

Discrimination against religion and ethnicity in indonesia

Sociology, Identity



I was born in the beautiful country of Indonesia. Indonesia is a multicultural and diverse country, she holds many culture and traditions but everything that's perfect always holds a secret. For starters, I have always been told that, when my brother and I was born, the first thing that my grandfather asked was the shape of our eyes, was it too slanted or too Chinese, I have never understood why. Then earlier this year, on my semester break, my father had shared an interesting story about how he and his friends would be very racist and discriminate the Chinese and Christians during his schooling years. I listened to them in discomfort as their jokes were uncalled for, and also the fact that my friends are mostly of different races, ethnicity and religion. Now, using my knowledge of social science, and with research I have uncovered the truth of the really weird and racist questions my grandfather had asked and my father's story.

Discrimination against Ethnic Chinese and the Christian are one of the major problems within Indonesia, in some countries racism is based on skin colour, but in Indonesia it is evidenced by discrimination against religion and ethnicity. Hence it is no stranger to anyone that Indonesia is a very religious country, majority of the population in Indonesians are Muslims, so it would not be that surprising that discrimination occurred in this country. In the time of Suharto's dictatorship, in which had proposed the Anti-Chinese law, a law which prohibited anything Chinese related in Indonesia, this includes names, religion, festival and so much more. This law has also suspended relations with Beijing for a long time. This had a lot of impact to the economy, as most foreign retailers were 90% Chinese.

On the 19th of April, where Indonesia was having an election for its governor, a man name, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, popularly known as Ahok, was caught up in a massive tangled and heated political campaigns. Despite a controversial managerial style, he was actually popular as a governor. He was a man focused on tackling corruption and streamlining the city's administration.

However being the first non-muslim and Chinese Christian man, wanting to serve the government in Indonesia, he faced a heavy criticism and became the main target of Islamic hardliners, who simply objected the idea of having a non-muslim leader to lead the country. Hence by using a sensitive issue, like religion, it is relatively easy for them to indoctrinate and mobilize a huge crowd of mostly lower class protestors to demonstrate against him.

Many people in Indonesia, especially the lower class are in a dilemma of choosing someone to lead the country because of their religion, hence rather than someone who could lead the country because their are politically correct, majority would choose a candidate who is more suited by the perspective of religion. Therefore this problem had not arise in the powers of politics and government, but it also sets the mindset to the people that they are entitled to power and control due to the majority of a certain race or religion.

There is an important relationship between a person and society, as whatever an individual does is not because of their own choice or personal preferences. We all make choices and are responsible of that choice, but

most of the choices that we make are influence by the people around us and our surroundings. If the government and media would not open their eyes and still would chose to cover this dark side of the society. There will always be a distinct division in class, whether its rich or poor or if you are one of the minority races, resulting the minority will feel alienated. Alienation will not go away unless a new economic system is created.