

## The Meaning of Independence Leadership Reflection in *Merdeka Belajar*

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### Introduction

The Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has declared the importance of applying Merdeka Belajar curriculum for Indonesian University students. The policy of **Kampus Merdeka** will provide extensive discretion to improve the capability relevant with interest, talent and personality through working practice. This can be used as a step of preparation to the higher career. Students are allowed, comprehensively, to explore knowledge and skill, learn any materials by widening external network of study program, or some relevant things with the study program, in an institution or other campus, and to establish cooperation with business and industry.

The term 'kemerdekaan' comes from French Revolution when people, at that time, felt frustrated and discomfort with the Monarch. People started to yell out independence. Then, came up a term *Vox Populi Vox Dei* which means people's voice is God's voice. This means that the role and the voice of people should become the direction and pathway of the government. French Revolution inspired the colonized countries to demand independence, including Indonesia, as a part of Dutch Monarch.

The *divide et impera* policy during Dutch colonization has caused civil war, in which, psychologically, the Indonesian people did not trust and easily suspicious between each other. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia defines independence as an independent state, autonomous, and has ability to control themselves without any interference from other parties. The difficulty to unite, mostly controlled by negative thoughts, and judging some issues as if they were the most intellect and highest moral standards person, is the confirmation that we are not fully independent privately.

It has been 70 years since independence is declared by Soekarno – Hatta. But, still we can dismantle the internalization of "second class nation". We are still easily triggered by sensitive things which lead to problematic attitude and behavior which consumed ourselves. This, later on, will create distrustful attitude, hopeless and difficult to accept diversity among ourselves.

The emergence of many great leaders still cannot strengthen the bargaining position of the nation to international political world. We still, and often, face difficulties in finding leaders who put the importance on people's interests, provide sense of secure, and deals with personal conflicts which are dragged into collective conflicts. This includes unfinished religion and ethnic conflicts. The gift, which is supposed to be grace for our nation, has turned to be problems for minority class.

So, which independence is needed for our nation to awaken us from the decline of private human value? Independence becomes a high-priced thing since not all people are able to pay for high education. Independence will become politically rare since politics has become the pathway to some aspects, such as religion, law, culture and education. It becomes more worrying since, in an effort to "make ourselves independent", the practice of law trade is still commonly found. How this situation can produce high quality humans to drag this nation out of problems in many aspects?

### Sense of Nation (Nationality)

The emergence of new leaders in regency or city level sparks a little optimism. This is also followed by the proper law enforcement, the achievement reward, working quality awarded, the chance of competition to receive university scholarship, the availability of intervention facility in many aspects, and so on. All of these dedicated and passionate intellectual's efforts bring the light of relief to improve the quality of the nation. This is hoped to become the balancer of the fragile mental of the nation inherited from previous generation or which is caused by the influence of unfavorable global situation.

"Sense of collective nationality" should be built from the same perception that this nation and country needs togetherness, mutual trust, and interdependence among all subsystems. There should be no more subordinate position. There should also be belongingness, same wishes, and win-win solution formula among all nation elements to set aside all differences. The research of Renato Foschi dan Marco Lauriola (2014) finds out that individual capability to interact between each other will enhance the participation as a citizen. They also can involve with political and non-political participation and even predict the interest to become a part of political decision making process by joining political or non-political organization. This ability to communicate and build strong relation between each other will put togetherness as a priority and stereotype. This, later on, will reduce the prejudice so that there are no more discrimination and conflict.

Research by Wing Yi Chan (2011) shows that the barrier of the emergence of attachment for the citizens is determined by the intensity of relation, identity, and gap in acculturation process. The relation intensity among citizen will influence the identity strength. No strong difference in acculturation process will strengthen citizen's role and participation. In simple practice, the assimilation of birth-attached differences cannot be the reason to bully other citizens.

The appreciation of self and others' ability will create positive environment. The comments such as "A is incredible in negotiating"; "When it deals with creativity and innovation, leave it to B"; "We are lucky to be led by a person who likes to listen and accept criticism like C" are evidences that sense of nationality is, evidently, started from daily and habitual basis. The consistent positive reinforcement is also needed. If the awareness of nationality is simultaneously applied in all aspects, then the optimistic actions will form unwavering strenght in to fight for real independence.

### **The Role of Psychology in Recruiting "Political Leaders" (Including Teacher) and Enhancing Political Participation.**

Basically, all of us are political human beings (*zoon politicon*) (Faturhman dan Sobari, 2004) which means that human power is basically inherently attached individually. Every human being intends to control. This control is started from controlling over his/herself to control over family, society, small organization to big organization the so-called nation. Authority means ability to influence other human beings to achieve the private or group purpose. Human beings' ability emerges coercion in controlling others. Authority becomes relevant social symbol with higher social structure. This should become a subject, rather than an object, of the authority (*the ruler and the ruled*). In an pyramidal way, authority means occupying elite position. Even if it only small in quantity, it has strong and solid capability to give effective orders and influence toward certain mass groups.

Based on the above reasons, it is important for us to have additional informations (psychological examination consideration) to select/recruit political leader candidates who do not put forward only power orientation. This power orientation will impact in incorrect decisions and ignoring the greater importance. Leaders have opportunities to become role model or example in attitude and behavior. Recommendation for psychological examination result is hoped to prevent selecting leaders with pathological intention (mentally disturbed). This pathological leaders will only create political imbalance and chaos since they intend to make wrong political decisions.

Psychology plays an important role to improve political awareness and knowledge in society. Smart leaders will use psychology to enhance society participation to support the policy taken. The leader who understands how to build and achieve dreams, to improve rational and positive way of thinking, and control themselves in dealing with differences, is "panacea" in helping this nation to heal itself. The health nation will interpret independence in a different way. The way which puts forward the recognition, appreciation and desire to be useful for others no matter how small the contribution. This is relevant with Huntington dan Nelson (Faturhman & Sobari, 2004) who states that political participation is the activity of private citizen to influence government policy making. This concept is not only a simple manner or faith, but also activities done by ordinary citizen with an intention to influence the public policy which is related to private or group interest. This political participation (including role as a teacher) becomes good control so that the nation does not perform abuse of power.

### **Conclusion**

Then, how we are supposed to interpret the real independence which creates freedom of thinking? Tough and Growing (**Tangguh dan Bertumbuh**) is a challenge from leader elect as a result of political participation mechanism of all nation components. This challenge puts forward the hope that great and dignified nation is started from freeing ourselves from small mind and keep on running to face problems. This will bring out potency to implement the great ability of the nation to grow and create many useful working results for the nation and country of Indonesia the independence in education implementation also becomes important thing to produce Indonesian human beings which will bring up innovation and creation and free from strict standards. To be independent does not mean to be uncontrolled freedom. It still has to obey the four frames of the consensus of state and country of Indonesia such as **Pancasila, Undang-undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika** and **Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia**. Leaders (including teacher) who grew from education which is full of independent "sense" and stay grounded on nationalism "earth" are believed to be able to launch the succession of who are able to face global challenge and competition.

**Reference**

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