

The Relevance of Local Historical Events in Building National Identities: Identification in the History Learning Curriculum in Indonesia

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Abstract – This study aims to describe the relevance of local history in building national identity, in terms of the history curriculum in Indonesia. The local history analyzed is local history in West Sumatra. This research is a type of qualitative research, using the library research method. Data obtained from sources; Local historical events books that have been written by historians, Indonesian history textbooks, and articles in scientific journals. The data is then analyzed through reduction, presentation, and concluding. The results showed that the local history of West Sumatra has relevance in building a national identity. Several local historical events in West Sumatra that have relevance in building national identity are 1) the history of the resistance of the West Sumatran people against the arrival of the Allied Forces/NICA (Netherlands Civil Administration); 2) the history of the formation of the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PDRI); 3) the struggle of the people in the interior of West Sumatra during the PDRI period; 4) the history of the formation of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in West Sumatra; and 5) armed conflict during the PRRI era in West Sumatra.

Keywords – Local History, National Identity, Curriculum, West Sumatra

I. INTRODUCTION

Historical learning is seen as an important instrument in building collective awareness of the past, fostering a sense of nationality and solidarity (Carretero *et al*, 2012). Arthur (Marwick, 2001) emphasized that through collective awareness people will be able to build their identity, understand and maintain their relationship with the community, society in the past. History learning is based on the educational philosophy of perennials (Hasan, 2012). This philosophical orientation places history learning as a subject that is full of building a collective spirit as a nation, through history learning, the past is used as a means of fostering awareness and a foundation in shaping national identity.

In its tendency, the use of history learning as a national identity development is widely used by newly formed countries or countries experiencing conflict. Foster and Crawford (2006) explain that history learning will be

effective as a tool in building collective awareness of countries that are under threat or are in the process of creating national identities due to colonial colonialism. National identity is a product of the development of modern nationalism. After the French revolution, modern nationalism is concerned not only with ideology but also with political and social movements. The most obvious political product of modern nationalism is the birth of the nation-state. Each nation-state creates a national identity as an identity that differentiates them from others (Liu dan Turner, 2018). National identity is rooted in the identity of cultural groups which is then constructed through the acceptance and recognition of common identity (Yuan dan Fang, 2016).

Historical learning plays a role in presenting past narratives about the relationships between community groups, regions and ethnicities to form a common identity. Through historical material, a link between groups is identified so that linkages are built between one another.

Collective memory represents the position of a nation with other nations. Until now, history learning in Indonesia is still positioned as an instrument for shaping national identity, this has proven to be effective in building collective memory (Zuhdi, 2014).

Building collective memory has become an integral part of nation-building, and in fact, the history lessons delivered in the classroom have contributed significantly to the process. occurring in authoritarian regimes and democracies, including Indonesia, have put great emphasis on learning national history to create loyal citizens (Carretero *et al*, 2012). The material developed in the history learning curriculum in schools becomes an “official” narrative about the history of the nation that has been approved by the state to be taught to students. The narrative described is related to important events in various places and regions which in turn build a collective memory that leads to the formation of a national identity (Mulyana dan Darmiasti, 2009; Kim and Kim, 2019).

National identity appears to differentiate between "us" and "them". Every nationalism (nationality) and ethnicity always has an identity or identity. National identity is not something that happens immediately, but something that is fought for through a process of rediscovered, preserved, and something to be proud of, until it gets recognition from outsiders (Zuhdi, 2017). Efforts to build a national identity are carried out through exploration in the history of the Indonesian nation, various events from the prehistoric period to the contemporary period, which are then built into a complete, mutually sustainable narrative. Historical events that occur at the local level make a big contribution in building national identity, even implicitly the national historical building is an accumulation of history at the local level which is called local history (Purwanto, 2007). The elasticity of local history can present various phenomena, including the role of local heroes in local and national struggles, the dynamics of interaction between ethnic groups in Indonesia, and the existence of local wisdom in each region. Thus the roots of national identity are built from the locality level.

The existence of local history in the development of national identity cannot be forgotten, given that the basis for

the development of national identity is the identity of cultural groups, so in the effort to develop a national identity, the elements of the historical locality cannot be ignored. In the realm of history learning in Indonesia, the relationship and linkages between the two can be found in the framework of building the history education curriculum, especially in developing students' basic competencies. This study identifies historical material contained in the history curriculum at the Senior High School (SMA) level and finds the relevance of local history material in West Sumatra in building a national identity.

II. METHODS

The research was conducted using qualitative research methods, by collecting data through library research, namely exploring data through book sources and research results, documenting data, analyzing data, and processing data into a comprehensive understanding (Zed, 2017). Data regarding local historical events are explored through the study of local history books by historians, meanwhile, the intended national history refers to the Indonesian History textbook at the high school level, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud, 2017). Data processing is done by data reduction, namely sorting and selecting relevant data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULTS

The results of the identification of local historical events that are relevant in building national identity show that there are several local events in various places in Indonesia, one of which is West Sumatra. Local history that occurred in West Sumatra, especially in the period after the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, through events in the context of efforts to defend independence, shows the potential and relevance in the development of national identity. Several historical events discussed in the Indonesian History textbook have links with local history in West Sumatra, identification shows that these events contribute to building a national identity because both are responses in defending the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on Basic Competence in class XI SMA, several historical events related to the local history of West Sumatra and relevant in building a national identity are as follows.

Table 1. The relationship between national history and local history of West Sumatra

National historical events in Indonesian History textbooks	West Sumatra local historical events
The initial challenge for the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia	West Sumatra people's resistance to the arrival of the Allied troops / NICA (Netherlands Civil Administration)
Dutch Military Aggression II and the birth of the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PDRI)n	Establishment of the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia in Bukittinggi
Domestic unrest (1948-1965)	The struggle of the people in the interior of West Sumatra during the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia
	Formation of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in West Sumatra
	Armed conflict during the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in West Sumatra

Some of the historical events above are part of local historical events in West Sumatra that are relevant in developing national identity. In the early period of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, there was a recapture of the colonies by the Dutch against Indonesia. The arrival of the Dutch to Indonesia was greeted by the people of West Sumatra with resistance in the spirit of Nationalism and Patriotism. On October 13, 1945, the Allied troops who were accompanied by NICA landed at Teluk Bayur Harbor, Padang City. The arrogant attitude shown by the Allied soldiers was responded by the youths of Padang City with valiant resistance and sacrifice. Several battles occurred around 1946-1947 including the battle at Simpang Haru and the battle at Pasar Usang. The resistance was led by soldiers from the former Gyugun during the Japanese Occupation, among the names of famous figures in leading the resistance were Ismail Lengah, Ahmad Husein, Djamaloedin Wak Ketok, Abdullah Andjang, and Maksum. They formed the People's Security Agency (BKR) which became known to the people of Padang City as "Harimau Kuranji" (Mansoer *et al*, 1970). The fighting in Padang City during the physical revolution killed many soldiers in the war, both Allied and indigenous forces, the most grievous event for the people of Padang City during the fighting period was the killing of the Mayor of Padang, Bagindo Azischan by Allied forces on July 19, 1947 (Ilyas, 2015).

The Dutch attempt to control Indonesia is getting stronger, this is evident from the Dutch attitude which unilaterally cancels the results of the negotiations that have been made if the agreement is deemed unfavourable for the Netherlands. Several negotiations such as the Linggarjati Agreement and the Renville Agreement were cancelled

because they were considered beneficial for Indonesia. After the cancellation of the Renville negotiations, the Dutch carried out a police action known as the second Dutch military aggression. This action resulted in the capture of the city of Yogyakarta by Dutch troops on December 19 1948 (Ricklefs, 2008). Responding to the Dutch attitude, in West Sumatra, Syafruddin Prawiranegara established the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PDRI) in Bukittinggi (Kahin, 2008) so that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia would continue. Syafruddin's actions then turned West Sumatra into a battleground in the period 1948-1949 and made West Sumatra the base and last bastion for Indonesia's existence (Zed, 1997). Several local events occurred during this period, one of which was the "Situjuah Batur" incident. This incident was an attack by Dutch troops against Indonesian independence fighters during the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia which killed several leaders and dozens of members of the National and City Guard Corps (BPNK). The incident occurred on January 14, 1949, in Kincia Urban Village, Situjuah Batua, Situjuah Limo Nagari District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra. One of the figures who died in this incident was Chatib Sulaiman who is currently being proposed as a national hero from West Sumatra, at that time acting as Chairman of the West Sumatra Regional People's Defense Headquarters (Kahin, 2008).

After the physical revolution around 1950-1960, Indonesia was faced with the domestic upheaval, this action emerged with various motives, from differences in ideology to protests over the imbalance of development between the centre and the regions. One of these upheavals was the birth of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of

Indonesia (PRRI) in West Sumatra. The presence of PRRI is a response to the attitude taken by the central government which does not pay too much attention to regional development, this imbalance in development has resulted in protests from civil society and the armed forces. PRRI was proclaimed by Lt. Col. Ahmad Husein on February 15, 1958, in Padang (Asnan, 2007) as a form of protest against the government regime but this resistance did not aim to break away from the Indonesian republic.

IV. DISCUSSION

Taking into account several local historical events in West Sumatra, it is found the relevance of local history in building a national identity. As a manifestation of the struggle to defend independence, the people's resistance action against the arrival of allies and the NICA was a reactive response showing solidarity in realizing a new life order with an independent collective identity. PDRI which occurred in West Sumatra was an effort to maintain the newly developed identity as the Indonesian State. This identity must be maintained through various efforts. Meanwhile, PRRI is interpreted as an effort to create a balanced socio-political order between the centre and the regions, so the misconceptions about PRRI should be changed by placing PRRI as an effort to realize national integration by the ideals of the Republic of Indonesia.

The local history in West Sumatra is unique in building a national identity, because the locality is geographically limited and far from the national capital but can be present in the framework of national history, and then becomes part of an important episode of forming a collective identity as the Indonesian State. So it can be said that the local history of West Sumatra is the knot of the national identity building which is formed from the locality.

Local history has an important meaning in connecting people with their environment (Douch, 1967). Local history will form the collective memory of a community group, this is the initial foundation of identity formation, namely recognizing the closest historical environment to then find a link with a wider history (national history) (Finberg and Skipp, 1973). The local history of West Sumatra has built students' knowledge regarding historical processes that occur in their environment, students can identify directly the connection and participation of their regions at the national historical level, especially the struggle for independence of the Republic of Indonesia, thereby also strengthening historical awareness and thinking skills in students (Ismaun, 2005).

Historical narratives so far are often not contextual in the students' environment, thus causing the students to lack a strong national identity. Historical material in textbooks tends to present historical events of a national nature, the material presented is often far from the daily environment of students, both the place of the event and the historical figures involved (Hariyono, 2017). This condition causes students not to feel the history as an important event and has a direct impact on their environment. The impact of this condition according to Barton and Linda (2004) is a condition where history learning does not produce an identification attitude, an analytic attitude and an attitude of moral responsibility in students. When students learn about the past, they are often asked to identify with what they are learning, that is, they are expected to associate themselves, either as individuals or as members of larger social groups, with specific people, events, or institutions in history. So that their current life is the result of these past events. Thus, the urgency of local history is as the initial foundation in the formation of national identity, through local history contextual historical facts will be presented that are easily understood by students to understand national history broadly.

V. CONCLUSION

The existence of local history in the history learning process in schools basically cannot be ignored by history teachers. Local history will be the initial foundation for teachers and students to identify and understand wider history, by understanding local history it will bring students closer to the historical locality that occurs in the student environment. A historical locality is a form of identity or identity in one's life. An identity which is interpreted as traits, characteristics, characteristics based on self-awareness, class, group, community or the state itself. Historical locality means awareness of personal identity regarding subjective feelings that are consistent and develop over time. The awareness of historical locality becomes the root and foundation of the formation of collective identities which then become common identities or national identities. Local history fulfils the criteria as a relevant historical narrative in the development of national identity, this is due to the existence of local history as the basis for forming identity which then extends to the formation of a collective national identity. The next research that can be done related to national identity is to look at the relevance of historical figures at the local level about the formation of national identities.

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