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Between formal and hidden curriculum: Investigating dogmatism and exclusive ultranationalism among college students through content and participatory analysis

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Abstract: The rise of exclusive ultranationalism—manifested in xenophobia and intolerance—has become a growing concern among university students despite the mandatory implementation of civic education aimed at fostering inclusive citizenship. This study maps the risks posed by dogmatic narratives by examining the gap between the formal and hidden curricula in university civic education. Using a descriptive qualitative case study design, the research was conducted in teacher education programmes (PGSD/PGMI) at two Indonesian universities, with data collected through content analysis of curricular documents, non-participatory classroom observations, and in-depth interviews with lecturers and students. The findings reveal three systemic risks: monolithic content risk, where instructional materials emphasise cultural uniformity or a single religious interpretation; hidden curriculum risk, where pedagogical practices dominated by rote learning implicitly reinforce passive obedience and ideological exclusivity; and manifested vulnerability, observed in a minority of students who exhibit xenophobic reasoning and resistance to critical self-reflection. The study concludes that the emergence of exclusive ultranationalism is less driven by external ideological infiltration than by internal systemic weaknesses in civics pedagogy, highlighting the urgent need for pedagogical reform through the integration of critical pedagogy and the redesign of learning content to promote reflexivity, pluralism, and democratic citizenship.

Keywords: Exclusive Ultranationalism; Dogmatic Approach; Hidden Curriculum

Introduction

The deregulation of national borders under globalisation has sociologically intensified identity insecurity, frequently provoking defensive responses that manifest as Exclusive Ultranationalism. This ideology transcends healthy patriotism by promoting beliefs in absolute national superiority (chauvinism) and the systematic rejection of external or internal “others” (xenophobia) (Ketut et al., 2025; Nurisman & Batam, 2023). Historically, such exclusivist ideologies have been associated with severe social and humanitarian consequences, making their prevention a continuing global concern (Pratama, 2022).

In Indonesia, the presence of exclusive ultranationalism is reflected in contemporary phenomena, including xenophobic public responses to the Rohingya refugee issue and the persistence of intolerance and radical tendencies among university students (Anderson, 2023; Ketut et al., 2025; Widodo & Al Muchtar, 2020). In this context, Civics Education (*Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan/PKn*) is normatively positioned as a philosophical and pedagogical instrument for cultivating inclusive, democratic, and pluralistic citizenship (Prasetyo & Wahono, 2017). This orientation is rooted in Mohammad Hatta’s conception of humanistic nationalism, which emphasises commitment to the nation alongside respect for internal diversity (Romualdi, 2024).

Institutionally, Civic Education is a compulsory subject in Indonesian higher education and is expected to foster tolerance, democratic values, and critical thinking among students (Marzuki & Feriandi, 2016; Sundawa & Dahliyana, 2022; Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). However, a persistent paradox endures despite these normative objectives; empirical studies continue to document manifestations of intolerance among university students (Ikhrom et al., 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2022; Westheimer, 2019). This paradox indicates the presence of implementation risks that are rooted not merely in ideological exposure but in pedagogical and curricular practices within civics learning itself.

Previous studies have identified that civics instruction in higher education is frequently characterised by lecturer-centred delivery, normative content transmission, and rote-based learning, positioning lecturers primarily as information transmitters rather than facilitators of critical inquiry (Murtiningsih et al., 2022). Conceptually, these risks can be understood through two interrelated systemic dimensions. *First*, the formal curriculum may present monolithic national narratives that fail to accommodate plurality and critical contestation adequately (Mazumi et al., 2023; Samsuri, 2025). *Second*, the hidden curriculum, operating through dogmatic pedagogical practices, implicitly socialises students to uncritically accept authority and dominant narratives, thereby creating conditions conducive to rigid and exclusivist forms of nationalism (Franz, 2007; Matorevhu & Madzamba, 2022; Transinata, 2017).

While existing research has examined Civics curricula or the influence of external radical ideologies, limited attention has been given to the critical interaction between the Formal Curriculum and the Hidden Curriculum as an internal pedagogical mechanism contributing to the emergence of Exclusive Ultranationalism. This gap is particularly significant in teacher education programs (PGSD/PGMI), whose students are future educators and potential multipliers of civic values in early education settings.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyse the potential risks within Civics Education that may contribute to the formation of exclusive ultranationalism among PGSD/PGMI students. Employing a multi-method case study approach, this research seeks to answer three guiding questions: (1) to what extent do Civics learning materials in PGSD/PGMI programs contain monolithic or dogmatic narratives reflecting risks within the formal curriculum; (2) how do pedagogical practices in Civics courses generate a hidden curriculum that may reinforce ideological exclusivity; and (3) how does the interaction between curricular content and pedagogical implementation contribute to the manifestation of exclusivist ultranationalist attitudes among students.

Method

This study employs a qualitative multi-case design to examine how tendencies toward exclusive ultranationalist reasoning may be shaped through the interaction between the formal curriculum and classroom pedagogical practices. The multi-case approach enables comparison across institutional contexts to identify recurring patterns without seeking national generalisation. The research was conducted in two teacher education programs: PGSD at Universitas PGRI Madiun and PGMI at UIN Kiai Muhamad Ageng Bestari Ponorogo. These institutions were purposively selected to represent different organisational orientations.

Data sources included documentary materials (syllabi, Semester Learning Plans, and primary textbooks), interviews, and classroom observations. Participants consisted of six Civics lecturers (three per institution) and six final-semester students (three per institution), selected purposively based on their direct involvement in Civics courses and completion of the course sequence. Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and non-active classroom observation. Document analysis examined how national identity, pluralism, and global issues were framed in official materials. Interviews explored pedagogical orientations, classroom climate, and student perceptions of national and civic issues. Classroom observations were conducted across eight sessions (four per institution), focusing on instructional interaction, authority patterns, and discursive openness. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and supported by systematic field notes. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014).

A three-stage coding process was applied: open coding to identify recurring expressions related to authority, compliance, and national framing; axial coding to group these into broader categories such as Narrative Narrowing and Discursive Closure; and selective coding to synthesise them into three analytical constructs: monolithic content patterns, hidden curriculum mechanisms, and manifested vulnerability. Cross-case comparison was conducted to identify similarities and contextual differences. The analysis focused on patterned tendencies rather than causal claims. Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation (documents, interviews, observations), source triangulation (lecturers and students), cross-case comparison, reflexive field notes, and peer debriefing. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and all identities were anonymised. The study analyses pedagogical patterns without attributing fault to individual lecturers or institutions.

The researcher's reflexivity was intentionally integrated into every stage of the study. The research team continuously monitored their normative assumptions about democratic pedagogy to prevent subjective biases from clouding

interpretations of classroom interactions and interview data. By adopting an empathetic neutrality, the researchers aimed to understand the lecturers' instructional choices as complex negotiations with institutional mandates and broader sociopolitical pressures, rather than rendering personal or institutional judgments. This reflexive process was operationalised through the meticulous maintenance of a reflexivity journal, which served as a critical tool during peer debriefing sessions to challenge, validate, and refine the emerging analytical categories.

Findings and Discussion

Potential Risks of Monolithic Content Narratives

A content analysis of formal documents (syllabus and lesson plans) shows that the Civics courses at both institutions have met normative mandates. However, the potential risk of exclusive ultranationalism lies in the interpretation of practical teaching content, which could limit inclusive understanding.

Table 1. Comparative findings of Civic Education learning content:

Content Risk Aspects	Universitas PGRI Madiun (PGSD)	UIN Kiai Muhammad Ageng Bestari Ponorogo (PGMI)	Systemic Risk Mechanism
Emphasis on Diversity	Tends to emphasize cultural uniformity and nationalism but lacks case studies on international pluralism and global citizenship issues.	Tends to emphasize unity within the framework of a particular religious interpretation of nationalism, which can implicitly exclude nationalism based on other ideologies.	Narrows the "Ingroup" (In-group Narrowing): Narrowing the definition of nationality culturally or ideologically, which fosters Cognitive Xenophobia (cognitive suspicion/rejection) towards "outsiders" who do not fit into a single narrative.
Presentation of History	Using a rigid historical narrative of the struggle based on a single fact, it lacks critical analysis of post-independence internal conflicts.	Presenting material on the historical debate between religious nationalism and secular nationalism, but without providing equal space for discussion, which risks triggering ideological bias.	Failure to Process Complexity: Failing to equip students with the skills to critically analyze complex or controversial national narratives leaves them vulnerable to exclusionary narratives that simplify problems and shift blame to the "other."

From Table 1, we can see a risk of monolithic narratives in both cases, suggesting that the curriculum fails to internalise Hatta's humanist nationalism. This content bias has the potential to become a gateway for exclusive thinking among vulnerable students, as they are not equipped with a strong pluralistic framework. This requires the development of comprehensive and in-depth materials for lecturers. Lecturers need to maximise their roles, especially as facilitators, evaluators, and motivators (Marzuki & Feriandi, 2016).

Implementation of Pedagogy and Hidden Curriculum (Implementation Study)

Research shows that the greatest systemic risk posed by exclusive ultranationalism arises from the hidden curriculum enacted through pedagogical implementation. Although most students can distinguish patriotism from extremism, this pedagogical weakness creates a conducive environment for the emergence of extreme attitudes among a minority segment of students. Ultranationalism, analysed by Piccolino as legalist nationalism, arises when political elites instrumentally manipulate the legal framework to maintain power and create a facade of democracy ("rule by law"). This elite strategy finds fertile ground in civics education through the hidden curriculum, which indirectly shapes passive, non-critical citizens.

Dogmatic and rote-based Civics teaching methods—in which lecturers function as transmitters of information rather than facilitators of critical inquiry—effectively condition students to accept authority uncritically, thereby failing to cultivate the capacity for independent reasoning. This deficit in critical reasoning impairs students' ability to distinguish between substantive adherence to democratic values and formalistic compliance with manipulated legal norms. Consequently, such pedagogical practices create favourable sociopolitical conditions through the hidden curriculum: producing citizens who are prone to accepting elite claims of legal legitimacy at face value while remaining susceptible to monolithic, exclusionary national narratives that displace responsibility for state failures onto marginalised groups, ultimately contributing to the entrenchment of exclusive ultranationalism. Although the probability of this outcome may appear limited, its potential impact warrants serious attention. It is therefore incumbent upon lecturers to proactively mitigate these risks to prevent the emergence of ultranationalist tendencies among students (Piccolino, 2014).

Pedagogical Risk Aspects	Universitas PGRI Madiun (PGSD)	UIN Kiai Muhamad Ageng Bestari Ponorogo (PGMI)	Systemic Hidden Curriculum Outcome
Lecturer's teaching method	Lecturers predominantly use lecture and drill and practice methods, focusing on transmitting national facts (70% of class time).	Lecturers tend to use ideological storytelling methods that have a persuasive nuance, focusing on moral obligations and absolute loyalty to a particular ideology and religion without comparison with the ideologies and values of other religions.	Reasoning: Positioning lecturers as transmitters of information, which systematically fails to develop students' critical reasoning to distinguish between substantive and formalistic compliance with laws/values.
Class Interaction	Some students were found to be very passive from the beginning of the semester to the end, showing reluctance to participate or ask critical questions	Discussions are restricted by the lecturer's authority to avoid touching on sensitive areas, risking leading an idealistic minority to seek answers outside the official narrative,	Validating Passive Compliance: The Hidden Curriculum implicitly teaches that good citizens are obedient and silent, which forms the foundation for rigid thinking.

Table 2. Comparative findings of learning implementation (RQ 2):

Hidden Curriculum	due to personal concerns. Validating Passive Compliance: Teaching students that being a good citizen means being obedient and silent, which is the foundation of rigid thinking.	which may be more extreme. Validating Ideological Exclusivity: Teaching that the official narrative or group narrative is the sole truth fosters cognitive anti-pluralism in vulnerable students.	Inhibits Critical Reasoning: Failure to implement Critical Pedagogy (such as PBM/PJBL), which systemically inhibits the development of Civic Skills (dialogue, processing value conflicts). This creates sociopolitical prerequisites for uncritical acceptance of elite authority (Legalist Nationalism).
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Table 2 reveals the potential failure to develop critical thinking in particular student groups. Courses nominally aimed at fostering democratic dispositions are delivered using authoritarian instructional methods and tend to promote particular values, resulting in an academic environment that permits a minority of students to internalise dogma without critical verification—a condition identified as a precursor to exclusive ultranationalism.

These findings raise the possibility of identifiable risks and potential manifestations of Exclusive Ultranationalism. The data indicate that the potential risks associated with biased content (RQ 1) and dogmatic pedagogical implementation (RQ 2) operate synergistically and may, together, precipitate exclusive ultranationalism among a small minority of PGSD/PGMI students. Most students maintain an inclusive nationalist outlook; however, this systemic risk cannot be disregarded, particularly given that these students are prospective educators.

Attitudinal indicators of exclusive ultranationalism were observed across in-depth interviews with several students who exhibited ideological vulnerability. These are exemplified first by a Rigid Interpretation of National Defence, in which vulnerable students narrowly conceptualise national defence as comprising military obligations or symbolic patriotism, while rejecting critical initiatives aimed at reforming the state system—thereby demonstrating a repudiation of substantive nationalism. Second, xenophobic attitudes were identified in contextualised case responses: when presented with the Rohingya refugee case study, vulnerable students adopted positions that rejected humanitarian assistance, framing their responses exclusively in terms of economic burden and national security concerns, thereby reflecting an exclusionary national orientation at the individual level. Third, a tendency towards ideological grouping was identified. This cohort of students exhibited a marked reluctance to engage with or exchange perspectives across ideological boundaries, indicating an impaired capacity to manage social diversity.

Classroom interaction in the PGSD case demonstrates a transmissive pedagogical orientation that positions the lecturer as epistemic authority. One lecturer explicitly acknowledged that approximately 70–80% of instructional time was allocated to lecturing:

"I predominantly use the lecture method, perhaps around 70-80% of the time. I must ensure students understand the 'correct' history according to the state version first. If I immediately allow open discussion, the conversation tends to become aimless and uncontrollable (ngawur). ...If a student becomes too critical, bringing up liberal thoughts or excessively comparing us with the West, I cut it off. I emphasise: 'You are here to become good Indonesian citizens, follow the rules.'"

This statement reveals two key elements: (1) the prioritisation of a singular "correct" national narrative and (2) distrust toward dialogical learning. The lecturer further emphasised that critical comparisons with Western perspectives were actively curtailed:

In the context of religious institutions, the monolithic narrative is framed through a theological lens. A lecturer explained his approach to filtering global issues:

"Globalisation is an entry point for foreign values. I tell them, 'Our nationalism is different from the West; we have a religious filter.' ...Students must possess ghirah (spiritual zeal) to fortify the ummah from external influences." (Informant D-PGMI-02)

The impact of this authoritative pedagogy is evident in student behaviour. Students adopt a strategy of performative compliance to survive the academic system, as revealed by one participant:

"To be honest, the class atmosphere is rigid... We concluded that, in the lecturer's eyes, being a 'good citizen' means being obedient (nurut). My strategy is: come, sit, and take notes exactly as he speaks. Idealism can wait until after graduation." (Informant M-PGSD-01 & M-PGSD-02)

At the religious institution, the hidden curriculum reinforces the notion of a single, indisputable truth. A lecturer remarked:

"Truth is singular; there is no need for wild debate. A good student obeys the ulama (scholars) and umara (government)... Overly free discussion will only generate doubt or syubhat." (Informant D-PGMI-03)

Consequently, both the secular-nationalist and theological tracks converge on a singular pedagogical objective: the preservation of systemic stability through the containment of intellectual divergence. Whether the justification is civic—producing a "good citizen" who respects state boundaries—or spiritual—moulding a "pious student" who obeys religious authority—the structural mechanism remains identical. In both institutional contexts, critical inquiry is fundamentally pathologised, categorised either as a disruptive Western subversion or a gateway to spiritual deviance (*syubhat*). This dual-layered containment strategy effectively stifles epistemic curiosity, signalling to students that intellectual conformity is the ultimate prerequisite for both civic acceptance and moral righteousness.

This pervasive culture of authoritative pedagogy carries profound implications for the future of the Indonesian educational landscape, particularly because these specific programs (PGSD and PGMI) are tasked with cultivating the nation's future primary school educators. When teacher candidates are conditioned to survive higher education through performative compliance and the uncritical consumption of monolithic narratives, they are highly likely to reproduce these dynamics in their future classrooms. The

ultimate casualty of this cycle is the cultivation of independent, analytical thinking. Instead of acting as catalysts for critical literacy, these future teachers risk becoming agents of ideological reproduction, passing down a legacy of unquestioning obedience to the next generation of Indonesian citizens.

Discussion

Content Analysis and Dysfunction of Political Socialisation

The findings of the content analysis confirm that the risk of exclusive ultranationalism does not originate from the formal curriculum, but rather from the narrowing of narratives and substantive bias in the practical teaching materials used by lecturers. This pattern indicates a dysfunction in the process of student political socialisation (Prayugo & Prayitno, 2022), in which an open understanding of nationalism is instead restricted. The dogmatic, rote-based Civics teaching method—in which lecturers function as transmitters of information rather than facilitators of critical inquiry—effectively conditions students to accept authority unquestioningly and fails to cultivate the capacity for independent reasoning. This deficit in critical reasoning impairs students' ability to distinguish between substantive adherence to democratic values and formalistic compliance with manipulated legal norms. Consequently, the hidden curriculum creates the ideal sociopolitical prerequisite: citizens who readily accept elite claims that they act legitimately because they are based on the law, while simultaneously vulnerable to monolithic and exclusive national narratives that shift blame for state failures onto other groups, ultimately fostering Exclusive Ultranationalism (Firmansyah, 2024; Piccolino, 2014).

The Risks of Limiting Cultural and International Pluralism

In the case of Universitas PGRI Madiun, the risk is manifested in the pronounced emphasis on cultural uniformity, centred on the Javanese ethnic group as the dominant local majority. Instructional content tends to be limited in its treatment of case studies concerning international pluralism and global citizenship. Theoretical Discussion: This restricted coverage creates structural obstacles to the development of Global Citizenship Education (Ahmed & Mohammed, 2022; Burgess Wilkerson et al., 2019). When nationalism is framed within rigid cultural boundaries, vulnerable students internalise cognitive xenophobia, viewing the outside world as an exclusive threat. This has the potential to undermine the six missions of Civics, one of which is making Civics education nationalism that aims to foster a sense of national unity (Hajri, 2023; Mulyana, 2024; Wiratomo et al., 2017). This failure, supported by the finding that some students were very passive from the beginning to the end of the semester, indicates that the system fails to provide the critical tools needed to process complex national information.

In the case of UIN Ponorogo, a potential risk emerged from the instructional content, manifested in the framing of national unity narratives within a particular religious interpretive framework. A singular emphasis on one interpretive tradition can implicitly marginalise discussions of nationalism grounded in secular ideology or alternative religious perspectives. Theoretical Discussion: This ideologically biased content poses a Risk of Ideological Gatekeeping. Hatta (Munabari, 2017; Sitompul, 2023), in his thinking on humanist nationalism, opposes ideological restrictions. When Civics content is used to direct loyalty to a single view, this course loses its character as democratic education. This is supported by Branson's findings that citizens need objective civic knowledge (Dwi Mustikarini & Ardian Feriandi, 2020). This failure causes vulnerable students to feel legitimised to view

other ideologies as a threat to national integrity, which is the embryo of Exclusive Ultrnationalism thinking. So the risk of Exclusive Ultrnationalism does not come from overtly radical material, but rather from narrative gaps that limit students' views of diversity, both culturally and locally and ideologically.

Implementing Pedagogy: The Failure of Critical Pedagogy and the Hidden Domain of Curriculum

Field observations and interviews confirm that the greatest systemic risk of Exclusive Ultrnationalism arises from the enactment of dogmatic pedagogy, a process through which a Hidden Curriculum emerges in the learning environment, often operating without conscious recognition by lecturers (Vu & Pham, 2022). Ultrnationalism, analysed by Piccolino as Legalist Nationalism, arises when political elites instrumentally manipulate the legal framework to maintain power and create a facade of democracy ("rule by law"). This elite strategy finds fertile ground in civics education through the Hidden Curriculum, which indirectly forms passive, non-critical citizens. Dogmatic and rote-based Civics teaching methods, in which lecturers act as transmitters of information rather than facilitators, effectively teach students to accept authority without criticism and fail to train critical reasoning (Kärner & Schneider, 2024). This weakness in critical reasoning prevents students from distinguishing between substantive adherence to democratic values and formalistic adherence to manipulated laws. As a result, the Hidden Curriculum creates ideal sociopolitical prerequisites: citizens who readily accept elite claims that they act legitimately because they are based on the law, while simultaneously being susceptible to monolithic and exclusive national narratives that shift blame for state failures onto other groups, ultimately fostering Exclusive Ultrnationalism.

Pedagogical Paradoxes and the Failure to Cultivate Civic Disposition

The normative objective of Civics education is to develop students who possess a genuine sense of nationalism and civic commitment to their country (Alscher, 2022). The essence of education is to equip students with civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition (citizenship character) (Marzuki & Feriandi, 2016; Neoh & Jayasooriya, 2026). Although most students demonstrate positive nationalistic attitudes, such as national pride, the use of domestic products, and the upholding of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), this success is achieved despite accompanying shortcomings. Courses aimed at creating democratic citizens are often implemented with passive methods. Lecturers predominantly use the lecture method and ignore proven models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBLJ) (Saqr & Uzir, 2023; Ulfa et al., 2018). In fact, PBLJ (Project Citizen) has been shown to excel at transferring skills, knowledge, and active attitudes (Joyce et al., 2015). This failure to adopt critical pedagogy demonstrates that the problem lies not in Civics content but in a methodological rejection of critical education.

Hidden Curriculum as a Mechanism of Dogmatism

The Hidden Curriculum comprises values and norms transmitted implicitly through the classroom environment, often without conscious pedagogical intention (Alamin et al., 2022; Rossouw et al., 2023). Findings indicate that lecturers' methods perpetuate two exclusive forms of hidden curriculum. For example, Civics students in the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program at Universitas PGRI Madiun often exhibit passivity, as observed among some students. This shows that Civics learning can lead to different interpretations of the objectives set by

lecturers and the university curriculum compared to the meanings students receive. Ultimately, for some of these passive students, being a good citizen means being obedient and silent, rather than being critical and active. This hidden curriculum fosters a rigid personality, which is fertile ground for exclusive ideologies because it is unable to process differences (Baykut et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023).

UIN Ponorogo (Veiled Exclusivity): Discussions are constrained or redirected through the authority of lecturers who foreground religious values characteristic of faith-based institutions. This is further reinforced by the dominance of Pancasila ideology in instructional content without comparative engagement with alternative ideological frameworks. The implicit message of this Hidden Curriculum is that a singular truth must not be subjected to critical scrutiny. This orientation may gradually foster cognitive anti-pluralism, which carries significant risks insofar as it may lead ideologically vulnerable students to seek absolute certainty outside the academic system, potentially drawing them toward extremist communities. This hidden curriculum dynamic constitutes the antithesis of Critical Pedagogy as theorised by Paulo Freire (Amin & Ikramatoun, 2022; Baykut et al., 2022). Education that relies on indoctrination (the banking concept) fails to empower students in dialogue, so they are not trained to empathise or process value conflicts, which is a failure to develop civic skills.

The synergy between the potential risks of biased content and the enactment of dogmatic pedagogy creates an ideological gap that may systematically contribute to the emergence of Exclusive Ultranationalism among a small minority of PGSD/PGMI students. Although most students have successfully internalised inclusive nationalism—as evidenced by behaviours such as the use of domestic products and the practice of respecting social differences—this systemic risk warrants sustained attention. Social Identity Theory posits that when the ingroup (the Indonesian nation) is rigidly defined and perceived as threatened by outgroups (such as refugees or foreign ideologies), members of vulnerable groups are liable to exhibit extreme ingroup bias. In the present context, Biased Input (Content): The ingroup (Indonesian nationalism) is framed as monolithic and inherently fragile. Passive Process (Pedagogy): Students' capacity to critically interrogate ingroup/outgroup boundaries is systematically curtailed. The combined result is the emergence of an exclusionary national ego among vulnerable student cohorts (Saqr & Uzir, 2023; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019; Yasa & Hamad, 2022).

Potential Manifestations in Vulnerable Groups

Attitudinal indicators of a tendency toward Exclusive Ultranationalism were observed across in-depth interviews with several students who exhibited ideological vulnerability. Xenophobic Rationalisation (Rohingya Case): Vulnerable students consistently rejected humanitarian assistance, framing their responses exclusively in terms of economic burden and national security imperatives. This orientation reflects a failure to reconcile the state's constitutional obligation to protect human rights with its broader global humanitarian responsibilities. Such students failed to internalise the principle that civic disposition must be grounded in human dignity and the universal public interest (Mazid & Wulansari, 2025).

When discussing the Rohingya refugee crisis, students at the religious institution rationalised exclusion using an economic logic that pitted domestic welfare against humanitarian aid:

"Logically, if the state has a budget, why should it be used to feed citizens of another country? The lecturer said, 'Fix our own house before helping

neighbours.' ...It is better to use state resources to ensure the welfare of Quranic teachers (guru ngaji) or repair damaged madrasas... Rejecting them is a form of 'love' for our state budget." (Informant M-PGMI-01 & M-PGMI-02

Conversely, in the general university, exclusion manifests through the silencing of critical inquiry. A student described suppressing a question about human rights due to fear of being labelled:

"The lecturer made a harsh closing statement... 'If the Rohingya are deemed to reduce the rights of Indonesian citizens, the government needs to be firm in rejecting them.' That sentence killed my courage. I wanted to ask about the humanitarian aspect of the constitution, but I was afraid of being labelled 'radical' in front of the class, so I kept it to myself." (Informant M-PGSD-03)

Vulnerable students conceptualised national defence narrowly as the protection of sovereignty and rejected critical initiatives aimed at reforming the state system (e.g., the anti-corruption movement). This orientation constitutes a rejection of substantive nationalism, which demands a commitment to continuous civic improvement. The synergy between content-related risks and pedagogical implementation may generate a curriculum gap that creates conditions in which exclusive dogma is liable to consolidate. This structural failure, particularly among prospective PGSD/PGMI teachers who serve as future civic value multipliers, carries significant policy implications (Iniesto & Bossu, 2023; Yasa & Hamad, 2022).

Conclusion

Ultimately, this study reexamines Exclusive Ultranationalism not as an abrupt ideological deviation but as a pedagogically mediated possibility shaped by the dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum in the two institutional cases examined. The findings suggest that ideological orientations are transmitted not only through formal syllabi but also through patterns of authority, modes of classroom interaction, assessment practices, and implicit hierarchies of acceptable viewpoints. Civic identity formation, therefore, occurs not merely at the level of curricular content, but within the structural logic of pedagogy.

In the observed cases, when Civics education operates predominantly within a transmissive paradigm, where lecturers function as primary knowledge authorities and students as relatively passive recipients, classroom interaction may narrow the dialogical space. Such narrowing does not automatically produce exclusivist orientations; however, it may constrain opportunities for critical interrogation of contested national narratives. In this sense, tendencies toward Exclusive Ultranationalist reasoning appear less as products of external ideological infiltration and more as patterned vulnerabilities shaped by pedagogical structures that limit reflexive engagement.

Drawing on Critical Pedagogy, this study conceptualises classroom interaction as a micro-political arena in which power, discourse, and identity intersect. Nationalism, from this perspective, is not a fixed doctrine but a contested discourse requiring dialogical engagement and the capacity to negotiate value conflicts. Where dialogical praxis is limited, civic education may risk reproducing dominant narratives without sufficient critical mediation.

Although this research is limited to two institutional contexts, the pedagogical mechanisms identified, such as authority-centred instruction, discursive closure,

and compliance-oriented evaluation, are not structurally unique to these cases. These features are characteristic of transmissive educational cultures more broadly. Therefore, while this study does not claim empirical generalisation, it suggests that similar vulnerabilities may emerge in other teacher education contexts where dialogical pedagogical practices remain limited.

The central theoretical contribution of this research lies in articulating, within the scope of the cases studied, a structural linkage between Hidden Curriculum mechanisms and the formation of civic dispositions. Civics classrooms are not neutral spaces of knowledge transfer; they are formative civic arenas in which authority structures and discursive boundaries shape how future teachers interpret and enact national identity. By shifting analytical attention from curricular content alone to pedagogical architecture, this study contributes to ongoing debates on democratic resilience and civic education reform.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in relation to this study.

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