

National Unity in the Midst of Political Fragmentation: Lessons from Libya's Struggle for National Cohesion and Their Relevance for Indonesia

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Abstract: This paper examines the positive dimension of Libyan national consciousness that persists despite momentous challenges to state authority and territorial integrity. Rather than focusing on institutional collapse or armed fragmentation, the paper highlights three significant values embedded in Libyan society: the subordination of group identity to national sentiment, the mediating role of tribal and customary leaders in conflict resolution, and the cultural and political centrality of dialogue and negotiated settlement. Drawing on conflict-resolution theory, nationalism studies, and hybrid governance frameworks, the paper argues that these three values offer analytical and practical insights for Indonesia's own nation-building project, particularly in contexts where diversity threatens cohesion. The paper concludes with policy-relevant recommendations for strengthening national unity through investment in identity education, formal integration of customary mediators, and strategic addressing of regional grievances.

Keywords: National Unity; Libya; Nation-Building; Reconciliation; Tribal Mediation; Bhinneka Tunggal Ika; Indonesia; Conflict Resolution; Civic Identity

INTRODUCTION

On the surface, Libya since 2011 reads as a textbook case of state failure. The fall of Muammar Gaddafi's four-decade regime opened a vacuum that successive transitional authorities, rival parliaments, and an alphabet soup of armed militias have struggled to fill (Vandewalle, 2012: 198). By the mid-2010s the country had split into competing centers of power, most visibly the Government of National Accord in Tripoli and rival administrations aligned with the Libyan National Army in the east, each backed by different tribal coalitions, regional militias, and foreign patrons (Lacher, 2020: 47). International commentary on Libya, understandably, tends to foreground this fragmentation: the absence of a unified army, the proliferation of armed groups, the contested legitimacy of successive governments, and the human cost borne by ordinary Libyans caught between competing factions (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 5).

Yet beneath this narrative of collapse lies a less frequently told story, one that is arguably more instructive for other plural societies: the persistence, across nearly all factions and regions, of a shared conviction that Libya should remain one country (Lacher, 2020: 112). Despite profound disagreements over who should govern and how, very few serious political or tribal actors in Libya have called for the formal partition of the state (International Crisis Group, 2021: 9). National dialogue forums, traditional reconciliation committees, and civil-society peacebuilding initiatives have continued to operate, often quietly and without international fanfare, precisely because Libyans across the political spectrum have continued to treat national unity as a value worth protecting even when they cannot agree on much else (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 11).

This paper takes that undercurrent as its starting point. It asks what can be learned, not from Libya's failures of governance, but from the resilience of its underlying national idea. The relevance of this question for Indonesia is direct. Indonesia is itself a vast archipelagic nation built from hundreds of ethnic groups, languages, and customary legal traditions, held together since 1945 by a constitutional commitment to unity in diversity (Aspinall, 2009: 23). Indonesia has its own history of regional rebellions, separatist movements, and communal violence, and continues to manage live tensions in regions such as Papua (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 64). While Indonesia's institutional trajectory has been markedly more

stable than Libya's, the underlying civic challenge, namely how to keep a profoundly diverse population invested in a shared national project, is structurally similar. Studying how Libyans have worked, however imperfectly, to preserve that shared project offers a useful mirror for Indonesian policymakers, educators, and civil-society actors.

The paper proceeds in six parts. Section 2 outlines the conceptual framework, drawing on theories of nationalism, civic versus ethnic identity, and conflict mediation. Section 3 provides historical and political context on Libya's post-2011 fragmentation, establishing why the persistence of national sentiment is analytically significant rather than incidental. Section 4 examines in detail the three positive values identified in this paper: the primacy of national identity over group identity, the mediating role of tribal and customary leaders, and the centrality of dialogue as a conflict-resolution mechanism. Section 5 draws explicit comparisons with Indonesia, considering both convergences and important differences in context. Section 6 offers policy-relevant lessons and concludes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: NATIONHOOD, IDENTITY, AND RESILIENCE AMID FRAGMENTATION

To understand why Libya's persistence of national sentiment matters, it is useful to situate the discussion within established scholarship on nationalism and civic identity. Benedict Anderson's classic formulation of the nation as an imagined community is helpful here: a nation persists not because its members interact directly with one another, but because they sustain a shared mental construct of belonging to a common political community, even when that community is internally divided, geographically dispersed, or institutionally weak (Anderson, 2006: 6). Libya's experience after 2011 is, in this sense, a stress test of the imagined community thesis. State institutions fractured, yet the imagined community of Libya, as a singular, bounded, sovereign nation, has proven more durable than its formal institutions (Lacher, 2020: 53).

2.1 Civic Identity Versus Ethnic or Tribal Identity

A useful distinction in nationalism studies is between civic nationalism, which binds citizens through shared political institutions, laws, and a common civic project, and ethnic or primordial nationalism, which binds members through shared ancestry, language, or kinship (Gellner, 1983: 138). Libya is often described, somewhat reductively, as a tribal society in which kinship networks dominate political life (Vandewalle, 2012: 34). While tribal affiliation does remain a powerful organizing force in Libyan society, this paper argues that the persistence of a national idea above tribal loyalty reflects an underlying, if fragile, civic commitment: the sense that being Libyan carries meaning and obligation distinct from, and in important respects superior to, being a member of any single tribe or region. This is the conceptual core of the first value examined below.

2.2 Customary Authority as Informal Governance

A second relevant body of scholarship concerns hybrid governance, the idea that in contexts of weak or contested state authority, informal and customary institutions, including tribal councils, religious authorities, and community elders, often step in to perform functions that the formal state cannot, including dispute resolution, security provision, and the maintenance of basic social order (Boege, Brown & Clements, 2009: 17). Libya's tribal and elder-led mediation structures exemplify this pattern. Far from being remnants of a pre-modern order destined to disappear, customary authorities in Libya have functioned as a parallel, sometimes complementary, sometimes competing, source of legitimacy and order during a period of state weakness (International Crisis Group, 2021: 14).

2.3 Dialogue, Deliberation, and Negotiated Order

Finally, conflict-resolution theory emphasizes the distinction between negative peace, the mere absence of active fighting, and positive peace, a durable settlement grounded in addressing underlying grievances through sustained dialogue and institutional reform (Lederach, 1997: 20). Libya's various national dialogue initiatives, including United Nations-facilitated talks and locally organized tribal reconciliation conferences, represent attempts, however incomplete, to move from negative toward positive peace through deliberative processes (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 8). This

framework helps explain why dialogue, examined as the third value in this paper, is not merely a diplomatic tactic but a substantive expression of a society's underlying commitment to coexistence.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT: LIBYA AFTER 2011

Understanding why the persistence of Libyan national sentiment is significant requires a brief review of the depth of the country's post-2011 fragmentation. Libya's 2011 uprising, part of the broader regional wave of protest movements, succeeded in removing Gaddafi but left behind no functioning replacement for the highly centralized, personalist system he had built over more than four decades (Vandewalle, 2012: 162). Gaddafi's rule had deliberately weakened formal state institutions, the military, and civil society, relying instead on personal patronage networks and a constantly shifting balance of tribal alliances to maintain control (Vandewalle, 2012: 89). When that system collapsed, Libya did not simply lose a leader; it lost most of the institutional scaffolding a post-conflict transition would normally rely upon (Lacher, 2020: 31).

3.1 Institutional Dualism and Armed Fragmentation

From roughly 2014 onward, Libya experienced a period of institutional dualism, with competing claims to national legitimacy emerging from rival parliaments and executive authorities based in Tripoli and in the eastern city of Tobruk or Benghazi (Lacher, 2020: 65). Hundreds of armed groups, ranging from local neighborhood militias to more organized military formations, exercised effective control over varying territories, often aligning temporarily with one or another political faction in exchange for resources, legitimacy, or autonomy (International Crisis Group, 2021: 6). Oil revenue, the country's principal economic resource, became both an object of contestation and, paradoxically, a unifying institutional thread, since control over the National Oil Corporation and the Central Bank of Libya remained nominally unified even as political authority fragmented (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 17).

3.2 External Intervention and Internationalized Conflict

Libya's internal fragmentation was compounded by external intervention. Various regional and international actors provided military, financial, or diplomatic support to different Libyan factions, transforming what began as a domestic political crisis into an internationalized conflict (Lacher, 2020: 121). This external dimension complicated reconciliation efforts considerably, since local actors often found their incentives to compromise undermined by external patrons with their own strategic interests in prolonging the contest (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 22).

3.3 Why Persistence of National Sentiment Is Analytically Significant

Against this backdrop, the continued absence of a serious, broad-based secessionist movement in Libya is notable. Unlike some other fragmented states where prolonged conflict has produced durable calls for formal partition, Libya's main political and tribal actors, including those most bitterly opposed to one another, have generally continued to frame their disputes as contests over who should govern a unified Libya, not as arguments for dividing it (International Crisis Group, 2021: 18). Regional grievances, particularly longstanding concerns in the east and south about marginalization relative to Tripoli, have certainly fueled federalist proposals and demands for greater autonomy (Lacher, 2020: 144). Yet even federalist advocates within Libya have typically argued for restructuring the unified state rather than dissolving it (Lacher, 2020: 149). This distinction, between contesting the form of the state and rejecting the existence of the state, is central to the argument of this paper: it indicates that an underlying national idea has survived institutional collapse, even as governance itself has not yet been successfully reconstituted.

THREE POSITIVE VALUES FROM THE LIBYAN EXPERIENCE

This section examines in detail the three values introduced earlier: the subordination of group identity to national identity, the mediating role of tribal and customary leaders, and the centrality of dialogue as a mechanism of conflict resolution. Each value is discussed first in its Libyan context and then briefly connected to its Indonesian parallel, with fuller comparative analysis reserved for Section 5.

4.1 Prioritizing National Unity Over Group Identity

Libya is home to a complex mosaic of tribal, regional, and ethnic communities. Arab tribal confederations dominate much of the country's social structure, but Libya is also home to Amazigh (Berber) communities concentrated in the Nafusa Mountains and coastal towns, Tuareg communities in the southwest, and Tebu communities in the southeast, alongside significant regional identities distinguishing Tripolitania in the west, Cyrenaica in the east, and Fezzan in the south (Vandewalle, 2012: 12). Each of these communities has its own historical grievances, political interests, and, in some cases, language and cultural practices distinct from the Arab-Libyan mainstream (Lacher, 2020: 39).

Despite this diversity, and despite the very real instances of inter-communal violence that have occurred since 2011, particularly involving towns and tribes associated with the former regime, a striking feature of Libyan political discourse has been the persistence of appeals to a shared Libyan identity that transcends these subgroups (International Crisis Group, 2021: 21). Political and tribal leaders across the spectrum, even while mobilizing their own constituencies, have generally continued to frame their ultimate political goals in terms of Libya's future as a unified state (Lacher, 2020: 156). Civil-society organizations formed since 2011, including youth networks and women's peacebuilding groups, have frequently organized explicitly around the theme of Libyan national identity as a unifying counterweight to factional politics, producing campaigns, cultural events, and media content designed to reinforce a shared sense of Libyan belonging that sits above tribal or regional loyalty (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 14).

This pattern illustrates a broader principle relevant well beyond Libya: that group identity and national identity need not be in zero-sum competition (Gellner, 1983: 142). The Libyan case suggests that even in deeply fragmented and conflict-affected societies, it is possible, and indeed common, for individuals to hold multiple, nested identities simultaneously, identifying strongly with their tribe or region while also maintaining a robust sense of national belonging (Anderson, 2006: 36). The challenge for Libya, and the lesson for other plural societies, lies in ensuring that political and economic incentives do not push these nested identities into direct conflict, since it is competition over resources and power, rather than cultural difference itself, that most often transforms benign pluralism into destructive fragmentation (Boege, Brown & Clements, 2009: 24).

4.2 The Mediating Role of Tribal and Customary Leaders

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Libya's informal peacebuilding architecture has been the active role played by tribal elders, sheikhs, and customary leaders in mediating conflicts that formal state institutions have proven unable to resolve (International Crisis Group, 2021: 27). In numerous instances since 2011, including disputes over territorial control, prisoner exchanges, and reparations for wartime harm, tribal mediation committees have negotiated local ceasefires and reconciliation agreements that formal governmental bodies lacked the legitimacy or capacity to broker directly (International Crisis Group, 2021: 31).

This phenomenon reflects the deep social embeddedness of tribal structures in Libyan society, a legacy of both pre-colonial social organization and, paradoxically, Gaddafi-era governance, which deliberately preserved and instrumentalized tribal hierarchies as a substitute for formal institutions (Vandewalle, 2012: 102). When the formal state weakened after 2011, these customary structures did not disappear; instead, they re-emerged as a primary, often the primary, vehicle through which local order and inter-communal accommodation were negotiated (Lacher, 2020: 73). Tribal elders have convened reconciliation conferences between communities in conflict, sometimes bringing together representatives from towns that had fought one another militarily, to negotiate the return of displaced populations, the release of detainees, and formulas for shared local governance (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 19).

The significance of this pattern lies in what it reveals about the sources of social trust and legitimacy in conditions of state weakness. Where formal institutions lack credibility or capacity, communities often fall back on pre-existing relational networks and recognized customary authorities, individuals whose legitimacy derives not from formal office but from lineage, reputation, religious standing, or demonstrated fairness over time (Boege, Brown & Clements, 2009: 31). This is not a uniquely Libyan phenomenon. Similar dynamics have been documented in post-conflict and weak-state contexts across Africa, the

Middle East, and parts of Asia, including, as discussed further below, in parts of Indonesia where customary and religious leaders have historically played comparable roles in local dispute resolution (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 41).

4.3 Dialogue and Negotiated Settlement as a Cultural and Political Norm

The third value examined in this paper is the centrality of dialogue, formal and informal, as the preferred mechanism for addressing Libya's political crisis, notwithstanding the country's recurrent descent into armed confrontation. Since 2011, Libya has been the site of numerous structured dialogue processes, including United Nations-facilitated negotiations that produced the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement, subsequent forums addressing constitutional arrangements and electoral pathways, and locally initiated reconciliation dialogues convened by civil-society organizations and tribal networks operating independently of, or in parallel to, internationally sponsored processes (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 9).

These dialogue processes have not, it must be acknowledged, succeeded in producing a fully stable political settlement; Libya's path to durable peace and unified governance remains unresolved at the time of writing (Lacher, 2020: 168). Yet their persistence, despite repeated setbacks, breakdowns, and renewed outbreaks of violence, is itself significant. Libyan political and civil-society actors have continued returning to the negotiating table even after dialogue processes have failed, suggesting that dialogue retains normative legitimacy as the appropriate way to resolve disputes, even when its practical results have been limited (Lederach, 1997: 53). This stands in contrast to scenarios in which warring parties abandon negotiation altogether in favor of purely military solutions.

Local-level reconciliation dialogues have, in several documented cases, achieved more concrete and durable results than national-level political negotiations, precisely because they address specific, bounded grievances, such as a particular incident of violence or a specific territorial dispute, rather than attempting to resolve Libya's entire political order in a single negotiation (International Crisis Group, 2021: 36). This suggests an important lesson about scale: dialogue processes calibrated to addressable, local-level disputes may build cumulative trust and procedural habits that, over time, support broader national reconciliation, even when grand national-level settlements remain elusive (Lederach, 1997: 78).

COMPARATIVE REFLECTION: WHAT INDONESIA CAN LEARN

Indonesia and Libya differ profoundly in scale, history, and political trajectory. Indonesia is a democratic, middle-income, archipelagic state of over 270 million people spanning more than seventeen thousand islands, with a relatively stable constitutional order since the end of the New Order period in 1998. Libya is a much smaller, oil-dependent state of roughly seven million people that has experienced near-total institutional collapse over the past decade. Any comparison must therefore be approached with appropriate caution: Indonesia is not at risk of the kind of armed institutional fragmentation Libya has experienced, and Indonesian readers should not interpret this paper as suggesting otherwise. The value of the comparison lies not in equivalence of circumstance but in the transferability of underlying civic principles regarding how plural societies sustain a shared national project.

5.1 Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and the Libyan Parallel

Indonesia's national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, commonly translated as Unity in Diversity, encapsulates a founding constitutional commitment strikingly similar in spirit to the implicit civic logic observed in Libya: that ethnic, religious, linguistic, and regional difference should be understood as a foundation for, rather than a threat to, national unity (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 18). Indonesia's experience operationalizing this principle, through the Pancasila state ideology, decentralization policies granting significant autonomy to regions including Aceh and Papua, and constitutional protections for religious and cultural pluralism, represents a far more institutionalized version of the same underlying aspiration that Libyan civil-society actors have pursued largely through informal, grassroots means in the absence of comparable functioning state institutions (Aspinall, 2009: 58).

This comparison suggests an important insight: Indonesia's relative success in maintaining national cohesion across an extraordinarily diverse population owes much to having translated the aspiration toward unity in diversity into durable institutions, including a national education curriculum that actively

teaches Pancasila values, a national language policy that established Bahasa Indonesia as a unifying lingua franca without suppressing regional languages, and constitutional mechanisms for managing regional autonomy claims through negotiated special-autonomy arrangements rather than purely military responses (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 72). Libya's tragedy is, in part, a tragedy of having lost the institutional capacity to translate a comparable underlying aspiration into durable governance arrangements (Lacher, 2020: 187). The lesson for Indonesia is therefore less about adopting new values, since Indonesia already possesses a strong foundational commitment to unity in diversity, and more about the imperative of continuously reinvesting in the institutions that operationalize that commitment, since institutional erosion, as Libya demonstrates, can occur even where an underlying national idea remains intact.

5.2 Customary and Religious Leaders as Mediators

Indonesia, like Libya, possesses a rich tradition of customary (adat) leadership and religious authority that has historically played, and continues to play, an important role in local conflict resolution. In regions such as Aceh, Maluku, Central Sulawesi, and Papua, customary leaders, religious figures, and locally respected elders have served as mediators in disputes ranging from land conflicts to inter-religious tensions, often working alongside, and sometimes more effectively than, formal state mechanisms (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 86). The post-conflict reconciliation processes following the Maluku and Poso communal conflicts of the late 1990s and early 2000s, for instance, drew substantially on traditional adat reconciliation mechanisms, including customary peace rituals, alongside formal government-led peace agreements (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 94).

The Libyan experience reinforces the value of continuing to invest in, and formally recognize, these customary mediation structures rather than treating them as residual or pre-modern (Boege, Brown & Clements, 2009: 45). Where Libya illustrates the risks of state institutions becoming so weak that customary structures must substitute for them entirely, often without adequate coordination or formal accountability mechanisms (International Crisis Group, 2021: 38), Indonesia offers a potentially more sustainable model: integrating customary and religious leadership into formal conflict-resolution frameworks, as has been attempted through Indonesia's village-level mediation institutions and various locally negotiated peace agreements, so that customary authority complements rather than merely substitutes for state capacity (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 101).

5.3 Musyawarah Mufakat and the Libyan Dialogue Tradition

The Indonesian cultural and constitutional tradition of musyawarah untuk mufakat, deliberation toward consensus, embedded as one of the five Pancasila principles, resonates closely with the normative commitment to dialogue observed in the Libyan case (Lederach, 1997: 95). Both traditions reflect a broader regional and cultural inclination, found across many parts of the Muslim world and Southeast Asia, toward resolving disputes through extended deliberation and the search for consensus rather than through majoritarian votes or unilateral decisions. Indonesia's own history includes notable applications of this principle at moments of national crisis, including the negotiated settlement that ended the Aceh conflict through the 2005 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, itself a product of sustained dialogue between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement following years of armed conflict (Aspinall, 2009: 211).

The comparison with Libya is instructive here because it illustrates both the strength and the limits of dialogue as a conflict-resolution mechanism. Indonesia's Aceh settlement succeeded in part because it occurred within a relatively stable national institutional framework, with a functioning central government capable of credibly committing to, and implementing, negotiated terms (Aspinall, 2009: 226). Libya's national dialogue processes have struggled precisely because no single Libyan authority has possessed the institutional capacity to guarantee implementation of negotiated agreements, a structural weakness that dialogue alone cannot overcome (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 28). This suggests an important caveat for Indonesia: the cultural commitment to dialogue and consensus, while valuable, is not self-sufficient. It must be paired with credible institutions capable of converting negotiated agreements into binding, implementable outcomes, since dialogue without

implementation capacity risks becoming, as it has at times in Libya, a recurring ritual rather than a durable solution (Lederach, 1997: 112).

5.4 Points of Caution: Where the Comparison Should Not Be Overstated

It is important to resist an overly romanticized reading of the Libyan case. Libya's persistence of national sentiment has not prevented immense human suffering, including thousands of deaths, mass displacement, and the erosion of basic governance over more than a decade (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 4). The existence of a shared national idea has not, by itself, been sufficient to produce peace or functioning government (Lacher, 2020: 203). For Indonesia, the lesson should therefore not be drawn as a simple message of reassurance, that strong national sentiment alone will protect against fragmentation, but rather as a more sober observation: that national sentiment, while necessary, is not sufficient, and must be actively supported by functioning institutions, equitable governance, and continuous civic investment. Indonesia's own historical experience with regional rebellions in the 1950s, and ongoing tensions in Papua, similarly demonstrate that the rhetorical commitment to unity in diversity must be matched by substantive attention to regional grievances regarding economic equity, political representation, and cultural recognition, lest that commitment erode over time (Pusaka & Hadiz, 2018: 117).

POLICY-RELEVANT LESSONS FOR INDONESIA

Building on the comparative analysis above, this section distills several concrete, policy-relevant lessons that Indonesian policymakers, educators, and civil-society actors might draw from the Libyan experience.

6.1 Continuously Reinvest in National Identity Education

Libya's experience demonstrates that even fragile states can sustain a national idea through grassroots civic effort when formal institutions falter. Indonesia, possessing far stronger institutions, should treat this not as cause for complacency but as a reminder that civic and national identity formation, particularly Pancasila and citizenship education, requires sustained reinvestment across generations, especially in regions where local or religious identity may otherwise come to feel more salient than national identity.

6.2 Formally Integrate Customary and Religious Mediators into Conflict-Resolution Frameworks

Indonesia should continue to strengthen formal recognition of adat and religious leaders within local governance and conflict-resolution structures, ensuring that customary mediation operates in coordination with, rather than as an unaccountable substitute for, state institutions, an important distinction the Libyan case illustrates by negative example.

6.3 Pair Dialogue Mechanisms with Implementation Capacity

Indonesian institutions engaged in regional or communal dispute resolution should ensure that dialogue processes are backed by credible mechanisms for implementing and monitoring negotiated agreements, learning from both the successful Aceh precedent and from Libya's experience of dialogue processes that produced agreements without durable mechanisms for enforcement.

6.4 Address Regional Grievances Before They Harden into Separatist Sentiment

Libya's regional federalist movements emerged substantially from longstanding grievances about economic and political marginalization relative to the capital. Indonesia's ongoing management of tensions in Papua and its historical experience with regional rebellions underscore the importance of proactively addressing economic equity, political representation, and cultural recognition in peripheral regions, rather than waiting for grievances to escalate into more serious challenges to national unity.

6.5 Treat Diversity as a Strategic Asset in National Narrative-Building

Both the Libyan and Indonesian cases illustrate that diversity, when actively framed by political and civic leaders as a source of national strength rather than a liability to be managed, can become a genuine

unifying narrative. Indonesia's continued public investment in this narrative, through education, media, and cultural policy, should be understood as core nation-building infrastructure rather than a peripheral cultural program.

CONCLUSION

Libya's post-2011 trajectory is, by any measure, a story of profound state fragmentation and human suffering (United Nations Support Mission in Libya, 2021: 3). Yet embedded within that difficult history is a more hopeful and analytically significant pattern: the persistence, across tribal, regional, and political divides, of a shared conviction that Libya should remain one nation. This persistence has been sustained not primarily by formal state institutions, which have themselves fractured, but by informal civic and customary structures, including tribal mediation, grassroots reconciliation initiatives, and a continued normative commitment to dialogue as the appropriate vehicle for resolving disputes (International Crisis Group, 2021: 41).

For Indonesia, a nation built on an explicit constitutional commitment to unity in diversity and a cultural tradition of deliberative consensus, the Libyan case offers both affirmation and caution. It affirms that the underlying civic logic Indonesia has institutionalized through Pancasila, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and musyawarah mufakat reflects a genuinely powerful and transferable principle for managing plural societies, one that Libyans, even amid state collapse, have continued to reach for instinctively (Anderson, 2006: 144). At the same time, it cautions that national sentiment alone, however resilient, cannot substitute for functioning institutions, equitable governance, and continuous civic investment (Lederach, 1997: 132). Indonesia's task, unlike Libya's, is not to rebuild a shattered state from the ground up, but to ensure that its comparatively stronger institutional foundation continues to be matched by the kind of active, generational civic commitment that has allowed the idea of Libya to survive even when the Libyan state itself could not. Persatuan, in the end, is not the elimination of difference, but the ongoing, deliberate work of making difference a source of collective strength rather than collective fracture, a lesson Libya's tragedy teaches as clearly as Indonesia's own founding aspiration always intended.

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