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by Fostering State Ideology

Fostering the State Ideology at Indonesian Universities:
Challenges and Strategies in the Disruptive Era

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Abstract

Pancasila has become the country's ideology for Indonesia for more than seven decades. However, efforts to foster the state ideology remain challenging especially since the country's citizens are now faced with several consequences of the so-called the disruptive era. This paper discusses the challenges and the strategy of cultivating the state ideology at Indonesian universities. The Indonesian universitiesare selected as a unit of analysis because they become one of "the breeding centers" of alternative ideologies against Pancasila. This paper offers two approaches as a strategy to fosterthe state ideology at Indonesian universities: institutional and cultural approaches. While the institutional approach refers to the use of institutional resources to foster the state ideology, the cultural approach utilizes cultural resources to back up the effort. This paper argues that the simultaneous application of both approaches is an affective strategy for fostering the state ideology at the higher education institutions.

Keywords: Character Building, Civics, State Ideology, Pancasila, University

Introduction

During the last decade, we have witnessed some challenges toward the existence of Pancasila a state ideology in Indonesia (Gunawan&Ratmono, 2018; Sudjito, Muhaimin, & Widodo, 2018). One of the challenges came from the re-emergence of alternative ideologies, from right-wing ideologies such as khilafato left-wing ones such as communism (Rachman, Abdullah, &Surjo, 2012). Pros and cons regarding the issue of the emergence of these alternative ideologies can be seen easily in the public arena. The recent pros and cons regarding communist and khilafah issues are examples of real ideological discourses and contestations in society (Fajardin, 2018; Putri 2017; Ismail, 2018; Putra, 2018; Arif, 2018). It is also common to see a wave of demonstrations, on a small or large scale, between the opponents and the proponents of these alternative ideologies (Fanani, 2018; Santoso, 2018).

At the same time, we are witnessing national and humanitarian problems that remain unresolved in this country. The problems of corruption, drug abuses, as well as religious discriminationare still rampant (Ganie-Rochman&Achwan, 2016; Ariyanti, 2017; Marshall, 2018),not to mention some problems related to poor public management and services (Mahsyar, 2011, Muhtada, 2017). For instance, at the end of 2017, we got a shocking news regarding a toddler with symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting in Brebeswho eventually diedafter being refused treatment at the government's local health clinics (Puskesmas) simply because of the administrative problem regarding her *Kartu Indonesia Sehat* (Indonesia's health assurance) (Priyanto,

2017). This tragedy is a sign that the government has not fully accomplished one of the constitutional mandates – that is, to advance public welfare.

These various phenomena show two problems that are related to each other. First, Pancasila as the ideology of the state is getting serious challenges from the proponents of alternative ideologies, who believe that their ideology is better than the current state ideology, Pancasila. Second, we have a more substantive problemassociated with the application of the values of Pancasila as a state ideology as well as the philosophy of the nation. Cases of corruption, drug trafficking, religious discrimination, and failure to provide good public services are some concrete examples of how Pancasila values have not been fully implemented in the life of the nation and society.

Such a failure of the implementation of the Pancasila values is not only bad for the welfare of the community, but in essence is a serious threat to the existence of the state ideology. This situation might make people to think of the failure of Pancasila and search for alternative ideologies to replace it as a state ideology. What should we do to overcome this problem? There is no other way except to cultivate Pancasila values in the life of the nationand society.

This paper specifically discusses some potential efforts to foster Pancasila values at Indonesia's universities. Efforts to ground Pancasila in higher education are very important because university is one of the fertile places to spread the seeds of the alternative ideologies (Tamtanus, 2018). The first part of this article discusseswhy university can be an effective medium for disseminating alternative ideologies. The second part of this paper discusses some effective strategies for fostering the ideology of Pancasila in Indonesia's higher education.

Methods

This is a perspective and commentary paper, which offers insights and opinion of the author on a specific issue or an existing problem (Majumder, 2015). This paper is a reflection based on my personal experience as a senior lecturer at Universitas Negeri Semarang. First, I analyze why an Indonesian university becomes a potential "breeding center" for various ideologies, all of which may not suitable with the state ideology, Pancasila. Second, my identification of the strengths and the weaknesses of the learning environment at Indonesia's university led me to think of several strategies to foster Pancasila as a state ideology at the Indonesia's higher education level.

Results and Discussion

University as the Breeding Center for Alternative Ideologies

Two factors can explain why university can be a strategic place in the spread of alternative ideologies in Indonesia. The first explanation is related to university environment. Campus is a learning center for the future leaders of the nation and society. Many people believe that students, who are educated in higher education, can be potential agents of change in the future. On campus, they not only have

opportunity to study formally inclasses, but also study informally through student activity units (*Unit KegiatanMahasiswa*, UKM) and Student Executive Boards (*Badan EksekutifMahasiswa*, BEM). Student organizations, both extra and intra-campus organizations, are very effective learning vehicles for students informally (Kosasih, 2016; Oviyanti, 2016).

On campus, students not only can learn from their lecturers, but also from their seniors, classmates, and outsiders who intentionally come to campus to spread knowledge. Information flows enter freely to campus, in the name of the freedom of academic pulpits, without anyone being able to control it strictly. In such an academic environment, information can be spread and captured easily by anyone. Higher education is essentially an information free market for its "dwellers".

The second factor is related to human resources. It is important to note that college students and teachers are a group of elites in our community. Not everyone has access to learning and teaching in the college. University students generally are those who have been selected academically. They are people with a certain level of intelligence, who are considered capable of absorbing knowledge at the higher level of education.

This situation is backed up with the general character of students, who are usually progressive and have high curiosity (Tamtanus, 2018). Such a capacity and character of students will interest the agents of alternative ideologies. As a matter of fact, radical movements – left and right – have grown and developed on universities. Campus becomes a strategic place for the growth of understanding that can threatenthe existence of Pancasila.

The government cannot ignore the role of universities in strengthening the country's ideology. Cultivation of the Pancasila values must be carried out at universities. Not only because students can be a catalyst for strengthening state ideology in society, but also because they are potential agents of changes in their community (Angkawijaya, 2017). They might become community leaders, religious leaders, bureaucrats, politicians, or even state leaders. If ideological cultivation is not carried out on them, the state will lose a very potential catalyst for strengthening the country's ideology in the future.

Strategic Solution

How can we foster the ideology of Pancasila in the university? At the moment, the Indonesian universities have offered Pancasila Education as one of the compulsory subjects (Rindjin, 2012; Sarinah, Dahri, &Harmaini, 2017). Yet, because of its formal nature, this course alone is not enough. The process of cultivating the Pancasila values cannot be done only through formal channels, but also informal ones.

In my opinion, two approaches are possible. The first approach is institutional. Strengthening the Pancasila Education as a compulsory subject is certainly one example of this approach. Campuses can do this by increasing the capacity and teaching skills of the instructors of this subject. This capacity and skill of the

instructors must be supported by adequate infrastructure and supporting facilities, including adequate textbooks and references in the library.

In addition, the university can utilize academic orientation for new students. During the New Order regime, the government offered a Pancasila training called the training of P4, which is the abbreviation of *PedomanPenghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (Guidelines for the living and practicing Pancasila). Today's government may replicate such a program in our universities, of course with different political goals and formulas. If the New Order regime usedthis P4 program as a means for indoctrination – that is, to strengthen state hegemony (Hartono, 2017; Maftuh, 2008), then in our era of reformation,the government can use such a program to instill Pancasila values, democracy, diversity, and strengthening civiceducation.

Universities can also establish a Pancasila Study Center, whose function as a think-tank for the dissemination and strengthening the Pancasila values on campus. As a matter of fact, this kind of institution has already existedin several universities in Indonesia such as in Gadjah Mada University, Malang State University, SunanKalijaga Islamic State University, and Semarang State University. However, a homework needs to be fully accomplished: how can such a center offer effective programs to instill the ideology of Pancasila among the campus community. Here, the creativity of the center managers is very important and crucial for the effectiveness of this institution.

Second, universities can also use an informal cultural approach, for example, by utilizing religious study groups on campus or existing UKM to help instill Pancasila values. The university can also involve community leaders, community organizations and other local networks to strengthen the process of cultivating Pancasila values on campus.

It is important to highlight that both approaches, institutional and cultural, must be carried out simultaneously and synergistically to get optimal results. For this reason, policy makers in higher education must be more creative, innovative, and pay attention to the unique characters of the audience in developing their programs and policies.

Conclusions

This paper underlines the important role of Indonesian universities to foster Pancasila as the state ideology. Such a role is important as we witness the development of alternative ideologies has started on the campus areas. This paper offers two approaches as a strategy to foster the state ideology at Indonesian universities: institutional and cultural approaches. The institutional approach refers to the use of institutional resources to foster the state ideology. The cultural approach utilizes cultural resources to back up the effort. A simultaneous application of both approaches is recommended to achieve an affective strategy for fostering the state ideology at higher education institutions in this country.

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