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THE ROLE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN BUILDING THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This article explains that a community or nation with such cultural diversities has both positive and negative potencies. The first issue being concerned here is why Indonesian people living in multicultural situation can survive. The second is how multicultural education takes a role in building the quality of democracy in Indonesia. This paper concludes that (1) Indonesian people are able to survive and unite under the multicultural situation for *Pancasila* is able to act as a common denominator, and (2) the quality of democracy will be achieved when the people of Indonesia implement multicultural education correctly and consistently both at school and college.

Keywords: *Democracy, Multiculturalism, and Multicultural Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Clifford Geertz (1997) in a book chapter entitled "Is It a Country If It is Not a Nation?" states about 20th century political identity, especially on the concept of nation, state, country, society, and people. Geertz (1961) states that the most problematic issue is if the concept of country and nation is considered the same, the country will be swallowed by nation, and this is an outwitting imagination because the country will be inhabited only by one nation.

Geertz (1961) defines a nation as a group of people with the same language, blood, history, and land, and a nation is a territory of a group of people. In this case, a nation is a political space to have social interaction, to create life chance, and to share productive sources, while a nation is the political strength in the arena. The world was sedated by the imagination of country and nation until the Balkan war happened. Yugoslavia is a real example if we think that the concept of nation and country is the same (Hardiman, 2002).

The fall of Yugoslavia, as Geertz (1961) states, reminds the world that if a political act wants to homogenize multi-cultures by doing ideological oppression and political violence, then the nation will be destroyed as the nation is developed from various forms of life and value, and like Geertz states that a country consists of many nations.

Indonesia is a multicultural and political nation, which has various diversities, like race, ethnic, language, religion, and ideology. Indonesia has amazing experience with its multicultural condition, like conflicts between ethnics in some regions, conflicts between religion groups, ideological conflict, and social conflict. The conflicts not only were hard but also caused a lot of casualties. Even there are some separating acts, like Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) movement, Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) movement, and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) movement, but Indonesia

can face it. Indonesia remains united. What is the key? Is it because of the nation motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", its loyalty to the ideology of "Pancasila", or other factors? This is the first question that will be discussed in this paper. The second issue that will be discussed is the extent of the effects of multicultural condition on the democracy in Indonesia, or how multicultural education can improve democracy quality in Indonesia.

PANCASILA AS MULTICULTURALISM HOUSE

Indonesia diversity has existed for some centuries even before its independence. Nasikun (1993) states that the structure of Indonesian has two unique characteristics: (1) horizontally, the people have social unions based on the region diversity, (2) vertically, there is a big gap between the high level and the bottom level. Horizontal differences can be measured based on the quality of the elements that create the diversity (Mutakin, et.al., 2004). However, we can measure vertical differences by its quality. The diversity in horizontal structure become the characteristics of plural society (Nasikun, 1993).

Furnivall describes Indonesia people in Dutch era as plural society because it consisted of two or more elements which lived on their own without assimilation in a political union (Nasikun, 1993; Liliweri, 2001), since it was divided politically into three categories, European, East Asian (Tionghoa and non Tionghoa), and indigenous people. The plurality make the three groups could not live together because they had different will to conquer the indigenous people.

The diverse society can easily have conflict and be conquered at the same time as there is a dominant strength which forces ideology politics, and law to the weak group. Military strength used by Dutch forced the weak group to obey all the rules given by the government. Conflicts were a potent strength to force the weak group to obey their rules.

Nowadays, we cannot name plural society to Indonesia because the old grouping done by the Dutch does not exist anymore and the people are blended socially by the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika ideology which was supported by the Youth Pledge in 1928. It was then further supported by the independence statement, Proklamasi. The statement shows that Indonesian people are committed to develop unity and have a better life by releasing themselves from the conqueror.

The facts do not support Furnivall's statement that Indonesia is a plural society; a multicultured society is more appropriate. A multicultural society is groups of people with diverse cultural background who live in a territory. They live side by side and do not consider themselves more superior. This paradigm which is developed in educational area in this diverse society is called multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is an ideology which appreciates diversity (Heckmann, 1993; Berkes, 2010; Rex 1996; Wieviorka 1998). Both individual and group differences can be seen as cultural differences. In differences, there is equality. The equality is for ascriptive differences, like race and its cultures, physical characteristics, religions, gender, and age. Multiculturalism strives not only for equality of ethnics, races, gender, and age, but also weak social classes. In other word, multiculturalism is ideological and political struggle for the weak group in a big system. Not only for normative vision, multiculturalism is also used as a term to call a society with diverse culture (Heywood, 2014).

In multiculturalism, human dignity who live in the society with their own unique cultures is recognized (Mahfud, 2006). Multiculturalism has two forms: first, the need of recognition, and the second, the right to difference. The difference should not cause fighting; it should be a factor to live in democracy. Multiculturism is the life style of nations in this world, including Indonesia, but we have to admit that not all Indonesian have understood the concept, as we can see many conflicts based on ethnics happened in some regions.

The problem of multiculturalism in Indonesia is the difficulty in finding the balance of diversity and the development of unity of the diversity. During the history of Indonesia, unity and diversity have experienced rise and fall. This condition cannot be separated from plurality in Indonesia. Kusumohamidjojo (2000) states that Indonesia society and their complex cultures are plural and heterogen. Plurality, contrasted to singularity, shows that there is a plural situation. Heterogenity, contrasted to homogenity, indicates the quality of a situation that has different factors. It means that each sub group in the society along with its cultures is different from the other.

The multicultural condition in Indonesia positively enriches the nation cultures. The support from different ethnics and races with their diverse language, tradition, arts, and other cultural aspects is a renewable cultural source and improves the quality of the nation cultures. The friction with global culture modernizes local cultures and dynamizes the quality of nation culture development.

On the other side, cultural and ethnical diversity in Indonesia often makes ethnical loyalty valued more than national political loyalty. The conflicts happened in Indonesia shows that Indonesian people awareness of nationality should be improved. However, the message given by Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as a concrete form of Pancasila can muffle the conflict. There is always unity strength from Pancasila which inspires and gives solution when Indonesia has problems. Pancasila is not only a nation ideology understood by political elite but also a value system understood by all society as a great ideology to face any problems happen.

Political elite and also the society believe that Pancasila is unity tool. Pancasila is common denominator because Pancasila is phylosophically believed inlife with ontologic thesis of the universe: (1) in the universe, there is no independent phenomena, (2) giving concept exists, and (3) there is a belief that when it is in line, then it is a total relation between entities (Handoyo,dkk. 2010).

Multicultural people in Indonesia can live together although they live in different islands. They believe that when they have a problem with multiculturalism, they will refere to Pancasila, especially the belief that they cannot live alone, they are dependent to the others, and that happiness can be felt if they give to each other. Based on the belief, the multicultural people can live in diversity peacefully.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY QUALITY

Multiculturalism is an ideology that emphasizes and appreciates cultural diversity. The ideology is in line with democracy, which also puts everyone (human rights) on the same level with the government and the local society. Multiculturalism which is identical to pluralism is a political model in which it is possible to have various individuals or groups in the society to take part in a political process of open democracy (Suryana and H.A. Rusdiana 2015).

The effort to spread, stabilize, and apply multicultualism to Indonesian plural society should be in line with the effort to spread and stabilize democracy and nationality. Multicultural education is the right place to develop multicultural awareness, because education can act as "a spokeperson" in developing a multicultural life which is free from cooptation of the nation.

Every Indonesian citizen has awareness on their responsibility as a citizen of Indonesia, a citizen of a race and its culture, and as a citizen with certain gender and age. S/he will not act arbitrarily to other people and logically reject discrimination from other group.

Democracy is related to the position of minority. Democracy may mean majority decides. This principle is contradicted to the obligation to save the minority rights in multicultural society. Ideally, the principle of democracy should be applied in how the government rules the country and that in democracy, there should be no group including the majority put other's rights aside, especially the minority.

Democracy includes the idea of accommodating the minority rights. The minority may have various background on ethnic, language, religion, geographical position, basic rights, and income. The law on the minority rights should give ensurance and protection to the minority to do their religious act, cultural aspiration, and cultural identity.

Parsudi (cited in Mariana, 2007) states that the concept of multiculturalism cannot be put on the same position with the concept of diversity in specific race which can be the characteristics of plural community, because multiculturalism emphasizes the equality of cultural diversity. The idea of multiculturalism is how to regulate diversity by recognizing the diversity. As an idea and ideology, multiculturalism is highly related to all ideological problems: politics, democracy, justice, law enforcement, employment opportunity, human rights, cultural community and minority rights, ethical and moral principles, and the quality of productivity. Therefore, multiculturalism cannot stand by itself as it should be connected to all dimension of living in the society, nation, and country, especially in democracy.

The idea of multiculturalism is an idea to regulate diversity with politics of recognition. Further it is the idea which regulates the relations between majority and minority groups, migrants, ethnic, people in rural area, etc. The discourse of multiculturalism appears as a respond to the failure of democracy theory in answering how a democracy country managing diversity in diverse cultural groups.

To measure the degree of democracy of a country, the element of society plays an important part. The society is the central point of democracy and whether the political system of the country is democracy or not can be seen from the characteristics of the society. If the society is more military or elite, the government has the same characteristics, military. On the other hand, if the society puts freedom and equation forward, the government is more democratic. Therefore, democracy development is kept by the low-level society (grass root). Revolution in Philipine when the citizen took over Marcos rezim and the 8th May 1998 revolution in Indonesia when the citizen forced Soeharto to step down the throne are the examples of democracy of nations.

When we talk about democracy, we cannot separate it from society with multi-cultures as Sagan mentions that democracy needs tolerance in plurality (Gunsteren, 1998). Democracy culture is not inherited. The value and procedure of democracy should be learned so that students can have a strong

humanity which is based on empathy and tolerance to keep the unity of plural society. In a multi-culture society, democracy value whish should be developed are tolerance, egalitarian, and participation.

Democracy and multiculturalism in sociology is included in pluralism, where the society is developed by a rational and mutual cooperation between human and individual (Riyanto, 2009). Pluralism, as introduced by Abbott, shows that human is a rational person and has freedom to act. Pluralism emphasizes that human's freedom, rational, and activeness in developing structure. Democracy shows that human freedom is in line with pluralism; at the same time, multiculturalism respects freedom on individual people who have diverse background. However, democracy has certain rules of game and multi-culture society has certain concensus to live together, so the social structure is developed based on the objective fact will force people in it to obey the rules. The paradigm stated by Abbot also shows that people who live in the same society try to find regularity in the social structure to have comfortable life.

In social structure, democracy in multi-culture society is not developed by only the actions of one person, but by the interactions in the social structure. Although the people in the society can act freely, they have to act in certain rules to have a ordered and stabilized life. The social structure will force people in the society to act based on the rules they have in the society. Berger states that people in a society experience institutionalization in a social structure they have made and the structure will surely limit their freedom (Riyanto, 2009). This condition shows that in social structure and plural culture, democracy is born, developed, taken care of, and developed.

Democracy put political structure and the society involvement in line (Heywood, 2014). However, multiculturalism is a paradigm that sees equality in differences. Indonesia, which has multi-culture society, has shown a positive performance in implementing democracy. It is shown that the society has equal chance to have political and administrative position. The composition of the management and the membership of political party is a concrete example. Another example is that now we can see many people of certain race, Chinese, have position as an elite politics. It shows that Indonesia has implemented multiculturalism.

From the sociological perspective, democracy can be transformed in three ways: first, explore one potential, evaluate, and maximize superior values to develop the nation characters. There are three strategic characters that should be developed. They are honesty, justice, and responsibility. Developing the three characters will be a great base for the society to trust each other (high-trust society) and improve the nation's credibility in international life. It includes local wisdom revitalization as an important part to strengthen democracy. The strengthening should not be done by coercion, like indoctrination, as Indonesian people are plural and have various ways of life and of the process of democracy learning. We should put more attention to this, as there are many acts that is considered democracy but it is actually killing the original value of democracy. Second, develop a healthy interaction in the society. The interaction can be done if the society respects equality (egalitarian), equal involvement, and openness. Those principles can be a fertile habitat in growing moral values, like honesty, justice, responsibility, and tolerance. Third, healthy interaction patterns are capital to develop responsive community. Responsive community is not repressive to the society, and does not let the individual to act arbitrarily. Responsive

community will reject vulgar individualism which threatens social solidarity and rejects community domination which handcuffs individual creativity.

Multiculturalism will not be a part of the society if the values of multiculturalism are not inculcated and developed in the society by multicultural education. Multicultural education is seen as an idea, a renewal movement, and also a process. It is called an idea as it is a dream of having respectful condition. It is called a renewal movement because education transforms school environment into an environment which has diverse cultures. It is called a process as a goal should be sought continuously to maximize potential characters to improve nation's characters.

In the Encyclopedia of Multicultural Education (1999) written by Mitchell and Robert E. Salsbury, multicultural education is multiethnic education, anti-races education, and multi-racial education used by some countries in the world to refer to educational process in developing positive values about pluralism in human life and learning potential for all students. By administering multicultural education, educators are expected to have sensitivity on democracy and the students' rights to have diverse culture (Handoyo, 2015).

Banks (1993) sees multicultural education as a series of trust and an explanation which confesses that cultural and ethnic diversity is important in forming life style, social experience, personal identity, and education chance for individual, group, or nation. In education scope, Banks (1995) recommends that there should be changes on school structure and culture to give equal chance to all students with special needs to have achievement.

Multi-culture education is a strategy applied in all lessons by using students' cultural diversity, like differences on ethnic, religion, language, gender, social status, race, ability, and age to have an effective and easy learning process (Yaqin, 2005). Multi-culture education is held to train and develop the students' characters so thet they can behave democratically, humanistically, and pluralistically in their environment, especially at school.

Al Arifin (cited in Handoyo, 2005) states that multi-culture education is an acculturating process on multi-culture. This means that in education, shared meaning occurs when there is interaction with environment, including interaction in education. Multicultural education has five main dimensions: (1) Content integration (how the teacher can give examples and substances of different cultures and social group to illustrate concept, generalization, and problems related to the subjects), (2) Knowledge construction process (how to help the students to understand, research, and explain how bias, frame of reference, and perspective in discipline will affect how knowledge is constructed), (3) Eliminating prejudice (describes the lessons and activities used by the teacher to help the students develop positive attitude on the cultural diversity), (4) Equal pedagogy (the teacher facilitates the students so the students from different races, cultures, and social status so they can have the best achievement), and (5) Empowering social structure and school culture (Banks, 1995).

Relevant fields with multi-culture education are the curriculum. A multi-culture curriculum should meet two requirements: first, it should be very narrow. There is no such curriculum which can cover everything in the world. If it is considered as travelling around the world, the education will be too abstract, underestimate big events, have no specific goal, and create too much bad things. Ideally, education should

accustom the students to focus and concentrate to problems and stimulate them to develop themselves. Second, the curriculum should be arranged carefully, especially on the teaching method. It is not enough if we put different culture, folktales, and religions. A teacher should be able to take the students to a meaningful discussion. The discussion can be about values, customs, habits, social life, enculturation, colonialism, rights, women position in the society, family, industrial revolution, social status, different ethnics, etc. so the students involved in the discussion will have different experience and views (Parekh, 2008).

With a flexible curriculum and multicultural education in all relevant lessons, along with student centered learning, the goal of multicultural education, that is to develop students characters (pluralistic, humanistic, and democratic) will be achieved. In an egalitarian classroom, the teacher should give the students freedom in exploring ideas, concepts, and good attitude without any obstacles of races, ethnics, religions, and gender, so the students will be able to develop democratic values and enrich and improve their ability to interact with people with different backgrounds. Discriminative attitude and underestimating minorities will not occur if the schools develop multicultural education in the curriculum. The habit done by the school communities and model given by the the leader is the key of culture development at school. Therefore, multicultural education will develop school communities' democracy.
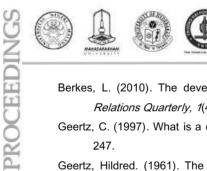
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Indonesia is a multi-culture nation which has positive potential, not only to enrich cultures and civilization but also to be a source of local loyalty. However, national awareness can be built on national unity (Pancasila) without ignoring cultural differences, so multiculturalism in Indonesia will be maintained well. Multiculturalism can be accepted well in democratic society because it is line with democracy. In multicultural society, multi-culture education is needed to catch the spirit of diversity, improving life motivation and positive attitude of togetherness, and showing social skill in analyzing and solving social problems in multi-culture society.

A good multi-culture education will make the students more democratic, humanistic, and care, because they are educated to respect others, give equal chance to minorities, and participate in solving problems together without showing the difference they have. The democracy quality, like freedom, equality, and participation will be improved if the education gives chance to both the teacher and students from different cultural background to explore their intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual potential maximally.

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