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## Understanding the Dimensions of Patriotism: A Literature Highlight

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### Abstract

Patriotism refers to a good value that benefits the country as a whole. Every citizen must be patriotic to ensure the survival of the country. They need to understand and appreciate the dimension of patriotism first to ensure patriotism is well understood as best as possible. However, some scholars discuss the pros and cons of patriotism that affect the understanding of patriotism meaning. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss in detail the dimensions of patriotism to avoid confusion regarding the actual meaning of patriotism. Hence, secondary data analysis from previous literature consisting of books, book chapters, and journal articles has been done to discuss the dimension. The results of the discussion highlighted six dimensions of patriotism: ego-centric patriotism, value-based patriotism, uncritical/authoritarian patriotism, constructive patriotism, fair patriotism and nationalism in the context of patriotism. The discussion can help readers classify true patriotism and vice versa.

**Keywords:** Ego-Centric Patriotism, Value-Based Patriotism, Uncritical/Authoritarian Patriotism, Constructive Patriotism, Fair Patriotism

### Introduction

A citizen's internal bond with his country is through feelings of love. The feeling of love tightly tied in a citizen will be a reason for them to be loyal, proud and willing to sacrifice for the sake of their beloved country, and such feeling can be referred to as patriotism. Therefore, patriotism is essential and needs to be instilled and fostered in citizens to ensure the survival of a country (Ku Hasnita, 2022). Without that spirit, the country's sovereignty will be threatened and the progress, as well as prosperity of the country, will be difficult to achieve. In this regard, the patriotic spirit is not only about waving the flag, singing the national anthem and respecting the national symbols and authorities related to the country but even more. Moreover, any form of contribution to the country, directly or indirectly, manifests the people's patriotism. In short, patriotism refers to a good thing that benefits the country as a whole. However, apart from the discussion of positive aspects, some scholars discuss the pros and cons of patriotism, such as Macintyre (2002); Primoratz (2002), which also affect the public's perception of the meaning of patriotism. Therefore, in order to ensure patriotism is well understood as best as possible, every citizen needs to understand and appreciate the

dimension of patriotism first. Therefore, this writing will discuss in detail the dimensions of patriotism to avoid confusion regarding the true meaning of patriotism.

### **What is Patriotism?**

If you are patriotic, don't ask, "what can the country give you" but ask, "what can you give to the country?" This question revolves around the contribution of a citizen to his beloved homeland to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the country are guaranteed in various aspects such as social, economic, science, and technology. Therefore, the main thing that needs to be unravelled here is the meaning of patriotism. Patriotism derives from two Greek syllables, *pater* and *patris*, referring to father and land, respectively. Thus, combining the two syllables means the love of a fatherland (Ali, 2009). Patriotism is an element of feeling or emotion that exists in a patriot centred on a deep love for the country, so the term is also associated with metaphors close to a person's soul, which is the "father" that refers to father or mother. In this regard, the father or mother is an important person for the existence and survival of an individual. Ideally, affection and love will completely pour out to the two important people. Therefore, the word father or mother is used to describe the land where a person lives and tries to live to continue their life. Individuals who appreciate such sentimental value must have a "sense of belonging" and thus love the place wholeheartedly. The emotional element referred to here is in a controlled form and does not lead to fanaticism. Thus, the "ism" in the word patriotism refers to an understanding, feeling or spirit that describes the emotions born from the heart of a patriot.

Curti (1946); Berns (1997) asserted that patriotism refers to the feeling of pride and love for the country and the willingness of every citizen to sacrifice anything for the sake of the country. The intended sacrifice is not simply sacrificing one's life against the real enemy, but more than that, including time, energy, basic freedom, finances, etc. Therefore, if a person feels passionately patriotic, he needs to be asked the question as a self-reflection, "is he willing to sacrifice for this beloved country?" If the answer is "yes," the confession shows true love for the country. If the answer is the opposite, then the value of his love for the country can be questioned. Of course, love requires sacrifice. If it is love alone without being accompanied by the willingness to sacrifice, then the level of true love has not yet been successfully achieved.

### **Dimensions of Patriotism**

Although patriotism is often described as a positive value that must be instilled in every citizen, many scholars also give the opposite meaning with their respective reasons. For example, Primoratz (2002) classified patriotism into two types: value-based and ego-centric. Value-based patriotism refers to a patriot's love for his country due to his country having certain privileges and great achievements. This makes his country very worthy of loyalty. In this context, this group often raises the question: "What is the country's contribution to me?" while the question "what is my contribution to the country?" will be ignored. In other words, if the country they live in does not provide benefits to this group of "value-based patriotism", then loyalty to the country will disappear. Therefore, this type of patriotism can be described as materialistic, superficial and insincere.

Meanwhile, the ego-centric type of patriotism presented by Primoratz is seen better compared to value-based patriotism. This is due to the ego-centric principle of patriotism, which leads to a patriot's love for his country because it is his country, not because of the importance, merit or certain achievements obtained by his country. Moreover, his love for his homeland is unconditional because it is the land where he was born. Therefore, in general, ego-centric patriotism can be considered a sincere love for the country because the patriot does not expect anything from it compared to value-based patriotism.

The fact is, both types of patriotism complement each other. Both should be in the soul of every citizen. The reason is as expressed by Primoratz:

*If the only reason the patriot can give for her allegiance is the fact that the country is her country, we will find her position irrational, for we feel that we can reasonably expect to hear more: to be told something about the valuable traits, the achievements of the country.*

This expression shows that if a patriot shows his loyalty to the country based on ego-centric patriotism alone, then the action is described as irrational because the reason needs to be given in detail from the aspect of special characteristics and achievements obtained by their country. This is due to the existence of an extreme sense of belonging among them, so they think that other groups cannot match the greatness of their group. In this context, purely ego-centric patriotism is seen as a dangerous stance because the chances of fueling chauvinism and jingoism are high.

In the national context, the principle used by these ego-centric patriots is "right or wrong, it's still my country". In other words, the principle reflects all actions or responses based on egoism without being balanced with logic or rationality in facing an issue. Thus, in many ways, the feedback of this group is emotional. This means that the country cannot be directly criticized or reprimanded in all aspects, such as government policies, administrative, and so on that involve the country. If any party does so, then they interpret it as a threat to the country's sovereignty and will defend their country's sovereignty by any means. In an effort to strengthen their patriotism, these patriots hold the principle "our country is the best, always right in all aspects and situations and the greatest compared to other countries, we are very proud and love our country." In order to realize this effort, they will belittle and look down on the greatness of other countries. This attitude can lead to dangerous bigotry and provoke other countries' anger, leading to war. We can explore this scenario through the actions of the media, the people even certain groups in the Indonesian government that call Malaysia "Malingsia" (Amri & Hamedi, 2014). Although the Malaysian government did not entertain this childishness, some Malaysians have labelled Indonesia as "Indosial" and "Indog" in response to the insult. Schatz and Staub (1997) view this situation as reckless patriotism or uncritical patriotism, which is the unwillingness of patriots in the country to criticize and accept criticism about their fatherland. They are confident that all aspects of their country are correct and cannot be criticized. Uncritical patriotism is also associated with authoritarianism or authoritarian patriotism, which means that the authority's policy must be obeyed and fully supported without any conditions, regardless of whether the policy is right or wrong. Even Commager (1966) also added:

*Men in authority will always think that criticism of their policies is dangerous. They will always equate their policies with patriotism and find criticism subversive.*

This shows that the authoritarian patriots always believe every policy made by the authorities in the country without any question. Furthermore, the authorities themselves practice a policy of closing the door to criticism because criticism is subversive and dangerous to the survival of a country. Therefore, anyone criticising the government's policies is unpatriotic because the national authorities associate the government's policies with patriotism. This situation is dangerous to the country because the authorities are also exposed to mistakes when making national policies. It is even worse if they get involved with integrity issues during the decision-making process of national policy or any other matter related to national interests, directly or otherwise. Therefore, in order to guarantee that the actions of the authorities or the government are correct, the people's involvement is very necessary to give feedback on all government actions, including national policies.

Nevertheless, in certain situations, such as national sovereignty being threatened by invaders or terrorists, authoritarian patriotism is seen as quite important in raising the spirit of the people to defend the country. For example, after the tragedy of the aggressor's attack on the United States on November 9, 2001, efforts to increase patriotism among the people were made even stronger, including fueling nationalistic and jingoistic sentiments to a great extent. In other words, through that sentiment, only their country is great and right compared to other countries. In such a situation, the definition of patriotism is also diversified to "patriotism is respecting authority" (Westheimer, 2006). This shows that the people need to obey and respect the authorities, i.e. they should not question any behaviour of the authorities. In addition, activities such as pasting stickers on vehicles urging love of the country and waving the national flag along the road in the city and the rural areas are also carried out on a large scale. Such a scenario is the basis for each type of patriotism to express their respective patriotism.

Accordingly, the study of Schatz and Staub (1997) in developing a constructive scale of patriotism that is more generally accepted can be interpreted as balancing the principle of value-based clan ego-centric patriotism. Constructive patriotism refers to the feeling of love for the country characterized by critical loyalty based on the principle of "questioning and criticizing" the country because it wants the country to change in a more positive direction. In this context, patriots can accept criticism of their homeland if that aspect benefits their country. For example, "I oppose some national policies because I care about my country and want to develop it." This group, at certain times, will feel angry and ashamed of the actions of their country's leaders on something. However, they still love their country. Schatz and Staub assert that such groups have the characteristics of a mature democracy. In fact, according to Richey (2011), constructive patriotism is able to increase people's civic participation. In this context, reckless patriotism can undermine civic participation because it denies people's right to express themselves. Civic participation means that the people also participate in the national political process, such as political discussions, voting, community activities, and concern about issues related to the state or the country. Therefore, it is clear that the people's civic participation, especially in matters related to politics, can shape them to be more critical of the country, thus avoiding reckless patriotism. This is because the groups will judge whether what is happening in the country is good or otherwise. The purpose is for the good of the country



and the people who live in it. In this context, every citizen needs to have true patriotism that is limited and balanced with moral values and knowledge as a boundary line. This kind of patriotism is known as fair patriotism (Nor, 2005). Elements of morals and knowledge that limit patriotism can prevent the outbreak of extreme emotional attitudes towards the country (Ku Hasnita et al., 2021). Therefore, the patriotic spirit can be placed in the right place by relying on the historical experience and traditions of the homeland. Accordingly, a citizen who has fair patriotism will support all efforts made by the government for the prosperity and well-being of the country.

In addition, patriotism is also often associated with nationalism. Abdul Latif (1998) describes nationalism as a form of sentiment among the inhabitants of a certain region. This sentiment can be seen when the people of a region use certain symbols such as borders and capitals to determine the state of the nation, national personality, citizenship, national language, economy, culture and art, flag, national anthem and so on. He explained that nationalism could be understood as a movement of consciousness that focuses on determining one's destiny, the nation and the country to achieve freedom and well-being and cultivate true individuality. This response results from colonial pressure and policies against fellow citizens that are planned so that they feel weak, have no identity and fall behind in various fields such as social, economics, politics and culture. Thus, the lifespan of colonialism will be longer, and it will be easy to suppress any opposition to the colonial power. So the movement of nationalism led to the return of the ability of the natives in various aspects that were disabled by the colonialists. The movement of nationalism must be based on the spirit of love for the country or patriotism found in their souls. Without the feeling of love and willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the country, the nationalist movement would not exist.

Furthermore, Kohn (1967) asserted that human feelings of love for their place of origin, fondness for their customs and food and strong loyalty to their religion and ancestry would provide the foundations for the birth and growth of nationalism. Kohn's statement shows that one of the basic aspects that support patriotism is that the spirit of love for the country existed before the idea of nationalism. This is proven through the study of Ongkili (1975), who found that the spirit of nationalism began to spread in Europe in the 18th century. However, the spirit of nationalism in Southeast Asia was firmly rooted in the 20th century. Meanwhile, Smith (1971) stated that elements of patriotism have existed since ancient times. Therefore, it is clear that nationalism is the result of the development of the patriotism elements, which is the motherland's spirit of love and defence.

Accordingly, many scholars define nationalism according to their respective views. For example, Kohn (1965 & 1967) described nationalism as an idea that permeates the minds and souls of the people with new thoughts and sentiments related to loyalty to the nation-state. He recognized the nation-state as a superior form of political organization and the nation as the source of all cultural life that builds and the source of economic well-being. In this regard, Kohn placed nationalism as a fundamental element in forming a complex nation-state. Its members are bound by factors that distinguish themselves from other nation-states, such as language, territorial boundaries, customary politics, tradition and religion. In addition, he emphasized that the emergence of nationalism as a mature concept involves the recognition of the idea of people's sovereignty. His statement is equivalent to the

concept of the nation-state itself, a common culture shared by a group of people who have historical and cultural ties and live in one region. These regions are defined by national borders and have national laws and cultures. (Bogdanor, 1993).

While Coleman (1960), in his study of the nationalism movement in Nigeria, defined nationalism as feelings, activities and organizational development that aim to move towards self-government and fight for the independence of Nigeria to be on par with other nation-states in an international political system. In other words, the movement of nationalism arose from the strong will among Nigerians to regain their basic rights as an independent sovereign nation. Accordingly, Fallers (1961) sees nationalism as an ideological commitment to achieve unity, independence and the people's interests. Based on the excerpts from the scholars' statements above, it is clear that nationalism includes elements related to the ideology of nation-state formation, language, customs, traditions and the struggle to achieve independence. At the same time, Scruton (1982) explained that patriotism involves aspects related to emotions such as the spirit of love for the country, willingness to sacrifice to defend the sovereignty, political institutions and laws of the country from being invaded by foreign powers. Accordingly, patriotism acts as a synergy and driving force for physical action in realizing the goal of having a sovereign country. Thus, patriotism is a proper defence for preserving identity and the survival of a nation or a country.

Therefore, it can be concluded that patriotism includes emotions that are the essence of nationalism. For example, in a country that strives to achieve independence, every citizen should have a high level of love for their own country. Therefore, they are willing to make sacrifices, use all their energy and efforts for the country's sake, and put the interests of the country's sovereignty above their own. Without strong patriotism, the independence of a country is in danger. However, in the context of a country that has achieved independence, it does not mean that patriotism's importance has ended because it is the driving force or momentum for efforts to achieve and maintain independence. For example, in Malaysia, as a country with heterogeneous characteristics, the spirit must be continuously nurtured and even strengthened from time to time and from generation to generation in order to maintain and defend the independence of the country, especially in facing a threat to the integrity of the concept of the nation-state in the present or better known as the age of globalization or a world without borders. This threat is no longer limited to the dimension of military power alone but is now present in various dimensions, such as the economic and cultural.

In this regard, Saifuddin (2005) emphasized that strengthening patriotism is necessary to face various forms of new colonialism, such as Pax Americana which can threaten the independence of a country. His statement describes the agenda of neo-imperialism that is sweeping across the world along with the era of globalization. This kind of phenomenon causes the boundaries between regions, time and space to become less meaningful. Therefore, in such a situation, the strengthening of patriotism is increasingly needed by every country that wants to defend the survival of its respective country in a real situation, not to be a puppet of another country or a more dominant transnational company.

## **Conclusion**

Every citizen must understand the various dimensions of patriotism so that the spirit of love

for the country can be well appreciated and inspired. A deep understanding of patriotism will prevent citizens from being influenced by blind or reckless patriotism. If a citizen is stuck with blind patriotism that leads to fanaticism, it will have a negative impact on the unity and image of the country. For example, the conflict will occur if one ethnic group declares that they are the greatest and belittles or ridicules other ethnic groups. Such a situation does not show the patriotic spirit of those involved. Still, it shows their unpatriotic attitude because it creates provocations that can trigger fights and conflicts between ethnic groups in a country. Likewise, if the citizens of a country are too obsessed with their country and belittle other countries because they feel that their country is the greatest, in that case, it will have a bad effect on the country's dignity as well as diplomatic relations between the two countries. Similarly, if a person loves his country so much and feels that all the actions and policies of the government are correct, but the people are oppressed through the implementation of those policies. Therefore, the reality is that he does not love his country because he does not criticize the government that oppresses the people. If such cases are allowed to continue, the situation will negatively impact the country and its people. Thus, true patriotism does not go beyond its limits. It must focus on aspects of morality, religious foundations, and national history and be critical and constructive. Due to the lack of analysis on the dimension of patriotism by other scholars, this paper is expected to help readers identify true patriotism for the country's sake. Interested researchers can analyze the dimensions of patriotism in other more specific forms, such as case studies.

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