



# The Reconstruction of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Learning in The Era of Globalization

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**Abstract:** This article departs from the author's analysis that, with the controversial issues in social studies education, the learning process will stimulate high-level thinking skills that include aspects of analyzing, evaluating, and creating among students. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) should be provided by stimulating discussion on an issue or phenomenon that must be solved. This paper aims to examine controversial issue material as a strategy to higher-order thinking skills in social studies education learning in the era of globalization. The research method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive-explanatory approach. The data source in this study consists of primary data and secondary data. The results showed that materials of controversial issues that can be developed by social studies teachers to improve student's HOTS is class VIII material with basic subtheme of resistance to colonialism and imperialism. This material provides a particular debate about the struggle of the people of South Sulawesi against the Dutch. Meanwhile for class IX, the material is sub-theme socio-cultural changes. The subtheme of social change is a also related, namely the emergence of increasingly consumptive behavior for society that can be a controversial issue in globalization.

**Keywords:** Controversial issues, social studies learning, HOTS, globalization



## Introduction

Social Studies subjects need to be built to shape the lives of democratic citizens. Organize the material necessary to form brilliant characters and critical learners. This article is based on research (D. E. Hess, 2002), states balanced approaches from all sides in controversial learning, including denial, privilege, avoidance, balance. Classroom situation should be allowed to develop, not necessarily interfered by teachers. They give students autonomy to decide or express their thinking critically.

Learning controversial issues in social studies will train high-level thinking skills that include analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) should be provided by stimulating discussion on an issue or phenomenon that must be solved. This issue is in line with the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) in (Philpott et al., 2011) that controversial topics become an essential component that can make children more critical and democratic. It is also relevant to the research results (Supriatna, 2007) that controversial issues can be presented in Historical Education to build critical historical awareness and students' imagination.

However, teachers always feel limited targets listed in the package book and Learning Implementation Plan, so they lack creativity in developing and training students to have HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skill) thinking skills. Finally, social studies education is taught monotonically, without variation, without practice to make students think at a high level.

This condition is reinforced by the theory (Al-Mukhtar Suwarma., 1999) that the weakness of social studies education so far lies in the learning process. The learning process is still weak and trapped in the process of memorization, touching low cognitive levels (the learning process has not developed high-level thinking). The quality of student participation in learning is still low; they have not been played as learners who independently conduct learning activities. Social studies education teachers have not been able to do optimal class management more act as presenters of information from books.

Many students who state that they memorize more prove that the state that has not given proper attention occurs the development of cognitive skills goals. If this phenomenon is continuously allowed, it is very concerning the quality of social studies education. Social studies lessons become unattractive, ineffective



and meaningful, and boring for students because of monotony in the method and dryness of learning media. Learners' minds are not challenged to think high level (Higher Order Thinking Skill) because learners are only asked to memorize concepts or events in textbooks.

Controversial issue material can improve the critical thinking of learners. Through the development of controversial issues in social science, learning seems to be more attractive to students' learning conditions. It will involve students in developing ideas, opinions, and activities in finding and solving or finding solutions to these issues. Based on the background of the above problem, the author will examine how to reconstruct controversial issues as a solution (Higher Order Thinking Skills) in social studies Education learning in the era of globalization.

## **Methods**

The study uses qualitative methods with descriptive-explanatory approaches. This method was chosen to find a detailed explanation of how teachers reconstruct controversial issues in social studies subject matter as a solution to HOTS (Higher Order Thinking) thinking skills in the era of globalization. By explanatory methods, informants are given the freedom to explore social studies material by constructing controversial issues.

The data source in this study consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a data source that provides data directly or is the source, is a social studies teacher at State Junior High School in Makassar City and a social studies teacher conducting Teacher Professional Education at Makassar State University. In contrast, secondary data is data obtained from other sources relevant to the problem (Nasution, 2001). The authors analyze the data using flows (Miles, Humberman, 2014), with stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

## **Findings**

*Material with Controversial Issues in Social Studies Learning in Junior High School.* In conjunction with efforts to teach social studies material, there is often material that contains elements of controversy. Controversy is a condition in which matter has several contradictory viewpoints, but those views have an equally strong basis for argumentation. In other words, controversial material gives



rise to many disagreements about various views. Each version or opinion has a solid foundation. In simple language, Solihatin (2012) in (Pratama et al., 2014), A controversial issue is "something that is readily accepted by a person or group but also quickly rejected by another person or group.

Based on the interviews with social studies teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Makassar, Andi Tenri Sumpala said learning social studies has developed learning materials by comparing teacher handbooks given by the Ministry and student handbooks. The follow-up to the development of such materials is to analyze the learning material by implementing annual programs and semester programs that match the characteristics of the school.

A similar approach was conveyed by social studies teachers of SMP Negeri 13 Makassar. As an effort of teachers to develop learning materials and media, they created a learning implementation plan, teaching materials, media learning, and LKPD. Teachers sighed following the knowledge or skills they had gained at training, for example, MGMP social studies meeting (Social Studies Teacher Teacher Training Conference).

To teach those themes which have controversial issues, identifying social studies learning materials contained in the package book, both teacher handbook and student handbook turned out to be found some material that can be categorized as material. However, according to the results of an interview with Andi Tenri Sumpala, a material with controversial issues has not been studied or developed because books used as references as learning resources are challenging to identify.

Based on the interview results with social studies Junior High School teachers who had participated in The Teacher Professional Education in the Social Studies Education Study Program at Makassar State University, it was also found that the material contained controversial issues in social studies learning. While teacher and student handbook identification results were found, some materials can be packaged and developed by raising controversial issues in social studies learning materials. Developed and taught by them is only intradisciplinary, does not give rise to debate.

The social studies material that can be categorized as a controversial issue material is class VIII material with Basic Competence 3.4 Analyzing the chronology, change, and continuity of space (geographical, political, economic,



educational, social, cultural) from the colonial period to the growth of the national spirit. The central theme of Basic Competence is the condition of Indonesian society during the colonial period, and the subtheme is resistance to colonialism and imperialism. While class IX material with Basic Competence 3.2 Analyzing socio-cultural changes of the Indonesian nation in the face of globalization to strengthen national life. The subject matter is socio-cultural change and globalization with a subtheme of socio-cultural change.

The above material, supported by research results by (Hahn, 1996), (D. Hess, 2008) and (D. Hess & Avery, 2008), found two main lines of teaching controversial issues are (1) the significant factors that influence the teaching of topics and (2) the instructional practices involved in the teaching of controversial issues. His study emphasized that it is important to apply controversial issues as an approach to the learning process.

*Controversial Issues in Social Studies Learning as a Solution to HOTS Thinking In The Era Of Globalization.* Social studies learning by raising controversial issues is one of the goals to foster a high-level way of thinking learners in the era of globalization. According to Beyer (Zaleha, 2007), critical thinking skills are the skills to determine the credibility of a source, distinguish relevancies, separate facts from judgments, identify and evaluate unspoken assumptions, identify existing biases, identify viewpoints, and evaluate the evidence offered.

Social studies teachers can develop the following material with a controversial issue that can trigger learners to think at high levels—referring to previous research in Basic Competence 3.4. Class VII, with the theme of basic competence, is the condition of Indonesian society during the colonial period, and the subtheme is resistance to colonialism and imperialism.

The content of the material is resistant to trade alliances. In the past, Indonesia was only a province or colony of the Dutch. But, it was not treated the same as the Dutch people in Europe. The colonial government only absorbed Indonesia's wealth for the prosperity of its country. How did the people react in Indonesia?

This material provides a particular debate about the struggle of the people of South Sulawesi against the Dutch. Two figures fighting against the Dutch are Sultan Hasanuddin (King Gowa) and Arung Palakka from (Bone). Sultan Hasanuddin was feared the Dutch so much because of his bravery in fighting



them , so he was referred to as the "Rooster of the East." Once, the Kingdom of Gowa (Sultan Hasanuddin) and Bone (Arung Palaka) disagreed. The VOC utilized this by pitting the two kingdoms. The VOC provided support, so Bone won during the war with Gowa in 1666. Sultan Hassanuddin was forced to sign the Treaty of Bongaya on 18 November 1667 (Suradisastra, Djodjo, 1992).

Another material of class IX with Basic Competence 3.2 Analyzing socio-cultural changes of the Indonesian nation in the face of globalization is related to strengthening national identity. The subject matter is socio-cultural change and globalization with a subtheme of socio-cultural change.

The topic of social change is about the problem caused by social change, namely the emergence of increasingly consumptive behavior—the emergence of consumptive behavior, namely the purchase and use of goods that are not considered rationally. Usually, consumptive people tend to buy something not based on needs but their desires only. A variety of things can cause consumptive behavior. Such as exposure to advertising in various media to people's lifestyles (Wijayanti Fitria, 2020).

From a piece of material in social studies learning, the teacher can raise the material as a controversial issue to be debated to foster the critical spirit of learners. Material with controversial issues is in line with the handbook (Evans, 2021); the emphasis is on problematic questions that need to be addressed and investigated in-depth to improve social understanding, active participation, and social progress. With controversial issues, ideally, students are invited to find, analyze problems based on their perceptions even though it will cause differences or perceptions with other students, precisely with it. Students will be aroused to think critically (Higher Order Thinking).It is relevant to the (Stradling et al., 1984) that:

“Some teachers include controversial issues in their teaching because they are topical and may be directly relevant to student lives or because they are major social, political, economic, or moral problems of our time and consequently aspects of life which students ought to know something about”.

In line with the explanation (Clark, 1973) that controversial issues are built and exist in real-life society, it fits the ips meaning that the source and media of learning Social Studies most of them are in the student's living environment. Reconstructing controversial issues in social studies learning will lead to the



development of democratic education, critical and creative thinking. In line with these goals, social studies teachers must implement in the classroom, following the purpose and tradition of IPS as a study that emphasizes social studies the development of high cognitive-level student mindsets.

Controversial issues in teaching train students to higher-order thinking (HOTS) by focusing on discussions in the classroom to respond to each other according to the student's perspective on the issues raised by the teacher. As the results of research conducted by (McAvoy & Hess, 2013) that with the application of discussion in the classroom will find (1) students discussing and discussing controversial issues intentionally, (2) students reading, watching, video or doing writing assignments before the discussion, (3) the majority of students participating during the discussion, and (4) teachers encouraging students to talk to each other.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion, the conclusion in this article is to identify social studies learning materials contained in the package book. Both teacher handbooks and student handbooks found some materials categorized as teaching material with controversial issues. Through controversial issues in teaching, train students to higher-order thinking (HOTS) by focusing on discussions in the classroom to respond to each other according to the student's perspective on the issues raised by the teacher. Meanwhile, the recommendation in this article is a reference for social studies teachers in designing and developing teaching materials by constantly raising controversial issues in learning to be more meaningful and effective for students.

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