

## Philosophical Understanding of Nationhood: Exploring High School Students' Perspectives on Islamism and Secularism in History Learning

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### Abstract

This research analyzes the contribution of learning the history of early independence in fostering a philosophical understanding of nationhood. The research questions are: 1) What kinds of philosophical understanding of nationhood are perceived as pro-Islamism and pro-secularism by high school students? 2) How is nationalist behavior expressed as an act of accepting secularism and opposing Islamic fundamentalism by high school students? Moreover, 3) How do factors contribute to high school students' actions and philosophical understanding of nationhood? This research was carried out using qualitative methods. This research involved 34 students enrolled in class XI 6. We researched at SMA 1 Semarang (a High School) in Indonesia. This research analyzed data from memos written by students, class activities, and conversations. Data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings showed that the nation's pro-Islamist philosophy is reflected in an attitude of fanaticism, difficulty accepting differences, and support for a closed system. A pro-secularism attitude is reflected in accepting differences, moderation, and prioritizing universal values. Accepting secularism and rejecting Islamic fundamentalism is perceived as an attitude of accepting historical agreements, moving away from fanaticism-based conflicts, and preparing for a more democratic future. The philosophical understanding of nationhood is formed by in-depth arguments on socio-political-religious phenomena, acceptance of historical agreements, and hopes for a peaceful future. The findings indicate that future research needs to investigate the teaching of national philosophy in Indonesian history material in different periods or events. They can also be carried out for teaching national philosophy in other places or countries.

**Keywords:** *Indonesian history, learning, nationhood, philosophical understanding*

### Introduction

The emergence of national disintegration and sentiment between tribes, religions, races, and groups is caused by incomplete philosophical understanding of nationhood (Jones, 2018; Snyder, 2015; Sunkel, 2019). What exactly is a nation, how is a nation born, and what basis makes a group of people from various backgrounds agree to become a nation? These are critical questions that continue to arise in societal discourse over time (Aguilar Jr, 2017; Anderson, 2017; Jaskułowski et al., 2018). Children transitioning to adulthood are trying to question their existence in social and

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political life (Chen, 2017; Ivarsson, 2019). Thus, history learning needs to explore this discourse systematically to produce an understanding of nationhood that every individual can accept without leaving a feeling of 'strangeness' and dissatisfaction with the history of the founding of a country. The hope that has arisen has succeeded in forming citizens who are wise and have the wisdom to face existing national problems (Jaffe-Walter, 2016). Ultimately, they are expected to become citizens who adhere to the historical principles and ethics established by the Founding Fathers (Ammert et al., 2022; Kaya, 2021; 2022a; 2022b; Utomo & Wasino, 2020).

Practicing critical learning is a mandate for 21st-century education (Dwyer et al., 2014; Kivunja, 2014). Students who have critical perspective tend to be better at analyzing information (Goodsett, 2020), recognizing strong arguments (Chatfield, 2022), and understanding the basics of logic (Kalinowski, 2018). This will help them in getting information from various sources, including digital sources (LaGarde & Hudgins, 2018). Practicing critical perspective in history learning can be done by presenting a text that contains pros and cons—encouraging students to ask questions, read various sources, criticize information, test knowledge and reasoning, make decisions, and evaluate decisions (Carretero et al., 2013; Salinas et al., 2012; Zajda, 2022). This activity can not only accustom students to participate in learning activities actively, but their logic and reasoning will be honed. This habit needs to be done to form an academic attitude in responding to social phenomena related to events in the past so that essential factors can form philosophical understanding of nationhood.

Critical perspective in history learning can occur if the texts presented and the learning models are oriented toward student-centered learning (Cicchino, 2015; Espey, 2018). Moreover, teachers who do not dominate in learning can create freedom of expression and independence in learning (Morris, 2017; Wells, 2018). In this context students are encouraged to access much information about the issues being discussed, for example those that are still current—the conflict between islamism and secularism (Fossati & Mietzner, 2019; Rosidi, 2021; Zuhri, 2021), in Central Statistics data; 86.93% adhere to Islam, 7.47% adhere to Protestantism, 3.08% adhere to Catholicism, 1.71% adhere to Hinduism, 0.74% adhere to Buddhism, and 0.03% adhere to Confucianism (Government, 2023). This data represents Indonesian citizens who adhere to religions recognized by the Indonesian State based on Law Number 23 of 2006 concerning Population Administration (Representatives, 2006). The data above has placed Muslims as a very dominant religion in society. That is also directly related to the issue of an Islamic state, which

continues to be touched upon by fundamentalist Islamic groups (Jackson, 2023; Muluk & Milla, 2023; Nurjaman, 2023), which often gives rise to problems such as – violence, bullying, marginalization and discrimination against groups who reject the idea of an Islamic State (Al Qurtuby, 2023; Saat, 2023). This issue continues to grow today in Indonesian society.

The issue of the Islamic State is a sensitive discourse because the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, but from the start, Indonesia is not an Islamic State and does not apply Islamic law in its constitution (Barton et al., 2023; Schulze, 2016). As a nation, Indonesia is more inclined towards secularism, which does not prioritize any religious ideology in the foundations of the state and constitution created since independence in 1945. Even though it is not an Islamic state, throughout the history of independent Indonesia, there have been several events with the issue of an Islamic State—such as the Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army (DI/TII) 1950-1965 rebellion, which demanded the establishment of the Indonesian Islamic State or *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII) (Kabubu, 2017), The Jihad Command Action 1968-1981, which is also known as an act of terrorism by Islamic extremists (Hakim, 2023b), and finally, the case of the 2023 Al-Zaytun Islamic Boarding School which is allegedly affiliated with the Indonesian Islamic State (NII) movement (Adnjani, 2023). In addition, Indonesia has experienced several attempts to replace the state ideology of *Pancasila* with Islam since the beginning of independence. To this day, public opinion has yet to reach complete agreement. There are still two camps that continue to be debated—the pro-Islamism and pro-secularism camps (Hakim, 2023a; Muwaffiqillah, 2023). The conflict between islamism and secularism has been rooted since colonial times and peaked at the Session of the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence or in Indonesia *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (BPUPKI) on June 22 1945 which gave birth to the Jakarta Charter (Hariyanto & Islamy, 2023; Niam et al., 2023), namely a basic concept of the state that contains Islam as a legal and ideological basis. However, on August 18, 1945, Indonesian representatives from the Eastern region, which was predominantly non-Islamic, rejected the country's basic proposal, resulting in a fierce debate as to whether the Indonesian nation was an Islamic nation or a secular nation that accepted pluralism. This debate is, of course, interesting to explore as a historical issue in material that can train critical perspective and is expected to lead students to a philosophical understanding of nationhood.

Research findings from Rrustemi and Kurteshi (2023) show that critical perspective can be trained by applying various learning models and adapting the material taught. Learning with a student-

centered approach is relevant and has a big impact on strengthening students' thinking and expression abilities. Critical perspective is one phase to achieve philosophical understanding. Davies (2017) believes that discussing sensitive material will train students to strengthen remembering, understanding and thinking critically to achieve detailed and in-depth knowledge. Kurniawati et al.'s (2022), research results show that historical literacy activities determine students' critical perspective abilities; reading, discussing, and communicating their learning results in writing or speaking can train students' critical perspective. Critical perspective is a keyword in learning to strengthen students' cognitive capacity. History learning does not only focus on conveying information, but the most important thing is achieving philosophical understanding by allowing students to criticize information, make decisions, and evaluate the decisions made (Bahri et al., 2023; Chimbunde et al., 2023). Based on the explanation above, this research aims to analyze history learning by applying Critical History Learning Activities (CHLA) to develop the nation's philosophical understanding. In building a theoretical framework, this study focuses on students' perceptions of behavior and understanding that are pro-secularism and con-Islamic fundamentalism, which are constructed through critical didactic activities. The results of this research contribute as the first in Indonesia. That focused on teaching philosophy about the nation in history, learning about the debate on Islamism and secularism at the beginning of Indonesian independence. It can be adapted as a reference for history educators in training critical perspective to achieve a philosophical understanding of nationhood.

### **Research Question**

The study investigated the following questions:

1. What kinds of philosophical understanding of nationhood are perceived as pro-Islamism and pro-secularism by high school students?
2. How is nationalist behavior expressed as an act of accepting secularism and opposing Islamic fundamentalism by high school students?
3. How do factors contribute to high school students' actions and philosophical understanding of nationhood?

### **Theoretical Framework**

*Philosophical teaching* is a grand theory that explores students' perspectives on Islamism and secularism in Indonesian history. Moreover, the middle theory used is the theory of the nation. Both are explained in the framework of knowing students' philosophical understanding of nationhood after receiving history lessons with CHLA.

Nikam (1953) argued that philosophical teaching addresses fundamental problems regarding societal knowledge—principles of life, norms, values, and things that can potentially cause social problems such as conflict and violence. In line with this, Parekh (1991) believes that a country needs philosophical understanding about its nation to create sustainability. He also believes that experience is a compelling reflection material for creating in-depth knowledge. Both theories underscore the urgency of philosophy in the teaching context to resolve fundamental problems and achieve sustainability. Nikam (1953) focuses more on the practical aspects of everyday life and potential social conflicts that can be overcome through philosophical understanding. Parekh sees philosophy as the foundation of national identity and state sustainability, emphasizing the critical role of experience in forming deep knowledge. In an educational context, philosophical teaching can stimulate deep thinking regarding the principles of life, norms, and values that build national identity. Past experiences can be integrated into the curriculum to stimulate deep reflection and contextual understanding.

Two theoretical opinions regarding the nation form the framework of middle theory. Firstly, according to Kohn (1939), a nation is a group of different people who are united due to historical struggle. A nation is formed and has characteristics—similarities in language, territory, and customs. Second, Renan (2018) states that a nation is a group of people who have inner ties and are united because they have a shared history and ideals. Both agreed that nations were born from heterogeneous communities and bonds formed from the same history and outlook on life without emphasizing aspects of genealogical similarities such as ethnicity and race. Nation, in the second sense, is also far from the same religion because the knowledge offered rejects the homogenization of religious communities.

Someone who understands the nation is characterized by accepting differences; they believe that diverse groups form the nation, and understanding this concept is necessary. The second is a historical struggle, in which a nation is formed by joint efforts to unite. Because of this struggle, the third thing is that a bond occurs. This bond is formed by similarities in interests in achieving

unity and prosperity. After the bond grows, the third grows idealism, a fundamental thought for prosperity and justice. There are other undefined factors, such as freedom and democracy, with which each nation has different experiences (Kohn, 1939; Renan, 2018). Understanding of nationhood is reflected by accepting the ideology that separates religion from state interests, namely secularism. This attitude simultaneously rejects skepticism and distrust toward universal values and fanaticism towards a religion (Abuzayyad, 2023; Wijaya, 2023; Elfert, 2023). However, secularism as a knowledge is not understood as an anti-religious attitude. This attitude reflects moderation, compromise, and prioritizing universal values (Nanto, 2022; Perry et al., 2022).

According to Nikam (1953), philosophical understanding can be achieved if learning fosters connectivity of understanding between material–social context–knowledge—a resolution to achieve a more established, conflict-free, and democratic social life. The nation's philosophical understanding grows in a democratic and reflective atmosphere. Purnomo (2023) explains that a democratic learning framework based on the Cansiz (2023) cooperative learning framework can foster deep understanding. The approach is called CHLA. The learning syntax refers to the procedure: (a) extracting information from various electronic and print sources; (b) small group discussion regarding the debate on Islamism and secularism at the beginning of independence; (c) short lecture on national philosophy; (d) knowledge discussion; and (e) written memos reflecting their involvement in studying the nation's philosophy and how the views obtained can be relevant to current and future conditions.

CHLA can facilitate collaborative activities by considering students' diverse abilities. Democratic learning is carried out to form a reflective understanding with high levels of thinking autonomy. CHLA is relevant to be applied in active, participatory, and collaborative classroom situations. It's referring to the opinion of Santiago and Dozono (2022) that interactive and intense learning can improve students' understanding and thinking abilities. Teachers play a role in encouraging students to make decisions based on values and philosophical principles (Hlungwani, 2022). This learning model encourages philosophical simulations, one of which is a discussion group, to help students understand the philosophical dilemmas individuals or groups face in specific historical periods.

Accepting historical truth is essential to studying national philosophy (Kohn, 1939; Renan, 2018). Defending an ideology does not justify violence and coercion (Ahmad et al., 2023; Dragojlovic, 2018; Sulfikar et al., 2023). Students who learn to dialogue with the planned academic activities

they participate in can become a bridge connecting themselves with their problematic past. CHLA can be a facilitative activity that connects the need to foster philosophical understanding based on debatable historical narratives (Almazroui, 2023), a compelling teaching goal oriented towards developing thinking. They are trained to solve these problems by paying attention to the current context.

## **Method**

### **Design**

We used a combination of content analysis (Elo et al., 2014) and Classroom Ethnography (Erickson, 2010) in our data analysis approach to investigate the dynamics of teaching about national philosophy within the context of CHLA. Classroom Ethnography aims to provide a deep contextual understanding of student experiences and the learning process (Erickson, 2010). Researchers are actively involved in classroom life, creating opportunities to understand more deeply the interactions and meanings that emerge. We are combining these qualitative traditions facilitated a systematic exploration of the conducted work, involving the identification of themes, categorization, coding, and extraction of key themes related to the philosophical understanding of nationhood.

*Classroom Ethnography* is an approach that involves immersive observation within the classroom setting to understand the social and cultural dynamics influencing students' perspectives and learning experiences. In the context of study on students' philosophical understanding of nationhood after history lessons using the CHLA, the Classroom Ethnography component would unfold as follows: observation of interactions, participation in classroom dynamics, analysis of teaching methods, and student responses and reactions. As a grand theory, philosophical teaching guides the interpretation of students' perspectives on Islamism and secularism. The theory helps frame the analysis within the broader context of philosophical understanding of nationhood. The study incorporates the middle theory of the nation to provide a conceptual framework for understanding students' perspectives. This theory helps connect the micro-level observations (individual student perspectives) with the broader sociocultural context of the nation.

The grand theory of philosophical teaching is applied to understand how students engage with and internalize philosophical concepts related to nationhood. This is complemented by the middle theory of the nation, which provides a bridge between individual perspectives and the larger

sociocultural and historical context. The combination of these theories guides the analysis of Classroom Ethnography, allowing for a nuanced exploration of students' philosophical understanding within the specific context of CHLA-guided history lessons.

The research was carried out at SMA 1 Semarang, a high school in the capital city of Central Java Province, Indonesia. This school was chosen due to its high research activity, designation as a National Reference School by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and notable ethnic and religious diversity among its students. As a *Sekolah Penggerak* (Driving School), the institution prioritizes the holistic development of student learning outcomes, encompassing both competency and character. Notably, the school caters to approximately 700 students annually.

### Participant

At that time, all 34 students were registered in Class XI 6, from which we had the possibility of collecting learning products from the assignments given. The students are a participant who concentrates on social studies, especially having outstanding results in history lessons. Most of the participants were 16-18 years old. There is high ethnic and religious diversity, reflecting the multicultural demographics of the society where the research was conducted, and almost equal representation of men and women.

**Table 1**  
*Characteristics of Student Participants*

No	Characteristics	Information	Frequency
1	Gender	Male	16
		Female	18
2	Age	16	2
		17	28
		18	4
3	Ethnic	Javanese	18
		Banjarese	2
		Sundanese	4
		Chinese	7
		Moluccan	3
4	Religion	Islam	17
		Catholic	3
		Protestant	8
		Hinduism	1
		Confucian	5



All students whose names are on the class XI 6 participant list can participate in this study, and all students agreed to participate in this research. While obtaining consent, all students are given information in the hope that awareness will arise that their participation in research is a valuable contribution to the development of science. However, it does not give them any privileges, and if they refuse, it will not have a detrimental impact on them. Student rights and study details are outlined in an agreement document approved by the Principal of SMA 1 Semarang.

### **Research Instrument**

This research implemented three data collection instruments: observation, interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Observation is the primary technique for understanding classroom interactions, student responses to learning, and implementing the CHLA approach. The observation steps involve strategic planning, the researcher's active participation in the learning environment, detailed recording of student behavior, and ethnographic analysis of texts to reveal cultural meanings.

Interviews were used to gain in-depth insight into students' views on nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. The interview stages involve planning objectives, selection of diverse participants, participant understanding and consent, semi-structural design, and data integration into a broader dataset for comprehensive analysis.

FGD captures students' collective views regarding these themes by planning clear objectives and themes, ensuring the presence of diverse participants, providing information and participant agreement, and using a structured discussion approach. Data from FGDs is analyzed to understand group dynamics and shared sentiments.

These three instruments work together to provide a comprehensive understanding. Observations provide direct insight, interviews provide in-depth perspectives, and FGDs depict collective views. Integration and triangulation of data from the three instruments strengthens the analysis, producing reliable and relevant findings. A well-planned research approach and use of various instruments helped ensure the accuracy and diversity of the data collected.

Based on the research procedures that have been determined, the research instruments used are as follows:

**Table 2**  
*Research Instrument*

Observation Instrument	
Part 1: Classroom Interaction Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Note how the teacher begins the class and conveys the learning objectives.</li> <li>b. Pay attention to whether there are opening questions that stimulate students' thinking.</li> <li>c. Observe the way the teacher presents initial material about nationhood.</li> <li>d. Note students' initial reactions to this material.</li> <li>e. Review how the teacher facilitates discussions between students.</li> <li>f. Note whether there are responses that reflect pro-Islamism and pro-secularism understandings.</li> <li>g. Pay attention to how the teacher applies the CHLA approach to learning.</li> <li>h. Note whether students engage in comparison and contrast between pro-Islamism and pro-secularism views.</li> </ul>
Part 2: Student Responses to Material and Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Observe the level of student participation during class discussions.</li> <li>b. Note whether there are students who actively contribute pro-Islamism or pro-secularism arguments.</li> <li>c. Note students' emotional reactions to the material, such as facial expressions, body language, or verbal responses that indicate interest or disapproval.</li> <li>d. Review how students interact during small group discussions.</li> <li>e. Note whether there is debate or unification of understanding among students.</li> <li>f. Read students' memos to see their reflections and thoughts after the lesson.</li> <li>g. Identify whether students grasp the gist of the material and whether they discuss pro-Islamism or pro-secularism.</li> </ul>
Part 3: Use of Diverse Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Observe how teachers use popular scientific articles to support students' understanding of nationhood.</li> <li>b. Note whether the article sparked deep discussion.</li> <li>c. Note how students respond to additional reading material on Islamic Fundamentalism, Roots of Secularism, and Debate on Islam and Secularism.</li> <li>d. Observe whether there is a difference in students' understanding after reading the articles.</li> </ul>
Part 4: Conclusion and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review the overall learning and whether the learning objectives were achieved.</li> <li>b. Note whether students leave the class with a deeper philosophical understanding of nationhood.</li> <li>c. Overall conclusions regarding class interaction, student participation, and their responses to material and discussions.</li> <li>d. Note findings that may be relevant to changing students' understanding of pro-Islamism and pro-secularism.</li> </ul>

Interview Instrument	
Part 1: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Greetings and self-introduction.</li> <li>b. Explain the purpose of the interview to understand students' views regarding the concepts of nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism.</li> </ul>
Part 2: Philosophical Understanding of Nationhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How would you define the concept of "nationhood" based on the learning you have received?</li> <li>b. What are the key elements that, in your opinion, constitute the philosophy of nationhood?</li> <li>c. How does the teacher's presentation of initial material influence your understanding of nationhood?</li> <li>d. How did class discussions help you form further understanding of this concept?</li> </ul>
Part 3: Pro-Islamism or Prof Secularism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do you see pro-Islamism views emerging in learning?</li> <li>b. What arguments do you think are strong from a pro-Islamism perspective?</li> <li>c. How do you understand the pro-secularism views taught in class?</li> <li>d. What do you think are the strengths of a pro-secularism perspective?</li> <li>e. How do you see the difference between pro-Islamism and pro-secularism views in the context of nationhood?</li> <li>f. Is there any common ground between both?</li> </ul>
Part 4: Factors Affecting Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How does the CHLA approach and the use of diverse perspectives in learning influence the way you understand nationhood?</li> <li>b. Was there a particular moment in the discussion that was particularly influential for you?</li> <li>c. How do history and past treaties play a role in shaping your understanding of nationhood?</li> <li>d. Was there a particular moment in history that influenced your views?</li> <li>e. How does your understanding of nationhood influence your hopes for a peaceful future?</li> <li>f. How do you see the role of nationhood in maintaining unity and security in society?</li> </ul>
Part 5: Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do you feel after participating in this interview?</li> <li>b. Is there anything else you would like to add or convey?</li> <li>c. Thank you for your participation and time.</li> <li>d. Provides the opportunity to add additional comments or questions.</li> </ul>
Instrument for FGD	
Part 1: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Start with a greeting and introduce the moderator.</li> <li>b. Ask each participant to introduce themselves briefly.</li> <li>c. Explain the purpose of the FGD: to gain in-depth insight into students' understanding of nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism.</li> </ul>
Part 2: Philosophical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do participants define the concept of "nationhood" based on the learning they have received?</li> </ul>

Understanding of Nationhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. What are the key elements that, according to them, constitute the philosophy of nationhood?</li> <li>c. How does the teacher's presentation of initial material influence participants to understand nationhood?</li> <li>d. How do class discussions help participants form further understanding of this concept?</li> </ul>
Part 3: Pro-Islamism or Pro-Secularism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do participants see pro-Islamism views emerging in learning?</li> <li>b. What arguments do participants think are strong from a pro-Islamism perspective?</li> <li>c. How do participants understand the pro-secularism views taught in class?</li> <li>d. What do they think are the strengths of a pro-secularism perspective?</li> <li>e. How do participants see the difference between pro-Islamism and pro-secularism views in the context of nationhood?</li> <li>f. Is there any common ground between both?</li> </ul>
Part 4: Factors Affecting Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How does the CHLA approach and the use of diverse perspectives in learning influence the way participants understand nationhood?</li> <li>b. Was there a particular moment in the discussion that was particularly influential for them?</li> <li>c. How do history and past treaties play a role in shaping participants' understanding of nationhood?</li> <li>d. Was there a particular moment in history that influenced their views?</li> <li>e. How do participants' understanding of nationhood influence their hopes for a peaceful future?</li> <li>f. How do they see the role of nationhood in maintaining unity and security in society?</li> </ul>
Part 5: Conclusion and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask participants to summarize their thoughts regarding the concepts of nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism.</li> <li>b. Is there a change in their understanding after involvement in learning?</li> <li>c. Ask participants to add questions or comments related to the discussion that has been carried out.</li> <li>d. Are there any aspects not covered that they would like to discuss further?</li> <li>e. Thanking the participants for their active participation.</li> <li>f. Provides an opportunity to convey final impressions or messages.</li> </ul>

### Data Collection

The data collection process for this research took place over one semester in history subjects, focusing on Class XI 6, a class characterized by high ethnic and religious diversity, with a

concentration in social studies. The researcher utilized focus group discussions (FGD), observation and interviews, and to gather comprehensive insights.

### ***Focus Group Discussion (FGD)***

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in this research is valuable for capturing collective perspectives, encouraging group dynamics, and exploring shared understandings among high school students regarding nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. The FGD process is thoughtfully designed to elicit open and rich discussions on predefined themes, fostering a democratic exchange of ideas within the group. Before the FGD commences, the research team identifies the objectives and themes of the discussion. The focus remains on exploring shared perspectives, group dynamics, and diverse opinions on nationhood and ideological stances, specifically pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. Participants for the FGD are selected carefully to ensure diverse representation, encompassing various backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences within the high school class (Class XI 6). This intentional selection aims to provide a more comprehensive and varied understanding of the topic under investigation. Participants are informed about the purpose of the FGD, the topics to be discussed, and their rights as contributors. Informed consent is obtained from each participant to uphold ethical standards and ensure their willingness to engage in the discussion. A skilled facilitator is designated to guide the discussion, ensuring a focus on the predefined themes. The facilitator possesses the expertise to encourage open dialogue and manage the overall flow of the discussion. A moderator complements this role, managing time and encouraging active participation from all group members. The FGD follows a structured agenda with predefined discussion points, allowing for systematically exploring topics related to nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. This structured approach ensures that the discussion remains focused and productive. Participants are encouraged to express their views openly, share experiences, and engage in respectful dialogue with one another. Probing questions encourage participants to delve deeper into their perspectives, providing insights into the diversity of opinions within the group. With participant consent, the FGD is audio-recorded to capture the discussions accurately. The facilitator and moderator also take notes to document critical points, participant reactions, and emergent themes during the discussion. The facilitator and moderator observe group dynamics, non-verbal cues, and interactions among participants, aiming to capture the collective sentiments of the group. This analysis contributes to understanding the shared

perspectives that emerge during the discussion. The data from the FGD are integrated into the broader dataset, facilitating triangulation with data from observations, interviews, and written memos. This integration ensures a more comprehensive analysis that considers multiple perspectives and sources.

In summary, the FGD in this research is a well-structured and facilitated discussion that provides a platform for students to collectively explore and share their perspectives on nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. The careful planning, diverse participant selection, and systematic approach contribute to the effectiveness of the FGD as a qualitative data collection method.

### ***Observation***

The researcher created a forum for students to discuss and agree on collecting observation data, written memos, and samples of assignments made individually or in groups. The observation process in this research was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between teachers and students, teaching methodologies employed, and student responses to the study of national philosophy in the context of high school history classes. Before commencing the observation process, the researcher strategically planned the specific aspects, considering teacher-student interactions, teaching methods, and student reactions.

Observers actively immersed themselves in the learning environment, participating in the classroom or learning context being observed. This approach aimed to capture real-time dynamics and interactions. During observations, we expected to collect data in various forms, including student responses, transcripts of discussions, and reflections on teaching methods and content focused on national philosophy. Observations were conducted across various activities, including discussions, short lectures, and group activities. Each activity provided a different lens to understand student engagement with the subject matter. The observation process closely monitored implementing the CHLA, emphasizing activities such as extracting information from diverse sources, small group discussions, short lectures on national philosophy, and knowledge discussions. Students were actively writing structured memos as part of the observation process. These memos included titles, philosophical questions, observations, and reflections on their learning activities. Memos served the dual purpose of documenting personal experiences and acting as a formative assessment tool, providing evidence of student engagement, and understanding.

### ***Interviews***

The interview process in this research was structured to delve deeply into high school students' perspectives, experiences, and nuanced understandings regarding nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. Before conducting interviews, the researcher clearly defined the objectives, focusing on gaining in-depth insights into students' views on nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. A diverse group of participants was selected, ensuring representation from various backgrounds and perspectives within the high school class (Class XI 6). Before the interviews, participants were provided with information about the research objectives, procedures, and their rights. Informed consent was obtained to ensure ethical standards were upheld. The interview process was semi-structured, allowing for flexibility while ensuring a focus on open-ended questions. This design facilitated in-depth responses and spontaneous insights. Interviews were explicitly designed to explore themes related to nationhood, pro-Islamism, and pro-secularism. Questions were crafted to elicit participants' experiences, opinions, and reflections. Probing techniques were employed to encourage participants to provide nuanced responses, encouraging them to elaborate on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The interview data served as a complementary source, enriching the overall understanding when triangulated with data from observations and written memos. Interview data were integrated into the broader dataset, facilitating a comprehensive analysis considering multiple perspectives and sources.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis in this research seamlessly integrates two primary approaches: Content Analysis (Elo et al., 2014) and Classroom Ethnography (Watson-Gegeo, 1997), presenting a cohesive framework for understanding students' perspectives on nationhood. Initial content analysis focuses on identifying key themes such as pro-Islamism, pro-secularism, and nationalist attitudes. These themes form the essence of the data, offering insight into students' views of nationhood. Data are meticulously categorized based on key themes and concepts, facilitating easy access and comparative analysis. Analysis codes are crafted to mark relevant data units, forming the basis for a nuanced understanding of student statements and underlying thoughts. The frequency of each theme or code occurrence is calculated, gauging its significance in the research context. Coding, such as Student Data 1 (SD1) and Student Data 2 (SD2), SD3, etc reflects a selective coding process based on the nation's philosophical learning topics. Results from content

analysis are interpreted and linked to pertinent literature, establishing a robust theoretical and conceptual framework. This interpretation deepens our understanding of students' perspectives on nationhood.

Classroom Ethnography delves into the intricacies of classroom interactions, teacher-student dynamics, and the implementation of teaching methods, particularly the CHLA. Understanding the classroom context elucidates the influence of the learning environment on student perceptions. Detailed records of student behavior, responses to learning, and classroom dynamics are captured during participatory observations. This approach ensures a holistic understanding of classroom dynamics. Data from Classroom Ethnography enriches and corroborates findings from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), affirming the validity and accuracy of research results. Texts from classroom observations, interviews, and FGDs undergo in-depth analysis to uncover cultural nuances, norms, and values influencing students' perceptions. Ethnographic text analysis unveils hidden meanings and contextual insights. Classroom Ethnography includes a reflective analysis of CHLA's implementation, evaluating its efficacy in fostering students' philosophical understanding of nationhood.

Content Analysis and Classroom Ethnography findings are seamlessly integrated to construct a comprehensive narrative detailing student perspective, classroom dynamics, and the implementation of learning methods. Data triangulation, incorporating observations, interviews, and FGDs, validates overall findings. This comprehensive approach enriches research results, providing a holistic understanding of the observed phenomena.

The research draws on two fundamental theories: Philosophical Teaching as a grand theory and the Theory of the Nation. These theories guide exploring students' philosophical understanding of nationhood within the CHLA context. Philosophical Teaching involves facilitating critical thinking, discussion, and reflection to develop students' philosophical understanding of historical and cultural concepts. The Theory of the Nation encompasses perspectives on nations' formation, sustenance, and understanding, including elements of national identity and shared history.

As the central Theory and Theory of the Nation, philosophical Teaching plays a crucial role in qualitative data analysis. These theories provide an in-depth and contextual framework for understanding students' views on the concept of nationhood after receiving history lessons with the CHLA approach. Philosophical Teaching theory is used to understand students' perspectives regarding Islamism and secularism in Indonesian history. Through this Theory, the research adopts



an approach where educators facilitate critical thinking, discussion, and reflection, encouraging students to develop their philosophical understanding of historical and cultural concepts. Data analysis was carried out by considering how students responded to history lessons with this approach. How students relate concepts such as Islamism, secularism, and nationalist views to a philosophical thinking framework is the focus of applying this Theory.

The theory of the Nation is used to explore how students understand, form, and maintain national identity. This theory helps analyze how students respond to learning material related to national history, including their views on Islamism and secularism. This theory is associated with the implementation of CHLA, which aims to enrich students' understanding of national philosophy. Contextual analysis considers how the concept of national identity is reflected in classroom interactions, student responses, and student understanding of the learning approach applied.

Both theories synergistically form a solid conceptual foundation for data analysis. While Philosophical Teaching provides direction in how students philosophically understand specific topics, the Theory of the Nation adds dimensions related to national identity, creating a more complete view. The analysis not only considers how students react to specific topics but also the extent to which national concepts such as Islamism, secularism, and nationalism play a role in shaping students' understanding. This provides a deep contextual dimension to students' views regarding their national identity and history. By combining these two theories, the analysis explores students' philosophical understanding and the cultural context and national identity that shape their views. Applying this theory provides a strong foundation for detailing and understanding the complexities in students' perceptions of nationhood.

## **Results**

In this research's findings, Classroom Ethnography as a pivotal methodological approach offers an in-depth exploration of the intricacies of the classroom environment. This ethnographic lens allows for a detailed analysis of classroom interactions, teacher-student dynamics, and the practical implementation of teaching methods, particularly the CHLA. Throughout the findings section, insights drawn from Classroom Ethnography enrich and contextualize the data collected through other methods such as interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and content analysis. The participatory observation employed in Classroom Ethnography serves as a valuable tool to capture the holistic dynamics of the learning environment. The recorded behaviors, student responses to

learning, and classroom interactions contribute layers of understanding to the overall analysis. Triangulation, involving integrating data from multiple sources, further enhances the credibility and validity of the research findings. The findings derived from Classroom Ethnography offer a unique perspective on how the CHLA method influences students' philosophical understanding of nationhood within the specific context of the observed classroom setting.

Therefore, as the narrative unfolds in the results section, the reader is guided through a comprehensive exploration that encompasses the theoretical underpinnings and content analysis and the nuanced dynamics discovered through the immersive lens of Classroom Ethnography.

**Research Question 1: What kinds of philosophical understanding of nationhood are perceived as pro-Islamism and pro-secularism by high school students?**

During initial learning, students have been given material and provocations by teachers about the nation's situation and the lawsuits that fundamentalist Islamic groups have carried out since the early days of independence. The action was not directly justified as something wrong in the eyes of the law. However, the teacher had positioned the issue as an academic issue in a democratic country, which could be discussed to find valid evidence. These are the various types that make up a nation that are regularly pointed out by students during learning. That was also confirmed by students in discussions and memos.

In addition, to strengthen their philosophical understanding, students continue to be taught using the CHLA approach. The teacher offers several alternatives for gaining knowledge about the nation. Various articles from scientific studies compiled in a popular way to make it easier for students to digest the information have been provided.

Articles that are additional learning resources outside of textbooks are divided into three topics: Islamic Fundamentalism, Roots of Secularism, and Debate on Islam and Secularism. The three sparked in-depth small-group discussions about the nation's philosophy. There are three pro-Islamism and pro-secularism arguments collected, all three of which represent contrasting views and reflect current societal life.

SD1: "It was found that the justification for secularism initially tended to be negative, and students had perceptions that supported fundamentalism."

The implementation of an Islamic state failed due to strong encouragement by pro-secularist groups at that time. [The class] also understands that what happened in the process of establishing the basis of the state was a process of marginalizing Islamic groups, which from the start had been labeled fundamentalist and anti-diversity (Tivani, written memos).

Tivani built a pro-Islamism argument by looking at the political position of Islamic groups, which were not strong enough to create the foundation of an Islamic state at that time. Islam is not the only option, and for most reasons, Ahmad supports Tivani's opinion.

SD2: "It was found that students were increasingly daring to show support for Islamic Fundamentalism by playing up the issue of majority group identity."

Religions with more adherents should have a better position in politics because the interests of the adherents of these religions are, of course, the interests of representatives of the nation. I agree with Tivani. Without marginalization and stigma, Islamic groups cannot be defeated theoretically (Ahmad, written memos).

Tivani and Ahmad's opinion shows suspicion towards secular groups who reject the idea of an Islamic state. This suspicion is based on a historical situation entire of debating arguments. Another opinion explains that Islam is the basis of the state, the legal basis that can lead the Indonesian nation towards justice and prosperity.

SD3: "It was found that Islamic fundamentalism can be reflected in confessions supported by dogma-laden arguments"

I think Islam is a [legal] basis that is oriented towards the development of people's lives, in Islam rejecting injustice. It cannot be justified, according to Islamic views, for someone living in an Islamic society who is hungry, inadequately clothed, begging, homeless or celibate forever (Ikhsan, written memos).

The three pro-Islamism opinions above were formed by feelings of 'defending religion.' All three of them are recorded as Muslims, so their sympathy with Islam is very high. Without the context of good knowledge of the nation's philosophy, the potential for being trapped in such fanatical opinions will quickly occur. Besides that, they need to be more careful in understanding the text. This fanatical attitude has made the reading of the text biased. History is interpreted as a struggle for the interests of groups rather than focusing on broader [general] interests.

The pro-Islamism opinion contrasts with the pro-secularism opinion. Students who are pro-secularist see the historical struggle as an essential foundation. Being a nation means respecting what has been agreed upon in the past, the context of society, and democratic attitudes.

SD4: "It was found that an individual who is open, has historical awareness can produce knowledge that is more moderate, less offensive, and does not discredit other groups."

The same spirit, namely independence, formed the Indonesian nation. What has been fought for by all elements of society from various backgrounds, fighting for the interests of a group or group means that we deny the agreement that has been made (Joseph, written memos).

Becoming a nation means 'agreeing on history, ethics and culture as a result of political processes in the past.' That is a discourse that continues to circulate among pro-secularism circles. In the Indonesian context, the formation of the nation was based on the spirit of liberation from colonialism, which was shackled, discriminatory and made fools of other people. For this reason, some data shows that the nation is interpreted because of joint work.

SD5: "It was found that knowledge of a nation's philosophy strengthens when an individual is not trapped in historical problems filled with religious-based revenge and hatred."

I reinforce the previous opinion that the nation is a bond that does not differentiate someone based on their identity. After independence, people are free to choose to contribute to what field without having to bring their identity too prominently to the surface. Essentially, we are independent based on similarities in views, not religion or class (Tan, written memos).

The idea of equality of views is new in national discourse. This aspect is very dominant in students' knowledge construction. The view in this context does not include individual or group egos but rather an open attitude and acceptance of each other's differences.

SD6: "It was found that if an individual has prioritized a sense of equality, accepted differences, and not played up issues of identity, then he has succeeded in forming knowledge about the nation that is free from conflict content."

It strengthens the previous opinions that a pluralistic nation must separate state and religious interests. I do not mean to be anti-religious, but rather so that the state can provide justice and a safe feeling for all, which gives hope to every individual regardless of their identity (Firman, written memos).

From these two contrasting views, it is known that fanaticism is rapidly growing when it comes to religious issues, as well as sentiment and prejudice. What is underlying this can be known from the answers given. Historical facts are not considered honest and accurate but are full of political interests, ultimately creating an attitude that is closed, sceptical, and does not allow differences. An attitude of acceptance and openness to differences does not mean someone is anti-religious. They still believe in religion but are more moderate, compromise, and prioritize universal values. Knowledge about actions that promote universal and moderate values is an understanding of pro-secularism that is reflected by students. They view historical agreements as the initial basis for the founding of the nation, they feel bound, and have the idealism to advance the country with a spirit of maintaining diversity. Meanwhile, a pro-Islamist understanding has fanatical tendencies, excessive pride in religious identity, ignoring diversity, and supporting the application of Islamic law in countries with diverse communities.

These data explore high school students' philosophical understanding of nationhood, specifically examining perceptions of pro-Islamism and pro-secularism. Through a curriculum emphasizing diverse perspectives and the CHLA approach, students engaged in discussions and formulated opinions. Pro-Islamism perspectives emerged, emphasizing the historical marginalization of Islamic groups, and advocating for an Islamic state. In contrast, pro-secularist views stressed historical struggles, democratic values, and a commitment to unity without identity-based divisions. The study highlights the impact of philosophical understanding on attitudes, with pro-secularism fostering open-mindedness, acceptance of differences, and a commitment to universal values. At the same time, pro-Islamism tends toward fanaticism, religious pride, and a disregard for diversity.

**Research Question 2: How is nationalist behavior expressed as an act of accepting secularism and opposing Islamic fundamentalism by high school students?**

After students read and study the text containing the debate between Islamism and Secularism, they give a dichotomous opinion; namely, one party is pro-Islamism, and the other party is pro-secularism. In this section, participants are given a short lecture on the philosophy of the nation by paying attention to the historical context of the debate regarding the foundations of the nation at the beginning of independence. This process aims to form a shared understanding without the tendency to take sides with past agreements regarding the nation's foundations.

A short lecture on the nation's philosophy began by asking a triggering question, "Is Indonesia a religious state?" this question succeeded in triggering a critical discussion so far. The pro-Islamism group considers Indonesia to be a religious state, so laws and regulations must be based on the majority religion, namely Islam. This spirit is what keeps the Islamic fundamentalist movement alive, and religious fanaticism continues to regenerate. The teacher also explains indications of an ideal nation without having to be a religious state. This explanation gave rise to responses regarding actions that reflected acceptance of secularism and rejection of Islamic fundamentalism.

SD7: "It was found that rejection of religious fanaticism was necessary to eliminate tensions and marginalization of a minority group. Awareness about the existence of Islam and respect for its values also emerged."

Indonesia is not a religious state and does not have to implement specific religious laws; it makes diversity marginalized, and relations between groups become full of tension. If we observe, even though it is not a religious state, in some cases, the majority religion [Islam]

has been implemented in social life, so that is not a reason to demand the implementation of Islamic law or an Islamic State (Faizal, written memos).

This opinion sparked another supporting argument: "I think that demanding the application of Islamic law is the right of every citizen in a democratic country, but it seems ahistorical that the agreements [in the past] that have been made must be obeyed by every citizen. We must maintain the values that have grown in Indonesia (Subhan, written memos)." After receiving a short lecture on the nation's nature, Tivani argued: "I consider the opinion that Indonesia is not a religious state to be correct, and we do not need the dominance of one particular religion in the state system. From here, I understand that the essence of a nation is a shared view of living together and working together to achieve justice."

Ahmad argued: "After receiving the explanation, I think that the non-applicability of Islamic ideology does not mean that we marginalize Islam. In becoming a nation, what must be prioritized are togetherness, freedom, egalitarianism, and not egoism." The Islamic fundamentalist movement is based on 'blind' group egoism and does not view differences as a destiny that must be cared for. This movement sparked tension among the nation's citizens.

Addressing the future of the pro-Islamism movement, Ikhsan argued: "Even though Islam is the majority religion, there is nothing wrong with providing space and a sense of security for minorities. That is where the honour of this religion lies—which does not impose will, eliminates arrogance, and is moderate. Excessive pro-Islamism movements will become increasingly shunned and unpopular."

SD8: "Awareness of the potential for conflict has closed the opportunity for the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism, a progress when opinions are found that prioritize a sense of nationalism and peace as priorities."

The Islamic fundamentalist movement has created fear in society. I agree with Ahmad and Ikhsan's opinion that religious-based socio-political movements are no longer relevant in an increasingly open world. If we force ourselves to become a religious state, what will happen is the potential for conflict, and ultimately, we will be shunned by other countries and isolated (Reza, written memos).

Acceptance of secularism is a condition for fostering hope for peace in society. Subhan believes: "what needs to be done... is to maintain everyone's sense of security, not to act arrogantly and provocatively which triggers tension, we must side with universal values." This opinion is a memo that contains nuances of progress in thinking, moderate action and marginalizing the potential for

conflict. This opinion leads students to reject Islamic fundamentalism altogether, that what they are doing is an action that is contrary to the nation's philosophy.

These data investigate how nationalist behavior is expressed as an act of accepting secularism and opposing Islamic fundamentalism among high school students. After studying the debate between Islamism and Secularism, students form dichotomous opinions. A short lecture on the nation's philosophy prompts in-depth discussions, with the triggering question, "Is Indonesia a religious state?" initiating a shared understanding. The rejection of religious fanaticism is identified as crucial to eliminating tensions and marginalization of minority groups, emphasizing awareness and respect for diverse values.

Participants express acceptance of secularism through statements such as rejecting demands for implementing Islamic law in a non-religious state and acknowledging the need to maintain values grown in Indonesia. The essence of a nation is seen as a shared view of living and working together for justice. Students recognize the potential for conflict and fear associated with excessive pro-Islamism movements, emphasizing the importance of providing space and security for minorities. Nationalist behavior is evident in the rejection of Islamic fundamentalism, as students prioritize togetherness, freedom, and egalitarianism over egoism. The movement is deemed irrelevant in an increasingly open world, with the potential for conflict leading to isolation. Acceptance of secularism is essential for fostering peace, emphasizing universal values and actions aligned with the nation's philosophy. Students exhibit nationalist behavior by promoting moderation, rejecting fanaticism, and prioritizing national unity and peace.

### **Research Question 3: How do factors contribute to high school students' actions and philosophical understanding of nationhood?**

Students' actions and understanding of national philosophy are shaped by in-depth arguments on socio-political-religious phenomena, acceptance of historical agreements, and hopes for a peaceful future. These three factors are dominant and appear in every discussion and memo students write after the discussion. The pattern is that students are critical of fundamentalist Islamic movements. These movements are no longer relevant to the increasingly open conditions of the times. Haikal believes: "accepting Islamic fundamentalism means... preparing for a closed future, which will bring the nation's situation towards backwardness, being pro-peace means rejecting fundamentalist Islam." A closed world seems scary to students, so they try to marginalize it.

Critical behavior is also shown by seeing secularism attached to the *Pancasila* ideology as the best way out. Zulva believes: "There is nothing more important than a prosperous life, but what is even more important is a life that can accept all forms of differences, without superiority and arrogance." Historical evidence that the Islamic fundamentalism movement is a disturbance containing terror and repression makes students think that peace is being threatened, even though they believe that modern life should lead to a more peaceful situation than today. Moreover, *Pancasila* has accommodated quite a lot of Islamic theology—regarding Sharia Banking, Zakat Management, Marriage, Hajj and Umrah, Islamic Boarding Schools, and others, without having to become a religious state. Islamic thought is already very representative.

SD9: "It was found that returning to the historical agreement, accepting secularism, is very important in facing the problem of ideological threats that have the potential to create conflict and disintegration."

Resolving the ideological disputes and problems created by supporters of the Islamic State is to return to past agreements. I suspect that they [Fundamentalists] do not read history well. They swallow religious raw dogma without considering the applicable historical context (Fajri, written memos).

Returning to ethics and historical norms is believed to be a way to deal with the problems caused by fundamentalist Islamic movements. In the end, every individual hopes for a peaceful future. They are not ready to face a prolonged conflict like the experience in the Middle East. Ahmad believes: "We need to read much history and learn that wars caused by religious politics will result in suffering and the decline of civilization. We must look at universal and human values." A psychological condition that reflects the desire to avoid conflict but is always ready to act to prevent it. The progress in thinking is a significant achievement that the nation's philosophical understanding has been successfully formed.

This part, complemented by the information in the memo, shows that forming a philosophical understanding of nationhood through critical discussion is quite effective. Gradually, students succeed in understanding the material–social context–knowledge—a resolution to achieve a more established, conflict-free, and more democratic social life.

These data highlight several factors contributing to high school students' actions and philosophical understanding of nationhood. The dominant factors include in-depth arguments on socio-political-religious phenomena, acceptance of historical agreements, hope for a peaceful future, critical evaluation of fundamentalist Islamic movements, return to ethics and historical norms, and



formation of philosophical understanding through critical discussion. In summary, these factors collectively shape high school students' actions and philosophical understanding of nationhood, emphasizing in-depth thinking, historical awareness, and a commitment to peace and unity.

### **Discussion**

Research findings show that the requirement for studying national philosophy is to involve students intensively in the classroom. In addition, sensitive material regarding the debate on Islamism and secularism at the beginning of independence, which was managed using the students' critical thinking paradigm, has resulted in a significant change in worldview. Kohn's (1939) and Renan's (2018) opinions regarding the nation's philosophy are reflected in this research. Directly, the findings of this research support the two philosophers' opinions that, for students, a nation is a group of people formed through acceptance of differences, historical struggles, inner ties, idealism, and other things that lead to political choices and agreements. The research findings also align with Azada-Palacios (2022), who puts forward the perspective of heterogeneity in nation formation and the resilience of a nation. The findings in Klautke's (2022) and Jaiswal's (2022) research are also in line with these findings, where the nation is defined as a diverse unit, not divided by dominant in-group sentiments or interests; for this reason, the philosophical understanding of nationhood that students have produced is relevant to the researchers' thinking. Following Rustemi and Kurteshi's (2023) research findings, in-depth arguments and critical thinking is one phase of achieving philosophical understanding. Students succeeded in providing fundamental criticism of the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism, as well as the national need for a pluralistic society (Dunn, 2022; Pirner, 2022; Setiyonugroho, et al., 2022).

This research supports Davies' (2017), Zadora's (2022), Maluleka (2023), and Fitrianto and Kurniawan (2023) findings that remembering, understanding, and critical thinking can be developed through sensitive issues—containing pros and cons. The confrontation of opinions has created in-depth knowledge, not just knew the definition but understood the elements in theory and the context. Also, in line with the research findings of Kurniawati et al. (2022), historical literacy determines students' in-depth arguments, cognitive capacity can be strengthened through learning that prioritizes dialogue, and each student can communicate the results of their learning. After philosophical understanding of nationhood is formed, some conditions align with Elfert's

(2023) findings that philosophical understanding of nationhood succeeds in eliminating fanatical feelings and, on the other hand, can encourage students to prioritize democracy.

This research also proves that the philosophical understanding of nationhood can be formed due to a critical didactic process that produces acceptance of differences, data, and evidence-based decision-making. Then, in line with the findings of Karn (2023), Bertelds et al. (2022), and Conner and Graham (2023), students can evaluate the decisions taken and contextual empathy according to the conditions experienced by the students. The nation's philosophical learning has succeeded in developing individual awareness of the importance of respecting parties with different identities, freedom of expression according to ethics and norms, and autonomy of thought, that an idea must be born through an academic process—reading, discussion, synthesis. Philosophical understanding is not born from doctrine or coercion of the will without the opportunity to criticize and refute arguments.

Acceptance of secularism opens hope for a peaceful life, and rejecting Islamic fundamentalism means an effort to prolong the life of peace. Students' opinions that marginalize potential conflict and stay away from closed political life reflect a pro-democracy attitude. This opinion is a criticism of the history of religious-based conflicts. Students' self-existence is a human being who is pro-peace and loves universal values. This research supports the opinion of Chen (2017) and Ivarsson (2019) that in the search for self-existence, everyone is faced with political choices based on a search process and critical dialectics. Critical questions about the nation have encouraged students to continue searching for knowledge and the meaning of the nation philosophically (Jaskulowski et al., 2018).

Factors forming the philosophical understanding of nationhood are in-depth arguments on socio-political-religious phenomena, acceptance of historical agreements, hope for a peaceful future, critical evaluation of fundamentalist Islamic movements, return to ethics and historical norms, and formation of philosophical understanding through critical discussion. These factors result from critical didactics carried out continuously. Learning is a searching process. In this context, this research supports Espey's (2018) opinion that in-depth arguments can produce meaningful knowledge. The knowledge obtained is the result of discovery from the search of each student, not the result of the doctrine under coercive conditions.

In the end, studying the history of the debate between Islamism and Secularism, which was carried out by prioritizing didactics oriented towards in-depth arguments and critical thinking, has given

birth to a philosophical understanding of nationhood which includes respect for differences, rejection of religious fundamentalism and the idea of an Islamic state, as well as support for democracy and values—universal values to build a peaceful and just future life.

This research has profound implications for developing history curricula at the secondary education level, especially in Semarang. Focusing on the Teaching Philosophy of the Nation, this research provides a basis for enriching history teaching methods by emphasizing philosophical and critical aspects. The implications can be felt in increasing students' understanding of national identity, values, and historical events that shape society. In this context, educators can adapt the teaching strategies developed in this research to motivate students to understand and reflect on the philosophical concepts underlying the nation's history. Implementation of research findings can guide teachers to improve the effectiveness of history teaching, promote in-depth arguments, and deepen students' understanding of national values.

The novelty of this research lies in its critical approach to teaching history with a focus on knowledge of national philosophy. As an innovative step, this research presents a framework that has yet to be widely explored in Indonesia's history learning context. This research may be one of the first to explore national philosophy in history learning activities in Semarang specifically. A critical approach to history and a philosophical understanding of the formation of national identity add a new dimension to history teaching methods. This novelty may inspire further research in this area, both at local and national levels. Therefore, this research contributes to teaching practices in Semarang and opens the door for further investigation into the integration of national philosophy in the history curriculum in Indonesia in general.

### **Limitations, Implications, and Conclusion**

The limitations of this research lie in the framework used. The nation's philosophy, according to Kohn (1939) and Renan (2018), has become a reference in forming knowledge of the nation's philosophy about Indonesia, which is constructed by students in learning the history of the debate over Islamism and secularism at the beginning of independence. Does learning about national philosophy only exist in this material? The answer is no. So, the next researcher can study national philosophy using the same or a different framework when studying Indonesian history in other periods or events. In addition, learning about national philosophy can also be carried out in history subjects in other countries, with socio-political conditions that are different from those in

Indonesia. The critical thinking paradigm has the following limitations. We only focus on how students apply critical knowledge to the material taught to achieve philosophical understanding by relying on the CHLA framework. Future research could focus on creative, collaborative, or reflective thinking paradigms. All three are equally important for developing students' cognitive capacities.

In addition, we have used qualitative methods to study the nation's philosophical learning. Future research could use quantitative or mixed methods. Learning about national philosophy must continue to be studied in a broader context to discover how each generation from each country constructs its philosophical understanding about the nation based on historical experience, today's socio-political context, and hopes for future life.

Based on the research results, this study found that learning national philosophy with material on the history of the debate over Islamism and secularism at the beginning of independence could run more effectively with a critical thinking paradigm operationalized by the CHLA framework. The philosophical understanding of nationhood is reflected in the discussions and memos written. The philosophy of a nation that is pro-Islamism puts forward fanatical ideas, encourages a closed system, and is full of suspicion and tension. In contrast, the philosophy of a nation that is pro-secularism is more open, supports universal values, and encourages peace and a more democratic life. Secularism is embedded in the *Pancasila* ideology, which is the basis of the Indonesian nation. The acceptance of secularism is interpreted as accepting the historical agreements and struggles carried out by the nation's founding fathers. In learning, the philosophical understanding of nationhood is formed by in-depth arguments on socio-political-religious phenomena, an attitude of accepting historical agreements, and hopes for a future full of peace.

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## Appendix

### *Nationhood Type Data Reported by Participants*

Kohn (1939) and Renan (2018) Nation Types	Number of Student Opinion Types	Common Themes in Written Memos and Discussions	Example from Data
Diverse group	11	A nation is identified as a diverse group regarding ethnicity, religion, and culture. The assumption of equality is very far from students' perceptions. It is just that the dilemma still arises, especially among Muslim students, that is Islam as the basis of the state something negative?	<p>"I don't think there is a need for ethnic, religious or cultural similarities to become a nation."</p> <p>"Is a nation based on Islam wrong? Although I agree that differences should be accepted openly."</p>
Historical struggle	13	The nation is identified as the result of equality and historical struggle, a historical process that gives birth to unity and a sense of mutual acceptance. In this section, Muslim students more openly express their opinions and side with secularism as the basis for the formation of the Indonesian nation.	<p>"The bonds formed by historical struggles keep the nation alive and optimistic about the future."</p> <p>"Implementing religious equality will only give rise to problems of division among the nation's citizens—creating feelings of suspicion, sentiment and unease among minorities."</p>
Bond	3	The nation is identified as an invisible bond, relying only on the same feelings of mutual acceptance.	<p>"I feel that what is the foundation of the nation is emotional ties. I feel I have a bond with everyone who lives in Indonesia."</p> <p>"I think that inner ties are an expression resulting from the history of the formation of a nation, which sometimes strengthens and sometimes weakens, depending on the political situation."</p>

Idealism	4	The nation is identified as a shared ideal towards a just and prosperous life.	<p>“The nation was formed because of the same goals and views regarding the ideal future.”</p> <p>“The foundation of the nation is the desire to prosper and access justice freely.”</p>
Other	3	The nation is identified as a free and democratic group, having diverse but not necessarily identical political choices, and agreeing on the same economic goals.	<p>“Without democratic values, the nation cannot exist. Freedom opens hope for life.”</p> <p>“Becoming a nation is a political choice. In this context imposing individual will is wrong.”</p>

### Learning Sources of Group Discussion

Media	Article Title and Description
Republika	<p><i>Islam and Pancasila: BPUPKI Discourse on the Foundations of the State.</i> Discusses the debate that occurred at the Independence Preparatory Committee (BPUPKI) in June 1945 in formulating the basis of the nation. That was where debates, disputes and contestations occurred between pro-Islamism and pro-secularism groups (Subarkah, 2023).</p>
	<p><i>June 22: Jakarta Charter, Ulama and Pancasila</i> Discusses the Jakarta Charter, which is considered the basis of the state according to pro-Islamism groups. The role of the ulama was huge in creating the foundation of an Islamic-based nation. <i>Pancasila</i>, as a representation of the pro-secular group, is considered the ideal middle way to accommodate the interests of disputing groups (Subarkah, 2023).</p>
Historia	<p><i>Divine Precepts from Ulama Padang Javan</i> Discussing the contents of <i>Pancasila</i> and the role of Islamic thinkers. The Divine Principle is the first idea in <i>Pancasila</i>, which is considered a middle way in accommodating the interests of pro-Islamism and pro-secularism groups (Hendra, 2016).</p>
	<p><i>Two Factions of the Masjumi Party</i> Discusses Masyumi as a party representing Islamic ideology at the beginning of independence. Even within pro-Islamism groups, there were two factions, fundamentalists, and moderates, who always had different views (Setiyono, 2015).</p>
	<p><i>The End of the Life of the Imam of the Islamic State of Indonesia</i> Discusses the end of Kartosuwiryo's struggle, namely the leader of an Islamic state who once declared the Islamic state of Indonesia (7 August 1949) as a representative of fundamentalist Islamic groups who were anti-<i>Pancasila</i> and anti-Declaration of Independence of 17 August 1945 (Triyana, 2012).</p>

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*Tirto*

*First PPKI Session: Muslims and Nationalists Agree on the 1945 Constitution*

Discussing the independence preparation committee meeting, at that time, Islamic and secular groups were still at odds, defending their respective ideologies, and the basis of the nation was still being decided. The debate did not lead to violence. There was wisdom between the two disputing parties to wait for each other and not be reactive (Prinada & Ardanareswari, 2021).

*Historical Causes of the DI-TII Daud Beureueh Rebellion in Aceh*

Discussing a movement or association of organizations that fight for Islamic ideology throughout Indonesia, this movement is called Darul Islam Indonesian Islamic Army (DI-TII). Daud Beureueh was one of the factions in the movement fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state. This movement was carried out with terror and violence in the Aceh region, triggering a reaction among anti-them groups to fight, and a local war broke out (Prinada, 2021).

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