STRENGTHENING THE CIVIC NATIONALISM THROUGH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Choirul Fuad Yusuf

Lahir di Purwokerto, 13 Desember 1958. Tamat S1 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FPBS, IKIP Bandung, 1983; S1 Filsafat, Fakultas Sastra UI, 1989; S2 Sosiologi FISIP UI, 2000; sedang menyelesaikan Program Doktor Sosiologi, Departemen Sosiologi, FISIP UI. Sejak Maret 2006 menjabat sebagai Kepala Puslitbang Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan, Badan Litbang & Diklat Departemen Agama RI

Abstrak

Salah satu agenda utama bangsa kita adalah memperkuat kembali nasionalisme (rasa kebangsaan). Selama dekade terakhir ini, nasionalisme Indonesia cenderung mengalami penurunan, lantaran berbagai faktor yang berkelindan. Fakta menunjukkan bahwa kemunculan konflik sosial dan penyimpangan sosial dengan berbagai motif dan modus-operandi-nya, ditambah faktor pengaruh globalisasi dengan segenap implikasinya, ternyata menjadi bukti nyata tengah terjadi penurunan rasa kebangsaaan dalam masyarakat.

Sebagai sebuah negara bangsa yang terbingkai dalam Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, tentu saja, kondisi seperti ini harus diatasi melalui berbagai pendekatan yang padu. Salah satu pendekatan dalam rangka penguatan kembali rasa kebangsaan adalah melalui pemungsian optimal pendidikan agama.

Tulisan ini mencoba menggambarkan bagaimana pendidikan agama harus diposisikan,

difungsikan dan dibermaknakan dalam rangka penguatan kembali rasa kebangsaan kita, bangsa Indonesia.

Keywords: *nasionalisme, deklinasi nasionalisme, kesadaran kolektif, pendidikan Agama, inklusifisme beragama, multikulturalisme.*

Most discussion of nationalism is always an interesting for readers who concern the political problems especially dealing with continuation and sustainability of the society in a certain territory in the future. Nationalism as both ideology and social movement, has been one of the formative processes of the modern world, but it is—because of the effects of globalization process—recently often seen as the topic was not covered in most international relation discourse. This paper is going to see and analyse (1) the concept and characteristics of nationalism , (2) factors promoting and strengthening nationalism, and (3) strategy for nationalism building through wide-approach, especially through the religious educational approach.

Nationalism : Concept & Characteristics

Nationalism denotes a form of group consciousness of a nation.[1] Such consciousness is politically often called as "nationality" which functions to identify the national achievement. Nationalism also denotes ideologies seeking to justify the nation state as the ideal form of political organization. Nationalists desire membership in a nation-state to be, or they are devoted to an existing one, with which they identify themselves (Gould & Kolb, 1964 : 455).[2] As a group or collective consciousness, nationalism implies a cohesiveness (or a sense of unity) of community that identifies and formulates the desires, wants, or objective, and the fate of the nation. Thus, in this perspective, nationalism can be variously described as "a collective state of mind, feelings, commitment has collectively been compromised. In another word, nationalism is any perspective used for categorizing human population— holding that national identities and

---

[1] Nation is commonly defined as the largest society of people united by a common culture and consciousness, occupying a common territory. It is a community of sentiments (Weber, 1920), or an imagined community (Anderson, 1983) based on one or more of the following : race, ethnicity, language, religion, customs, or political memory (David Jary and Julia Jery. 1999. *Unwin Hyman Dictionary of Sociology*, Harper-Collins' Publication, Glasgow.

[2] See : Julius Gould & William L. Kolb (eds.). 1964. *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Tvistock Publication, London, p.455.

groups are of basic importance. Nationalism is thus simultaneously a way of constructing groups and normative claim. Nationalism, then, is the use of the category "nation" to organize perceptions of basic human identities, grouping people together with fellow nationals and distingushing them from members of other nations. It is influential as a way of helping to produce solidarity within national category, as a way of determining how specific groups should be treated.

Nationalism as an ideological perception of nation as the real entities or communities—facilitates national integration and identification. It constitutes the people or citizens to have or belong common and distinct territories, cultures—including norms, values, traditions, and languages and sovereign states of their own. Many nationalists see nationalism as ubiquitous in history and simply "the normal" way of organizing large-

scale collective identiy. Some modernists, variously regard nationalism as any phenomena concerning with state formation (Mann 1993,[3] Tilly, 1990),[4] the rise of new communications media and genres of collective imagination (Anderson 1991,[5] Deutsch 1966[6]), and the development of new rhetorics for collective identity and capacities for collective actions (Calhoun, 1997)[7], national self determination (Fred Halliday, 1997)[8]. Nationalism constituted a new ideology about primary identities. But in this case, it competed not only with localism and family but with religion (Anderson 1991)[9]. Nationalism was often furthered by religious movement and wars. National self-understanding or awareness were frequently religiously inflected (as in the Catholicism of Poland, Protestanism of England).

Whatever the concept of nationalism defined, factually, nationalism

---

[3] Michael Mann, *Source of Social Power*, Vol.2/1993, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK.

[4] Charles Tilly. 1990. *Coercion, Capital and European States*, Cambridge, Blacwell.

[5] Benedict Anderson. 1991. *Imagined Communities*, Revised Edition, London.

[6] Karl W. Deutsch. 1996. *Nationalism and Social Communication : An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2nd Ed., Massachusset University Press, Cambridge.

[7] Craig Calhoun. 1997. *Nationalism*, Open University Perss, Milton Keynes, UK.

[8] Fred Halliday. 1997. "Nationalism", in John Baylis & Steve Smith (Eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press, New York.

[9] Benedict Anderson

in its formation is rooted from several interrelated causes—political, cultural, economic, and yet it is often religiously-rooted. As an ideology or political principles, according to Smith (1991), the core doctrine of nationalism is based on the following set of assumptions : (1) the world (humanity) is naturally devided into nations, (2) each nation has its peculiar character, (3) the nation is the source of all political and social power and loyalty, (4) human beings must identify with a nation if they want freedom and self-realization, (5) loyalty to the nation-state overrides other loyalties, and (6) the primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation-state.[10]

Consequently, as an ideology, nationalism was often significantly influenced by some factors—both in the global and local scale of socioeconomic, cultural, and political dimensions. From the global perspective, there are some new phenomena related to the quality of nationalism. The phenomenal and progressive advancements of communication technology and transportation brought by globalization process, for instance, in a reality, have enormously influenced nationalism in many countries.

First, the spread of ideologies or philosophical thoughts and doctrines, unavoidably increased and grew the new global awareness towards human rights, universal values, and also the need for self-determination of the people. The people (citizens) of any state, have not totally been dependent on their own state. The people become autonomous in determining and formulating his personal identity, aspiration, and wants due to their awareness of human rights and other universal values embeded by the global culture, though at nationalism requires a set of common characteristics that provides emotional bonds, cultural ties, make it unique, and differentiate it from other communities. Ernest Renan—the nineteenth century French theorist on nationalism, ever argued that the two things make a nation : present day consent and a rich cultural inheritance of shared memories and practices.

Second, globalization which connects any nations or countries without geographical borders, in turn, gave wide opportunity to grow up the global societies, universal communities, international organizations (whether culturally, politically, or religiously-based constructed). In the

---

[10] Anthony Smith. 1983. ***Theories of Nationalism***, Duckworth, London, p. 21.

globalization era, the growth of internationally ideological organization or political community which advocates universal humanity is increased. Sometimes, such idiology spreads up the new concept of souvereignty, a new political world system which are dangerous for the nation-state. Beside that, the global culture emergence—which introduces any new pragmatic life orientation, style, world view, and any other novelties— frequently moved local culture has been already established since hundreds years ago into the marginalized position. In other words, local or national symbol, like local language, food, drink, clothing, tradition, and the likes become eliminated, changed and marginalized. On the contrary, the global culture replaces the local culture perceived as the traditional ones. In this case, the nation-state— especially any states formulating his concept of nationalism based on ethnicities not citizenships—is faced with some difficulties for unifying and integrating their plurality to strengthen the nationalism.

Third, the increasing globalization of economy tends to bring about any multilateral niches, thereby reducing dependency on bilateral economic relation to the state. *Fourth*, is the geopolitical relations amongst the superpowers which have frequently supported different sides of conflicts within pluralistic societies, either directly or through proxies. This condition, ofcourse , if we use some indicators of nationalism, emerges any phenomena called as nationalism decline.

Nationalism : Its Promoting & Opposing Factors

Since 1998, which marked the end of the New Order Regime under President Suharto (reigned approximately more than thirty years), there have been a significant and dramatic increase in mutlifaceted conflicts and violence in Indonesia.

These conflicts in Indonesia, politically and culturally, were a result of the New Order's narrow and constraining reinterpretation of Indonesia's "national model". Since past dacades, we all realize, that the Indonesian society has been facing the most important agenda dealing with the socio-political position of our country, i.e.nationalism. From a sociological perspective, we have been seing that the societal condition was very disappointed or discontented. The facts showed that any multifaceted conflicts—whether socio economically, politically, ethically, or religiously-based—existed or happened in society.

We still in my mind, how the ethnic-based conflict between Madura and Dayak in West Kalimantan, the dominantly political conflicts in some ditricts : Sulawesi, Sumatera, Maluku, Papua and NAD, and other provinces. These multifactors-rooted conflicts in some provinces are indeed, not only brings about negative and destructive effects towards the structural conditions of sosio-economic life, but further it politically reduced and decreased the sense of being together amongst the Indonesian people. This socio-psychological affection, in the long time, can be a promoting factors causing the national declination in our country. Although, the battle or the war has been stopped, but that historical grievances experienced, psychologically, grew any negative impression amongst individuals or groups involved in the past conflicts, such as: the hatreds, motive to vengeance, hostile actions, state of enmity, and ofcourse the growth of social prejudice, and uncondusive communication and the likes. This situation, is indeed, must be normalized in order not to become the sources of the conflicts in the future time.

Besides factors regarding to the conflicts existed in our country, globalization is also the external factors effecting strongly to the quality of nationalism. Fred Halliday sees any contradictory processes dealing with the relation between globalization and nationalism. There are some factors promoting and opposing nationalism from this perspective, as follows (vide the following box).

Having seen to those facts, it has been clear that our country have

Box 1 : Globalization and Nationalism : The Contradictory Processes

Factors Opposing Nationalism	Factors Promoting Nationalism
• Shared prosperity	• Loss of control to foreign investors
• Economic integration	• Hostility to immigration
• Migration	• Fears of unployment
• Travel and tourism	• Resenment at supranational institutions
• Employment abroad	
• Global treats	• Dislike of alien cultures
• World-wide communication	• Fears of terrorism & subversion
• End of belief in economic sovereignty	• Hostility to global media, and Attractions of secession

been facing any process we call "national disintegration", "nationalism declination", or "nationalism breakdown". This political deprivation, in fact, is structurally caused by some factors—both internal and external factors consisting of any systemicly intertwined political, economic, and cultural factors.

Religious Education for Strengthening Nationalism

There are some significant strategies can systemicly be used in the sake for maintaining and strengthening our nationalism. Beside the political approach through socializing the use of national symbols such as: respecting national anthem, popularizing local wisdom and, elaborating traditions, norms and values empowering, etc., in the building any political awareness & belongingness of the Indonesian citizens, there can also be approached through the religious education.

As a part of the National Educational System, Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan*) plays an important role in the process of development and the improvement of civilization of the people. So, discussing of religious education, substantively, will be also interesting, actual and also strategic.

There are any dominant reasons why religious education become impor-

tant and strategic topics to be discussed in the context of nationalism building. *First*, the function of education is obviously significant and determinative in changing society in every sectors of life. Religious education, as explained in the *Law 20/2003 on National Education System*, is oriented to preparing the student to become a member of society who understands and practises the religious norms and values. Religious education is also directed to the strengthening the social harmony for the sake of integrating the people—which are pluralistic in a manner. Through religious education with any kind of its process, religious community will be constructed. Religious education, in this context, plays very important roles in moulding and constructing the people with any certain socially acceptable values and norms of religious teachings. Through the process of socializing religious norms and values, the people or society will be structurally constructed to become the functional persons which are socio-culturally accepted by the people. In this perspective, education determines and influences the level of the progressiveness and civilizedness of society. In short, the degree of educational property and experience of the people will significantly correlate

to the degree of the people's civilization. Religious education will affectionally build good citizens. In this case, the effectiveness of the political awareness will be very functional in building the political stability inour country.

Second, the process of education, teleologically, has to be oriented in building the national culture and civilization. Religious education—whether in madrasah, pesantren (boarding religious education), must be engineered and designed as effective and efficient as possible on behalf of building a strong, integrated, unified and religious nation. In short, a religious education has to be planned and controlled systemicly in a purpose of fulfilling the society needs today and in the future.

For the sake of strengthening nationalism, national integrity, national cohesiveness, national harmony, the religious education process must be functioned as an effective tool for socializing and disseminating any political, doctrinary, and cultural values which are functionally useful for strengthening nation or integrating plurality, multiculturality, and multi-religiosity of the people. In this purpose, religious education has to be oriented to building and strengthening of (1) nationalism, universalism, respecting to the Human Rights, and (2) pluralism and multiculturalism[11]. Specifically, any process of education must be capable of transforming and developing the religious inclusivism,[12] respecting religious freedom, understanding religious ritualism, and also reducing the ethnic primordialism, and also strengthening solidarity and tolerance in the real life. Teaching and learning of any doctrine of a certain religion should be able to create the condusive atmosphere which mobilizes the growth of awareness to be unified and integrated in the same frame of nation (NKRI). On the contrary,

---

[11] Multiculturalism, philosophically, refers to the belief that in the real reality of life, there is a diversity or plurality of nationality, race, ethnicity, language, tradition, religion, interest and the like which has to respected, accpeted, and operated. Many social scientists termed it as "*cultural pluralism*". Based on this definiton, it is assumed that multiculturalism structurally wants the harmonious, balanced, functional, and systemic life order. (see : Will Kymlicka, "Multicultural Citizenship", dalam Steven Seidmen and Jeffery C. Alexander (Ed.), *The New Social Theory Reader*, Rotledge, London, 2001, p.217.

[12] Religious inclusivism is any religious teachings or doctrines of certain religion contains any universal values or norms which tend to stress the similarity not difference of religion doctrine.

religious exclusivism and any forms of social conflicts—whether politically, economically or religiously based-conflicts—have to be eliminated or at least to be reduced. By this orientation, Indonesian people—which is culturally, religiously, and ethnically plural—will become stronger, more integrated, and ofcourse will be faster in reaching the final goal of the nation. From this analysis, it has been clear that, the awareness of plurality, of multiculturality, multireligiosity, and of being togetherness, is something necessary to build nationalism and to realize "the progress" in the future on behalf of gaining the objective of national development of Indonesia that is "the welfare, justice, and harmonious life for all the people".

REFERENCES

Anderson, Benedict (1991): *Imagined Communities*, Revised Edition, London.

Calhoun, Craig (1997): *Nationalism*, Open University Perss, Milton Keynes, UK.

Deutsch, Karl W. (1966): *Nationalism and Social Communication : An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2nd Ed., Massachusset University Press, Cambridge.

Gould, Julius & William L. Kolb (eds.), (1964): *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Tvistock Publication, London.

Halliday, Fred (1997): "Nationalism", in John Baylis & Steve Smith (Eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Jary, David and Julia Jery (1999): *Unwin Hyman Dictionary of Sociology*, Harper-Collins'Publication, Glasgow.

Kymlicka, Will, 2001, "Multicultural Citizenship", dalam Steven Seidmen and Jeffery C. Alexander (Ed.), *The New Social Theory Reader*, Rotledge, London, 2001.

Mann, Michael, *Source of Social Power*, Vol.2/1993, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK.

Smith, Anthony (1983): *Theories of Nationalism*, Duckworth, London.

Tilly, Charles (1990): *Coercion, Capital and European States*, Cambridge, Blacwell.