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Valuable Crime Prevention Initiatives : Case of Indonesia

Adrianus Meliala*

Abstract:

The dilemma of crime prevention versus crime suppression is the perspective used. There will be some headings dedicated to disclose initiatives or programs that exist and relate to crime prevention mechanism within society. Indonesia is known as a country with abundant local and traditional values and mechanisms. Of around 600 hundreds tribes and ethnicities, each has their own culturally specific and unique attributes, starting from languages, clothes, dances, rites of passage, childrens upbringing to traditional houses. Also worth noted is the prevalence of local values and mechanisms which directly and/or indirectly relate to the security of people. Security industry in Indonesia is now growing due to the increasing dynamics of Indonesian economy, especially in big cities. Not only the police is everywhere, but security personnels working for private companies too. The Indonesians are now awaiting for whether positive situations or initiatives regarding crime prevention efforts will win or lose.

Key Word : *Crime Prevention, Security, Police.*

Introduction

As a populous and less developed country, Indonesia is quite fortunate for having a moderate crime rate as well as receiving a relatively low impact of crime toward the fabric of Indonesian society. At least, "crime problem" in general quite rarely occupies everybody's minds or affects people's daily behaviors. Even terrorists threats do not produce a social breakdown as anxiously expected in areas where terrorists once operated. There is no single area in Indonesia which suffers from serious crime problem so that it becomes dangerous for certain people to pass by or stay in whether day or night. There are also fery few occassions in which

members of the public in general become so frightened of crime threats.

The above situation is greatly contributed by the profile of conventional crime which indicates steady figure since the last decade, despite the growing population that leads to 250 million people by 2012. Other categories of crimes, commonly called contemporary ones, have been generally admitted very much progressive and less controllable than conventional crimes but, fortunately, however they create less fear of crime.

Due to that, the writer can not say that Indonesia is in position to be compared to Japan since the later has terribly lower crime rate resulting in Japan as the safest place in the world. What the writer can say is that, considering various societal, political, economical as well as

* Prof. Adrianus Meliala, Ph.D, Criminologist of University of Indonesia; Commissioner of the National Police Commission.

ecological factors affecting Indonesia since the last decade, this country should have indicated higher prevalence of crime as well as horrifying crime dynamic rather than what Indonesians have today. It is a miracle that Indonesia as a nation-state may still exist considering (potential) burdens, whether from within or outside, that are facing Indonesia's central and local governments and also people.

This paper will, directly or not, explain why such a situation may exist. The dilemma of crime prevention versus crime suppression is the perspective used. There will be some headings dedicated to disclose initiatives or programs that exist and relate to crime prevention mechanism within society. Analysis on limitation of those initiatives/programs and their fates in the future of Indonesia will also be discussed.

Urban People with Village Attitudes

One explanation why Indonesia enjoys a relatively low crime rate relates to the fact that Indonesians in general have basically Asian characteristics which acknowledge strong family relationship as well as uphold local values. Without too much discussion of what actually Asian characteristics are, what people may see from Indonesians' daily life is the fact that Indonesians value their community members very highly. People know one another and, furthermore, people help their own fellows in various and serious matters such as preparations of a marriage ceremony or arrangement of a funeral session. Seniority, hierarchy and social structure are also several attributes that Indonesians value very highly. This may also be reflected by, among others, the way parents are respected or expect to be respected by children.

All and all, the above situation is very positive to prevent crime in general sense. Social fabrics still quite strongly exist to deter people from committing crimes or conducting deviant behaviors. Furthermore, this close-knit community is also beneficial to support the police to discover crime since people know whomever moving in their area.

Such attitudes described above actually persist in rural areas of Indonesia. While a big number of Indonesians are moving to be urbanites, such village attitudes are also brought along and implemented in their new surroundings. For people who have stayed in big cities for some time, amazingly, they still maintain their old habits in terms of treating or be treated by others. Some modifications seem to happen since faster dynamics of big cities should also be accomodated. However, in general, the village attitudes are still there and being the social capital of Indonesians who dwell in urban settings.

There are also clear signs however, the village attitudes have been diminished and eroded. More and more examples can be found among Indonesian urbanites today that know nothing of their surrounding or have no contribution to their neighborhood. Egocentrism enhances, segregation increases and level of tolerance decreases -- these may become our daily pictures. The reasons that why Indonesian terrorists were so relaxed in preparing their actions relate to, among others, people's ignorance to what one another was doing. The higher prevalence of street crimes, as another example, has been another evidence that people seem to be ignorant toward others while in the public sphere. As the village attitudes diminish and replaced by urban attitudes, it is predicted that Indonesia's big cities will be no different

from cities all over the world.

From crime prevention perspective, this may be understood as this: that rooms for conventional crimes especially violence and street crime will be very much opened. Without group intervention, the decision to commit crimes or not will be solely depend upon individuals. While the quality of Indonesian individual in general may not be sophisticated enough to calculate possibility of being captured and imprisoned, as well as opportunity cost that follows, we will see more and more crime taken either by first offenders or by career ones.

Traditional Values and Mechanism

Indonesia is known as a country with abundant local and traditional values and mechanisms. Of around 600 hundreds tribes and ethnicities, each has their own culturally specific and unique attributes, starting from languages, clothes, dances, rites of passage, childrens upbringing to traditional houses. Also worth noted is the prevalence of local values and mechanisms which directly and/or indirectly relate to the security of people.

On local values and mechanisms which have direct relationship with security, there are several examples which are still alive and routinely implemented. An active local security mechanism, for example, can be found in Bali Island. This security officer, called *pecalang*, is activated to secure religious activities which are often held in that island. In another province, Banten, local security officers called *jawara* are popular among people as their assignment is to secure area which is far larger than just neighborhood from local thugs. Another example, such as Central Java province, we can also find the role of *jogoboyo*, who work closer

with state's apparatus to capture culprits or to prevent social disturbances. So far, despite the fact that those traditional security roles are now declining, people who perform those roles can get along with the police assigned in their area.

There are also local values and mechanisms which are not primarily security-motivated. However, such implementation of those local values and mechanisms may contribute to the secured situation. There are many tribes, for example, which have local mechanisms to achieve peace and justice according their own rules and standards. Indonesia is once again known having very rich customary laws applicable for specific followers. Such justice mechanism are certainly effective to prevent people from behaving improperly in the eyes of local leaders. *Tepung tawar*, for example, is popular among people living in central Sumatera to settle down conflicts. For North Molucca's people, *Liliali* is known as a mediation method often used to solve conflict as well as to achieve resolution while crimes occur despite its triviality or seriousity. Another example, *islah* is also another way for local people, especially Moslems, to achieve conflict resolution. For people who have abused local rules, local punishment may await for them, one extreme example is an eviction from community.

The Police: When Size Matters

In line with stronger capacity of the state to govern the country, the police has been developed and grown into a strong police organization. Up until 2010, the number of police personnel has reached 410.000 personnels. This number is two times higher than a decade ago when the police was still under themilitary.

It is clear that the police should thank

the Reformation Movement existed since the falling down of President Soeharto, 1998. There are many changes that take place in Indonesia post-Soeharto, one of them is the separation of the police from the armed forces. Since 35 years ago, as part of military, Indonesia National Police (or Polri) has suffered from a low number and low quality of personnel, lack of police technology and, at the utmost, its accountability and integrity as law enforcer officers.

Since the last ten years, the police has become the most controversial state organization in Indonesia since this received state budget 300% higher than 10 years ago. The police nowadays also enjoys stronger police power due to enaction of specific laws that contain specific enforcement jobs given to the police. The police is simply the strongest organization that outweighs Indonesian military in terms of manpower (military has 240.000 personnel) as well as political influence (two examples: police general are seconded in various departments and the military committee in the parliament has been liquidated).

Increasing its size (including manpower and facilities) has become the focus of police management since the first time the police being an autonomous organization directly under the President of Republic of Indonesia. Police educational institutions are ordered to be optimum in receiving new cadets. These new cadets are expected to be assigned everywhere as they will enhance the visibility of the police among people and also to achieve the United Nations' standard (1 officer for 500 inhabitants). So far, there are several provinces that have reached the standards such as Bali and Central Kalimantan.

In line with effort to increase the high visibility of personnel, police stations are also built everywhere. This also becomes the milestone of police jurisdiction which now follows the lay-out of civil government as initiated by Ministry of Home Affairs. There is an opinion that the fact that the police is everywhere is regarded effective in deterring people from committing street crime or conducting public disorder.

Starting 2005, another initiative has been launched by the headquarters, to enhance community policing throughout Indonesia. Indonesian police delivers Indonesian-type of community policing, called *Polmas* or *Perpolisian Masyarakat*, to enable people in general to have constructive engagement with the police so as to prevent crime that may occur and to eradicate crime which have occured.

Only recently, police management admits that having a big number of personnels also creates problem. A big number of personnels needs huge investment in the form of training or workshop, something that Indonesian police rarely prepare from the beginning. How to monitor and to evaluate performance also become a big issue at the moment as the government has promised to provide better salary for the police, based on performance.

Another situation that Indonesians become worry about the big size of the police that the strong police force tends to be reactive, "bandit catcher"-type of policing, instead of being crime preventor. The role of police mangement in any level seems to be very important to keep their personnels busy in terms of doing crime prevention-type of assignments, otherwise they will return back to maintain conventional policing which is reactive and repressive.

New Security Assembly

Security industry in Indonesia is now growing due to the increasing dynamics of Indonesian economy, especially in big cities. Not only the police is everywhere, but security personnels working for private companies too. They are easily seen performing security maintenance in any public or private offices, residences, apartments or industrial estates. It is estimated that the total number of people working in this industry has reached 250.000 personnel. The majority of them works on contractual basis. According to the law, they are trained and supervised by the police.

Furthermore, there are also other genres of police conducting very specific policing jobs. They are employed and working for municipality (or local government) as well as certain public organizations (such as special police working for ministry of forestry, ministry of transportation and ministry of sea and fishery).

One thing which worth-mentioned is the role of military officers who may also move around in their uniforms in the public sphere. Until the last decade, uniformed military officers were actually "the real police" since the military was still active in politics to back up Soeharto regime. Due to the declining influence of the military in politics, the number of military personnels are "moonlighting" whether as body guards or debt-collectors have been diminished.

As commonly understood, the above new types of police have very limited police power and authority compared to their fellow officers who work for Indonesia National Police. The law only permits them to execute immediate action to arrest criminals in red-handed situation prior sending the suspect to police station. Their physical presence, either in public and private domain, also contributes to the enhancement of the law since they will react when crimes occurs. On the other hand, crimes may be prevented since potential criminals will reconsider the idea of committing crimes, especially street-level cases, since the probability of being captured is high.

The fact that it is very easy to see people with various paramilitaristic uniforms in Indonesia on the street may bring us to a conclusion that Indonesia is a militaristic country. So far, militaristic sense among those personnel is often resembled upon their daily behavior but not the political power. Sometimes, their behaviors are not deemed unacceptable by Indonesian people who have had better grasp toward democracy and rule of law. This may reduce contribution of this private policing to enhance crime prevention mechanisms within our society.

High Prevalence of ICT

Crime prevention perspective can also be reflected on the increasing prevalence of information communication technology owned and used by Indonesians. A recently interesting phenomenon is the high use of virtual social network such as *twitter* or *facebook* for security-related purposes. As internet for urbanites has become daily consumption using user-friendly gadgets, twitter and facebook have been mediums for conversations where as many people as possible could join and follow. Indonesians are indicated the biggest account owner of those two social networks. The range of topics to be discussed and/or informed is very broad including one of them is security (and safety) in general sense.

Traffic jams due to flood, blocked

streets caused by demonstrations or car-accidents is typical information disseminated through twitter. This is very helfpul as it can be used as guidance for drivers to avoid being trapped in traffic jams, especially in Jakarta or Surabaya. We can imagine that this sort of media communication may also be used when there is suspicious behavior or deviant activities taken by groups of people on the street. The speed of communication may provide chances for people to prepare beforehand so as to avoid being victimized.

There are also cases where hand-phone users recorded situations that occured around them using their gadgets, uploaded the records to internet and distributed them using emails or directly contacted the police. The police may save days of investigation process to discover crimes and/or also use the same file to modify situations to prevent crimes from occuring in the future.

Having realized the potentiality of ICT for crime prevention purposes, in reality the government or other stakeholders have not taken many steps to maximize it yet. So far, there has been no single public education prepared so far either by civil society organization or even the government to enlighten people on the power of ICT to prevent crime. The government seems more interested in intervening the power of ICT for distributing pornographic materials. In line with that, ICT seems to be used for leisure-type of communications as well as to maintain social status.

Strong Civil Society Organizations

The period of "strong state" whereas state institutions dominates almost all aspects of social life has been over in Indonesia. Especially since 1980's, civil society organizations (also known as "non-governmental organization") have emerged to be equal partners to the state. In almost all area of life there are specific civil society organizations active in which state institutions do not exist or be reluctant or inefficient to operate.

As civil society organizations, there are several roles they may perform, whether to empower people (by providing people with skills, access or information), to advocate people on their rights which are not distributed, misled or coopted or to be in partnership with state institutions. On this last role, civil society organizations support the capacity of state institutions to perform their role as defined by law and regulations. This is totally different from other civil society organizations which basically have similar aims to support the capacity of state institutions but use different standpoint, that is through delivering external oversight (in the form of critique and comments).

The bottomline of this is the fact that strong participation of civil society organizations contribute very much to our crime prevention efforts. Civil society organizations which deliberately choose advocacy role or oversight role in particular, they are effective to prevent human right abuses, fraud, misleading information or violent behavior from occuring as maybe conducted by stronger parties either in the form of communities, corporations or even the government.

If we believe that the government (at least the government's apparatus) can commit crimes (either in the form of corruption, abuse of power or inflicting violence to the people), there should be parties who deter or stop it. This may in the form of notifying the government using lobby

or preparing public announcement through the media, even informing international audiences. There are cases that several civil society organizations have sued the government from conducting illegal actions or improper policies. These sort of lawsuits are directed to various adjudication mechanism available. From crime prevention perspective, those actions are valid to be taken.

However, despite of a growing number of civil society organizations in this country, there are only a few organizations that deliberately choose advocacy or oversight role. There are indeed specific capacities required to perform those roles such as strong database, investigative skill, funding and (shall we not forget) bravery to encounter any kind of retaliation.

Conclusion

This modest article has disclosed several situations or initiatives which have been proven effective and beneficial to prevent crime in general sense in Indonesia. Sometimes, situations or programs disclosed are so unique reflecting Indonesian's uniqueness in regard to crime problem.

On the other hand, this article has explained obstacles or challenges found by those situations or initiatives that deter from contributing further to crime prevention efforts. The Indonesians are now awaiting for whether positive situations or initiatives regarding crime prevention efforts will win or lose. Should they lose, Indonesia will again depend upon reactive, repressive and expensive way of having wars toward crimes.