Article Review

Building Teamwork in the *Gotong royong* Based Modern State: A Conceptual Investigation of Difficulties and Challenges

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Abstract

It is difficult to contextualize the spirit of *gotong royong* that underlies communal life in ancient times to build modern teamwork. Questions arise about the incompatibility between *gotong royong* and modernity. This research aims to conceptually explore what underlies this incompatibility, how this incompatibility makes it difficult to build modern teamwork, and what solutions can be taken to overcome these difficulties. The traditional literature review method was chosen to achieve its objectives because the method provided flexibility to explore ideas, concepts, and insights from a variety of relevant literatures in various disciplines. Relevancy, comprehensiveness, and depth of conceptual assessment were used as criteria to select targeted literatures. The research results showed a sharp incompatibility, namely that *gotong royong* is characterized by a communal way of life whose principles are "giving" and "mutual giving," while modernity is characterized by individualism, economism, and instrumentalism whose basic principles are "taking/having" and "mutual taking/having." Sharp incompatibility is prone to producing a crisis of individual self-integrity and a culture of non-transparency, which in turn creates difficulties in building modern teamwork. A solution was proposed, namely, building self-integrity, which is conceptualized as a virtue acquired through identifying oneself with ideal communities (teams, organizations, social institutions, or human communities generally) of which one is a member. The self-integrity solution emphasizes individual aspects, places practical ethics at the center of the education system, and promotes ethical leadership.

Keywords: *Gotong royong; Modernity; Incompatibility; Teamwork; Self-integrity*

INTRODUCTION

The struggle of people in Indonesia, especially those on the island of Java, to repel the Dutch occupation with its VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) trading company had begun before the 18th century. However, the divide and rule politics (*divide et impera*) implemented by the VOC meant that the struggle could be easily thwarted. The struggle without massive cooperation between the splinter kingdoms ended in vain. Fortunately, the VOC's resistance, which was accompanied by a corruption scandal among its officials, caused it to experience a financial crisis and was finally declared bankrupt in 1800. The territory occupied by the VOC was then taken over by the Dutch government. After that, the struggle of the kingdom's people continued. The largest war was led by the prince of the Mataram Kingdom, Diponegoro, from 1825 to 1830 and was known as the Java War. Again, struggles without unified cooperation ended painfully. After the Java war, the people's mentality collapsed, while almost all kingdoms submitted to the Dutch government. Starting in 1830, the real colonial period began on Java Island (Ricklefs, 2001).

Dutch power extended beyond Java's island, exploiting resources to restore its financial position, which was worsened by the Java War. Suffering was experienced by the lower middle class of society, while the upper class had the opportunity to maintain their status through their

close relationship with the Dutch colonial government. There were no serious challenges to Dutch dominance at that time. The Dutch colonialists began to instill a liberal outlook on life and order, especially through "ethical politics" at the beginning of the 20th century. The colonial government not only removed feudal symbols but also tried instilling a liberal spirit in the younger generation. Modernity, private capitalism, and internationalization of investment began to have a decisive influence on the policies of the colonial government. The rationale for colonization shifted from exploitation to fostering a colonized society to improve welfare, although the practice was not so different. European-style educational institutions were built to produce westernized Indonesian elites who could take over the administrative work of the colonial government and ultimately become inspiring examples for the lower classes of Indonesian society. The promotion of European modernism to colonized peoples seemed to have been more or less successful. An important impact of colonial liberal education was the emergence of anti-colonial movements led by educated elites. Unfortunately, the new leaders of these movements were involved in fierce conflict with each other, following religious and ideological differences originating from outside countries. Once again, the anti-colonial movements were not successful because of weak cooperation.

Only toward the end of the Second World War in 1945 did political leaders realize what unified them, what was at least temporarily considered more important than the issues that divided them. The unifying factor was a sense of shared destiny under colonialism. It was this psychological sentiment that moved the younger generation in 1945 to urge Soekarno, who later became the first president, to declare Indonesia's independence and also fight together to defend it in the war against the Dutch and their allies who wanted to restore colonial rule. However, such a psychological unifying factor did not last long. When the colonial enemy disappeared, the unifying factor also disappeared. This vulnerability could be the background to Soekarno's speech on June 1, 1945, which proposed Pancasila as the state philosophy or rational, not sentimental, foundation for unifying the nation. For Soekarno, the five principles in Pancasila could be compressed into one most fundamental principle "*gotong royong*" which meant mutual cooperation, and was thus further incorporated into the motto known as "negara *gotong royong*". Soekarno's expectations from then until now have not been fully realized. Teamwork or group collaboration, which should be easy to develop in a *gotong royong* country, turns out to be not easy.

In the past, the Constituent Assembly failed to draft a final constitution to replace the 1945 constitution, which was previously considered temporary. When the five principles in Pancasila were still being questioned, collaboration failed. Soekarno finally issued a decree of July 5, 1959, to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and restore the 1945 constitution into force. However, Pancasila, thus also *gotong royong*, was challenged again in 1965 through a coup attempt. The New Order government declared its survival as the sacredness of Pancasila. Unfortunately, in the hands of the New Order, Pancasila was only used as a tool to create political stability, while *gotong royong* was implicitly enforced as a citizen's obligation. The forced *gotong royong* was implemented through psychological exploitation. What is worse about forced *gotong royong* is that it has a tendency to be non-transparent, including hiding the motivation behind its use for personal gain. Teamwork or group collaboration often failed in a situation of lies, deception, and corruption during the New Order period.

During the reform period until now, the 1945 Constitution has undergone four amendments by adopting modernity, which carries the voice of liberalism and capitalism. Through these amendments, Pancasila and *gotong royong* are implicitly contextualized to play a role in the modern world. The problem is that *gotong royong* is not a product of modernity, but rather a social concept based on communal life in pre-colonial times. Pure *gotong royong* is still practiced today in villages that are generally untouched by modernity. As such, promoting *gotong royong* in modern times seems more like political *gotong royong* than an essential *gotong royong*, no different from

collaboration based on psychological sentiment during the struggle for independence. Questions arise about the incompatibility between *gotong royong* and modernity. This incompatibility has never been much discussed in depth by previous researchers so far, even though it has been empirically identified as interfering with *gotong royong* practices on various occasions. Suwignyo (2019), for example, identifies how citizens were not always sincerely willing to participate in *gotong royong* since *gotong royong* was used by the government as a means of social engineering merely to mobilize them. Most current researches on *gotong royong* in modern life show empirically that *gotong royong* still has benefits in certain circumstances without examining the problems when similar practices are carried out in other circumstances. To be able to substantially contextualize *gotong royong* in modern times requires a thorough conceptual investigation of both *gotong royong* and modernity. This investigation aims to provide a perspective in efforts to improve teamwork which is still problematic in Indonesia even though Indonesia was once described as a *gotong royong* country. The results of this research will provide a conceptual solution on how to integrate the spirit of *gotong royong* with the demands of modernity in the context of developing teamwork.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Understanding the Concept of *Gotong Royong*

Gotong royong is widely understood throughout Indonesia as "mutual cooperation", an old traditional social institution historically practiced in closed communal societies generally living in remote rural areas. Although the practices vary depending on the challenges and environment of the community that practices them, there are two main patterns of *gotong royong*: the pattern of mutual help between neighbors and the pattern of collective cooperation for common affairs. Of the types of *gotong royong* practices studied by anthropologist Koentjaraningrat (2009) in two villages in Central Java, the first pattern includes: "*tetulung*" or "*tulung-layat*" and "*selametan*" in helping neighbors in condolence events; "*Njurung*", "*sambatan*", "*gerojogan*", "*krubutan*", and "*gentosan*" in helping neighbors who ask for help in the fields of cultivation, fisheries, forestry, etc.; and "*rerukunan*", "*alur-waris*" and "*guyuban*" in carrying out activities to strengthen kinship relations. The second pattern includes: "*gugur gunung*" in collective work to build mosques, irrigation dams, and other public infrastructure; and "*kerigan*" or "*kerja bakti*" in spontaneous work to clean and repair necessary public facilities. Note that Koentjaraningrat's findings are actually an advanced form of *gotong royong* in villages that have been in contact with outside cultures. In closed and culturally homogeneous villages, the original practice of *gotong royong* functions truly as a binding force for the villagers, governing all aspects of their lives from the religious to the economic (Notoatmodjo, 1962). Traditional customary law ("*adat*") usually reinforces it with guiding principles for every member of the village community. Those who fail to follow it feel ashamed and can be ostracized. Although individual identity cannot be separated from collective identity, traditional democracy is implemented in the village through deliberation and consensus to make unanimous decisions. *Gotong royong* is also well known and is occasionally practiced among Malay communities in Malaysia and Singapore. The underlying sentiment of such mutual help and collective practices is also known in the Philippines as "*Bayanihan*" (Speers et.al., 2023; Su & Thayaalan, 2024; Gatarin & Andal, 2024).

From an economic point of view, *gotong royong* clearly forms a combination of two integration patterns, namely "reciprocity" and "redistribution," two of the three integration patterns identified by Karl Polanyi (1957), besides "exchange" as the third pattern. "Reciprocity" refers to reciprocal giving activities between individuals; "redistribution" refers to the activity of collecting individual productive works and then redistributing the results; and "exchange" refers to the activity of exchanging product ownership between individuals. Although not mentioned

explicitly, the first two patterns contain a "giving" motivation of each individual in the community, while the last pattern contains a "taking/having" motivation. So *gotong royong* requires individuals to have the motivation to give what they can give. The individual's ultimate motivation in "giving" is not merely for the collective interests of individuals or simply the interests of the collectivity, but rather for the good that is generally contemplated by all individuals in the community. The good is greater than any sum of collective interests. Thus, to a certain extent, *gotong royong* can represent a noble moral obligation that unites all members into one community.

Due to its nobility, Soekarno, in his speech on June 1, 1945, before the Investigating Body for Preparatory Enterprises for Indonesian Independence, said that *gotong royong* encapsulates the five principles in Pancasila, the fundamental philosophy of the state. *Gotong royong*, which in its original form united people in villages with a homogeneous culture, was elevated by Soekarno to the national level to unite various elements of the nation. Soekarno hoped that the spirit of *gotong royong* would provide strength for national unity, actualizing the official national motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" (unity in diversity). But Soekarno forgot one important thing in Indonesian society, namely that the influence of Western culture had become increasingly entrenched since the colonial period. Positioning *gotong royong* as a symbol of nationalism without a rational spirit in implementing it will become a slogan of political *gotong royong* whose impact is not substantially sustainable. Indeed, the influence of modern Western culture is not trivial on the spirit and practice of *gotong royong* which still continues to this day. Investigating the power of modernity and its global discourse is important.

Understanding the Power of Modernity and Its Global Discourse

Modernity began as a movement intertwined with the intellectual movement called "Enlightenment" that occurred in the West in the eighteenth century. The spirit of modernity emerged as a reaction to the pressure of tradition and religious authority that had penetrated almost all aspects of life in previous centuries, a spirit rooted in human awareness of being able to be independent and free to shape themselves. Meanwhile, the enlightenment movement itself was motivated by the intellectual activities of very diverse thinkers in France, Scotland, and Germany, such as Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, Montesquieu, Frances Hutcheson, Adam Smith, David Hume, Thomas Reid, Christian Wolff, Moses Mendelssohn, and G.E. Lessing and Immanuel Kant (Bristow, 2017). Modernity institutionalized several basic ideas promoted by the Enlightenment movement, such as rationality, the development and use of science, universality, and progress (Ohana, 2019). Under the idea of rationality that every human can possess, modernity found its justification that humans have the right to freedom and power over themselves. Individuality, liberty, equality, democracy, and ultimately human rights developed from this idea. The epistemological debate between rationalism and empiricism led to the birth of positivism, which had a strong influence on the development of science, while the use of science and technology rapidly increased human productivity through the industrial revolution. Therefore, modern belief in human rationality and objective positive sciences then built belief in the universality of humanity and the universality of modern sciences, both of which supported the justification of globalization. Finally, the idea of progress became central because modern humans needed to prove their power over themselves by ensuring that the future must be different from the present and the past. This then gave rise to an obsession with economic growth, division of labor (specialization), use of production machines, and market capitalism (Ringmar, 2005).

Despite experiencing difficult clashes and obstacles, the Europeans succeeded in overthrowing the traditional status quo and building the institutions of modern society. The progress they have achieved in the fields of economic prosperity, development of science and technology, stabilization of modern culture, bureaucratic systems, and political governance has
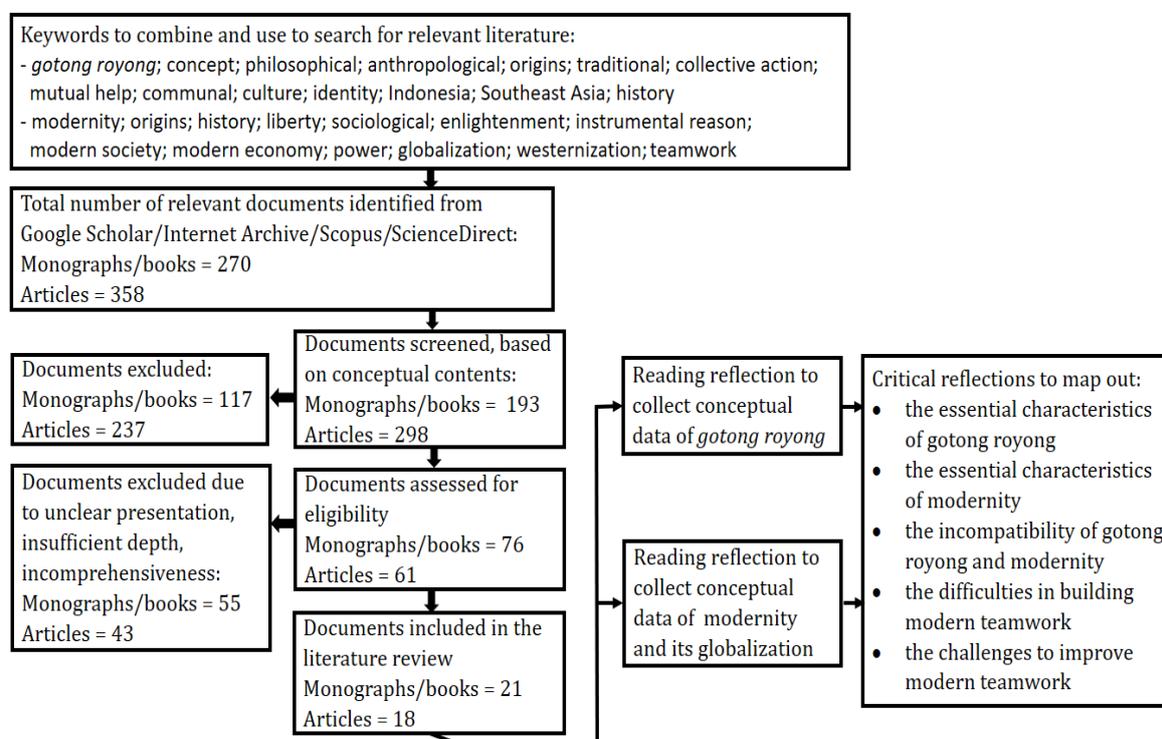
increased their confidence in the truth of modernity. As their power increased, they exported ideas of modernity and modern culture while expanding global trade, territorial occupation, colonialism, and imperialism to other parts of the world. Modern ideals, which previously consisted of people's desire to have power over themselves, have become a desire to have power over anything and anyone outside themselves. Modernity has been pushed toward globalization and expected to become a global norm for humanity. Because they were more powerful than people in other parts of the world, however denied it was, the modernity they promoted was in many cases considered westernization. Adaki (2024), for example, highlights how westernization has displaced traditional practices and values in a non-western country. Nevertheless, modernity is now gradually being absorbed by most of us in the world, no longer through the use of colonial power, but through a system of ideas or discourse that enters our mindset and shapes our belief system. Following the line of thought of Foucault (2001), power works in a complex system of power relations that is built through a system of ideas (discourse) that is internalized, embedded, and constantly reinforced in our society. Education, communication media, and increasing globalization over generations seem to play an important role in strengthening the discourse and power of global modernity.

A prominent characteristic of modern life is that it prioritizes individuals and their rights as humans to pursue progress in fulfilling their material desires. This encourages individuals to believe in three principles: individualism, economism, and instrumentalism. From the principle of individualism, democratization is growing in various aspects of life, accompanied by increasing respect for human rights. Once democratization has taken root, it seems difficult for individuals to reverse the situation. The principle of economism embodies the demands of modernity to differentiate the modern way of life, which is more focused on material matters, from the traditional way of life of the previous era, which was more focused on spiritual matters. Economic relations are positioned as the most basic relations in explaining the phenomena of social life, reducing all kinds of other relations. Such a positioning is in line with what Marx and Engels (2007) observed, namely that economic relations are the "base" on which the "superstructure" social, cultural, and political relations rest. It is not uncommon to find in modern life that family matters, friendships, social affairs, bureaucracy, political affairs, and so on are economicized and reduced to economic matters in which efficiency and utility are the most basic values to refer to. The principle of instrumentalism is a logical implication of modernity's commitment to progress, namely forward-looking or results-oriented. Life vision is considered more important than life mission. All kinds of activities in modern life are only instruments for attaining what one wants to pursue. Religious rituals, feelings, and thinking tend to be instrumentalized and manipulated to achieve certain goals. As a result, rationality is increasingly interpreted only as instrumental rationality. Indeed, instrumental rationality dominates life affairs in the modern culture of capitalism, as highlighted by the Frankfurt school philosopher, M. Horkheimer (2004, 2012). Instrumental rationality differs from "value rationality" as shown by Weber (1978), and also from "communicative rationality" as argued by Habermas (1984). Finally, together with the principle of economism, the principle of instrumentalism has given birth to a culture of consumerism and formed a mainstream economic science where the consumption side underlies the production decision side. Because the modernity movement has great power but very different characteristics from *gotong royong*, it is important to examine how modernity influences the practice of *gotong royong* in modern Indonesian society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a conceptual exploration and investigation. The traditional literature review method was chosen to achieve its objectives because it provided flexibility to explore ideas, concepts, and insights from a variety of relevant literature in various disciplines. A relevancy search strategy was conducted to find research materials such as monographs, books, articles, research

reports, and encyclopedias from electronic databases, especially Google Scholar, Internet Archive, SCOPUS, and ScienceDirect. The most relevant and comprehensive literature that accesses in depth the concept, conceptualization, and conceptual reviews of the practices of *gotong royong* and the concept, historical background, conceptualization, and conceptual reviews of modernity and globalization of modernity were the target of the search strategy. Owing to the criteria of comprehensiveness and depth of conceptual assessment, many targeted literatures were in the form of books and monographs. Reading reflection techniques were used in the review process to obtain conceptual data. Triangulation of conceptual data was carried out by simultaneously ensuring rational coherence and contextual correspondence among the collected data. In processing the collected conceptual data, critical reflection techniques were employed, namely: analysis and meta-analysis to deepen the subject matter, while synthesis and meta-synthesis were used to build and reconstruct narrative maps. The following flowchart illustrates the data collection and processing steps, showing the total number of documents identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and processed.

Keywords to combine and use to search for relevant literature:
- *gotong royong*; concept; philosophical; anthropological; origins; traditional; collective action; mutual help; communal; culture; identity; Indonesia; Southeast Asia; history
- modernity; origins; history; liberty; sociological; enlightenment; instrumental reason; modern society; modern economy; power; globalization; westernization; teamwork

Total number of relevant documents identified from Google Scholar/Internet Archive/Scopus/ScienceDirect:
Monographs/books = 270
Articles = 358

Documents excluded:
Monographs/books = 117
Articles = 237

Documents screened, based on conceptual contents:
Monographs/books = 193
Articles = 298

Reading reflection to collect conceptual data of *gotong royong*

Critical reflections to map out:
- the essential characteristics of gotong royong
- the essential characteristics of modernity
- the incompatibility of gotong royong and modernity
- the difficulties in building modern teamwork
- the challenges to improve modern teamwork

Documents excluded due to unclear presentation, insufficient depth, incomprehensiveness:
Monographs/books = 55
Articles = 43

Documents assessed for eligibility
Monographs/books = 76
Articles = 61

Reading reflection to collect conceptual data of modernity and its globalization

Documents included in the literature review
Monographs/books = 21
Articles = 18

Figure 1. Data Collection and Processing

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Difficulties in Building Teamwork in Modern Indonesian Society

The practice of *gotong royong* in modern life has changed or shifted from its original form. When practiced by communal communities in the past, individuals who practiced it subordinated their identity to collective identity, practicing it as a way of life as well as a way to maintain the survival of their community. In societies where modernity has been introduced, awareness of being an individual demands recognition so that the motivation underlying an individual's willingness to perform *gotong royong* can vary. Although an individual's motivation to maintain a collective life is not eliminated as an option in carrying out *gotong royong*, the pressure of modernization has brought most individuals to a plurality of motivations that are not necessarily in line with

motivation for the common good. As pointed out by Koentjaraningrat (2009), *gotong royong* and participation in *gotong royong* are sometimes conducted not on the basis of spontaneous volunteerism but on the basis of calculating profits and losses. Rather than being organized as a way of life, *gotong royong* and participation in it are positioned as a means or instrument to achieve certain goals that are sometimes subject to economic principles.

The power of modernity in influencing people living in Indonesia has existed since the beginning of the colonial period through the penetration of modern discourse into the mindset of individuals. The "giving" mindset in the practice of *gotong royong* is obscured by the modern exchange discourse with a "taking/having" perspective. As a result, individuals become confused and unsure how to simultaneously respond to the demands of *gotong royong* and modernity. It becomes even more complicated when *gotong royong*, following Soekarno, is positioned so highly as a representation of the moral content of Pancasila. This means that individuals who ignore *gotong royong* would be accused of not being Pancasilaist and thus immoral. Because anyone wants to be seen as a moral person, one tends to hide one's true intentions when practicing *gotong royong*. Ultimately, such a society becomes permissive toward non-transparency and fake social relationships. Corruption is rampant in almost all areas of life, and social trust is eroded. It is indeed not easy to practice *gotong royong* in a society that experiences cultural contradictions after its original culture of collectivism is mixed with modernity, which demands individualism.

At the national level, *gotong royong* is politically used as a mantra to mobilize citizens to care for each other and collaborate collectively for the sake of national unity, but its implementation is often ineffective and full of fake interactions. The same thing happens at the provincial and district levels. Suwignyo (2019) traced the instrumentalization of *gotong royong* by successive Indonesian governments from the 1940s to the 1990s. In some cases, political *gotong royong* can be successful when it generates strong psychological sentiments among its participants. Baydhowi et al. (2023), for example, empirically show the influence of threat to the psychological sentiment of collective self-esteem, which in turn cements national identity. However, such a psychological sentiment is unlikely to last long, so that *gotong royong* is only tentative and contingent. Finding and developing a long-lasting rational motivation for *gotong royong* remains a mystery.

The root cause of the *gotong royong* problem in modern society lies in the unpreparedness of individuals to define themselves after being influenced by modern thought. Because they are used to living in an environment that emphasizes a collectivist perspective, they become alienated when living a modern life that demands an individualist perspective. Most of them are confused and have serious difficulties in building a true self-identity. Modernity indeed promises the right of individuals to be free from any coercion that can reduce their rights. This means that individuals are promised 'freedom', 'liberty' or 'independence' from unwanted intervention of outside others. However, referring to Berlin (2002), the negative liberty "freedom from" does not fully cover the true meaning of liberty because the positive liberty "freedom to" is not expressed. The positive liberty "freedom to" fails to develop because individuals experience serious difficulties in establishing their true self-identity. Their self-identity is blurred and partly occupied by modern characteristics. The ambiguity of their self-identity results in feelings of uncertainty, and they do not know what they really want. Instead of experiencing true independence, they become dependent on parties outside themselves.

This lack of individual independence ultimately becomes a serious problem in the development of teamwork. In contrast to *gotong royong*, which in its original form was conducted in communal societies, teamwork is conducted in modern, individualistic societies where the specialization of the participants is very extensive and intensive. Both *gotong royong* and teamwork are forms of collaboration, but they are in fact not compatible. *Gotong royong* would not thrive in a modern democratic culture that gives rise to individualism and reduces social relations to economic

relations with 'taking/having' perspective, not 'giving'. Modern individuals who have 'independence' problems would likely fail to make maximum contributions to collective success. Gotong prolong requires an individual perspective on 'giving', whereas effective teamwork requires interdependence between participants' specializations, which is only possible if each participant has strong "autonomy" or "independence." Moreover, blurred self-identity breeds a culture of non-transparency, while the erosion of transparency intensifies teamwork development as hidden agendas become increasingly common in teamwork. False pleasantries and fake interactions emerge because each participant wants to be seen as an enthusiastic participant. The clear need to complete collective tasks is hampered by the orientation of individuals to maximize their personal interests. This ultimately threatens collective task accomplishment.

Challenges: A Perspective on Improving Teamwork in Indonesia

It is important to note that in modern Western societies, teamwork can take place without problems even though the participants are used to 'market competition' and have a "taking/having" perspective. How can individuals with the "taking/having" perspective have a willingness to make maximum/professional contributions to the fulfillment of collective tasks? Referring to Karl Polanyi's (1957) categorization, the exchange integration pattern may function as strongly as the reciprocity and redistribution patterns to unite members of modern society. Participants in teamwork may still adhere to the "taking/having" perspective, but they position their professional contribution in an "exchange" framework with the team as a collectivity rather than with fellow participants. A culture of transparency is the key to ensuring fairness in every "exchange" so that each participant is willing to consistently give their best performance. This culture of transparency is strongly promoted in modern society. Indeed, transparency is even expected to prevail in market competition to ensure that only the best and most efficient market players will survive and be rewarded. It is not surprising that market competition and competition in general is often seen as a special "cooperation" to find the best players that indirectly benefit the entire modern society. Transparency is the bottom line of modernity. It facilitates all kinds of 'cooperation' in modern society. As a result, modernity can bring about a superior civilization because everywhere there is a love for excellence, whether obtained through teamwork mechanisms or market competition mechanisms. Societies with a high degree of individualism and transparency use sports metaphors for teams (Gibson & McDaniel, 2010).

It becomes clear how problematic it is for a society that desires the advantages of modernity and experiences serious difficulties in realizing transparency. When the problem lies more in the individual's willingness to be transparent than in the lack of institutional knowledge that facilitates transparency, then the best solution is not to simply improve institutions but rather to focus on improving individual attitudes. As previously discussed, the source of transparency problems in Indonesian society is the blurring of individual identities. The best way out is to build the self-integrity of each individual member of society so that they always have the will to give their best to realize ideal institutions, including institutional transparency. Therefore, the path taken is from "self-integrity" to "institutional transparency," rather than the other way from "institutional transparency" to "integrity." This path fits the culture of Indonesian society, which has a strong "giving" perspective as proven by the highest World Giving Index in 2021 and 2022 in the annual survey reported by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). For following religious principles, the majority of Indonesians tend to 'hide' the name of the giver to prove their sincerity in giving. For the sake of sincerity in giving, transparency is not a priority at the outset.

Living in the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesian society is very diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, language, and culture. Modernity, which impacts increasing urbanization, facilitates several cultures to meet and produce mixed cultures. Therefore, members

of society have broad freedom to choose and adhere to religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, moral norms and values, principles of modernity, and other principles of life, all of which constitute standards for making decisions and taking actions. Imagine how difficult it is to integrate all these standards into one whole to generate strong power to make decisions and take actions. The more diverse the standards, the more difficult it is to integrate them. Those who ignore the reality of diverse standards and do not train themselves to integrate these standards will have a blurred self-identity or weak self-integrity and will be weak in decision-making and action-taking. As a result, they become less independent as subjects of action. The Indonesians need to get used to building self-integrity at the personal, organizational, and national levels. Without it, the motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" will just be an empty slogan.

How to build self-integrity? Which standards should be selected for integration? The method for building self-integrity involves rational activities that one must undertake to synthesize and ensure the coherence of all standards in the belief system. The rational activities in question are the activity of thinking inwards, within oneself to synthesize, as opposed to the activity of thinking outwards to analyze something (Endro, 2020). This is a thinking activity that occurs in deep communication with oneself: the deeper the thinking, the stronger the basis obtained for the unification of standards (Endro, 2022). Its process is called the process of self-reflection, which together with the reflection process that accompanies it constitutes practical ethics. The standards being selected for integration are rules, beliefs, norms and values shared by all members of the communities, from the smallest community such as a team to larger communities: organizations, countries, professional communities and human community. Standards held by larger communities are more fundamental than those held by smaller communities. Therefore, moral values, the deepest standards shared by the human community, are the most fundamental basis for unifying all standards.

The only principle that applies in building self-integrity is that one must make the greatest contribution to the wellbeing of the smallest community of which one is a member, and the smaller community must make the greatest contribution to the wellbeing of the larger community. The well-being of a community is realized when standards shared within the community are adhered to and expressed in collective decisions and actions. If wellbeing is interpreted as an indicator of an ideal community, then one must make the greatest contribution to the realization of the smallest ideal community of which one is a member, and the smaller community must make the greatest contribution to the realization of the larger ideal community. Self-integrity can thus be defined as a virtue acquired through identifying oneself with ideal communities so that it tends to move oneself to make the greatest contribution to the realization of the smallest ideal community of which one is a member, and subsequently that community makes the greatest contribution to the larger ideal communities (Endro, 2007; Endro, 2017). Self-integrity tends will move one to contribute to the realization of all ideal communities because all ideal communities are in some sense part of oneself. Three main values of the ideal community are upheld: autonomy, care, and justice (Endro, 2019). One with self-integrity will have a love for excellence, but this excellence must be legitimized by the community and subsequently by all larger communities.

Self-integrity establishes the true independence of an individual as a prerequisite for building a network of interdependence with other individuals. In other words, the process of developing self-integrity is a process of learning to be truly independent. Strong self-integrity promises high enthusiasm for each individual in the practice of *gotong royong* and teamwork because each individual will make maximum contributions to the network of interdependence for the success of ideal communities. In contrast to those who openly adopt modernity and consider collaboration only as a means or instrument to achieve certain goals, anyone with self-integrity treats collaboration as a way of life.

In the context of building teamwork, the self-integrity approach emphasizes the importance of individual aspects rather than social aspects (relational aspects) and collective aspects (fulfillment of collective tasks), both of which are widely discussed in Western society. Transparency regarding mission vision, leadership, and task suitability as well as the availability of infrastructure and superstructure support from the larger community are necessary for the success of a team (Levi, 2014), but all of these will only be effective if each team member has adequate self-integrity. Internalizing the rules and agreements of all members into norms and values embraced by each member and then expressing or externalizing them in every collaboration is part of a series of reflections and self-reflections to build the self-integrity of team members. The prospects for successful reflection are similar to the 'transformative interaction capabilities' envisaged by Qamari et al. (2020), while the prospects for success in self-reflection are similar to the self-evaluation described by Wiyono (2017). Indeed, the prospect of building self-integrity in contextualizing *gotong royong* to develop modern teamwork is not an illusion. For this prospect to be successful, it is necessary to reorient human life activities toward production and co-production and make it a way of life, as illustrated by Winardi (2020).

The self-integrity approach emphasizes reflection and self-reflection and places practical ethics at the center of the education system. Referring to the two different modes of human existence "having and being" previously discussed by Marcel (1949), Fromm (1976), and Fromm (1992), the self-integrity approach shifts the learning paradigm from the process of acquiring/possessing ('having') the desired knowledge and skills to the process of becoming ('being') oneself. The coherence and wholeness of oneself that is expressed in one's ethical contributions for the realization of ideal organizations, ideal social institutions, or generally ideal communities of which one is a member is the objective of this approach. It promotes ethical leadership with transformational influence toward ideal organizations, social institutions, or communities. Such characteristics of ethical leadership are not much different from the ethical leadership advocated by Sherchan et al. (2024) and Arokiasamy & Tamah (2021) in their research. The only difference is in the social strata of individuals characterized by ethical leadership. The self-integrity approach targets every individual, meaning that every individual is a leader and should become a leader whose ethical leadership is an expression of his or her self-integrity.

CONCLUSIONS

This conceptual investigation has revealed the original patterns and characteristics of *gotong royong* practiced by communities living in Indonesia since ancient times, namely a way of living in social and communal cooperation to maintain communal life whose basic principles are "giving" and "mutual giving." This investigation has also revealed the basic characteristics of modernity that initially developed in Europe and spread throughout the world, namely individualism, economism, and instrumentalism, whose basic principles are "taking/having" and "mutual taking/having." The incompatibility between *gotong royong* and modernity gives rise to a crisis of individual self-integrity, which ultimately results in the difficulty of applying the spirit of *gotong royong* to modern life, especially in the context of building modern teamwork. Only if psychological sentiment can be aroused through the politicization of *gotong royong* or the emergence of threats can *gotong royong* effectively mobilize individuals to work together as a team. However, such a psychological sentiment does not last long. If the sentiment fails to arouse, an atmosphere of false pleasantries and fake interactions fosters a culture of non-transparency that further perpetuates difficulties in building teamwork. This conceptual investigation suggests a concept of self-integrity that necessarily accommodates a long-lasting rational motivation for *gotong royong* in the context of modern life. Self-integrity is a virtue acquired through identifying oneself with ideal communities (teams, organizations, social institutions, or human communities generally) of which one is a

member. Thus, individuals with self-integrity are always motivated to make the greatest contribution to the success of the ideal team based on the rational consideration that the ideal team is part of themselves. The self-integrity approach emphasizes individual rather than social and collective aspects, places practical ethics at the center of the education system, and promotes ethical leadership.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

There are two limitations in this research: limitation related to the research object and limitation related to the research method. The object of this research is limited to societies that have historically led a communal life, such as the *gotong royong* society, but have never experienced a sharp cultural change from within to modern culture. In terms of method, this research is limited to conceptual exploration of a philosophical nature. The results of this research certainly give greater weight to the rationality aspect than to the factuality aspect. Therefore, much further research can be recommended, for example: investigating the truth of the underlying characteristics of various indigenous cooperation practices similar to *gotong royong* in other societies using different qualitative methods; exploring parameters and indicators to measure the level of self-integrity conceptualized in this research; and finding statistical evidence of a causal relationship between the level of self-integrity conceptualized in this study and teamwork success. Further research related to educational policies to accommodate the self-integrity approach is also a very promising area of research.

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