Exploring the Structural Spread of Close-Mindedness as an Epistemic Vice in Indonesia

Ferris Arrafi Silitonga[1], Herdito Sandi Pratama[2]

[1]Magister of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia.
[2]Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia.
(corresponding author: herditosandi@gmail.com)

Abstract

The post-Suharto era in Indonesia, which spans over 26 years and encompasses numerous leadership changes, has been marked by significant democratic challenges. The period is defined by the rise of populism, increasing polarization, and institutional resistance to open discourse. Sensitive discussions regarding the principles and ideologies of the state are often met with reluctance or outright rejection by governmental institutions. These tendencies reflect a deeper structural issue: the intellectual vice of close-mindedness, as examined through the lens of vice epistemology. This paper argues that close-mindedness operates not only at an individual level but also as a systemic issue entrenched within institutional frameworks, creating a feedback loop between political structures and societal attitudes. The paper examines the relationship between institutional resistance and societal polarization, shedding light on how these elements reinforce one another. Additionally, it investigates the cultural and historical factors that have contributed to the perpetuation of close-mindedness as an epistemic vice in Indonesia's governance and political culture. Left unaddressed, this structural vice threatens to undermine the integrity of Indonesia's democracy and further deepen societal divisions. In its conclusion, the paper offers practical recommendations to break this cycle, emphasizing the need for fostering intellectual humility, strengthening democratic institutions, and encouraging open and critical public discourse to safeguard the nation's democratic trajectory.

Keywords:
populism; polarization; vice epistemology; Close-Mindedness in Indonesia

Introduction

In August 2018, the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS) of the University of Gadjah Mada published a paper regarding the polemic of the interpretation of Pancasila, Indonesia's state principles. Two of the main concerns were the risk of multiple interpretations of Pancasila, weaponised for particular political interests, and the need to prevent Pancasila from becoming a closed ideology immune to feedback or criticism (Fachrudin, 2018). Historically, it must be noted that multiple views and ideologies shaped Pancasila in its development, starting from the Islamists and communists, and how

Pancasila was treated variably during the eras of Sukarno, Suharto, and post-reformation. The post-Suharto era, which has been ongoing for approximately 26 years, has witnessed several leadership changes, each with its impact on the interpretation and application of Pancasila. During this period, Indonesia experienced a democratic upheaval characterised by the rise of populism and polarisation, particularly during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's term, Joko Widodo's term, and the transition between the two. This era saw the emergence of various social and political movements that challenged the conventional understanding of Pancasila, leading to debates about its relevance and

interpretation in contemporary Indonesia. As Fachrudin noted, any organisation deemed not 'Pancasila enough' will have to be disbanded by law, yet what constitutes 'Pancasila' remains unclear and is prone to be misused by particular authorities for their vested interests.

A few months after the publication, Syaiful Arif (2018), a member of the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency (BPIP - *Badan Pembinaan Ideologi Pancasila*), an organisation tasked to preserve and develop Pancasila as an ideology, refuted the call for such polemics, stating that Pancasila can develop and is open to debate through 'scientific' and academic methods. This refutation was published in a newspaper column, so responses were limited, but one could have responded that Arif's refutation ironically missed the point: if Pancasila is supposed to be developed academically, he—and BPIP by extension—supports CRCS' statement and attempt to polemise Pancasila academically. However, it seems to be that the way the ideology is handled must be according to the institution's (BPIP in this case) methods and not in any other way.

Around the same period, Acikgenc and Pratama (2018) observed an increasing amount of populism in Indonesia, characterised by political movements that polarise public opinions and exclude those not belonging to the majority, treating them as hostile. This situation reflects a decreasing commitment to the use of reason or public reason that values diverse opinions and values. Both the BPIP (an institution) and the populists (a collective of individuals outside the institution) exhibit a common epistemic vice: close-mindedness. Before we can explain how both entities share a similar vice, how they are linked, and their potential influence on one another, the concept of an epistemic vice requires clarification.

An example of such an epistemic vice is the 2019 Indonesian presidential election, where the polarisation of opinions was evident in the intense rivalry between supporters of the incumbent president, Joko Widodo,

and his challenger, Prabowo Subianto. Social media platforms were flooded with misinformation and divisive rhetoric, leading to a highly polarised political landscape. This situation exemplifies how populism and close-mindedness can manifest in the political sphere, affecting both institutions and individuals.

The BPIP has the mandate to promote the values of Pancasila, the state ideology which underscores democracy and tolerance. However, the rise of populism and the polarisation of opinions can challenge the BPIP's efforts to foster these values. The clash between the institution's goals and the populist movements' tactics highlights the struggle between open-mindedness and close-mindedness in the public discourse.

Karl Popper's concept of falsifiability is also crucial in our efforts to build a regime of truth that is far from intellectual stagnation. For him, a claim becomes scientific if it can be tested and refuted (Popper, 2002). This, of course, contrasts with dogmatic systems that fortify claims from falsification, which is likely to succumb to epistemic vices, such as dogmatism and close-mindedness. Popper's concept of falsifiability, when applied through the lens of virtue epistemology, serves as a means to challenge and resist the rigidity of closed-minded systems. Falsifiability recognises that truth is provisional, and our best claims about truth are never congruent with truth. Any claim is understood only in terms of its degree of truth-likeliness or verisimilitude.

In this context, understanding the epistemic vice of close-mindedness becomes crucial. Close-mindedness hinders the ability to engage with differing viewpoints constructively, leading to a breakdown in rational discourse and the marginalisation of minority opinions. By examining how both the BPIP and populist movements exhibit this vice, we can gain insights into the dynamics of epistemic vices in Indonesia and their impact on the country's intellectual and social

landscape.

Vice epistemology is a recent development of virtue epistemology, a field of epistemology where the primary focus of an epistemic evaluation is the agents themselves. In this field, intellectual virtues and vices, the qualities that agents possess, are considered fundamental for evaluating agents (Battaly, 2012). Zagzebski (1996) identified several intellectual virtues, such as autonomy, intellectual courage, intellectual due diligence, fairness, and open-mindedness. According to Pratama (2018), these qualities are crucial for fostering healthy and rational discourse, allowing knowledge to grow, and creating a society open to different opinions and arguments. This is particularly important in the "post-truth" era characterised by increasing polarisation and populism. In Aristotelian ethical terms, these virtues can only be achieved when an agent hits a "mean" between qualities, avoiding both deficiency and excess. For example, open-mindedness is a mean between the deficiency of considering too few alternatives (close-mindedness) and the excess of considering too many alternatives (naivete) (Battaly, 2016).

On the other hand, vice epistemology focuses on the vices in individuals, as postulated by Cassam (2016), who emphasised the equal importance of examining intellectual vices and virtues. In other words, recognising human flaws is essential for making progress in intellectual character, which cannot be done without understanding what those flaws (or vices) are and how they affect us. The development of vice epistemology culminated in the release of the book "Vice Epistemology" by Kidd, Battaly, and Cassam (2021). This book contains various essays, including discussions on how collectives, institutions, and networks can also be epistemically vicious and how this vice can affect the individuals within those institutions. For example, the recent rise of misinformation and fake news on social media platforms can be seen as a manifestation of epistemic vice at a societal level, leading to the spread of false beliefs and undermining rational discourse. Another example is the phenomenon of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed only to opinions that reinforce their own, limiting their exposure to diverse perspectives and hindering the development of intellectual virtues such as open-mindedness. These phenomena illustrate the relevance of vice epistemology in understanding and addressing the challenges faced by contemporary society.

Virtue epistemology works at a deeper ontological level than surface-level vice epistemology, although both engage in debates at the ontical level that focus on facts and reasoning. The key difference lies in reshaping the perception and institutionalisation of knowledge, which, in virtue epistemology, must go through challenging myths and ideological narratives that structure society's understanding of truth. Virtue epistemology is thus not about winning debates but about transforming the frameworks that shape how knowledge is understood and legitimised. This, of course, requires a shift from the superficial (ontical) to the foundational (ontological) in restructuring myths and narratives in epistemic practice.

This paper assumes that many of the virtues and vices of an individual, including the intellectual ones, are highly affected by the surrounding environment, including the institution's education system and actions, as argued by Battaly (2016). As per Aristotle, virtues and vices are qualities that an individual is responsible for and also voluntarily acts on. In this sense, virtues must be self-cultivated, done voluntarily and independent of their environment, and acquired so they can be admired to be so (Zagzebski, 1996). However, Battaly argued that an individual can also unwittingly acquire virtues and vices from the environment, not by their own effort. Yet, these qualities remain admirable, even though they are not always self-cultivated or within

one's control. There may be environments that are beyond the individual's control that support either virtue or vices, for instance, a repressive, intimidating, and authoritarian government would likely cause the citizens around them to be so epistemically timid and intellectually vicious that the individual is not under a condition where they can self-cultivate their own virtues (Battaly, 2016; Kidd, 2019). Because of this, the cultivation of virtue and vices in individuals must not be separated from how the environment around them is shaped. Identifying the environment and external factors that can lead to epistemic vices allows us to improve the epistemic and intellectual condition of the individuals within it.

This paper seeks to explore how the propagation of epistemic vices can also happen structurally at the national level, particularly in Indonesia, either inadvertently or intentionally, due to various factors. The need to examine this issue arises from the observation that epistemic vices, such as close-mindedness, can significantly impact the intellectual and democratic health of a nation. In Indonesia, the historical context of political and social changes, combined with the influence of digital media, presents a unique landscape for the study of structural epistemic vices.

To do so, the paper utilises various sociological theories that assume the existence of a structure with an interaction between institutions and individuals. Giddens' structuration theory (1993) is employed to analyse how the exercise of agency can reveal whether an individual exhibits epistemic vices or virtues. Additionally, the paper draws upon recent research developments in the field of epistemic virtues and vices, with a primary focus on close-mindedness as an epistemic vice. However, this study does not rule out the possibility of other intellectual vices being propagated, nor overlook the presence of intellectual virtues within the structure.

This paper aims to initiate further discussion regarding the structural propagation of virtue and vice epistemology in Indonesia. By identifying additional epistemic vices beyond close-mindedness, the paper seeks to encourage the development of ameliorative strategies to enhance the intellectual conditions in Indonesia. As Kidd (2019) suggests, this would involve a multidisciplinary approach encompassing psychology, sociology, education, and virtue and vice epistemology. The urgency of this study is heightened by the influence of the Internet and social media, as well as recent events that may pose a threat to Indonesia's status as a democratic country.

Method

This study employs a qualitative and conceptual approach to investigate the structural spread of epistemic vices, particularly close-mindedness, within Indonesian institutions. The framework draws on the fields of virtue and vice epistemology, structural analysis, and interdisciplinary studies to examine the interplay between individuals, institutions, and the broader social and historical context in Indonesia.

The foundation of this analysis is built on the evaluation of intellectual character at both individual and collective levels, which is an integral assessment in both vice and virtue epistemology. Scholars such as Battaly (2016), Cassam (2016), and Fricker (2021) have laid the groundwork for understanding how epistemic virtues like open-mindedness and intellectual courage contrast with vices such as close-mindedness and dogmatism. This study is built upon this groundwork to scrutinise how close-mindedness has not only taken root within strategic institutions in Indonesia but has also shaped societal behaviours and norms.

To analyse the structural dimension of close-mindedness, this study employs the structuration theory articulated by Giddens (1993). This theoretical lens highlights the interaction between individual agency

and structural forces, which are shaped by historical and cultural conditions. For example, institutions like the BPIP exemplify how structures influence and are influenced by the individuals within them. This interaction reveals how institutional practices can reinforce epistemic vices such as close-mindedness while limiting opportunities for critical discourse and intellectual growth.

To ground this theoretical exploration, the study incorporates case studies that illustrate the manifestation of an epistemic vice within specific contexts. The 2018 polemic about Pancasila interpretation, instigated by a paper published by the CRCS UGM, serves as a critical example of institutional resistance to academic debate. Similarly, the rise of religious populism, as documented by Acikgenc and Pratama (2018), and the intense polarisation during the 2019 Indonesian presidential election underscore how close-mindedness operates both within institutions and among the populace. These case studies highlight the mutual reinforcement between institutional rigidity and individual close-mindedness.

The research is further informed by secondary data analysis, drawing on a wide array of sources. These include academic literature on virtue and vice epistemology, official reports from institutions such as BPIP and CRCS, and historical accounts of Pancasila's evolution during the New Order and post-reformation periods. This combination of data sources ensures a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and historical factors that perpetuate epistemic vices in Indonesia.

Finally, the research identifies how epistemic practices are shaped by historical legacies, institutional norms, and contemporary challenges such as the rise of digital media and populism. This approach not only enriches the analysis but also facilitates the development of strategies to mitigate the structural propagation

of close-mindedness.

Results
Institutions and Ideologies in Indonesia

As described in the introduction, BPIP as an institution displayed the epistemic vice of close-mindedness, indicating and shown in the unwillingness to consider differing points of view to allow for a more holistic judgment of the state's principles and ideology. It is, however, only one of the many other vices displayed by the institution and other governmental organisations. The Pancasila case study, as observed in this study, is especially salient as the way ideology is handled by the institution can also determine how everything else is practised and managed, such as education and institutional policy issuance.

In "Mythologies," Barthes (1972) explored how ideology, such as Pancasila, is based on particular myths or worldviews that are widely accepted and taken for granted by society. Behind Syaiful Arif and the BPIP's excessive defence of Pancasila lies a view that Pancasila is the ultimate solution to the inherent problem of Indonesia's multicultural society, emphasising the notions of tolerance and democracy. Implicit in this ideology is also the belief that Pancasila is sacred and powerful, capable of withstanding perceived detractors (such as communism), leading to the establishment of Pancasila Sanctity Day as a commemoration. This approach can already be seen as leading to an absolutist method of treating the ideology of Pancasila and closing itself off from alternative views other than those termed 'Pancasila'.

The sanctification of Pancasila and its positioning as the sole solution to Indonesia's multicultural challenges can be traced back to its historical and political developments. For example, the New Order regime under Suharto aggressively promoted Pancasila as the unifying ideology, suppressing alternative political ideologies and movements (Crouch, 1978). This historical context provides a

backdrop to the current discourse surrounding Pancasila, where alternative views are often marginalised in favour of maintaining a cohesive national identity (Heryanto, 2006).

It must be noted, however, that ideology itself is indifferent and can lead to epistemic virtues or vices depending too on how an individual handles the ideology. Keum (2020) argued that Plato, contrary to the view that myths are inherently bad, saw how myths could be used to promote virtues, which, in our case, are epistemic ones. Accordingly, an institution and its members, if vicious, would treat ideology as a closed one and would bar it from further discussion, promoting an epistemic vice of close-mindedness. It must also be noted that a system can be vicious or corrupt without having the intention or aim to do so (Kidd, 2019). The members of an institution may not even be aware of the extent to which they have vicious epistemic characteristics. The extent of how much the institution is epistemically corrupt and vicious will be explained further in the third section as we discuss Kidd's notion of *epistemic corruption* in the education of individuals.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) noted that institutions are formed to facilitate the habitualisation of worldviews or myths. Social institutions play a vital role in solidifying and transmitting accepted norms and values, such as Pancasila's principles of democracy, tolerance, and sacredness. These ideals are reinforced through the education system and reflected in the practices and behaviour of the institutions themselves. Berger and Luckmann also stated that an institution "controls human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct." Habitualization and institutional structures contribute to psychological stability by providing universally accepted guidance that fosters a sense of order and predictability within society. Pancasila as an ideology is taught to individuals in schools and other state programs, along with, unknowingly, the propagation of the epistemic vice of close-mindedness. By adhering to sets of principles that are deemed absolutist and allowing no discourse against different views, either in public or in the academic system, individuals in society are not habitualised to consider differing views of life other than Pancasila. As a result, they are not trained to be more open-minded, that is, to be more considerate of different views.

Another consideration is that an institution may not be working for the sake of verisimilitude or the disposition towards the search for truth, which is an intellectual virtue, according to Zagzebski (1996). To follow verisimilitude *in an epistemically virtuous way* would mean that one must be able to acknowledge the possibility that one may have made mistakes or may have weaknesses. To consider or admit that Pancasila may have flaws would certainly be to the contrary that it is sacred, that is, free of faults. In this way, it may be seen that the institution, in its working towards stability, would be inherently promoting epistemic vices. A counter to this argument is Fricker's (2021) assertion that an institution, especially the justice-promoting ones, would have to care about the truth to create trustable judgment, which is also important for its own stability. Seeking the truth, then, is not mutually exclusive with stability. The extent of an institution's trustworthiness, which contributes to its stability, would depend on its affinity towards the truth, which also suggests it has to be more open-minded towards opposing opinions. Since Indonesia also assumes the notion of democracy, differing opinions and feedback from its citizens must be taken into account, displaying that these different accounts are not neglected. In the *epistemically vicious way*, however, an institution *falsely* believes that it has found the truth, leading to vicious acts such as being close-minded and dismissing differing opinions in finding the truth.

This begs the question as to what the reasons would be for such resistance against ideological discourse. One explanation is that the institution consists of epistemically vicious individuals. As Medina (2021) put it, individual and institutional epistemic vices work in tandem and feed each other. Individuals in the current institution would be very likely educated and follow the norms and values of the previous generation. Acikgenc and Pratama (2018), in their discussion about the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia, also noted how, culturally, Indonesia still holds onto the social values of the New Order era (1965-1998), which tended to be undemocratic and close-minded on differences in perspectives, and the New Order is especially close-minded and authoritarian when it comes to Pancasila as an ideology. The succeeding governments of the *reformasi* era wished to be less authoritarian, though considering the individuals were educated in the ways of the New Order, they would inadvertently carry over the epistemic vices of the previous era.

Beyond individual factors, the current government's emphasis on maintaining ideological stability may account for its resistance to engaging in discourse. Historically, Indonesia experienced a power vacuum after the fall of Suharto's New Order government, which was against political movements from the lower class. In this period, the gateway for political control opened, raising concerns of potential revolutions or anarchy, which Wiranto described as a state of chaos (Hadiz, 2000). These historical accounts could help explain why discourses about the state ideology tend to be close-minded: the institution itself opposes political movements aiming for control through various ideologies, thus needing to present itself as infallible and absolute, including in its treatment of the state's ideology. The resistance to the government, as observed by Acikgenc and Pratama (2018), is through the emergence of religious populist movements. Suharto's New Order government was repressive against discourses, so the religious movement, freed from that repression, engaged in discourses, albeit precariously, through polarisation and populism. These populist movements provide a reason for the institution to be more resistant to discourse, as engaging with close-minded populists might be fruitless. However, this does not justify the institution being close-minded in other areas, especially when interacting with intellectually virtuous agents like CRCS. There is a need for a better approach to engaging with different opinions without completely closing off, to avoid the vices of close-mindedness or naivety and to achieve the epistemic virtue of open-mindedness.

Another reason for the resistance to discourses can also be political, such as that which was feared by CRCS regarding the state ideology being handled for particular political interests. Future studies are encouraged to look further into this as well as other possible causes for the handling of the institution's policies, which can perhaps also reveal other types of intellectual virtues or vices displayed by the institution.

Discussion
The Individuals, the Internet, and Social Media

Berger and Luckmann (1966) mentioned that an institution would inherently appear in one's life, such that one cannot simply wish them away. Also reflected by Giddens (1976), an individual's agency, or capability to act, is bounded by the structure they are in, as shaped by historical factors and conditions that are not of their own choosing. Yet a structure is not always constraining but can also be enabling, so one may be more able to act under certain conditions (including the institutions) around them. Given these ideas, the institution, as previously mentioned, would teach values and norms that it prefers through the education system or through examples of how it acts, and

with it, individuals would exercise their agency in accordance with the taught epistemic vices or virtues to either bring changes to the existing structure or uphold it in the status-quo.

Kidd (2019) has considerably explored the extent to which *epistemic corruption* can happen through the education system. The idea is that education should create conditions for the cultivation and exercise of epistemic virtues and the appropriate epistemic characteristics, such as curiosity and intellectual autonomy, to be critical of ideas. When this ideal condition is absent, epistemic corruption occurs. According to Kidd, the educational system becomes corrupt when it promotes the development and practice of epistemic vices, which are the opposite of the desired virtues. Epistemic corruption itself emerges from the interactions between personal, context, and structural factors that tend to encourage, increase, or strengthen one or more epistemic vices. If individuals are not trained to be open-minded in the education system, which, according to Zagzebski (1996), includes being motivated to pursue the truth, being encouraged to consider appropriate alternatives, being receptive to new ideas, and reasonably choosing between alternatives, vices will propagate among the individuals in the education system and the general population. In the previously mentioned case of BPIP, the sign of epistemic vice was also inadvertently promoted to the public.

The extent of corruption, however, does not affect all members of society equally. Instead, it depends on both individual and external factors. As Kidd (2019) also mentioned, students have different psychological profiles, with some being 'Aristotelian', aware of the corrupting tendencies of their schooling and are inclined towards character excellence (virtue). The education systems also vary, with some universities being dissident of anything against dogmatic tendencies. Likewise, there are differences between the virtues of teachers. As a result of these factors, some members of society would be more epistemically virtuous than others, and the same applies to viciousness.

The propagation or habitualisation of intellectual vices and virtues, we would argue, also comes from what Fricker (2021) termed institutional *ethos*, the institutional analogue of an individual's character. Ethos consists of a collective's dispositions, values, and evaluative attitudes that guide activities. In this context, institutional epistemic vices are displayed in the lapses in the ethos in, for example, their goal implementation. Fricker provides an example of an epistemic vice, such as incredulity, where an institution demonstrates insensitivity toward certain testimonies. In the case observed in this study, BPIP and its surrounding institutions exhibit a specific ethos in their treatment of the state ideology, often reflecting the epistemic vice of closed-mindedness. This ethos serves as either a model of behaviour and norms for individuals to emulate or as a counter-example of conduct to be avoided. BPIP and other institutions in Indonesia, by displaying close-mindedness, have set an example that implicitly establishes this epistemic value as the norm. Consequently, the rise of populism, which similarly exhibits close-mindedness and hostility toward differing opinions, may be excused or legitimised by mirroring the behaviour of institutions that are expected to lead by example. This can create a dangerous zero-sum mindset in treating opinions, in which individuals would think only one idea is allowed to exist at a time, with differences met with hostility. This environment fuels populism, which thrives on such exclusionary characteristics.

The habitualisation of the institution results in at least three types of individuals. The first upholds the status quo of the institution. These individuals are more likely to be accepted by the institution as they provide stability and support, thereby reinforcing the epistemic vices that arise from the institution.

For example, some members of the BPIP, as previously mentioned, defend the institution's interpretation and handling of the state ideology, potentially exhibiting the epistemic vice of close-mindedness.

The second type is individuals who challenge the status quo and aim to reshape the structure, often facing resistance and exclusion from institutional discourse. They recognise the existence of epistemic vices and work towards promoting epistemic virtues. The CRCS UGM, for instance, seeks to foster a debate and a discourse on the interpretation of the state's ideology, advocating for open-mindedness and due diligence despite facing resistance from BPIP. The third type consists of individuals who have suffered under the epistemic vices propagated by the institution's education system but strive to exercise their agency to address the perceived deficiencies in the structure. An example of this is the group described by Acikgenc and Pratama (2018), which claimed to represent Muslims in Indonesia and demonstrated against the government, possibly influenced by the epistemic vice of close-mindedness inherited from the education system of the New Order era or even the current one.

To enhance the logical foundation of these discussions, it is crucial to include additional data and references that substantiate the presence and influence of such individuals within the context of Indonesian society and its institutions. For instance, empirical studies or surveys that demonstrate the prevalence of close-mindedness or resistance to alternative viewpoints within Indonesian institutions could provide valuable support for the arguments presented.

The Internet and social media further complicate the extent of agency as well as the entrenchment of particular epistemic vices or virtues. Jenkins (1992) noted a new social phenomenon called *Participatory Culture,* where the production of meaning, knowledge, and information is no longer centralised to certain media establishments, but rather, the consumers and audience are also able to do so. *Participatory Culture* was previously coined towards fans of media creation to contribute towards the media, though it can be extended towards the creation of epistemic products such as information and knowledge. This phenomenon is evident on the Internet, where user-generated content and creations abound. However, the quality of these contributions varies significantly depending on the epistemic character of the creator. An epistemically vicious participant is more likely to produce hoaxes or disseminate unreliable information. On the other hand, epistemically virtuous agents would note the lack of epistemic virtues in the same space and would try to compensate, such as by producing content that can help others discern information they obtained from the Internet, fostering critical thinking.

The Internet and social media's role in the shaping of the epistemic character of individuals, however, is complicated by the *filter bubble* and *echo chamber*, whereby the algorithm of the social media will perpetually show its users only what would be similar to what they have seen previously. For example, users who were exposed to information based on epistemically vicious creators would most likely see similar information the next time they use social media. An epistemically virtuous individual would have less of a problem with such a filter bubble since they are more likely to be aware of such filters and attempt to personally verify and compare available information to form a more balanced and holistic judgement. However, those who are unaware or uneducated about such virtuous usage of social media would find difficulty in escaping the bubble and are more prone to epistemically vicious information that can lead to polarisation.

The Internet and social media complicate the existing structures by reinforcing and amplifying entrenched epistemic vices. Individuals with inherent epistemic vices

who engage with social media are continually exposed to epistemically harmful content. This constant exposure may entrench their vices, as they may be unaware of, or even resistant to, content that challenges their existing views, even if it is presented responsibly. This goes both to those who either intend to protect the status quo and those who wish to change it: they will only be exposed to and be supportive of content that follows their own goals. Epistemic virtues include open-mindedness and courage, which require individuals to approach different opinions with fairness and consideration. Additionally, these virtues encourage individuals to be courageous when confronting perspectives that differ from their own rather than retreating into familiar or comfortable beliefs. However, becoming entrapped in the filter bubble would dampen those virtues to the point that they are not aware of their own vices.

The key point is that individuals who have been taught in certain ways before engaging with social media may be largely shaped by those prior experiences. Whether they are epistemically virtuous or vicious will influence how they interact with information on social media, potentially confining them to particular patterns of thinking, either open-minded or closed-minded, as they engage with content. The danger lies in the fact that epistemically vicious individuals may not only resist but also become further entrenched by the social media system, causing them to oppose even epistemically virtuous content.

The upshot is that while social and structural change is not inherently reliant on social media, such change may eventually occur if the institution's resistance to discourse weakens. However, this change could manifest in an unhealthy manner, as it is likely to be driven by the epistemically vicious, who make up a larger portion of the population. This may cause what Acikgenc and Pratama (2018) feared, that is, the formation of fascistic

institutions as a replacement. However, that resistance from the institution towards the epistemically vicious will also extend to epistemically virtuous entities, such as CRCS UGM, which, despite advocating for healthier discourse, will encounter similar resistance. The institution and its members resist discourse due to the epistemic vice of close-mindedness, but also out of fear that being more open might lead to engaging with the epistemically vicious and their influence. This creates an undesirable cycle, where the institution faces a dilemma: whether to open discourse with the epistemically vicious, risking further entrenchment, or maintain its resistance, which may ultimately become untenable.

Regarding resistance to discourse, Medina (2021) has discussed the concepts of *communicative and epistemic neglect*. In this context, individuals may experience neglect when they are excluded from moral consideration, either by being ignored or having their words dismissed and not taken seriously. Medina discussed the problem in the context of epistemic injustice and the failure of the institution to take into account testimonies in a criminal justice context. However, it would be important too to consider if the same happens to our case, where individuals wish to enact their agency and change the structure. CRCS UGM, in their effort to make the state's ideology more openly discussed, might Medina call *epistemic resistance* and *epistemic activism*— practices that wish to lead to interventions and transformations that "will improve both interpersonal testimonial sensibilities and institutional epistemic policies and designs" (Medina, 2021). Though again, Medina's paper was in the context of epistemic injustice whereby some testimonials or feedbacks are not accepted by the institution as the epistemic virtue would act to transform the institution to be more epistemically virtuous.

One could argue that the epistemically vicious are also experiencing epistemic injustice

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within this structure, particularly as a result of the institution's resistance to engaging in discourse with them. The question would be whether the epistemically vicious would exercise their agency towards epistemic justice. This could be the case, but the argument should be taken cautiously. The vicious, according to Aristotle, act towards a conception of value (in this case, justice) yet *falsely* (NE.1151a7; NE1151a20–25). An individual with intellectual vices in this case, while they act towards reshaping the current social structure from the wish to be more heard (especially after the power vacuum post-New Order era), they are inclined to uphold the views that they are already invested into and falsely believing that they do the right thing by not considering, or hostile to alternatives. The intellectually vicious will also not realise that they are dogmatic and close-minded (Battaly, 2016). Yet, their agency can also be the result of implementation failure and institutional intellectual vices that contribute to the lack of trust towards the institution (Fricker, 2021). Through this line of thinking, those who are intellectually vicious might be responding to an *actual* injustice that was done by the institution but might also be performing injustice themselves by falsely believing that they do not need to consider alternative opinions, thus acting epistemically viciously. This only makes it more important to address agencies that are epistemically vicious since they might not even realise that they are dogmatic. However, this should be treated with caution and sensitivity since their actual intention may not be vicious.

Ameliorative Approach to Epistemic Corruption

Kidd (2019) stated that in analysing a corrupt institution in the education system, the criticism ought to be ameliorative, that is, aiming to not merely describe the vices that are at work but also attempt to identify the causes and point to solutions. To that end,

Kidd posits that we can do so by making *conditionality claims* and *corrective claims*. The former states the conditions that have to be in place for corrupt tendencies to be possible, such as certain aims, practices, or cultures that allow or encourage the exercise of vices. The latter can be stated afterwards, which describes the corrupt features that need removing, and virtuous features that need to be installed or enhanced. In all, according to Kidd (2019), we must specify and explain the (1) corruptor(s) and corruptee(s), (2) the epistemic vice(s), (3) corrupting condition(s), and (4) conditionality and corrective claims. Though Kidd mainly focused on epistemic corruption in the education system, it can be expanded to other forms of institutions insofar as they also take part in teaching norms and values to individuals, including how to behave intellectually and thus epistemically.

In the previous section, this paper has described at least, in general, the corruptor(s) and corruptee(s), describing that the structure has three types of individuals. The first are those who would uphold the status quo, reinforcing the institution's ability to propagate epistemic vices. The second are those who exercised their agency in their attempt to change the structure by making it more epistemically virtuous. The third are those who exercised their agency to also change the structure, albeit done so in an epistemically vicious way. The corruptees—the general population who can only obtain an education as the institution has given and thus inherit the epistemic vices of the institution, were affected the most. The corruptor of the structure would be the institution since they are in control of the education system and the government. Yet, it must be noted that the individuals of the institution may also be the corruptees (for instance, those who are upholding the status quo). In the words of Medina (2021), those who work in tandem and feed each other. Tying down the main source of corruption cannot be pointed to one

single source, and strategies for amelioration ought to be, quoting Medina (2021), a hybrid one, targeting both the institution and the individuals at the same time.

The epistemic vice of close-mindedness has been identified as prevalent within Indonesia's social structure. However, this does not rule out the presence and propagation of other epistemic vices as well. More importantly, Kidd (2019) argued that it is of greater importance that researchers identify hidden vices that otherwise remain unknown. While this paper primarily focuses on one identified epistemic vice, rather than a hidden one, the emphasis is placed on describing the structure that enables the spread of this vice. Additionally, the paper highlights how this particular epistemic vice significantly impacts society.

The corrupting conditions are multifaceted, thus, so will be the corrective claims and strategies. The first factor is the policies enacted by the institution regarding the educational system and the institution's actions, which propagate and exemplify close-mindedness. The second factor involves individuals who either reinforce the institution by maintaining the status quo or exercise their agency in an epistemically vicious manner. For example, some individuals may use the Internet and social media to propagate this epistemic behaviour to others around them. With these in mind, we can start to speculate on the strategy that can ameliorate the epistemic conditions, which, according to Medina (2021), should be a hybrid one, targeting both the institution and individuals. The institution should make changes in how it operates, particularly within the educational system and in its handling of the state's ideology. More open discourse should be encouraged to demonstrate the institution's willingness to accept diverse opinions, including constructive criticism of its shortcomings. The education system should also cultivate skills and provide conditions that encourage individuals, from an early age, to engage in healthy discourses.

In this way, the institution will be better positioned to reduce the number of epistemically vicious individuals from contributing to the existing pool of such individuals. However, institutional change cannot be isolated from the need for transformation within the individuals who make up the institution. These individuals must be trained and educated to engage in healthy discourses, be persuaded of the necessity for such changes, and be made aware of the consequences of their current behaviours. Furthermore, they must be willing and courageous to embrace these changes despite the political, historical (such as the power vacuum after Suharto's regime), and contemporary factors (like the rise of populism) that might make them perceive such changes as dangerous. Here, we argue that the negative effects of not changing are greater than establishing change since the former would mean encouraging more close-minded individuals, rendering the resistance to discourse untenable.

In regards to the individuals outside of the institution, Battaly (2016) noted that we can design the environment (university, workplace, public spaces, etc.) so that it can encourage virtuous emotions and actions in individuals through exemplars and mimicry. Battaly argued that simply teaching the 'blueprint' of what it means to be virtuous is not enough, and the individual cannot be made to change only through self-cultivation since, if one were to be dogmatic or close-minded, they will not even realize their ignorance. As such, change must also be encouraged through the environment such that change will be 'jumpstarted' outside-in by putting individuals into an environment that is supportive and familiar. However, considering the roles of the Internet and social media with their *filter bubbles* and *echo chambers*, such an environment would be difficult to realise in virtual spaces. Ideally, such environments are designed where

the individuals can interact physically, hearing and responding to different opinions through face-to-face interaction while being moderated for potential flare-ups. Such environmental change can be applied to individuals both inside or outside the institution, with *epistemic activists* (Medina, 2021) working to improve both interpersonal testimonials sensibilities, institutional policies, and designs, and are deemed epistemically virtuous to provide examples and help other individuals to improve.

Though this paper has not yet specified specific actions to be taken, it must be noted that realising social changes of this sort will not be easy. It requires constant, sustained efforts in a perfectionist struggle (Medina, 2021). The stakes are high to enact the required changes before the structure itself undergoes an undesirable eventual change led by viciously epistemic collectives in the form of populism.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed a general overview of how epistemic vices, such as closed-mindedness, can propagate in Indonesia, with institutions teaching it to individuals while these individuals attempt to either reinforce or change it. The potential causes of this intellectual corruption have been highlighted, showing a complex combination of political, historical, and contemporary factors that need to be overcome to improve the environment and, thus, the intellectual condition of individuals within the structure.

While this study has contributed valuable insights, the relationship between polarization and institutions, as well as the exploration of cultural and historical factors contributing to the intellectual vice of closed-mindedness, could benefit from further analysis. The author's initial objectives and promises, while partially addressed, could be explored more thoroughly. Additionally, a more nuanced examination of the relationship between the

rise of populism and polarization, particularly in the context of the post-Suharto and Suharto governments, is necessary. Clarifying which government period is being referred to will help ensure a more focused and contextually rich discussion, capturing the distinct dynamics of each era.

Future analyses that reveal other types of vices not mentioned in this paper, as well as multidisciplinary research on ameliorative strategies for reshaping institutional policies and the environment surrounding individuals, are highly recommended for inclusion in the discussion.

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Azis Anwar Fachrudin. Program Studi Agama dan Lintas Budaya, Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), Sekolah Pascasarjana Lintas Disiplin, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

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