# Social Studies Education to Develop Democratic and Responsible Citizens

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## ABSTRACT

According to NCSS, social science education is an effort to develop civic competence by utilizing social sciences as its subject matter. However, social sciences do not arise from a vacuum but are based on social reality (society), which already has its own perspectives and values that are believed to be true. Indonesian society has a triadic paradigm: soul, social being, and creature of God. Everyone is placed within the framework of social being, divine being, and soul. Within this framework, individuals are situated within a community, not as isolated entities. Freedom is placed within the framework of limitations as a creature of God and must be accounted for both to God and to others. This is different from the Western paradigm, which places humans within the triadic framework of freedom, individuality, and physicality. Therefore, social studies education must be able to foster awareness of living together in diversity by respecting and placing diversity on an equal footing.

**Keyword:** Social education, Social Science, Citizens

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of education for the progress of a country is believed and realized by all nations in the world. Even Nelson Madela said that Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world**.** But he also warned that destroying a nation does not have to be with weapons, but simply by destroying its education system. Indeed, education is not only an effort to develop human resources, as development capital, but also a shaper of the character and civilization of the nation, so if the wrong policy is taken in education, it can damage the nation's generation.

As said by a sociologist, Robert K Merton that in every system is always functional and dysfunctional. Likewise in the education system, there will always be dysfunctional elements that must be anticipated so that the negative side can be minimized. The policy of independent learning and independent campus also has a dysfunctional element, namely the emergence of pragmatism as a counterpoint to idealism. The zoning policy in the new student admission system has also caused dysfunctional in the form of pragmatic behavior by ignoring achievement but only relying on distance by manipulating the place of residence in order to be accepted in public schools.

The history of education in Indonesia, there have been several curriculum changes. Since the enactment of the National Education System Law number 20 of 2003, there have been changes in the curriculum, starting from the KBK, KTSP, K-13 and Merdeka Curriculum. Frequent changes have created the impression that every minister changes the curriculum. Curriculum changes are a natural thing, because education is not only related to what will be achieved (goals), but also related to how to achieve these goals. But what must be realized is that every curriculum change brings consequences to changes in the learning process.

Now the minister of higher education, science and technology (Mendiksaitek) has launched a strategic program on the impact campus as a replacement for the independent learning campus independent program on the anniversary of the national education day on May 2, 2025. These programs are designed to shape students as

actors of social and economic change, and strengthen academic contributions in national development towards the Golden Indonesia 2045. This program is believed to be a transformative step to answer the challenges of the times while strengthening the competitiveness of graduates at the global level.

## Philosophical Foundation of National Education

Education broadly refers to the overall social process that brings a person into cultural life (Gutek). In connection with education, a fundamental question arises, namely what and who education is for. Dik Hartoko says that education is an effort to humanize humans. This opinion certainly raises further questions, what is meant by humans and how to humanize it.

For Indonesia, education is also a mandate that must be carried out to realize the state's goals, namely educating the nation's life. A smart nation in life is not only a nation that is educated, but a nation that is able to think healthily, and morally (honestly and responsibly) both towards God, others (nation and society), the natural environment and oneself. The founding fathers realized that when proclaiming independence there are three things that must be built, namely building the state, building the nation and building character, all of which are based on Pancasila. The success of building this character will determine the success of building the nation and state.

As the basis of state philosophy, Pancasila certainly underlies education in Indonesia. If we refer to the Pancasila philosophy, the concept of human being that is constructed is a mono-pluralist creature (Notonagoro). In this concept, humans consist of three natures, namely:

1) the composition of nature consisting of soul and body; 2) is the nature of nature, namely as an individual and social being; 3) is the position of nature consisting of personal beings and creatures of God.

The soul consists of reason, feeling and will. Intellect as a means to seek truth, will as a tool and impetus to seek goodness, and feeling is the urge to seek and beauty. It is with this soul that humans can distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, and beautiful from beautiful. Intellect becomes an instrument for thinking that produces science and technology, which can help humans overcome difficulties.

The human body consists of inanimate elements that give shape, plant elements that cause humans to grow from small to large, and animalistic elements that cause humans to move around.
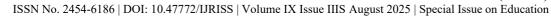
By nature, humans have an individual nature that is reflected in the form of me-ness, which causes humans to be able to position themselves as subjects and make others as objects. I-ness is also the basis for the emergence of ownership, which can be a source of greed and arbitrariness. Meanwhile, their social nature causes humans to not be able to live alone, and always need other people, so humans must always live together.

As personal beings, humans have freedom as a gift from God Almighty, which is then known as human rights. However, this freedom is not without limits but is limited by his position as a creature of God who is not immortal. It is this immortality that causes humans to age and end in death. This freedom is also limited by the body, as its executor. The older man gets, the narrower his freedom becomes, because not all of his will can be realized. On the other hand, freedom is also limited by his nature as a social being, who must appreciate and respect the freedom of others.

## Humanizing Education

In human nature there are positive and negative traits. The body, individual nature and personal being are negative traits, which cause conflict and unhappiness. While the soul, social beings and their position as creatures of God are positive traits that can lead humans to peace and happiness. From these two traits, it seems that humans are a combination of "angels" and "demons", one good side and one bad side.

Education is intended to develop the good side of man and inhibit the development of the bad side. The soul, social nature and religiosity are the good sides that must be developed through education. In the soul element,

the mind must be developed through education.by moving to continue to think critically, creatively and innovatively. The mind is not a "warehouse" that can only be filled with knowledge, but also a "machine" that can produce knowledge, as theorized by the adherents of constructivism, such as Piaget and Vygotsky, Vygotsky emphasized that students construct knowledge through social interaction with others. The content of this knowledge is influenced by the culture in which students live, including language, beliefs, and skills. Students can construct new knowledge from experience or their environment. People who live on the coast have more extensive knowledge about beaches than those who live in the mountains. Conversely, people who live in the mountains will have more extensive knowledge about mountains than those who live on the coast. This is in line with the epistemology of empiricism, which considers experience to be the source of knowledge.

On the other hand, according to Piaget, students build knowledge by transforming, organizing, and reorganizing previous knowledge and information. Students can also build new knowledge from their existing knowledge (stock of knowledge). People who already have a lot of knowledge have the potential to produce more new knowledge. This is in line with the epistemology of rationalism, which considers reason to be the source of knowledge.

On the other hand, the mind is also encouraged to think analytically, reflectively and abstractly. The ability to think creatively will result in renewal (innovation) in the field of technology. While analytical, abstractive and reflective thinking will produce new theories (*novelty*) as an explanation of natural and social phenomena. Such thinking ability shows that the person concerned has intellectual intelligence and has broad insight (rich in knowledge).

However, thinking is also a skill that must be trained. One way to train thinking skills is to practice asking questions, because thinking is essentially a process of seeking answers to questions (warsono). By asking, a person will gain knowledge, as Einstein said that asking is 50% of knowledge, meaning that people who ask a lot will have a lot of knowledge. The importance of practicing asking questions is also conveyed by James Ryan, a psychologist from Harvard University, by saying that question is more important than asked.

If we refer to Aristotle's concept, that men are an animal rational, and refer to the opinion of Rene Descartes: *Cogito Ergo Sum* (I exist as a human being because I think, or because I think then I exist as a human being), it is clear that thinking is one of the distinguishing characteristics and at the same time the superiority of humans compared to other creatures. Therefore, people who ask questions should be respected, because asking questions does not mean they are stupid, but should be interpreted as a sign that they are thinking.

Other elements of the soul that must be developed through education are will and feelings. These two things are the domain of ethics. Ethics must be a companion to science and technology as a product of reason, because science without ethics will become a destructive monster. As Einstein said, science without religion (ethics) is blind, which means it will cause damage and not benefit humans.

Ethics and thinking (science and technology) cannot be separated; they complement each other. Ethics gives direction to the use of science and technology. Meanwhile, science and technology will strengthen ethics. What is good for life can be explained with sound reasoning. For example, why we should be honest, responsible, and tolerant, can be explained logically, using the logic of If (to borrow Randall Munroe's term). For example, what happens if we are all dishonest, irresponsible and intolerant? Reason can answer and explain the consequences that occur in life together, if we are all dishonest, irresponsible and intolerant.

The development of the soul must be accompanied by the development of the body, so that it remains healthy, because the soul cannot exist (active) if it is not in the body. Renne Descartes said that the soul is imprisoned in the body, so that an unhealthy body can interfere with the performance of the soul. Therefore, maintaining the health of the body is also an important part of maintaining the optimization of the performance of the soul (mind).

Human nature as an individual is a negative element that must be controlled or suppressed so that it does not become dominant. This individual nature is seen in children, so there is often a struggle for games between them. To suppress the individual nature in children is done by playing with other children. By playing together it will realize that there are other people whose existence must be accepted. Therefore, Early Childhood Education

(ECE) is important as a first step to controlling their individuality.

In addition to building social awareness (recognition of the existence of others), early childhood education is also a very good time to shape children's character, as stated by Lawrence Kohlberg (in Kurtines. M. William). While the best method for character education is habituation and exemplary. This is in accordance with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's view, that the process of learning children is with 3N (Nontoni, Niteni, and Niru), so children are still easy to shape their character with the method of habituation and good examples. Parents must become role models of children's character. The home should be a place to cultivate (familiarize) good character. Therefore, education in the family environment is very important. However, in modern (urban) society, the role of parents in education is usually diminishing. For this reason, PAUD should be able to replace the role of parents in education, especially character.

Social nature as a positive element should also be optimized through education. Awareness of the existence of others must be cultivated. The presence of others is needed as an acknowledgement of his/her existence, as said by Hainneman, that the existence of "I" because of "*you*", or Aristotle's word that you are older than me*,* in the sense that one's existence will be meaningless if not recognized by others. On the other hand, the presence of others can also help achieve success. The assumption that there is no success without the help of others must be instilled in every child, so that empathy and respect for others grow. Therefore, living together in diversity, with various ethnicities, religions and cultures is a must, because diversity is a nature that cannot be avoided.

Life together must be based on equality and equality, so as to become a smart and socially rich person. For this reason, multicultural education as part of social studies education is important, because it places humans in equality and equality, so that there is only one human concept, as said by Buya Syafii Maarif, that there is only one humanity. By doing so, discrimination and demeaning attitudes towards others, which stem from individual nature, can be avoided or minimized.

The position of human nature as a personal being who has freedom is a negative element, it must also be controlled, at least freedom must be accompanied by responsibility for the common life. We cannot demand absolute freedom, because it will collide with the freedom of others. If that is done, there will be conflict. God as the giver of freedom also requires humans to be accountable for it. Therefore, freedom must be based on ethics and morals, so as not to disrupt and destroy life together.

Human nature as God's creature is a positive element that must be developed. Although humans as God's creation, are superior to other creatures, humans are still weak creatures. Humans cannot avoid God's law, such as death. Awareness as a weak creature before God must be cultivated, so that strong faith grows. This faith will be the basis for the birth of honesty and honesty will be the basis for truth, and truth will give birth to justice. People who have strong faith will be honest (afraid of lying) in revealing the truth as a form of noble aklaq, thus becoming smart and morally rich people,

By starting from the concept of man as a monopluralist being, education must be directed towards human glory by developing the elements of the soul, social nature and his position as a creature of God. Critical thinking skills must be developed, character must be familiarized and religiosity must be strengthened. In addition, physical health must be maintained and bonds as a nation must be nurtured.

**Social studies education**

According to Jarolimek (1982) the purpose of social studies education is to form a *citizenship competence*, which includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are the basis for the common life. Social studies education should be able to produce an understanding of human nature and convinced that nature is something that can not be rejected. Social studies education should also be able to foster awareness that differences are nature that is *taken for granted*. Therefore, we must be able to live together in differences by respecting and placing differences in equality.

In the law No. 20 of 2003 Sisdiknas product profile (output) education has been explained that the purpose of education is to help develop the potential of students, in order to become human beings who have faith and

devotion to God, noble character, independent, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and democratic and responsible citizens.

From these objectives, it can be explained that the output of education is to produce people who: 1. Religious (faith and **devotion** to God Almighty, 2. Character (noble character, **independent**, 3. Resilient (**healthy**) 4. Intellectual (**creative,** knowledgeable, capable) 5. **Nationalism** (democratic and responsible citizen).

The profile of educational outcomes outlined in the 2003 Sisdikknas Law until now and into the future is still very relevant. These outcomes are much more comprehensive and in-depth than the competencies needed in the 21st century, namely Critical thinking, Creative, Communication and Collaboration known as 4C, as well as deep learning objectives as presented by Michael Fullan, namely Critical thinking, Creative, Communication and Collaboration, Character and Citizenship.

In the Indonesian education curriculum, social studies is taught at the elementary and junior high school levels. However, at the senior high school level, social studies is also taught in the form of subjects such as sociology, geography, and economics. In addition to introducing social science concepts and theories, these subjects also serve as a means of building awareness as democratic and responsible citizens.

Therefore, social studies education has a very strategic role in humanizing humans as an effort to realize the national goals and objectives of education, as mentioned in the National Education System Law in 2023. Social studies education should be able to contribute to producing citizens who are democratic and responsible, both to God, himself, nation and state, and the natural environment.

**Social Studies Education Materials**

In order to realize citizenship competence, social studies require social theory to build knowledge, attitudes and behavior as good citizens of society and the state. So far, the theory used as material in social studies education comes from the West, not extracted from the reality of the Indonesian nation itself. Though the scope of social studies e d u c a t i o n includes: 1) man, place and environment; 2) time change and continuity; 3) Social and cultural systems; 4) economic behavior and welfare (Jarolimek). This means that social studies education should make geographical conditions, social systems, cultural values that exist in Indonesian society itself as the material.

It must be realized that social science was born from a social reality bound by the dimensions of space and time. Social theory is born as an attempt to explain social reality, influenced by the value system and the social system of society being studied. Society is a collection of individuals who interact with each other by making an agreement on values. From these values, norms are born that regulate the behavior of each individual who supports the community.

This phenomenon has raised the question of individuals who form society or society that forms individuals. This question has given birth to the constructivist theory developed by Peter L Berger, by creating a dialectic between individuals and society. On the one hand, through internalization, society shapes individuals by instilling values and norms that have been mutually agreed upon. These values and norms are internalized to each new generation, so that the same pattern of behavior is formed from all members of society. But on the other hand, individuals with their free will and creativity will also shape society through the externalization process. The society formed by individuals will not be exactly the same as the society that originally formed itself. The values and norms received from society are constructed into new values according to their thoughts and will.

Berger's view is a dialectic between society and individuals, between internalization and externalization which ultimately results in objectification as the synthesis. This view assumes that there is a dynamic that runs normally from Thesa (internalization) with anti Thesa (externalization), which then produces a new reality (society) as a synthesis. The question is whether the dialectic between society and the individual will always run normally or will find its own way as a result of rational choice.

If we examine, between human nature as a social being and as an individual, is a rational choice. In practice, these

two traits have their own choices and form different paradigms. In practice, the nature of being an individual (meness) is more in line with freedom and physical (material), which has been more developed in Western society. Meanwhile, the nature as a social being is more in line with the soul and as a creature of God, which emphasizes ethics and morality rather than rationality alone. Western society places rationalism to strengthen its position as an individual being with freedom. Meanwhile, Eastern societies, including Indonesia, use rationalism to understand their nature as social beings and creatures of God. Therefore, Maryam Jamilah sees a difference in orientation between Western and Eastern societies.

These differences are also caused by different natural environments. Different natural environments have also given birth to different value systems and norms. Nature has become a challenge that requires a response so that humans can survive. In fact, people not only respond to their natural environment, but also understand their natural environment. The community's response and understanding of its natural environment has given birth to culture. This can be seen from the cultural diversity of Indonesian society.

The Indonesian people (the word Indonesia refers to the people who live in the archipelago), is not a nation that can be considered "underestimated", which does not have civilization and the ability to develop science and technology. History has proven that the people of Indonesia already have an extraordinary heritage of civilization and material culture. Material culture in the form of temples (Borobudur, Prambanan and others), not only proves that Indonesian society is in the triadic being of God, social and soul, but also proves the ability in the field of science and technology.
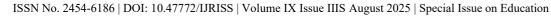
Until now we have no explanation of how the Borobudur and Prambanan temples were built, except for the myth of Bandung Bondowoso, who with his power was able to build a thousand temples in one night. Only because of the trickery of Roro Jonggrang, the temple was missing one, and to complete it, Roro Jonggrang was said to be the temple as a complement.

The making of a kris that contains a mixture of materials that according to metallurgists contain titanium and nickel certainly requires high science and technology. Majapahit ships and Pinisi ships from the Bugis community prove their superiority in navigating the seas, all being evidence of the heritage of science and technology of the archipelago.

In terms of thought we also find the philosophical heritage of life, ranging from social issues to politics (leadership). The principles of politics and leadership as well as the philosophy of life can be found in the culture of Indonesian society, including Hastabrata. The philosophy born from the thinking of the archipelago proves that the Indonesian people already have ethical and moral insights to realize a just, peaceful and prosperous life, because it is supported by extraordinary natural wealth, this condition is described as a life that is gemah ripah loh jinawai tata tentrem kertoraharjo.

Taking into account the values, norms and cultural heritage of the archipelago, Indonesian society prefers the triadic paradigm, soul, social being and God's being. Everyone is meant to be framed as a social being, a creature of God and a soul. Thus, thinking (rationality) is aimed at understanding his nature as a creature of God and a social creature. In this frame, the individual is placed in togetherness, not as an independent entity. Freedom is placed in the frame of limitations as God's creatures and must be accounted for both to God and to others.

In Indonesia, there are hundreds of communities with their own culture as a response to their respective environments. The diversity of ethnicity, culture, customs and religion in Indonesia is a "field" for the development of social science, because it requires its own explanation and understanding, as well as being material in social studies education. Many foreign scientists who conducted research to understand Indonesian society, then gave birth to theories that are different from the theories built in the West. Geertz, for example, has created an understanding of Mojokunto society, and made a classification that is different from other societies. Martin Van Bruinessen; Andree Feillard who conducted research on the lives of Muslims in Indonesia, especially NU, produced explanations that were different from the lives of Muslim communities in other countries. Likewise, in the field of politics, researchers who examine democracy in Indonesia also produce explanations that are different from democratic models in other countries.

On the other hand, theories built from Western societies are not always relevant and able to explain phenomena that occur in Indonesia. Bung Hatta, built Indonesia's economic system based on mutual cooperation as its pillar. The late Prof. Mubiarto, an economist who understood various economic theories developed in Western countries, then developed his own concept or theory known as the Pancasila economy, because according to him the theories built from the West were not suitable for application in Indonesia. Likewise, political theories imported from the West are not always relevant to be practiced in Indonesia. Our education should be built based on the social system and cultural values of the Indonesian people themselves, not importing from the West.

Therefore, social studies education teachers should be able to explore the theory of social theory sourced from Indonesian society itself, as teaching material. During this time, we a r e often trapped with Western theories and forget to build and develop social science based on the nation itself. Indonesian society with all the cultural diversity including the way of thinking, need to be studied and understood through research involving various social science disciplines. The results of these studies are then used as social studies education materials, so as to produce citizens who are intellectually intelligent, socially intelligent and morally intelligent, as well as citizens who are rich in science, socially rich and morally rich.

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