single country reveals a structural vulnerability. If Indonesian industries depend on the same country for machinery, spare parts, technology, financing, and markets, geopolitical disruptions, policy changes, or supply-chain pressures could affect national production capacity.

Indonesia–China economic relations, therefore, should neither be viewed through hostility nor approached naively.

China need not be portrayed as a new colonial power merely because its economic influence is significant. Chinese state and corporate actors engage with Indonesia through cooperation, investment, trade, and contracts that are formally approved by the Indonesian government and domestic economic actors.

Yet the legal form of cooperation does not automatically guarantee that the relationship will always be balanced or deliver the greatest benefits to the people.

The fundamental question is not whether China is good or bad. The question is: Does Indonesia have its own national strategy when engaging with China's national strategy?

China understands its industrial interests, its energy requirements, the security of its supply chains, the technologies it seeks to master, and the markets it seeks to enter. Indonesia must possess the same degree of clarity.

If only one side possesses a strategy while the other merely provides permits, land, raw materials, labor, and facilities, a relationship formally described as cooperation can ultimately produce structural dependency.

B. Downstream Industrialization, Nickel, and Industrial Parks

Nickel has become one of the central elements of Indonesia–China economic relations. Indonesia possesses abundant nickel resources and views downstream industrialization as a means of breaking away from the long-standing pattern of exporting raw materials. Through domestic processing policies, the government seeks to ensure that nickel is no longer exported merely as ore, but is transformed into intermediate and finished products with higher added value. The fundamental objective of downstream industrialization is sound.

A nation that continuously exports raw materials will remain at the lower end of the value chain. The

greatest benefits are usually captured by those who control processing technology, manufacturing, brands, distribution, and final markets.

By developing smelters and downstream industries, Indonesia seeks to increase added value, expand employment, increase state revenues, strengthen national industry, and enter the battery and electric vehicle ecosystem.

China has played a major role in this process. Chinese companies have brought capital, smelting technology, industrial experience, buyer networks, and the capacity to develop large-scale production complexes. Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has documented the extensive involvement of Chinese companies in the development of the country's nickel smelters. A strategic ministry report stated that, as of 2023, Chinese companies had built more than 90 percent of Indonesia's nickel smelters.

This involvement has helped Indonesia transform the structure of its exports and accelerate the development of its processing industries. Iron and steel products, mineral fuels, as well as nickel and its derivative products have subsequently become important components of Indonesia's exports to China.

Yet the success of downstream industrialization cannot be measured solely by the number of smelters, export value, or volume of investment. Downstream industrialization must also be examined through the structure of ownership.

Who owns the processing companies? Who controls the technology? Where do the machinery and technical expertise come from? Who purchases the final products? Where are the profits recorded? How much of the added value remains in Indonesia? Are Indonesian companies developing greater capabilities, or are they merely serving as local administrative partners?

Nickel ore may be processed in Indonesia, but this does not necessarily mean that Indonesia controls the value chain. If capital comes from abroad, machinery is imported, technology is not transferred, final markets are controlled by the same external actors, and domestic companies merely provide permits, land, labor, and raw materials, then dependency has not disappeared. It has merely shifted from dependence on raw-material exports to industrial dependency.

In the past, Indonesia depended on buyers of its ore. Under the new structure, Indonesia may become dependent on smelter investors, machinery suppliers, sources of financing, processing technologies, markets, and production decisions controlled by external actors.

This transformation nevertheless provides real benefits. Domestic processing is preferable to merely exporting raw materials when it creates employment, generates revenues, and contributes to regional development. Yet downstream industrialization can truly be called a national transformation only when it builds capabilities that belong to the nation itself.

Industrial parks have become an important instrument in this development. In regions such as Sulawesi and North Maluku, nickel investment has

developed into integrated industrial complexes combining mines, smelters, power plants, ports, warehouses, worker housing, and various supporting facilities.

The integrated industrial park model offers significant efficiency advantages. Raw materials, energy, processing facilities, and logistics are concentrated within a single area, allowing production costs to be reduced.

Yet industrial parks can also develop into economic spaces that are relatively disconnected from surrounding communities. The state must ensure that these areas do not become production enclaves with modern infrastructure behind their boundaries while people outside them continue to face underdevelopment, environmental degradation, and limited access to opportunities.

Industrial parks must be connected to local economies, local education, domestic suppliers, Indonesian companies, and regional development.

If all the needs of an industrial park are supplied by the same corporate networks, local communities may become little more than providers of labor and living space. Industrialization may be physically present, while local economic capabilities fail to genuinely develop.

C. Financing, Infrastructure, and Logistics

Indonesia–China relations have also expanded through infrastructure financing and development. China possesses extensive experience in the

construction of roads, railways, ports, power plants, industrial parks, and logistics connectivity. These capabilities align with Indonesia's need to connect its archipelagic regions, accelerate distribution, reduce logistics costs, and strengthen industrial competitiveness.

Infrastructure is a fundamental foundation of development. Industry cannot grow without electricity, roads, ports, railways, water, telecommunications, and logistics networks. Infrastructure cooperation with China, therefore, need not in itself be viewed as a threat.

The central issues lie in the design of financing, the distribution of risk, the use of technology, ownership structures, state guarantees, and long-term benefits.

Project financing can enable Indonesia to develop infrastructure more rapidly. Yet every form of financing creates obligations. If economic projections are not achieved, costs escalate, or project revenues prove insufficient, the burden may shift to state-owned enterprises, the government, or ultimately the people.

The state must distinguish between infrastructure that is genuinely needed by the people and infrastructure that is built primarily because financing is available.

The availability of funding must not become the sole justification for development. Projects must emerge from national planning, economic needs, careful risk assessment, fiscal capacity, and clearly defined public benefits.

Indonesia–China relations have also expanded through cooperation on industrial parks and supply chains. The two governments have developed the Two Countries, Twin Parks initiative to connect industrial parks in Indonesia with their counterparts in China, expand manufacturing investment, and strengthen market access. The Indonesian government has positioned Batang and other industrial areas as part of the development of this framework.

In 2026, both governments continued to accelerate the implementation of the program, linking it with new investment and the development of cross-border supply chains.

This cooperation can provide Indonesia with opportunities to participate in broader production networks. Indonesian companies can gain access to markets, investment, technology, and connections with global manufacturing networks. Yet the twin parks concept must also be examined in terms of balance.

Will Indonesian industrial parks merely become lower-cost production locations for Chinese companies? Can Indonesian companies participate as technology owners and major suppliers? Will final products carry Indonesian brands? Will research and development take place domestically? Will industrial design and strategy be determined jointly, or merely follow the requirements of foreign corporate supply chains?

Infrastructure and industrial parks are not merely collections of physical structures. They shape economic geography.

Ports determine where goods flow. Railways determine which regions grow. Power plants determine which industries gain access to energy. Industrial parks influence who gains access to permits and land. Infrastructure development, therefore, is not neutral. It creates new centers of economic power.

If the state lacks strong economic leadership, infrastructure may be developed primarily to accelerate the movement of commodities and products out of production regions rather than to connect the needs of the people and build an integrated national economy.

Old colonial patterns can re-emerge in modern forms: roads, railways, and ports may develop rapidly, yet primarily serve to connect resources with external markets.

The decolonization of infrastructure means ensuring that connectivity does not merely accelerate extraction, but also builds local capabilities, domestic trade, education, national industry, and more equitable regional development.

D. Technology and Supply Chains

China is not only a manufacturing power. It has also emerged as a major technological power. Chinese companies hold significant positions in telecommunications, mobile networks, digital devices, data centers, solar energy, batteries, electric vehicles, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, and various other forms of technological infrastructure. Indonesia needs many of these technologies.

The development of digital networks, government transformation, Industry 4.0, electric vehicles, renewable energy, and smart cities cannot proceed without hardware, software, computing infrastructure, networks, sensors, and data management systems.

Cooperation with Chinese companies can provide access to technology at competitive costs, enable rapid deployment, and offer integration with well-established industrial networks.

The Indonesian government has opened various areas of cooperation, including the digital economy, 5G development, technology investment, and the development of manufacturing ecosystems. Yet technology is never merely a neutral tool.

Every technological system carries an architecture of control. Those who provide the hardware may understand how it operates. Those who provide the software may control its updates. Those who control the platform can change its rules. Those who store the data can acquire knowledge about society. Technology cooperation must therefore always be connected to system and data sovereignty.

Indonesia needs to know which components of a technology can be audited, who owns the code, where the data is stored, how the system is updated, and whether dependency on a single vendor exists.

Vendor dependency becomes a problem when the state is unable to operate, repair, or replace a system without the approval or assistance of its provider.

Under such circumstances, Indonesia may formally own the infrastructure without fully controlling it.

The same issue arises within supply chains. Modern supply chains connect raw materials, components, technology, factories, financing, logistics, data, standards, and markets. No country controls all of these elements entirely on its own. Participation in global supply chains is therefore a necessity.

Yet countries occupy very different positions within these chains. Some control design, research, core technologies, financing, and brands. Others dominate manufacturing. Still others merely supply raw materials and labor.

The strategic question for Indonesia is: At which level of the value chain does Indonesia intend to position itself?

If Indonesia merely becomes a source of nickel, a location for smelters, a market for vehicles, and a user of technology, then industrialization has not yet produced sovereignty.

Indonesia must move toward mastery of advanced materials, battery chemistry, engineering, production machinery, industrial software, product design, standardization, intellectual property, and brands.

Technology transfer, therefore, must not remain merely a phrase written into contracts. Technology transfer must have measurable outcomes.

How many Indonesian specialists are being trained? Which parts of the technology can eventually be developed independently? Are Indonesian

universities and national research centers involved? Are domestic suppliers given meaningful opportunities? After a certain period, will Indonesia be capable of operating the system without complete dependence on foreign providers?

An official study by Indonesia's Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Komdigi) on China's telecommunications technology transformation demonstrates that China's own success was built through state policy, research financing, state-owned enterprises, domestic entrepreneurship, technology transfer, and the strengthening of national research capabilities. The study itself recommends that Indonesia develop its national innovation capacity, increase R&D funding, strengthen domestic industry, and ensure that foreign cooperation is structured on a mutually beneficial basis.

The lesson is clear: Indonesia must not merely purchase Chinese technology. Indonesia must learn how China built the capacity to create technology of its own.

E. Opportunities for Industrialization and the Risks of New Dependencies

Cooperation with China creates genuine opportunities for industrialization. Investment can accelerate the construction of factories. Machinery and technology can strengthen production capabilities. The Chinese market can absorb Indonesian commodities

and products. Industrial parks can create jobs and stimulate regional economic activity.

Indonesia's Ministry of Investment recorded that Chinese investment in Indonesia from 2019 through September 2024 reached approximately USD 34.19 billion, accounting for around 18 percent of total foreign investment during that period. The Indonesian government has also continued to secure new investment commitments from Chinese companies.

Investment in downstream industrialization as a whole has become an important driver of Indonesia's investment growth. The government has positioned mineral processing, the battery ecosystem, and downstream industries as central components of its economic transformation agenda. Yet the scale of investment does not automatically reflect the degree of sovereignty.

A country may receive enormous amounts of investment while remaining in a subordinate position if it does not control technology, ownership, management, data, and markets.

The opportunities created by industrialization must therefore be measured by the growth of national capabilities, not merely by the number of industrial facilities being built. There are at least several risks of new forms of dependency.

First, capital dependency. Large-scale industrial projects require substantial financing. If financing sources become highly concentrated, Indonesia's room for maneuver may narrow.

Second, technological dependency. Smelters, batteries, electric vehicles, and digital systems require machinery, patents, expertise, and software that may remain under the control of external actors.

Third, energy dependency. Mineral-processing industries require enormous amounts of energy. If that energy is supplied by inefficient or high-emission power generation, downstream industrialization may impose significant ecological costs.

Fourth, market dependency. If products depend heavily on a single major destination, changes in demand or policies in that market can disrupt Indonesian industries.

Fifth, supply-chain dependency. Even when processing takes place in Indonesia, chemicals, machinery, spare parts, technology, and buyers may still come from the same external networks.

Sixth, managerial and knowledge dependency. Industrial parks can develop rapidly without producing a proportionate number of Indonesian experts and professionals.

Seventh, dependency in the exercise of national power. When economic relations become overly concentrated, the state may become more cautious about adopting divergent positions out of concern for their potential impact on trade and investment.

These risks do not mean that Indonesia should end its relationship with China. On the contrary, precisely because the relationship is important, Indonesia needs a more mature and comprehensive strategy.

Indonesia must diversify its partnerships to avoid excessive dependence on any single country. National companies must be strengthened. Technology transfer must be required and measured. Technical education must be connected to industrial needs. National research must receive adequate funding. Government procurement must be used strategically to build domestic capabilities.

Downstream industrialization must also expand from minerals to knowledge. Indonesia must not merely process ore. It must process data, create machinery, develop new materials, build software, and generate intellectual property.

Without such transformation, Indonesia will merely shift from a primary extractive economy to an industrial extractive economy.

Raw materials may indeed be processed domestically, while knowledge and the greatest share of the benefits continue to flow outward.

F. The Envitonment, Labor, and Communities Surrounding Industrial Areas

Industrialization cannot be assessed solely in terms of investment, export value, and production capacity. It must also be understood through the experiences of the people living around industrial areas.

The development of smelters and mineral-processing complexes requires land, water, energy, ports, roads, and living space on a large scale. These

activities can affect forests, coastal areas, agriculture, fisheries, air quality, and water resources.

Downstream industrialization that is not accompanied by adequate environmental protection therefore risks transferring the costs of development onto local communities.

Industry and the state may capture the added value, while the people bear the costs of pollution, loss of living space, health impacts, and changes to local economies. Such a condition contradicts the purpose of a state that genuinely belongs to its people.

The people must not simply be expected to accept industrialization as a sacrifice for the national interest. The national interest cannot be built by disregarding the interests and well-being of the people who live in production regions.

Labor protection is equally important. Investment must create decent jobs, ensure workplace safety, develop skills, provide opportunities for career advancement, and guarantee legal protection. Indonesian workers must not be confined to high-risk, low-value positions while strategic technical and managerial positions remain dominated by foreign workers.

Foreign specialists may be necessary during the initial stages of industrial development. Yet there must be a clear plan for developing Indonesian expertise.

If, after years of operation, an industry still cannot function without foreign expertise, technology, and management, then the transfer of capabilities has not succeeded.

Local communities must also receive a meaningful share of economic development. Small and medium-sized enterprises surrounding industrial areas should be able to participate as suppliers. Schools and training institutions should be aligned with industrial needs. Regional revenues should be used to improve public services. Infrastructure developed for industrial areas should also benefit the wider community.

If an industrial park is directly connected to ports and external markets while maintaining only weak connections with surrounding communities, it begins to resemble an economic island within Indonesian territory.

Geographically, it may be located in Indonesia, but functionally, it may become part of another country's industrial strategy.

G. National Economic Leadership amid the Strategies of Other Nations

The central issue in Indonesia–China relations is not simply the scale of China's influence. The central issue is the quality of Indonesia's economic leadership.

China has a long-term strategy to strengthen its industries, technology, markets, energy security, and supply chains. There is nothing inherently wrong with this reality. Every country must pursue its own national interests.

Indonesia must do the same. Economic leadership cannot merely celebrate incoming investment. It must determine which industries

Indonesia seeks to master, which technologies it must possess, what kinds of employment it seeks to create, and how much added value must remain within the country.

An administrative leader looks at the number of projects and the value of investment. A civilizational leader looks at the national capabilities created by those projects.

An administrative leader counts how many smelters have been built. A civilizational leader asks who controls the smelting technology.

An administrative leader measures iron and steel exports. A civilizational leader asks whether Indonesia can produce machinery, advanced materials, and finished products.

An administrative leader inaugurates industrial parks. A civilizational leader ensures that those industrial parks are connected to education, research, national companies, and the people.

An administrative leader sees China as a source of capital. A civilizational leader understands China as a nation with its own strategy and then prepares Indonesia's strategy to negotiate on equal terms.

National economic leadership must be capable of setting boundaries.

Strategic resources must not be surrendered without adequate control. Data must not be managed without sovereignty. Critical industries must not depend on a single supplier. Contracts must not bind future generations without public accountability.

Yet leadership must also be capable of opening opportunities.

Indonesia should not reject capital and technology simply because they come from China. Rejection based on racial prejudice, ideological sentiment, or hostility would ultimately harm Indonesia itself. Economic relationships must be assessed according to the interests of the people, not the identity of the partner country.

If Chinese investment provides technology transfer, decent employment, environmental protection, stronger national companies, and greater sovereignty, such cooperation should be supported. If the relationship produces dependency, concentrated control, environmental degradation, and the marginalization of the people, the state must have the courage to correct or reject it.

The same standard must be applied to the United States, Japan, Europe, Arab countries, Russia, and all other partners.

Indonesia does not need an anti-China policy. Indonesia needs a policy that advances the sovereignty of its people.

H. China as a Reflection of the Seriousness of Industrial Development

China is important not only as a partner. It can also serve as a mirror reflecting what it means to pursue industrial and technological development with strategic seriousness. China's progress did not result solely from

foreign investment or low-cost labor. China combined state policy, infrastructure development, technical education, national companies, research, its domestic market, technology transfer, protection of selected industries, and global expansion. China welcomed capital and technology from around the world, but it did not remain merely a recipient.

Chinese companies learned, imitated, developed, and eventually created technologies of their own. The state used its vast domestic market as an instrument of negotiation. Foreign investment was directed toward supporting the development of national capabilities.

Indonesia does not need to replicate the entire Chinese model. The two countries differ in their constitutional systems, histories, societies, and scale. Yet Indonesia needs to learn from the seriousness of China's strategic approach.

Indonesia often treats the arrival of investment as the culmination of success. For a nation with a clear strategy, however, investment is merely one instrument. The ultimate objective is the mastery of capabilities.

Cooperation with China should be used to build Indonesia's own capabilities, just as China once used cooperation with advanced economies to strengthen its own industries.

Indonesia must avoid a situation in which China moves up the value chain through technology while Indonesia remains a supplier of resources that supports that advancement. An equitable relationship must enable both sides to develop.

China gains access to resources, markets, and investment opportunities. Indonesia must gain technology, stronger national industries, knowledge, high-quality employment, and greater competitive capabilities.

If only China strengthens its supply chains while Indonesia becomes increasingly dependent, the relationship has yet to become an equal civilizational partnership.

I. Modern Colonialism in Indonesia-China Relations

Indonesia–China relations in the twenty-first century constitute one of the most important bilateral relationships in Asia. The steadily increasing volume of trade, investment in the mining sector, development of industrial parks, infrastructure financing, technological cooperation, and integration into global supply chains demonstrate the growing economic ties between the two countries.

From the perspective of international relations, this is a natural development, as every country seeks to expand its economic influence in pursuit of its national interests.

China, like other major powers, conducts its foreign policy with a strong orientation toward national interests. Its economic instruments, trade policies, investment mechanisms, financing institutions, and

strategic companies are directed toward strengthening China's national position in global competition.

No country undertakes cross-border investment purely for humanitarian reasons. Such activities invariably involve economic objectives, geopolitical interests, energy security, technological advancement, or the strengthening of national supply chains.

The central issue, therefore, does not lie with China itself, but with Indonesia's preparedness to manage the relationship. A country with strong leadership, a robust legal system, a professional bureaucracy, and a clear direction for national development will be able to use foreign investment as an instrument for accelerating its own development.

Conversely, a country that lacks the capacity to determine its own policy direction risks becoming a market, a supplier of raw materials, and a source of low-cost labor serving the economic interests of other nations.

It is within this context that the concept of modern colonialism emerges. Modern colonialism no longer operates through military occupation as classical colonialism once did. Instead, it operates through economic mechanisms, regulation, financing, technology, industrial dependency, and even the shaping of public policy.

This form of colonialism is far more subtle because it does not eliminate the outward symbols of national independence. The flag continues to fly, the

government continues to function, and elections continue to be held, yet the space for strategic decision-making can gradually become influenced by economic interests beyond the control of the people.



The diagram "Modern Colonialism (China Version): From the Party-State to the Partner State" illustrates this mechanism conceptually. At the highest level are the central elites of China's party-state, who direct national strategy. Beneath them are various state-owned investment companies and international financing institutions that serve as instruments for implementing national interests. These relationships are then translated by national elites in the partner country through government policies, regulations, development programs, state financing, human-resource curricula, and the development of industrial parks. Ultimately, the entire process reaches the lives of the people, who experience the direct consequences of the policies adopted.

The position of national elites is therefore decisive. Bureaucratic elites, technocrats, and business actors can function as translators and gatekeepers of national interests. If national elites are strongly oriented toward the interests of the people, foreign investment can be translated into opportunities to develop national industries, strengthen technological capabilities, improve human-resource capacity, and expand public prosperity. If that orientation shifts toward short-term interests, however, public policy may increasingly serve the interests of capital rather than those of the people.

The situation becomes even more complex when policy changes are carried out through legally valid mechanisms. Under such conditions, the people may

not realize that the space for national sovereignty is narrowing because the entire process takes place through established administrative procedures. This is what Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) has described through the concept of "regulatory colonialism"—a condition in which changes to legal rules themselves become a means through which control over resources and the direction of development can shift without the use of military force. As he put it, "We are now experiencing regulatory colonialism. The way theft works is no longer by taking money, but by changing the rules—what is called regulatory colonialism."

The consequence of this process is not merely economic dependency, but also dependency in technology, financing, industry, logistics, and even the direction of national development. The state may continue to appear formally independent, while its strategic space for determining its own future becomes increasingly influenced by external interests. Under such conditions, the people live in their own country yet do not fully possess ownership over the direction of their nation's development.

The people live in their own country, yet remain trapped within a global system they do not control. They work harder, obey the law, and participate in democracy, yet still lose sovereignty, justice, and prosperity. As a result, money ceases to be a tool and becomes a master. Without realizing it, human beings cease to devote themselves to Almighty God and begin

to worship "almighty finance." Ultimately, Islamic values no longer function as the value system guiding life, but remain merely as symbols and rituals.

Nevertheless, this diagnosis must not be interpreted as a rejection of cooperation with China or with any other country. No country can live in isolation in an interconnected world. What is needed is not the severing of international relations, but the development of a state capable of evaluating every form of cooperation according to the national interest. Investment must become an instrument for building the nation, rather than the nation becoming an instrument for investment.

The solution offered, therefore, is not hostility toward other nations, but civilizational liberation. Such liberation begins by restoring tauhid as the foundation of moral orientation, reaffirming Pancasila as the value system guiding the governance of the state, and reforming the constitutional structure through the refinement of the Constitution so that the people genuinely become the holders of state sovereignty. In this way, Indonesia can build equal relations with China and with all nations of the world—not as an object of others' interests, but as a sovereign state cooperating on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit.

J. Chapter Conclusion

China has become one of the most important forces in Indonesia's contemporary economy. Its

presence can be seen in trade, investment, nickel, downstream industrialization, industrial parks, financing, infrastructure, logistics, technology, the digital economy, and supply chains.

This presence creates significant opportunities. Indonesia can accelerate industrialization, process its natural resources domestically, develop infrastructure, gain access to technology, create employment, and participate in global production chains. Yet these opportunities also carry the risk of new forms of dependency.

Indonesia may stop exporting raw ore while remaining dependent on foreign capital, machinery, technology, energy, management, and markets. Smelters may operate in Indonesia, while the knowledge and greatest share of the benefits are not necessarily controlled by Indonesia.

Industrial parks may expand without surrounding communities becoming meaningful beneficiaries of their development. Technology may be widely used while the state does not fully control the underlying data and systems. China, therefore, should not be understood as a form of direct colonialism. Indonesia–China relations are not built through territorial occupation or the elimination of the Indonesian government.

A more appropriate description is contemporary structural-economic influence—one that can strengthen industrialization, but can also create risks of dependency if Indonesia does not possess a strategy of its own.

The central problem is not China's strength, but Indonesia's lack of strategic direction. China will pursue a strategy in the interests of its own nation. Indonesia must pursue a strategy in the interests of its own people.

A nation that possesses natural resources but lacks economic leadership will become a production space for the strategies of other nations. A nation that possesses a market but lacks technology will become a consumer. A nation that possesses data but lacks control over its systems will become a source of digital raw material. A nation that possesses industrial parks but lacks strong national companies will become a provider of land and labor.

Downstream industrialization must therefore advance toward genuine industrialization.

Industrialization must advance toward technological mastery. Technological mastery must advance toward sovereignty over knowledge, data, and decision-making. National economic leadership must ensure that every form of cooperation with China answers the following questions:

- Are Indonesia's capabilities increasing?
- Are the people gaining ownership and added value?
- Are Indonesian companies moving up the value chain?
- Is technology being transferred?
- Are the environment and workers being protected?

- Will Indonesia be capable of standing on its own without complete dependency once the cooperation has matured?

If the answer is no, then even massive investment does not necessarily produce genuine independence. Within the Islamic value system, economic cooperation must be grounded in justice, *amanah*, balance, the protection of property, the protection of human beings, and *kemaslahatan*.

Capital must not be placed above the people. Technology must not diminish human dignity. Growth must not come at the expense of justice. Prosperity must not be reduced merely to figures of exports and investment.

Indonesia–China relations must be built without hostility and without submission. Indonesia should learn from China's capacity to build industry, but it must not become a passive component of China's industrial strategy.

China can be an important partner. Yet Indonesia's direction must remain determined by the Indonesian people, Indonesian leadership, and the people of Indonesia as the true owners of the state.

Sovereignty is not the ability to reject other nations. Sovereignty is the ability to cooperate with other nations without losing control over one's own future.

Chapter XII
Russia: A Proportional Assessment Based on Evidence of Its Actual Role

In contemporary geopolitical analysis, Russia is often regarded as one of the major poles in an increasingly multipolar world. This position has led many analyses of Indonesia to include Russia as an actor presumed to exert significant influence over the country's development. This manuscript, however, takes a different approach.

Sekolah Negarawan does not treat every major power as a dominant actor merely because of its military capabilities, territorial size, or geopolitical influence. Each country must be assessed on the basis of verifiable historical evidence and the actual extent of its influence on the formation of Indonesia's structures.

Within this framework, Russia—and previously the Soviet Union—did indeed play an important role during certain periods of Indonesian history, particularly under President Sukarno. The Soviet Union provided support for defense development, strategic industries, technical education, and Indonesia's diplomatic efforts in international forums.

Yet compared with the Netherlands, which built a colonial administrative system over centuries; Japan, which shaped Indonesia's experience of mass mobilization and militarization; the United States, which played an important role in the Cold War configuration and the transformations following 1965;

or China, whose influence is significant within Indonesia's contemporary economy and supply chains, Russia's influence on Indonesia's constitutional and institutional structure has been relatively limited.

This chapter, therefore, is intended neither to exaggerate nor to diminish Russia's role.

Its primary purpose is to demonstrate that reading the world fairly requires assigning weight according to the evidence. This is what distinguishes historical diagnosis from geopolitical propaganda.

A. The Soviet Union and Indonesia during the Sukarno Era

Relations between Indonesia and the Soviet Union developed rapidly from the late 1950s through the mid-1960s.

During this period, Indonesia was building a newly independent state while seeking to maintain its free and active foreign policy amid the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

President Sukarno did not position Indonesia as part of either the Eastern or Western bloc. In practice, however, Indonesia's national development needs—particularly in defense and strategic infrastructure—created substantial opportunities for cooperation with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union provided development credits, military equipment, military training, and diplomatic support for Indonesia's struggle to secure West Irian.

Various strategic assets that remain well known in Indonesia—including warships, fighter aircraft, submarines, and a number of industrial facilities—were part of this cooperation.

In this context, the Soviet Union functioned as a development partner to a state seeking to strengthen its defense capabilities.

Yet this relationship did not evolve into institutional domination comparable to the colonial legacy of the Netherlands.

The Soviet Union helped strengthen the Indonesian state, but it did not establish a colonial administration or a legal system that endured into the present. This distinction is essential if the historical analysis is to remain proportional.

B. Defense and Military Cooperation

Defense has been the most tangible area of cooperation between Indonesia and the Soviet Union, and later the Russian Federation. Various Indonesian weapons systems, from the Sukarno era to the present, demonstrate the continuity of this relationship.

Defense cooperation has also developed through personnel training, equipment transfers, and weapons procurement. Unlike economic relationships that can generate long-term supply-chain dependencies, however, Indonesia's defense cooperation with Russia has generally been based on specific strategic needs.

Indonesia has continued to maintain a policy of diversifying its defense equipment by cooperating with a range of other countries as well.

Indonesia–Russia defense relations are therefore better understood as one component of Indonesia's free and active strategy rather than as a relationship that has created a structure of domination.

C. Energy and Multipolar Geopolitics

Following the end of the Cold War, Russia re-emerged as one of the major powers in international affairs. In the Indonesian context, relations have developed in areas including energy, civilian nuclear technology, resource exploration, and diplomacy.

Indonesia views Russia as one of its strategic partners in maintaining balance within its foreign relations. For Russia, Southeast Asia is an important region within an increasingly competitive Indo-Pacific environment.

Yet this relationship has not developed into an economic dependency comparable to Indonesia's relationship with China or its financial relationship with the Western economic system.

Russia is therefore more appropriately understood as one element within the multipolar configuration rather than as a dominant center of influence over Indonesia.

D. Russia in the Non-Western Imagination

For many developing countries, Russia is often perceived as a symbol of resistance to a unipolar world order.

This perception has grown stronger with the emergence of multipolar forums such as BRICS and the growing discourse surrounding a more balanced world order. This manuscript, however, does not build its analysis on symbolism.

Sekolah Negarawan does not assess a country according to whether it is perceived as anti-Western or anti-American. What matters is:

- The extent to which that country influences Indonesia's structures;
- How that relationship operates; and
- Whether the relationship strengthens or weakens the sovereignty of the people.

By these measures, Russia is undoubtedly important in global geopolitics, but its direct influence on Indonesia's social structures and configuration of power must still be assessed proportionally.

E. Important, but It Must Be Assessed Proportionally

Errors in reading history often arise when every major power is assumed to have exercised the same degree of influence. The historical reality is more complex.

The Netherlands shaped the colonial administration. Japan shaped Indonesia's experience of total mobilization. The United States influenced the Cold War configuration and the transformation of

power after 1965. China has significant influence in the contemporary economy, industry, investment, technology, and supply chains. Russia, meanwhile, has exercised tangible influence primarily in defense, certain areas of diplomacy, and geopolitical relations.

That influence is important, but it is insufficient to explain the structures of domination that exist in Indonesia today. Exaggerating Russia's role would weaken the quality of the analysis. Conversely, ignoring Russia entirely would erase an important part of Indonesia's foreign-relations history.

The most appropriate approach, therefore, is to assess Russia with discipline and on the basis of evidence.

F. Understanding Multipolarity without Losing the Sovereignty of the People

The world's movement toward a multipolar configuration creates greater opportunities for developing countries. Indonesia no longer has to engage with only one center of global power.

Relations can be developed with the United States, China, Russia, Japan, Europe, India, the Middle East, and other countries. Yet having more partners does not automatically produce sovereignty.

A country without a national strategy will remain dependent on whichever power happens to be strongest at a given moment. Multipolarity, therefore, is not the ultimate objective. The ultimate objective remains the same: the ability of a nation to determine the direction of its own development.

Indonesia must be capable of cooperating with all major global powers without losing its ability to define and pursue its own national interests.

Strategic leadership is essential to ensure that international cooperation does not become a new form of dependency.

G. Chapter Conclusion

Russia occupies an important place in the history of Indonesia's foreign relations, particularly through its relationship with the Soviet Union during the Sukarno era, as well as through defense cooperation and diplomacy in the contemporary period.

Historical evidence, however, does not indicate that Russia shaped Indonesia's colonial structures, state administration, or economic domination on a scale comparable to the Netherlands, Japan, the United States, or China. Russia must therefore be assessed proportionally.

This position also reflects the method adopted by Sekolah Negarawan. This manuscript is not written to search for new enemies or to compile a list of countries to blame. Its purpose is to understand how global networks operate in relation to Indonesia, the extent to which the influence of each actor can be demonstrated through evidence, and how Indonesia can develop leadership capable of engaging with all major global powers without losing its civilizational direction.

In an increasingly multipolar world, Indonesia's measure of success is not its closeness to any particular country, but its ability to preserve the sovereignty of the

people amid increasingly complex international relationships. A nation with strategic leadership will not simply be drawn into competition among great powers. Instead, it will be capable of transforming every international relationship into a means of strengthening its people, knowledge, technology, and the kemaslahatan of the nation.

Russia, therefore, is not positioned as the central explanation for Indonesia's condition, but as one part of the global network that must be understood honestly, proportionally, and on the basis of evidence. This approach ensures that the thesis "Iran Will Not Understand Indonesia If It Does Not Understand the World" remains grounded in academic discipline rather than geopolitical prejudice.

SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter XIII
Financial Institutions, Global Corporations, Technology, Data, Education, Middle Eastern, Networks, AI, and Domestic Elites

Major changes in the global order over the past several decades demonstrate that the distribution of power is no longer determined solely by states. The architecture of global power is increasingly influenced by non-state actors capable of shaping flows of capital, technology, information, education, and even the ways in which people understand reality. International financial institutions, multinational technology companies, cloud service providers, digital platforms, artificial intelligence companies, global educational institutions, transnational media, philanthropic organizations, and cross-border professional networks have become part of an ecosystem that influences the development trajectories of many countries.

In this context, political scientists and economists have described the emergence of new forms of dependency that differ from classical colonialism. While colonialism in the past was associated with direct territorial occupation, influence in the age of globalization more often operates through economic integration, technological standards, data flows, the shaping of public opinion, investment, and knowledge networks. Such influence can provide substantial benefits through access to capital, innovation, and markets, but it can also create vulnerabilities when a

country lacks the capacity to safeguard its policy sovereignty, data sovereignty, and national interests.

For Indonesia, the challenge is not to reject globalization, but to develop the capacity to engage with it on equal terms. States with strong institutions, capable human resources, and a robust value system tend to be better positioned to harness globalization for their own interests. Conversely, weaker states can become heavily dependent on technology, capital, and systems of knowledge developed by others.

A. Global Non-State Power

Power in contemporary international relations is increasingly multidimensional. Alongside states, non-state actors now exercise considerable influence over public policy and global economic dynamics. International financial institutions, technology companies, pharmaceutical corporations, credit rating agencies, global consulting firms, social media platforms, and international philanthropic organizations can influence policy choices through financing mechanisms, investment, technical standards, the dissemination of information, and the production of knowledge.

This situation should not always be understood as a form of domination. In many cases, these actors also contribute to economic growth, technology transfer, greater efficiency, and cross-border collaboration. Nevertheless, the scale of their influence requires states to possess sufficient capacity to manage these

relationships in a balanced manner so that national interests remain the primary orientation.

B. Global Corporations and Control Over Resources

Globalization has strengthened the role of multinational corporations across strategic sectors ranging from energy, mining, and food to telecommunications and the digital economy. Through investment, international supply chains, and technological capabilities, these corporations contribute to economic growth while also influencing the direction of development.

For developing countries, the central challenge is to ensure that foreign investment generates domestic added value, technology transfer, human-resource development, and stronger national industrial capabilities. Without appropriate policies, dependence on external technology and capital can reduce the space for economic self-reliance over the long term.

C. Technology, Cloud Computing, Platforms, AI, and Data

The development of digital technology has transformed data into one of the strategic resources of the twenty-first century. Cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence (AI), digital platforms, and communication networks now form a new foundation for economic activity, government, and social life.

On the one hand, digital technology creates significant opportunities to improve the efficiency of

public services, industrial innovation, and the quality of education. On the other hand, it creates challenges involving cybersecurity, personal data protection, system interoperability, and digital sovereignty. The state must possess adequate regulatory and technological capabilities to ensure that the use of technology remains aligned with the public interest.

D. Globalization, the Battle for Knowledge, and the Unpreparedness of Universities

In various Maiyah forums, Cak Nun has expressed criticism that Indonesia is not yet fully prepared to confront the dynamics of globalization, modernization, and rapid technological change. This criticism can be understood as a call for the nation to strengthen its human capabilities and value system rather than merely pursuing technological advancement.

Competition among nations is increasingly determined by their capacity to produce knowledge, innovation, and highly skilled human resources. Universities do not merely serve as institutions for transferring knowledge; they must also function as centers of research, innovation, and policy development. Improving the quality of higher education is therefore one of the essential prerequisites for national competitiveness.

E. Education and the Formation of Consciousness

Education does not merely develop technical competencies. It also shapes an individual's worldview, ethics, and orientation toward society. Curricula, teaching methods, media, and academic environments all influence the formation of public values.

Educational development must therefore be directed toward producing graduates who possess mastery of modern knowledge while also demonstrating integrity, social responsibility, and critical thinking. Education that focuses solely on technical competence without developing character risks producing progress that is not accompanied by moral responsibility.

F. Middle Eastern Networks, Religious Education, Social Funds, and the Influence of Values

Indonesia's relations with countries across the Middle East have a long history in religion, education, trade, and culture. Many Indonesian ulama have pursued their education in the region, while various social and philanthropic institutions have also developed partnerships in humanitarian and educational activities.

These relationships provide many benefits, including the exchange of knowledge, stronger academic networks, *dakwah*, and social cooperation. At the same time, as with international relations more broadly, every form of cooperation also carries

perspectives, experiences, and values that can influence how societies understand the world.

Strengthening Indonesia's intellectual and policymaking capacities is therefore essential to ensure that every form of cooperation can be critically assessed and adapted to the country's needs.

G. Islam as Revelation, the Arab World as a Historical Actor

It is important to distinguish between Islam as a religion and the Arab world as a historical and social region. Islam is a faith rooted in divine revelation and serves as a guide for the lives of the *ummah*, while Arab societies are human communities characterized by diverse cultures, histories, political systems, and interests, just like societies in other regions of the world.

In Islamic history, the Arab world has played an important role as the birthplace of Islam, the center of the development of the Arabic language, and one of the major sources of Islamic intellectual traditions. Yet the development of Islamic civilization has also been enriched by contributions from many other civilizations, including Persia, Türkiye, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa. Understanding Islam, therefore, does not mean treating every dynamic within the Arab world as a singular representation of Islamic teachings.

H. Domestic Elites as Intermediaries of Interests

In the age of globalization, relationships between international actors and states often operate through

various forms of partnership with domestic elites in government, business, academia, and civil society. Their role can be constructive when they are able to bring investment, technology, and knowledge that contribute to national development.

Good governance, however, remains essential to ensure that every form of cooperation is transparent, accountable, and oriented toward the public interest. International relations can therefore be understood not merely as an arena of domination, but as a space for collaboration in which national policy sovereignty must still be preserved.

I. Elite Leadership and the Crisis of Civilizational Responsibility

The progress of a nation is determined not only by its economic or technological strength, but also by the quality of its leadership. National elites play an important role in determining the direction of development, building public trust, and maintaining policy continuity.

The responsibility of leadership does not end with the achievement of economic indicators. It also encompasses the ability to build justice, strengthen institutions, uphold integrity, and prepare society to confront global change.

J. Global Modern Colonialism: From Colonial States to a Global System

From the sixteenth to the twentieth century, colonialism was synonymous with territorial occupation, the deployment of military force, control over natural resources, and the domination of governments in colonized territories.

Colonial powers such as the Netherlands and Britain built empires through maritime expeditions, trading companies, colonial administrations, and armed force. Indonesia experienced this form of colonialism for centuries. At that time, colonial domination was clearly visible: territory was occupied, government was controlled, and the people were deprived of political independence.

Following the wave of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, however, the nature of international relations began to change.

Many countries achieved formal independence, but the world entered a new era characterized by economic interdependence, international trade, technology, financial institutions, and cross-border flows of information.

It is within this context that the idea emerged that domination does not always operate through territorial occupation. It can also take shape through mechanisms that are more complex and less visible.

In this evolving international order, the United States became one of the principal actors shaping the post-World War II system through its influence in economics, security, technology, finance, and global alliance networks.

Britain continued to exercise influence through finance, law, and Commonwealth networks, while the Netherlands, although no longer possessing a colonial empire, remained part of an interconnected international economic and trading system.

In the Middle East, Israel has developed significant capabilities in technology, cybersecurity, defense, and innovation, giving it a role in contemporary geopolitical and technological dynamics. These four countries represent examples of influential state actors across different fields, although each has its own distinct history, interests, and role.

At the same time, the modern world has witnessed the growing importance of non-state actors. International financial institutions, global investment companies, technology corporations, consulting firms, standard-setting organizations, digital media platforms, cloud service providers, artificial intelligence developers, and multinational auditing firms all possess the capacity to influence economic practices, governance, and development trajectories across many countries.



The infographic "Modern Colonialism: From Global Elites to the Lives of the People" illustrates this transformation. At the highest level are global elites that influence the direction of international consensus through agendas, narratives, systemic stability, and

various forms of global economic coordination. Beneath them are multilateral policy institutions, global professional services firms (the Big Four), and global investment companies that form part of the international economic ecosystem.

These influences are subsequently interpreted by national elites before being translated into government programs, regulations, fiscal policies, curricula, and various instruments of state administration that ultimately affect the daily lives of the people. The diagram also positions the people as those who experience the final consequences of policy changes, while proposing liberation through the strengthening of divine values, Pancasila, and the reform of the constitutional structure.

Within this framework, the central issue does not lie with any single country, but with a nation's ability to preserve its sovereignty within an increasingly complex global system. Major powers will naturally pursue their national interests. Corporations will pursue profits. Financial institutions will carry out their mandates. Technology companies will expand their markets and influence. The real challenge is whether the receiving state possesses the capacity to filter and manage these influences so that they remain aligned with the interests of its people.

This is where the position of domestic elites becomes decisive. Political elites, bureaucrats, technocrats, academics, and business actors can serve as

guardians of the national interest, but they can also become intermediaries through which external interests are translated into domestic policy. The quality of leadership and the integrity of institutions are therefore far more decisive than the mere scale of foreign investment.

The transformation of domination can also be seen in the instruments through which it operates. While classical colonialism relied on military force and colonial administration, modern colonialism operates more extensively through regulation, financing, trade, technological control, international standards, data ownership, artificial intelligence, and influence over public opinion and the production of knowledge. Because these mechanisms operate through legally recognized processes and are often entered into by mutual agreement, such forms of domination are not always easy to recognize.

This condition resonates with Emha Ainun Nadjib's (Cak Nun) warning about "regulatory colonialism"—a situation in which changes to rules and regulations can become instruments for altering control over resources and the lives of communities without requiring military occupation. This critique reminds us that a nation's sovereignty is determined not only by its ability to defend its territory, but also by its ability to safeguard the direction in which laws and public policies are formed.

As a consequence, the people may live in their own country yet remain distant from the benefits of development. They work harder, obey the law, pay taxes, and participate in democratic procedures, yet may still fail to experience genuine justice, prosperity, and sovereignty. When every dimension of life is increasingly measured through financial indicators, there is a risk that money ceases to be regarded as a tool for serving humanity and instead becomes an end that dominates decision-making. At this point, the orientation of civilization can shift away from divine values toward an orientation centered solely on economic interests.

The solution proposed in this book, therefore, is not to cultivate hostility toward any country—whether the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Israel, China, or any other nation. International relations remain necessary in an interconnected world. What must be strengthened is Indonesia's capacity to build a state with leadership grounded in integrity, a constitution capable of safeguarding the sovereignty of the people, accountable institutions, and a value system that places humanity, justice, and Belief in the One and Only God at the foundation of governance.

Liberation from modern colonialism, therefore, does not begin by rejecting the world. It begins by building moral, intellectual, economic, technological, and constitutional self-reliance, enabling Indonesia to cooperate with all nations on equal terms without losing

its identity, sovereignty, or responsibility toward its people.

K. Why a Value System Must Govern Technology

Technology is an instrument that can accelerate human progress, but the direction of its use is determined by the values and purposes that guide it. Artificial intelligence, data analytics, cloud computing, and digital platforms can be used to improve the quality of public services, education, healthcare, and economic productivity. Yet without adequate governance and ethics, technology can also widen inequality, reinforce concentrations of power, and weaken the protection of people's rights.

From this perspective, Cak Nun's critique can be understood as a reminder that technological progress must be accompanied by the development of a strong value system. Technology without a value system risks becoming an instrument of domination or an abuse of power, while a value system unsupported by mastery of knowledge and technology will struggle to meet the challenges of the modern world.

For Indonesia, the strategic choice is not between accepting or rejecting globalization, but between possessing or lacking the capacity to harness knowledge, technology, and international cooperation independently, justly, and in accordance with the values that form the foundation of national life.

Within this framework, human development, institutional strengthening, and technological mastery

must advance together as foundations of national sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

L. Chapter Conclusion

Twenty-first-century colonialism no longer operates primarily through warships, fortresses, or colonial governments. It operates through far more subtle systems: financial institutions, global corporations, digital platforms, cloud computing, data, artificial intelligence, education, media, networks of values, philanthropic networks, and domestic elites who serve as intermediaries between global interests and national policy.

Within such a configuration, it is not enough for Indonesia merely to defend its territorial sovereignty. Indonesia must also build knowledge sovereignty, technological sovereignty, data sovereignty, and, above all, sovereignty over its value system.

This is where Cak Nun's critique becomes particularly relevant. Indonesia is not yet fully prepared to confront globalization, modernization, the battle for knowledge, and AI because human development has often lagged behind infrastructure development. Universities, bureaucracies, markets, and even religious institutions are challenged not merely to follow the changes taking place in the world, but also to help shape the direction of those changes.

Indonesia's relationship with the Arab world and the Middle East must also be understood fairly. Islam is a universal revelation, whereas the Arab world is a historical actor that has contributed knowledge,

language, dakwah, culture, trade, and education, and in the modern context also encompasses various social, philanthropic, and interest-based networks. The two must not be treated as identical. The appropriate measure is not geographical origin, but conformity with the Islamic value system and the kemaslahatan of the people.

Ultimately, Indonesia's greatest challenge is not choosing whether to align itself with the West, the East, China, Russia, the Arab world, or any other global power. The challenge is to build leadership capable of engaging with all global networks without losing its own civilizational direction.

Indonesia's future, therefore, will not be determined solely by who possesses the most advanced technology, but by who is capable of ensuring that technology remains governed by amanah, justice, knowledge, and the protection of human beings. Only then can Indonesia enter the global and artificial intelligence era as an independent nation—not merely as a user of technology or a market serving the civilizational strategies of other nations.

Chapter XIV
Why Indonesia's Large Muslim Population Has Yet to Become a Foundational Value System

Indonesia is known as the country with the world's largest Muslim population. Mosques, pesantren, majelis taklim, zakat institutions, Islamic organizations, Islamic schools, and various forms of religious activity can be found throughout nearly every region of the country. Demographically, the presence of Islam is remarkably strong. Yet the more fundamental question is not how many Muslims there are, but to what extent Islamic values shape public life.

This chapter begins with the thesis that the measure of Islamic revival cannot be reduced to the size of the Muslim population, the prevalence of religious symbols, or the extent of ritual activity. A more substantive measure is whether Islamic teachings genuinely function as a value system guiding the state, economy, education, law, knowledge, leadership, and the protection of human beings.

On various occasions, Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) has expressed a simple yet deeply thought-provoking hope: *"May the teachings of the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW, truly be practiced in Indonesia."*

This statement is not a rejection of the religious character of Indonesian society. Rather, it is a moral critique inviting society to distinguish between religious

identity and the application of prophetic values in collective life. From this perspective, the chapter examines Indonesia as a country with an extraordinarily large Muslim population that still faces the major challenge of making Islam a foundational value system in the life of the nation.

A. A Demographic Majority Is Not a Civilizational Majority

A large population does not automatically produce a great civilization. History demonstrates that the strength of a civilization is determined not merely by the size of its population, but by the quality of its institutions, leadership, knowledge, justice, and the value system that guides collective life.

Indonesia has a Muslim majority. Yet a demographic majority is different from a civilizational majority. A demographic majority concerns the number of people. A civilizational majority concerns a society's capacity to build justice, knowledge, security, prosperity, and protection for its people.

The success of Islam, therefore, cannot be measured solely by the number of mosques, *pesantren*, religious gatherings, Islamic organizations, or public officials who are Muslim. The measure is whether society genuinely experiences justice, *amanah*, and the protection of human dignity.

B. Islam as a Foundational Value System, Not Merely an Identity

In this manuscript, Islam is understood first and foremost as a value system before it is understood as a social identity.

Islam teaches justice before victory, *amanah* before power, knowledge before pride, service before leadership, and the protection of human beings before the expansion of political influence. The measure of success for a Muslim-majority state, therefore, is not how frequently religious symbols are displayed, but the extent to which the state is capable of protecting:

- Human life;
- The property of the people;
- The dignity of every citizen;
- The intellect through education;
- The family as a foundational institution;
- Knowledge;
- Justice under the law; and
- The future of succeeding generations.

These principles are consistent with the higher objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah), understood within the Islamic intellectual tradition as the protection of fundamental dimensions of human life.

Within this framework, Javanese, Sundanese, Acehnese, Malay, Bugis, Banjar, Minangkabau, Madurese, and all other cultures of Nusantara are not opponents of Islam. Culture provides the social space in which Islamic values can live and be expressed, while

the state organizes collective life so that those values can be protected in practice.

C. Prophet Muhammad SAW is Formally Recognized, but Prophethood has yet to Become a Foundation of Public Life

Cak Nun once expressed the hope: *"May the teachings of the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW, truly be practiced in Indonesia."* This statement can be understood as a critique of how recognition of Prophet Muhammad SAW is often expressed through identity, ceremony, or formal reverence, while prophetic values have yet to become fully embedded as a reference point for building public life.

In this interpretation, the issue is not merely recognition of the Prophet himself, but the effort to make the principles he taught—such as *amanah*, honesty, justice, compassion, protection of the vulnerable, and the responsibility of leaders—the ethical foundation of governance and society.

The central question, therefore, is not whether society loves Prophet Muhammad SAW, but the extent to which the values he brought are reflected in leadership, law, economics, education, and service to the people.

D. Social Hypocrisy: A Virtuous Face, a Cruel Heart

In various Maiyah forums, Cak Nun has used the term "hypocrisy" as a moral diagnosis of certain social phenomena. This perspective is not intended to label

Indonesian society as a whole, but rather to warn of the possibility of a widening gap between outward appearances and the realities of everyday conduct.

This critique invites each person to engage in introspection: whether the symbols of goodness they display are genuinely accompanied by honesty, justice, and concern for others.

In public life, this challenge can emerge when image is prioritized over service, when rhetoric becomes stronger than action, or when personal interests prevail over the interests of society.

This moral diagnosis should therefore be understood as a call to strengthen personal and institutional integrity, rather than as a judgment against an entire nation or particular group.

E. Justice, Amanah, Knowledge, and the Protection of Human Beings

Within the Islamic tradition, power acquires moral legitimacy when it is exercised to uphold justice and fulfill *amanah*.

A good state is not merely one that is militarily or economically powerful, but one capable of:

- Protecting the lives of its people;
- Ensuring legal certainty;
- Providing education;
- Advancing knowledge;
- Limiting abuses of power; and
- Creating space for technological advancement that serves human *kemaslahatan*.

The orientation of development, therefore, cannot end with economic growth. It must also encompass human development and social justice.

F. The Crisis of Leadership within the Ummah: From Social and Constitutional Life to Culture and *Ibadah Mahdhah*

Cak Nun has repeatedly argued that the challenges facing the leadership of the ummah are not confined to the realm of political power. They also extend into social life, culture, education, and even religious life itself.

From this perspective, the quality of leadership is measured not merely by administrative competence or rhetoric, but by the ability to guide society toward better *akhlak*, strengthen unity, and connect ritual worship with social responsibility.

Ibadah mahdhah occupies an essential place in the life of a Muslim. Yet ritual worship is also expected to shape everyday conduct through honesty, compassion, and responsibility toward others. When this connection weakens, it creates a space for the *ummah* to reflect on how the relationship between worship and social ethics can be strengthened once again.

G. Why the Muslim Population is Large but the State Has Yet to Embody Islamic Values

This chapter does not attempt to measure the "Islamicness" of a state. Rather, it raises a reflective question: why does a Muslim-majority society continue

to face problems such as corruption, inequality, weak legal protection, and the poor quality of certain public institutions?

The answer cannot be reduced to a single factor. History, institutional quality, education, governance, leadership, culture, and the dynamics of the global economy all influence the trajectory of a nation.

From the perspective advanced here, the challenge is how the universal values of Islam can increasingly be embodied in public governance through stronger integrity, justice, knowledge, and service to society.

H. From Islamic Symbols to an Architecture of Values

Symbols have an important role as expressions of identity and religious commitment. Yet symbols acquire deeper meaning when they are supported by a living value system embedded in institutions and social conduct.

An architecture of values means building public life upon principles such as honesty, amanah, justice, respect for human dignity, protection of the vulnerable, and responsibility toward future generations.

Within this framework, technology, economics, education, and government become instruments for realizing values rather than ends in themselves.

I. Cak Nun's Prayer: May the Teachings of the Messenger of Allah Truly Be Practiced in Indonesia

This chapter concludes by returning to the hope expressed by Cak Nun: *"May the teachings of the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW, truly be practiced in Indonesia."*

This hope can be understood both as a prayer and as an invitation to reflection. Its essence is not simply to multiply religious symbols or identities, but to strengthen the application of the values taught by the Messenger of Allah SAW in both personal and public life.

In the context of relations within the Islamic world, the importance of solidarity with communities experiencing oppression—regardless of differences in *madhhab* or background—has also been emphasized by various Muslim leaders and thinkers, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Within this framework, concern for Palestine, Lebanon, Myanmar, India, and other Muslim communities is understood as an expression of humanitarian empathy and solidarity within the *ummah*, rather than merely an issue of sectarian identity.

If cooperation between Indonesia and Iran is built upon the values of justice, respect for human dignity, knowledge, and the defense of the oppressed, then the focus shifts away from differences of identity toward civilizational cooperation grounded in the universal values of Islam.

Ultimately, the greatest lesson to be drawn from Indonesia is not that a Muslim majority automatically produces a strong Islamic civilization. Rather, the lesson is that population size, religious symbols, and collective identity must be accompanied by strong institutions, education, leadership grounded in amanah, mastery of knowledge and technology, and just governance. It is at this point that Islam is understood not merely as a social identity, but as a value system that guides the state, society, and the development of civilization toward human kemaslahatan.

SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Chapter XV
From Cak Nun to Sekolah Negarawan: The Crisis of Leadership and the Search for a Form of the State

No great idea emerges from a vacuum. It is always the result of a long journey of understanding life, witnessing human suffering, observing the changes of an era, and reflecting on the relationship between religion, culture, power, and the future of a nation.

In the Indonesian context, the decades-long intellectual journey of Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) offers a distinctive way of understanding the nation. Cak Nun does not begin with theories of the state, but with human beings. He does not speak first of power, but of dignity. His thought does not begin in the palace, but in the village. He does not begin with bureaucracy, but with families, neighbors, rice fields, *langgar*, markets, and the everyday spaces in which the people live.

Through his writings, Maiyah forums, and especially his book *Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya*, Cak Nun offers a different way of understanding Indonesia. The state is not understood merely as a structure of law and formal institutions, but as a living space that should serve human beings. His critiques of leadership, education, religion, constitutional affairs, and culture are not intended to reject the state, but to encourage the nation to continue searching for a form of governance increasingly aligned with the ideals of justice.

It is within this framework that Sekolah Negarawan is positioned in this manuscript. Sekolah Negarawan is understood not merely as an educational institution or research center, but as an effort to translate ideas about human beings, the people, *musyawarah*, leadership, and justice into institutional design, education, technology, culture, and social practice.

A. Cak Nun as a Cultural and Civilizational Alarm

For several decades, Cak Nun has functioned more as a voice of warning than as a holder of power. He did not establish a political party, pursue public office, or promote slogans of political power. Instead, he has repeatedly invited society to reconsider the direction in which the nation is moving.

The themes he raises consistently return to fundamental questions:

- Are human beings increasingly treated with dignity?
- Are the people increasingly protected?
- Does religion increasingly bring about justice?
- Does culture remain a living space for society?
- And does the state genuinely work for the people?

From this perspective, Cak Nun can be understood as a "cultural alarm", reminding society that material progress does not necessarily constitute civilizational progress when it loses its moral orientation.

B. "We Do Not Yet Have a State" as a Critique of the Form of the State, Not a Denial under International Law

One of Cak Nun's statements that has frequently generated debate is his assertion that Indonesia "does not yet have a state." In an academic interpretation, this statement is more appropriately understood as a critique of the quality of governance rather than a denial of the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as a subject of international law.

Indonesia clearly possesses the elements of statehood recognized under international law: territory, population, government, and international recognition. Cak Nun, however, invites us to examine a different layer. Do the people genuinely experience the presence of the state? Is the state present when justice is needed? Does power truly serve society? These questions constitute a critique of the substance of governance, not of the legal existence of the state.

C. The Crisis of Leadership as a Cause of Civilizational Decline

Many of the nation's problems ultimately converge on the quality of leadership. Leadership is not merely administrative competence. Leadership is the capacity to understand the times, comprehend human problems, make just decisions, and guide society toward a better future.

On many occasions, Cak Nun has highlighted the crisis of leadership as a problem that cuts across sectors.

It affects not only constitutional affairs, but also education, economics, culture, media, religion, and social life. When every sector loses leadership grounded in integrity, the damage affects not only institutions, but also the character of society.

D. Islam as a Foundational Value System, Culture as the Social Body, Indonesia as the Framework of the State

One of the central threads developed throughout this manuscript is the relationship among three major elements. Islam is understood as the source of the value system. Culture is understood as the living social space in which those values are embodied. The state is understood as the organization that protects collective life.

These three elements have different yet complementary functions. Values provide direction. Culture provides social form. The state provides institutional protection. When any one of them ceases to perform its function, the balance of collective life is disrupted.

E. From the Ummah, the Village, and the Nation to the State

A strong state is not built solely from above. A strong state grows from a healthy society. A healthy society emerges from strong families. Families grow within villages, communities, and vibrant social environments.

The building of a state, therefore, begins with the development of human beings. From human beings come families. From families comes society. From society comes the nation. And the nation then forms the state.

This sequence demonstrates that the state is not the ultimate objective, but an instrument for protecting human life.

F. *Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya*: Understanding the State through the Living Spaces of the People

The book *Indonesia Bagian dari Desa Saya* offers the perspective that Indonesia cannot be adequately understood through national statistics, official speeches, or the dynamics of public officials alone.

Indonesia must also be understood through the everyday spaces in which its people live: villages, rice fields, markets, langgar, neighbors, gotong royong, children's education, and family life.

This way of understanding the nation reminds us that the success of the state cannot be measured solely through macro-level indicators, but must also be assessed through the actual experiences of people in their everyday lives.

A good state is one whose presence can be felt by its people, especially when they need protection, public services, and justice.

G. The Civilizational Leader: Not Lineage, Not Wealth, and Not Electoral Success Alone

In his various reflections, Cak Nun frequently invites society to assess leadership according to human qualities rather than merely lineage, wealth, or the ability to win contests for political power.

In a rapidly changing world, a leader must be capable of understanding global challenges, technological change, economics, geopolitics, and developments in artificial intelligence (AI), while also being able to translate those challenges into policies that protect the interests of the people.

Leadership, therefore, cannot rely solely on procedural legitimacy obtained through elections. It also requires moral legitimacy, intellectual capacity, and strategic competence to guide the nation through the transformations of the times.

H. From Cultural Concerns to Constitutional Design

Cultural concerns will remain merely discourse if they are not translated into institutional design. Conversely, institutional designs that lose their cultural roots can easily lose their social legitimacy. A bridge is therefore needed between cultural reflection and constitutional design.

Within the framework of this manuscript, ideas concerning *musyawarah*, *amanah*, the protection of the people, limitations on power, and justice are translated into constitutional proposals intended to contribute to

discussions on strengthening Indonesia's constitutional system.

I. Sekolah Negarawan as a Phase of Implementing Ideas

If Cak Nun's intellectual journey has largely focused on interpretation and reflection, Sekolah Negarawan is positioned as a space for developing the practical application of these ideas through education, research, policy development, and social innovation.

Writhin this understanding:

- ideas about human beings are translated into systems that protect human beings;
- ideas about the people are translated into institutional designs;
- ideas about musyawarah are translated into decision-making mechanisms; and
- ideas about technology are translated into tools that strengthen public services and social welfare.

Education in statesmanship, therefore, does not end with conceptual discussion. It is directed toward developing leadership capacity and solutions that can be tested in practice.

J. The People as the Ultimate Holders of Sovereignty

Within Indonesia's constitutional tradition, sovereignty rests with the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution. This principle

establishes the people as the source of the state's legitimacy.

Consequently, every state institution receives its authority to carry out the mandate of the people, not to replace the people as the holders of sovereignty.

This perspective forms one of the foundations of various ideas for constitutional reform developed within Sekolah Negarawan.

K. The MPR as a Forum for the Sovereignty of the People

Within the framework of thought developed by Sekolah Negarawan, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) is regarded as an institution whose function could be strengthened as a forum for national deliberation.

This idea is based on the view that the diversity of Indonesian society requires a forum capable of bringing together the aspirations of different elements of national life in a balanced and constitutional manner.

Its precise form and authority remain matters of constitutional choice that are open to discussion through democratic mechanisms in accordance with applicable constitutional procedures.

L. Regional Delegates, Group Delegates, Religious Leaders, Intellectuals, Cultural Figures, and Patriots

One of the ideas proposed within Sekolah Negarawan is the need to broaden representation within

a national consultative forum so that it better reflects the diversity of Indonesian society.

The proposal includes representation from regions, professions, academic and intellectual communities, cultural communities, and other elements of society as a basis for considering how the quality of national deliberation might be strengthened.

Its purpose is to enrich the range of perspectives involved in strategic decision-making, not to replace the democratic mechanisms established by the Constitution.

M. The President as Head of Government

Within various constitutional discussions developed by Sekolah Negarawan, there is a proposal to clarify the President's function as head of government, responsible for administering the state effectively, professionally, and accountably.

This proposal forms part of an academic discussion concerning the institutional design of the state and is not a description of Indonesia's current constitutional system.

N. The Fifth Amendment as a Search for a Form of the State that Genuinely Belongs to the People

The entire intellectual journey presented in this manuscript ultimately converges on one central idea: the Constitution is a human creation that can continue to be refined through legitimate mechanisms whenever the nation considers such refinement necessary.

From the perspective of Sekolah Negarawan, the idea of the Fifth Amendment is understood as part of the search for a form of governance increasingly capable of realizing the ideals of justice, protecting the people, strengthening musyawarah, and advancing human development.

Regardless of whether these proposals are ultimately accepted, what matters most is preserving a space for constitutional dialogue that is open, grounded in reasoned argument, and respectful of democratic mechanisms. This chapter serves as a bridge between the cultural reflections extensively developed by Cak Nun and efforts to translate those reflections into institutional ideas that can be examined through academic study, public discussion, and legitimate constitutional processes. Sekolah Negarawan is therefore positioned not as an end in itself, but as a space for learning and developing ideas about how the state can better protect human beings, uphold the dignity of the people, and confront the challenges of the modern world while remaining grounded in values, knowledge, and civilizational responsibility.

Chapter XVI
Why Civilizational Cooperation Must Be Built through the People: Sekolah Negarawan as a Civilizational Partner, Not an Instrument of Power

Relations between Indonesia and Iran are fundamentally built upon principles of interstate relations recognized under international law: respect for sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, equality, and mutually beneficial cooperation. These principles constitute a foundation that must continue to be respected in every form of official interaction between the two countries.

History, however, demonstrates that relations between nations do not develop solely through government diplomacy. Exchanges in knowledge, education, culture, research, technology, professional organizations, higher education institutions, religious communities, and civil society also play an important role in building long-term relationships. These channels are often referred to as *people-to-people diplomacy*.

This chapter begins from the understanding that civilizational cooperation is not intended to replace state diplomacy, but to complement it. Governments remain the primary actors in official interstate relations, yet trust-building, knowledge exchange, leadership development, and the formation of shared values often grow through relationships among individuals,

educational institutions, and communities committed to mutual progress.

It is within this context that Sekolah Negarawan is positioned. It is not a political actor, not an instrument of state diplomacy, and not a representative of government, but rather a space for learning and civilizational cooperation oriented toward the development of knowledge, leadership, and a value system.

A. Official Indonesia-Iran Relations Remain Important and Must Be Respected

Bilateral relations between Indonesia and Iran are interstate relations conducted through official diplomatic mechanisms. The governments of both countries possess constitutional authority to formulate foreign policy, enter into international agreements, and develop cooperation across various fields.

Every civil-society initiative must therefore respect the national legal frameworks of both countries as well as the principles of international law. People-to-people cooperation is not a substitute for government-to-government relations, but a complementary channel that can expand opportunities for dialogue in education, culture, knowledge, and innovation.

B. Why Civilizational Cooperation Cannot Rely on Governments Alone

Government-to-government relations generally follow policy cycles, political dynamics, and changes in

leadership. People-to-people relationships, by contrast, can often maintain greater continuity because they are built through education, research, the exchange of ideas, and professional networks.

Many advances throughout history have emerged from cooperation among universities, research institutions, cultural communities, professional organizations, and groups concerned with shared challenges.

Civilizational cooperation therefore requires spaces that enable the continuous exchange of knowledge, experience, and values without blurring the boundaries between academic cooperation and political leadership.

C. Government, Bureaucracy, Regulation, and the Limitations of Formal Diplomacy

Formal diplomacy operates within particular mandates and constraints. Governments must simultaneously consider legal issues, national interests, security, economics, and broader international relations.

Issues such as character education, youth development, leadership formation, social innovation, and cultural exchange, meanwhile, can often develop more effectively through collaboration among educational institutions, civil-society organizations, and professional communities.

These two channels are not contradictory. They perform different yet complementary functions.

D. The People May Have Many Formal Representatives, Yet Still Feel Substantively Unrepresented

In modern constitutional systems, society has various institutions designed to represent and serve the public interest, including the president, parliament, political parties, regional governments, state institutions, universities, civil-society organizations, the media, religious leaders, and other public institutions.

In practice, however, some members of society may experience a gap between the existence of these institutions and the realities of their everyday lives. Not every group feels that its needs, aspirations, or concerns receive adequate attention.

This phenomenon is a challenge faced by many democratic countries and serves as a reminder that formal institutions must continually improve the quality of public services, civic education, and the relationship between leaders and society.

E. Cak Nun and the Critique of "Orphaning the People"

In various Maiyah forums, Cak Nun has used the expression "orphaning the people" as a moral critique of situations in which society feels deprived of the care, guidance, or protection that should be provided through various social institutions.

The expression is not intended as a judgment against all public officials, institutions, or social groups, but rather as a metaphor that invites reflection.

In this sense, "orphaning the people" describes a condition in which some citizens feel that their fundamental rights do not receive adequate attention, whether in education, public services, or social development.

This critique is also an invitation to understand leadership as a responsibility to care for, serve, and empower the people, rather than merely perform administrative functions.

F. Political Parties, Public Institutions, and Civic Education

Political parties, educational institutions, civil-society organizations, the media, and various public institutions play an important role in strengthening the quality of democracy.

Beyond their representative functions, these institutions also bear responsibility for strengthening civic education, improving public literacy, and encouraging public participation in national life.

The stronger these educational and empowerment functions become, the greater the possibility of creating a society capable of participating critically and responsibly in democratic processes.

G. Building Trust through Social Proof

People-to-people cooperation should not be based solely on labels, titles, or formal positions. Trust is built through track records, integrity, competence, and tangible contributions.

Every institution, community, academic, religious leader, professional, and civil-society organization should therefore be assessed according to the quality of its service to society and its ability to produce benefits that can be demonstrated in practice.

Such an approach helps reduce dependence on symbols while strengthening a culture of accountability.

H. Solidarity with the Oppressed as a Humanitarian Value

In various speeches and writings, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has emphasized the importance of solidarity with communities experiencing oppression and suffering, as well as concern for the conditions of Muslims in different parts of the world.

Within the context of Indonesia–Iran cooperation, this idea can be understood through a broader humanitarian framework: concern for those affected by conflict, poverty, discrimination, or injustice, without allowing differences in madhhab to become barriers to empathy and humanitarian assistance.

Such an approach positions solidarity as part of moral responsibility, rather than as an instrument for expanding political influence.

I. The People-to-People Path as a Means of Selecting Values

People-to-people cooperation does not mean that every civil-society organization or public figure automatically represents the interests of the people. On the contrary, partnerships must be approached critically and selectively.

Commitment to the people must be demonstrated through tangible work, integrity, capacity, and genuine service.

The people-to-people path, therefore, should not be understood as a romanticization of civil society, but as a space for building cooperation grounded in values, competence, and social responsibility.

J. Sekolah Negarawan as a Civilizational Partner, Not an Instrument of Power

Within the framework of this manuscript, Sekolah Negarawan is positioned as an institution for education and leadership development that seeks to bring together ideas, experiences, and practices from diverse groups in order to strengthen the quality of public leadership.

Its orientation is toward education, research, policy development, social innovation, and the formation of leadership character.

Sekolah Negarawan, therefore, is not intended to serve as an instrument of those in power, nor as a representative of any country's foreign policy.


SEKOLAH NEGARAWAN
AS A CIVILIZATIONAL PARTNER
EDUCATION
Developing knowledge, leadership, and integrity
VALUES SYSTEM
Strengthening integrity, justice, and moral humanity
RESEARCH
Producing knowledge for solutions to national challenges
SEKOLAH NEGARAWAN
A Civilizational Partner
SOCIAL INNOVATION
Creating ideas and solutions for social welfare and sustainable development
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Building character, competence, and service to society
CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE
Promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity
INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION
Building networks and partnerships for mutual benefit and long-term cooperation
NOT
AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER
A POLITICAL TOOL
A STATE PROPAGANDA ORGANIZATION
A REPRESENTATION OF GOVERNMENT
INSTEAD
CIVILIZATIONAL PARTNER
DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE
STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP
INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION
EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION
DEDICATION TO SOCIETY
CONCLUSION
OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO
BUILD HUMAN BEINGS,
NOT TO PURSUE POWER.

K. Value-Based Leadership Cooperation, Not Cooperation in the Pursuit of Power

The primary focus of the cooperation proposed in this manuscript is the development of leadership grounded in integrity, knowledge, social responsibility, and the capacity to respond to the challenges of the times.

Areas of cooperation include education, research, the development of beneficial technologies, governance, culture, and the development of younger generations.

The objective is not to build alliances for the pursuit of power, but to strengthen human and institutional capacity.

L. Not Intervention, Not Opposition, and Not the Export of a System of Government

It is important to emphasize that the civilizational cooperation envisioned in this manuscript is not intended to interfere in the domestic affairs of any country, to serve as a form of opposition to any legitimate government, or to export any particular system of government.

Cooperation is built upon mutual respect for sovereignty, recognition of the diversity of each country's experiences, and openness to the reciprocal exchange of ideas from which both sides can learn.

Every nation has its own history, constitution, and social dynamics. There is therefore no single model that can be universally applied.

M. The People-to-People Path as a Means of Building Knowledge, a Value System, Future Leaders, and Social Proof

Ultimately, the strength of a nation is largely determined by the quality of its people. The greatest investment, therefore, is not only in physical development, but also in the advancement of knowledge, public ethics, leadership, and society's capacity to work together in confronting global challenges.

The people-to-people path is important because it is within society that teachers, researchers, farmers, fishermen, santri, students, professionals, entrepreneurs, cultural figures, and the many other groups that shape the everyday life of the nation emerge and develop.

Within this framework, Sekolah Negarawan is positioned as a space for learning that seeks to connect knowledge, a value system, leadership, technology, and service to society. Its role is not to replace the state, serve as an instrument of power, or advance an agenda of intervention, but to act as a civilizational partner that encourages the emergence of leaders capable of integrating knowledge, morality, and public responsibility in confronting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Chapter XVII
Proposed Programs for Indonesia-Iran Civilizational Cooperation



A. From Diagnosis to Demonstration

The entire discussion across the preceding sixteen chapters ultimately converges on one simple yet decisive question. If Indonesia has been diagnosed, if its history has been examined, if the weaknesses of the state have been identified, and if the relationships among religion, culture, leadership, technology, and constitutional governance have been explained, then what comes next?

An idea will remain merely discourse if it ends with analysis. A civilization is not built through criticism alone, but through the ability to transform values into systems, systems into institutions, institutions into culture, and culture into the everyday life of society.

The Indonesia–Iran cooperation proposed in this manuscript is therefore not intended as another diplomatic project, nor as a ceremonial forum that produces joint statements without tangible demonstration. Nor is this cooperation intended to build political alliances, create a new geopolitical bloc, or expand the influence of one country over another. What is being proposed is something far more fundamental: civilizational cooperation.

Civilizational cooperation begins with human development. The process advances through knowledge. Ideas are tested through technology. Civilization is strengthened by leadership grounded in integrity. And ultimately, it is demonstrated through tangible improvements in the lives of the people.

Within this framework, Sekolah Negarawan does not position itself as a formal religious educational institution, nor as a university in the conventional sense. Sekolah Negarawan is a meeting space for knowledge, a value system, law, technology, culture, and leadership. It serves as a laboratory that seeks to bridge ideas and implementation, so that every idea can be tested for its practical value in real life.

For this reason, the cooperation proposed with Iran does not begin with cooperation between pesantren, universities, or formal religious institutions. All of these institutions continue to play important roles within their respective fields, but Sekolah Negarawan operates in a different space. That space is the formation of civilizational leadership, connecting different disciplines of knowledge and diverse social experiences to develop solutions that can be applied in practice.

The ultimate objective is not to produce more seminars, but to develop more people capable of leading change through knowledge, akhlak, technology, and responsibility to society.

B. Iran as a Strategic Civilizational Partner

Throughout the long history of relations between nations, not every form of cooperation has produced civilization. Many international relationships have resulted only in trade. Some have produced little more than contracts. Others have ended with exchanges between officials and state visits.

History, however, demonstrates that great civilizations flourish when nations exchange

knowledge, experience, and ways of thinking. The Islamic world during the classical era developed not because every region shared the same constitutional system, but because networks of knowledge connected Baghdad, Isfahan, Nishapur, Damascus, Cairo, Cordoba, Samarkand, and Nusantara. Ulama, scholars, merchants, and thinkers traveled with knowledge, enriched one another, and generated innovations that transcended national boundaries.

In the context of the twenty-first century, this spirit needs to be translated into forms appropriate to the challenges of our time. Iran has experience in developing science, technology, healthcare, higher education, and national resilience amid geopolitical pressures. Indonesia has experience in managing a highly diverse society, developing constitutional democracy, and sustaining a pluralistic social life.

These differences in experience should not become reasons for distancing the two nations from one another. On the contrary, it is precisely within these differences that opportunities for mutual learning emerge. The cooperation envisioned here is not a relationship between teacher and student, but a relationship between two nations, each possessing valuable experiences and each willing to enrich the other.

Within this framework, Iran is regarded as a strategic civilizational partner. This partnership is not based on the similarity of their respective strengths, but on a shared willingness to develop human beings, strengthen knowledge, advance responsible technology,

and expand the space for dialogue concerning the future of society.

C. Cooperation Begins with a Value System, Not with Power

Many cooperative initiatives fail to endure because they are built upon temporary government interests. When governments change, programs come to an end. When budget priorities shift, cooperation disappears. When geopolitical circumstances change, relationships that were once close become distant.

Civilizational cooperation cannot be built upon such fragile foundations. It must begin with something more fundamental: a value system.

A value system provides the moral orientation that directs knowledge, economics, technology, law, and public policy toward the protection of human beings. Values such as amanah, justice, responsibility, respect for human dignity, and the pursuit of knowledge constitute foundations that can transcend cultures and national boundaries.



From this perspective, power is not the starting point, but one of the instruments that can be used to realize values. The proposed Indonesia–Iran cooperation is therefore not directed toward discussing

how to acquire power, but toward developing human capacity so that, regardless of the fields in which individuals eventually serve, they are capable of exercising authority responsibly.

This approach also makes cooperation more sustainable. Values do not depend on a single regime, organization, or generation. They can be passed on through education, research, social practice, and character formation.

D. From Ideas to a Civilization Ecosystem

To ensure that cooperation does not end with discussion, an ecosystem is needed to connect its various elements in an integrated manner. This ecosystem consists of five main components.

The first component is knowledge development. Every program should generate new knowledge, whether through research, publications, documentation of best practices, or the development of methodologies that can be studied and applied by the wider public.

The second component is human development. Cooperation should cultivate future leaders who possess strategic thinking skills, technological competence, an understanding of governance, and strong moral integrity.

The third component is social technology development. Technology is understood not merely as software or artificial intelligence, but also as new ways of organizing public services, strengthening public participation, improving transparency, and accelerating the resolution of shared challenges.

The fourth component is social proof. Every idea must be tested through real-world projects. Success is not measured by the number of concepts produced, but by the ability to create tangible change that can be experienced by society.

The fifth component is knowledge replication. A successful model should not remain confined to a single location. It must be documented, evaluated, refined, and made applicable elsewhere, with appropriate adaptations to local contexts.

In this way, Indonesia–Iran cooperation develops into a complete cycle: values generate knowledge, knowledge produces technology, technology is tested in society, experience generates new knowledge, and that knowledge, in turn, enriches the values upon which the entire process is founded.

E. Indonesia-Iran Study Center: From the Exchange of Ideas to the Production of Knowledge

Every great civilization has had centers of knowledge where ideas, experiences, and innovations could meet. During the Abbasid era, Baghdad had Bayt al-Hikmah. Cordoba became a center for the exchange of knowledge between the Islamic world and Europe. Isfahan was once an important hub for the development of philosophy, art, and knowledge. Nusantara itself developed pesantren, surau, padepokan, and various forms of learning communities that became spaces for the emergence of community leaders.

In the twenty-first century, this function needs to be translated into a form better suited to the challenges of our time. Indonesia–Iran cooperation requires a study center that does more than collect documents or organize seminars. It should become a knowledge production engine that continuously generates ideas, methodologies, policy models, and social innovations.

The Indonesia–Iran Study Center proposed in this manuscript is not designed as a bureaucratic institution, but as a collaborative network connecting legal experts, technologists, economists, agricultural experts, sociologists, cultural figures, governance practitioners, artificial intelligence developers, and community leaders. Participants come not to defend their institutional identities, but to work together in addressing real problems faced by society.

The primary focus of this study center is not ideological debate, but the search for solutions. Every study should lead to recommendations that can be tested in the field. Every concept should have measurable indicators of success. Every theory should have the potential to be applied. In this way, the study center becomes a space where academic reflection meets social proof.

In the long term, the center is expected to produce joint publications, annual reports on societal developments, leadership education modules, and a digital knowledge base accessible to younger generations in Indonesia, Iran, and the wider international community.

F. Center for Comparative Constitutional Statecraft

One of the major challenges facing the Muslim world is not a lack of religious commitment, but the limited availability of spaces that systematically compare the constitutional experiences of different Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Many debates concerning constitutions remain normative, while relatively few examine how particular systems actually function in practice.

For this reason, the establishment of a Center for Comparative Constitutional Statecraft is proposed as a center for the comparative study of state design, governance, constitutions, and public leadership.

The center is not intended to determine which country has the "most correct" system. Rather, it seeks to understand why a particular system succeeds in one context and why the same system may not necessarily succeed elsewhere. Such an approach creates space for learning that is both more humble and more productive.

Its studies would not be limited to comparisons between Indonesia and Iran, but would also examine international experiences across East Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. The focus would be on identifying principles capable of strengthening the protection of human beings, improving the quality of public services, enhancing government accountability, and maintaining a balance between state effectiveness and public participation.

Within this framework, a constitution is understood not merely as a collection of articles, but as an architecture that defines the relationship among the

state, society, and human beings. Research therefore extends beyond legal texts to include implementation, legal culture, institutional behavior, and their impact on the lives of the people.

The center's outputs would not consist merely of slogans, but of policy reports, governance indices, academic papers, and recommendations that can be studied by policymakers, researchers, and the wider public.

G. Mustad'afin Observatory Indonesia

One of the greatest weaknesses of many public policies is that decisions are often made without a comprehensive understanding of conditions within society. States possess large amounts of data, yet those data are often fragmented, disconnected, or unable to portray human life comprehensively.

A social observatory is therefore needed—one that does not merely collect statistics, but is capable of identifying patterns of injustice developing within society.

Mustad'afin Observatory Indonesia is proposed as a data-driven social analysis laboratory designed to identify groups experiencing vulnerability in areas such as education, healthcare, the economy, access to public services, agrarian conflicts, food security, and the digital divide.

The term mustad'afin in this context refers to those who occupy weak or vulnerable positions within social structures, without limiting the concept to any particular religion, ethnicity, or group. The approach is

oriented toward protecting human beings and strengthening the capacity of communities.

The observatory would utilize multiple sources of information, including official statistical data, geospatial mapping, field surveys, public participation, and artificial intelligence-based analysis to develop a more comprehensive understanding of social conditions.

Its ultimate purpose is not merely to produce reports, but to provide a stronger foundation for development programs, community empowerment, and public policy evaluation.

H. Institute for Post-Colonial State Reconstruction

Many developing countries continue to face challenges rooted in their colonial histories, whether in legal systems, bureaucracy, education, economics, or spatial planning. These historical influences are not necessarily entirely negative, as some modern institutions also emerged through complex historical processes. Nevertheless, every nation must critically understand this legacy in order to undertake reforms suited to its own needs.

The Institute for Post-Colonial State Reconstruction is proposed as a multidisciplinary research center examining how history has shaped contemporary institutions and how different countries have undertaken gradual institutional reform.

Its areas of sudy would include:

- the evolution of legal systems;
- the development of bureaucracy;

- the transformation of public administration;
- changes in educational systems;
- economic dynamics;
- the development of government technology; and
- data governance and digital sovereignty.

Rather than reducing complex problems to a single narrative, the institute would promote evidence-based research capable of explaining both the factors contributing to successful reform and the obstacles encountered by different countries.

In this way, the study of history is not directed toward cultivating hostility toward the past, but toward strengthening the capacity to design the future.

I. School of Statesmanship for the Muslim World

The most important program within this entire framework of cooperation is human development. Institutions can be built. Technology can be purchased. Buildings can be constructed.

But leaders who possess knowledge, integrity, breadth of vision, and moral courage can only be developed through a sustained educational process.

For this reason, the School of Statesmanship for the Muslim World is proposed as an interdisciplinary leadership development program designed to prepare a new generation of community leaders.

The program would not function as a university, confer academic degrees, or replace formal education. Instead, it would serve as a learning space where theory

meets practice, knowledge meets experience, technology meets ethics, and leadership meets service.

Its curriculum would be designed in an integrated manner. Participants would study not only law, but also developments in digital technology, artificial intelligence, economics, agriculture, the environment, public communication, geopolitics, crisis management, and leadership ethics.

Every participant would be required to engage in a real social project. Classroom discussion alone would not be sufficient; participants would have to demonstrate their ability to lead change within society. Success would therefore be measured not merely by the ability to speak, but by the ability to produce an impact that can be experienced by others.

In the long term, the school is expected to develop a network of leaders across different professions who remain connected after completing the program, ensuring that learning does not end with formal participation but develops into a lifelong learning community.

J. Governance Knowledge Transfer Program: Learning Together, No Standardizing

Every nation has a unique historical experience. No country has succeeded simply by copying another country's entire system. Progress generally emerges when a nation learns from the experiences of others and then adapts those lessons to its own history, culture, constitution, and societal needs.

The Indonesia–Iran cooperation proposed in this manuscript is therefore not intended as a process of exporting ideas or adopting a particular system. Instead, it seeks to establish a knowledge transfer mechanism through which both nations can learn from how each has addressed real-world challenges.

Indonesia has extensive experience in managing a highly diverse society spread across thousands of islands, with hundreds of languages and diverse local traditions. Iran has experience in developing capabilities in knowledge, technology, healthcare, and national resilience amid complex geopolitical dynamics. Both sets of experiences are valuable and can be studied openly.

This knowledge transfer is not intended to determine who is "most correct," but to identify practices that have proven effective. How can the quality of public services be improved? How can food security be strengthened? How can an education system produce innovators? How can technology be developed while remaining centered on human well-being? How can leadership ethics be strengthened in a continuously changing society?

These questions provide common ground for cooperation. The answers are sought not through rhetoric, but through research, documentation, evaluation, and mutual learning.

Within this framework, knowledge is understood as an amanah to be shared, not as an instrument for creating dependency.

K. Social Technology, AI, and a Digital Knowledge Platform

The greatest transformation of the twenty-first century lies not only in the development of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, or digital networks. More fundamentally, it lies in the way human beings organize collective life through technology.

For several decades, technology has often been understood primarily as a commercial tool or an instrument of efficiency. Yet technology can also strengthen public participation, improve the quality of public services, expand access to education, and accelerate the resolution of social problems.

Indonesia–Iran cooperation should therefore approach technology as social technology: technology designed not merely to generate economic profit, but to improve the quality of life within society.

Within this framework, artificial intelligence is not positioned as a replacement for human beings, but as a tool to assist them. AI can help analyze social data, map community needs, support development planning, identify patterns of vulnerability, and accelerate evidence-based decision-making.

The use of AI, however, must always be accompanied by ethical principles. People's data must be protected. Decisions affecting citizens' rights must not be delegated entirely to algorithms. Transparency, accountability, and privacy protection must remain integral to technological development.

To support these objectives, this manuscript proposes the development of an Indonesia–Iran Digital Knowledge Platform, an online collaborative space bringing together research, publications, educational modules, legally compliant open data, best practices, and innovations that can be utilized by researchers, practitioners, and the wider public.

The platform would not merely be a digital library, but an evolving learning ecosystem built through shared contributions.

L. "Moses's Staff for the Modern Age": A Metaphor for Liberating Leadership

Throughout history, every era has faced its own challenges. The story of Prophet Musa AS teaches that courage in confronting injustice requires not only faith, but also the capacity to act according to Allah's guidance and to make use of the means available in one's own time.

In this manuscript, the expression "Moses' Staff for the Modern Age" is used as a metaphor, not as a literal symbol.

If, in the time of Prophet Musa, the staff became a sign of Allah's assistance in confronting oppression, then in the present age the "staff" can be understood as the human capacity to combine knowledge, integrity, and technology in confronting modern challenges.

This "staff" consists of several complementary elements. The first is law, which safeguards justice and provides certainty for society. The second is knowledge,

which guides human beings in understanding reality objectively. The third is data, which helps society understand problems through facts rather than prejudice.

The fourth is technology and artificial intelligence, which expand the human capacity to manage information and solve problems. The fifth is akhlak, which ensures that these capabilities are exercised responsibly. The sixth is leadership, which connects values with action. The seventh is spirituality, which reminds us that knowledge and power must always be directed toward human kemaslahatan.

Thus, "Moses' Staff for the Modern Age" is not a symbol of power for defeating others, but a symbol of the capacity to liberate society from ignorance, injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment through the integration of knowledge, technology, and integrity.

M. Spirituality as the Foundarion of Leadership

Technological progress does not automatically produce civilizational progress. History demonstrates that knowledge can be used to build, but it can also be used to destroy. The difference lies in the character of the human beings who use it.

Leadership development therefore cannot stop at improving technical competence. It must reach deeper dimensions: character formation, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and an awareness that every public decision affects the lives of many people.

Within the Islamic tradition, the spiritual dimension is understood as a source of inner strength that cultivates courage, patience, and honesty. These values provide the foundation that prevents knowledge and technology from becoming instruments of domination and ensures that they remain tools for serving society.

This approach is also consistent with the objectives of leadership education developed by Sekolah Negarawan. A leader is expected not only to be intelligent, but also to exercise self-discipline, uphold amanah, and understand power as a responsibility rather than a privilege.

N. Musa Village Project: A Living Laboratory of Civilization

All the ideas presented in this book must ultimately be tested in real life. A concept of leadership, governance, technology, or community development acquires meaning only when it produces benefits that people can genuinely experience.

On this basis, the Musa Village Project is proposed as a pilot village or community that functions as a living laboratory for applying the various ideas discussed throughout this manuscript.

The village would not be positioned as a symbolic project, but as a space for social experimentation integrating multiple dimensions of development.

In education, a learning model would be developed that connects literacy, technology, entrepreneurship, and character formation.

In the economy, cooperatives, microenterprises, sustainable agriculture, and local value chains would be strengthened to improve community welfare.

In governance, transparent musyawarah mechanisms would be developed alongside data-driven village planning and information systems that help residents understand development programs.

In technology, digital tools, geospatial mapping, ethical artificial intelligence, and information systems would be utilized to improve public services according to the needs and capacities of the local community.

The success of the Musa Village Project would not be measured by the sophistication of its technology, but by tangible changes: Has education improved? Are public services faster? Is the local economy growing? Has public participation increased? Has the quality of life genuinely improved?

In this way, the pilot village becomes a space for demonstrating that values, knowledge, technology, and leadership can work together to improve human well-being.

O. Annual Indonesia-Iran Civilization Forum

Any form of cooperation intended to endure across generations requires a living space for dialogue. Dialogue is not merely a meeting for exchanging opinions, but a mechanism for mutual correction,

mutual learning, and collectively renewing the direction of cooperation as circumstances change.

One of the principal programs proposed is therefore an Annual Indonesia–Iran Civilizational Forum, bringing together thinkers, practitioners, community leaders, professionals, technologists, legal experts, researchers, social entrepreneurs, and younger generations from both countries.

The forum is not designed as a ceremonial conference that ends with an official opening and the signing of memoranda of understanding. Instead, every meeting should produce tangible outputs. Participants should bring field experience, data, research findings, or innovations that have already been tested. Every discussion should conclude with an actionable work plan that can be implemented and evaluated at the following meeting.

To maintain continuity, a major theme reflecting shared challenges would be established each year. One year might focus on public leadership and governance. The following year might address digital transformation, artificial intelligence, food security, education, or village development. In this way, the forum would not simply repeat the same agenda, but continue to evolve according to society's needs.

The forum would also provide a space for interdisciplinary engagement. Legal experts could engage with data scientists. Agricultural researchers could collaborate with artificial intelligence developers. Public health experts could exchange experiences with information technology practitioners. Cultural figures

could engage with economists. Such interdisciplinary encounters often produce innovations that would not emerge if each field worked in isolation.

Alongside the annual forum, thematic working groups would operate throughout the year. These groups would develop joint research, prepare policy recommendations, build educational modules, develop digital tools, and support agreed pilot projects.

The annual forum would therefore not be the final objective, but a connecting node that brings together activities throughout the year so that cooperation remains active and continues to develop.

P. Demonstration is the Language of Civilization

All the ideas presented in this manuscript ultimately converge on one simple principle:

Civilization is not built by theory alone. Civilization is not built by slogans. Civilization is built through demonstration.

A great nation is not the nation that speaks most frequently about justice, but one capable of making justice present in the lives of its people. A great nation is not one that speaks most often about the importance of knowledge, but one that transforms knowledge into culture. Likewise, technology cannot be considered a measure of progress if it does not improve the quality of human life.

Every program proposed in this chapter is therefore built upon the same approach: every idea must be capable of being demonstrated in practice.

If values-based leadership is considered important, then it must produce leaders who are more honest, more trustworthy in fulfilling their amanah, and more capable of serving society.

If artificial intelligence is considered beneficial, then it must help improve public services, accelerate access to education, strengthen transparency, and expand people's opportunities to acquire knowledge.

If good governance is considered important, then it must produce a bureaucracy that is simpler, more transparent, and more responsive to the interests of citizens.

With this way of thinking, the measure of success changes. Success is no longer measured by the number of seminars organized or documents published, but by the extent to which people's lives genuinely improve.

Sekolah Negarawan therefore does not regard itself as an end in itself. Sekolah Negarawan is simply one instrument for connecting ideas with action, values with systems, knowledge with society, technology with humanity, and leadership with service.

Its success is not measured by the size of the organization, but by the number of people who become more capable of serving others.

Q. Chapter XVII Conclusion

Toward Civilizational Cooperation that Liberates Human Beings

This manuscript began with a question about how Indonesia can be understood more comprehensively. The discussion then moved through

the history of colonialism, constitutional development, the relationship between the state and the people, the role of Islam as a value system, and global challenges involving technology, artificial intelligence, and geopolitical change.

All of these discussions lead to one important conclusion: the future will not be determined by those who possess the greatest power, but by those who are most capable of developing human beings.

Indonesia and Iran have different histories, different constitutional systems, different leadership experiences, and even different geopolitical environments. These differences do not need to be erased. It is precisely through these differences that the two nations can learn from one another, enrich each other's experiences, and develop a more mature form of cooperation.

The cooperation proposed in this manuscript is not intended to unify systems of government, standardize ways of thinking, or create a new geopolitical bloc. Nor is it intended to interfere in the domestic affairs of any country or to export a particular ideology, madhhab, or model of government.

What is being proposed is human-centered cooperation: cooperation that makes knowledge a shared language; technology an instrument of service; leadership an amanah; and a value system the foundation of development.

From this perspective, "Moses' Staff for the Modern Age" symbolizes the idea that every era possesses its own instruments of struggle. If in the past

the staff symbolized courage in confronting oppression, then in the twenty-first century that "staff" takes the form of knowledge, just law, responsible technology, truthful data, artificial intelligence that serves humanity, and leadership capable of integrating all these capacities for the common kemaslahatan.

If all these elements advance together, Indonesia–Iran cooperation will no longer be understood merely as a relationship between two countries. It will develop into a civilizational partnership aimed at strengthening human beings, building institutions that serve, advancing knowledge that liberates, and creating a more just future for society.

Ultimately, the success of this cooperation will not be remembered for the number of meetings that were held or documents that were signed. It will be remembered if it succeeds in developing a generation of leaders who possess knowledge and akhlak, master technology, respect human dignity, and leave a tangible legacy in the lives of the people. It is at that point that cooperation ceases to be a project—and begins to become a civilization.

Conclusion
The Indonesia We Are Searching For

A. Indonesia as a Nation Still Seaching for Its Form of the State

Every nation has its own historical journey. Some nations are born through revolution, some grow out of ancient kingdoms, some are formed through the unification of territories, and others emerge after freeing themselves from colonial rule. Indonesia was born out of a long historical struggle. Independence on August 17, 1945 marked the end of formal colonialism, but it did not bring to an end the broader search for how this country should be governed.

This manuscript begins from the conviction that Indonesia's journey is not yet complete. The nation continues to search for a form of governance capable of delivering justice, prosperity, and protection for the people, while also creating space for the advancement of knowledge, culture, and a dignified religious life.

What is being sought is not a new name for the country, nor is it a rejection of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. What is being sought is a way for the existing state to move ever closer to the ideals established by the nation's founders: a state that protects all its people, upholds justice, educates the nation, and contributes to the realization of world peace.

The search for a form of the state, therefore, does not mean rejecting the existing state. Rather, it means continually improving the quality of governance so that

it becomes increasingly centered on human beings and their well-being.

B. True Independence as the Sovereignty of the People

Independence is not merely a historical event in which a colonial power withdraws from a territory. Independence is also a condition in which the people genuinely experience themselves as subjects of national life, rather than merely as objects of development.

True independence is present when the law protects the weak, rather than merely punishing those who lose.

True independence is present when natural resources are managed as an amanah for the common welfare.

True independence is present when knowledge opens the path toward liberation from ignorance and poverty.

True independence is present when technology strengthens service to society, rather than merely increasing economic efficiency.

True independence is present when leaders understand that public office is an amanah to serve, not a right to dominate.

And true independence reaches its fullest meaning when the people no longer feel distant from their own state.

It is in this sense tha the sovereignty of the people is not merely a constitutional concept, but a lived experience within the everyday life of society.

C. The Crisis of Ledership and the Need for Statesmen

The entire discussion throughout this book ultimately converges on one recurring issue: leadership. Constitutions can be improved. Institutions can be reformed. Technology can be renewed. Economies can grow.

Yet when leadership loses its integrity, the direction of development can easily shift away from the public interest toward narrow interests.

Every nation therefore needs not only administrators capable of running government, but also statesmen capable of understanding the transformations of their time, safeguarding the long-term interests of the people, and making decisions grounded in moral responsibility.

Statesmen are not born from lineage. They are not born from wealth. Nor are they born merely from electoral victory.

Statesmen are formed through character, breadth of knowledge, experience, and a willingness to place the interests of society above their own.

It is here that Sekolah Negarawan positions itself not as an end in itself, but as a space for learning dedicated to preparing people who are capable of

integrating values, knowledge, technology, and leadership.

D. Cak Nun as an Alarm for Indonesia

Throughout this manuscript, the thought of Emha Ainun Nadjib (Cak Nun) is understood not as doctrine, but as a moral and cultural alarm.

His critiques of leadership, the relationship between the state and the people, and his expression about "orphaning the people" invite us to reconsider whether institutions, leaders, and society have fulfilled their responsibilities justly.

In this interpretation, "orphaning the people" is understood as a social metaphor describing a condition in which some citizens feel deprived of the care, protection, or guidance that should be provided through families, communities, and public institutions.

Likewise, when Cak Nun expresses the hope that the teachings of the Messenger of Allah SAW will truly be practiced in Indonesia, the message can be understood as emphasizing the importance of making values such as amanah, honesty, compassion, and justice the foundations of collective life, rather than merely matters of identity or symbolism.

Cak Nun, therefore, does not merely criticize existing conditions. He also invites society to continually improve itself.

E. Imam Khomeini and the Lesson of Constitutional Change

The journey of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran offers an important lesson: transforming a nation cannot end merely with a change of government. Change must acquire an institutional form if it is to endure beyond a single generation. Following the revolution, Iran therefore established a new constitutional order through the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the foundation of state governance.

For the authors, the most important lesson from this experience is not the particular form of Iran's constitutional system, but the courage to translate ideas into the architecture of the state. An ideal will remain merely a speech unless it acquires a constitutional form capable of governing the relationship among the people, the state, leadership, and power.

It is at this point that Sekolah Negarawan finds a space for dialogue with Iran's experience.

The idea of the Fifth Amendment developed by Sekolah Negarawan is not intended to imitate the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, nor to return Indonesia to its constitutional structure before Reformasi. The Fifth Amendment is understood as a constitutional endeavor to continue searching for a form of the state that increasingly reflects the ideals of Indonesian independence.

The central question is not merely how to amend the provisions of the Constitution, but how to restore the people to the center of the architecture of the state. How can the state maintain continuity in development without diminishing the people's control? How can the Constitution respond to emerging challenges such as data sovereignty, artificial intelligence, the digital economy, environmental protection, and the protection of future generations?

From the perspective of Sekolah Negarawan, a constitution is more than a legal document. A constitution is a nation's moral agreement on how power should be exercised in service to the people.

The Fifth Amendment, therefore, is not the ultimate objective. It is an instrument. The ultimate objective remains consistent with the ideals of Indonesian independence: to create a state increasingly capable of protecting the people, upholding justice, advancing knowledge, developing technology for kemaslahatan, and safeguarding human dignity.

Indonesia does not need to become Iran, just as Iran does not need to become Indonesia. Yet both nations can learn from one another that civilizational change requires the courage not only to improve human beings, but also to improve the constitutional architecture that serves as the common home of all the people.

F. Khamenei as a Reflection of Resilience and Solidarity within the Ummah

In this manuscript, the thought of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is not positioned as a model of power that other nations should follow, but as one perspective on the importance of moral resilience, education, and solidarity with communities experiencing oppression.

One relevant message is that the strength of a society does not rest solely upon material capabilities, but also upon steadfastness of values, preparedness in confronting challenges, and concern for others.

Within the context of the Islamic world, solidarity with communities experiencing suffering can be understood as an expression of humanitarian values and moral responsibility, without erasing the diversity of history, culture, and madhhab that exists within the Muslim ummah itself.

Such an approach creates space for a more mature dialogue—not to impose uniformity, but to strengthen one another in matters of shared concern.

G. Indonesia and Iran: Not Imitating One Another, but Learning from One Another

No nation possesses all the answers to the world's problems. Indonesia has experiences from which others can learn. Iran also has experiences from which others can learn.

Both possess strengths, challenges, and distinct historical experiences. The cooperation proposed in this

book, therefore, is not an invitation to imitate one another, but to learn from one another.

To learn how to develop human beings. To learn how to strengthen knowledge. To learn how to use technology responsibly. To learn how to maintain a balance between material development and moral development.

This kind of relationship is more consistent with the spirit of civilizational cooperation: respecting differences while seeking common ground that benefits society.

H. "Moses' Staff for the Modern Age": From Symbol to Demonstration

Throughout this book, "Moses' Staff for the Modern Age" is used as a metaphor for leadership that integrates knowledge, law, technology, data, akhlak, and spirituality.

The metaphor reminds us that every era has its own instruments for confronting its challenges.

Today, that "staff" may take the form of just law, liberating education, ethical technology, accurate data, responsible artificial intelligence, and leaders who use all these instruments to serve society.

Yet all these instruments acquire meaning only when they are demonstrated through tangible action.

Demonstration is the universal language of every civilization.

I. The Revival of a Value System for Indonesia and the Islamic World

Ultimately, the entire discussion in this manuscript returns to the most fundamental question: how can we build a society capable of protecting human beings?

From the authors' perspective, Islamic values such as justice, amanah, respect for human dignity, the pursuit of knowledge, the protection of life and family, and concern for others can make an important contribution to discussions about building a dignified society. These values can inspire public life when they are wisely translated into institutions, education, technology, and service to society.

If Indonesia–Iran cooperation is developed upon this foundation, it is not directed toward standardizing constitutional systems, interfering in another country's domestic affairs, or exporting a particular madhhab. Instead, it becomes a space for mutual learning about how values, knowledge, and technology can be integrated to strengthen human development and improve the quality of life within society.

Perhaps, ultimately, the greatest question is not whether Indonesia has discovered a perfect form of the state, or whether Iran possesses all the answers to the challenges of our time. The more important question is whether both nations are willing to continue learning, improving themselves, and cooperating with humility in pursuit of a life that is more just, more enlightened by knowledge, and more dignified.

If the long journey of this book carries one central message, it is this: the future of a nation is determined not only by the size of its territory, the strength of its economy, or the sophistication of its technology. Its future is determined by its ability to preserve the relationship between values and power, between knowledge and akhlak, between innovation and responsibility, and between the state and human beings.

It is there that the meaning of independence continues to be pursued. It is there that leadership discovers its amanah. And it is there that civilizational cooperation acquires its deepest meaning—not to enable one nation to prevail over another, but to expand the benefits of civilization for humanity.

SHIKSHAYATI RAJANITIVIDAM

Epilogue

A. Civilization is not Built to Defeat Other Nations, but to Honor Human Beings

Ultimately, the long journey of this manuscript is not intended to conclude that Indonesia must become Iran, or that Iran must become Indonesia. History has shaped both nations along different paths. Their constitutions, cultures, experiences of leadership, social structures, and societal dynamics emerged from different contexts. These differences are not problems to be eliminated, but realities to be understood honestly and respected maturely.

The cooperation proposed in this manuscript, therefore, is not cooperation aimed at imposing uniformity. It is not an invitation to imitate another country's constitutional system. It is not a project to export a particular model of leadership. Nor is it a means of expanding one country's influence into the territory of another.

Likewise, this cooperation is not intended to bring debates over madhhab into the sphere of international relations. Islam has lived for centuries with diverse intellectual traditions, schools of thought, and historical experiences. Such diversity is part of the intellectual journey of the ummah and must be approached through knowledge, adab, and dialogue, rather than through mutual exclusion.

What Indonesia–Iran cooperation seeks to demonstrate is something far more fundamental:

That the Islamic value system remains capable of responding to the challenges of the modern age.

That values such as justice, amanah, compassion, respect for human dignity, the pursuit of knowledge, social responsibility, and protection of the vulnerable need not remain merely moral teachings, but can be translated into systems that work.

That value system must be capable of protecting life, so that human life remains the primary objective of every policy.

That value system must be capable of protecting property and wealth, so that wealth does not become an instrument of oppression, but an amanah for the common welfare.

That value system must safeguard human dignity, so that every person is treated as a subject possessing rights and honor, rather than merely as an object of power or a number in development statistics.

That value system must develop the intellect through liberating education, honest research, and a culture of knowledge that encourages innovation.

That value system must strengthen the family as the first space in which values, compassion, and responsibility are passed from one generation to the next.

That value system must honor knowledge, not merely as a means of securing employment, but as a path toward building a civilization that is more just and more wise.

That value system must form leaders who understand power as an amanah of service, not as a right to dominate.

That value system must guide technology so that it becomes an instrument of human liberation—strengthening transparency, expanding access to education and public services, and ensuring that artificial intelligence, data, and digital innovation remain governed by ethics, rather than the other way around.

Ultimately, that value system must safeguard humanity's future so that advances in knowledge and technology do not erase humanity itself.

It is in this sense that the Indonesia–Iran cooperation proposed in this manuscript is not a project of power, but a project of demonstration.

A demonstration that religion can serve as a source of inspiration for public service.

A demonstration that knowledge can advance alongside akhlak.

A demonstration that technology can develop without losing its conscience.

A demonstration that leadership can once again be understood as an amanah, rather than merely a position.

A demonstration that a state can be built not only through the strength of its institutions, but also through the strength of human beings who possess knowledge, integrity, and moral courage.

If such a demonstration succeeds, this cooperation will benefit not only Indonesia or Iran. It can make a modest contribution to the global conversation about how religion, knowledge, constitutional governance, technology, and humanity can move in the same direction.

Perhaps, ultimately, the greatest legacy a nation can leave behind is not its towering buildings, nor merely the strength of its economy, but its ability to develop human beings who honor other human beings.

For the greatest civilization is not the civilization most capable of dominating the world.

The greatest civilization is the one most capable of protecting life, upholding justice, advancing knowledge, and honoring human dignity.

If Indonesia and Iran can walk together in that spirit, the cooperation that emerges will not be cooperation based on temporary interests, but civilizational cooperation that respects the sovereignty of every nation, remains open to dialogue, and strives to demonstrate that noble values can be translated into systems, public service, knowledge, technology, and a better life for all humanity.

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