

# The Moral of Politics Constitutes Ideological Perspectives

*BFI Working Paper Series WP-8-2011*

Hokky Situngkir  
[hs@compsoc.bandungfe.net]  
Dept. Computational Sociology  
Bandung Fe Institute

## **Abstract**

The paper reports some insights that is acquired in the online survey observing the moral politics among Indonesian. The survey maps the participant's responses into two dimensional axis of political ideology, comprised by the source of moral virtues (ethic-esoteric) and the method to achieve them (progressive-conservative). Since the political ideology is emerged from the moral political values, the observations through the responses in the survey are delivered. The observation also brings some insights from information theory, regarding to the uncertainty within the political minds as captured by the survey.

**Keywords:** moral politics, political ideology, Indonesia, online survey.

*I don't believe in Beatles,  
I just believe in me!*  
- John Lennon

## 1. Introduction

Modern political practices have brought the population into distinguishable political stances as a consequence on different cognitive background caused by social neighborhood, cultures, *et cetera*. These political stances are often recognized as political streams or ideology, in more formal discussions. Recently, studies on political ideology has been discussed not only specifically within the political sciences, but also other social analysis, including sociology, economics, and psychology [7]. Political ideology is comprised by moral affinities within certain issues that is faced in daily life. This has become important because in general, people do not use political ideology merely in an election [13], but also in a great deal of decisions within their social interactions.

A classical study to modern Indonesian political minds has distinguished the political stances as being influenced a lot by the religious life in the country. There have been known some part of the people as traditionalist, while the other is categorized as modernist, and so on [5]. The observation is focused on the affinities to the general election in Indonesia [4], yet we know that Indonesian moral politics are definitely far more complex than just the social clusters of religious streams.

Some recent work has re-introduced an adaptation of [6] to do an online survey to see the political stances of Indonesian people by a mapping of political values via responses to some social issues, be it conservative or progressive, and belief in exogenous source of moral wisdom (esotericism) or just put it in ethical ponders [8]. This recent works set 14 issues on-line, each of them are 4 moral propositions and let people choose as a respond in between<sup>1</sup>. The mapping is based upon [6] and the moral propositions are constructed regarding to the "Pancasila"<sup>2</sup>, the fundamentals of the Republic of Indonesia, which was claimed to be the result of the founding fathers digging the basic values of the people.

The paper discussed the result, after the survey has collected more than 800 respondents and tries to give some interesting insights about the survey. First, the questions of the survey are elaborated as the way we read how the Indonesian responses reflect the particular moral values of the participants. Second, we see the employment of the notion of entropy to observe the positions of some moral values one another throughout all responses.

## 2. The model of Moral Politics

By incorporating the scheme proposed in [6], the landscape of moral stand of Indonesian individual would be constituted in two-dimensional system. One can be recognized to be a conservative as she agrees with some aspects related to conservatism, while the other might be a progressive. On the other hand, one can also be recognized to hold certain subjects or objects as the source of wisdom and morality, or she may leave it to individual ethics.

Thus we have two axes, each is constituted by the horizontal axis,  $a_k \in A$ ,  $k=1,2,3,\dots K$ , expressing the one's strength of conservative standpoints, and  $b_j \in B$ ,  $j=1,2,3,\dots J$ , the one's

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<sup>1</sup>Interested readers may want to visit the online survey in URL: <http://spektika.com/>

<sup>2</sup> "Pancasila", the five wisdom of Indonesian fundamental principle: religiosity, humanity, national unity, deliberations, and social justice.

strength to hold esoteric measures on personal ethics. The set of person  $X = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots, x_N\}$  would place an ideological location within the coordinate-system in,

$$I_i = [\varphi(A), \varphi(B)] \quad (1)$$

where  $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$  and the horizontal axis,

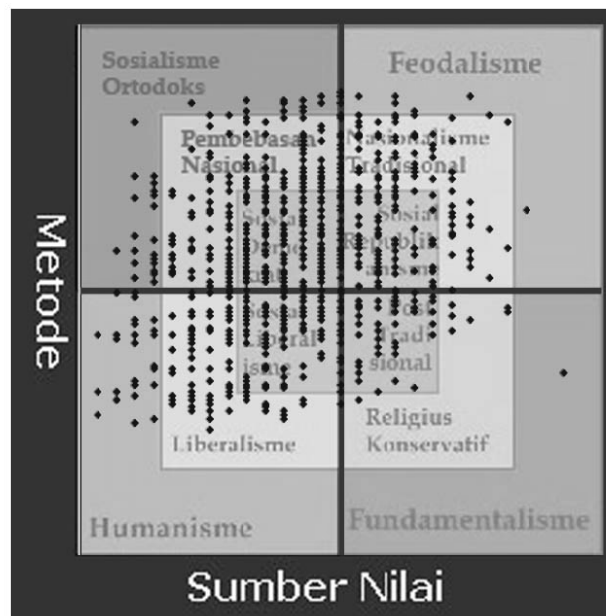
$$\varphi(A) = \frac{\sum_k (w \times a_k)}{K} \quad (2)$$

as the vertical axis,

$$\varphi(B) = \frac{\sum_j (w \times b_j)}{J} \quad (3)$$

with  $w$  the possible moral position on every issue. In our case of study,  $w$  is a discrete and finite standpoints of,  $w = \{-2, -1, 1, 2\}$ .

In the case of our study, the positive values of  $w$  (in the horizontal axis) map ideological perspective to the conservatism while the negative ones reflect the progressivism. On the other hand, the positive values of  $w$  (in the vertical axis) map ideological perspective to the esotericism, while the negative ones reflect the ideological stands, regarding to the ethical one. This is shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The result of an online survey brought to see where Indonesian people may be located ideologically. The vertical axis is the source of moral virtues (esoteric-ethics), while the horizontal one the alternative methods believed to gain them (conservative-progressive).

The figure 1, shows the four quadrants of the places in which we see people are mapped into, based upon how they respond to some moral issues.

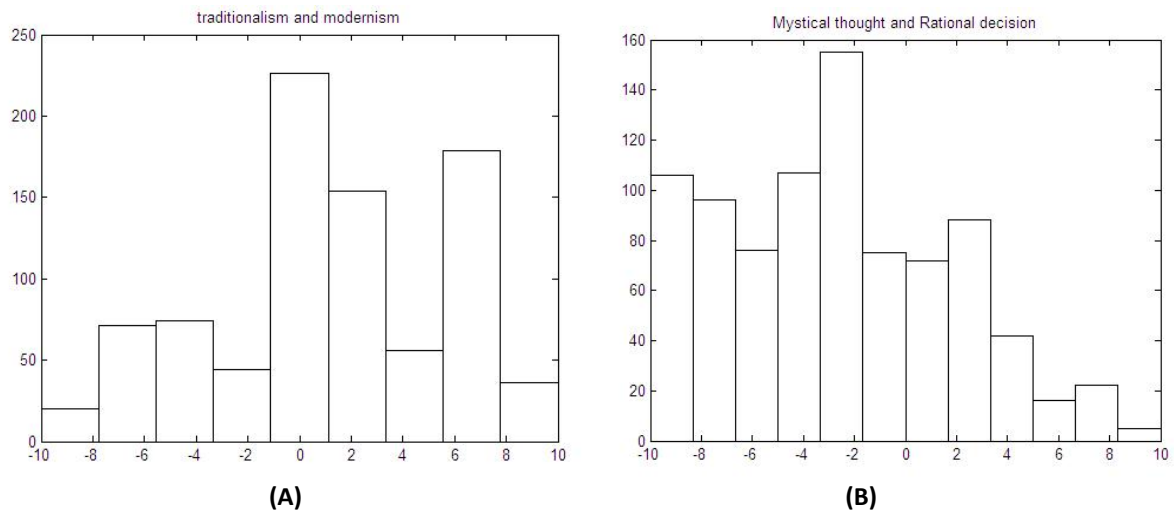
We see ideological perspective must be complex. The source of the complexity within ideology is its intertwining elements: ideology can be seen as domain of which sub-domains overlap one another. Moral stands constructing an ideological perspective are not independent. Furthermore, people having the same ideological thoughts may have different moral stands on different issues. The notion hypocrisy is frequently heard when people make political and ideological judgments on others [7].

Suppose we denote a moral standpoint,  $\mu$ , we can write,

$$\mu = \varphi(\tilde{A}) \oplus \varphi(\tilde{B}) \quad (4)$$

for  $\tilde{A} \subset A$  some particular part of the elements constructing the value of conservatism, stand point  $A$ , and  $\tilde{B} \subset B$ , some parts constructing the value regarding to how one perceives the source of morality. Thus, we have written how moral politics constituting ideological perspective mathematically.

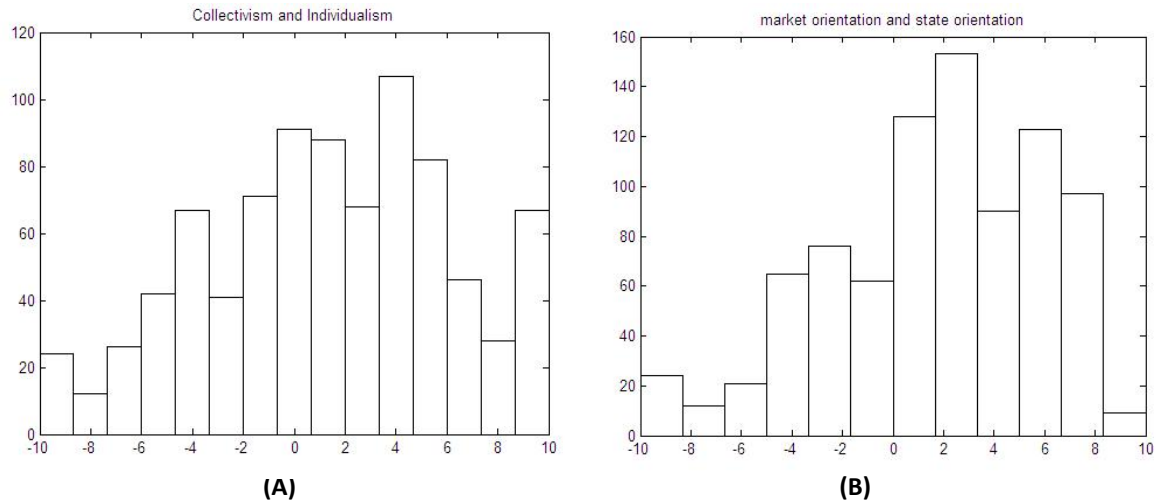
While the online survey result as depicted in figure 1 has given us a lot of insights related to the ideological trends among the respondents, it is also interesting to see the trends of some particular issues of which the moral elements ( $\mu$ ) constructing the particular ideological perspectives ( $I$ ).



**Figure 2.** The moral values of our respondents regarding to traditionalism and modernity (*left*), and when mysticism contrasted to the rationality when they make a personal decision (*right*).

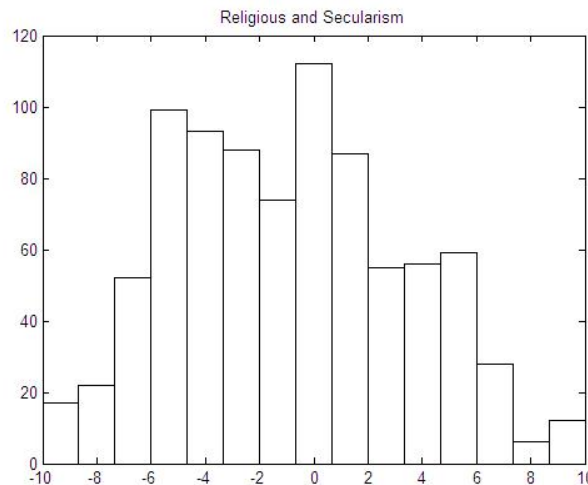
Below, in our case, we see the trend of the population's stances on some popular moral issue among Indonesian people, namely the modernism, market, mysticism, individualism, and secularism. This five issues have been discussed a lot when it comes to political discussions among people.

When it comes to the collective aspects of modernism, it seems that the online respondents are dominated by those who affine to the modernism better than holding some traditional values. This is shown in figure 2a, where the respondents could be regarded with preference to modernity. This moral element ( $\mu$ ) is made by focusing to questions related to their response to the questions whether they have belief on some issue about an epidemic myths, cultural values, and tradition.



**Figure 3.** The moral values of our respondents regarding to collectivism and individualistic preference (*left*), and when market orientation contrasted to the state intervention on public issues. (*right*).

However, when we focus on their response on the morality related to myth as contrasted to rationality in decision making, the result is quite interesting. Most people tend to have some beliefs on mysticism rather than emphasizing the rationality. These are the elements ( $\mu$ ) from their responds regarding to religion, affinity to myths, and social leadership. Most respondents show their affinity to the mystical (irrational) frame of thought rather than lean on rationality.



**Figure 4.** The focus on responses to the contrasting religiosity and secularism reflects the emphasis of religions in political aspects.

Indonesian people are well-known for their collectivism, with some local terminologies such as: *gotong royong* (working together), *tepa selira* (tolerance), *et cetera*. However, when it comes to the contrast of individual decision making, our respondents are keen more on individualistic view. When they respond to the propositions regarding to social charity, marriage, national defense, and the expected role of leaders, our respondents express how they more to be individualistic rather than as a part of collective social togetherness.

Yet, when it comes to collectivity regarding to market and the role of the state on public life, our respondents' stances are more on the role of the state rather than market, as shown in figure 3b. This can be seen as we focus on their response to the collective participation on acts of charity, restoration of Indonesian diversity of cultures, and justice for the poor.

From the five elements, the complexity of the political moral is a complex entity. In most aspects of life, Indonesian is religious, even though it is also possible that this is not directly related to the essence of religion: spiritualism. This is confirmed in our focus on seeing the response when we contrasted the religiosity and secularism on social life as shown in figure 4. We do this by observe the response to the aspects of the relation of social leaders and religions, marriage, morality in social political aspects, and gender related issue.

### 3. The Information Theory in Moral Politics

Entropy can be regarded as the measurement of uncertainty while we do not have knowledge about the distribution of a data set. One of the well-known measurements is the Shannon entropy [10] which gives us ability to calculate the level of uncertainty of data. Let  $W$  be the discrete random variable with a finite number of possible values,  $w_1, w_2, w_3, w_4$ , thus recognizing the respective

positive probabilities  $p_i \geq 0$  as  $\sum_i^N p_i = 1$ , the Shannon entropy  $H(W)$  is defined as,

$$H(W) = -\sum_{i=1}^{i=4} p_i \log p_i \quad (5)$$

However, we have seen in the previous section that the moral politics or practically ( $I$ ) ideological stance is comprised by some elements ( $\mu$ ). Thus, in our case here, the entropy as our measurement of uncertainty would be more like a joint entropy [3], defined as,

$$H(X, Y) = -\sum_x \sum_y p_{xy}(x, y) (\log p_{xy}(x, y)) \quad (6)$$

We understand that the mutual information of two (or more) random variables measure their mutual dependence. It is obvious that positive mutual information reflects the dependent marginal distributions. This means that some combination in the dataset occur more often than others. Here, the marginal entropies exceed the total entropy by an amount equal to the mutual data information. Mathematically, we write that

$$D(X, Y) = H(X) + H(Y) - H(X, Y) \quad (7)$$

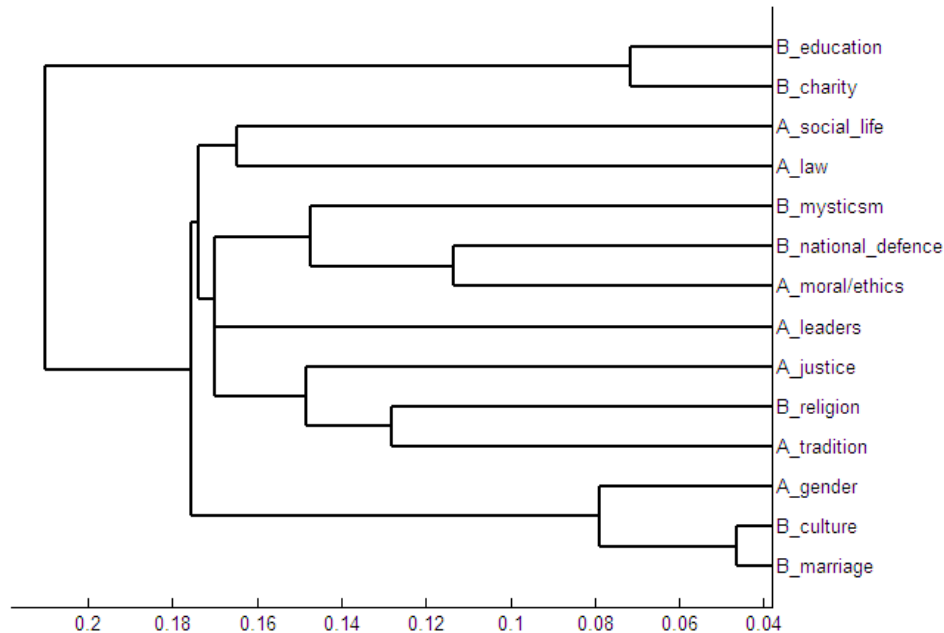
or normalized (7) by the average of the joint entropy,

$$\hat{D}(X, Y) = \frac{H(X) + H(Y) - H(X, Y)}{[H(X) + H(Y)] / 2} \quad (8)$$

It is interesting to find how two random variable share mutual information. Thus, we can transform the joint entropy within the whole data from 14 responses as discussed in previous sections into the distance matrix: how different the combination among vectors in our data set,

$$d(X, Y) = \sqrt{2(1 - D(X, Y))} \quad (9)$$

The distance that is calculated from the joint entropy of the each response in our online survey has made it possible for us to bring the multidimensional analysis as we construct the minimum spanning tree from the distance matrix [11, *c.f.* 9]. The result is shown in figure 5.



**Figure 5.** The multidimensional analysis of the moral aspects of our respondents.

Figure 5 shows us interesting features of moral politics among our respondents. It is interesting to explore how political morals among our fellow Indonesian respondents interact one another. From the below clusters we can see how the moral issue about marriage is closely related to issue on gender, tradition, and then religion. Marriage in Indonesian is more about social life [2]. In the other hand, we can see that issues on social leadership, justice, religions, and national defense are related cognitively. Social leaders are regarded as also moral leaders and a key aspect to gain social justice [14]. It is also interesting to see that aspect like issue on education is clustered strongly with social charity. It is interesting to postulate that conservatism (as well as progressive thought) on education is related closely with the conservative (and also the progressive one) thought about social charity – brought in the issue of scholarship as well as general social empowerment via education as highlighted by lots of non-governmental organizations in the country [1].

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

An adaptation of some theoretical works about how Indonesians see religion, moral, ethics, and culture has brought us to the online survey to map Indonesian ideological and political moral attachment. Furthermore, our understanding has brought us to more insights as we discussed some aspects of the moral elements constructing the ideological positions. The comprehension of those aspects, we could understand the overlapping moral elements that might be understood to be the incoherence of political stances.

The information theory has also been acquainted to analyze the moral aspects by using the notion of entropy, as a measurement of the uncertainty level in the data set for their unknown distribution. It is interesting that from the multidimensional analysis we see the relations between an aspect to one another by transforming the mutual information of joint entropy into “distance” among them. By exploring the yielded ultrametric tree, we can have a good visualization on how some moral aspects relate with the other in the mind of the respondents.

### Acknowledgement

I thank Ardian Maulana and Rendra Suroso for the raw data used in this paper, also people in INVASA, Billy Tarigan, Vande Leonardo, Rolan Dahlan and Budiman Sudjatmiko since the data is collected in their sites, BFI fellows for discussions on the rough draft of the paper.

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