

NKRI and Bhineka Tunggal Ika: A Constitutional and Futuristic Understanding of Sukarno's Politics

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Abstract

Sukarno is known not only as the proclaimer of Indonesia and the originator of Pancasila but also as a national figure who introduced the ideas of NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika into the Indonesian state system. This study aims to examine the essence and existence of both ideas philosophically and then analyze their relationship, and based on that analysis, predict the future of NKRI: Will Indonesia remain with the unitary ideology (NKRI), or could it change to federalism (RIS State)? By using a philosophical research methodology, this study found: First, although NKRI concerns the form of the state and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as the motto of the Indonesian State, their essence is the same, namely regarding the political ideology of a modern state: "unity in diversity." With this philosophical ideology, Indonesia, which has a diversity of tribes, customs, languages, and religions, has existed since its founding. Second, the NKRI (unitarism) and the RIS State (federalism) have different constitutional bases. The NKRI is based on the 1945 Constitution, while the RIS State is based on the 1949 RIS Constitution, but their philosophical basis is the same, namely Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Therefore, in the future, Indonesia can remain a Unitary State and become a Federal State. However, although the form of the Unitary State can change to a Federal State in the future, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika remains valid. This is Sukarno's contribution to the State of Indonesia, past, present, and future.

I. Introduction

NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika are two Indonesian political terms with a genealogical relationship with Sukarno. The term NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) is listed in the proclamation text uttered by Sukarno when Indonesia returned to a unitary state in 1950. Interestingly, in 1950, the term Bhinneka Tunggal Ika was also proposed by Sukarno as the political motto of the pluralistic State of Indonesia. So, the terms NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika originate from Sukarno. Therefore, the effort to understand the essential relationship between NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is an effort to understand Sukarno's politics since the initial debate on the establishment of the State of Indonesia in the BPUPKI session he, supported by Supomo, wanted an *Einheitsstaat*, namely a state that encompasses all groups and the entire territory of Indonesia (Kusuma, 2009, p. 124).

The mention of the form of a unitary state in the acronym abbreviation such as NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia) was only officially introduced as a political terminology regarding the unity and nationality of Indonesia in the Suharto era. It was only known as the "Negara Kesatuan RI" in the Sukarno era. Sukarno used the term "Negara Kesatuan RI" because he wanted to provide political education for the Indonesian people and foreign nations, especially the Netherlands, that the "Negara Kesatuan RI" proclaimed on August 15, 1950, was only a continuation of the "Negara Kesatuan RI" declared on August 17, 1945. For Sukarno, the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia was not new but was only a continuation of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta on August 17, 1945 (Suwarno, 1993, pp. 168-169).

Therefore, in national history books, RI I and RI II (Suwarno, 1993, pp. 150-152), RI I is the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed by Sukarno-Hatta on August 17, 1945. RI II is the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia declared by Sukarno without Hatta in front of the RIS Senate on August 15, 1950. However, the essence and existence of the Unitary State of RI II is not a new state but a continuation of the Unitary State of RI I. The difference is that RI I is a constitutional state based on the 1945 Constitution proclaimed by Sukarno-Hatta on August 17, 1945, while RI II is also a constitutional state, namely a state based on the Provisional Constitution of 1950, declared by Sukarno (without Hatta) on August 15, 1950.

Thus, the Indonesian state, at its relatively young age, has adopted two forms of state: the Unitary State and the Federal State. However, the federalism system (Federal State) is not by the philosophy of life of the Indonesian nation, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, so Sukarno, supported by all leaders of the 16 States, returned to unitarism (Unitary State) (Suwarno, 1993, p. 144). Then, in the Suharto era, unitarism was implemented with the spirit of centralism of power. Regions in pure provinces are only extensions of the center; everything done in the regions must be determined by the center. The regions only carry out what the center wants, which is, in this case, what Suharto wants. This desire could not be avoided because Suharto carried out political and governmental duties with a militaristic approach so that the regions could not react to reject or fight.

The situation worsened because Suharto implemented uniform political and development policies throughout Indonesia to maintain the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, even though the regions had differences in culture and economic strength. The burden of centralism and uniformity culminated in the overthrow of Suharto in 1998 (Utomo, 2012, p. 3436). Since then, a new era was born, known as the reform era, which continues to this day.

The reform era is an era of democracy, an era in which space for freedom of opinion is opened. Therefore, in the reform era, especially the beginning of the reform (1999-2002), a political and academic debate was born about the adequate form of state for Indonesia (Kholifah, 2020, p. 299). In this debate, two ideas about the form of state emerged again: unitarism and federalism. Supporters of federalism, accommodationists or federalists, argue that Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is a political philosophy of federalism, that the state system guarantees the differences or uniqueness of each region in the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia (Marzuki, 2012: 100). Meanwhile, supporters of unitarism, known as integrationists

or unitarians, also adhere to the political philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, that the Republic of Indonesia is organized in the spirit of the political ethics of "unity in diversity."

Our question now: To what extent has research on the relationship between the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* been carried out? The researcher found that many studies on the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* have been carried out from the literature study. Still, there has been no philosophical study on the relationship between the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Even if there is a study on the relationship between the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, it is not from a philosophical (political) perspective but from the perspective of political sociology, history, and cultural anthropology (Panggabean, 1988; Sari, 2015; Kholifah, 2020; Omara et al., 2022; Santoso et al., 2023; Marzuki, 2012; Zamzam, 202). Is it because Indonesian researchers have sentenced the Republic of Indonesia, as is commonly said by Indonesian politicians and academics, to be "non-negotiable"? This means that the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) has been fixed in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in Article 37, paragraph 5: "Specifically regarding the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, no changes can be made" (Secretary General of the MPR RI, 2015: 169).

Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the fact that the Republic of Indonesia is not only associated with *Pancasila*, as in the studies of social sciences (history, culture, sociology, politology, and law), where they all found that the form of a unitary state is very much by *Pancasila* (Kusuma, 2009, p. 163). This study opens a new perspective, namely that the Republic of Indonesia is no longer only associated with *Pancasila* but also with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as one of the four pillars of the Indonesian nation today (*Pancasila*, the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). NKRI and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are connected in this study not only because the genealogy of the two ideologies originates from Sukarno. Namely, NKRI was proclaimed by Sukarno on August 15, 1950, in front of the RIS Senate. That year, Sukarno also proposed the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* to be placed under the Garuda State's symbol, but mainly because there is a substantial relationship between the contents of NKRI and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, where the unity contained in NKRI and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* both adhere to "unity in diversity."

Based on the problem map presented above, the research questions are as follows: First, how is the existence and essence of the Republic of Indonesia in Sukarno's political chess in the era of liberal democracy and the era of guided democracy? Second, how is the existence and essence of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the Indonesian Nation-State, which is diverse in religion, ethnicity, and ideology? Third, how is there a relationship between the philosophical substance of the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*? This question opens new insights into understanding the politics of the Republic of Indonesia in the present and the future (Santoso, 2023, pp. 349-350).

2. Research Method

As a philosophical study, researchers use the Philosophical Method (Baker & Zubair, 1990, pp. 61–66). Philosophy recognizes that studies from political science, sociology, anthropology, and history regarding the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are "the first-level sciences." In contrast, philosophy itself is only "the second level science." Therefore, this article has no tables, diagrams, matrices, or statistics. Thus, philosophy obtains data in two ways: first, directly encountering facts in the field and then analyzing them philosophically; secondly, indirectly, namely taking data from the results of studies in Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, and History. This study is more concerned with the last way, namely by accepting the latest study results from all scientific disciplines about the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and then supplementing with direct observation of researchers as citizens of Indonesia.

Thus, this study is library research, using a Philosophical Research Methodology that is commonly used in Indonesia, namely the philosophical research methodology proposed by Bakker and Zubair (Bakker et al., 1990, pp. 41-54), using several basic methodical steps in a philosophical study, such as interpretation, internal coherence, holistic, historical continuity, and heuristics. Before we explain how the five methodical steps answer the three questions above, we first affirm or clarify the terminology commonly used in philosophical studies, especially Western philosophy, namely the terms "philosophical method" and "philosophical research methodology." The philosophical method is a way of philosophizing used by philosophers to discover the nature of reality or to discover the most profound causes of reality (*ultima causa*), such as E. Husserl's Phenomenology, Socrates' *Maieutik* (Midwifery Method), Thomas Aquinas' Reduction Method and Descartes' *Dubium Method*. Meanwhile, Philosophical Research Methodology is a way for a philosophical researcher to be a philosopher but can also be a philosopher or a person studying philosophy) to find answers to research questions. What is meant here is Philosophical Research Methodology, not Philosophical Method.

The five elements of the primary method (Bakker et al., 1990, pp. 91-97) can be explained as follows:

- (1) Interpretation: Data reported by empirical science studies on the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are read from the philosophical conception, namely the most basic conception regarding the existence and essence of the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and how the two relate.
- (2) Internal coherence: All essential points of view on the Republic of Indonesia (unitarism) and the Federal State (Federalism) are investigated according to their relationship to each other and how the two schools of thought relate to *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Researchers will look for objective and logical dependency relationships between unitarism and federalism, whether in total or only in part. Then, researchers will try to find which elements are the most central or dominant in the ideas of unitarian and federalism and how they relate to *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.
- (3) Holistic: All elements of the philosophical conception of unitarian and federalism are used to assess the overall vision and experience of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.
- (4) Historical continuity: The researcher will also pay attention to the historical development line from the idea of unitarism and federalism to Sukarno's political policy in 1950 regarding the Republic of Indonesia and the inclusion of the political motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" on the foot of the Garuda state symbol and the relationship between the Republic of Indonesia and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.
- (5) Heuristics: Finally, based on the methodical reflection above, this research will show a "new light" so that a new reading or new meaning is formed regarding the Republic of Indonesia and its future relationship with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

3. Results and Discussion

Constitutional basis of the Republic of Indonesia

One of the main agreements of the "founding fathers" in 1945 was that the Indonesian state is a State of Law; therefore, a constitution was drafted known as the 1945 Constitution. They agreed that the Constitution is the highest source of law because it is seen as the result of an agreement by all Indonesian people as holders of sovereignty. Because the Indonesian state had just begun to be established, the "founding fathers," also known as the BPUPKI members, saw themselves as representatives of all Indonesian people.

Therefore, from a legal perspective, the 1945 Constitution has the legitimacy of all Indonesian people, although de facto, only BPUPKI members drafted and ratified it (Gaffar, 2012, pp. 85-86). Let us look at it from a material perspective. The contents of the 1945 Constitution contain three basic agreements of the Indonesian people, namely: First, consensus on the goals of the Indonesian state, often also called the shared ideals of all Indonesian people; second, consensus on fundamental principles as the basis for organizing the state; and third, agreement on state institutions and procedures, including on the constitutional rights of citizens that must be guaranteed and must not be violated by the state itself.

Regarding the second consensus, namely on the basic principles, the members of BPUPKI, through a long and heated debate from May to August, finally agreed that the basis of the state was not religion (Islam) but Pancasila. However, why not Islam as the basis but Pancasila, even though the majority of the Indonesian population at that time, 95%, were Muslim? The answer is that it is a noble agreement of the Indonesian nation (Diana, 2017). Thus, the basis of Pancasila can cover all Indonesian citizens of any religion and ethnicity. So, the essence and existence of Pancasila in a country with diverse religions and nationalities is a unifier of the entire diverse nation (Dahm, 1987, pp. 359-360). In line with the basis of Pancasila, all members of BPUPKI also agreed that the form of the Indonesian state is a unitary state (Eenheidstaat) (Kusuma, 2009, p. 336).

Therefore, the debate on the form of the state, whether a unitary state or a federal state, did not last long. The majority of BPUPKI members who participated in the debate on the form of the state were Muslims and Javanese, which can be identified as follows: 40 Javanese, 7 Sundanese, 4 Chinese, 3 Minangkabau, 2 Madurese, 1 Batak, 1 Indo, 1 Arab, 1 Bantenese, 1 Lampung, 1 Ambonese, and 1 Minahasa (Omara et al., 2022, p. 74). Meanwhile, if identified based on religion, the majority of BPUPKI members were Muslim, and only eight people were of other faiths, Christian and Buddhist (Omara et al., 2022, p. 75).

With the membership structure of BPUPKI based on ethnicity and religion, the majority of which were Javanese and Muslim, a second debate was born, namely the discussion of the form of the state in a relatively short time. Although BPUPKI had agreed that the basis of the state was Pancasila, a philosophical basis encompassing the entire Indonesian nation with its diverse ethnicities and religions, there was still debate about the form of the state, even to the point of holding a vote. However, the discussion did not last long. Most BPUPKI members agreed with the form of a unitary state (unitarism), and only a few chose the form of federalism. Those who supported the form of a federal state were Latuharhari, Maria Ulfah, Hatta, Rajiman, Sukiman, and Kusuma Atmaja.

The majority of the "founding fathers" agreed with the form of a unitary state (unitarism), but they had different reasons. At that time, there were two main reasons for supporting a unitary state: First, historical-factual reasons, the bitter experience of Dutch colonialism, which was able to control the entire territory of Indonesia thanks to the divide et impera (divide and rule) policy. They were very aware that the territory of Indonesia, which consisted of thousands of islands with various tribes, languages, customs, and religions, would quickly break up and separate from the unity of the Indonesian State (Panggabean, 1998, p. 33). Second, philosophical reasons, namely the Staatsidee Negara Integralistik, were put forward by Supomo at the beginning of the BPUPKI session. This idea of integralism was supported by Sukarno but rejected by Hatta because there was a danger of ignoring human rights (Omara et al., 2022, p. 75).

Based on the agreement, Sopomo, who was tasked with formulating this Basic Law, placed the form of a unitary state in the first article of the Constitution, Article 1 (paragraph 1): "The State of Indonesia is a

unitary state in the form of a republic" (Secretary General of the MPR RI, 2015: 4). This formulation is intended to accommodate the diversity of Indonesian tribes, religions and traditions in one country, namely the State of Indonesia. Therefore, to accommodate the diversity of regions with different customs, languages, tribes, and religions, article 18 was stipulated concerning regional government. This article stipulates that Indonesia is divided into areas (provinces), and then those regions are divided again into smaller regions (regencies) (Secretary General of the MPR RI, 2015: 35-36). The "founding fathers" were very aware that to manage the state of Indonesia with its vast territory, the government (central) must also trust the regions to manage their government according to the conditions they face.

To ensure a unified understanding of the form of a Unitary State in Article 18, the state's founders supplemented the 1945 Constitution with an official explanation. There are two main ideas in the explanation of Article 18 (Omara et al., 2022, pp. 76-77): First, the existence of regional governments is not a rival to the central government but an integral part of the central government. The State's founders firmly rejected the idea of "imperium in imperio" (a state within a state). The explanation reads: "Because the State of Indonesia is a Eenheidsstaat, Indonesia does not have regions within its environment that are also states." Second, although Indonesia adheres to a unitary state, meaning that there is only one state, one government, one president, one Constitution, and no "state within a state," this unitary state still recognizes the differences and even the uniqueness of each region. The explanation reads: "These regions have an original structure; therefore, they can be considered special. The Republic of Indonesia respects the special status of these regions, and all state regulations will remember the original rights of these regions."

The constitutional basis of the RIS State

It turns out that the 1945 Constitution, which was the result of a heated and long debate by the nation's founders, only lasted 4 years because, in 1949, Indonesia abandoned the unitary state form (unitarism) and then adopted federalism, the Federal State, known by the abbreviation RIS (Republik Indonesia Serikat) (Joeniarso, 1996, pp. 63-64). This change did not come from the will of the Indonesian people but from an international agreement at the Mother Table Session in The Hague, Netherlands, August-December 1949. This session involved four parties: Indonesia, the Netherlands, UN envoys, and the United States. Due to the political will of the Netherlands, supported by the UN and the United States, the Netherlands was finally willing to hand over sovereignty to Indonesia, but with the condition that the form of the Indonesian state must be federal (Suwarno, 1993, p. 146).

Based on this political constellation, Supomo and the international committee drafted a Federal State Constitution known as the Constitution of the RIS State (Republic of the United States of Indonesia). This RIS State included 16 states, with details: 15 states that had been formed by the Dutch during the War of Independence (1946-1949), known as the BFO states (Bijeenkoms Federal Overleg: Federal Agreement Meeting), and added the Republic of Indonesia which Sukarno-Hatta proclaimed on August 17, 1945. So, the total was 16 states (Suwarno, 1993, p. 145).

Meanwhile, there is no debate in formulating the Constitution of the United States of Indonesia (UUD RIS) because the form of this federal state was not Indonesia's choice but rather the choice of foreign powers. There are many articles relevant to the form of a federal state (Omara et al., 2022, p. 77): Article 1, article 42, article 43, article 44, and article 45. Article 1 reads: "The independent and sovereign State of the United Republic of Indonesia is a democratic legal state, which takes the form of a federation." Here, there are new points compared with the 1945 Constitution: First, there are the words "independence and sovereignty." This shows that the RIS State is truly an independent country, and as a sign of independence, it is sovereign. In the eyes of the Dutch, the State of Indonesia, which was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, was independent but not yet sovereign because Dutch rule still existed in various regions of Indonesia. Second, there are the words "democratic rule of law." In the 1945 Constitution, there is indeed a democratic legal state concept, but there is no strong affirmation in a unique article (Azmi, 2016: 1-2). Other advantages include the RIS Constitution, which guarantees human rights. This relates to political developments in the West after World War II and Western values, where, in 1948, universal human rights were declared.

Meanwhile, the other three articles (Omara et al., 2022, p. 78), article 42, article 43, article 44, and

article 45, are only further regulations on the form of this federal state to be adjusted to the actual conditions of the 16 states at that time. Article 42 regulates the equal rights of the 16 states, called "states," and those only called "regions." Article 43 governs the principles of guidelines for the formation of states. Article 44 regulates the merger of regions into one State. Article 45 governs the procedures for organizing the regional government.

Return to the Republic of Indonesia

Although many articles regulate in detail the form of the federal states in the 1949 RIS Constitution, the lifespan of this Constitution was very short, less than a year (Parikh, 1990, pp. 1593-1594). During 1949, there were also political discussions about returning to the form of a unitary state. Starting in April 1950, there were political discussions, so a new political constellation was formed. Namely, 16 states merged into only three: the Republic of Indonesia, the State of East Sumatra, and the State of East Indonesia (Suwarno, 1993, p. 149). Due to the movement of the political conscience of the Indonesian people, who loved the Unitary State more, finally, the three states merged into just one country, namely the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The Republic of Indonesia was then proclaimed again by Sukarno, without Hatta, on August 15, 1950 in front of the Senate and DPR RIS, with the text of the proclamation as follows (Suwarno, 1993, p. 150): "Based on the Proclamation of Independence on August 17 1945 and at the level of the Indonesian people's struggle for independence today, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is today proclaimed, covering the entire territory of Indonesia."

Since the proclamation of August 15, 1950, the term "Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia" has been known, which later, during the Suharto administration, was used as a political acronym, "NKRI." However, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and NKRI have the same essence: the Indonesian state is a unitary state, and that unity exists as a "unity in diversity." Therefore, in 1950, Sukarno also included the traditional motto of the Majapahit Kingdom, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," as the motto of the Unitary State, which was placed at the foot of the Garuda state symbol.

Based on the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed on August 15 by Sukarno, a new constitution was drafted, known as the Provisional Constitution (UUDS 1950). This temporary Constitution changed the UUD RIS to UUDS 1950, where the form of the state was returned to a unitary state (Schuck, 2006: 5-6). Article 1, paragraph 1 of the UUDS 1950 reads: "The independent and sovereign Republic of Indonesia is a democratic and unitary state based on law." (Joenarto, 1996, p. 82). National figures at that time agreed that the Republic of Indonesia was the incarnation of the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed on August 17, 1945. Formally and legally, the UUDS 1950 was an "amendment" of the RIS Constitution, but if viewed from the material, it was not a "change" but a "replacement" of the Constitution. The most fundamental thing that was replaced was the form of the state, namely from a Federal State to a Unitary State.

Based on the 1950 UUDS, Indonesia held the 1955 General Election to elect a constituent assembly. This assembly created the Indonesian Constitution because the 1950 UUDS was temporary. After meeting for three years in Bandung, 1947-1949, the constituent assembly failed to produce a constitution. Seeing the increasingly dire situation, leading to ideological divisions: religious groups, nationalist groups, and socialist groups and at the same time rebellions in the regions, Sukarno, supported by the military, especially the Army, issued a Presidential Decree on July 5, 1959, which re-established the 1945 Constitution (Santoso, 2023b, pp. 257-258). Since then, the 1945 Constitution has been in effect again until the amendment to the 1945 Constitution, 4 times, in 2000-2002.

The amendment has many substantial changes, especially regarding the democratic governance of the state and the guarantee of Human Rights. In the four amendments, it was agreed that the opening of the 1945 Constitution would not be amended because it contains Pancasila, and this philosophical basis indeed guarantees the diversity of tribes, religions, and customs in Indonesia (Sutisna, 2012, pp. 123-124). Article 1 (paragraph 1) did not change the editorial formulation regarding the form of a unitary state. Only in Article 1 was a paragraph (paragraph 3) added: "The State of Indonesia is a state of law". Article 37, which consisted of only two paragraphs, became five, and paragraph 5 reads: "Specifically regarding the form of the Unitary

State of the Republic of Indonesia, no changes can be made."

Finally, based on the historical facts above, we find that the political idea of the "Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia" (NKRI) is contained in the 1945 Constitution, both the original 1945 Constitution and the 1945 Constitution as amended in 2000-2002. In the amended 1945 Constitution, there is a firm stance that the 1945 Constitution must follow the development of the times and, therefore, can be changed, but concerning the form of the Unitary State, it cannot be changed anymore.

Philosophical basis of the Republic of Indonesia

The constitutional basis of the Republic of Indonesia, as mentioned above, is contained in Article 1, paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution and the Provisional Constitution of 1950. Meanwhile, the philosophical basis of the Republic of Indonesia is included in the formula of the motto of the Indonesian nation, which was officially used in 1950 at the suggestion of Sukarno: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. So far, many people view the Sanskrit formula as merely a motto for a pluralistic state. However, when viewed from the perspective of political philosophy, the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* formula is a metaphysical, political principle: "unity in diversity."

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is a concept of "unity in diversity" that is universal, which in Western philosophy is known as the formula *ex pluribus unum* (one comes from many). At the same time, the relationship between "unity" and "diversity" in the Sanskrit formula is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The literal meaning of these three syllables: *bhinneka* means many, *tunggal* means one, and *ika* means that. So, the formula means "diversity is one". Suppose we delve into the meaning of *bhinneka* and *tunggal*. In that case, the translation of "diversity is one" is close to the meaning of the formula "*ex pluribus unum*" that "one comes from many." Here, "diversity is one" has the same meaning as "one comes from many" in *ex pluribus unum*. Western philosophy uses the concept of "many" (*pluribus*), while Sanskrit uses the formulation "different" (*bhinneka*) (Ulfig, 1997, pp. 98-99). In Western philosophy, "many" and "different" are identical because many describe their differences.

Thus, there are two main ideas in the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* formula, namely: "single" and "bhinneka". We start with the concept of "single." What needs to be asked here is single or one according to what category: is it *unum mathematicum* (mathematical unity), *unum logicum* (logical unity), or *unum metafisicum* (metaphysical unity)? *Unum mathematicum*, as a unity of numbers, is used as a principle of numerical distinction so that quantity one is distinguished from quantity two, and two is distinguished from quantity three. *Unum logicum* is one or unity as an abstraction, namely unity related to the activity of reason in making an understanding (*simplex apprehendio*), so it is related to understanding reality (Ulfig, 1997, pp. 10-11). While *unum metafisicum* is indeed an activity of reason, but it is not related to calculating reality (*unum mathematicum*) and not making an understanding of reality (*unum logicum*), but rather about the unity of reality itself, namely about the unity of reality, especially the reality of humans as social beings.

However, this *unum metaphisicum* is of two types: *unum in se*, the unity concerning the Divine reality (the oneness of God), and *unum ordinis*, which is the unity concerning the reality of creation. *Unum in se* is absolute. After all, its unity is entirely unrelated and dependent on the parts because it does not recognize the parts and, therefore, is absolute, which is God. *Unum ordinis* is relative because it depends on the parts as the elements forming the unity. However, this *unum ordinis* is also of two types: *unum per se* and *unum per accidens*.

Unum per se (unity in itself) is a unity concerning reality that exists on its own, such as rocks, trees, humans, etc. *Unum per accidens* (accidental unity) is a unity relating to reality that does not exist independently. Accidental unity is the unity between substances (parts) (Ulfig, 1997, p. 454). So, *unum per accidens* is the unity between "parts," where the parts are realities with their substance (*unum per se*). In other words, *unum per accidens* is the unity between substances that exist as *unum per se*. For example, the unity between people in an organization, while the individuals themselves as members (parts) of the organization are *unum per se*. Thus, the unity of the state is an *unum per accidens*, while each citizen or component in the state is *unum per se*.

Thus, *unum per accidens* does not have its existence. Its existence depends on the parts. If the parts

still exist as parts (*unum per se*), then there is no unity during that time. Therefore, the unity is called "accidental unity" (*unum per accidens*) because the unity depends on the parts. As soon as the parts break away from the whole as a unity, the unity also dissolves. Therefore, *unum per accidens* is applied to human social reality regarding life together as a society, nation, and state.

That means the essence of the Republic of Indonesia is a concept of *unum per accidens*, not *unum per se*, and even more so, not an *unum in se*. The unity of the state is a unity of parts, in this case, regions, as parts of the totality of the unity of the state. Therefore, the unity of the state is fragile because it is possible for areas as parts to separate and stand alone or join another unity (another country). So, the Republic of Indonesia can only continue to stand if all parts, namely the regions (tribes), remain united with the State of Indonesia as a whole. Once they withdraw from the unity of the Indonesian state, then the Republic of Indonesia will automatically dissolve.

However, when we return to the historical background of the birth of the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* philosophy, which is related to the conditions of the meeting of two religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, in the Majapahit Kingdom, then the idea of "single" in the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* formula, can also mean *unum in se*, namely regarding the object of worship of Buddhists and Hindus, namely God. Buddhists and Hindus differ in their understanding of the Divine, but they worship the same being, namely God. The meaning of "single" in this formulation regards the unity of the object of the *actus religiosus*, so an *unum in se*.

In the current conditions or the past during the Sukarno era, there are differences in the form of religions practiced by citizens. However, one object of the *actus religiosus* remains: the Almighty God. The unity of the object of the *actus religiosus* of various religions is the basis for the birth of an ethical imperative for all spiritual people to respect each other in practicing their religious teachings. They are aware of a social, ethical demand as fellow worshipers of the Almighty God, namely that they all maintain tolerance and peace.

Based on the plurality of religions and regions, the ethical-political consequences of the unity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia are clear. First, *unum per accidens* for religion. That means the accidental unity between people in a religion is fragile. Therefore, the ethical message of *unum per accidens* here is for its adherents to realize themselves as "parts" of the unity of the religious institution to which they adhere. With that, religion as an institution must pay attention to the existence of other faiths. Hence, it maintains tolerance to realize a unified state that includes all religions (Munabari, 2017, pp. 242-246). Second, *unum per accidens* for the regions. That means the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia can continue to stand as long as the areas unite with the center (Unitary State). Therefore, the ethical-political message is that the center must pay attention to the interests and uniqueness of the regions to avoid centralism of power and uniformity of development policies.

Thus, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* has advantages as a political ethic for the Indonesian nation, which is diverse in religion and ethnicity because the substantial content of the formulation guarantees equality (unity), but at the same time also guarantees the differences of each element that forms the unity. Therefore, the concept of unity used in *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is not a mathematical unity that eliminates the value of diversity but rather a metaphysical unity that includes both differences and similarities. So, in the formulation *ex pluribus unum*, the concept of "unity" (*unum*) contains the idea of "plurality" (*pluribus*), and vice versa, the concept of "the Many" includes the idea of "the One."

Thus, culturally, politically, and religiously, the principle of diversity is not only understood as a multiplicity of numbers but mainly according to the meaning of "diversity." Emphasis on the multiplicity of numbers will lead us to shallow pluralism. The focus on diversity will lead us to a more advanced stage, namely achieving recognition and fostering respect for incommensurable differences. That is multiculturalism (Santoso et al., 2023, p. 70). So, diversity here is understood not only in the sense of multiplicity but more as differences that substantially cannot be reduced to one or forced into one unity in the sense of monism or monolithism but in the sense of unity according to the philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, namely as *ex pluribus unum*.

Of course, Sukarno never explained *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as described above. However, from a philosophical perspective (Metaphysics), accidental unity (*unum per accidens*), such as the concept of unity in the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* formula, is a model of unity related to human social nature, namely concerning

unity in living together in society, state or nation. Accidental unity (*unum per accidens*), as the name suggests, is accidental, so this type of unity must always be maintained so that the parts do not separate from the unity. Sukarno was very aware of the fragility of the unity of Indonesia, which is diverse in religion and ethnicity. Therefore, since the founding of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, Sukarno had proposed the philosophical basis of the Indonesian State, namely *Pancasila*, and then in 1950, namely when he proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia as a replacement for the Federal State (*RIS State*), he added a political ethic for a diverse Indonesia, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

The unitarian versus federalism debate

The fall of Suharto's power in 1998 was a challenging and enlightening political event for Indonesia. First, it is called "challenging" because since then, the era of reform was born, which opened a very open and broad political discourse about the unsuitability of the Unitary State form for Indonesia. The experience of Suharto's centralistic and militaristic government for approximately 32 years made the people, especially academics and politicians, aware that the unitarian ideology was unsuitable for Indonesia. Therefore, the unitary state form must be changed to federalism (Huroiroh: 18-20). Second, it is called "enlightening" because the two consequences of unitarism, namely the centralism of power and the uniformity of government administration, are contrary to democracy, so the fall of Suharto was the birth of democracy in Indonesia.

However, we focus on discussing the first point only, namely the discourse on the form of the state, unitarism, or federalism, where the debate takes place in two realms, namely the political realm (political society) and the academic realm (civil society). In the political sphere, the debate is carried out by politicians and the people based on their experience of the Unitary State of Indonesia. In contrast, in the academic realm, it is carried out by scientists based on their scientific research on the experiences of many countries that adopt federalism or unitarianism (Zamzam et al., 2021, pp. 34-35). The discourse in the political realm was short-lived because most political parties and the people continued to maintain unitarism. Therefore, when the 1945 Constitution was amended four times (2000-2002), there was no significant debate about the form of the state; the absolute majority of parliament supported unitarism as the most suitable form for the State of Indonesia. At the same time, academic discourse has been going on since 1999. There is no agreement among scientists about which form is most appropriate for Indonesia, whether unitarism or federalism (Bednar, 2000, pp. 19-20).

Despite the lack of agreement, something is interesting about the academic discourse on the form of the state for Indonesia, namely the similarity of the philosophical basis of the arguments of the integrationists (supporters of unitarism) and the accommodationists (supporters of federalism). The integrationists (unitarists) and the accommodationists (federalists) base their arguments on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The federalists claim that *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a philosophical formula for a federal state, not a philosophical formula for a unitary state.

Against the federalists' claims, unitarists argue that the consensus of the nation's founders in 1945 and the proclamation of the "Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia" on August 15, 1950, was a noble consensus of the Indonesian nation (Setyawan, 2018, pp. 1-6). This means that the choice of a unitary state is not only based on rational academic studies of the facts of Indonesia's diversity but also on the actual political experience of the Indonesian nation, which the Dutch colonized for hundreds of years. The Dutch could control the vast Indonesia easily and for a long time because the Dutch implemented a "divide et impera" policy. The regions were divided into relatively small areas, making them easy to control and divide. The main concern of the integrationists is that if federalism is implemented, there will be a "door" for the state to separate from the Republic of Indonesia. This concern is justified, namely the fact of the struggle of Aceh and Papua (Abdulah, 2003, pp. 10-15). The socio-religious and socio-political uniqueness of Aceh, with all its struggles, has been experienced by the Indonesian nation. Likewise, Papua's socio-anthropological and socio-political uniqueness still challenges Indonesia (Huda, 2014, pp. 20-25).

About the cases of Aceh and Papua, accommodationists answer that precisely because the

Indonesian state emphasizes unity to the point of centralism and standardization of political policies that are detrimental to both regions, Aceh (Ahnaf, 2009, pp. 69-70) and Papua are fighting to separate themselves from Indonesia. Therefore, the answer to the unique conditions of the regions is not with unitarism but with federalism. So, the form of a federal state is the correct answer to the demands of regionalism and separatist movements in Indonesia. In response to this, unitarists say that the fact that there are demands from regions to accommodate regional uniqueness is not only Aceh and Papua, but there are still other regions that in the reform era are fighting for their regional interests and uniqueness, such as Riau, East Kalimantan, Bali, and Maluku (Bourchier, 2019, pp. 713-715).

What is interesting about this debate is that both integrationists and accommodationists base their arguments on the traditional philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The question is: Which of these two camps is right? The answer is that both are right if they anchor their arguments on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Integrationists are right if they base their arguments on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* because that formula wants to guarantee two things simultaneously, namely "unity" and "plurality." So, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is the basis of political ethics for the Unitary State (NKRI). However, it is also proper if accommodationists base their views on the federal state (Negara RIS) on the same *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* because a federal state is formed by the agreement of all states (as parts) to unite in a Federal State (as a whole) (Osaghe, 1990, pp. 83-85).

If so, is the debate between unitarism and federalism a pseudo-debate because both are based on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*? The answer is no. This is not a pseudo-debate but a serious and rational debate. Their differences lie in the emphasis on the two main elements of the philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, namely "unity" and "plurality." Integrationists emphasize "unity" more, while accommodationists prioritize "plurality" or "difference." Therefore, both are suspicious of each other. Accommodationists suspect the unity of unitarism as ignoring diversity, so unity is a threat to diversity. On the other hand, integrationists worry about federalism as a space for regions to proclaim themselves as independent countries.

The future of the Republic of Indonesia

From a philosophical perspective, the debate between integrationists and accommodationists is a rational-existential discourse on the metaphysical principle of politics *ex pluribus unum* (Latin) or *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Sanskrit). However, determining the form of the state is certainly not enough based on rational analysis alone but also considering the actual conditions and real experiences of the Indonesian people. Sukarno took a firm political stance on the form of the Unitary State (NKRI) and the political ethics of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, relying more on the concrete experience of the Indonesian people whom the Dutch colonized for a very long time and also the factual reality of Indonesia which is not only vast but also very diverse. On that basis, he chose the Unitary State, and to strengthen unity in diversity, Sukarno included a classic motto, a modern state political ethic, namely *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

Then, there is still a challenging question: What is the future of the Republic of Indonesia? Can it be guaranteed to continue to exist? The choice of Sukarno and the Indonesian nation from the past until now is the Unitary State (NKRI), but that is not a guarantee that the form of the state cannot be changed again to federal or semi-federal. From the perspective of political anthropology, the reality of the state is the reality of humans; humans form a state to guarantee the lives of humans in society. Because society is dynamic, meaning it develops according to the demands of the times, the form of the state can also change. Therefore, a form of state is currently considered the most suitable, but in the future, it could become unsuitable and, hence, can be changed (Joenagio, 2016: 1-4).

Therefore, from the perspective of political anthropology, humans are not only "state-based" (having a state) but also "state-based" (making a state). We are "state-based", meaning. We are running a state institution based on the current agreement based on the 1945 Constitution. In this case, the Republic of Indonesia, based on its legal instrument, namely the 1945 Constitution, is like an object that has been created and then run. If we are now a state of Indonesia (NKRI), then we are running the Indonesian State according to the 1945 Constitution. That is what is called "state-based" Indonesia. However, while we are running the Indonesian State based on the 1945 Constitution, we are also "state-based" Indonesia. This means we

organize the Indonesian state, and in that implementation, we add the substance of democracy and its laws here and there. Every time we make a Law or change a Law to realize the message of the 1945 Constitution, all of those actions are slowly changing or making the country different from before. That is the political phenomenon called "statehood."

Therefore, although the Indonesian Constitution, the 1945 Constitution was amended fourthly in 2002, article 37, paragraph 5, stipulates: "Specifically regarding the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, no changes can be made," but from a legal perspective, because the decision is stated in the Constitution, then whenever and under any conditions, the form of a unitary state is eternal for Indonesia, so it cannot be changed again (Santoso, 2023a, pp. 10-14). However, from a political and anthropological perspective, because the state is a manifestation of the dynamic social nature of humans according to conditions and developments in the times, it is possible that the form of the state can change to suit the times.

However, the question from a legal perspective is how to change it because the 1945 Constitution has locked in that the form of a unitary state cannot be changed. What does it mean to change it? The answer is that it is indeed impossible to change the Constitution through "legal means" but only through "political means," namely not by "changing" the Constitution but by "replacing" it (Joenarto, 1996, pp. 73-74).

Thus, there is always the possibility that the Republic of Indonesia will be dissolved and replaced with another form, a federal or semi-federal state (Santoso, 2023a, pp. 10-12). If viewed from Sukarno's perspective, the answer is clear that the most appropriate form of state for this extensive and diverse Indonesia is a unitary state, and this unitary state is in line with the ethical message of the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika philosophy. Suppose one day it happens that the form of the state is changed to a federal state. In that case, it does not show that Sukarno was wrong or not careful about the form of the state but because Indonesia is not only a "state" but also an "Indonesian state." However, Sukarno's extraordinary contribution is still visible here, namely the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika philosophy, which is now used to guarantee a Unitary State but can also be used to ensure a Federal State.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the essence and existence of the Republic of Indonesia and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika and how the relationship between the two and how it will develop in the future, the following are some main points that can be noted as a result of the discussion: First, Sukarno was genuinely aware of the reality of the Indonesian nation which was very broad and very diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion, so he took the form of state that was most appropriate for that, namely the Unitary State (NKRI), and to support the existence and continuity of the unitary state, it was not only given a philosophical basis with Pancasila but also a philosophical basis for Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Second, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is a modern political, metaphysical principle that ensures the continuity of a pluralistic modern state. Therefore, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, contributed by Sukarno, not only guarantees the Republic of Indonesia but also opens the door to forming a Federal State because the essence of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is "unity in diversity." Both the Unitary State (NKRI) and the Federal State (RIS State) adhere to the political ethic of "unity in diversity." The difference lies in the emphasis: the Republic of Indonesia, which adheres to the unitarian ideology, emphasizes "unity" (Tunggal), while the RIS State, which adheres to the federalism ideology, emphasizes "pluralism" (Bhinneka), which in fact "tunggal" and "binneka" are related and mutually imply, both cannot stand alone.

Third, whatever the current national consensus, as stated in the Constitution, that the form of a unitary state cannot be changed anymore, it is not a guarantee in the future that Indonesia will remain a unitary state. Indonesia is not only a "state" but also a "nation"; therefore, it is very possible to change the form of its state. However, even if the form of the state is changed to a federal or semi-federal state, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika remains in effect. This is Sukarno's contribution to the State of Indonesia, past, present, and future.

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