

Indonesian research – understanding the Beringin

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The Beringin, with its multitude of branches, leaves and roots symbolizes the diversity of the Indonesian people in one organism.

So, what do I know about South East Asia?

I have worked in Banda Aceh, Jakarta, Surabaya, Timor Leste, Malaysia, Bandung and Bali



Working with Indonesia

- Indonesia is a unique country
- Primary requirements

Humility

Politeness

Patience

Acceptance

Humour

Honesty

Flexibility

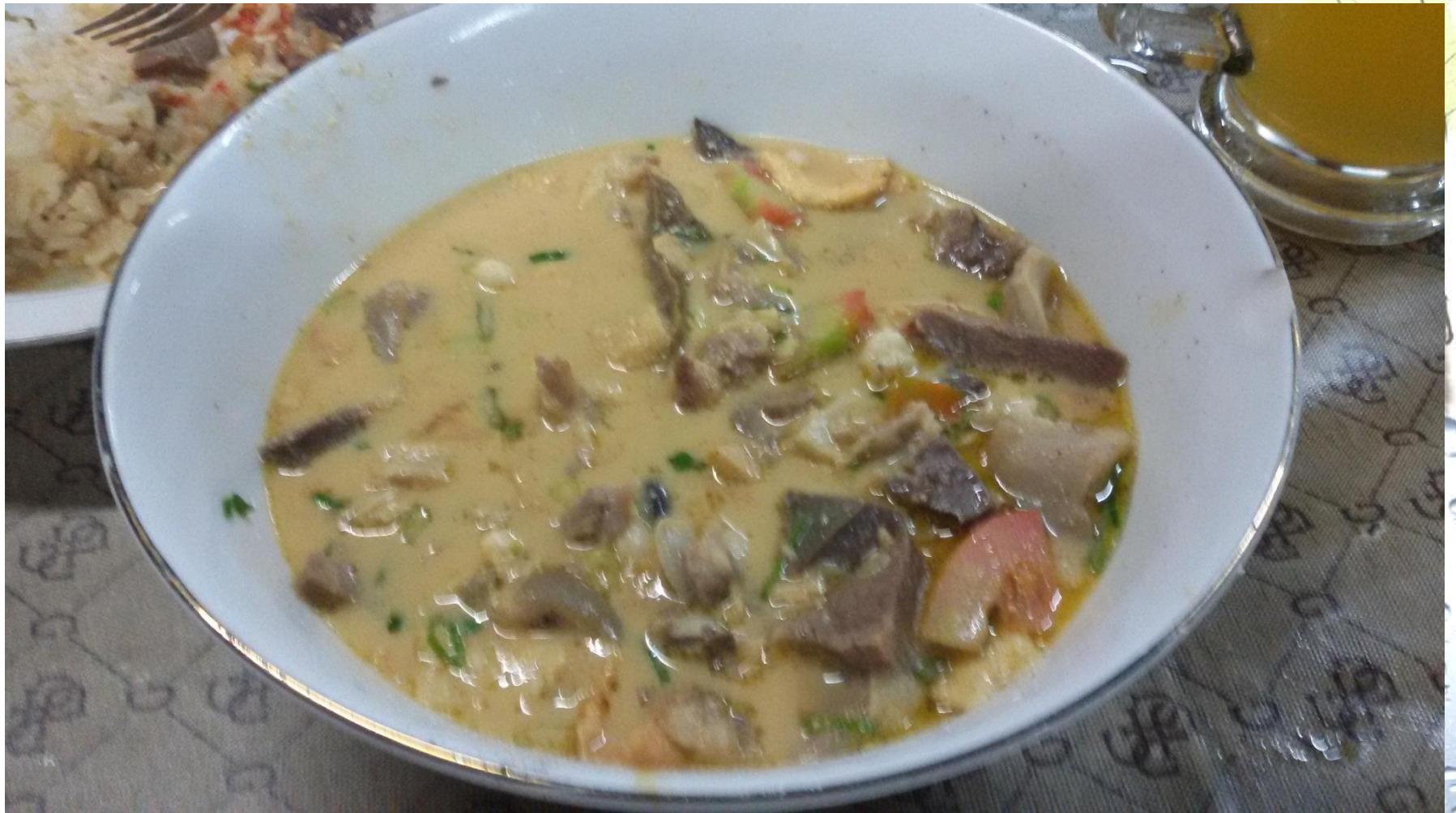
Integrity

Loyalty

Time

....and an ability to eat almost anything!





.....including Soto Babat!

Key questions:

What changes are needed at the national level (or ASEAN), in particular government policies, research culture, research infrastructure and systems?

What lessons can be learnt from other experiences?



Areas of interest

- WEIRD
- Institutional self-confidence
- Research quality
- International publications



WEIRD

Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich,
Democratic

The concept of WEIRD originates from
USA psychology research

Predicting the behaviour for one group
with its own societal norms and cultural
practices, from the behaviour of another
group with different norms and practices,
cannot be expected to give reliable
results.



Terrangengon

North Sumatra



Terrangengon

North Sumatra



Banda Aceh



WEIRD

- WEIRD should not be taken as a derogatory term, it simply highlights subtle but important cultural differences
- Technology alone is not the solution, a multi-disciplinary approach is vital
- Any technology must be appropriate for its location, and the people who will benefit from it



Institutional self-confidence

- Includes academic and government
- Highly risk averse affecting all layers
- But....the Indonesian people are very comfortable with risk



The Indonesian people are very comfortable with risk
.....or as a family!



Institutional self-confidence

- Need for risk management strategy within institutions – research IS risky!
- Government must lead “It is OK to take a chance”



Research quality

- Indonesia has strong research capability but limited capacity in marine energy



Picture courtesy of Pak Erwandi, BPPT



Research quality



Research quality



Picture courtesy of Pak Erwandi, BPPT



Research quality



Research quality

- So what's the difference?
- In terms of the skills required... Not much
- Mostly self-confidence
- Committed resources
- But, those committing the resources need to see self-confidence



International publications

- Much of Indonesia's research work is unknown or inaccessible outside
- Increased international collaboration will support more joint publications
- Publications help with international funding
- Senior academics should be encouraged to publish one joint international paper per year



Research Strategy

- Indonesia has its own characteristics and needs
- Scattered population with distinct cultural differences
- Technology must serve the people – not the other way round
- Understand what “advanced” nations have done, but don’t slavishly follow them



International publications

- Perceived difficulty for Indonesian researchers to publish in international journals?
- Increased visibility will give increased self-confidence and greater access to international funding



Conclusions

- Indonesia has some world-leading facilities
- It is not difficult to work with the Indonesian people, but a Western visitor will need a very different mindset
- Funding is necessary to develop research
- Visibility of publications is needed
- The self-confidence of the people is much more important and must be supported



Thank you

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