

**Department of Media and Information  
Faculty of Media, Society and Culture**

**Indonesian Cultural Policy, 1950-2003:  
Culture, Institutions, Government**

**Tod Jones**

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of  
Doctorate of Philosophy  
of  
Curtin University of Technology**

**November 2005**

## **Declaration**

I, Tod Jones, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Media and Information, Faculty of Media, Society and Culture, Curtin University of Technology, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. It contains no material which has been accepted for the award of degree or diploma by any university.

Tod Jones

## Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
Table of Tables .....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Preface .....	xi
Introduction: Culture, Politics and Power in Indonesian Studies .....	1
1. Culture and the State in Indonesian Studies .....	5
2. Constructing the Relationship between the Indonesian State and Culture .....	9
a. Impacts On Local Community Practices and Performing Arts .....	9
b. Indonesian culture as a version of Javanese culture .....	11
c. The Growth of Consumption and Indigenous Values .....	14
d. New Order National Culture as Military Culture .....	18
3. Thesis Objectives.....	20
4. Methodology .....	21
State, Society and Culture in the Study of Indonesian Politics .....	21
a. Understanding the Indonesian State .....	21
b. Power, the State and Foucault.....	24
c. Governmentality and the New Order Regime .....	28
Researching Cultural Policy .....	31
a. Different Analytical Perspectives on Cultural Policy.....	32
b. The Cultural Policy Debate in Cultural Studies.....	36
Positions and Issues for Analysis of Indonesian Cultural Policy .....	41
5. Thesis Outline .....	44

Part I. A Short History of Indonesian Cultural Policy .....	47
Chapter 1. The Genesis of Modern Cultural Policy in Indonesia: Culture and Government in the Late Colonial and Japanese Occupation Periods, 1900-1945.....	48
1. Culture and Government in Indonesia from 1900 to 1945 .....	48
2. Late Colonial Rule in the East Indies (1900-1942) .....	53
Cultural Policy for Europeans.....	58
Cultural Policy for Indonesians .....	60
3. The Rise of Nationalism .....	64
Cultural Debates amongst the Nationalists in the 1930s .....	65
Cultural Policy and a Cultural Polemic .....	67
4. Colonial Cultural Policy and Nationalist Cultural Discourses Compared.....	71
5. Cultural Policy during the Japanese Occupation .....	73
Japan and the Invasion of Indonesia .....	73
Nationalism and the Pan-Asian Cultural Model.....	76
The Cultural Policy Infrastructure .....	80
The Impact of Japanese Cultural Policy .....	82
Effects of Japanese Cultural Policy .....	88
6. Conclusion .....	90
Chapter 2. From Cultural Regulation to Cultural Leadership: the Changing Uses of Culture in the Periods of Constitutional Democracy (1950-1957) and Guided Democracy (1957-1965).....	92
1. Politics and Governance After the War of Independence.....	93
2. Policy and Culture during Constitutional Democracy .....	95
Cultural Policy Debates in Four Cultural Conventions .....	97
a. The 1948 Cultural Congress .....	98
b. The Cultural Conference.....	102
c. The Second Cultural Congress .....	103
d. The Third Cultural Congress .....	105
Cultural Policy During Constitutional Democracy.....	107
3. Policy and Culture During Guided Democracy .....	115
The Cultural Office during Guided Democracy .....	118
Non-Government Arts Organisations .....	129
4. Conclusion .....	133

Chapter 3. The New Order as a ‘Cultural Process’ .....	136
1. Historical Background: The Political Climate of the Early New Order Period. .....	138
2. Culture in the New Order Regime’s Rationality of Government .....	140
Development and Governmentality .....	141
Culture in <i>Pembangunan</i> .....	143
Other New Order Era Governmental Discourses and Strategies .....	149
a. Political Emasculation .....	149
b. Language and New Order Governmentality .....	151
c. Family Principles .....	152
d. State/Society .....	153
3. The Indonesian Arts Community and the New Order Regime.....	155
Universal Humanism and the New Order Regime .....	155
Points of Agreement, Points of Disagreement.....	158
The Ismail Marzuki Arts Centre: a ‘Cultural Oasis’.....	159
4. Indigenous Ethnic Cultures.....	163
Regional Art Forms .....	163
New Order Pluralism and <i>Taman Mini</i> .....	165
5. Responses to Changing Social Conditions and Political Imperatives in the 1980s and 1990s.....	168
6. Conclusion .....	173
Chapter 4. New Order Cultural Policy: Cultural Institutions and Programs .....	175
1. Cultural Policy Trends and Influences.....	176
Continuities and Breaks with Guided Democracy Cultural Policy .....	176
Development.....	177
International Connections .....	180
The Director-Generals of Culture .....	182
The New Order Regime’s Policy Making System.....	183
2. Cultural Policy Areas Under the New Order .....	186
Archaeology, Museums, History .....	187
Languages .....	192
Arts Policy .....	194
The Licensing Regime for Arts Events.....	198
3. New Order Cultural Policy as a Command Culture Model .....	199
4. Conclusion .....	201

Chapter 5. Cultural Policy in the Reform Era: Ethnic Identity, Decentralisation and Tourism .....	203
1. Changes to Governance after Suharto .....	204
2. Immediate Impact of <i>Reformasi</i> : Winding Back State Licensing of Arts Events.....	207
3. Decentralisation, and the Growth of Ethnic and Local Identity Politics .....	209
Decentralisation .....	209
The Growing Assertion of Ethnic and Local Identity.....	211
4. Cultural Policy in the Reform Era .....	215
The Directorate of Culture and Tourism.....	216
Making Cultural Policy in Decentralised Indonesia.....	221
a. Strategic Planning in West Java.....	221
b. The Planning Dialogue .....	225
5. Conclusion .....	229
Part II. Cultural Policy Case Studies.....	232
Chapter 6. Nation-Wide Cultural Institutions: the Spread of the Cultural Parks and the Arts Councils .....	233
1. The Cultural Parks .....	234
2. Programs in the Cultural Parks .....	239
The Three Kinds of Programs.....	240
a. Training.....	242
b. Activities.....	244
c. Documentation.....	247
Cultural Governmentality and the Arts in the Cultural Parks.....	248
3. Uniformity and Diversity within the Cultural Parks.....	249
4. Decentralisation and the Cultural Parks.....	253
5. The Arts Councils .....	255
The Jakarta Arts Council .....	256
The 1993 Legislation .....	260
The Jakarta Arts Council in the Reform Era.....	260
6. Other Arts Councils .....	261
The Riau Arts Council .....	262
The Arts Councils of West Java .....	264
7. Assessing the Arts Councils .....	267
8. Conclusion .....	270

Chapter 7. Making Local Culture National: Cultural Management, State Publications and Local Cultures .....	272
1. State-Run Cultural Research and Publications .....	273
History .....	273
Resources .....	276
Planning .....	277
2. Locating Local Culture .....	279
3. Analysis of Local Culture Project Texts .....	282
Acehnese Marriage as a National Cultural Ritual .....	283
a. Researching Local Culture in <i>Marriage Law and Ceremonies in the Special Region of Aceh</i> .....	283
b. Cultural Difference .....	288
c. Development Priorities and Acehnese Marriage <i>Adat</i> .....	290
Yogyakarta, Cultural Heritage and the Child-Citizen .....	294
a. Whose Yogyakarta? .....	295
b. New Constructions of Culture .....	298
c. Learning within the Cultural Sphere .....	300
4. Conclusion: The Continuing and Changing Construction of Local Culture	302
Conclusion .....	305
Research about Indonesian Cultural Policy .....	309
Understanding the Cultural Policies of Postcolonial Polities .....	310
A Cultural Policy Research Framework for Indonesia .....	311
Bibliography .....	314

## Table of Tables

<b>Table 2.1:</b> The Strategic Splitting of <i>Balai Pustaka</i> and <i>Bacaan Liar</i> Publications.....	62
<b>Table 2.2:</b> Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana’s Division between Indonesia and Pre-Indonesia.....	69
<b>Table 2.3:</b> Sanusi Pane’s Divisions between a Balanced East-West Culture and Either Eastern or Western Culture.....	70
<b>Table 4.1:</b> Directorate of Culture Budgets (Rp. Thousand).....	184
<b>Table 5.1:</b> Recommendations of the Different Groups at the <i>Planning Dialogue for Culture and Tourism in West Java</i> .....	228
<b>Table 6.1:</b> Cultural Parks by Province and Year Established.....	237
<b>Table 6.2:</b> Cultural Park Activities as Specified in the <i>Technical Instructions for the Management and Development of the Arts in the Regions</i> .....	241
<b>Table 7.1:</b> The Ten Local Culture Projects, their Duration and a Brief Description.....	275
<b>Table 7.2:</b> Funding for IDKD Stream Projects by Year (Rp. Thousand).....	277
<b>Table 7.3:</b> Narrative Structure of Chapters in <i>Yogya in Passing</i> .....	295

## Abstract

This thesis examines official cultural policy in Indonesia, focussing on the cultural policy of the national governments from 1950 until 2003. Drawing on Michel Foucault's writings about government and debates about cultural policy in Cultural Studies, the study proposes that the features of cultural policy in Indonesia are primarily determined by the changing ways that the state has put culture to work in its versions of modern governance.

Part I of the thesis provides a history of official cultural policy, including a background chapter on the late colonial era and the Japanese occupation. Although contemporary cultural policy was first articulated within Western liberal democracies to shape self-governing national citizens, the Dutch colonial cultural policy differed in that it assumed indigenous subjects had reduced capacities and focussed on managing ethnic populations. The cultural policies of subsequent governments maintained the twin imperatives of 'improving' individuals and managing populations, but with different understandings of both imperatives. While a more autonomous subject was assumed during Constitutional Democracy, Guided Democracy exercised greater state guidance as part of Sukarno's mobilisation of the population behind his political program. Cultural policy during the New Order era rejected Sukarno's 'politicisation' of culture, replaced 'improvement' with 'development' and further strengthened the role of the state in providing cultural guidance, a move justified by designating Indonesians backward by modern standards. The Japanese administration was the first government to address a national population. Relations among indigenous ethnic populations and between ethnicity and the nation were addressed in cultural policy from 1956 and were central to cultural policy throughout the New Order era. Part II of the thesis consists of two case studies of cultural programs in the New Order and Reform eras: (1) the arts councils and cultural parks and (2) a cultural research project. It explores New Order centralism, demonstrating the heterogeneity between different levels of the state and how governmental goals imbued particular practices and objects with special significance and meaning by constructing them as culture.

Cultural policy in the post-Suharto period is addressed in both Parts I and II. While the practices of the New Order era are generally continuing, decentralisation created the possibility of a plurality of cultural policies across Indonesia, as lower levels of government are responsible for administering cultural policy. Decentralisation could result in a more participatory cultural policy as more cultural practices are addressed or a narrowing of cultural policy if conservative ethnic identity politics drives changes.

## Acknowledgements

My first thanks and greatest feelings of gratitude are for my supervisor, Krishna Sen, who provided me not only with academic guidance but whose friendship and advice has assisted me in many more ways.

This thesis would not have been possible without the friendships and kindness of the many people I met in Indonesia. Special thanks to Taufik Rahzen for his generosity and providing me with an inspiring place of residence in Bandung and Rusdi Muchtar for both sponsoring my visa and providing generous assistance. Bisri Effendi, Baso, Achmad Suaedy and my other friends at *Desantara* also receive special thanks for long conversations and their friendship. Thanks to Edy Utama for putting me up in Padang and for the most interesting and chaotic short-trip I have so far experienced and to Wira Satah, Benny Riau, Al azhar and my other friends at *Bandar SERAI* for their friendship and helping me out of a jam. Thanks also to Endo Suanda, my friends from the Directorate of Culture and all of the other people with whom I laughed, chatted and debated in my travels across Indonesia. Their hospitality and acceptance were truly amazing.

I am also grateful for the inspiration and generosity of a number of scholars that I have met in the course of my studies. Thanks must firstly go to Clem Macintyre, Greg McCarthy and Ken and Liz Skinner for their advice and belief during my undergraduate years. Ken and Liz receive a special thanks for the late-night coffee and chocolates before assignment deadlines. I am exceedingly grateful for the advice of Ian Chalmers and Jon Stratton in the early part of my doctoral research, David Hill while on fieldwork, Edward Aspinall for his detailed comments on some early writings and Colin Brown for his detailed and thought-provoking comments on the first two chapters. My thanks also go to Greg Fealy, Keith Foulcher, Greg Acciaioli, Paul Genoni and Barbara Hatley for their counsel and comments.

Numerous friends have contributed to this thesis through both their comments on my writing and by keeping me sane. A special thanks to Nick Herriman with who I exchanged chapters, debated ideas and shared Ph.D experiences. Special thanks also to

Siti Zuhro and to Budi, Fifi and Ahma Irawanto for their friendship and Budi's comments on my writings. Thanks to Sandra and Imam Sudjudi who showed incredible forbearance with the Indonesian bureaucracy over a five-month period and demonstrated great strategic use of high Sundanese to retrieve my final piece of data, to Ida for her assistance particularly with translations and to Krishna's other research students for the seminars, comments, coffees and camaraderie. Thanks to Rachel Diprose who made my time in Jakarta a ball, Steph Coots for our chats and to Romit, Mike, Htwe-htwe and Noor for making me welcome when I first arrived in Perth. Thanks also to Kate Gregory, Hugh and Anna Kesson, Phil Dobson, Tim Balfour, Denis O'Donovan, Tamsin Jones, Keith Croker and Kate Croker for reading and commenting on chapters and making my breaks from the thesis thoroughly enjoyable. I am also exceedingly grateful to Keith, Jenny, Jane and Jeremy Croker and Laetitia for their immense generosity and for forgiving my many absences from family functions.

I gratefully acknowledge John Curtin University of Technology for the John Curtin Scholarship that made my doctoral research possible. Thanks also to the Department of Political and Social Change at the Australian National University for a two-month visiting fellowship that allowed me to complete my archival research.

My final three thanks are for my amazing family who have been my backbone. Thanks to my parents, Brant and Neva Jones, and my siblings, Tamsin and Sim Jones, for their unwavering support, love and friendship. Thanks to Christina and Bara for their understanding and open hearts. Most of all, I thank Kate Croker, who experienced the highs and lows alongside me, endured the breaking of many promised deadlines, was my most committed editor and critic, and greatest source of support.

## Preface

Two sets of experiences helped me clarify the direction of my research. When I was on fieldwork in Sumatra, two people in different provinces who were actively involved in the arts said independently to me that they did not know what Indonesian culture (*kebudayaan Indonsia*) was. They felt it was something alien, talked about by, and used to justify the actions of a far-away central government. While most other Indonesians with whom I talked did not hold this view, there was a widespread confusion over the purpose of cultural policy and dismay at the effects of centrally generated policy on local practices. While at a seminar in Australia, after discovering that I was researching Indonesian cultural policy a senior academic asked, with a roguish smile, whether Indonesia had a cultural policy. While this was a dig from a political economist, it also indicated that while it had been established that other countries had cultural policies, this was not the case for Indonesia. These experiences identified cultural policy as a puzzling, blurry space within two disparate communities.

My understanding of what I was doing grew from the question of how best to explore and map this space. I do not view my research as charting the linear stages of development of cultural policy. Instead, I have endeavoured to write about the contingency of the present condition of cultural policy – a history of what Michael Shapiro calls ‘what we are now’:

This ‘what we are now’ is not meant as a simple description of the current state of things. Rather, it is an attempt to show that the ‘now’ is an unstable victory won at the expense of other possible nows. (Shapiro, 1992, p. 12)

I have tried to write about cultural policy in a way that allows for different possibilities and choices, both in Indonesia and abroad. My goal has been to contribute to the debate, in particular in Indonesia, about the state’s role and relationship to culture in its myriad forms. This thesis in many ways arises from the long discussions with numerous friends and colleagues in Indonesia who have an interest in cultural policy. I hope that my research can clarify issues and assist reflection about future directions.

Modern Indonesian spelling is used in the body of the text. Where names and titles use earlier conventions, I have followed the original spelling with two exceptions. I have used

the modern Indonesian spelling for *Pujangga Baru* and *Balai Pustaka*,<sup>1</sup> as this has become the convention after considerable contemporary research. I adopt the English-language convention of citing an author's last name in this thesis because many Indonesian authors publish in English as well as Indonesian, and I have applied this convention to Indonesian publications for consistency. In the case of articles from the Indonesian daily newspaper *Kompas*, I have used the journalists' abbreviated names, as the difficulty of associating abbreviated names with full names makes the abbreviated names the easiest way of tracking down the original articles. All of the translations in the text are mine except when otherwise indicated. The reference system I have used is the American Psychological Association (APA) citation system.

---

<sup>1</sup> Originally *Poedjangga Baroe* and *Balai Poestaka*.