

Cultural bomb: Empowering non-military defense

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Abstract: This study delves into the concept of the “cultural bomb” within the framework of non-military defense empowerment strategies in Indonesia. This approach can potentially change society’s views and attitudes towards various security threats as a realization of strengthening the defense and security system of the universal people (Sishankamrata) per article 30 paragraph (2) of the 1945 constitution. By leveraging media, education, and information technology, the cultural bomb acts as a social weapon that operates powerfully in the “space of mind,” shaping behavior and actions nonviolently. The issue of cultural threats pertains to the infiltration and imposition of foreign cultural values and practices that undermine local traditions and national identity, leading to social fragmentation and weakness. This study proposes the concept of a “cultural bomb” as a policy framework to address and mitigate these cultural threats. The research employs a qualitative approach using the Delphi technique, engaging experts from cultural studies and defense strategies to reach a consensus on the strategic application of the cultural bomb. The results indicate that the cultural bomb can effectively strengthen national identity and awareness of national defense by promoting local values and cultural resilience, thus enhancing societal cohesion and mitigating the impact of foreign cultural influences. The paper outlines the components of a cultural bomb, analyzes its application in international contexts, and discusses its implications in efforts to strengthen national identity and foster a sense of national defense awareness. Focusing on the “war over space of mind” ideology, it introduces “cultural hacking” as a strategic initiative to address cultural power imbalances in the post-truth era.

Keywords: cultural hacking; Indonesian language; national identity; non-military defense; social weapon

1. Introduction

The old insight of the second defense strategy is to combine non-military approaches with military systems. We call this a non-military defense approach. This approach relies on some form of non-violent defense. However, this method has certain limitations and cannot be implemented immediately, so it requires a form of defense that combines military and non-violent methods at the transition stage (Salmon, 1988). According to Szkoluda and Strzoda’s (2020) study, the cooperation of Territorial Defense Forces with non-military systems during armed conflict emphasizes the legal and operational framework necessary for effective non-military defense measures. Combining military defense and non-violence offers flexibility and, in some cases, the potential to enhance defense.

In the context of non-military threats, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia has identified eight forms of non-military threats, which include ideological

threats, political threats, economic threats, sociocultural threats, technological threats, informational threats, environmental threats, and safety threats (Kementerian Pertahanan RI, 2015). Cultural threats specifically address the infiltration and imposition of foreign cultural values that undermine local traditions and national identity, leading to social fragmentation and weakened national cohesion. This issue is elaborated on page 21 of the *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia*.

This paper discusses various studies related to sociocultural threats. For example, Nengsih and Setyadiharja (2017) conducted a research focus on local development collaboration in the Riau Islands Province and non-military threats which used a qualitative approach with data collection through documentation studies, interviews, and observations, focusing on aligning regional development policies with non-military threats, particularly in border areas like the Nantua Regency. Additionally, this research introduces the concept of the “cultural bomb” to counter-cultural threats from foreign values, emphasizes culture-based strategies to fortify national awareness, utilizes the Delphi technique for deeper analysis, and explores the international implications of the “cultural bomb” concept. This approach extends the scope of previous research by incorporating cultural strategies and offers a novel framework for understanding and addressing sociocultural threats on a global scale.

In the second defense strategy context, we will discuss efforts to empower non-military defense through a “cultural bomb,” conceptualized as a massive and intensive social approach to change people’s views and attitudes towards a conflict or security threat by approaching cultures and values. This concept is proposed using the specific terminology “social weapons.”

‘Social weapons’ can be seen as tools various entities use to influence society or individuals without physical violence (Mândraş, 2022). It is a form of ‘war’ in the “mind space” of individuals and institutions, aiming to control or change their thinking, behavior, and acting.

The focus of this paper is to propose and discuss the concept and thought of non-military defense empowerment by utilizing art, media, culture, and aspects of the safety of soldiers and people in various social activities and the use of cyber technology as a tool or platform to influence and strengthen public awareness of the values to be spread. For example, those who want to enhance their understanding of human values and peace can promote works of art, film, or music that display these values. In addition, they can also introduce traditions or customs that reflect these values, such as social or cultural activities that teach about tolerance and cooperation between individuals. The formulation of a “cultural bomb” as an approach to social weapons through cyberspace is considered effective for developing national defense cadres. See the end of the document for further details on references.

2. Materials and methods

The methodological approach for this study is Delphi technique (Okoli and Pawlowski, 2004). This method involves a structured communication process to gather expert opinions and achieve a convergent opinion or solution to a specific issue. The Delphi technique is particularly effective for issues lacking empirical evidence, relying instead on the insights and experiences of experts in the field.

The study panel consisted of cultural studies and defense strategies experts from the Defense University, Ministry of Defense (Ditjen Pothan), National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Muhammadiyah University, and Jakarta University. These individuals were selected based on their extensive knowledge and contributions to cultural strategies in non-military defense.

The Delphi process was implemented over three iterative rounds to refine expert consensus:

- First round: Each expert participated in an initial online discussion focused on identifying the key elements and impacts of the “cultural bomb” in non-military defense. Following the discussion, experts submitted individual notes summarizing their perspectives and insights. These notes were compiled into a comprehensive document to serve as the basis for the next round.
- Second round: Experts reviewed the compiled document from the first round, which included synthesized viewpoints and additional commentary. A second online discussion allowed experts to debate and further refine the concepts. After the discussion, experts again submitted detailed notes, which were compiled to refine the agenda for the final round.
- Third round: The third round is aimed at reaching a consensus. Experts received a refined compilation of the collective insights from the second round. A final online discussion was held to resolve any outstanding disagreements and finalize the consensus on the strategic application and definition of the “cultural bomb” Final notes from this discussion were used to draft the consensus statement and conclusions for the study.”

Qualitative data from the Delphi rounds were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and concepts agreed upon by the experts. This analysis helped articulate a comprehensive understanding of the “cultural bomb” as a strategic tool in non-military defense.

All participants provided informed consent, understanding the purpose of the research and their role in it. Confidentiality and anonymity of the expert opinions were maintained throughout the analysis and reporting stages to uphold the integrity of the process.

3. Results

In theory, the concept of the cultural bomb is related to the context of thinking about the “War over space of Mind” expressed by Thiong’o (1992). This concept refers to how colonialism and imperialism control not only a nation’s land and physical resources but also their minds and culture. This concept relates to the battle within individuals’ minds between their original identity and the identity imposed by the dominant power. In the context of colonialism, colonizers often try to replace local languages, traditions, and values with their own. The goal is to control the minds of the natives and make them feel inferior or that their way of life is inferior. By maintaining “mind space,” colonists can ensure long-term dominance over the indigenous population, even after they have physically left the territory. In the context of cyberspace platforms, cultural bomb refers to the term cultural hack (Dunbar-Hester, 2019; Follis and Fish, 2022), namely concepts to address cultural power imbalances,

address cultural root causes for diversity and inclusion, as well as aim at strategic interventions, and bridge the gap between desirable mindsets and behaviors that subtly influence decision-making for inclusive outcomes.

Meanwhile, the term “cultural bomb” refers to strategies used by dominant powers to intervene in a nation’s indigenous culture and align it with a universal culture through various means, such as education, media, religion, and even law. By replacing indigenous cultures, indigenous people can become alienated from their cultural roots. The long-term effect of the “cultural bomb” is the loss of cultural identity, which can affect future generations. Thus, the “cultural bomb” approach can be controversial because it can be considered an attempt to impose specific societal values. On the contrary, it is important to implement cultural bombs inclusively and openly to strengthen awareness and cooperation, not deepen divisions and conflicts. In other words, this “cultural bomb” approach can be adopted and modified for certain purposes that are positively applied to one’s own circles, namely strengthening cultural joints, self-esteem, and strengthening self-confidence in the context of an increasingly global society. For example, to overcome local-national conflicts related to cultural and ideological differences. In this regard, strengthening people’s awareness of common values and distancing them from views and attitudes promoted by enemies or parties who want to threaten security can help prevent conflicts and build better cooperation between different peoples.

3.1. Description of the cultural bomb and its components

3.1.1. Definition

A cultural bomb is a social weapon in the form of a concept, method, or tool used by a state or other entity to influence, control, or manipulate the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of a society or individual through non-physical means, often to dominate, control, or changing the social and cultural structure of the target.

3.1.2. Components

- a) Existed:
 - Media propaganda: News, advertisements, movies, music, and other content disseminated to influence public opinion.
 - Education: A curriculum designed to teach certain values, norms, and ideologies.
 - Information technology (cultural hacking technology, social media algorithms, filter bubbles, and other technologies affects what users see and hear (Herget, 2021a).
 - Cultural symbolism: Icons, emblems, languages, and traditions that promote a particular ideology or value.
- b) Framework:
 - Target identification: Specifies the group or individual to be targeted.
 - Message formation: Creating or modifying information to influence the target.
 - Deployment: Using communication channels to massively and intensively deploy messages to targets. In practice, it is called “movement” or “revolution” and other terms represent the force of the ‘impact’ of a bomb

explosion.

- Monitoring and adjustment: Observe target reactions and adjust strategies if needed.

c) Goal:

- Public opinion: Creating or changing people's perception of an issue.
- Social structure: Changing the hierarchy or dynamics of groups in society.
- Norms and values: Changing or reinforcing the norms and values adopted by society.

d) Forming device:

- Mass media: Television, radio, newspapers, magazines.
- Social media: Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
- Educational institutions: Schools, universities, training institutions, academic journals, and scientific publications.
- Organizations and associations: Groups or organizations that have influence in society.

e) Perp:

- Governments are actors and investors, using social weapons to promote a particular agenda or policy or invest resources in actors.
- Corporation: Using social weapons to promote a product or brand.
- Religious groups: Using social weapons to promote a particular doctrine or belief.
- Activist groups: Using social weapons to promote social or political change.

In the context of Indonesian defense based on statutory regulations, the government needs a robust, vital concept in the social sector to illustrate non-military defense. The defense office has formulated the ideal posture of military capabilities (TNI) in the long term and its derivatives in short-term programs such as procuring ships, tanks, and other weapons. However, in terms of building non-military forces, the only program introduced by the government is the PKBN concept (national defense awareness program). It is unclear what kind of context of non-military defense posture is used as a strategy. In this context, the idea of the “cultural bomb” as a non-military weapon is proposed as a non-military defense empowerment program. In this article, in the context of a very dynamic cyberspace, the author outlines the importance of the government immediately providing a concept for non-military weapons technology—which has not yet been formulated.

3.2. The cultural bomb concept

The notion of “soft power” (Winkler and Nye, 2005) intricately intertwines with the concept of a “cultural bomb” showcasing how nations utilize cultural influence as a strategic tool to enhance their global presence and achieve geopolitical goals. Soft power leverages the appeal and seductive quality of a nation's culture, values, and policies rather than relying on coercion or monetary incentives. This method of influence can be seen in various countries' practices, which serve as compelling examples of cultural bombs in action. By promoting distinctive cultural elements internationally, countries aim to foster a favorable image and establish a subtle yet powerful influence over others. This strategic cultural export not only increases a

nation's attractiveness but also bolsters its competitiveness in the global arena. Importantly, beyond its role in international diplomacy, the concept of the cultural bomb discussed in this writing is also pivotal in strengthening national defense awareness among citizens, particularly in Indonesia. As such, deploying soft power through cultural bombs contributes significantly to shaping international relations and perceptions, aligning closely with the broader objectives of national foreign policy strategies and enhancing patriotic consciousness within the nation.

The government developed non-military weapons such as "culture hacking" (cultural hack) in the cyber domain due to the evolving strategic environment that recognizes cyber as a warfare domain (Patton, 2016). While cyberattacks are often seen as strategic asymmetric weapons, their effectiveness in state-to-state conflicts is debated (Dévai, 2016). Cyber tools are seen as more effective during tension between states than in direct military conflicts, serving as signaling tools rather than gaining military advantage (Kari and Pynnöniemi, 2023). In addition, the emergence of the "cyber escalation cycle" highlights how offensive cyber capabilities can be stolen, publicized, and used by hostile nations, leading governments to regulate the flow of technology between countries (Gomez and Whyte, 2022). These factors collectively contribute to strategic reasons for governments to explore non-military cyber options such as "cultural hack" and its derivatives "good cultural" for various strategic purposes.

The cultural bomb, as a derivative cultural hack, is defined as a subtle strategy a country uses to influence, change, and master the culture of the people in a region (Herget, 2021a). This terminology is used to refer to a devastating force that can destroy a city in an instant. However, cultural bomb work is packaged through cultural and artistic influences with cyber technology that is spread systematically and a masse to influence people's outlook on life, values, and culture.

In a political context, a cultural bomb is often used as a government weapon to deal with various political movements in the country. In this case, a cultural bomb was utilized to influence people's thinking, behavior, and outlook on life and produce changes desired by the government. In this case, a cultural bomb becomes an important tool for the government to influence people's culture and outlook on a large scale and create significant changes within a country. The idea of a "cultural bomb" is an application of "cultural hacking" technology. In areas of low national consciousness or areas of conflict, separatism brings many critical considerations and essential points that must be understood and explored in depth (Minchev, 2022). The use of "cultural bombs" in this context can aim to strengthen national identity, maintain unity, and minimize conflict (Abhishek, 2022), but it also has significant potential risks and negative impacts.

3.3. The metrics

Measurements such as the State defense index, democracy index, and human development index are proposed metrics to assess the effectiveness and precision of the effects of the cultural bomb concept and provide a better understanding of its impact on society. This proposal aligns with the success metrics of implementing cultural hacking, namely perception, awareness, reflection, reinforcement of desired

behavior, alignment with mindset, the effect of encouragement on decision-making, and innovative formats/methods for behavior change (Herget, 2021b). Some researchers propose indicator-based metrics, such as community collaboration, gamification, innovation in heritage reuse, and citizen engagement in cultural policy (Cerreta et al., 2021); function simulation/dissimulation in the context of cultural hacking in business (Liebl, 2005); the amount of information transmitted (Cashman, 2022); the role of the hacker, hackathon characteristics, cultural connections, hobbies vs. work orientation, and results vs. process focus (Mucha, 2021).

Metrics need to be tailored to the purpose of the cultural bomb, for example, according to the derivatives of purpose-based cultural hacking, such as:

- Hacking education (Aragão et al., 2021): Implement alternative educational methods or change the curriculum to adapt to current cultural needs and values.
- Hacking media (Tikhonova, 2022): Creating alternative narratives or changing the flow of information in the media to influence public opinion or bring about social change.
- Hacking identity (Bilyi, 2022): Using culture to reshape or reinforce the identity of an individual or group, often with the goal of empowerment or social change.
- Hacking art (Baranzoni and Vignola, 2021): Using art as a means to criticize or comment on social, political, and cultural issues, often with the aim of provoking discussion and critical thinking.
- Hacking environment (Happonen et al., 2022): Implement sustainable, culturally based practices to promote environmental conservation and ecological awareness.
- Hacking technology (Dunbar-Hester, 2019): Creating or modifying technology to portray or critique certain cultural values or to promote inclusivity and diversity.
- Hacking economy (Alexander, 2013): Proposing alternative economic models based on cultural and social principles to create equity and economic justice.

4. Discussion

4.1. Cultural gaps in the post-truth era

In the context of state defense, liberating oneself from foreign influences and strengthening national cultural identity and local wisdom become important to defend state sovereignty and prevent conflicts caused by cultural and ideological differences. The rapidly evolving strategic environment with the recognition of cyberspace as a warfare domain and the increasing interest in cyberspace as part of defense has increased the need for theoretical studies. Thus, empowering non-military defense is one way to strengthen cultural identity and build public awareness of the values to be maintained in the context of national defense (Kari and Pynnöniemi, 2023).

According to Ngugi, education and language are two important tools for building cultural awareness and strengthening local cultural identity. “Without it, we will lose our way and become vulnerable to foreign influences that can affect how we think and act in the context of national defense” (Thiong’o, 1992). In the face of the challenges of the times, where borders between countries are increasingly blurred and cultural dominance can occur indirectly through media and cultural products, cultural hacking

is not only a choice but a necessity. Through this approach, a state preserves its territorial sovereignty in the physical sense and the cultural and psychological sovereignty that is the essence of a nation's identity and sustainability. Education and language, as emphasized by Ngugi, are the most effective weapons in guarding and strengthening fortifications.

In this case, non-military defense empowerment can be interpreted as strengthening national and local cultural identity, building public awareness of the values they want to uphold, and keeping away foreign influences that can threaten state sovereignty. Thus, the government and the public need to pay attention to this in maintaining the security and defense of the country.

In theory, "difference" in this paper refers to multiculturalism, which debates ethnic and cultural diversity. At first, it was only known as pluralism, which refers to ethnic and cultural diversity within a region or country. This term has at least three elements: culture, cultural diversity, and ways to anticipate cultural diversity. Modern society generally consists of various groups with the same cultural and political status. Today, recognizing cultural pluralism demands social justice. Karjalainen (2020) explores the role of cultural identity in multicultural societies by stating that cultural identity can be a tool to strengthen a sense of community in a multicultural society and minimize conflicts between groups. The author also outlines how multicultural societies can strengthen cultural identity through the formation of cultural identity and its importance for understanding individuals' distinctive, culture-specific traits. Through this paper, the author provides a positive view of cultural diversity and identity in a multicultural society and concrete suggestions to strengthen cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, Jason (2023) discusses multicultural societies' challenges in current global conditions. The article aims to provide insights into the complex dynamics of cultural diversity and offer practical recommendations for promoting peaceful interactions and social cohesion in multicultural settings. The author states that multicultural societies need to strengthen cultural identity and expand tolerance and cooperation between groups in complex and changing global conditions. The author outlines best practices in conflict resolution within such a context, emphasizing the importance of intercultural mediation, cultural awareness, inclusive policies, proactive prevention, and community-based approaches. However, power imbalances and communication barriers persist and require ongoing attention. Through this paper, the author provides a critical view of the challenges faced by multicultural societies in today's global conditions and offers concrete suggestions to overcome these challenges. Finally, Enli (2024) discusses the relationship between politics, language, and the emergence of populist movements in the post-truth era. The author explains how populism utilizes language and media to reinforce messages that often contradict truth or fact. Enli highlights the role of the media in amplifying populist messages and deepening societal polarization among political parties. Furthermore, the author outlines how society can fortify itself against populist messages and build critical awareness of the information received. Through this paper, Enli provides a critical view of the role of language, media, and politics in the emergence of populist movements, emphasizing how mediated authenticity strengthens the populist message by creating a perception of honesty and relatability.

The threat of difference arises in the context of populist movements in the post-truth era. In that movement, ethnic differences were sharpened so that tribal people felt “different” from other tribes of Indonesian nationality. Aceh feels “different” from Jakarta. Batak is different Malay. Whatever happens in these areas is because tribes A and B are compared (differentiated). One of the sharpening is to report intensely and massively on events in the past, such as the conflicts that erupted in Papua, Aceh, and Ambon. The movement will sharpen differences between tribes, and similar conflicts will arise because of traditional hostility rooted in “differences”.

Another variation of tribal cultural interpretation that exacerbates “differences” is the reality of conflicts between Islamic culture and Christianity, Catholicism, and Protestantism, or Hinduism and Buddhism, among other religions. These cultural conflicts often introduce phobic vocabulary and clash intensely with local cultures. This phenomenon is perhaps what Huntington referred to as the clash of cultures at the local level (Huntington, 2013). Huntington suggests that in the post-Cold War era, cultural clashes will be a significant trigger for conflicts between civilizations. Adopting the motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity) in Indonesia while promoting unity poses the risk of cultural clash. Indonesian leaders and the nation’s founding fathers have long recognized this risk. Especially now, with rapid social changes in the digital era, cultural clashes are expected to occur more frequently, particularly between cultures that have adapted and those that have not (Livingstone and Sefton-Green, 2020). These clashes carry different risks. In this context, the government needs to formulate a “non-military defense empowerment” strategy that can be implemented through sustainable and practical programs. These programs should have measurable achievements and tangible outcomes that can be effectively utilized to address cultural clashes and promote national unity.

In the context of a non-military strategy, there needs to be a response to the threat of differences that occurred in the past and the effects of changes due to current policies. In the new order era, the concept of multiculturalism was applied through the practice of Pancasila values. These values are a foundation for creating a peaceful and harmonious community life system, even though it consists of various cultural backgrounds. The concept of non-military weapons in the new order era was the massive dissemination and socialization of the practice of Pancasila, known as P4 (Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila) (Al Ghifari, 2021).

However, in the democratic transition after the new order era, P4 was abolished, and the handling of the threat of differences shifted to the political realm with the concept of *Otoda*. This concept is thicker on the smell of “differentiating” or magnifying latent differences between regions, which can seriously threaten the country’s defense vision and lead to the nation’s disintegration. Therefore, there needs to be proper handling of the effects of *Otoda*’s policies and the existence of other new threats, such as post-truth populist movements.

4.2. Strategic implications and universal defense policy

The universal defense policy of the Indonesian National Forces (TNI) plays a critical role in addressing non-military threats, including cultural threats. This policy underscores the importance of integrating military and non-military strategies to

safeguard national security comprehensively. The TNI's strategic steps include enhancing the synergy between military and civilian institutions to address non-military threats effectively.

One of the key aspects of this policy is the emphasis on community involvement and the empowerment of local cultures to build resilience against foreign cultural influences. The TNI collaborates with various governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement cultural programs reinforcing national identity and unity. These efforts align with the broader objectives of non-military defense empowerment, as they aim to create a robust defense posture deeply rooted in the cultural and social fabric of the nation (Priyanto and Asmoro, 2023).

The TNI non-military's strategic framework includes promoting local arts, integrating cultural education in schools, and using media to propagate positive cultural narratives. These initiatives are designed to counteract the adverse effects of foreign cultural infiltration and to strengthen the national identity. The prevalent inclination of Indonesian people to appreciate foreign cultures more than their own has presented a significant challenge to maintaining national identity, for example, adverse the promotion of arts education in schools (Salam, 2020). Internal obstacles aggravate the situation, such as limited teacher proficiency in meaningful arts and culture education, inadequate facilities, and a lack of commitment from school administrators to cultural education. Overcoming these barriers is vital and requires government intervention. One proposed solution is adopting the "cultural bomb" concept, which entails substantial policy changes. In this context, by offering a structured approach to counter-cultural threats, the Indonesian general defense policy is crucial in utilizing cultural strategies and enhancing collaboration between military and civilian efforts. This policy will assist Indonesia in building a more resilient and united society capable of withstanding various non-military threats.

4.3. Cooperation and synergy

The General National Defense Policy unequivocally asserts that the Ministry of Defense strategically collaborates with various sectors and stakeholders, including other ministries, regional governments, NGOs, academics, and the private sector, to address non-military threats comprehensively (Republic Indonesia President, 2021). For instance, they actively engage with the Ministry of Education to seamlessly integrate cultural education into the national curriculum as part of the National Defense Awareness Development Program (Program Bela Negara) and firmly align with media organizations to vigorously promote positive cultural narratives. Moreover, local governments implement community-based defense initiatives effectively, while NGOs and academics fervently provide research and expertise. This unwavering multi-stakeholder approach ensures non-military defense initiatives sustained and far-reaching impact, ultimately fostering robust collaboration between military and civilian efforts.

For effective participation, the Indonesian Military Forces (TNI) must unequivocally demonstrate a commitment to human rights and the ability to adapt to civilian protocols while ensuring non-repressive methodologies in peace missions (Tri, 2023). Leveraging its soft power, the TNI must actively cultivate productive alliances

with civil institutions through joint ventures under civilian supremacy within a regulated and harmonized civil-military cooperation construct.

4.4. Cultural bomb concept in various countries

The concept of cultural bomb has been applied in various practices around the world. In China, the concept of Guanxi (Dunning and Kim, 2007) is a practice example of a cultural bomb the strong. Guanxi refers to personal relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and social exchange. Guanxi is important in forming relationships and forging connections with potential business partners in China. As part of the cultural bomb, Guanxi helped strengthen the strength of Chinese culture and gave Chinese people a competitive advantage in international business.

In Japan, the “Cool Japan” concept is also a form of cultural bomb. Cool Japan is a Japanese government program aimed at promoting Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga, and video games, worldwide. This program aims to introduce Japanese culture to the rest of the world and increase the importance of Japan as a tourist destination and as an economic market. In this case, Cool Japan combines traditional Japanese culture with modern lifestyles to create an attractive image for the global market (Valaskivi, 2013).

In other countries, such as South Korea and India, the concept of the cultural bomb has also been applied to promote their culture worldwide. For example, in the music industry, South Korea is known for the K-pop phenomenon that popularized Korean pop music worldwide. Meanwhile, India is promoting their Bollywood films and classical dance traditions to the rest of the world. All these cultural bomb practices aim to introduce the culture of these countries to the world and increase their competitiveness in the global market.

In the context of war campaigns, the cultural bomb was used by the U.S. In the 2003 U.S. campaign to topple Saddam Hussein, there was a practice of cultural bomb in the form of propaganda and cultural influences spread by the United States government to influence public views at home and abroad towards the war. For example, the United States government used mass media to spread certain narratives about the reasons for war and build a negative image of Saddam Hussein. In addition, propaganda is also disseminated through the internet and international television channels to influence public opinion in various countries (Gardels and Medavoy, 2009).

Another example of a cultural bomb was when the United States government tried to change public views of Muammar Gaddafi and his regime in Libya. During the 1980s and 1990s, the United States built a negative image of Gaddafi through propaganda and cultural influence by spreading narratives about brutality and terrorism perpetrated by the Libyan government. In 2011, when an uprising broke out in Libya, and the United States decided to support the uprising, the United States government used propaganda and mass media to build a positive image of the uprising and create the impression that military intervention was the only way to end the violence in the country (Peter and Chilwa, 2022).

The concept of the cultural bomb has also been applied in South Korea in the context of relations with North Korea. In the face of threats from North Korea, South

Korea developed the concept of “soft power” or “Hallyu wave”, which includes promoting South Korean culture and technological excellence, such as K-Pop music and South Korean television dramas. K-pop is one example of a cultural concept that successfully promoted South Korean culture to the rest of the world (Koo and Koo, 2022). K-pop music has become a global phenomenon, attracting fans from many countries, including Asia, the United States, Europe, and Africa. Many fans outside South Korea are interested in learning Korean and understanding South Korean culture more deeply. In addition to K-pop, waves Hallyu includes Korean dramas, movies, and other aspects of Korean pop culture. This phenomenon shows how culture can be an instrument of soft diplomacy, influencing global perceptions of South Korea and increasing its attractiveness as a tourist and investment destination.

But Gangnam Style, one of the biggest K-Pop phenomena, cannot fully be classified into the concept of a cultural bomb as it has no specific political purpose and is not intended to promote any particular policy of the South Korean government (Jung and Shim, 2014). However, the global success of the Gangnam Style has still positively impacted South Korea’s cultural image.

India promotes not only Bollywood movies but also a wealth of cultures and traditions that include classical music, dance, art, and culinary arts. Festivals like Diwali and Holi have also gained global popularity, showcasing the diversity and richness of Indian culture packaged to influence global perspectives and especially to enhance the nationalism of the Indian people.

4.5. Cultural bomb and Indonesian language

The term “cultural bomb” is not yet popular. This term refers to the use of culture or cultural attributes to rule an area with cultural forces injected into the local culture with all kinds of attributes by replacing these attributes with new cultural attributes and then replacing local culture. According to Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o. (1986), injecting well-prepared culture would be the most frightening bomb when used in a negative (non-ethical) context or cultural obliteration:

“The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves.”

The effect of a non-ethical cultural bomb is to obliterate people’s beliefs in their own name, in their own language, in their own environment, in their legacy of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves.

In an ethical context, the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) can be considered one of the cultural bomb concepts that succeeded in uniting the nation, which has various tribes and regional languages. The Indonesian language combines Malay (Minang), Javanese, Sundanese, and Madurese, as well as some loan words from Dutch, English, Chinese, etc. The Indonesian became the official language and language of unity for the nation.

However, nowadays, the Indonesian language is also faced with Malay, which has significant differences. Such differences can challenge maintaining Indonesia’s authenticity as a language of national unity (Phillips, 1973). Therefore, efforts are needed to continue to develop and preserve the Indonesian language as a strong

language of unity and maintain its authenticity, which is influenced by other languages, including Malaysian Malay.

- Thus, there is an argument that a more massive use of the Indonesian language is an opportunity for the Ministry of Defense to prepare the concept of non-military defense empowerment in the context of the cultural bomb concept that is being discussed. At least two strong reasons can be put forward: Indonesian language is the keyword for unifying different cultures. The Indonesian language has a long history of recognition as a unifier of nations and tribal cultures. Although there are regional languages, all admit that there are Indonesian (de facto and de jure). Indonesian language is seen as effective in inter-tribal communication (Zaid et al., 2021), and Indonesian political thinking to unite the Indonesian nation is very relevant.
- The Indonesian language has the opportunity to become a language at the ASEAN regional level because it is the most widely spoken and is spoken by around 350 million people. This opportunity can strengthen Indonesia's political bargaining position in ASEAN if the Indonesian Language is later declared to be the official language of ASEAN (Alam et al., 2022).

Thus, referring to the thought of Ngugi Thiong'o, the Indonesian language qualified to be formulated in a concept and description of the program that came to be referred to as a "cultural bomb" in the context of the thought of "empowerment of non-military defense." By utilizing the concept of cultural bombs, Indonesia can further enhance its ability to empower non-military defense (Rambu, 2016). As Ngugi Thiong'o thought, a cultural bomb can be an effective strategy to unite the nation in the context of defense. Therefore, the Ministry of Defense needs to strengthen the role of the Indonesian language as a cultural bomb by increasing its understanding and use in society and promoting the use of the Indonesian Language at the ASEAN regional level. That way, the Indonesian language can be one of the influential social weapons for protecting the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

4.6. Cultural bomb and populist movement

Populist movements are political movements characterized by anti-elitist rhetoric, advocating political views that are considered populist and claiming to represent the interests of the small people. This movement tends to exploit public dissatisfaction with existing political elites, whether from political parties, mass media, or public figures. Populist movements often use current and polarizing societal and political issues to strengthen support and increase their influence (Roberts, 2022). In this context, the Populist Movement can have significant implications for the cultural bomb because people involved in this movement often have a different view of life from the government or ruling group.

Populist movements and cultural hacking intersect in their shared use of technology to challenge established norms and power structures (Ron and Nadesan, 2020) Populism uses technology, such as social media, to amplify its message and mobilize support for perceived elite control (Aslanidis, 2022). On the other hand, cultural hacking, exemplified in literature, pushes the regulatory framework through technology, emphasizing identity and space rather than global inclusion (Joppke,

2022). Both phenomena reflect a push towards dominant narratives, with populism focusing on political and social change through mass mobilization, while cultural hacking disrupts neoliberal ideals by advocating alternative forms of social intervention (Leonard, 2014). This convergence clearly demonstrates the ever-growing impact of technology in shaping dissent and confronting traditional power dynamics in politics and culture. The implications of the Populist Movement on cultural influence underline the potential resistance of the people to the cultural influences enforced by the government. Populist movements construct anti-elitism narratives, fostering skepticism among their adherents towards government policies and strategies. Consequently, the government must meticulously weigh the application of the cultural bomb concept in response to Populist Movements, as the cultural influence wielded could provoke backlash if perceived as conflicting with public interests and desires. Therefore, the strategic and prudent implementation of the cultural bomb concept is imperative to achieve success in the face of the Populist Movement while minimizing public resistance.

In countering the post-truth Populist Movement, the cultural bomb can be an effective weapon for the government. This weapon is a concept that influences people's thinking and outlook on life to shape public opinion that supports government policies and programs. In this case, a cultural bomb can be used to counter the disinformation and propaganda often perpetrated by populist movements post-truth. By focusing on the unequal distribution of social forces and cultural norms within open technology communities, efforts to increase diversity are seen as ineffective without addressing the root causes of cultural problems (Dunbar-Hester, 2019). Therefore, cultural hacking technology, like the concept of a Cultural bomb, aims to dismantle deep-rooted cultural issues by simulating and introducing new orientations within the system, ultimately challenging the cultural foundations underpinning populist movements. By spreading the right messages to the target community, the concept of a cultural bomb can create a positive public perception of the government and its efforts to build a better country.

It is essential to recognize the significant role of extensive cultural activities in addressing the challenges presented by the rise of populist movements and post-truth ideologies. These activities promote solidarity and unity among diverse groups (Eslen-Ziya and Pehlivanli, 2022), effectively mitigating inter-ethnic or religious conflicts often exploited by populist movements to gain support and influence (Yilmaz et al., 2022). The establishment of a well-structured cultural policy, also known as the "cultural bomb", holds the potential to advance diversity and cultural understanding, contributing to a more peaceful and harmonious social environment. Additionally, it allows individuals to develop a deeper appreciation for different cultures, reducing apprehension and skepticism between groups and ultimately strengthening unity in the face of populist movements and post-truth ideologies.

4.7. Challenges and constraints

Using a cultural bomb as a weapon against the Populist Movement's post-truth is not easy and may not be consistently effective. There are several challenges and obstacles to using this weapon. One of the main challenges is the growing influence

of social media. The Populist Movement's post-truth often uses social media to spread disinformation and propaganda, creating a counterproductive cultural action. Another challenge is that implementing cultural bombs to reach a wide audience is difficult and can sometimes have the opposite effect. Additionally, the lack of public understanding and awareness of different cultural values is also an obstacle to the use of cultural bombs as a weapon. Societies that are less open to cultural differences are often difficult to influence with the cultural bomb, so efforts to promote cultural diversity and values must be continuously intensified (Herget, 2021b).

Another constraint in using the concept is the resistance and criticism of groups of people who disagree with the views or ideologies propagated (Clover and Sanford, 2020). This constraint can occur if the concept is considered propaganda or an attempt at manipulation, thus strengthening the position of the post-truth Populist Movement. Therefore, using the cultural bomb concept must be done carefully and wisely, considering the existing social and cultural context. In addition, this weapon must also be supported by concrete and sustainable programs and policies from the government to create a real positive impact on society.

4.8. Implications of the cultural bomb in public policy

The cultural bomb has implications for public policy. The concept of massive cultural hacking has implications for the use of government resources and public engagement to achieve its goals effectively. Therefore, its application will influence public policy by emphasizing participatory governance, challenging authority, and redefining knowledge creation, especially in general knowledge and public interest science (Powell, 2016). It has also influenced the development of participatory governance in public interest science and highlights the value of expanded knowledge accessibility. In addition, massive cultural hacks such as cultural bombs and hacktivism have been linked to political protests, virtual actions, and shaping the culture and politics of the information age. Cultural hacking research in cyberspace is also emerging, introducing a cultural evolution modeling framework to explain previous results and guide future campaigns for endogenous change (Muthukrishna, 2019). Finally, it shows how cultural hacking practices in contemporary contexts can influence public policy; for example, memes and digital remix cultures allow people to express their feelings about politics and society in impossible ways before the internet. Politicians, policymakers, and others committed to progressive social change should pay attention to this culture in terms of what they can learn from it and how they can protect people from its effects (Sobande, 2019).

When applied to digital media and social memory, cultural hacking presents an innovative method for sustainable societal development. Tikhonova (2022) explains that cultural hacking connects traditional practices with contemporary sustainability concepts by combining cultural heritage, local values, and existing norms. This approach reinterprets historical narratives and involves Indigenous peoples in meaningful dialogue, reinforcing the community-based approach to gathering and sharing information. Hacking cultural memory allows for the appropriation, editing, and inhabiting of historical narratives within personal digital memory strategies, thus creating a strong framework for preserving and evolving cultural identity in the digital

age. That is why massive cultural hacks such as cultural bombs that utilize cyber technology can bridge more massive public engagement and have implications for the effectiveness of cultural development to support sustainable development.

In the discourse of cultural memory and documentality theory, cultural hacking facilitates the formation of new objects of social memory. It links individual digital memory storage strategies with broader collective narratives, promoting development that is not only inclusive but also sustainable. By embracing cultural roots and leveraging digital technologies, cultural hacking has great potential to be a catalyst for adopting and improving sustainability practices in community life (Tikhonova, 2022).

Examples of real implications for positive purposes, such as the use of Indonesian as a cultural bomb, will have implications for the fulfillment of government policies (public policies) regarding the use of Indonesian on sites: Mass Media, Educational Institutions, Organizations, and Associations; Even cyber sites of individuals, public figures, and public figures. In such a context, the use of Indonesian is an effective tool as a cultural bomb that can strengthen the goal of strengthening national identity. Those with negative implications include cultural bombs in elections (Foster Bhusari et al., 2022; Noveck, 2017; Whyte, 2020).

5. Conclusion

The concept of the “cultural bomb” introduced in this study provides a comprehensive framework for addressing non-military threats, particularly cultural threats arising from the infiltration of foreign values that undermine local traditions and national identity. The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of cultural resilience as a component of national defense. In tackling these non-military threats, the government employs a multi-faceted strategy that involves various stakeholders and sectors.

Concrete measures taken by the Indonesian Government:

- Educational initiatives: The government collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Culture to integrate cultural education into the national curriculum. This initiative aims to promote awareness and appreciation of local cultures among students from a young age in terms of state defense programs (PKBN), thereby building a solid foundation of national identity.
- Media and information campaigns: Partnerships with media organizations are crucial in disseminating positive cultural narratives. These campaigns counteract the influence of foreign cultural values and promote national unity. Social media and digital platforms have effectively reached a broader audience. The program that has garnered the most attention is the online coffee program, an online discussion program with a “world cafe” approach featuring young influencers and community leaders.
- Community-based programs: Local governments and community organizations significantly implement cultural programs such as festivals, art exhibitions, the state defense actions (Aski Bela negara), and cultural workshops. These programs foster community bonds and reinforce national identity at the grassroots level.
- Research and development: The government collaborates with academic institutions and research organizations to study and develop strategies for cultural

resilience. For example, this study is part of an R&D collaboration that includes the application of the Delphi technique to gather expert consensus on practical measures and the continuous evaluation of existing programs.

- Legislative support: Policies and regulations supporting cultural preservation and promotion are enacted to ensure long-term sustainability. These legal frameworks provide the necessary support for various cultural initiatives and protect against the erosion of national identity.

By implementing these strategies, the Indonesian government aims to create a resilient and cohesive society capable of withstanding various non-military threats. The “cultural bomb” concept, as proposed in this study, aligns with the broader objectives of national defense and highlights the importance of cultural empowerment in safeguarding national sovereignty.

In various discussions about the future of Papua on national TV shows, a prevailing pessimism surrounds the current approach to resolving the conflict. It is clear that relying solely on repressive means, such as using force by the National Police or TNI, is not the solution. The government must prioritize non-military approaches to resolving the conflict while strengthening its military capabilities. This effort challenges the traditional notion that safeguarding and conflict resolution are exclusively the government’s responsibility. This approach could be termed “massive cultural hacking” and requires the government to act as an investor and regulator, collaborating with universities, NGOs, customary/community leaders, and social experts. “Massive cultural hacking” is the key concept here.

Another urgency is that in the face of the era of post-truth populist movements that increasingly threaten the unity of the nation, the use of non-military weapons in the form of the cultural bomb concept needs to be formulated as part of the country’s defense policy. With social weapons, it is hoped that people can avoid hate propaganda spread by populist movements and maintain the nation’s integrity. As part of non-military weapons, the cultural bomb is also expected to build a stronger national character and foster the spirit of defending the country in an increasingly open society with advances in information technology.

In the context of Indonesia, which has cultural and ethnic diversity, the use of the cultural bomb as part of the country’s defense policy can make a positive contribution to the unity of the nation. People will better understand and appreciate this diversity by disseminating the values of local wisdom and national culture. In addition, the concept of a cultural bomb can also be seen as a concrete tool to build a healthy political culture and mutual respect in society to reduce the adverse effects of populist movements and hate propaganda. Therefore, this paper recommends further thinking to realize concrete forms of social weapons (such as the cultural bomb concept) from various academics and observers of state defense and encourages the efforts of the Government (relevant Ministries and Institutions) to immediately formulate the concept of non-military defense weapons policy to maintain the unity and unity of the Indonesian nation in the future.

In conclusion, the concept of “cultural bomb” elaborates on the General State Defense Policy in Indonesia, presenting a structured approach to non-military defense by utilizing cultural strategies and increasing collaboration between the military and civilian sectors. Through this concept, Indonesia can firmly face cultural threats and

strengthen its national identity through education, media, community programs, research, and legislative support.

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