

# *The Culture of Gotong Royong of the Multiethnic Society in North Sumatera: How to Introduce it to Students through Civic Education?*

Hodriani, Halking, Julia Ivana  
Department of Civic and Pancasila Education  
Universitas Negeri Medan  
Medan, Indonesia  
hodrianis@yahoo.com

**Abstract**-Indonesia is the country united by ethnical, religion, racial and group differences. This diversity phenomena has been existed among society before this country's independence. The reality of this diversity can be seen from various cultures of *Gotong Royong* which become Indonesian national identity. But in reality, this nation face various basic problems, among others is the lack of national identity marked by deterioration of virtue value such as the fading away of *Gotong Royong* behavior particularly among young generation. This study aims to generate a learning innovation to introduce various cultures of mutual help among multiethnic society in North Sumatera through Civic Education. This study was conducted in State University of Medan, with subject of study were lectures who are experts in Education, Civic Education, and Anthropology fields. The result of study showed that (1) Civic Education is subject which play role to build students' civic culture, including the culture of *Gotong Royong*; (2) To introduce the culture of *Gotong Royong* among multiethnic society in North Sumatera, then the learning model which integrate cultural values in Civic Education learning is needed. The developing model should make learning become more meaningful, enjoyable and active. So students are able to experience and practice various cultures of *Gotong Royong*. This result study recommended that there is need of Civic Education model which is based on local tradition through transformation of *Gotong Royong* values among multiethnic society in North Sumatera.

**Keywords**-*Gotong Royong, Multiethnic, Civic Education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In a country that has the characteristics of a pluralistic society like Indonesia, build and maintain the value of solidarity and *Gotong Royong* culture it is important to implement the national life order to be more democratic. The country of Indonesia should be proud and feel fortunate because the behavior of mutual cooperation has long existed long before this country existed. These values are born from various collective behaviors of the community arising from the cultural habits and customs of the archipelago. These values then transformed into a spirit and characteristic for the people of Indonesia.

Being in the 21st century and the global era as it is today, the Indonesian people should be happy with the various assets they have. However, in reality, this nation faces a variety of fundamental problems. Among them is

the weakness of the identity of the nation which is marked by a decline in the value of virtue, such as the fading of cooperation due to globalization which has led to cultural imperialism. Various facts show that the occurrence of various conflicts between ethnic groups, religions, community groups, even between government elites is evidence of the weakness of social solidarity which influences the behaviour of community solidarity. Ironically, the conflicts that occur are dominated by horizontal conflicts (fellow small people), which are destructive which cause us to become a nation that destroys each other (self-destroying nation) [1].

We can see this from various horizontal and vertical conflicts that occur in various regions in Indonesia today. Such as violent conflicts that occurred in Papua, Ambon (1999), Sampit (2001), in Sampang (2012), Ahmadiyah conflicts, ethnic and Chinese ethnic conflicts (1998), and occurred in Tanjung Balai (2016). The various conflicts that have certainly affected the condition of nationality, especially the internal challenges of the Indonesian people, namely the attitude of collectivism in a pluralistic society. The decline in national ties is because there is no longer a synergistic relationship between local and national entities that mutually reinforce [2]. Although indeed the various cases that occur do not reflect the entire Indonesian people, it becomes alarming if the country is not able to stem and resolve various problems of this nation.

One of the factors that caused the occurrence of various conflicts was due to an identity crisis, especially for Indonesia's young generation. Changes in the pattern of life of the younger generation that is uncertain have an impact on the mindset, attitude patterns, and actions that are not by the norms of the principles of the Pancasila life. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), that from 2011 to 2015 there were 1,880 cases of violence that occurred in the education environment [3]. The results of this data are then reinforced by a survey conducted by ICRW that 84% of Indonesian children experience violence at school [4]. The occurrence of various cases of violence among these students may be due to the low value of social solidarity and solidarity due to strengthening individualist values in students. The fading of the value of togetherness, which is characterized

by the weakness of mutual attitudes, helps to make students as individuals who feel not bound by social values in their environment. Changes in the lifestyles of adolescents due to the modernist new civilization make many adolescents fall prey to individualistic, consumptive and materialistic, hedonic, and opportunistic behaviors, which results in teenagers losing their identity. This reality is certainly very different from the character of the Indonesian people who highly uphold the values of togetherness or collectivism.

These values of togetherness or collectivism existed long before the Indonesian nation existed. These values are cultural, historical traces as a sign that the Indonesian people are a nation that is rich in cultural values. These values were used as strengths, so they were able to deliver Indonesia as an independent nation. Furthermore, by the founders of the country, this value was made as a strength of national identity through the precepts of Pancasila. This is done so that future generations will not forget the value of cooperation as the identity of the Indonesian people because Pancasila as a nation's identity is extracted from the values contained in multicultural Indonesian culture so that it becomes the philosophical values of the Indonesian people [5], [6].

What was feared by the founders of the Republic of Indonesia decades ago turned out to be right now, that the value of cooperation began to be abandoned by some Indonesians? Efforts to restore the spirit of cooperation must be carried out quickly and appropriately so as not to deteriorate and damage the ideology as the foundation of the life of the nation and state. In response to this, the Indonesian Government is currently drafting the National Development Agenda, one of which is "strengthening diversity and strengthening social restoration in 2015-2019". The goals to be achieved in this development agenda are "the development of social capital to realize social care, cooperation, trust between citizens, and protection of traditional institutions, and community life without discrimination and strengthening the value of social solidarity" [7].

This goal can be achieved if all parties want to be involved in re-socializing the values of cooperation in various life practices, including through education. Because education is a means of enculturation in strengthening the values of national character. Education is one part of the socio-cultural system that has a role in society to influence other social institutions [8]. Education is a vehicle for transforming culture, values, science and technology (science and technology) and even art to develop national character through both formal and non-formal channels [9]. In this context, the education in question is diversity education that is taught in various ways including through civic education as a subject in school. Because there can be no doubt that PKn has a very strategic role for 'national character building' in the broadest sense, especially in forming good citizens [9], this paper will explore how to introduce a culture of

cooperation in multi-ethnic communities in North Sumatra through Citizenship Education.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Multi-Ethnic Society*

In a modern society today, it is very important to build strength in a variety of diversity in a pluralistic society. A pluralistic society can also be understood as a multi-ethnic society, namely a society in a place which consists of ascriptive group identities - race, language, religion, ethnicity or caste [10]. In an understanding multi-ethnic society, it cannot be separated from the term ethnicity. Ethnicity comes from ethnic words or ethnos (Greek) which means civilized human concepts [6]. Thus ethnicity can be said as a group of people who have the same characteristics regarding culture and biology and act according to the same patterns [6]. In a more specific concept, a group that has similarities becomes an ethnic group or a group called ethnic group or ethnic community.

Ethnicity in the narrow sense is often associated with "race" and "language" [10]. Even in the era of British rule, scholars preferred to use communal terms rather than ethnicity [10]. However, in line with the development of Varshney, [10] explaining ethnic terms and then developing and categorized larger where religion, race, language, sect including categories and subcategories in it. The category presented by Varshney is more about civil society and ethnic conflict [10]. So that the diversity of ethnic understandings is influenced by various conflicts that have occurred such as conflicts between Hindus - Muslims, blacks and whites, Tamil da Sinhala conflicts in Sri Lanka, Sunni and Shia disputes in Pakistan, etc. So in the past according to Varshney, [10] only used for differentiating types of conflict both (1) religious, (2) racial, (3) language, and (4) sectarian.

The definition of ethnicity above, of course, has not provided a complete definition so it is very difficult to identify what ethnic groups are. To distinguish the four levels of development displayed in a community of human culture, Handelmen identifies the following levels namely (1) based on ethnic categories; (2) based on ethnic networks; 3) based on ethnic associations and (4) based on ethnic communities [11]. Tilaar explains these levels as follows [6]:

At the level of ethnic categories, the connection of a person to society is a rather loose bond and merely a picture of the existence of cultural differences between his group and the outside world. At the level of the ethnic network, there has been regular interaction between the members of the ethnic group so that with the network distribution of resources occurs among its members. At the level of ethnic association, its members have developed similar interests and formed political organizations in collective statements. At the level of ethnic communities, the group has fixed territory and is bound above its

political organization such as seen in a country. This last form is called the concept of nation or nation.

From the above levels, we can understand that human cultural groups are created from ethnic groups that unite themselves into a nation. This is in accordance with what was stated by Handelman that ethnic groups (ethnic communities) are a collective society that has or is described as having a common ancestor, having the same historical experience in the past, as well as a cultural focus in one or several elements symbolic elements stating their membership[11]. This community ethnic group then has six characteristics[6], namely:

(1) has a distinctive name that identifies the nature of a society; (2) having a myth about ancestral unity; (3) the group has historical records; (4) having a unity of cultural elements such as religion, customs and religion; (5) bound to one spilled blood both physically and symbolically; (6) have a sense of solidarity from the population.

These six characteristics of ethnicity indicate that a society has the same ethnicity because it is united by various bonds that form themselves as a common ethnic unit. Between one ethnic and another ethnic group which united themselves because of their historical experience and solidarity among their fellow citizens, this was what later became a multi-ethnic society. For example, the Batak tribe, the Javanese tribe, Malay tribe, Chinese ethnic, tribal Nias, Karo tribe who together have the same experience, both historical experience and afterwards can be said to be part of a multi-ethnic society. What was exemplified was a form of multi-ethnic society in North Sumatra?

Ethnicity is very entangled with multiculturalism, even ethnic identity as the root of multicultural education [6]. In line with developments, each group has the right to preserve culture towards the life of a democratic society. For this reason, recognition of various types of cultures is needed in a nation and country, and this is what is called multiculturalism. [6]. Multiculturalism carries the spirit of peaceful coexistence in differences in existing cultures both individually and in groups and communities [1]. In connection with that, Parekh in Budimansyah and Suryadi suggests the term multiculturalism includes at least three elements, (1) related to culture; (2) refers to a plurality of cultures; and (3) certain ways to respond to that plurality [1].

#### *Gotong Royong Culture as Local Tradition*

Studying the cooperation culture, we cannot give up the history of the formation of such behaviour so that it becomes the culture of Indonesia. Koentjaraningrat explains that the concept of cooperation is a concept that is very closely related to the lives of the people as farmers in an agrarian society[12]. In the life of rural communities in Java, cooperation is a system of mobilizing additional personnel from outside the family, to fill the shortage of

labor during busy times in farming activities in the fields [12].

This behavior then develops into (1) help in agricultural activities, (2) help in activities around the house, (3) help in preparing for parties and ceremonies and (4) help when disaster occurs [12]. This behavior according to Koentjaraningrat is referred to as cooperation because the habits of mutual assistance between citizens of a small community in various fields of social life, there are activities that are carried out jointly called "mutual cooperation"[12].

*Gotong Royongis* a form of social solidarity because there is assistance from others for personal and group interests. And this culture is a feature of the Indonesian people, especially for those who live in rural areas who apply from generation to generation so that it becomes tangible social behavior which further shapes the social order.

In addition, *Gotong Royongin* making tools such as stone mortar in North Sumatra, Lesung Kayu in Java and fishing boats in Southeast Sulawesi. *Gotong Royongin* a residential development activity is known as the ngarawah but lewo (South Kalimantan), sambatan (Yogyakarta), markarah (North Sumatra). Whereas the *Gotong Royongin* trust is carried out in the holding of religious ceremonies / beliefs such as the lepambai ceremony (apology to ancestors) in Southeast Sulawesi, ngayah (mobilization of gotongroyong labor) in Bali, Mosehe ceremony (refuse reinforcements), pemane kolo rai ceremony (reject reinforcements and fertility) in Nusa Tenggara, and the ceremony of molamoa (death) in Central Sulawesi

The various *Gotong Royong* activities mentioned above are still ongoing. Of course experiencing changes (addition, subtraction or replacement) due to the influence of religion in particular (royal era) and the West (colonialism and modernization). However, this local tradition is still carried out as a manifestation of efforts to maintain a cultural identity for the similarities they have. This similarity element then becomes the source of the creation of social solidarity which is driven by collective awareness (especially mechanical equality rather than organic solidarity).

Suparlan explains that Mechanical Solidarity is based on a collective awareness that shows the totality of shared beliefs and sentiments that on average belong to the same citizens[13]. In contrast to ethnic solidarity that arises because of the increasingly large division of labor that creates a structure of society that is highly interdependent. Thus it can be understood that the *Gotong Royong* culture is part of mechanical solidarity based on the collective awareness of the community

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach through descriptive analysis method, which describes the attitudes

and views and the situation or phenomenon that occurs when carrying out research. This research was conducted at Medan State University, with research subjects as lecturers who had expertise in the fields of Education, Citizenship Education and Anthropology. Data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. While the data analysis in this study uses Miles and Huberman which consists of data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing/verification through interactive methods[14].

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian society as a plural society that has various local traditions as a wealth of national culture that must be maintained, carried out and maintained through education. The results of education not only increase knowledge but efforts to preserve culture in society including students. The effort to integrate social-cultural values (*Gotong Royong* culture) in the learning process is an effort to foster students' knowledge about the culture of their nation. From the results of interviews with lecturers and experts on Citizenship Education and Anthropology Education formulated various ideas related to how to introduce a culture of *Gotong Royong* in multi-ethnic communities in North Sumatra through Citizenship Education

Some speakers explained that the *Gotong Royong* culture is a characteristic of the Indonesian nation as the values of the nation's local wisdom. This culture must be introduced to the younger generation in order to find out the characteristics of the nation amidst the onslaught of the global currents that hit. Various current cases that show that there are social inequalities that occur in our society especially teenagers as a result of a low sense of social solidarity that forgets the national identity of the nation. The fading of solidarity with the people of Indonesia is inseparable from the fading of the *Gotong Royong* behavior which has been maintained as the nation's cultural identity, as well as forgetting the *adiluhung* culture that is the identity of the nation.

The era of globalization affects various aspects of community life, nation and state, as well as the mindset, actions and attitudes of the Indonesian people. The *Gotong Royong* tradition experienced various attacks due to dynamic and aggressive western culture. The individualist, capitalist and tend to act consumptively are characteristics of Indonesia's new society today, especially in the younger generation. It is undeniable that there are still some Indonesian people who carry out actions of solidarity and *Gotong Royong* only to "look for names", acting or "masks" or part of a form of self-appearance, or emotional work that ultimately expects rewards, praise or flattery. Most of this realistic attitude occurs a lot in communities in urban areas. What happened in Indonesian society is currently explained by Goffmen in his dramaturgical theory. Goffmen in Ritzer and smart explained [15]:

From a dramaturgic point of view, emotions are a strategic method for managing identity and negotiating relationships. Through socialization, people learn any emotions that are suitable for various situations and learn how to express them. Also, in social life, Goffman claims that daily interactions can be better understood if he considers people as actors on stage. Goffman also explained that people care about the image that others have formed about him. Thus only by influencing the image of others, individuals can predict or control the responses of others to it.

It is indeed very difficult to identify whether *Gotong Royong* behavior is carried out purely as a form of sincerity as a form of solidarity or just management of impressions as suggested by Goffman and other. However, the reality of life in the community, especially in urban areas even in the present time, shows that the mobilization of *Gotong Royong* activities can be carried out if there is a "lure" or expect mere benefits. Muchtar Lubis describe this character as a characteristic of Indonesian people which is hypocritical or hypocritical or pretending, others in the other behind, like to hide what they feel or think or what they really want, for fear of getting rewards and bringing disaster to themselves and happy to wear masks in public to hide his true face [16]. This hypocritical or hypocritical character, according to Lubis, [16], makes Indonesian people have an attitude of not or less concerned with the fate of others, as long as it is not about themselves or close people, then people feel as if they are not involved and interested. This is what makes the spirit of help, helps to help, gives giving, defends defending becomes fierce among the people of Indonesia [16]. For this reason, the culture of *Gotong Royong* must be strengthened through PKn Learning.

The culture of *Gotong Royong* is the identity of the Indonesian nation which is born from the values of local wisdom and comes from habits, and customs which are continuously maintained into cultural identity and strengthen national identity. According to Koentjaraningrat the culture of *Gotong Royong* was very close in the life of the people as farmers in an agrarian society[12]. Although it has different terms, the behavior or *Gotong Royong* activities have become the value of local wisdom that is binding for every community including in the multicultural community in North Sumatra.

The term *Gotong Royong*, according to Koentjaraningrat, is not clear where in Java the term originates. The first time this term appeared was seen in the essays of adat law and also in the essays of social aspects of agriculture (especially in East Java) by Wageningen in Koentjaraningrat, [12]. So according to Koentjaraningrat that in each region there are various terms of *Gotong Royong* that are different[12]. Various characteristics that describe *Gotong Royong* behavior in various communities also have different terms depending

on various activities carried out such as *Gotong Royong* in hunting and gathering activities known as *sosor* or *ngiring* (South Sumatra), *melambu* (Southeast Sulawesi), *monyilo* (Sulawesi Center). *Gotong Royong* in farming activities is known as *marsiadapari* (Tapanuli), *splice* (Central Java), *mapalus* (Minahasa), *sintuwunasiolapale* (Central Sulawesi), *paarian* (Riau), *peparian* (Banjar tribe) and *malleleng* (Bugis) and *subak* system (Bali).

In North Sumatra, when it was identified several types of *Gotong Royong* culture were Javanese (*Among-among*), Malay (*Upah-Upah*), Karo (Annual Party), Mandailing (*Marriage Delivery*), Simalungun (*Rondang Bintang*, Harvest Event, Thanksgiving, Pak Pak (*OongOong*, *Penenand* Thanksgiving Program), Nias (Jumping Stone), Toba Batak (*Marsialapari*). Various cultures of *Gotong Royong*, are currently still being carried out as symbols of each custom and culture. These cultures must of course be known by generations young people, especially students both at the elementary, middle and high school levels, and one of those who has the assignment is the subject of Citizenship Education (PKn).

One of PKn's most important tasks is to strengthen and develop education in a multi-ethnic society or multicultural society. Citizenship education plays a very important role in a multicultural society to prepare students to become citizens who are strongly and consistently committed to maintaining the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia [1]. In a multicultural society such as in Indonesia, the cultural values are the values of civic virtue or morals that become a civic culture for a nation. Pancasila is a culture of Indonesian citizenship so that the personal identity of citizens originating from civic culture needs to be developed through citizenship education in various forms and backgrounds [17].

From various directions and character development strategies, there is a very important effort to restore the spirit of *Gotong Royong* in the lives of the people, nation and state, as well as the basis of this research, namely 1) strengthening diversity education through: (a) character education based on local wisdom values develop values and traditions to strengthen national culture, and 2) redevelop social capital to accentuate national character and identity through: (a) development of *Gotong Royong* concerns and institutions, (b) empowerment of indigenous peoples and cultural communities. Or it can be described as follows.

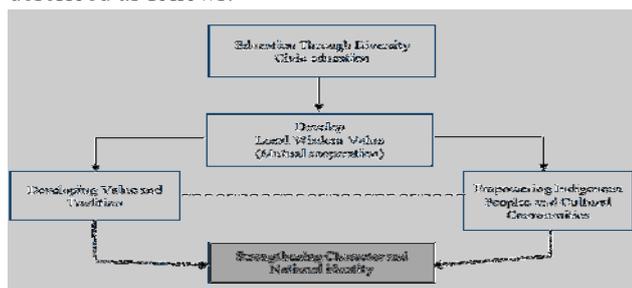


Fig 1. The role of education in constructing the value of local wisdom in a culture of *Gotong Royong*

The picture above explains how through developing various values and traditions, as well as empowering indigenous peoples to strengthen national character and identity. This shows that the problem of national character is inseparable from education.

**V. CONCLUSION.**

Communities in North Sumatra have various ethnic and ethnic groups, so it is often said to be a mosaic of diversity in Indonesia. This diversity can be seen from life in heterogeneous societies that currently still respect each other, maintain differences and strengthen solidarity as a multi-ethnic society. North Sumatra has 8 tribes or ethnicities currently living side by side, namely the Batak tribe consisting of 5 Toba (Tapanuli) Batak sub-ethnic, Simalungun Batak, Karo Batak, Mandailing Batak, and Pakpak Batak, Nias ethnic, Malay Tribe, Javanese, Chinese, and several other immigrant tribes (India, Arab, Minangkabau, Aceh etc.).

The ethnic and ethnic groups in North Sumatra recognize various values and traditions that contain the values of *Gotong Royong* as local wisdom in each of their communities. The *Gotong Royong* behavior in this multicultural society in North Sumatra is carried out in various forms with various different terms. For some people, the culture of *Gotong Royong* is still carried out and maintained. But not a few people in North Sumatra including students have forgotten the various traditions of *Gotong Royong* as local ethnic wisdom there. For this reason, it is necessary to transform these noble values in order to be able to know their identity and cultural identity through fun, active and meaningful Civics learning. This goal will build the role of PKn which is not only conceptually-normative (schooling) but as a socio-cultural program that can build awareness in the community

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