



# The Effect of Separatism on the Society: Quantitative Analysis on the World Values Survey

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In the 21st century, world politics appeared to far from resolved condition in terms of power sharing among the elites, thus created separatism movements in many parts of the world. These movements caused some changes in the society that is nowadays seen as a multicultural. Using World Values Survey's data, this study revealed that separatism would cause people to less likely agree on ethnic diversity benefit. Further, when the result is tested by elaboration model, economic condition was found as important factor on how people saw ethnic diversity benefit among the society.

*Keywords:* world politics, effect of separatism, ethnic diversity, national identity

## Introduction

Reading news every day, people should get the sense that the world is in danger. Particularly, when people read the international affair news section, which covers separatism issue almost every day. In the 21st century, world politics appear to far from resolved condition in terms of power sharing among the elites. Around 146 national scale conflicts in 76 countries happened in the last 50 years (Walter, 2006). Papua separatism in Indonesia, Patani insurgents in Thailand and Tibetan issue in China are few of the many separatism issues that are still in presence. People usually see images mass protest, conflicts or even violence whenever they read an article that discusses an act to separate certain regions from their central government. Scholars have also made many attempts to research the cause of separatism. To this date, what causes the insurgent movements are described from differences of ethnicities (Horowitz, 1981), politics (Chai, 2008), and religions (Forsberg, 2005).

One might wonder, how can people live in this situation that causes potential riots in the street? Well, researches have described the effect of separatism are economics (Brancati, 2014), politics (Tull, 2011), violence (Amitai, 1992), and social demographic (Kollenz, 2000). Although these findings are surely interesting, the authors still find them as not enough to portrait the society inside. Hence, this study proposes that it would be valuable by understanding more knowledge if we discuss the effect of separatism from the social perspective. The following questions then, which social perspective are we looking for? Seeing that separatism is caused by many things, it would be useful should our research is going towards the tolerance among societies because it is widely known as an essential shared value for assuring the solidity of societies. Hence, our research should be in the direction of answering this question "What is the effect of separatism on people's tolerance?".

## Literature Reviews

### Separatism in Society

Our common sense would suggest that tolerance is in the opposite side of separatism. While tolerance suggests affirmation with regard to the values and practices of others (Forst, 2003), separatism is said to “threaten the continuation of the national identity, as well as the nation’s economic position” (van Leeuwen & Mashuri, 2013). However, before we draw any conclusion about their relationship, it would be useful to see what causes separatism in the first place.

In the beginning of this paper, we knew that many things could lead into separatism movements, e.g., ethnicities, economics, and religions, which could be summarized as cultural diversity. Yet, we still discuss less in details regarding the situation that causes this insurgent movement. Throughout history separatism has demonstrated itself in many forms as groups developed disgruntled feelings with their governments. So, the idea of separatism is not exclusively refer to the modern days of society, but in fact it started long time ago. Even the Roman old empire had this problem with the Gauls, the Britons and the Celtic resisters (Horowitz, 1981). This history lesson teaches us that separatist movement arises from cultural diversity inside the society, particularly to the minorities group that live inside the society, such as ethnic group, immigrant diaspora (Belanger, 2009; McGill, 2009) and religions (Forsberg, 2005).

Another cause for separatist movement is the political condition inside a country (Chai, 2008). We have just seen recently how a political group in Scotland gained international attention with their successful attempt to force incumbent political holder, the British, holding a general poll for Scottish independence. Although the Scot is still part of the Great Britain after the general poll, there is still something to learn from the Scottish independence case. Scottish’s nation identity seems cannot accept that they are ruled by other group (Mycock, 2012).

### The Effect of Separatism

Unfortunately, to this date, there are little to know about the effect of separatism inside the society. This importance especially is pointing out that cultural tolerance is the ingredient of great civilizations (Tillery-Larkin, 2001). Current researches go to the direction of material effect of separatism. For instance, the most popular research is about the effect of separatism in economics (Brancati, 2014). This is quite understandable, because any separatist movement would cause unstable conditions. Through his research on European continental, Brancati (2014) claims that separatism could, in fact, foster economic integration. This finding is somehow opposed our common sense that unstable countries should have problem on their economic conditions.

Power sharing is what happened next in the society when there are many factions to contest (Tull, 2011). Should there is any deadlock in the politics; scholar suggests that violence will arise (Amitai, 1992) and population movement is becoming a need (Kollenz, 2000). So to look what the effect of separatism in the society, it would be helpful if we make a decision that the independence variable is the separatism itself.

As for the dependent variable, we should also notice that existing researches define separatism as many terms. It could be a movement (Breary, 2008), an identity threat (Van Leeuwen & Mashuri, 2013), or a violence act (COT Institute for Safety, Security, and Conflict Management, 2008). Typically, in each of separatism case, scholars found that the separatist leaders made many promise to their supporters that independence would benefit their group (Chai, 2008). Looking at this proposition, we should assume that the

people outside that group could see less benefit to the separatism idea. Since separatism carries cultural diversity from its causes, we should also adopt that the idea of cultural diversity would not be seen benefiting the country's unity.

H1: Separatism would cause people to less likely agree on ethnic diversity benefit.

After offering our first hypothesis, we felt that further inquiry is still needed. Talking about separatist, we would certainly talk about politics too. And in the world of politics, it is proven that everything is very dynamics, especially in collective segmented countries (Battaglini & Palfrey, 2012). Hence, for our second hypothesis, we need to make sure that the finding from our first hypothesis could be generalized in. To do this, we need to think carefully by looking the effect of separatism in different groups. One possible division is by looking at the economics welfare. That is because, as we already discuss before, that economy is one major cause and effect in separatist movement.

H2: People's economic welfare would influence their perception on ethnic diversity benefit.

### **Methodology**

This study uses data from the World Value Survey (WVS), one of the leading global survey organizations on social research. Having conducted surveys since 1981, the Sweden based organization has surveyed almost 100 countries which covered around 90 percent of world's population. All surveys by WVS are performed by an international network of social scientists, meaning, that each survey from different countries was conducted by different person. However, before the social scientists conducted the surveys, they had been provided by some set of uniformed questionnaires.

WVS drew samples from the countries' population of 18 years and older, with minimum sample of 1,000 of each countries. In order to obtain representative national samples, the surveys were conducted using stratified random sampling method. To this date, WVS surveys were divided in six waves. Each waves, represented five years of time period. We used data from the fifth wave (2005-2009) because that particular wave contains have more surveys result from the separatist countries that are listed by Unrepresented Nations and People Organization (UNPO), which it would be explained more in the following section.

### **Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis of this study is the people. The first step of my measurement method was on where people lived, which it was countries. From the list of Asian countries recognized by the United Nations (UN), this study first divided two groups of countries: countries that have separatist issue and countries that don't have separatist. The list of countries that have separatist issues was drawn from a list produced by UNPO, an international organization who worked in the issues of indigenous peoples, minorities, and occupied territories. In the world of international relations, UNPO is one of recognized organizations by the UN. In terms of academic, this study is not the first academic study which uses UNPO's list as the source. Breary's (2008) research on separatist movement also used the same data set.

Further, UNPO's list contained around 20 Asian countries that had separatism issues. Combining with UN's list which stated that there were 48 legitimate countries in Asia, The authors selected five countries representing the countries with separatist issue and five countries representing the countries with no separatist issue. The selection process is never easy. Part of it is because we, the researchers, are demanded to be as neutral as possible. Hence, The authors picked group of countries that include high and regular economic growth. Having said that, we should include some countries that are G-20 members and some are not there to

balance our group comparison. As a result, in the non-separatist countries group, we picked Japan and South Korea as representative of G-20 members (see Table 1). On the other hand, China, India, and Indonesia are the countries with separatism group that are also members of the G-20.

Table 1

*Sample*

No.	Countries with Separatism Issue	Countries with No Separatism Issue
1.	Japan ( <i>N</i> = 1,096)	China ( <i>N</i> = 1,991)
2.	South Korea ( <i>N</i> = 1,200)	India ( <i>N</i> = 2,001)
3.	Taiwan ( <i>N</i> = 1,227)	Thailand ( <i>N</i> = 1,534)
4.	Vietnam ( <i>N</i> = 1,495)	Malaysia ( <i>N</i> = 1,201)
5.	Jordan ( <i>N</i> = 1,200)	Indonesia ( <i>N</i> = 2,015)

**Measures**

This study used several variables. The first variable or the independent variable was the country the population lived. This variable was generated from the V2 section of WVS source code. This study only used populations from the selected countries and the other countries' population was automatically excluded. Next, this study summed up all the total sample population on each group. The result then was used then as the representative of each group.

The dependent variable for this study was the ethnic diversity of population. The survey question (V221) asked "Turning to the question of ethnic diversity, with which of the following views do you agree?". Next to the question, there were 10 answers of nominal scale as the answers, ranging from 1 as "Ethnic diversity erodes a country's unity" to 10 as "Ethnic diversity enriches my life". To simplify the answers, the authors recoded the answer into only two categories which is based on the median split. Answers 1 to 6 were recoded into "Ethnic diversity erodes a country unity" and answers 7 to 10 were recoded into "Ethnic diversity enriches my life". All other answers, such as don't know or not answer, were recoded as system missing. In addition, statistical significance (chi-square test) was also conducted to check the reliability on the data.

Further, we would also like to see whether there was more condition that influences the result of the study. Babbie (2012) mentions that the social scientists had come with elaboration model or the gateway model as one of the better way to test relationship between variables. This model requires the third variable. For this study, the control variable was the scale of incomes, which could be found as V. 253 in WVS. This question was divided into 10 scales in the original code book. Similar to ethnic diversity measurement, the authors also recoded the answer into two categories. Based on the median split, Answers 1 to 4 were recoded into "Lower Step Income" and answers 5 to 10 were recoded into "Upper Step Income". Likewise, all other answers, such as don't know or not answer, were also recoded as system missing.

**Results**

H1: Separatism would cause people to less likely agree on ethnic diversity benefit.

According to Hypothesis 1, we expected that between the two groups would have different level of people's perception on ethnic diversity benefit. Table 2 showed us that percentages of countries with separatist group are different than countries without separatist group the percentages of 2nd group. Specifically, in the non-separatist countries 49.2% of sample says ethnic diversity erodes country unity and 50.8% of sample says ethnic diversity enriches their life, and in the separatist countries 37.8% of sample says ethnic diversity erodes

country unity and 62.2% of sample says ethnic diversity enriches their life. From this finding we could say that people who live in a country with separatism issue, to some extent, are more likely to agree on ethnic diversity benefit than people in countries without separatism issue.

Table 2  
*Contingency Table*

Countries	Ethnic Diversity Benefit		Total (row)
	Erodes nation unity	Enriches my life	
Non-Separatist Countries	49.2% (2,811)	50.8% (2,906)	100% (5,717)
Separatist Countries	37.8% (2,791)	62.2% (4,588)	100% (7,379)
Total (column)	42.8% (5,602)	57.2% (7,494)	100% (13,096)

The significance level of this result was that the study had chi-square value of 169.4 with one degree of freedom. In other words, it showed a strong significant value ( $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, our conclusion was the variables were significantly related and we were in favor to reject the null hypothesis. We also concluded ethnic diversity benefit is related to where they live, either in countries with separatist issue or without separatist issue. However this finding is the negative result or going towards the other direction of our hypothesis (H1).

H2: People’s economic welfare would influence their perception on ethnic diversity benefit.

Further, we tested our initial test with economics’ welfare as our control variable. When the control variable was conducted, the result was somehow varies as we could see it on Figure 1. The initial outcome was that ethnic diversity benefit rises from 51.1% in the countries with no separatist issues to 61.2% in the countries with separatist issues/As for the higher income group, a person living in the non-separatist countries have already have a high degree of ethnic diversity benefit 59.5% and rise a little in the separatist countries (64%). On the contrary, for the lower income group, people’s perception of ethnic diversity benefit was only 39.5% on the non-separatist countries and jumped into 56.6% in the separatist countries.

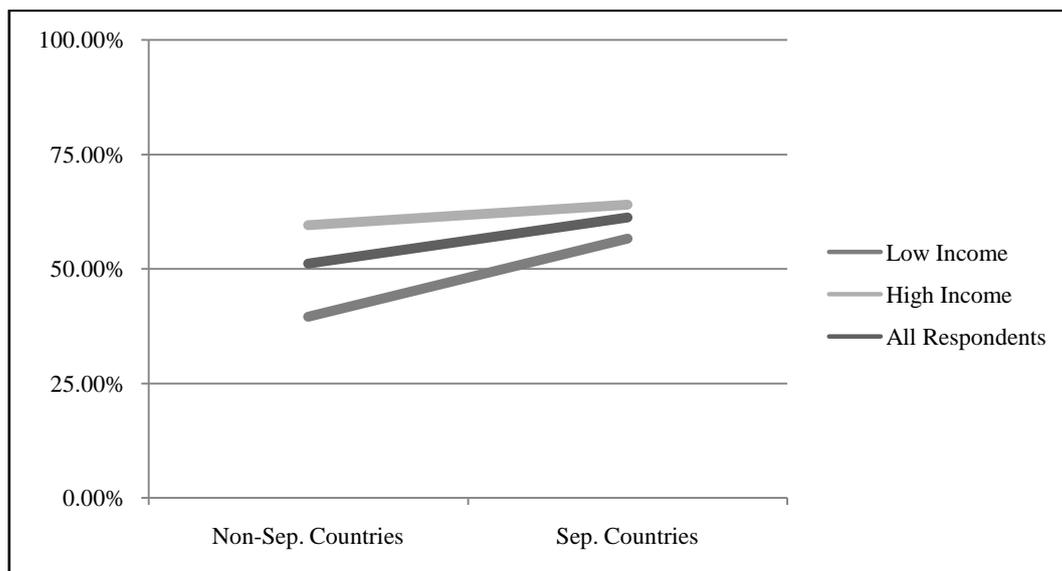


Figure 1. Elaboration model.

Based on this finding, it seems to me that the causality between the two variables is supported by the analysis and the direction of causality remains the same. Hence, the elaboration paradigm for this research fits with the term specification. We use the latter term because the research outcome between the initial two variables is replicated in one subgroup but not among the other. This result also has statistical significance. The test on lower income has chi-square value of 145.2 and the test on upper step income has chi-square test of 16.1, both with one degree of freedom. To this end, our conclusion is that the most important determinant to have society perception of cultural diversity benefit is the lower income on people's welfare.

### **Discussion**

The finding section has given us more perspectives on what happened in the separatist countries. From the two hypotheses tested, we see that the first one has opposite result of the initial hypothesis while the later confirms the hypothesis proposed. Although there is an opposite result of the hypothesis proposed, in my opinion, the finding is still important because it gives us new perspective on what is happening in the separatist countries.

One of the implications of the finding is regarding how we should evaluate the social conditions in the separatist countries. While we probably thought that separatism could possibly make political-racism problem, the finding shows us that people in the separatist countries are less likely to think that ethnic diversity would erode their nation's unity. In fact, people who live in the separatist country are more likely to think that ethnic diversity enrich their lives. This finding is somehow in line with the general attitude of separatist leaders, which usually promise to their supporters that independence would benefit their group (Chai, 2008). Thus, there is a possibility that in the separatist countries, separatist leaders successfully communicated their idea.

Another implication of the finding is the specification on the separatism effect. The increasing attitude of ethnic diversity benefit from non-separatist countries to separatist countries is found strongly related to a sub-group of people, that is the lower economic welfare people. Again, this finding also confirms that the message from the separatist leaders is well received for the people who need more "benefit" in their lives. For the upper economic welfare society, the idea of ethnic diversity could probably harm their well-established status. This finding could help by suggesting that the communication message for separatist community should take into the considerations about people demographic. Hence, this study views this is a good input for any government to improve their message of how the ethnic diversity would reward society as a nation. Otherwise, ethnic diversity could always be referred to just for the needy people.

The findings in this paper open several opportunities for future studies. The term ethnic diversity should very well be received as positive sign. However, it is unknown in what point that the perception of ethnic diversity benefit could turn into a separatist movement. For this matter, it would be interesting to see qualitative research that focus on the effect of separatism. That way, we should find the origin of separatism from the social perspective.

Another research possibility is to look into how the society works inside the separatist countries compared to the non-separatist countries. We knew that people from separatist countries embrace the cultural diversity. However, we do not know whether this attitude could transform into a tolerance society and how this society sometimes chooses to form independent countries.

To this end, it would be fair enough to say that there are limitations on this research. First of all, we know that the political situation is very dynamic. Hence, the data that this research gathered could possibly change

throughout the time. Particularly in this period of time, when as information technology influences the communication channel for a rebellion organization (Clifford, 2005). The other limitation is regarding the type of data this research used; quantitative data. So, the interpretation that we did earlier was solely based from numerical attitude. This limitation may cause some readers to say that since every people is different, it is impossible to get conclusion from quantitative data. On that particular aspect, the authors plead to be different. Public opinion, no matter how different in the individual level, could still be generated from a well-designed survey method as the survey like general elections public poll have proven.

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