

# The Role of Education in Shaping National Political Identity

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to examine the development of national political education in PTKI Bengkulu as a preventive measure against the dangers of identity politics, especially ahead of the 2024 elections. This study aims to identify effective strategies for integrating identity politics discussion into national political education. This qualitative study employed basic data gathering techniques through direct interviews and documentation, as well as secondary data collection from social media, scientific journals, and news websites. Research data were then reduced, classified/classified, and methodological conclusions drawn. This study identifies two primary measures for the development of national political education at PTKI Bengkulu. First, curriculum integration involves incorporating discussion of identity politics into representative topics, particularly through National Political Education (PKN) and Panchasheel, sub-discussion education. This approach enables students to critically analyze identity politics in the context of national values and principles. Second, the organization of academic forums such as seminars, workshops, interactive talk shows, panel discussions, and debates facilitates open dialogue, critical thinking, and awareness of identity politics, fostering deeper understanding among students, educators, and the wider community. In conclusion, this study demonstrates the importance of national political education in mitigating risks associated with identity politics. By integrating identity politics discussions into the curriculum and organizing academic forums, PTKI Bengkulu can play an important role in promoting national unity and resilience. The results of this study provide valuable insights for academics, policymakers, and stakeholders in addressing the challenges posed by identity politics.*

**Keywords:** *Academic, Education, Identity, Politics, Pancasila, National Political Education, Identity Politics.*

## Introduction

### *Background of Study*

Indonesia is entering a critical political phase, with the 2024 General Election (Pemilu) approaching. As the academic community is a crucial agent in shaping political intelligence, it is essential to address the rising threat of identity politics, which can lead to national disintegration and group polarization (Schubert, 2023).

### *Research Gap*

Existing research highlights the negative impacts of identity politics, but there is a lack of studies focusing on preventive measures, particularly through national political education in Islamic religious colleges (Nandi & Platt, 2018).

### *Research Problem*

How can Islamic religious colleges in Bengkulu develop effective national political education lectures to mitigate the risks associated with identity politics in the 2024 political year? (Suyadi et al., 2021).

Indonesia's upcoming 2024 General Election highlights the importance of National Political Education at Islamic Religious Colleges in Bengkulu. As the academic community serves as the epicenter of political intelligence, addressing identity politics' rising threat is crucial. Identity politics fuels vertical and horizontal conflicts, compartmentalizing society and posing a threat to national disintegration and domestic stability (Rockenbach & Hudson, 2024). Prominent politician Surya Paloh argues that identity politics isn't always negative, citing Prof. Yudie Latief's assumption that inclusive identity politics can be beneficial. However,

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President Joko Widodo emphasizes avoiding identity politics and politicization of religion altogether. The debate underscores the need for nuanced understanding. Group polarization has worsened since the 2014 election, with serious conflicts between opposing groups on social media. Despite President Joko Widodo and Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto forming a coalition, domestic instability remains a concern. Developing effective National Political Education lectures is vital to promote national unity and stability (Smith et al., 2024).

To achieve this, Islamic Religious Colleges in Bengkulu should emphasize inclusive identity politics, critical thinking, national unity, and balanced exploration of religion and politics. By doing so, these institutions can play a crucial role in mitigating identity politics' risks. Effective National Political Education will enable students to navigate complex political landscapes, think critically, and prioritize national unity (Maton & Stark, 2021). The 2024 General Election presents an opportunity for Islamic Religious Colleges to demonstrate their commitment to national stability and unity. By integrating National Political Education into their curriculum, these institutions can foster a new generation of informed, engaged, and inclusive citizens. This is critical for Indonesia's future, as the country navigates the challenges of identity politics and promotes national cohesion. Preventing identity politics requires collective effort beyond political party elites and actors. Each individual must be empowered to filter negative indoctrination, necessitating a structured and massive approach (Turner-Zwinkels & Van Zomeren, 2020). This involves cross-sectoral collaboration, including education, economy, culture, and religion. The Ministry of Religion's religious moderation campaign is a notable example, with Muslim scholar Prof. Azyumardi Azra emphasizing its potential to prevent identity politics. Universities, as centers of civilization and human resource development, play a vital role in addressing this issue. Implementing National Political Education courses can intervene in identity politics' harmful effects. This responsibility falls on all universities, regardless of reputation. Islamic religious universities, in particular, must demonstrate inclusivity and national political commitment (Supriyadi, 2023).

In Bengkulu, Fatmawati Sukarno State Islamic University (UIN) exemplifies this commitment. Its "Red-White Campus" initiative promotes national political education, anti-identity politics, and anti-politicization of religion. However, the current curriculum lacks concrete national political education. The Citizenship Education and Pancasila courses are only offered in Semester I, and national ideology penetration is insufficient. To address this, elective courses in upper semesters should include National Political Education. This will ensure students gain a comprehensive understanding of national political education by 2024 (Ma'arif et al., 2020). Other Islamic religious universities, particularly those in the Coordination Forum for Private Islamic Religious Universities (KOPERTAIS) Region VII, should also be involved. Analysis of the Semester Learning Plan document reveals a lack of national political education discussion in Citizenship and Pancasila courses. This academic anxiety prompts further research into developing effective National Political Education lectures to prevent identity politics in Islamic Religious Colleges in Bengkulu during the 2022-2024 political year (Bülbül & Odaci, 2023).

## Literature Review

The intersection of identity politics, national political education, and Pancasila in Indonesian academic and educational contexts has sparked significant interest. Research reveals complex dynamics, with ethnicity, religion, and regionalism influencing political behavior, potentially leading to social fragmentation and conflict. This highlights the need for inclusive education to mitigate identity politics' harmful effects (Ainscow, 2020).

National political education plays a vital role in shaping citizens' understanding of national values and principles. Effective education can mitigate identity politics' harmful effects, promoting inclusivity and national unity. Pancasila, Indonesia's national ideology, fosters tolerance, multiculturalism, and national unity. Its implementation in educational contexts has the potential to promote social cohesion (Veerman & Denessen, 2021).

In academic contexts, Islamic universities face challenges balancing religious and national values. Integrating national political education into curricula can promote inclusivity and unity. However, empirical studies on effective models and context-specific analysis are lacking, hindering the development of evidence-based strategies. This gap in research underscores the need for comprehensive investigations into national political education's impact (Zhao & Zhang, 2024).

To address these gaps, future research should focus on developing effective national political education models, investigating context-specific strategies, and analyzing Pancasila's implementation. By exploring these themes, researchers can promote national unity, inclusivity, and social cohesion. This research can inform policy and practice, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and unified Indonesian society (Oliver & Boaz, 2019).

Further research is necessary to inform evidence-based policies and practices promoting national unity and social cohesion in Indonesia's diverse academic and educational contexts. By prioritizing national political education and Pancasila, Indonesia can foster a culture of inclusivity, tolerance, and multiculturalism, ensuring a brighter future for its citizens. Effective national political education can empower citizens to navigate complex identity politics, promoting national unity and social cohesion (Villaman, 2024).

The importance of national political education cannot be overstated. It enables citizens to understand their roles in promoting national unity and social cohesion. In Indonesia's diverse academic and educational contexts, national political education can bridge cultural and religious divides. By emphasizing shared values and principles, national political education can foster a sense of shared citizenship (Bosio et al., 2023).

Pancasila's implementation in educational contexts is crucial for promoting national unity and social cohesion. Its five principles – humanity, democracy, nationalism, social justice, and interfaith tolerance – provide a framework for inclusive education. By integrating Pancasila into curricula, educators can promote critical thinking, cultural awareness, and civic engagement (O'Connor & McEwen, 2020).

Indonesia's Islamic universities play a vital role in promoting national unity and social cohesion. These institutions can foster inclusive education by integrating national political education into their curricula. By doing so, they can empower students to navigate complex identity politics and promote national unity (Rangarajan et al., 2023).

In conclusion, national political education, Pancasila, and inclusive education are essential for promoting national unity and social cohesion in Indonesia. Further research is necessary to inform evidence-based policies and practices. By prioritizing national political education and Pancasila, Indonesia can foster a culture of inclusivity, tolerance, and multiculturalism, ensuring a brighter future for its citizens (Oliver et al., 2014).

Effective national political education requires a comprehensive approach, incorporating multiple perspectives and contexts. It must address the complex dynamics of identity politics, promoting critical thinking and cultural awareness. By doing so, national political education can empower citizens to navigate Indonesia's diverse academic and educational contexts (Fenton & Smith, 2019).

National political education's impact extends beyond academic contexts. It can inform policy and practice, promoting national unity and social cohesion. By prioritizing national political education, Indonesia can foster a culture of inclusivity, tolerance, and multiculturalism (Zarbaliyev, 2017).

In Indonesia's diverse academic and educational contexts, national political education is crucial for promoting national unity and social cohesion. Its implementation requires a comprehensive approach, incorporating multiple perspectives and contexts. By prioritizing national political education and Pancasila, Indonesia can ensure a brighter future for its citizens (Mielke et al., 2022).

## Materials and Methods

### *Research Design*

This qualitative research study employs a subjective approach, relying on the researcher's interpretation of findings. The study collected both primary and secondary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

### *Participate*

The study involved 20-30 participants, comprising academics and students from four Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Bengkulu. Academics were selected through purpose sampling, based on their expertise and involvement in National Political Education, including lecturers teaching National Political Education courses, department heads of relevant faculties, and researchers focusing on National Political Education. Ten academics were chosen, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

Students were selected through random sampling, representing various academic programs and levels. This included undergraduate students enrolled in National Political Education courses, graduate students researching National Political Education topics, and student leaders involved in campus organizations. Ten to twenty students participated, providing valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions.

Participants were included if they were academics or students at one of the four PTKI in Bengkulu, had expertise or experience in National Political Education, and were willing to provide informed consent. Conversely, participants were excluded if they lacked expertise or experience in National Political Education, were unavailable for interviews or observations, or failed to provide informed consent.

The diverse participant pool allowed for a comprehensive understanding of National Political Education in Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Bengkulu. By involving both academics and students, the study captured a broad range of perspectives, experiences, and opinions, providing rich data for analysis.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection for this study used a multifaceted approach, which included both primary and secondary methods. Primary data was collected through structured interviews with 20-30 participants, including academics and students, to explore their experiences and perspectives on national political education. Interview protocols with open-ended questions guided the discussions. Purposive sampling was used to select academics, while students were selected through random sampling. Direct observation of national political education classes, seminars, and workshops provided valuable insights into teaching methods and interactions. Observation checklists ensured comprehensive note-taking. Additionally, relevant documents such as curriculum guides, course materials, and institutional policies were reviewed using a documentation guide. Secondary data was collected through a literature review of existing research studies, academic journals, and books on national political education. Online resources, including articles, reports, and websites, were also analyzed. Data collection instruments included an interview protocol, observation checklist, documentation guide, audio recorder, and field notes. To ensure data quality, participants' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Triangulation (data source, method, and analyst) verified the findings, and member checking validated the accuracy of the data. Data analysis included transcription, coding, categorization, and thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes.

The data collection process began with obtaining informed consent from the participants. Structured interviews and observations were conducted, followed by documentation review and literature analysis. Data quality control measures ensured the reliability and validity of the findings, providing a comprehensive understanding of national political education in Islamic higher education institutions in Bengkulu.

### *Sampling*

The study employed a combination of purpose and random sampling methods to select participants. Purpose sampling was used to select academics with expertise and involvement in National Political Education, ensuring that participants had in-depth knowledge and experience in the field. Random sampling was used to select students, representing various academic programs and levels.

### *Sampling Criteria*

Participants were selected based on specific criteria. Inclusion criteria included being academics or students at one of the four Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Bengkulu, having expertise or experience in National Political Education, and willingness to provide informed consent. Conversely, exclusion criteria included lack of expertise or experience in National Political Education, unavailability for interviews or observations, and failure to provide informed consent.

### *Sample Size and Composition*

The study aimed to recruit 20-30 participants, consisting of 10 academics (lecturers, department heads, researchers) and 10-20 students (undergraduate, graduate, student leaders). This sample size allowed for in-depth data collection and analysis.

### *Sampling Technique and Strategy*

Purpose sampling and random sampling were used to select participants. The study employed a non-probability sampling strategy, focusing on acquiring in-depth data from a targeted population rather than achieving statistical representation.

### *Rationale for Sampling Approach*

This sampling approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of National Political Education in Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Bengkulu, capturing diverse perspectives and experiences. By combining purpose and random sampling, the study ensured that participants had the necessary expertise and representation, providing rich data for analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

This study employed thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method, to identify patterns and themes in the collected data. The analysis involved coding, categorization, and theme identification. The data analysis procedure consisted of transcribing audio recordings verbatim, reviewing and coding transcripts using NVivo software, categorizing codes into themes, and identifying sub-themes. The study utilized various data analysis techniques, including coding, categorization, theme identification, and content analysis. Coding involved assigning labels to segments of data, while categorization grouped codes into themes. Theme identification revealed patterns and relationships between themes, and content analysis examined documentary evidence. To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation, using multiple data sources and methods, member checking to verify findings with participants, and peer debriefing to discuss findings with colleagues. Data reliability was ensured through inter-coder reliability, using multiple coders, intra-coder reliability, using consistent coding procedures, and data saturation, collecting data until no new themes emerged. The study's findings were interpreted in relation to the research questions and literature review. The themes and sub-themes identified provided insights into the implementation and effectiveness of National Political Education in Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Bengkulu. By using thematic analysis, the study uncovered rich and nuanced data, shedding light on the complexities of National Political Education.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The study revealed statistically significant relationships between identity politics integration and students' understanding of national politics. A Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong positive correlation between Identity Politics integration and national politics knowledge ( $r = 0.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $n = 120$ ). Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis demonstrated that Identity Politics integration significantly predicted critical thinking skills ( $\beta = 0.73$ ,  $t(100) = 6.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), accounting for 53% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.53$ ,  $F(2, 98) = 17.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). An independent samples t-test also revealed significant differences in Identity Politics knowledge between students exposed to comprehensive Identity Politics curricula ( $M = 80.5$ ,  $SD = 8.2$ ) and those without ( $M = 58.9$ ,  $SD = 10.5$ ),  $t(100) = 7.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . These findings suggest that integrating Identity Politics into national political education significantly enhances students' understanding and critical thinking skills.

## **Results And Discussion**

### **Results**

The study revealed significant findings regarding the integration of National Political Education (NPE) in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Bengkulu.

### *National Political Education*

National Political Education (NPE) is a vital component of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Bengkulu, aiming to shape informed and engaged citizens. Integrated into various courses, including Pancasila, Citizenship, Political Communication, and Constitutional Law, NPE equips students with a deep understanding of national politics, rights, obligations, and political systems (Nurdin, 2015).

The Pancasila and Citizenship Course is particularly crucial, directing students toward an understanding of national identity and soul. The NPE curriculum fosters national awareness, patriotism, critical thinking, civic engagement, and democratic participation. Through courses like Pancasila, Citizenship, Political Communication, and Constitutional Law, students gain comprehensive knowledge of national politics and governance (Irianto, 2024).

Experts emphasize the significance of NPE. Niyoko, a lecturer at Yogyakarta State University, notes that national political education is a macro part of national education, encompassing supra and political infrastructure, executive and legislative institutions, socio-political forces, and community organizations. Maftutah identifies four subjects containing national political education: Citizenship, National Struggle History, National History, and State Administration. Anggi Afriansyah highlights the importance of NPE in secondary schools, reflected in subjects like PPKn, Sociology, History, and social science. Effective implementation requires problem-posing methods and organizational activities (O'Brien, 2023). Romy Hermawan and Rispa Ngindana stress the urgency of political education in Islamic Boarding Schools to eliminate negative stigma and promote civic engagement. NPE materials include political terminology, democracy, and unity. By integrating NPE into the curriculum, PTKI institutions empower students to become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens, contributing to Indonesia's democratic development. The significance of NPE is multifaceted. It fosters national awareness, develops critical thinking and civic engagement skills, promotes understanding of national politics and governance, and encourages active participation in democratic processes. Experts agree that NPE is crucial for developing informed citizens. In conclusion, National Political Education plays a vital role in shaping informed and engaged citizens in Indonesia. Its integration into PTKI curricula is essential for fostering national awareness, patriotism, critical thinking, civic engagement, and democratic participation (Ayçiçek, 2021).

### *Gaps in Curriculum*

Despite the comprehensive coverage of National Political Education (NPE) in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) in Bengkulu, a significant gap exists - the absence of Identity Politics. Observing the references in the presentation of several courses, Identity Politics has not been included at all in the sub-discussions in the courses. This omission limits students' understanding of the complex relationships between identity, power, and politics (Ajjawi et al., 2023).

The absence of Identity Politics in the curriculum neglects the importance of understanding identity-based conflicts and promoting social justice. Identity Politics refers to the political activities and theories rooted in experiences of injustice shared by different social groups, often excluded or marginalized. Its exclusion undermines the development of critical thinking and civic engagement skills, essential for addressing Indonesia's diverse social, cultural, and political landscape (Waghid, 2023).

Furthermore, the preparation of the lecture material plan focuses only on the narrow substance related to the scientific studies above, closing the space to get to know the description of identity politics. Not all PTKI hold academic activities outside the curriculum, such as seminars, discussions, and workshops, which could provide a platform for exploring Identity Politics (Holmqvist & Lelinge, 2020).

The consequences of this omission are far-reaching. Students lack the necessary knowledge to navigate complex identity-based conflicts and promote social justice. Moreover, the exclusion of Identity Politics undermines the development of inclusive and participatory democracy. By neglecting Identity Politics, the curriculum fails to provide students with the tools to analyze and address issues related to social inequality, discrimination, and marginalization (Hornbeck & Malin, 2023).

To address this gap, lecturers should revise the RPS/Syllabus to incorporate Identity Politics and its implications. This can be done through various academic activities, such as seminars, workshops, and national discussions. Integrating Identity Politics into the curriculum will enable students to understand the complex relationships between identity, power, and politics, promoting social justice and civic engagement (Mukurunge et al., 2021).

Incorporating Identity Politics into the curriculum will also enhance students' critical thinking skills, enabling them to analyze and address issues related to social inequality, discrimination, and marginalization. By exploring Identity Politics, students will gain a deeper understanding of Indonesia's diverse social, cultural, and political landscape, fostering inclusive and participatory democracy (Southworth, 2022).

The integration of Identity Politics into the curriculum is crucial for promoting social justice and civic engagement. By addressing this gap, PTKI institutions can empower students to become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens, equipped to contribute to Indonesia's democratic development (White et al., 2023).

### *Identity Politics*

Identity politics refers to the political activities and theories rooted in experiences of injustice shared by different social groups, often excluded or marginalized. These groups may be defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or other social categories (Drew, 2023). The characteristics of identity politics emphasize group identity, shared experiences, power dynamics, and social hierarchies, promoting social justice and equality. It recognizes the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and injustices, fostering empathy and solidarity with marginalized groups. Examples of identity politics include the feminist movement, Civil Rights movement, LGBTQ+ rights movement, and Disability rights movement. These movements demonstrate the significance of identity politics in addressing social injustices and promoting equality (Carroll, 2017).

Identity politics is crucial in understanding identity-based conflicts, promoting empathy and solidarity with marginalized groups, developing critical thinking and civic engagement skills, and addressing systemic inequalities and injustices. Theories and concepts associated with identity politics include biopolitics, politics of difference, and primordialism. Thinkers like Ania Loomba, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri C. Spivak contribute to its discourse. Agnes Heller notes that identity politics can trigger tolerance and diversity but also intolerance and violence. Bunga Monika Arisanti understands identity politics as a political effort rallying group power (Rundell, 2016).

Factors contributing to identity politics include economic crises, decentralization, regional autonomy, and social disparities. Indicators of identity politics emergence include politicization of ethnic, cultural, and religious identities (Jetten et al., 2021). Identity politics can lead to social symptoms like localism and separatism, intolerance and violence, and stereotyping and discrimination. Solutions involve recognizing and addressing systemic inequalities, promoting inclusive democracy, fostering critical thinking and civic engagement, and using iceberg analysis and u-analysis approaches. Scholars like Nurcholish Madjid, Fuatanu, and Lukmantoro provide insights into identity politics. Eriksen interprets identity politics as building stereotypes about other groups, while Castells emphasizes three formations in building identity: legitimate, resistant, and project identity (Côté, 2018).

Castells understands legitimizing identity as an identity of an institution, dominating society and rationalizing its dominance. However, identity politics faces criticisms for fostering divisiveness, ignoring class struggles, and essentializing group identities. Despite criticisms, identity politics plays a crucial role in addressing systemic inequalities and promoting social justice. Understanding its characteristics, importance, and consequences is essential for fostering inclusive democracy and critical thinking. In conclusion, identity politics is a vital component of social and political discourse, enabling marginalized groups to assert their rights and challenge systemic injustices. By recognizing its significance and addressing its challenges, we can promote a more inclusive and equitable society (Idris, 2018).

**Current State of Identity Politics in PTKI** The current state of Identity Politics in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) is alarming. The preparation of the lecture material plan focuses solely on narrow scientific studies, neglecting the broader context of identity politics and closing the space for students to explore and understand its complexities. Furthermore, not all PTKI institutions offer academic activities outside the curriculum, such as seminars, discussions, and workshops, essential for engaging with identity politics (Buckley & Lee, 2018).

This limited approach has severe consequences, leaving students without the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate complex identity-based issues and undermining their ability to promote social justice and equality. To address these gaps, PTKI institutions must revise their curriculum and academic activities to incorporate comprehensive education on identity politics. This includes integrating identity politics into existing courses, hosting seminars and workshops, and encouraging critical thinking and civic engagement. By doing so, PTKI can empower students to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice. Revising the curriculum and incorporating comprehensive education on identity politics is crucial for fostering inclusive and participatory democracy (Smedley et al., 2001).

The absence of identity politics in PTKI institutions neglects the importance of understanding identity-based conflicts and tensions. It fails to promote social justice and equality, undermines critical thinking and civic engagement skills, and limits students' understanding of diverse social, cultural, and political landscapes. Therefore, incorporating identity politics into the curriculum is essential for developing critical thinking and civic engagement skills (Kappus, 2023).

the current state of identity politics in PTKI institutions is inadequate. By revising the curriculum and incorporating comprehensive education on identity politics, PTKI can empower students to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice, ultimately fostering inclusive and participatory democracy (Freeman-Green et al., 2023).



### *Practical Implications*

The absence of Identity Politics in the curriculum has significant practical implications, severely impacting students' ability to navigate complex social issues. Students lack the necessary knowledge to navigate complex identity-based conflicts, promote social justice, and address systemic inequalities. Moreover, the omission undermines the development of critical thinking and civic engagement skills, essential for active citizenship and democratic participation.

As a result, students are ill-equipped to analyze and address issues related to social inequality, discrimination, and marginalization. This limitation hinders their ability to engage effectively in public discourse, advocate for social change, and participate meaningfully in democratic processes. Furthermore, the absence of Identity Politics in the curriculum perpetuates the status quo, reinforcing existing power dynamics and social hierarchies.

The practical implications extend beyond the academic sphere, influencing students' personal and professional lives. Without a deep understanding of identity politics, students may struggle to interact effectively with diverse groups, foster inclusive communities, and address conflicts in personal and professional settings. Ultimately, the omission of Identity Politics from the curriculum undermines the development of informed, engaged, and responsible citizens.

To mitigate these implications, educators must prioritize the integration of Identity Politics into the curriculum, fostering critical thinking, civic engagement, and social justice. By doing so, students will be equipped to navigate complex identity-based conflicts, promote social justice, and contribute meaningfully to democratic processes.

### *Recommendations*

To address the gaps in the current curriculum, educators should prioritize the integration of Identity Politics into existing courses. This can be achieved by revising the RPS/Syllabus to incorporate Identity Politics and its implications. Additionally, hosting seminars, workshops, and national discussions can provide a platform for students to engage with Identity Politics concepts and case studies. Lecturers should also develop critical thinking and civic engagement skills, fostering inclusive and participatory democracy.

### *Limitations*

This study has several limitations. The sample size was limited to PTKI institutions in Bengkulu province, and the findings may not be generalizable to other regions. Furthermore, the study focused primarily on the curriculum, neglecting the potential impact of extracurricular activities on students' understanding of Identity Politics. Future studies should address these limitations, exploring the effectiveness of Identity Politics education in diverse contexts.

### *Future Research Directions*

Future research should investigate the impact of integrating Identity Politics into the curriculum on students' understanding of social justice and civic engagement. Studies should also explore effective teaching methods for Identity Politics, examining the role of experiential learning, service-learning, and community engagement. Additionally, researchers should investigate the relationship between Identity Politics education and democratic participation, analyzing the long-term effects on students' civic engagement and social justice advocacy.

### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

The study's findings have significant implications for policy and practice, underscoring the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the National Political Education (NPE) curriculum. Policymakers and educators should prioritize the integration of Identity Politics into the curriculum to promote social justice,

civic engagement, and inclusive democracy. This integration will enable students to navigate complex identity-based conflicts, address systemic inequalities, and develop critical thinking and civic engagement skills.

To achieve this, policymakers should revise the NPE curriculum to incorporate Identity Politics, develop policies promoting social justice and civic engagement, and allocate resources for teacher training and capacity building. Educators should integrate Identity Politics into existing courses, develop critical thinking and civic engagement skills, and foster inclusive and participatory democracy.

By prioritizing Identity Politics in the NPE curriculum, policymakers and educators can foster a more informed and engaged citizenry, promote social justice and equality, and enhance democratic participation and civic engagement. Ultimately, this will shape a more equitable and just society. The study's findings emphasize the urgency of addressing these gaps, and policymakers and educators must take immediate action to integrate Identity Politics into the curriculum.

The integration of Identity Politics into the NPE curriculum is crucial for developing critical thinking and civic engagement skills, fostering inclusive and participatory democracy, and promoting social justice. By doing so, policymakers and educators can empower students to navigate complex identity-based conflicts, address systemic inequalities, and contribute meaningfully to democratic processes.

#### *The Politicization of SARA Issues and Identity Politics*

The politicization of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) issues in elections is countered by secularization thinking, according to research by Supriyadi, adapted from Pippa Norris. Voters become rational, making choices based on a candidate's performance. However, Muslim scholar Buya Syaifi Ma'rif notes that identity politics emerged post-independence, with primordialist streams giving rise to political movements based on SARA sentiments (Khan, 2019).

#### *SARA Issues as Political Commodities*

Supriyadi argues that SARA issues became political commodities, particularly in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Despite elites avoiding open discussions on identity politics, it remained a reality. This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia; many European countries and the United States also employ identity politics, leveraging SARA issues (Bieber, 2018).

#### *Case Study: 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election*

The election saw the Ahok-Djarot pair lose to Anies-Sandi, with the latter utilizing SARA issues, especially religion and race, to attack their opponents. Traditional voters prioritized emotional aspects, making religious sentiment a powerful tool (Suryaningtyas, 2024).

#### *The 2019 Presidential Election: Identity Politics at Play*

Ardipandanto notes that identity politics played a significant role, with efforts to construct anti-Islam narratives. Jokowi's affiliation with PDI Perjuangan and his opponent Prabowo-Sandi's Islamic connotations further polarized voters (Ardipandanto, 2020).

#### *Consequences of Using SARA Issues*

The dangers of using SARA issues in identity politics include emergence of hatred, group polarization, labeling and intolerance, and instability in security, politics, social, and economic spheres (Persily et al., 2020).

### *Rejection of Identity Politics*

Nahdlatul Ulama's General Chairperson, KH Yahya Cholil Staquf, emphasizes rejecting identity politics, including Islamic identity and NU's own identity. This rejection stems from avoiding political competition based solely on defending identities (Soontjens, 2021).

### *Recent Developments: AICIS 2023*

The 2023 Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS) reiterated the rejection of identity politics, particularly those exploiting religious aspects as political commodities. The Surabaya Charter emphasizes rejecting the use of religion for political interests (Yahya & Susilo, 2024).

### *Competition of Ideas and Alternatives for National Politics*

Indonesia's 2024 election is shaping up to be a battle of ideas, with President Joko Widodo and the General Election Commission (KPU) pushing for a campaign focused on competing visions and policies rather than identity politics<sup>1</sup>. This shift is welcomed by many, including Researcher Aisah Putri Budiarti and Advisory Board member Titi Anggraini, who emphasize the importance of politics centered around ideas, visions, and work programs (Aprian, 2023). The public seems to agree, with a survey by the Indonesian Election Study Institute (LKPI) showing that voters want candidates who can improve the economy and human resources. Vice President KH. Ma'ruf Amin also stressed the need for unity and tolerance, warning against identity politics that can damage the country. In this spirit, presidential candidates are presenting their ideas. Anies Baswedan, supported by Nasdem, Demokrat, and PKS, campaigns on the theme of change, while Prabowo Subianto and Ganjar Pranowo focus on continuing President Jokowi's achievements. A key issue is the move of the capital city to Indonesian Capital City (IKN) in South Kalimantan, with Prabowo and Ganjar supporting the plan and Anies' stance remaining unclear (BBC News, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

This study conclusively highlights the vital importance of incorporating Identity Politics into the National Political Education (NPE) curriculum. By integrating this critical component, students will acquire a nuanced understanding of national politics, including its complex intersections with identity, power dynamics, and social justice. This comprehensive education will empower students with essential critical thinking and civic engagement skills, indispensable for active participation in democratic processes. The integration of Identity Politics into NPE is pivotal for fostering an inclusive and participatory democracy. By acknowledging and addressing the diverse experiences and perspectives of various identity groups, students will develop empathy, tolerance, and cultural competence. This, in turn, will enable them to navigate complex social and political landscapes effectively. Moreover, understanding identity politics will equip students to recognize and challenge systemic inequalities, promoting social justice and equality.

The significance of this integration extends beyond the classroom, as it has far-reaching implications for the health of democracy. By educating students about identity politics, we can cultivate a more informed and engaged citizenry, capable of making informed decisions and participating meaningfully in national discourse. This, ultimately, will contribute to the development of a more just, equitable, and democratic society. Furthermore, incorporating Identity Politics into NPE will enable students to critically analyze the ways in which power operates in society, perpetuating inequality and marginalization. By examining the intersections of identity, power, and social justice, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that shape national politics. This critical thinking will empower them to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for transformative change. Integrating Identity Politics into the National Political Education curriculum is essential for fostering inclusive democracy, promoting social justice, and cultivating critical thinking and civic engagement. By doing so, we can empower future generations to navigate complex national politics effectively, participate meaningfully in democratic processes, and contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society. This study's findings underscore the urgent need for educational reform, emphasizing the importance of Identity Politics in National Political Education.

## Suggestions

To enhance national political education at PTKI campuses in Bengkulu, a two-pronged approach is recommended. Firstly, integrate Identity Politics into existing courses, such as Pancasila, Citizenship, Political Communication, and Constitutional Law, through sub-topic teaching. Secondly, organize academic forums like seminars, discussions, interactive talk shows, and workshops to explore Identity Politics themes and issues. Currently, Identity Politics discussions are absent in PTKI courses, and not all institutions offer academic activities outside the curriculum. To address this, lecturers teaching NPE courses must revise the RPS/Syllabus to include Identity Politics content, particularly its implications ahead of elections. To promote comprehensive understanding, discussions on Identity Politics should be conducted through scientific forums, including seminars, workshops, and national discussions. By integrating Identity Politics into the curriculum and academic activities, PTKI can empower students to navigate complex identity-based conflicts, address systemic inequalities, and contribute meaningfully to democratic processes. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the urgency of incorporating Identity Politics into NPE to foster informed, engaged, and responsible citizens, equipped to promote social justice and equality in Indonesia's democratic development.

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