

Examining The Relevance of Pancasila as the Indonesian State Philosophy

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Abstract

Pancasila is the Indonesian state philosophy. It contains five basic principles produced from a deep reflection and profound thought of the founding fathers of Indonesia. It embraces five noble values espoused by the various ethnicities on the archipelago. These values are also a unifier of these diverse ethnic groups into one nation state of Indonesia, an identity of the nation, as well as guidelines in running the life of the state. This paper questions the relevance of Pancasila as the way of life for the nation in this era of globalization. The historical and the analytical perspective approaches are used to look at the role of Pancasila throughout the life of the country until today. It is recognized that Pancasila is increasingly more important, especially for the nation to be able to survive in the global era, because it is the national character, and guidelines for all the societies to carry out their lives, as well as to determine the direction of the nation in order to achieve its objectives.

Keywords: State philosophy, national character, global era, survive

1. Introduction

A country is founded on the basis of an agreement on common goals and ideals to be achieved. As a pluralistic nation, it needed an adhesive that will unite all the differences and provide awareness of the essential equality of the objectives in the national context. The adhesive is necessary to form a solid and strong nation state which would not be easily infiltrated by any forces which would then destroy the country. Therefore, the search for a mutually agreed basis derived from the values espoused and commonly shared is something very crucial when establishing a state.

Indonesia has discovered and formulated five basic principles as the people's collective consciousness, which becomes the guidance in running the life of the state, known as Pancasila. Pancasila is the result of a serious discussion and profound contemplation of the founding fathers of Indonesia that they finally succeeded in formulating a state philosophy. Pancasila is the true nature as well as the identity of the Indonesian nation.

Pancasila should always be the soul and spirit of every citizen, and is reflected in its uniqueness as a nation. All policies and development programs must be based on Pancasila. Pancasila can serve as a shield as well as a tool to address all the problems that the country might face either at present or in the future.

2. Pancasila as the State Philosophy

In Greek, *philo* means love – or devotion – and *sophia* means wisdom. Philosophers are people devoted to wisdom (<http://thephilosophersmail.com/what-this-is-all-about/what-is-philosophy-and-whats-it-for/>). Thinking philosophically is thinking carefully and deeply on everything to do with belief or object up to the real heart of the matter. So, philosophy can be interpreted as an earnest desire to find the real truth (Herdiwanto and Hamdayama, 2010: 8). Pancasila is the state philosophy or "*Philosophische Grondslag*" which is a formulation of the noble values of the nation, underlying any action of the nation state. The founding fathers of

the Indonesian nation had done a very serious discussion trying to search the similarity of the noble values espoused by the diverse ethnic groups that exist in this archipelago.

The word 'Pancasila' comes from Sanskrit consisting of two words; panca means five, and sila means basis for the good morality and behaviour. So, Pancasila is the five basic teachings for good morality and behaviour. Pancasila is the guidelines for every citizen and state administrators or government officials to perform their functions and roles in any political procedures of the state. Every regulation and legislation should refer to Pancasila.

Soekarno, the first President of Indonesia was the main founder who sought the noble values espoused by the diverse ethnicities in the archipelago. On the 1st June 1945 in the BPUPKI (The Preparatory Body for the Indonesia Independence) meeting, he elaborated at length how should Indonesia become an independent nation. There were examples of how other countries got their independence, and on what basis they were independent. The same applies to Indonesia. "On what basis should Indonesia be independent, and what unites the different ethnicities to become one nation", Soekarno asked the members of the congregation (Ali, 2009, p.27). He then concluded and came up with 5 basic principles, which he then called it Pancasila. Pancasila was '*Philosophische Grondslag*' as well as '*Weltanschauung*'. In his speech Soekarno explained that only with Pancasila will the Indonesian people be able to survive.

Soekarno (1945) explained that the first principle was establishing the Indonesian nation, 'the Indonesian nationalism'. Sukarno explained that the Indonesia's independence was established not for one faction, but "all for all". That is the essence of Indonesian nationalism. Indonesia is a nation state with various differences. But, Indonesian nationality was formed because of their desire to unite on the basis of equal values, ideals and common destiny. The second basis is 'internationalism or humanity'. Indonesian nationality is based on equal rights and equal dignity. Independence is the initial momentum to uplift the previously oppressed nation to become a free nation with equal rights and dignity with other nations.

Indonesia is a nation that upholds human rights. The third principle of the establishment of the Indonesian independence is 'consensus or democracy'. Soekarno has always rejected liberal democracy where decisions affecting common interests can be decided by a majority vote. Indonesian democracy is based on the value of deliberation. The people's aspirations are fought by giving authority to the institution whose members represent the people in the various groups (Karman, 2016, p. 6). Indonesian democracy must be formed as a single entity, which is democracy in political, economic, and social aspects. Liberal concept by providing the freedom only for private sectors does not correspond to the Indonesian value. This concept provides an opportunity for capitalists to control the economy of the country and oppress the people. Indonesian economic democracy places the state as an important part as far as the interests of the people are concerned. The state should be present in giving happiness to everyone. This is the essence of the fourth principle namely 'social welfare'. The latest principle is divinity. In a speech on June 1st, 1945, Sukarno explained that the Indonesian people believe in God with a cultured, respectful and civilized ways of conduct. All the five principles underlie the Indonesia's independence.

Aside from being *welthanschauung*, Pancasila is a unifying tool, or social contract and as a nation, Indonesia badly needs unity. Soekarno said: "Only with Pancasila as the state philosophy, will the Indonesian nation be able to face challenges of all time" (Sukarno, 1945 in Ali, 2009, p. 30). After a long debate, and through several stages, the meeting on June 22nd, 1945 in Jakarta gave birth to 'the Jakarta Charter', and though plenary sessions at BPUPKI, Pancasila was finally formulated. This provision was passed when the five principles of Pancasila were inserted into the Preamble of the State Constitution, the Constitution of 1945, a day after Indonesia proclaimed its independence. Since then,

Pancasila officially became the basic principles and the guide for the Indonesian state administration, as well as the social contract. In sum, the five precepts are, 'The Only Supreme God', 'Just and Civilized Humanity', 'The Unity of Indonesia', 'Democracy Led By Wisdom In the Representative Deliberation', and 'Social Justice For All Indonesian People'.

The founders of the Indonesian state were brilliantly able to decide and agree on the right choice on the basis of the Indonesian state which is in accordance with the character of the nation. It is very original to establish a modern state with religious and not of secular characteristics, nor is it as a state religion (Ali, 2009, ix). The state that they founded is a nationalist-religious country. The first principle is "The Only Supreme God" which asserts that Indonesia is a nation that recognizes the existence of God. The religious life is the central feature of the community's life, since the era of animism until their divine religions. With this divine principle, the country wants the religions professed by the people as the source of noble minds, and morality of the nation. The state has to protect and provide equal opportunity to all religious faiths to practice the religion they believe. The divine principle, the only almighty explains that the state does not discriminate or favour any religion. The state takes the same position against the religions recognized by the state. The state even has a strong commitment on the establishment of inter-religious harmony. Therefore, the state is obliged to provide a space that is conducive to the creation of a better religious life for the people by applying the same treatment to everyone.

The second principle is "Just and Civilized Humanity". The meaning of just and civilized humanity contains the national humanitarian vision with a great commitment to establish brotherhood in the association with the world as well as the interactions with fellow countries, which is based on the values of justice and civility that honour human rights (Latif, 2014: 242). Muhammad Hatta (the first Vice President of Indonesia) described the second principle had the inward and outward looking consequences. Inward looking consequences refer to the values within this principle are fundamentals for exalting the values of humanity and human rights. In this context, Indonesia, as the nation state, tries to adopt these values in its daily life through the realization of the state's goals, namely, to protect the country in every aspect, promote the general welfare, and educate the nation. In the outward looking consequences, Indonesia tries to establish the world order based on an everlasting peace.

The 3rd principle of Pancasila is the Unity of Indonesia. It is well known that Indonesia is a pluralistic nation. Indonesia is formed by a lot of similarities in diversities. A wide variety of ethnics, cultures, languages, religions, social classes, and other aspects of primordialism are united on the basis of commonality to form a nation state. The commonality was formulated in the 3rd principle of Pancasila 'Bhineka Tunggal Ika', which means unity in diversity.

Indonesia in the past was well-known as a country that succeeded in a maritime-based civilization. Many kingdoms in its archipelagos managed to control shipping in the Asian region and also ventured to Europe. The glory of the ancestors had united the Indonesian archipelagos as well as linked the archipelagos with the world. Apart from that, the formation of the nation state of Indonesia has strengthened the unity among the ethnic groups who regarded Indonesia as one. The 3rd principle of Pancasila is a golden bridge to overcome all the differences and to form a national spirit that has made this country a nation state. The national spirit which is based on the 3rd principle has developed a sense of belonging and love for the country. Consequently, there is a growing spirit of self-sacrifice to defend the country and always strive to provide the best for each individual citizen.

The fourth principle, which is "Democracy Led by the Wisdom of Representative Deliberation" confirms the mutual agreement of the nation to become a democratic state. Democracy means that the people have a significant role in determining the success of the country to achieve its objectives. Democracy is not only a technical tool; rather it has to be

reflected in the personality and behaviour of each individual in the society and the state officials. Latif (2014: 473) concluded that the Indonesian democracy is based on deliberation. In a democratically political decision, something is said to be true if it meets at least four prerequisites. First, it is impartial, which means it involves and considers the opinions of all parties (albeit the minority) inclusively to counteract the dictatorial tyranny of the majority as well as the minority. Second, it is dedicated to the interests of many people, not in the interests of an individual or a group. Third, it is oriented to the future, not for the sake of short-term interests through transactional accommodation destructions. Fourth, it should be based on the principles of rationality and justice, not only based on ideological subjectivity and interests.

The fifth principle means that the state is formed with the purpose of protecting the whole country and the people as well as giving them happiness and prosperity. To be able to achieve the welfare state, the government should use the principle of justice for all. It will be achieved by not only relying on the state's role, but also by involving all elements of the society to jointly work to improve the well-being. Fair and prosperous society is the final destination of the country.

The embodiment of the state objectives essentially depends on the quality and integrity of the state officials and citizens. Therefore, they must have the characters of responsibility, a sense of humanity and justice, people-oriented, and a strong understanding of the state objectives. People can rely on the state to raise their dignity and to be liberated from poverty and ignorance.

3. Reseach Methodology

In its journey as a nation, there have been many challenges and obstacles faced by the country, and there might be more in the future. The development of democracy and the dynamics of life of the country depend on the implementation of Pancasila. The integrity as a strong country has been and will be tested so that it will survive, and the objectives as a nation state can be realized.

In order to examine the role of Pancasila in defining democracy of the nation, we consider the historical and the analytical perspective approaches. In this regard, we can evaluate how Pancasila has been successful in giving the significant impact on the journey of democracy in Indonesia.

4. Experiences in the Past

The founders of the Indonesian nation in a very visionary and genius ways have succeeded in formulating a sound basis for the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious nation, whose people live in thousands of islands in a very vast area, united as a nation with agreement and mutual awareness. The unifying tool is Pancasila. In the process of its formulation, it required tolerance and sacrifices of the makers of Pancasila so that they could finally achieve an agreement that will be adhered forever to realize a democratic state.

In its journey to an independent country, there were various attempts to interpret Pancasila as personal perception and interest. Soekarno was one among those who actually made personal interpretation to Pancasila when he issued the Presidential Decree on July 5th, 1959, and implemented a democratic system which he called Guided Democracy. The Decree contained commands to re-enact the Constitution of 1945. In the era of guided democracy, Soekarno sought to use Pancasila as a tool to legitimize his rule. Soekarno even began to make Pancasila as an inclusive or closed state ideology, as well as a hegemonic ideology. Pancasila was considered as the only means to unify and to resolve all problems faced by the nation. Soekarno then also outlined Pancasila further into a state ideology with the famous doctrine which stands for the Political Manifesto 'USDEK', that was Undang-Undang Dasar

1945 (the 1945 Constitution), Sosialisme Indonesia (the Indonesian Socialism), Demokrasi Terpimpin (Guided Democracy), and Kepribadian Indonesia (the Indonesian Identity). The Political Manifesto was a doctrine that required the unification of all groups in the society that was nationalist, religious, and communist.

In the New Order era (1966 - 1998) led by President Suharto, Pancasila was reused as the state ideology. At this time Pancasila was radicalized even more deeply, to not only serve as the foundation of the state, philosophy, *welthanschauung*, identity, and welfare, but also serves as a source of all sources of law. Pancasila during the New Order has been transformed into an idea construction that was intact, official and absolute, with a single truth (Ali, 2009, p 39). The acceptance of Pancasila truth was derived from the internalization of the entire people of Indonesia. The state strategy was by indoctrinating it to all people in which the guidelines became the interpretation of the principles of Pancasila made unilaterally by the state. The interpretation was the only interpretation recognized by the state, so that it was a single truth. The state even defined any behaviour that deviates from the values of Pancasila, and anyone who sought to embrace an ideology other than Pancasila would be opposed by the state.

5. Pancasila in the Reform Era

When the New Order era ended in the late 1998, Indonesia entered the reform era. The New Order Government which lasted for 32 years was marred by rampant corruption, collusion and nepotism, and the power tends to be authoritarian. The longstanding condition eventually built up the strength of the people to overthrow the regime, and urged for the accomplishment of a more democratic one.

In the reform era, the first change made was to amend the basic law of the country, namely the 1945 Constitution to become a more democratic legal basis. The amendment of the constitution fundamentally changed the constitutional structure of Indonesia. The amendments were made four times from 1999 to 2002. Pancasila which is the preamble of the constitution was not changed at all. However, fundamental changes occurred to the contents of the constitution that resulted in implications on Indonesia's democracy. In fact, the constitution is one of the nation collective agreements in interpreting Pancasila into a framework of rules which determines the direction of democracy.

In the reform era, there is a fundamental change of the state institution which is no longer as agreed by the founding fathers when they created Indonesian independence. The existence of Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or the People's Assembly (The highest representative Body) as the institution which represents the sovereignty of the people, consisting of various elements in society, such as the elements of political, regional, social class, even from the military, is demoted. Its authority is reduced and this institution no longer acts as an institution that determines the course of democracy. In fact, the membership of the Assembly and its authority are no longer the translation of the 4th principle of Pancasila, which is the ideal of political democracy *a la* Indonesia. After the amendment, such a structure is replaced to exactly as what is practiced in the United States, that is considered as the most democratic country, by making the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR) similar to the House of Congress whose members consist only of the members of the DPR (House of Representatives) and DPD (Regional Representatives Council) or known as Senate in the US. Both elements of the Assembly membership are selected through a general election. This implies that the representation of the main characteristic of the MPR and the mechanism of decision-making based on the consensus with respect to the principle of wisdom are no longer the same. "By implementing this system, Indonesia abandons the principle of kinship with representation from every element of the society" (Suryohadiprojo, 2014, p. 51) as mandated by Pancasila.

The idea of Indonesia's democracy is something that ensures social justice. In addition to political democracy, the Indonesia's democracy should be an integral part of the economic and social democracy. This is different from the democracy applied in many other countries, which only embraces the concept of political democracy. An economic democracy is based on the 5th principle of Pancasila as elaborated in Article 33 paragraph 1, 2, and 3, of the 1945 Constitution. Paragraph 1 of the Constitution which reads: "*Perekonomian disusun sebagai usaha bersama atas asas kekeluargaan*" ("The economy is structured as a joint venture on the principles of kinship"). Paragraph 2 reads: "*Cabang-cabang produksi yang penting bagi negara dan yang menguasai hajat hidup orang banyak, dikuasai oleh negara*" ("The branches of productions that are important for the state and dominate the life of many, are controlled by the state"). Paragraph 3 is: "*Bumi dan air dan kekayaan alam yang terkandung di dalamnya dikuasai oleh negara, dan dipergunakan untuk sebesar-besarnya kemakmuran rakyat*". ("Earth and water and natural resources that are therein shall be controlled by the state, and utilized for the welfare of the people"). The three chapters before the amendment describe the Indonesia's economic democracy. The economy is managed jointly by the government and the private sector, which can be either state-owned enterprises, private companies, with large, medium and small scale as needed. The government's role is very significant when it comes to the lives of many people.

The concept of Indonesia's economic democracy is different from the western one that is based on the ideology of liberalism and individualism, in which the role of the private sectors dominate, and the private economy is its main characteristic. The proposers of the amendment of the article 33 of the Constitution was originally very desirous to incorporate concepts that are inclined towards liberalism and capitalism by eliminating the concept of kinship

The proposers of the amendment of the article 33 of the Constitution were originally very keen to incorporate concepts that are inclined towards liberalism and capitalism by eliminating the concept of kinship. However, eventually a deal was achieved by maintaining the three original paragraphs, but coupled with two more additional paragraphs which read: "*Perekonomian nasional diselenggarakan berdasarkan atas demokrasi ekonomi dengan prinsip kebersamaan, efisiensi berkeadilan, berkelanjutan, berwawasan lingkungan, kemandirian, serta dengan menjaga keseimbangan kemajuan dan kesatuan ekonomi nasional*" ("The national economy shall be organized based on economic democracy with the principles of togetherness, efficiency, justice, sustainability, and environmental insight, as well as independence, and by keeping a balance between progress and national economic unity". Paragraph 5 reads: "*Ketentuan lebih lanjut mengenai pelaksanaan pasal ini diatur dalam undang-undang*" ("Further provisions concerning the implementation of this article are regulated in the law"). The two additional paragraphs to this verse does not explain the reason why they were added, and their implications for the economic democracy.

The concept of social democracy based on Pancasila uses the principle of justice and fairness. This diverse nation must get its welfare equally, and the people are treated equally by the government. The life of the nation based on Pancasila contains the principle of kinship, acknowledges differences in unity and unity in diversity (Suryohadiprojo, 2014, p.65). This is what distinguishes the western principle that is based on individualism and liberalism. Social democracy requires the government to take care of the life of the citizens in need, the poor and displaced people.

Constitutional amendments have fundamentally changed the concept of democracy in Indonesia as a whole. Pancasila and the Constitution prepared by the founders of the nation in a package indicate that Pancasila and the Constitution are in unity. The interpretation of Pancasila should be described in detail in the Constitution so that it can be used as the

implementation guidelines. Therefore, amending the Constitution must be done very carefully so that the meaning contained in Pancasila would not be mistakenly interpreted.

6. Conclusion

Pancasila is the identity of the Indonesian nation. It was derived from the noble values of a diverse nation. Pancasila is very important for Indonesia because it serves as philosophy, basic principles of the state, *welthanschuuung*, and guidance in carrying out the national life. The power of Pancasila as the state philosophy has been tested through the interpretation by individual or the regime in order to maintain their power. Furthermore, the change to the constitution was also consciously made which means changing the translation of the precepts of Pancasila. Consequently, the ideals of the Indonesian state will no longer be the same. Pancasila which contains a collection of noble values of the nation is the strength in running their lives in this global era. Ignoring Pancasila means eliminating the national identity.

Pancasila should be discussed by all elements of the nation because its role is very important especially in the light of a competitive global era. However, any efforts to position Pancasila as the national guidelines should be done with extreme caution because a mistake in doing so will have grave implications for the future of the nation. Indonesia is very fortunate to have state's own national identity. Therefore, the nation should keep the Pancasila, so that it can continue to be a guide in the running of the life of Indonesians now and in the future.

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