

PANCASILA AS THE ETHIC OF PEACE IN INDONESIA'S INDEPENDENT AND ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY (1945-2024)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze Pancasila within the framework of philosophical discourse, emphasizing its ethical dimensions and its role in promoting peace. The doctrine of the Independent and Active Foreign Policy serves as Indonesia's principal vision, striving to embody the principles, ideals, and aspirations for a more peaceful, just, and civilized global society. Employing a qualitative research methodology anchored in philosophical inquiry. The conceptual framework is developed through philosophical discourses on ethics and peace including from Levinas, Galtung and other related perspectives. This study systematically and reflectively examines Pancasila as the ethical foundation for peace, exploring its pertinence to the evolution and dynamics of Indonesian foreign policy from 1945 to 2024. The findings indicate that Pancasila functions as both the ideological foundation and a moral framework for Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly in promoting peace. Implementing this policy requires a deep understanding of peace as an aspirational goal, moving beyond rhetoric to further societal change. As the ethic of peace, Pancasila renders Indonesia's foreign policy adaptable to varying international dynamics while emphasizing the importance of domestic diversity experiences as a vital asset in managing the intricacies of international relations.

Keywords: ethic of peace; independent-active foreign policy; Indonesia; Pancasila

PANCASILA SEBAGAI ETIKA PERDAMAIAN DALAM KEBIJAKAN LUAR NEGERI BEBAS-AKTIF INDONESIA (1945-2024)

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini berupaya melakukan analisis komprehensif terhadap Pancasila dalam kerangka wacana filosofis, dengan menekankan dimensi etisnya dan perannya dalam memelihara perdamaian. Doktrin Kebijakan Luar Negeri yang Bebas dan Aktif berfungsi sebagai visi utama Indonesia, berupaya mewujudkan prinsip, cita-cita, dan aspirasi untuk masyarakat global yang lebih damai, adil, dan beradab. Dengan menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif yang berlandaskan pada kajian filosofis. Kerangka konseptual dikembangkan melalui diskursus filosofis mengenai etika dan perdamaian seperti dari Levinas, Galtung dan pandangan lainnya yang terkait. Studi ini secara sistematis dan reflektif mengkaji Pancasila sebagai landasan etis untuk perdamaian, mengeksplorasi relevansinya terhadap evolusi dan dinamika kebijakan luar negeri Indonesia dari tahun 1945 hingga 2024. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Pancasila berfungsi sebagai landasan ideologis dan kerangka moral bagi kebijakan luar negeri Indonesia, khususnya dalam mempromosikan perdamaian. Implementasi kebijakan ini membutuhkan pemahaman mendalam tentang perdamaian sebagai tujuan aspiratif, melampaui retorika untuk mendorong perubahan sosial. Sebagai etika perdamaian, Pancasila menjadikan kebijakan luar negeri Indonesia mampu beradaptasi dengan dinamika internasional yang beragam, sekaligus menekankan pentingnya pengalaman keragaman domestik sebagai aset vital dalam mengelola kompleksitas hubungan internasional.

Kata kunci: etika perdamaian; Indonesia; kebijakan luar negeri bebas aktif; Pancasila

INTRODUCTION

Since its independence, Indonesia has grappled with core issues related to its identity, sovereignty, and standing on the world stage. Right after proclaimed as a nation-state, Indonesia positioned itself as an active member of the international community, emphasizing an anti-colonial stance advocating for global peace and order, as articulated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, highlights an awareness that Indonesia's emergence as a nation is closely connected to the broader interna-

tional community. The country's unique identity is rooted in noble values that unite and preserve its diversity, notably Pancasila. In his 1953 writings on Indonesian foreign policy, Mohammad Hatta stressed that peace is an integral part of Indonesia as a nation with Pancasila serving as the foundation for this mindset.

The history of Indonesia's nation building is shaped by both internal and external challenges. Pancasila functions as the official foundation of the state and embodies Indonesian values, influencing the national order and foreign policy. The founders

of Indonesia established a peaceful, diverse society through Pancasila in 1945 (Darmaputera, 1987). As the guiding ideology, it offers a philosophical basis grounded in principles of humanity, justice, unity, deliberation, and social justice, which hold international importance. Since gaining independence, these principles have supported Indonesia's foreign policy of active and independent diplomacy. The founders' efforts to decolonize and foster peace embody the nation's spirit of liberation.

Pancasila faces challenges, especially internal political struggles impacting its foreign policy. During the New Order, Soeharto promoted Democracy Pancasila as a central ideology, blending domestic and international values. However, the regime's policies were monolithic and resistant to alternatives (Morfit, 1981). In the Reformation, Pancasila experienced marginalization within public discourse and policy, often coinciding with globalization and liberalization. However, it has been repositioned as a vital normative framework capable of addressing global issues such as conflicts, humanitarian crisis, and geopolitical tensions. This underscores its ongoing relevance, though requiring contextual interpretation. Additionally, disintegration phenomenon, exemplified by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, raising concerns about state integrity. As Indonesia's foundational ideology promoting peace, dignity, and sovereignty, it is crucial to assess whether Pancasila remains a resilient social contract amid globalization's challenges and Indonesia's pursuit of international peace (Rosyidin, 2017).

Pancasila has been widely examined from various philosophical viewpoints, especially as the foundation of the state, a national ideology, and a source of values in both national and state life including Notonagoro (1983) and his early works, Kaelan (2013), Magnis-Suseno (2016b) and other studies. These analyses generally frame Pancasila within political and social philosophy. Several studies on foreign policy mentioned Pancasila such as Sukma (1995), Weatherbee (1985, 2005), Perwita (2007). A book from Wuli (2020) is the closer study to peace, ethics and Pancasila. Yet, researches that particularly remark Pancasila as an ethic of peace in the context of Indonesian foreign policy remains relatively limited. This article views Indonesian foreign policy as an expression of political culture grounded in Pancasila's values. Therefore, foreign policy is seen not just as state conduct at the international level but also as a cultural practice embodying the worldview and ethics of Indonesian society. Currently, most studies on Indonesian foreign policy focus on strategic, diplomatic, or ideo-

logical aspects, while its ethical dimension has not been sufficiently explored.

This article examines Pancasila as an ethic of peace and assesses its significance within Indonesia's Independent and Active Foreign Policy. Utilizing a philosophical framework, it demonstrates that Pancasila transcends being merely a national ideology, serving as an ethical foundation that guides Indonesia in cultivating peaceful international relations.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method with a philosophical inquiry to understand the meaning, values, and ethical foundations underlying Indonesian foreign policy. The philosophical approach assisted researchers to examine Pancasila as a living system of values and ethics and reflect on its relevance in the practice of Indonesian foreign policy. The systematic-reflective framework commonly used in philosophical research to examine concepts, ideas, and values in depth through systematic exploration and critical reflection (Bakker & Zubair, 1990). The conceptual framework is developed through philosophical discourses on ethics and peace including from Levinas, Galtung, and other related perspectives. Through this method, the concept of the ethics of peace and the values of Pancasila are analyzed sequentially and placed within a coherent framework. Primary sources include several classical and contemporary texts in the fields of philosophy and ethics. In addition, official state documents related to Pancasila and Indonesian foreign policy were also used as research materials. Secondary sources included books, scientific journal articles, and previous research relevant to the themes of ethics, peace, and foreign policy. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies by tracing, reviewing, and comparing various relevant sources. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively and analytically, emphasizing the interpretation of meaning and relationships between concepts. Data validity was maintained through the use of credible reference sources recognized in the scientific tradition, as well as through the consistency of argumentation developed throughout the analysis (Kaelan, 2013). Through this process, the research seeks to demonstrate how Pancasila can be understood as an ethical framework that guides the orientation and practice of Indonesian foreign policy in efforts to build peace.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pancasila as the Ethic of Peace

This study recognizes that peace is more than just the absence of conflict; it is an ethical condition that requires acknowledgment of human dignity and equitable relations among individuals and nations. While peace is often viewed as the absence of war or violence, in political philosophy and ethics, it is frequently seen as the outcome of a normative framework that considers humans moral agents (Bobko, 2024; Dar, 2017; Magnis-Suseno, 2016a). Consequently, this research sees peace as an ongoing process rooted in ethical commitments to humanity, justice, and dialogue. Instead of solely exploring theories of peace ethics, it also incorporates philosophical reflection by examining Pancasila as a distinctive Indonesian normative synthesis.

In Western philosophical discourse, Thomas Hobbes posits that peace emerges from a social contract rooted in human apprehension of the state of *bellum omnium contra omnes* (Hobbes, 1998; Thivet, 2008). This paradigm underpins the theoretical framework of Realism within International Relations. Hobbes elucidates the genesis of the social contract through an ethical analysis bifurcated into two domains: ethics concerning human nature, which aligns with contemporary psychological understanding, that human conduct is motivated by an innate drive for self-preservation; and the consequent observation that human beings see relationship with others as “war of all against all.” Nevertheless, this natural condition exacerbates the threat to human survival, thereby necessitating the formation of a collective agreement to evade such peril and establish peace. Ethical considerations thus function as mechanisms to mitigate inherent natural tensions and sustain survival prospects, culminating in the state’s central role. Hobbes’s Moral and Political Philosophy are thus integrally intertwined, emphasizing the state’s role as the primary guarantor of order (Branstetter, 2017; Wawrzonkowski, 2024). This perspective confines peace within the political-institutional domain, where the state assumes authority to uphold order. Hobbes construes ethics predominantly as an extension of state power, leaving limited scope for the ethical dimension of interpersonal relations, which are inherently dialogical and accountable.

Immanuel Kant, through his concept of “perpetual peace,” highlighted the significance of law, rationality, and an orderly international relations founded on universal moral principles (Bourke, 1942; Kant, 1980). Kant recognized that war and

the potential for war cannot be completely eradicated. Since the possibility of war cannot be entirely eliminated from human existence, it is still possible to establish and maintain conditions where war becomes unnecessary. For Kant, human as rational-being build their capacity for moral agency based on ethics that regard humans “as ends in themselves.” His ideas facilitated the understanding of peace as a global ethical sustainable endeavor that necessitates respect for human dignity and compliance with shared moral norms (Corvino, 2019; Kant, 1980). In this respect, peace transcends mere political agreement to encompass normative and moral dimensions.

Two contemporary philosophers, Eric Weil and Emmanuel Levinas, present important contributions on the philosophy of peace discourses. Weil offers an insightful approach that has been mentioned by Levinas (1998). He delineates two principal points in conceptualization of peace: first, that humans are fundamentally rational beings who inherently prefer peaceful conditions, and that the human capacity to transition from potential to actual through dialogue can catalyze further change; second, that this capacity enables the transformation of conflict and violence into peaceful outcomes through rational discourse, emphasizing the necessity for ideas to attain tangible realization. According to Weil, philosophy becomes truly meaningful only when it actively engages with real-world experiences (Taufiq, 2021; Wuli, 2020; Yiaueki, 2023).

Like Weil, who reflected on the experience of being a victim of war, Levinas offers a contemplative perspective on peace. In his seminal work *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas raises questions about the nature of morality as an aspect that should distinguish humans from other creatures, suggesting that it can be excluded, manipulated, or removed in any situation, including wartime. This prompts an exploration of whether morality is an intrinsic element of human nature or merely a tool that holds significance only when it serves certain interests. Levinas observes that Western philosophy often frames war as a fundamental aspect of existence, describing “the realm of being as the state of war” (Lao, 2008; Levinas, 1969). This perspective invites us to consider how morality has been downplayed and how issues of human relations in wartime are often reduced to political calculations, raising deeper questions about the true essence of ethical life.

There are several important considerations when examining Levinas’s perspective on peace, particularly within the broader context of ethics and

inter-subjectivity. Both war and peace inherently presuppose inter-subjectivity, the relationships among subjects, and the coexistence within a structured order, which situates them within the realm of “the political” (Drabinski, 2000). Peace, in this framework, can be associated with ethical discourse because both are intertwined with ideals of goodness. From Levinas’s viewpoint, peace is not merely a goal (*telos*) to be achieved through the cessation of conflict; it also serves as a foundational starting point that shapes human capacity to define their objectives. Peace thus encompasses both ethical and political dimensions, illustrating that morality and politics are not mutually exclusive in the conception of peace. It is a condition enabling human beings to exist in the world, to engage with others, and to act for others. This condition is characterized by an emphasis on otherness; in a pluralistic world, humans are inherently oriented toward goodness and communal life. Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophy advances the discourse on the ethics of peace by emphasizing the primacy of the relationship with the Other as the core of ethical responsibility. According to Levinas, responsibility towards the Other supersedes self-interest or political calculation, asserting that ethics originate not from law or contracts but from an encounter with the face of the Other. This perspective underlines that peace is grounded in an ethical responsibility that is asymmetrical and precedes national interests (Alford, 2004; Bernasconi, 2008; Levinas, 1969).

In contemporary peace studies, Johan Galtung distinguishes between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, while positive peace emphasizes social justice and non-oppressive structures (Galtung, 1969). This distinction suggests that true peace is measured not only by political stability but also by sustainable justice and prosperity. Another highly relevant work by Galtung is on peace as an inherent part of Social Cosmology. The formation of all social groups, whether religious, political, or other entities, presupposes an innate commitment to peace, tied to the formation of the group’s worldview. Furthermore, the formation of a shared worldview and norms is made possible by a belief in the value of peace itself. This worldview is influenced by other aspects of experience, resulting in differing formulations of peace. In Western societies, peace is generally viewed through the dynamic opposition between the in-group and out-group (Us and Them). In Eastern traditions, peace at the subjective level is characterized by inner peace, while at the community level it refers to a state of harmony (Galtung, 1981).

Pancasila aligns with the Eastern Hemisphere’s tendency to view peace as the harmonization of differences without eliminating them. This contrasts with the Western perspective, which frames peace within a highly dichotomous in-group/out-group context. Pancasila is not only the basis for peace limited to the absence of conflict but also the realization of a just and civilized humanity and social justice. In Galtung’s view, this aligns with positive peace, which presupposes the absence of violence and structural injustice. From a Levinasian Ethics perspective, Pancasila was born from inter-subjective relations grounded in welcoming others in hospitality. Pancasila is an ethic of peace because its entire existence presupposes peace as the core of communal life and serves as a beacon that continuously points toward peace. Pancasila as an Ethic of Peace in Indonesia’s Foreign Policy vision can be seen in at least two important commitments: to the justice agenda and the inclusivity agenda.

Based on the conceptual review above, Pancasila emerges as a profound value system rooted in the principles of peaceful coexistence. As a national guidance, it embodies essential values: divinity, humanity, unity, deliberation, and social justice, that support peaceful relations both within Indonesia and on the international stage (Kaelan, 2013; Notonagoro, 1983). More than just a set of formal state norms, Pancasila functions as a vibrant social ethic woven into Indonesia’s cultural fabric (Magnis-Suseno, 2016b). These values serve as a moral compass, shaping Indonesian foreign policy not merely as a pursuit of national interests but as an expression of moral commitment. Our study’s conceptual framework integrates the philosophy of peace with Pancasila’s normative values, providing a lens through which to understand Indonesia’s independent and active foreign policy as an authentic reflection of its cultural and ethical outlook.

Pancasila in Indonesian Foreign Policy

Since independence, Indonesia’s foreign policy has been based on a “Independent and Active” principle, aimed at safeguarding sovereignty and expressing moral stance amid international dynamics. Technically, it means the freedom to choose positions and be active in global forums. Ethically, it reflects Indonesia’s effort to independently and responsibly promote world peace. Hatta (1953) highlighted this as non-alignment during the Cold War, rooted in Pancasila values. These include “Belief in One Almighty God,” emphasizing transcendence, and “Just and Civilized Humanity,” stressing respect for human dignity. Though often discussed in

domestic contexts, these values underpin Indonesia's responses to conflict, crises, and injustice in foreign relations.

In Indonesia's early independence period, this ethical stance was evident in its rejection of dominance by great powers and colonialism in any form. The 1955 Asia-Africa Conference (AAC) exemplifies Indonesia's active effort to promote international solidarity rooted in humanity and justice. As part of its peace ethics, the AAC reflects Pancasila values promoting dialogue, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence among nations affected by colonialism (Legge, 2003). Indonesia also engaged in international peace through foreign aid and the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Other than AAC 1955, Indonesia was proactive in initiating international forums, including 1961 Non-Aligned Movement, launched by Indonesia, India, Egypt, Ghana, and Yugoslavia. The Djuanda Declaration on December 13, 1957, in Jakarta proclaimed Indonesia's sovereignty over its maritime sector as an archipelagic state, influencing the evolution of International Law of the Sea under UNCLOS. Indonesia also participated in GANEFO 1963, promoting sports solidarity. This event later initiated the Jakarta-Pyongyang-Peking Axis in 1964-1965, uniting Indonesia, China, and North Korea in an anti-imperialist alliance. Ironically, the New Order government later exploited the joint activities of these communist nations to justify Sukarno's support for communism, which was viewed as contrary to Pancasila (Kroef, 1970; Perwita, 2007; Sukma, 1995).

In later developments, Pancasila's ethical principles continued to shape Indonesian foreign policy, even as the global landscape became more complex. From this viewpoint, Indonesian diplomacy goes beyond mere politics; it also expresses the nation's core values and collective identity on the world stage. During the reform era, Indonesia actively participated in international forums and peace missions. While often seen as efforts to enhance Indonesia's global image, these actions can also be viewed as embodying peace ethics rooted in Pancasila's dedication to humanity and global justice.

Emmanuel Levinas's perspective helps deepen the ethical understanding of foreign policy practices. Responsibility for the Other, as emphasized by Levinas (1969), can be translated in the context of international relations as moral sensitivity to the suffering of other nations. Thus, foreign policy is not solely oriented toward national interests but also toward ethical responsibility to the global community. Galtung (1969) distinction between nega-

tive and positive peace is also relevant to understanding Indonesian foreign policy. Indonesia's involvement in UN peacekeeping missions, humanitarian diplomacy, and conflict mediation efforts demonstrates that Indonesia seeks not only to prevent direct violence but also to promote the creation of conditions of justice and prosperity as prerequisites for sustainable peace. Therefore, Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy can be understood as a manifestation of the ethics of peace derived from the values of Pancasila. Pancasila serves as a moral compass that guides Indonesian foreign policy, preventing it from being trapped in the logic of power alone and keeping it grounded in the principles of humanity, justice, and global solidarity.

President Soeharto firmly maintained that Indonesia was committed to Pancasila Democracy. Weatherbee (1985) explored whether the New Order truly implemented this vision. Domestically, this was evident in the party system and community organizations that had to uphold Pancasila values to participate in political processes or contests. In reality, efforts focused on identifying political parties and civil society groups under government control. Weatherbee also contrasted the foreign policies of Presidents Sukarno and Soeharto. Sukarno, deeply familiar with Western political ideas and often inspired by them, was openly critical and confrontational toward Western countries at negotiations and international forums. In contrast, Soeharto viewed Pancasila as the pure ideology of Indonesia, untainted and resistant to Western secular influences and claimed to be uncompromising. In practice, however, Soeharto was quite flexible in international diplomacy. During his era, domestic Pancasila Democracy and Cold War geopolitics directed Indonesia's foreign policy, emphasizing economic development and regional stability. Indonesia's anti-communist stance played a pivotal role in strengthening ties with the Western Bloc during the Cold War, boosting economic cooperation with Western nations and allies (Jemadu et al., 2004 in Perwita, 2007).

The New Order government claimed to uphold the principle of "Independent and Active" in its foreign policy, but data and facts suggest a different interpretation than during Sukarno's era. Nonetheless, notable achievements include Indonesia's success in establishing territorial boundaries for archipelagic nations through UNCLOS in 1982, led by then-Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja. This victory not only confirmed Indonesia's territorial integrity, as detailed in the Archipelagic Outlook, but also laid a legal foundation for other

archipelagic nations (Sjawie, 1998). This was partly due to Soeharto's willingness to empower qualified figures to carry out foreign policy. While internally, Soeharto relied on military networks for political control across various sectors, in foreign affairs, many civilian professionals and intellectuals were entrusted with diplomatic roles.

The collapse of Soeharto's regime after 32 years in power marked the inception of the Reformation Era. His successor, Habibie, confronted a multitude of complex challenges across various sectors. Public legitimacy for the nascent government was notably low, primarily due to perceptions that it represented a last-ditch effort by supporters of the New Order to preserve their hold on power. Indonesia experienced the most severe economic crisis among Southeast Asian nations at the time. Despite a short tenure, Habibie achieved a significant recovery from the economic downturn, which was unexpected given the limited duration of his administration. Nevertheless, he faced continued public pressure to expedite the holding of elections and to establish a new government untainted by the influence of the New Order.

President Habibie was burdened with the legacy of the New Order. He did not explicitly highlight Pancasila in his domestic or foreign policies. His diplomatic efforts focused more on alleviating the economic crisis and addressing the East Timor referendum and human rights issues. Dewi Fortuna Anwar highlighted key legacies of Habibie's brief but consequential administration, which facilitated a peaceful political transition. She noted that Habibie recognized Indonesia's need for swift and fundamental change while maintaining constitutional integrity and transparency. He also strongly supported freedom and civil rights through various policies. Additionally, he promoted political liberalization, emphasizing democratic elections and limiting presidential terms. Habibie also initiated decentralization to promote justice nationwide. For his supporters, East Timor's independence was seen not as a failure but as proof Indonesia had evolved into a nation respecting human rights internationally, thus enhancing its global standing (Anwar, 2010).

Habibie constitutionally transferred the presidency after the 1999 general election. After a series of rigorous procedures within the MPR, on October 20, 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid, commonly known as Gusdur, assumed the presidency, with Megawati Soekarno Putri serving as Vice President despite her party garnering one of the highest number of votes in the election. Gusdur was renowned as a cleric, intellectual, and a commendable leader of

the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), who was also highly critical during the New Order period. His criticism was not directed at rejecting Pancasila per se, but rather against its instrumentalization, which undermined the authentic order of Indonesia as a society characterized by pluralism. For Gus Dur, Pancasila must be actively defended to sustain the unity of the nation amidst diversity, a principle cherished since independence (Wahid, 1990). Gus Dur is regarded as the Father of Indonesian Pluralism, advocating for the dignity of humanity and the pursuit of peace without eradicating social, political, or religious identities (Welem, 2023).

Abdurrahman Wahid's administration ended on July 23, 2001, failing to complete its first five-year term. It faced criticism for poor communication with state institutions, cabinet members, and in international forums. The cabinet was seen as ineffective due to lack of cooperation and contradictory statements (Budiman, 2001). Despite public euphoria over a new democratic era, his government confronted an economic crisis and separatism. His foreign policy was criticized for being unfocused (Smith, 2000), yet he remains unique as the only president to consistently promote human rights and inclusivity domestically and internationally (Jemadu et al., 2004 in Perwita, 2007). As president, Abdurrahman Wahid left a legacy of strengthening national identity based on human rights. Gus Dur supported marginalized groups, like ethnic Chinese and victims of Soeharto's anti-Communist policies. His liberal stance was criticized by some Islamic groups, sparking movements for religious moderation and Nusantara Islam (Franklin, 2024; Kuntjara & Hoon, 2020; Welem, 2023).

In 2001, a report from the International Crisis Group (ICG) examined the early years of President Megawati's tenure amid doubts about her leadership as Indonesia's first female president. Overall, Megawati demonstrated considerable ability to manage internal crises, assuaging fears that her administration would be as ineffective as Gus Dur's. Society felt relieved as potential horizontal conflicts, stemming from clashes between Gus Dur's supporters and opponents, as well as military trauma, were ultimately avoided. The ICG also noted that Megawati had a clear, focused plan for forming her government. While she was closely associated with nationalist rhetoric, her policymaking appeared grounded in rational decisions aimed at stabilizing the nation after the transfer of power.

Scholars and human rights activists voiced concerns about the revival of traumatic memories of political and social conflicts and the misuse of Pancasila by those in power. During Megawati's era,

efforts to revive Pancasila as a tool to rebuild national understanding of diversity and tolerance gained momentum, especially amid rising terrorism and intolerance. Military figures, recognizing its importance, also supported revitalization (Bourchier, 2019). In one hand, Megawati faced criticism for her militaristic approach to domestic conflicts. In the other hand, she addressed these challenges through policies aimed at strengthening democratic institutions like KPK, the Corruption Eradication Commission. Interestingly, Megawati adopted an intermestic approach to foreign policy, revamping the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while also involving civil society in diplomatic activities (Nubowo, 2023; Jemadu et al., 2004 in Perwita, 2007; Weatherbee, 2005).

SBY expressed views on Pancasila differently from the New Order by framing it as a 'Living Ideology' rather than sacralizing or dogmatizing it. However, observers noted the strong influence of New Order political thought in his approach, emphasizing harmony, balance, and a focus on stability and order, all within the framework of Pancasila Democracy promoted during both the Soeharto and SBY eras (Aspinall et al., 2015; Tyson & Nawawi, 2022). In SBY's political perspective, Pancasila was mainly seen through the lens of counter-terrorism efforts domestically and internationally. Other initiatives were viewed as merely efforts to craft a positive image, with little emphasis on their substantive content.

In the international arena, SBY is recognized as a statesman who has received significant praise, including from Barack Obama in 2014, who noted that SBY was a leader with a democratic vision and successfully guided Indonesia through its transition. This served as a basis for SBY and his supporters to dismiss claims of democratic stagnation or criticism, which argued that democracy under his leadership was returning to a procedural rather than substantive form similar to the New Order era. SBY was active in promoting peace under the principle of Thousand Friends Zero Enemies, including sending UN peacekeeping troops to various conflict zones. However, these accomplishments did not prevent negative perceptions from developing in his second term, which was marked by the resurgence of dynastic politics and a rise in corruption, collusion, and nepotism trends (Fealy, 2008). This critique is supported by data showing fluctuations or declines in various global rankings during his tenure, as well as the enactment of Law No. 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions, which led to a decrease in the freedom of speech index near the end of his term. The UNDP Human

Development Index in 2005 and 2011 reveals that GDP growth did not necessarily translate into improved public welfare (Aspinall et al., 2015; Can, 2011; Hamid, 2019). SBY was the first president during the Reformation era to complete two consecutive terms. Despite constitutional changes allowing for longer presidential terms, SBY actively sought to maintain his political influence, supporting Prabowo from the National Mandate Party (PAN), his in-law, and Hatta Rajasa, to run in the 2014 presidential election against Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla, his former vice president.

Joko Widodo's leadership initially uplifted optimism for the revival of Pancasila discourse, characterized by a more comprehensive and non-reductionist ethical framework reminiscent of the era during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency. In the beginning, Pancasila promoted as an inclusive value embodied as a political consensus. This optimistic outlook galvanized support among certain intellectual circles, as well as democracy and human rights advocates, who expressed their willingness to actively engage with and support the Jokowi administration. This period saw the re-opening of dialogues concerning human rights violations and a civilian leadership committed to genuine justice and prosperity, exemplified by initiatives such as the Mental Revolution Program. However, criticisms emerged alleging that the program, which entailed expenditures amounting to trillions of rupiah, ultimately devolved into rhetorical slogans. The program is ineffective in addressing the structural challenges and called for more rigorous evaluation and tangible actions to prevent these initiatives from being perceived as empty rhetoric (Medcom.id, 2023).

During his first term, foreign policy mainly focused on supporting economic development and maritime sovereignty issue. Many hope that President Joko Widodo's second term will deliver on promises related to justice and human rights (Connelly, 2015; Sebastian & Chen, 2021). Unfortunately, the term was largely dominated by policies addressing the Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged months after Jokowi's inauguration for his second term. In the early stages of the pandemic, Indonesia faced severe challenges in both spread and containment (Mietzner, 2021). Nonetheless, from the second year onward, Indonesia was considered to have performed relatively well globally in managing the pandemic, notably actively contributing to vaccine procurement efforts for under developing countries. Indonesia received international praise from organizations like WHO and other nations, including G-20 members (Independent Observer, 2023;

Tempo, 2021). President Jokowi often credited Indonesia's success in controlling the pandemic to the nation's Pancasila-based character. Mutual cooperation across government levels and communities was crucial in implementing measures to combat COVID-19, significantly reducing its spread and impact (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2022).

The management of the Covid-19 pandemic represents, on one hand, a notable achievement of President Jokowi; however, it has also been utilized as a discourse catalyst suggesting that his second term was suboptimal due to the pandemic's impact. Certain support groups have begun advocating for the continuation of Jokowi's leadership into a third term, emphasizing the importance of his ongoing presidency (Kompas.com, 2022). This idea has elicited significant controversy, primarily because it challenges the constitutional framework established by the 1945 Constitution, which was amended during the early reform era to limit the Indonesian presidency to two terms. The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), under the leadership of Megawati Soekarnoputri, has explicitly rejected this notion on the grounds of constitutional inconsistency and democratic principles, thereby exacerbating tensions with Jokowi (CNBC Indonesia, 2024). Later, Jokowi publicly supported his former rival, Prabowo Subianto in pairing with his eldest son. This event marked the nadir of Indonesian democracy since the reform era (Petlach & Řičánová, 2025).

The analysis of presidents whose terms have concluded, from Sukarno to Joko Widodo, illustrates the dynamics of interpreting Pancasila, particularly in the formulation and implementation of Indonesian foreign policy. The interpretation has developed alongside the "Independent and Active" principles, which have remained a foundational vision shared across successive administrations. Another preserved tradition is the reliance on diplomatic representatives from intellectual and professional backgrounds, as evidenced by the roster of foreign ministers from independence through to 2024. Notably, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exemplifies a governmental institution characterized by high professionalism and a meritocracy-based organizational culture. This underscores a profound commitment to positioning Indonesian foreign policy as an essential component of national identity and sovereignty. This tradition has enabled Indonesian diplomats to elevate the country's standing on the global stage, fostering recognition and respect.

The distinctions among each leader's approach were significantly shaped by the prevailing domes-

tic and international contexts during their respective tenures. Within the framework of Pancasila as the Ethic of Peace, these differences manifested through a steadfast commitment to justice and inclusivity — foundational principles of Indonesia's Independent and Active Foreign Policy, grounded in the notion of human brotherhood. The Sukarno administration, supported by prominent intellectual figures, pioneered this vision and persistently implemented policies aligning with decolonization efforts and the pursuit of a more inclusive global order. In contrast, during the Soeharto era, such commitments became more procedural, characterized by participation in international forums that nonetheless often aligned with the political agendas of First World nations. The subsequent administrations of B.J. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri represented a continuum of agendas centered on justice and inclusivity, incorporating the development of human rights discourses in domestic and international contexts. Under the leadership of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo, Indonesia's engagement with global peace and order appeared to revert to rhetorical exhibition, reflecting a shift toward political branding rather than substantive action. This analysis demonstrates that a robust political commitment, embodying professionalism, and a comprehensive understanding of justice and inclusivity, fundamentally influences the manifestation of Pancasila as the ethic of peace within Indonesia's foreign policy paradigm.

CONCLUSION

This research illustrates that Pancasila should be interpreted not solely as a foundational principle of the Indonesian state or as a national ideology, but also as an ethical framework underpinning peace, with particular relevance to Indonesia's foreign policy practices. The core values embedded in Pancasila—belief in divinity, humanism, unity, deliberation, and social justice—embody ethical principles that can inform Indonesia's diplomatic attitudes and strategies in engaging with the international community. Employing a philosophical methodology complemented by a systematic-reflective approach, this study posits that Indonesia's Independent and Active Foreign Policy is not merely a pragmatic means of safeguarding national interests but also a reflection of an ethical commitment to peace, justice, and human dignity. From this perspective, Indonesian foreign policy can be conceptualized as a form of moral praxis aimed at

harmonizing political sovereignty with global responsibility.

Interpreting Pancasila as a moral framework for peace enhances the discourse on international relations, which has traditionally been dominated by strategic considerations and power dynamics. By situating Pancasila as a repository of ethical values, this study presents an alternative perspective that indicates the significance of moral and cultural factors in understanding Indonesia's diplomatic role on the global stage. This approach facilitates further inquiry into the application of Pancasila principles across various global issues, including conflict resolution, humanitarian diplomacy, and international cooperation. Hence, Pancasila not only holds relevance within the domestic sphere but also possesses the potential to serve as a foundational ethic of peace in the context of global society. Indonesia's foreign policy can remain relevant and make a real contribution, if Indonesia continues to uphold Pancasila as an ethic of peace and be devoted to solidarity for humanity, as was carried out in a consistent and good-faith manner by all former foreign ministers from 1945 to 2024.

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