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Introduction

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Introduction

This volume addresses an issue of increasing international concern, namely development in relation to globalization, nationalization programs and the crises of change. The focus here is on Riau, a region in Indonesia that has swung from its historically prestigious standing as part of successive Malay kingdoms to a largely ignored and peripheral province within the Republic of Indonesia. Yet although the geographic area under discussion is specific, the issues discussed in this volume echo similar dilemmas experienced all over the globe in areas selected as locations for development programs.

The origins of this volume date back to conversations in late 1994 between Cynthia Chou, an anthropologist, and Will Derks, a scholar of Malay literature, who are both research fellows at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). Chou and Derks have been involved in fieldwork in parts of *kepulauan* (island) and *daratan* (mainland) Riau for various periods spanning five and eight years respectively, and in the course of extended field stays established close bonds of friendship with local families and individuals. With great generosity, hospitality and patience, the inhabitants of Riau opened their homes, shared intimate details of their lives and guided both Chou and Derks through straits and forests in order to pursue their research interests.

In recent years, Riau has been singled out by policy makers and investors for development schemes such as the Growth Triangle and transmigration programs. Such initiatives have introduced extensive and often problematic change to the lives of the people with whom Chou and Derks became involved. Driven by professional concern for the global phenomena of the dilemmas which result from developmental projects and inspired by a deep personal commitment to the people of Riau, they convened an international conference on 'Riau in transition: the Globalization of a Peripheral Region in Indonesia.'

Under the auspices of the IIAS and with the support of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), Chou and Derks brought together a group of people from around the globe as representatives of the local inhabitants of Riau, Indonesian policy makers, non-governmental organizations and academics from the fields of anthropology, history and literature. The outcome is reflected in this volume, based on selected papers presented at the conference and the ensuing discussions. The differing approaches offered by our contributors, who come from a mosaic of diverse backgrounds and disciplines, will, it is hoped, stimulate a rethinking of the processes of

change and reconstruction in this province. On a more specific note, this volume also attempts to put Riau back on the map.

Riau

The Indonesian province of Riau, the heart of the Malay world in Indonesia, is relatively little known. Perhaps the regular tourist to Sumatra may be forgiven if he or she is unaware that this huge area exists to the southeast of Lake Toba and the east of Lake Maninjau, since it cannot boast of many exciting scenic panoramas, sandy white beaches, impressive historical sites or 'exotic' music and dance traditions. Yet others, who could be expected to be more knowledgeable, are hardly less ignorant. For instance, on being asked what 'Riau' stands for, it is not uncommon for an Indonesian to answer, 'Caltex!' The name of this oil company in effect sums up what many respondents know about this part of their own country.

According to official definitions, Riau is one of Indonesia's twenty-seven provinces. It consists of the Riau mainland in the central part of eastern Sumatra, together with the Riau archipelago, which stretches from the Strait of Malacca in the west to the South China Sea in the east. Pekanbaru is the provincial capital. Although a substantial amount of work has been done on the history of the area, especially on the early modern period of *kepulauan* or insular Riau and the (written) literary heritage of the Malays, it is fair to say that Riau has been neglected by most scholars with a professional interest in Indonesia. This neglect is reflected in the dearth of recent literature concerning this area. It is also a reminder of the attitude adopted by the colonial and postcolonial governments. Under the former's jurisdiction, Riau was but another of the many regions to be controlled. The Riau Malays were swept to the periphery of an empire that focused on Java as its center. Cultures in the so-called 'Outer Islands' were interpreted against that background. Bahasa Melayu, or Malay, was to become the language of the Indonesian nationalists. Nevertheless, this did not mean increased interest in the people among whom this language predominated.

After Independence, the central government's policy has been to construct a national identity to hold together a multi-cultured, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-island country. However, this national culture has in the course of time become increasingly equated with Javanese culture. Consequently, until recently areas such as Riau and its inhabitants have been of minor political, economic and cultural importance. It is telling, for instance, that in the early 1970s this huge area was still deprived of essential facilities, including the virtual absence of roads, various means of transport, communication and most forms of higher education.

Recently, however, there has been renewed state and scholarly interest in Indonesia's Malay heartland. As far as the state is concerned, this

interest is due to increasing opportunities for exploiting the vast resources of oil, forest and maritime reserves in Riau. In particular, the high-profile Growth Triangle concept has stimulated considerable interest in Riau because it promises to develop the area into a prosperous economic zone. However, while it maps out an economic cooperation scheme between Riau-Indonesia, Johor-Malaysia and Singapore, the direction of the Growth Triangle program is based heavily on Singapore's definition of a 'globalized' economy. Critical to the concept are Singapore's initiatives in formulating an economy- and development-restructuring strategy that aims to increase the flow of foreign technology and capital, while encouraging local and foreign-owned ventures in the region. Singapore has persuaded Riau and Johor to cooperate and promote cross-border manufacturing and infrastructural projects to promote rapid economic growth for all three countries. In essence, the call is for Riau as well as Johor to restructure their goals by pooling their resources with Singapore to enjoy the economies of scale and enter a 'globalized' economy. This increasingly globalized market economy has presented the province with the potential for appropriating and commodifying all natural resources for exchange.

Riau as a whole, once considered a peripheral region in Indonesia, is thus at a historic junction, for it is being fundamentally affected by social, economic and development programs intended to modernize the region. However, a globalization that is characterized by increased international economic interdependence also poses challenges to existing notions of territory, space and nation as resources circulate in specific cultural milieus and historical periods. Riau is therefore witnessing a contrast between old and new patterns that are emerging in ecological and cultural spaces which evolved centuries ago. The resulting tensions and conflicts are almost inevitable.

The contributions in this volume are divided into four broad categories, namely history, development and policy issues, minority groups and Malay consciousness. The aim is not to compartmentalize discussions or concerns into rigid categories. Rather, the intention is to show the numerous and important overlaps in discussions stemming from different approaches. Crucial insights will be lost if this initiative for establishing cooperation is not acknowledged.

History

Barbara Watson Andaya, a historian, sets the tone for examining the unity of such an eclectic region. As seen on maps, Riau is a mix of two major regions, *daratan* (mainland) and *kepulauan* (archipelago). Andaya traces the creation of the modern-day province of Riau back to the fifteenth century when the kingdom of Malacca united these two areas under its rule. However, beneath the portrayed unity, Andaya shows the numerous and persistent difficulties that continue to pose serious challenges to this

region. This is because, in reality, the province comprises various dispersed and disparate communities. The difficulties which over the centuries have strained unity between mainland and island Riau range from wars and conflicts between multiple centers to specific politico-economic developments. The historical discourse of Riau conveys an important message. The well-being of the inhabitants today will demand more than economic profits. It will have to include an understanding of the difficulties posed by the mainland-island association, and the sustained efforts necessary to resolve them. Inculcating a sense of unity and commonality into the Riau communities is not an easy task. However, Andaya shows how Malay culture and the Riau inhabitants themselves have always displayed a willingness to adapt to the demands of reality. In spite of the difficulties, there remains the possibility of recreating and pursuing this vision of unity in diversity. The challenge is to create an environment in which the people of Riau can be treated as valued participants in the nation-building process.

The problems of negotiating identities, unity and commonality in this region of flux are analyzed in a case study by another historian, Timothy P. Barnard. By considering the issues associated with nominating a local hero for the National Heroes program, Barnard shows the obstacles that militate against unity between the various Malay groups in the region. In this program, the government uses the historical past to emphasize the relevance of modern Indonesian ideals. Although attempts have been made in Riau to increase the underrepresentation of local heroes in the national pantheon, there are difficulties in reaching a consensus among Riau's diverse Malay groups, since each has a different idea regarding individuals suitable for nomination for national status. A second problem lies in the process of creating the exemplary biographies necessary if local heroes are to meet the criteria set by the National Heroes Board. Efforts to create such biographies make the tenuous links between Riau and the contemporary nation state apparent. Furthermore, they highlight the fact that the people in Riau still regard the former Malay kingdoms as their points of reference. In order for local heroes to qualify for consideration as national heroes, their biographies have been molded to fit nationalist biographies that support the goals of the Indonesian government. However, in the process many of these heroes lose their local significance as they are pictured in light of modern-day Indonesian development policies. Barnard, like Andaya, sounds a cautionary note that should be kept in mind as the discussion on Riau continues. The province's rich and multifaceted history should not be homogenously glazed over by a constructed national history. Problems will not be solved by such methods. Rather, as in the case of even a complex jigsaw puzzle, the distinctive pieces can all be fitted together comfortably within the entire frame without losing their respective characteristics.

Development and Policy Issues

The challenge to look at the multiple yet overlapping social, political and economic milieus in Riau is continued in discussions by Vivienne Wee and Cynthia Chou, Mubyarto, and Cathy Hoshour. The main consideration of their papers is the impact on Riau of current development and policy programs. Wee, the co-author with Chou of the first paper in this section, is a program director for a nongovernmental organization that aims to encourage development strategies directed at attaining ecological sustainability. Wee and Chou's paper establishes the context for this set of essays by focusing on development issues and the plight of minority groups, and the impact of the Growth Triangle economic cooperation agreement on Riau. In presenting the comparative perspectives of investors from Singapore and the aims of the Indonesian government, Wee and Chou demonstrate how the view of those involved in the ongoing economic development differ. Investors from Singapore view Riau as a hinterland that can provide natural resources not available to the small nation state. By contrast, the Indonesian government sees Riau as an area that can be developed quickly due to its proximity to Singapore and Malaysia and the infusion of financial resources into the region. As argued by Wee and Chou, this has resulted in competing needs, choices and use of resources in Riau. They appeal for a reformulation of programs to prevent the duplication of past mistakes in development models that have failed to provide long-term ecological sustainability.

The problems raised by Wee and Chou are similarly the concerns of Mubyarto, Professor of Rural Economic Development at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Mubyarto is also currently Assistant to the Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Equity Affairs, and is involved in implementing the Program Inpres Desa Tertinggal or IDT Poverty Alleviation Program for less developed villages in Indonesia. Launched through a presidential decree and partially supported by the United Nations Development Program, the IDT from 1 April 1994 became the official development program for the people's economy throughout Indonesia. Mubyarto raises crucial questions about the effects of current development policies on the people of Riau. Startling social inequities in wealth and poverty have been simultaneously generated by the same development programs, and rapid growth in different centers have resulted in increasing disparities among Riau's inhabitants. Mubyarto offers the Indonesian policy maker's alternative development strategy in averting the crisis of poverty. He argues that by instituting multiple economies, such as offering working capital from the IDT program to self-help communities, alternative self-sufficiency economies would be generated for the inhabitants who have been left out of ongoing developmental programs.

In the context of the situation described by Mubyarto, it is ironic that another national development program that promotes the introduction of

new settlers to 'share' in Riau's wealth and resources has compounded the problems of deprivation and poverty. Cathy Hoshour's contribution provides an example of the operation of Indonesia's transmigration program, which relocates Indonesians from densely populated to more sparsely populated areas such as Riau as part of the state's effort to allocate resources evenly among Indonesians. Hoshour, an anthropologist, has carried out prolonged field studies in Tepas, a rural village in the Special District of Yogyakarta, Central Java, and Tanah Putih/Bagan Sinembah, a transmigration site and oil palm plantation in Riau province. The tensions that Hoshour describes have erupted at a very basic level, and are quite contrary to the ideals of the transmigration program. In this case, the lack of policy coherence in addressing culturally sensitive and inter-related issues such as population movement, local cultures, ethnic identity and national identity have had serious consequences. The problem of disparities addressed by Wee and Chou and by Mubyarto is developed further in Hoshour's discussion of the acts of resistance and defiance that have mushroomed in the transmigration sites. Funds and facilities designated for transmigration projects on the Riau-North Sumatra provincial border have been manipulated, resulting in embittered relations between Javanese transmigrants, local residents and Batak migrants. This also leaves open the question of what happens when national programs have priorities over provincial ones.

Minority Groups

The collection of papers focusing on the plight of minority groups poses a challenge to explore alternative routes to development in Riau. In no way do the papers by Lioba Lenhart, Cynthia Chou, Ashley Turner and Tenas Effendy suggest that only minority groups are affected as resources become intensely contested. Rather, the intention is to direct the architects of development programs to rethink programs that affect many local inhabitants, including the minority groups in Riau. It is necessary to develop innovative and appropriate programs encompassing not just a top-down approach, but just as importantly, a micro approach grounded in an appreciation of everyday community life. It is also apparent that all too often the alleged benefits of 'modernization' do not in fact trickle down. Culturally sensitive approaches must therefore be adopted to avoid a series of generalized projects that are cobbled together with little attention paid to cultural diversity and distinctiveness. These papers take note of the cultural bases of differentiation in Riau and serve to underscore the rich cultural diversity that exists in the region.

The section begins with papers on the Orang Suku Laut or tribe of sea people by two social anthropologists: Lenhart and Chou. Their contributions emphasize two broad themes. First, they show how prevailing stereotyped views of the Orang Suku Laut have hindered their acculturation.

Such views have had a negative influence on interethnic contact and on Indonesian governmental policies, in which a lack of cultural sensitivity has often forced the Orang Suku Laut into a problem-ridden framework of development. Lenhart shows how government misunderstandings and condescension have led to the failure of resettlement programs for the Orang Suku Laut. In ways quite similar to Hoshour's description of the strategies used by mainland Riau inhabitants affected by transmigration programs, Lenhart provides a compelling account of the Orang Suku Laut's manipulative strategies that have frustrated the efforts to resettle them. Chou presents another provocative argument for the need to reconceptualize modes of appropriation and production by focusing on the deprivation of Orang Suku Laut territorial rights. She shows that, contrary to prevailing views of the Orang Suku Laut as irresponsible gleaners of resources, they are in fact responsible custodians of territories who are keen to reproduce maritime resources. Her ethnographic data explain how the Orang Suku Laut feel a responsibility for the state of development in these traditional areas. The second theme that surfaced from the contributions by the two anthropologists concerns the readiness of the Orang Suku Laut to participate in the processes of change if they are assured of its benefits. The aim of the contributions by Lenhart and Chou is to provide crucial development options to enhance the quality of development schemes incorporating the cooperation of planners, investors and the Orang Suku Laut.

A second set of essays by Tenas and Turner focuses on another minority group in *daratan* Riau, the Orang Suku Petalangan of the Kampar river valley. Tenas, a renowned local expert from Riau, documents his self-initiated efforts in offering a possible solution to protecting the cultures of the indigenous peoples. Tenas describes how, with funding from the Ford Foundation, he developed a regional arts center to help the Petalangan people preserve their unique place in Riau society. He hopes that this will offer a possible model for helping other indigenous communities. With the focus still on the Petalangan, Turner, an ethnomusicologist, affirms Chou's proposition for the acknowledgment of territorial rights by minority groups. Approaching the issue from another perspective, Turner describes how the identity of the Petalangan people is derived from their claim to territorial tenure. Their songs and epic poems are their title deeds. However, these claims have been regarded as irrelevant by the various timber and palm-oil industries that have infringed on Petalangan territory. As a result, the Petalangan people have lost control over much of their land and face a very uncertain future. Arguing that traditional culture is not static, Turner advocates the recognition of the dynamism of traditional cultures. Turner stresses that this proposition is not to promote the concept of living museums. Rather, it is to acknowledge the terms as well as the strengths of the Petalangan people in their participation in a changing world.

Malay Consciousness

The collection of papers by Henk Maier, Will Derks and Jan van der Putten, all specialists in Malay literature, explore the heart of Malay. From readings of Malay manuscripts and opportunities offered by the printing press, these scholars show the passionate desire of Riau Malays to participate in reforms to present themselves as a modern community. Reinforcing Andaya's historical discourse on the complexities of unifying this intensely diverse region, the essays by these three scholars in Malay literature posit the necessity of understanding historic and modern Riau as a region consisting of a plethora of peoples and cultures. Imposing a false homogeneity on Riau will pose a real obstacle in efforts to understand the constituent diversities that have influenced Malay consciousness in the region. For instance, Maier and Van der Putten show how the idea of instituting only one form of a multitude of Malay languages as 'pure' Malay did not arise from the Riau Malays themselves. Rather, this was propounded by Dutch colonialists to fulfill their desire for solidity, stability and expansion of their economic enterprise. Derks discusses how the transcendence of a Javanese-oriented national culture on contemporary Riau has resulted in resentment and resistance among the Malays. All three contributors show that the heart of Malay is its fluidity and flexibility to assimilate and adapt to various centers of reference simultaneously. The common identity and shared culture of Malay lies in negotiating concurrent Malay identities, rather than a single Malay identity. Unfortunately, the imposition and perception of a false Malay homogeneity continues to this very day. Another issue concerns the question of the attitudes of Malays to change. A historical perspective suggests that Riau Malays have always been keen partners in modernizing their homeland. Through various means, ranging from the first Malay printing press in Riau to their oral traditions, the Riau Malays have expressed their ideas, grievances and desires. Their call is for an appreciation of the relevance of being Malay. Malay complements change, and a desire to be 'modern' is embedded in the Malay mind-set.

The simplification of Riau into a homogenous provincial space to promote its incorporation in a hegemonic colonial or national space has also had adverse results on other groups and cultures in the region. Kato Tsuyoshi, a sociohistorian, focuses on the position of the Minangkabau migrants, often regarded as confident representatives of a historically dominant culture. Yet Kato shows that, uncertain of their place in Riau, Minangkabau migrants have been forced to reassess their cultural and ethnic identity. Out of necessity, migrants have reconstructed their history and their cultural and ethnic identity as strategic responses to ensure their incorporation into Riau's changing economic and social structures.

Al azhar, representing the voice of Riau Malays, provides some concluding thoughts to the discussion. An academic in a local Riau university,

he discusses the revitalization of Malay consciousness as a statement of local discontent in the region. This was sparked off by the marginalization if not alienation of the local Malays from the massive economic development that Riau has experienced. Al azhar cautions the Indonesian government to be aware of the prevailing local discontent or face a possible rejection by Riau Malays of the unity of the nation as defined by state ideology. At the same time, Al azhar offers possible solutions to the festering problems in Riau. There is a need to reestablish an environment whereby rules and regulations governing public life are shaped by the tradition and culture they have inherited. Space must also be created to allow for greater local participation, and clearer policies must be implemented to improve the welfare of the local inhabitants. Al azhar presses for the importance and formal recognition of introducing Malay studies in local universities. He admits that the implementation of such solutions have not been without problems. Nevertheless, Riau Malays are aware that they have to take positive steps not merely to regain something of the past but to reaffirm their position in the future.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most challenging and yet the most difficult of task of the editors has been to synthesize the arguments and perspectives of the collection of essays presented in this volume. Were this possible, the result would be something like this: viewed together, these contributions were collated to make people reconsider known problems in new ways and to unearth old ways of reflecting about new problems.

The forces of change are clearly affecting Riau. We have attempted to canvas different sectors in both mainland and island Riau to examine the impact that growing Indonesianization and globalization have had on the people of this province. Fundamental questions have been raised. The lively and forthright exchanges in this volume revolve around several themes. The first concerns the question of the geography of Riau and the ethnic diversities that have played such a formative role in Riau's past and will continue to be influential in the future. A second theme is the question of local relations with different centers, and how these have been locally negotiated. A third theme addresses economic and social equity, the pace of change and the extent to which local communities should be participants in the policy-making process. The fourth theme, which concerns the question of culture and how it can adapt to the challenges of change, is perhaps the most problematic and the one most resistant to solution. Yet, with regard to all themes, it is clearly imperative to widen the vision of development by recognizing local adaptive knowledge and enlisting local participation. The forces shaping Riau can obviously be traced to external as well as internal origins. Thus, the concerns raised are often similar in other areas that are undergoing change. The dilemmas are shared. The

intention here is to raise awareness of the two possible faces of changes brought about by nationalization and globalization programs. This volume is not intended to leave readers confused or discouraged about the possibility of continuing with policies that will inevitably involve change. Rather, the purpose is to challenge readers to see how different perspectives on ways of dealing with the same issues or problems are not necessarily contradictory or conflicting. Our hope is to initiate a collective process of working out different approaches. The horizon must be widened to encompass richer insights into the transformation processes that are occurring in Riau, as in other areas in the world which face similar concerns. No such process can be complete without a dialogue between all interested parties, be they academics, development planners, policy makers, or the local residents themselves. This volume has taken a step in that direction. For instance, it has cajoled policy makers such as Mubyarto to reexamine an antipoverty alleviation programme for the Orang Suku Laut, as evident in his response that appeared subsequent to the conference in the 17 October 1995 edition of *Kompas*, a leading Indonesian newspaper. Furthermore, Wee is now working in partnership with Chou and Indonesian academics to implement a program for maritime resource management in Riau.

The views expressed in this volume are not necessarily those of the editors. Rather, the editors of the volume have left the essays in as much of their original form as possible to allow the participants to speak for themselves. This volume is dedicated to the continued cooperation between all those concerned with the forces of change and to the future of the inhabitants in Riau.

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