

## THE REVITALIZATION POLICY OF CHARACTER-EDUCATION IN TERMS OF STRENGTHENING THE CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM

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### ABSTRACT

Globalization impacts the order of society, nationhood and statehood in Indonesia. One change *brought about* is the emergence of public behavior that does not reflect the values of nationalism. This calls for the revitalization of character education as part of *an effort to maintain* the values of nationalism in the community. This article aims to provide an overview of the importance and urgency to revitalize character education *for nationalism*, through a qualitative approach. *Previously* the Government revitalized the nationalism concept education policy with implementation during the New Order era. Based on recent findings, there are a number of factors supporting and hindering the policy implementation of nationalism education at present. The role of character education is found to be notably significant, therefore the option to revive character education to maintain nationalism values in Indonesia is empirical and logical.

Keywords: *globalization, concept of nationalism, revitalization, character education.*

### INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has prompted Indonesia to open up to collaborate internationally regarding various dimensions of life. One of the important advantages is Indonesia's membership in the G-20, with Indonesia's economy now globally ranked. Nevertheless, globalization has given rise to grassroots problems that bring some change to the order of social life, nationhood and statehood. Micklethwait, J. and Wooldridge, A. (2000) affirm that: "Basically globalization is a commercial phenomenon, .... Although the roots are commercial, globalization has given rise to notably large social, political and cultural problems".

One of the problems arising is behavior that does not reflect the Pancasila (Five core founding principles) values of the nation. This phenomenon, among others, is allegedly linked to the abolition of the educational material of national attitude in formal education, particularly at an early age, such as Character Education, Pancasila Moral Education and National Struggle History Education. Yet according to Tilaar (2000), education is not merely about making a man

smart but more importantly how to make people respect cultures and become aware of the nature of his created purpose. This is where character education of national attitude plays a role to impart values of nationalism.

Additionally the elimination of national educational institutions such as the BP-7 (the Office for the Education and the Implementation of the Guide for the Internalisation and Actualization of Pancasila) is considered to contribute to the behavior that does not reflect the cultural values of the nation based on Pancasila. In addition, the insufficient budget facilitated by central and local government contributes to the current diversity of materials, methodologies and applications available in education.

The loss of national character-based education is in fact contrary to the essential role of education as mandated in the Law concerning National Education System No. 20 of 2003, Chapter I, Article 1, Paragraph 1, that "Education is a conscious and deliberate effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that learning participants can actively develop their potential to have: spiritual power through

religious beliefs; self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills required by themselves, society, the nation and state". It is clearly stated that the nation and the state became the subject of real importance, as is expected from education in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

The study uses a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2008), aimed at providing a description regarding the urgency of revitalization of character education as part of efforts to maintain the values of nationalism in the public sphere. To obtain the required data, desk studies were conducted of various literary sources: with primary data collection through an in-depth interview process with related informants (Patton, 2001), and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) with related stakeholders. The interview process and FGD were conducted with stakeholders from central and local levels of government in the Province of Aceh, DKI Jakarta, Central Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, and Papua (these regions were previously selected as appropriate case studies regions by Yin, 2003).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **The Importance and Urgency of Nationalism**

Rapid economic development and globalization have brought the people of Indonesia into a vortex of other (outside) values. Accordingly, this requires the state to keep the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) by ensuring education for citizens to have a common understanding of the perspectives of national values. Mahifal (2011) even considers that national values, which form a shared concept, appropriately serve as nationalism. Furthermore, according to Kartasasmita (1996) and Hadi (2003) the concept of nationalism also demands a nation to embody the identity and develop behaviors

as a nation, believing in the cultural values that are born and grow, and are embodied in the personality of the people.

More comprehensively, the concept of nationalism, according to the Regulation of Minister of Home Affairs No. 71 Year 2012, is the perspective of the Indonesian nation on itself and its surroundings, prioritizing the national unity and territorial unity, based on Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Unity in Diversity, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Meanwhile, if the concept of nationalism is interpreted as a shared consensus, the people will set shared goals as the basic framework of the state's ideals. Asshiddiqie (2011) affirms that the concept of nationalism is a consensus that guarantees the establishment of constitutionalism in modern times, i.e. with respect to the shared goals that determine the enforcement of the constitution and constitutionalism in a country.

Referring to the views of Asshiddiqie, in the Indonesian context, the philosophical basis referred to is commonly called Pancasila, meaning the five basic principles or five fundamentals to achieve the four national goals stated in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The five basic principles are used as a philosophical-ideological basis to achieve the four national goals or ideals of the state, namely: (1) protect the entire Indonesian nation and the entire country of Indonesia; (2) improving the general welfare; (3) educating the nation; and (4) participate in the establishment of world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. This is reinforced by the fact that the essence of the nationalism concept for the Indonesian nation is one embodied in the soul of the preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, that establishes the basis and goals of the national independence of Indonesia (Kartasasmita, 1996).

Thus, the concept of nationalism is ideologically the basic starting point, invested into society in the form of the noble values of the Indonesian nation in the people's daily life. If the concept of nationalism is imposed well, then all values of the nation and the state within it shall be actually implemented in the community. However, if the concept of nationalism fails to be imposed well, then society will lose the benchmark of nationalism values. This will have an impact on the birth of an individualistic society which has difficulty accepting shared values. It is very susceptible to threats against the foundation of national unity.

### **Degradation of the Concept of Nationalism and the Conflict Potentials**

The current empirical condition of nationalism or similar values, has deteriorated in the community. Some issues arising in the community that indicate this include the Poso conflict, Sampit tragedy, Bali bombing, Ambon conflict in 2011, the burning of churches, the difference of opinion between the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Muhammadiyah, dissent of opinion regarding the date of the Eid al Fitr, rampant corruption of officials, the separatism movement, the movement of radical groups, cases of sexual harassment, fighting between students, and electoral conflicts. The deterioration of the value of nationalism in Indonesian society is also reflected in the following details of conflict mapping.

Manopo research data showing the Conflict Intensity Ranking, shows that as many as 1,051 cases were experienced by the Manopo population. This is 30.5% of total conflict based on the research relating to issues in the years 2010-2011. This condition indicates public efforts to use vigilantism to solve problems occurring in their environment. It is caused by a lack of public trust in government apparatuses in law enforcement and security. The second issue is the fighting between students, as many

as 985 cases (or 28.6%). Further incidents involving conflict include political conflict, mass beatings, conflicts over economic and natural resources, religion, ethnicity, and conflicts between authorities. Further, data from the Coordinating *Ministry* for Political, Legal and Security Affairs (Kemepolhukam) indicate that during the period from January to April 2013, 17 cases of conflict occurred in various parts of Indonesia, including land, religious, local electoral, inter-ethnic conflicts, and mass rioting due to regional expansions.

These phenomena indicate that the problems occurring in society are conflicts triggered by the negative effects of the implementation of democracy and decentralization. On the one hand, democracy and decentralization seek to bring government closer to the people and to include more aspirations of the people. Nevertheless, on the other hand, they result in new issues such as anarchy by demonstrators in the name of democracy. One example is the workers rally which occurred in 2006, when workers knocked down the fence complex of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au>). Other examples include the rally in 2012, interfering with the activity on the highways (<http://news.okezone.com>), and the demonstrations of students both in front of government offices and in the university environment.

Potential for conflict in a pluralistic society like Indonesia is indeed high. According to a study by Croissant and Schauchter (2010), Indonesia, as well as Nepal and Thailand, is a plural society that is characterized as a region with a high chance of conflicts. The high conflict opportunities indicate that a plural society has a high chance of different interests, especially at the local level. In the view of Pratchett (2009), conflicts occurred in Indonesia partly because of the dilemma in the implementation of democracy in the local sphere, especially

after the implementation of regional autonomy and democracy at the national level. Regional autonomy basically intersects with the broader democratic structures and their practices conceptually. Its presence has the potential to challenge the sovereignty of the nation state. In such condition, the central government experiences a paradox. On the one hand, a strong local autonomy is essential for maintaining local democratic practices that support a wider democratic culture inside; on the other hand, regional autonomy threatens the viability of national policy priorities.

The other underlying phenomena in the last few years are the early signs of state failure. Rotberg as cited by Harahap (2012) states that some syndromes of failed state are: a situation when the security of the people cannot be guarded; ethnic and religious conflicts are not finished; and corruption is rampant (<http://muchtareffendiharahap.blogspot>). Associated with cases of corruptions, based on the Corruption Perception Index 2013, Indonesia is ranked first of the 175 countries surveyed and obtains the value of 32 of the scale 100 (<http://www.transparency.org>). This indicates that Indonesia is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Up until 2013, the Commission of Corruption Eradication (KPK) had completed 385 cases of corruption (<http://www.antaraneews.com>). From January-August 2014 the Commission conducted an investigation of 60 cases. This indicates that there are still many cases of corruption in Indonesia.

These various issues reflect the decline of understanding of the spirit of nationalism among the people and the weakening sense of ownership of the state and nation. Without a sense of ownership of the homeland, and an empathy for others, there will be injustice, poverty, violence, and criminal acts, which if not immediately anticipated will bring the country towards failure and may lead to the destruction of the country. Wasistiono once said in one of his classes, (the first Doctoral

class of 2014 at the Institute of Public Administration), that a country will lead to a failed state if economically it does not produce public welfare. This is indicated by an increase in the amount of poverty, violence and unemployment due to rising injustice and political failure to create political stability, marked by violence. Potential conflict requires immediate response by promoting the concept of nationalism as the basic approach to education.

### **The Role of Character Education**

The deteriorating concept of nationalism is closely related to character education, as affirmed by Tolleng, *et al.* (2013) as follows:

“... the fading, even the loss, of the national character is an alarming phenomenon in the life of the nation. The phenomenon is among other associated with the emergence of behavior that is far from the values of decency. The rise of globalization and the coming ASEAN free zone, as well as the intensifying freedom of speech, yet without the accompaniment of the development of character education, is a factor associated with the emergence of the phenomenon”.

This description suggests that education is the main foundation in building a national character that will give birth to the civilization of noble culture. As emphasized in Article 31, paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the government will manage and organize a national education system that enhances faith, piety and noble values in order to educate the nation, governed by law. In essence, through education, the Indonesian community is expected to develop honourable character, dignity, high moral values, i.e. society that respects and uphold the values of Pancasila, namely practicing the religious norms, upholding humanity, national unity, and democracy, as well as social justice.

In line with the opinion of Tolleng, *et al.* (2013), character education is key in maintaining the integrity of the nation. This was stated long ago by the President of the United States from 1923-1929, Calvin Coolidge, in his speech in New York on 12 February 1924, saying: “character is the only secure foundation of the state”. It can be said, therefore, that if the national character weakens, the foundations of the state are also weakening. Corroborated by excerpts from the study of National Security Agency and the National Security Council in 2013, education is the most effective media in an effort to implement strategic, systemic, rapid, precise and shared efforts for the development of the concept of nationalism/national character, because education is the construction of the real world in a limited community. Accordingly in education, there are inter- and intra-personal values being developed, occurring and producing thoughts inside, simultaneously developing actions from what is happening outside a person. In the Survey of the Central Bureau of Statistics, education is described as the most appropriate and effective way to make people understand and internalize the values of nationalism (noted as having 30% of impact?). Amongst the key players that implement education of nationalism, teachers and lecturers rank as high as 43 %.

As explained by UNESCO (2000), a person’s character is notably influenced by differences in individual, family, environment and psychology. Likewise, Confucius stressed the important role of the family in teaching how people behave at their initial development. According to Confucianism, the family is responsible for making the children good members of society. Similarly, Brady (1950) affirms that a person’s character, both when expressing himself happy, sad, angry, and so on, is greatly affected by the values he gets at home. The next character formation is in school. However unfortunately schools often do not teach the values internalized

by students, so that the limit of education provided by the family cannot be identified and corrected. As described by UNESCO (2000), some factors that lead to behavior problems are: cultural factors, school and religion.

The description above shows that character education is key of influence of public behavior, produced both by family, school, and neighborhood. This illustrates the great role of character education for a nation; thus reviving the character education in Indonesia is a very important and logical step.

### **Revitalization of Character Education**

In the efforts to revitalize character education, there are obstacles that hinder the education process in implementing a nationalism concept. Based on the study of National Security Agency in 2013, the inhibiting factors are: (1) lack of competent educators who can transfer knowledge to their students and are capable of making Pancasila values and nationalism substantial in the learning process at schools; (2) education is still partially implemented, only emphasizing the cognitive dimension alone, without the support of affective and psychomotor dimensions. Materials concerning Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are merely judged by how the principles and the articles are personally memorized, instead of understanding the meaning and attitudes that reflect the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; (3) the values of Pancasila and the concept of nationalism have not been consciously implemented; this is reflected in the tendency of society that has less respect for freedom of religion, ethnic differences and diversities. These of course result in the seeds of anarchy against different beliefs and ethnic groups.

Reflecting on this phenomenon, the Government has made various efforts to develop character education through the strengthening of the concept of nationalism.

They have organised education policy on the concept of nationalism by directly involving the regions, and the materials and methodology of character education has been produced in accordance with the current needs.

One policy related to the practice of nationalism that was used for a long time was the *Guide for the Internalisation and Actualization of Pancasila* (P4). During in the New Order era the P4 was the star policy and become one of the main nationalism education tools, and was known to be effective for practicing the 36 descriptions of principles of the Pancasila. In fact the pattern of P4 advocacy was considered less grounded with more emphasis on the indoctrination pattern and caused people to lose a critical attitude and creative power. Similar education was also conducted in the school curriculum through the subject of Pancasila Moral Education that was later transformed after the post-New Order era into Citizenship Education.

At the time of the Reform Order (in 1998), the Government again revitalized character education through a policy on strengthening of nationalism developed by the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 71 of 2012. This was based on the character education policy according to Law Number 32 Year 2004 citing the Regional Government holding the responsibility to organize and implement. At the time of drafting this article, the law was revised into 3 different Laws, namely Law No. 6 of 2014 on the Village, Law Number 22 Year 2014 on the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors, and Law No. 23 Year 2014 on the Regional Government.

Specifically related to Law Number 23 Year 2014 for Regional Government, the authority for organizing general government affairs, (that is related to nationalism education according to Article 9 and Article 25), is in the hands of the central government, yet can only be implemented by Regional Heads.

However the derivatives or the implementing regulation in the form of Government Regulation is under the preparation stage.

### **Supporting and Hindering Factors of the Implementation of Revitalization of Character Education**

The policy implementation of nationalism education at the national level, among others, is the responsibility of the Directorate of Ideology- and Nation-Building which is part of the Directorate General of National and Political Unity, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri).

Policy formation has been based on the results of interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders at central and local levels, especially the Agency of National and Political Unity and community leaders. There has also been a review of documents, and observation from the regions. A number of factors that support the implementation of nationalism education can be identified, namely:

- 1) In the escort of the Agency of National and Political Unity a coordinated, directed, planned, and sustainable conception and applications from each Ministry and related institutions are required. This has been set and decided through the amendment of Law No. 32 of 2004 into Law No. 23 of 2014 on the Regional Government, in particular Article 9, Article 25, and Article 327. According to Article 9 Paragraph (5), the general government affairs is the Government Affairs that has become the authority under the President as the Head of Government. Article 25 Paragraph (1) states that the general government affairs as referred to in Article 9 Paragraph (5) includes among others sub-paragraph (1), i.e. the development of the concept of nationalism and national resilience in order to strengthen the implementation of Pancasila, the implementation of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia,

the preservation of unity in diversity, and preservation and maintenance of the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

- 2) The Presidential Regulation No. 11 Year 2015, dated January 21, 2015 concerning the Ministry of Home Affairs, among others, stresses that the classification of Directorate Kesbangpol is transformed into the Directorate General of Politics and Public Administration, in which there is the Directorate of Pancasila Ideology, Character and the Concept of Nationalism and one of its subs is the Directorate of National Character and Nationalism.
- 3) There is support in the form of similar programs in Ministries/Institutions other than the Ministry of Home Affairs, for example, the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security has a program of strengthening nationalism concept, i.e. activities promoting efforts to make a person or situation steady, firm, and stable; thus he/it can function better than the previous state to support shared life as a national unity. Meanwhile, the concept of nationalism is a perspective of the Indonesian nation in order to manage the life of the nation and the state, based on the national character and awareness of the national system, sourced from Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Unity in Diversity, in order to solve the various problems encountered by the nation and the state for achieving a safe, fair, prosperous, and highly competitive society (KemenkoPolhukam, 2014). Through cooperation across ministries and institutions, all similar programs can be synergized in an effort to improve the quality of life of society, nationhood, and statehood.
- 4) The emergence of a deep awareness from community leaders, educators, religious leaders, and political figures with respect

to the waning understanding, experience, and the spirit of nationalism lately, thus requiring programmed effort to overcome it.

- 5) The public has been saturated with the atmosphere of violence, clashes, security disturbances, and the like; hence it is now desperate for a safe peaceful and comfortable atmosphere in the life of society, nationhood, and statehood.
- 6) In general, a positive response for Nationalism Education from the Indonesian Youth National Committee, community organizations, and religious organizations, in most areas of the Republic of Indonesia.

Apart from supporting factors, based on the result of interviews and FGD conducted to stakeholders of National and Political Unity in the center and regions, public figures, document reviews, and observation in the regions, a number of factors hindering the policy implementation of nationalism concept education can be identified, namely:

- 1) The multidimensional effect of globalization affecting the aspects of politics, economy, society, culture, as well as defense and security. The negative product of globalization can be either the less educating television broadcasts, the content of pornography via the Internet, the freedom of speech unaccompanied by responsibility, the culture of hedonism having great effect on the decline of national character and nationalism owned by the Indonesian community.
- 2) There is a degradation of nationalism caused by the diminishing public understanding and care toward the concept of nationalism over time. The lack of understanding and ignorance of Indonesian society on the main foundation of national life, namely Pancasila result in the emergence of various problems of nationality.
- 3) The corrupt behavior of some state officials plays a major role in accelerating

- the degradation of the life of the nationhood, and statehood; people are losing confidence in the leaders of the country and have lost good role models.
- 4) The concept and application of BP7 with its P4 is deemed less appropriate in an era of reform. BP7 was then converted into the Agency for the Development of the Life of Nationhood and Statehood (BPKB) through MPR Regulation. It turned out to be a failure, thus amended by Law No. 22 of 1999 into Law No. 32 of 2004, which was entrusted to Kemendagri Cq. Directorate General Kesbangpol and local government Cq. Kesbangpol bodies at the provincial and district/municipal levels.
  - 5) The obstacles in the concept of regional autonomy in the Law concerning Regional Governments are:
    - (1) Kesbangpol becomes “the playing tool” of the Regional Heads. For example: Programs and Activities of the Central Kesbangpol in many ways are less synergic with Regional Kesbangpol;
    - (2) Provincial, District/Municipal Kesbangpol who should play important role in guiding and developing the strengthening and implementation of Pancasila and the concept of nationalism have their own problems, i.e.:
      - a. The institutional classification in many districts/cities is only the level of echelon III (Office) which is considered not important, not strategic, has little budget and has incapable staffing;
      - b. Many Regional Heads indicate that areas of physical development are more important than the non-physical ones;
      - c. The relatively fair/high frequency of personnel mutation;
      - d. The implementation of nationalism concept stabilization activities is just to fulfil an obligation, without clear targets and outputs;
      - e. The absence of synergy among Districts in one province, and between the Districts and its Province;
      - f. The lack of supervising and monitoring from the Provinces to Districts/Cities.
  - 7) Some Ministries/institutions have their own activity program in guarding Kesbangpol (for example: People’s Consultative Assembly, the Coordinating *Ministry* for Political, Legal and Security Affair (Kemepolhukam), National Security Agency, Coordinating Ministry for People’s Welfare, and the Constitutional Court). Consequently the modules and guidelines for the nationalism concept education are different. Accordingly, coordinated, directed, planned, and sustained conception and implementation are required.
  - 8) External challenge is sourced from formal education (primary and secondary). First, there is a lack of qualified teachers who can transfer knowledge to their students and capably to implement the values of Pancasila in the learning process at school. Second, education in Indonesia is still partially implemented, only emphasizing the cognitive dimension, but neglecting affective and psychomotor dimensions. For example, the teaching of the subject of religion merely consists of explanation/recitation of a particular religion, but is not accompanied by the practices of the religious teachings and its implementation in real life; Third, in social life at school and the learning process in the classroom, the values of Pancasila have not been consciously and earnestly applied; thus there is a tendency in social life to have less respect for freedom of religion and belief, as well as less acceptance of diversity. This results in the seeds of anarchy against different



beliefs.

The concept of nationalism is ideologically a basic capital, imposed in everyday life of society in the form of the noble values of the Indonesian nation. If the concept of nationalism fails to be imposed well, then society will lose the benchmark of its national values. This will have an impact on the birth of an individualistic society that finds it difficult to accept shared values. It is very hazardous for the foundation of national unity.

Character education is the key to nationalistic public behavior and is produced by families, schools, and the environment. This paper has illustrated how important the role of character education is for a nation; thus it is empirical and logical to revive character education to maintain the concept of nationalism in Indonesia. The potential for national conflicts can be immediately mitigated by promoting the concept of nationalism as the basis of public education.

The Government has made various efforts of character education development through strengthening the concept of nationalism. One of the related policies that has been implemented is through the advocacy of the Guide for the Internalisation and Actualization of Pancasila (P4) presented in the New Order era but stopped since the Reform era. Given the urgency of the declining quality of public morals, the Government seeks to revitalize the policy of strengthening the concept of nationalism, one being through the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 71 of 2012 on the Guidelines for the Nationalism Concept Education.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the study, there are several factors supporting and hindering the policy implementation of nationalism concept education in an effort to improve the quality of life of the society, nationhood, and statehood.

The supporting factors include: (1)

the existence of statutory instruments with regard to the Nationalism Education; (2) the existence of support in the form of similar programs in other ministries/institutions; (3) the emergence of public awareness concerning the waning understanding, experience, and the spirit of nationality that require programmed efforts to overcome; (4) the public has been saturated with the atmosphere of violence, clashes, security breaches, and the like; and (5) there is a positive response from the public on Nationalism Education.

Meanwhile, the hindering factors include: (1) the negative multidimensional impact of globalization; (2) degradation of nationalism due to the waning understanding and public care of the concept of nationalism; (3) the corrupt behavior of some state officials, causing the loss of confidence in the leaders of the country; (4) difficulties in the concept of regional autonomy in Law concerning Regional Governments; and (5) Each Ministry/institution has its own program of activities in guarding Kesbangpol.

Central or local governments need to undertake a number of steps to keep providing the character education in the form of nationalism education, by:

- 1) Establishing and developing centers of excellence that already exist as educational centers for Nationalism that continuously and sustainably implement the Nationalism in Education, (although limited in scope)
- 2) Involving a variety of stakeholders such as elements of the Indonesian Army (TNI)/police force, community leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, women's organizations, teachers, and NGOs in various activities of the Nationalism Education; and
- 3) Facilitating governmental sub-levels, both the provincial and district/municipal governments to encourage the efforts to revitalize Nationalism Education.

Moreover, I also suggest that in the future we need to further investigate in greater

depth the current policy implementation of the nationalism education in the field. The good policy implementation of the nationalism education shall play a role in improving the quality of the life of society, nationhood, and statehood.

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