

Pancasila-Based Democratic Education and Civil Society Development amid Indonesia's Democratic Regression

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Abstract

This study explores the reconstruction of democratic education grounded in Pancasila to strengthen civil society amid democratic regression in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research draws on primary sources—peer-reviewed journals and research reports—and secondary materials such as books and policy documents. Data analysis follows the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model involving data reduction, display, and verification. The findings highlight the urgent need to revitalize democratic education to address issues such as declining political participation, disinformation, and online polarization. Pancasila-based democratic education plays a crucial role in instilling values of tolerance, human rights, deliberation, and social justice among citizens. Key strategies include integrating democratic values across educational curricula, implementing participatory learning models, repositioning political institutions to uphold democratic integrity, and strengthening digital ethics. The study concludes that democratic education grounded in Pancasila is essential not only for sustaining democratic consolidation but also for shaping civic-minded, responsible citizens. This research contributes to current debates on democracy, civic education, and civil society in developing democracies.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi rekonstruksi pendidikan demokrasi yang berlandaskan Pancasila guna memperkuat masyarakat sipil di tengah kemunduran demokrasi di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini memanfaatkan sumber-sumber primer—jurnal dan laporan penelitian yang telah melalui penelaahan sejawat—dan bahan-bahan sekunder seperti buku dan dokumen kebijakan. Analisis data mengikuti model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana yang melibatkan reduksi, tampilan, dan verifikasi data. Temuan-temuan tersebut menyoroti kebutuhan mendesak untuk merevitalisasi pendidikan demokrasi guna mengatasi berbagai isu seperti menurunnya partisipasi politik, disinformasi, dan polarisasi daring. Pendidikan demokrasi berbasis Pancasila memainkan peran penting dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai toleransi, hak asasi manusia, musyawarah, dan keadilan sosial di kalangan warga negara. Strategi-strategi utama meliputi pengintegrasian nilai-nilai demokrasi di seluruh kurikulum pendidikan, penerapan model-model pembelajaran partisipatif, reposisi lembaga-lembaga politik untuk menegakkan integritas demokrasi, dan penguatan etika digital. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendidikan demokrasi yang berlandaskan Pancasila penting tidak hanya untuk mempertahankan konsolidasi demokrasi tetapi juga untuk membentuk warga negara yang berwawasan kewarganegaraan dan bertanggung jawab. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada perdebatan terkini tentang demokrasi,

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pendidikan kewarganegaraan, dan masyarakat sipil dalam mengembangkan
demokrasi.

Introduction

As a democratic country, Indonesia has experienced a period of transition of democratic patterns since the beginning of independence until now. The dynamics of the history of the Indonesian nation's journey show the important role of civil society in efforts to consolidate democracy. The strength of civil society consisting of students, university students, activists and community organizations has proven successful in overthrowing the authoritarian regime and giving birth to reforms, one of the important points of which is demanding democratization. However, efforts towards democratization to date still pose various challenges, especially in facing the rapid development of information and communication technology in every aspect of life. Based on the report of The Economist Intelligence Unit, Indonesia's democracy index in 2021 to 2022 stagnated with a score of 6.71, then in 2023 it decreased with a score of 6.53. The general decline in democracy is generally caused by the weakening of political institutions that support the democratic system in a country, strengthening citizen participation, and weakening accountability by reducing the norms of accountability and punishment for public officials (Waldner & Lust, 2018).

In dealing with the phenomenon of democratic regression, efforts are needed to build a culture of democracy in the digital era. Democracy education is needed along with the transformation in the way of obtaining information, communicating, transacting, and participating in politics as a result of technological developments (Rohmatin., et al., 2024). Efforts to build community democracy in an increasingly open digital era pose new challenges. Today, society is faced with new challenges such as disinformation, online polarization, and data security and privacy. Another reality of the implementation of democracy in Indonesia shows that democratic values have not fully become a consciousness and mentality. The attitude of society towards the issue of freedom and tolerance between religious communities that occurs is still far from a democratic attitude. Even political violence to resolve problems that still arise in society, such as considering differences as conflicts, how to take action and act in a totalitarian manner and behave anarchically (Zamroni, 2001). This mentality becomes very dangerous when carried into cyberspace, where divisions become easier to occur when society does not have a good democratic culture.

Citizens need to be equipped with a good democratic culture to become democratic citizens. Without the support of a democratic culture, the process of democratic transition is still vulnerable to various threats of undemocratic cultural and behavioral legacies from the past, such as anarchic behavior in expressing opinions, money politics, mobilizing masses for political purposes, and the use of primordial symbols in politics (Nasution, A.R., 2016). Citizens who possess and are able to actualize democratic values are expected to become a source of strength for civil society, which serves as a social control over the government in upholding the democratic system. Based on previous research conducted by Asrida, Wan., et al. (2021), there is a close conceptual and practical relationship between civil society, democracy, and democratization. Civil society can have either a positive or negative impact on democratization depending on the quality that is built. Civil society will have a positive impact on democratization if it can play a role in bringing about the transition from authoritarianism to the consolidation of democracy by acting as a balance of state power, defending public interests, and being able to influence the state's policy agenda for the common good. However, civil society can have a negative impact on democratization efforts if it is dominated by ethnocentrism, radicalism, and power-oriented agendas.

Civil society that can build democracy is civil society that consists of components of citizens who understand and practice democratic values. In this regard, according to Khaerah, Nur., et al. (2021), education holds a very important position in a democratic system with the aim of educating citizens about virtues and responsibilities as members of civil society. Democratic education plays a role in instilling values of human rights, freedom of expression, equality, and active participation in political life, thereby producing citizens who are capable of behaving democratically and becoming a force for civil society. Based on the concepts, theories, and findings mentioned above, the author is interested in examining democracy education in Indonesia, as well as efforts to reconstruct democracy education rooted in Pancasila as the state ideology. With the reconstruction of democracy education based on Pancasila, it is hoped that it can build the democratic mentality of citizens as a force of civil society in building a democratic state.

While many studies have examined the importance of democratic education and the role of civil society in political development, few have explored how Pancasila as an ideological foundation can serve as a unique framework for democratic resilience in Indonesia's current climate of democratic backsliding. This article fills that gap by offering a contextualized analysis of Pancasila-based democratic education as a normative and pedagogical strategy to counter democratic erosion and revitalize civic participation in the digital age.

This article is structured into five main sections. Following the introduction, the second section presents a conceptual framework that integrates key theoretical perspectives on democratic education, civil society, and Pancasila as a normative foundation. The third section outlines the research methodology, including the data sources, scope, and analytical approach. The fourth section discusses the findings, organized thematically to highlight the role of Pancasila-based democratic education in strengthening civil society amid democratic regression. The final section concludes with key insights, policy implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Pancasila-Based Democratic Education and Strengthening Civil Society

Democratic education plays a strategic role in strengthening civil society and fostering civic values that support the sustainability of the democratic system. In the Indonesian context, democratic values cannot be separated from the national ideology of Pancasila, which has long been the normative and philosophical basis for organizing the state and education system. The conceptual framework in this study is built on the interconnection between three main concepts: (1) democratic education, (2) civil society, and (3) Pancasila as an ethical and ideological basis.

Democratic education is defined as a pedagogical process that aims to shape individuals into active, critical, and responsible citizens. Parker (2003) emphasized that democratic education not only conveys political knowledge, but also fosters deliberative skills and the ability to take part in the democratic process. The main principles of democratic education are participation, equality, respect for differences, and commitment to social justice (Gutmann, 1999). This education can be carried out formally through the school curriculum, or informally in public spaces such as communities, community organizations, and digital media.

The concept of civil society refers to a network of institutions and citizen associations that operate independently of the state and the market, and serve as agents of democracy, participation, and social control (Cohen & Arato, 1992). A strong civil society is able to act as a balancing force against the state, strengthen political accountability, and fight for the public interest. In the context of developing countries such as Indonesia, civil society has a crucial function in maintaining democracy amidst the challenges of oligarchy, digital disinformation, and political apathy.

However, civil society cannot develop sustainably without the support of an educational ecosystem that promotes the values of freedom, deliberation, and moral courage. This is where democratic education plays a role as a bridge between ideology and democratic practice. Pancasila, as the foundation of the Indonesian state, contains fundamental values such as humanity, social justice, unity, and deliberation. In the context of democratic education, Pancasila is not only understood as an ideological doctrine, but also as an ethical foundation that can be translated into pedagogical practice. Values such as deliberation, mutual cooperation, and diversity can be integrated into democratic learning to strengthen social ties and collective responsibility of citizens.

In the view of Ki Hadjar Dewantara—an educator and national figure—education should guide all natural powers in children to achieve the highest possible safety and happiness in life, both as humans and as members of society. This principle is in line with the Pancasila-based pedagogical approach, which emphasizes not only academic achievement but also the formation of civic character and social responsibility.

Indonesia is currently facing symptoms of democratic regression, which is marked by the weakening of institutional checks and balances, declining public participation, and increasing identity polarization in the digital space (Warburton & Power, 2021; Diamond, 2020). In this situation, the reconstruction of democratic education based on Pancasila is crucial as an effort to form a civil society that is not only politically intelligent, but also moral and inclusive.

Thus, the conceptual framework of this article emphasizes that Pancasila-based democratic education can be a strategic mechanism to foster the character of deliberative and inclusive citizens, strengthen the capacity of civil society as a pillar of democracy, and counter the practices of intolerance, disinformation, and political apathy that are growing in the era of democratic regression. The application of Pancasila values in political education is not only symbolic, but must be realized through curriculum, critical pedagogy, and educational institutional reform that opens up space for participation and sides with social justice.

Methods

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. According to Creswell, a qualitative approach is used in studying phenomena, behaviors and social processes that occur naturally, without being controlled by certain treatments or laboratories (Creswell, 2016). The purpose of using a descriptive method with a qualitative approach is to be able to describe, summarize the conditions of various situations or phenomena of social reality that exist in the community that is the object of research, and to draw that reality to the surface as a characteristic, character, nature, example, sign, or picture, about the conditions, situations, or phenomena that occur (Bungin, 2007). In this study, a qualitative approach with a descriptive method was used based on the novelty of information from the phenomena studied regarding democratic regression and democratic education efforts to instill democratic values in citizens so that they can contribute to strengthening civil society in building democracy.

This study was conducted during the period of January–April 2024. The literature reviewed spans the past 15 years, with a focus on sources published between 2018–2024 to capture contemporary debates on democratic regression and education. To maintain credibility and trustworthiness, triangulation was applied by comparing themes across primary and secondary data. Reflexive journaling and source validation were used to reduce researcher bias. While hermeneutic analysis was central, attention was given to ensure interpretive coherence and thematic saturation.

The sources of this research consist of primary sources, namely research reports and accredited journals that are relevant to the research, because they have novelty of information regarding the situation that occurs with high validity. Second, secondary sources, namely books and documents, to complete comprehensive research. As for data analysis, based on the technique of Miles, Huberman & Saldana which explains qualitative data analysis gradually, namely by reduction, display, and verification (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers collect and select information from primary and secondary sources that are relevant to research needs, then conduct analysis by reduction, display and verification until answers are found to the problems studied descriptively.

Result and Discussion

Challenges of Democratic Regression in Indonesia

As a democratic country, Indonesia guarantees the sovereignty of the people in its constitution, which is the essence of democracy. This is explicitly stated in Article 1, Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which centers on the people as the holders of the highest sovereignty. Thus, indirectly, democracy as a system of government based on the sovereignty of the people has been agreed upon as the system used in running the wheels of government since Indonesia's independence. However, in its development, Indonesia's democratic system has experienced ups and downs in line with the application of the principles of its own democratic rule of law. In the book "Democracy in Indonesia from Stagnation to Regression," most political analysts agree that Indonesian democracy is currently experiencing regression. In fact, those political analysts once praised Indonesia as a beacon of democracy in a troubled region (Thomas & Eve Warbuton, 2021). This opinion aligns with the current reality of Indonesia's democratic life, which is marked by a decline in the quality of democracy. Based on the report by The Economist Intelligence Unit, Indonesia's Democracy Index stagnated from 2021 to 2022 with a score of 6.71, and then declined to a score of 6.53 in 2023.

The decline of democracy is generally caused by the weakening of political institutions that support the democratic system in a country, the restriction of citizen participation, and the weakening of accountability by reducing norms of responsibility and punishment for public officials (Waldner & Lust, 2018). Ironically, the weakening of democracy is often indirectly caused by regulatory arrangements made by the rulers to perpetuate their power in order to protect their interests. From the research findings in the Varieties of Democracy Institute 2024 report, the factors causing the decline of democracy include pressure on freedom of expression, manipulation of election results due to interference by the authorities, dominance of executive power leading to the lack of independence of other institutions which weakens the principle of checks and balances, and the poor quality of education (Febriandy & Wahid, 2024). This decline in democracy threatens citizen participation as a key element of democracy. The political system that faces various challenges such as corruption, oligarchy, bureaucracy, and conflicts that lead to low political participation (Alifiani, 2024).

The low political participation of citizens in democracy indicates a regression of democracy occurring in Indonesia. One indication of this problem is seen in the high number of abstentions in elections from year to year. Based on the latest data from the 2024 general election, the number of citizens who did not exercise their voting rights in the general election remains very high, indicating a decline in citizens' political participation in fundamental democracy. From the data released by the General Election Commission (KPU) from the number of Permanent Voter List (DPT) amounting to 204,807,200 voters, only 164,227,475 voters cast their ballots. The remaining 40,579,725 eligible voters did not cast their votes (Shofa, 2024). Such a condition will increasingly threaten Indonesian democracy if the public becomes

more apathetic towards the ongoing situation, which is caused by disappointment with the current system and politics, and the erosion of democratic values.

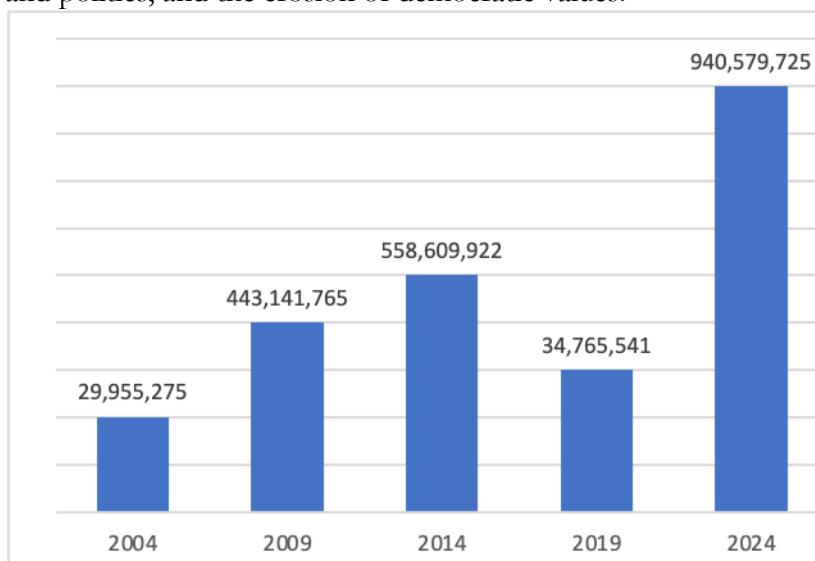


Figure 1. The Number of Abstaining Voters in Indonesia
The Organization of Elections from 2004 to 2024

The Role of Civil Society in Democratic Consolidation

According to Warbuton and Edwards (2021), the strength of civil society is a fundamental element for the consolidation of democracy in developing countries, because civil society can provide channels for political participation and function as a means of control that guards against abuse of power, and can be used to support anti-democratic agendas. Civil society refers to networks, organizations, and individuals outside of government that work together to promote social justice, human rights, and civil liberties. Civil society that has the power to support democratization to increase political participation, transparency, government accountability and uphold human rights is born from human resources who have good democratic awareness.

In previous studies, it revealed the role of civil society in the consolidation of democracy. Marcus Mietzner showed that civil society faces challenges from anti-reform political elites who hinder change, causing post-reform democratic stagnation. Then, Larry Diamond and Warburton (2020) revealed that a strong civil society is a fundamental element for the consolidation of democracy in developing countries, because civil society provides channels for political participation that function as a guard against abuse of power, as well as to support anti-democratic agendas. Meanwhile, Vedi Hadiz stated that civil society movements in Indonesia do not always support democratic values, by taking the example of Islamic populism supported by several civil society groups that carry an agenda that is contrary to the principles of democracy (Hadiz, 2021).

There are four elements that civil society can do to support democracy, namely: 1) providing social infrastructure for democracy; 2) limiting, opposing, and restraining the power of the state and the market; 3) becoming an additional resource when the state and the market fail; 4) deepening democracy by maintaining democratic norms and citizenship (Alagappa, 2024). So, civil society plays an important role as a control and strength in the administration of the state. As the results of research by Asrida, Wan., et al. (2021) there is a close conceptual and practical

relationship between civil society, democracy, and democratization. Civil society can have positive or negative implications for democratization depending on the quality that is built. Civil society will have a positive implication on democratization if it is able to play a role in bringing about change from authoritarianism to democratic consolidation by taking on the role of balancing state power, defending public interests, and being able to influence the state policy agenda for the common welfare.

Citizen participation can strengthen the role of civil society as the last bastion of democratic social control. Strengthening civil society is urgent amidst the phenomenon of democratic regression and the principle of the rule of law in Indonesia. Diamond defines civil society as "a realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by legal order or set of shared rules" (Diamond, 1990). Civil society as a "realm" or arena that is between the state, political society, the market, and the general public (Alagappa, 2004). To strengthen the role of civil society in building democracy is a challenge for democratic education so that it can shape citizens to become intelligent, moral citizens, aware of their rights and obligations, and able to actively participate in building a democratic life. Strengthening democratic values is expected to lead to the consolidation of democracy as a system of government based on people's sovereignty that can provide reciprocity for the welfare of the community itself. Because social control that comes from intelligent and moral people power and upholds democratic values can produce leaders who are trustworthy to realize a peaceful, prosperous, just, and civilized life.

Strengthening Civil Society Through Pancasila Democracy Education

The phenomenon of democratic regression and the contribution of civil society as a prerequisite for democratic consolidation as the findings that have been presented are challenges for democratic education. Especially in the midst of the rapid progress of science and technology where there is a transformation in the way of communicating, transacting and giving birth to new patterns of political participation. The ease of communicating and accessing various information presents an increasingly open public space. The increasing openness of this public space can have a positive impact on the democratization process if the public space is successfully utilized to access various positive information and knowledge, express opinions responsibly, convey constructive criticism of the running of the government, and create a more transparent and accountable government system. On the other hand, if this increasingly open public space gives rise to irresponsible freedom such as the increasing ease of causing disinformation, intolerant attitudes, hate speech, threats to personal data, to the manipulation of opinion for certain interests that give rise to political polarization, then it can threaten the democratization process.

In this context, democratic education plays a role in internalizing democratic values in citizens from an early age. According to Khaerah, Nur., et al. (2021) democratic education is a systematic effort made by the state and society to facilitate citizens to be able to understand, appreciate, practice and develop the concepts, principles and values of democracy in accordance with their status and role as citizens in society. These democratic values include values such as human rights, justice, equality, tolerance, freedom of expression and active participation in political life responsibly. Democratic education transfers democratic values so that it can build knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that support the formation of a democratic culture as a support for the democratization process (Saefullah, Febri., et al., 2020). Democratic values are also a prerequisite for the realization of a civil society (civilized society). According to Ubaedillah (2008) the main elements that must be possessed by a civil society include: a free public sphere; democracy; tolerance; pluralism and social justice.

A democratic education system has been mandated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system. In chapter III article 4 paragraph (1) it is explained that education is organized democratically and fairly, and is non-discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values and national diversity (Ministry of National Education, 2003). Implicitly, the implementation of education in Indonesia must uphold democratic values. Democratic education is expected to form students who have personal and social abilities, so that they become citizens who can uphold the pillars of democracy that prioritize the values of freedom, brotherhood, equality, unity, nationality, diversity, multiculturalism, nationalism and democracy (Sobri, Muhammad & Umar, 2022). Thus, these values are important to be integrated and internalized with practical experience in every learning process so that students can actualize democratic values in social, national and state life.

According to Zamroni (2001) there are four aspects that can be seen from schools that implement the instillation of democratic values and attitudes, namely: 1) the aspect of students; 2) the aspect of teachers as facilitators; 3) the material dimension; and 4) the managerial dimension. These four aspects contain democratic values. In terms of curriculum, democratic education is one of the contents of Civic Education. According to Ubaedillah (2008) Civic Education aims to build the character (character building) of the Indonesian nation. The development of this character includes: a) forming the skills of citizens to participate in national and state life in a quality and responsible manner; b) making citizens who are intelligent, active, critical, democratic and committed to maintaining the integrity and unity of the nation; c) developing a civilized democratic culture with freedom, equality, tolerance and responsibility. The development of this character is expected to form democratic Indonesian citizens, aware of their rights and obligations and become a civilized society. However, the content of democratic education is not enough if it is only given to the subject of Citizenship Education considering the limited learning time and the challenge of internalizing democratic values that need to be habituated in various aspects of life.

Conceptually, one of the strategic solutions in facing these challenges is to strengthen democratization in various aspects and areas of life through the revitalization of democratic education based on the Pancasila ideology. Strengthening democratic education is a prerequisite and the first agenda of empowering civil society (Al Muchtar, 2016). First, democratic values must be integrated and internalized in the curriculum and implementation of learning from elementary to higher education. Education has a strategic role in internalizing and strengthening democratic values as the basis for the growth of civil society. In the educational dimension, the main emphasis of developing democratic values is through the subject of Citizenship Education. As a subject that etymologically originated from the development of the tradition of citizenship education, Citizenship Education has a mission to develop democratic values and democratic awareness, as well as education in values and human rights that strengthen the position and role of citizens in the life of the nation and state.

Second, strengthening democratic education with a democratic education process in the implementation of the curriculum of all subjects in all educational units. The implementation of a democratic curriculum must be realized in the learning process by developing learning models that apply the principles and characteristics of democratic learning. In the aspects of educators, students, learning materials and managerial aspects, democratic values must be built where the learning process and management of education prioritize equal rights and obligations, equality, justice, freedom to express opinions and provide criticism and suggestions responsibly.

Third, repositioning the role of political institutions, especially political infrastructure as groups of political power in society that have a strategic role in voicing aspirations and influencing public policy. When the political infrastructure consisting of political parties, interest

groups, pressure groups and the media loses the integrity of its democratic values by affiliating with certain ruling groups to protect the interests of the rulers and perpetuate their power, it indicates a loss of integrity of democratic values that cause the weakening and decline of democracy. Therefore, democratic values are fundamental to be internalized in these institutions, even these institutions have a role to socialize democratic values in society.

Fourth, democratic education and educational democracy need to be strengthened with democratic ethics in the digital era so that access to increasingly open public spaces does not lead to excessive behavior that actually gives birth to counterproductive behavior for democracy. Digital literacy and ethics in democracy are important for citizens amidst openness and easy access to information and communication. Digital ethics in democracy encourage the ability to express opinions, associate, channel aspirations and participate in politics through digital spaces wisely and responsibly. Thus opening up public discourse and public spaces that are conducive to democracy which in turn are also expected to be able to build a civil society that embodies public spirit in the form of social solidarity between citizens as a counterweight to state power, defenders of public interests, and able to influence the state policy agenda for shared welfare.

As a philosophy and outlook on life of the Indonesian nation, Pancasila is a characteristic in the ideals of implementing Indonesian democracy. The characteristic of Indonesian democracy that specifically distinguishes it from other countries' democracies is Pancasila democracy which is rooted in the values of Pancasila, namely divinity, humanity, unity, deliberation in the wisdom of wisdom and social justice. These values are rooted in crystallization that is excavated from the noble values of the life of the Indonesian people themselves. All the values contained in the Pancasila principles that inspire each other and can exist as a unifier in the diversity of the lives of the Indonesian people to create a democratic life. According to Ujan (in Syahbani, 2003) the special values of Pancasila are reflected in its principles, as follows:

The first principle "*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*" contains an explicit recognition of the existence of God as the source and creator of the universe. This recognition acknowledges the relationship between the creator and his creation and shows the dependence of creation on its creator. So that Indonesian society recognizes the existence of the Almighty God (monotheism). This means that there must be no anti-belief in the Almighty God with every citizen being tolerant in worshiping according to their respective religions and beliefs. The value of belief in the Almighty God as the first principle in Pancasila is the main source of life for the Indonesian nation, as well as animating and guiding the realization of a just and civilized humanity, the promotion of Indonesian unity which has formed a fully sovereign Indonesian state, which is popular and led by wisdom in deliberation / representative to realize social justice for all Indonesian people.

The second principle "*Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab*" which is inspired by the first principle with the basic assumption of this value is that humans have a special position as creations of God Almighty, so that humans have dignity and the state is committed to protecting them in a just and civilized manner. Just humanity and civilized is a formulation of the noble character of humans who naturally with their reason and intellect have the right and obligation to improve their dignity and status as humans with politeness and moral values.

The third principle "*Persatuan Indonesia*" has a value of responsibility in maintaining unity and oneness for the sake of the existence of the nation Indonesia. This unity includes unity in the ideological, political, economic, socio-cultural and security sense. The spirit of unity contained in Pancasila has the goal as aspired to in the opening of the 1945 Constitution, namely to protect all Indonesian people and all Indonesian blood, to advance the welfare of the people general and enlighten the life of the nation, and realize eternal world peace. Therefore, the understanding of

Indonesian nationality is not a narrow (chauvinistic) understanding of nationality, but rather a national understanding that respects the nation. Nationalism, which was born from the spirit of unity, is able to overcome notions of class, ethnicity and descent.

The fourth principle, *“Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan perwakilan”* contains the state’s recognition to protect the sovereignty of the people in a climate of deliberation and consensus. This means that every Indonesian citizen receives recognition and protection for their right to participate in politics. The fourth principle contains the understanding that Indonesia adheres to democracy both directly and indirectly with the highest power in the hands of the people. The value of wisdom and wisdom is a sign that in making decisions, we always use healthy thoughts and ratios by always prioritizing the spirit of national unity and the interests of the people consciously, honestly, and responsibly with good intentions according to our conscience. The value of deliberation is a typical procedure of the Indonesian people in making decisions based on the will of the people until a unanimous decision is reached (based on unanimity). The value of representation is an effort to involve the people through representative institutions to take part in the life of the nation and state.

The fifth principle, *“Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia”* contains the value of balance between rights and obligations. The state must guarantee a fair social structure so that every citizen can enjoy real justice, both in the fields of economics, politics, law, culture and security. Social justice means achieving balance between personal life and life in society. This justice includes physical and spiritual justice in a balanced manner. The ideal of social justice for all Indonesian people is inspired by the values in the principles above it. Without practicing the values of divinity, humanity, deliberation in wisdom and prudence, it is impossible to realize social justice for all Indonesian people. Therefore, all the values of Pancasila from the 1st principle to the 5th principle are a complete unity and mutually inspire each other. Therefore, in creating a democratic life according to the noble ideals of the Indonesian nation, practicing all the values of Pancasila is an absolute prerequisite that is relevant to changes in the times, including in facing today's global challenges.

Pancasila: From Normative Ideals to Institutional Realities

While Pancasila offers a compelling normative foundation for civic education in Indonesia, this study recognizes the critical gap between ideological aspiration and institutional actualization. As a philosophical system, Pancasila promotes values such as deliberation, social justice, tolerance, and unity in diversity—principles that are essential to the sustenance of a pluralistic and democratic society. However, when translated into the field of education, these values often risk being reduced to symbolic rhetoric—ritually recited but seldom internalized or operationalized in democratic practices.

One key finding of this research is the disconnect between curricular claims and pedagogical implementation. Although civic education in Indonesia nominally includes Pancasila-based democratic principles, its delivery tends to emphasize rote memorization and moral indoctrination, rather than participatory learning or critical reflection. This limits students’ ability to engage with real-world democratic issues such as corruption, disinformation, intolerance, or political apathy. As such, Pancasila’s potential as an emancipatory civic framework becomes constrained by top-down educational models that do not encourage debate, dissent, or dialogical engagement—ironically contradicting Pancasila’s own principle of deliberation (*musyawarah*).

Furthermore, the institutional landscape in which democratic education is embedded also suffers from weak accountability and political interference. School leaders and educators often lack autonomy to innovate pedagogical methods that critically address local democratic

challenges. As noted by Warburton and Power (2021), Indonesia's democratic regression has involved not only the weakening of state institutions but also the co-optation of civic spaces. This includes the formal education system, which remains vulnerable to politicization, curriculum standardization, and performance pressures that discourage democratic experimentation.

Without institutional safeguards—such as teacher training on civic pedagogy, supportive school governance, and links to civil society networks—Pancasila-based education risks remaining a moralized abstraction rather than a transformative civic force. Civic learning, to be effective, must be situated within democratic school cultures that model inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. This includes participatory mechanisms that allow students to engage in school decision-making processes, organize civic projects, and critically assess public discourse.

Moreover, the lack of systemic integration between democratic education and broader policy frameworks also hinders its impact. While national guidelines endorse character education and nationalism, they often fail to align with contemporary civic challenges in the digital age, such as algorithmic polarization, online hate speech, and populist mobilization. These dynamics require new civic competencies—digital literacy, critical thinking, and intergroup empathy—which are not sufficiently embedded in the current Pancasila education framework.

Thus, this study underscores that Pancasila alone is not a sufficient guarantor of democratic resilience. Its civic potential must be operationalized through institutional arrangements that promote democratic norms not only in textbooks, but in school governance, pedagogy, and student life. Only through this integrated approach can Pancasila-based democratic education effectively contribute to building a critical, participatory, and accountable civil society in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Efforts towards democratization to date still pose various challenges, especially in facing the rapid development of information and communication technology in every aspect of life. Today, society is faced with new challenges such as disinformation, online polarization, and data security and privacy. Another reality of the implementation of democracy in Indonesia shows that democratic values have not fully become a consciousness and mentality. The democratic transition process is also still vulnerable to various cultural threats and undemocratic behaviors inherited from the past, such as anarchic behavior in voicing opinions, money politics, mobilizing the masses for political purposes, and the use of primordial symbols in politics. In facing the phenomenon of democratic regression, efforts are needed to build a democratic culture in the digital era, along with the transformation in the way of obtaining information, communicating, transacting, and participating in politics as a result of technological developments. Democratic education has a fundamental role in building citizens who have and are able to actualize democratic values so that they can become a source of strength for civil society which becomes the government's social control in upholding the democratic system.

Democratic education plays a role in instilling the values of human rights, freedom of expression, equality, and active participation in political life responsibly, so that it can produce citizens who are able to act democratically and become a force for civil society. Because, civil society that has the power to support democratization to increase political participation, transparency, government accountability and uphold human rights is born from human resources who have good democratic awareness.

Strengthening democratization in various aspects and areas of life through the revitalization of democratic education based on the Pancasila ideology is a prerequisite and the first agenda for empowering civil society or civil society that can build democracy. First,

democratic values must be integrated and internalized in the curriculum and implementation of learning from elementary to higher education, especially in Civic Education which has the mission of building democratic awareness, as well as value and human rights education that strengthens the position and role of citizens in national and state life. Second, strengthening democratic education with a democratic education process in the implementation of the curriculum of all subjects in all educational units.

The implementation of a democratic curriculum must be realized in the learning process by developing learning models that apply the principles and characteristics of democratic learning using a comprehensive, deliberative and participatory approach. Third, repositioning the role of political institutions, especially political infrastructure as political power groups in society that have a strategic role in voicing aspirations and influencing public policy. These institutions must return to their original purpose in upholding democracy and play a role in socializing democratic values in society. Fourth, democratic education and educational democracy need to be strengthened with democratic ethics in the digital era so that access to increasingly open public spaces does not lead to excessive behavior that actually gives birth to counterproductive behavior for democracy.

Efforts to revitalize and construct democratic education must be based on the values of Pancasila as a philosophy and outlook on life that are characteristic of the ideals of implementing Indonesian democracy. Pancasila democracy is rooted in the values of Pancasila, namely divinity, humanity, unity, deliberation in the wisdom of wisdom and social justice. All the values of Pancasila from the 1st to the 5th principles are a complete unity and mutually inspire each other. Without practicing the values of divinity, humanity, deliberation in wisdom and prudence, it is impossible to realize social justice for all Indonesian people. Therefore, in creating a democratic life according to the noble ideals of the Indonesian nation, practicing all the values of Pancasila is an absolute prerequisite that is relevant to the changing times, including in facing the challenges of democratic regression in the era of technological disruption.

Generally, Indonesia's experience of democratic stagnation—marked by declining political participation, weakened institutional accountability, and growing online polarization—calls for renewed civic strategies rooted in local wisdom. This study affirms that democratic education grounded in Pancasila provides both normative and practical tools to strengthen civil society in resisting democratic regression. By integrating democratic values into national education, fostering participatory and deliberative learning, and repositioning political institutions to promote ethical leadership, democratic resilience can be gradually restored.

However, this study also recognizes key limitations. As a conceptual review, it does not include field-based data or quantitative assessment of civic behavior. Future research could explore empirical evaluation of Pancasila-based democratic learning in schools, comparative analysis with other Southeast Asian models, or longitudinal studies on digital civic engagement. Ultimately, the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia depends not only on institutions, but on citizens empowered through democratic education aligned with the nation's founding values.

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