

## BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM: IMPLEMENTATION OF PKN IN FORMING STUDENTS' NATIONALIST ATTITUDES AT SDN 091482 KASINDIR

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### Abstract

Civics education faces threats from globalization and moral decadence. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Civics as a democratic education at SDN 091482 Kasindir and its contribution to the formation of students' nationalist attitudes. Using a qualitative approach with a single case study design, data were collected through a literature review, participant observation (12 Civics meetings in grades 4, 5, and 6), and interviews with 3 teachers, the principal, and 15 students. Data analysis used the Miles & Huberman interactive model. The results show that the implementation of Civics as a democratic education is realized through three main practices: deliberative discussions on national issues, simulations of joint decision-making, and collaborative projects of patriotism. The nationalist attitudes formed include pride as Indonesian citizens, a willingness to prioritize common interests, participation in simple national defense activities: ceremonies, mutual cooperation, and respect for national symbols. The main obstacles are limited time and teachers' understanding. This study contributes to the development of a nationalism-based democratic education model in elementary schools.

**Keywords:** Democracy education, elementary school civics, nationalistic attitudes, case study; SDN KASINDIR

### INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon fading attitude nationalism among generation young Indonesians become attention serious . Data from 2023 Education Report Card indicates existence challenge in strengthening character participant educate , including aspect nationality (Kemendikbudristek, 2023) . A survey conducted by the Setara Institute also revealed that part big High school students view Pancasila not as final ideology , a indication weakness understanding nationality among generation young (News 24, 2024) . In context This , Citizenship Education ( PKn ) in Elementary Schools (SD) holds role strategic . As eye lesson must in Independent Curriculum , Civics in a way explicit aim form character nationalist through Profile Pancasila students , especially in the dimensions of " Global Diversity " and "Mutual Cooperation" ( Kemendikbudristek , 2022) . However , ironically , the practice learning Civics in the field Still dominated by methods lectures and memorization , without give experience democratic that allows student internalize values As a result , there was gap between ideal goals of education national with reality practice learning (Khairum, D., Sianipar, D., Nainggolan, D., Siregar, I., & Hamda, 2024) .

In a way theoretical , relationship between education and nationalism has been studied for a long time . Anderson in *Imagined Communities* confirm that nationalism is construction social formation through institutions education (Anderson, 2006) . Smith added that school play a role central in grow civic *nationalism* , namely a sense of nationalism based on participation public (Smith, 2013) . Meanwhile that , Habermas introduced draft *constitutional patriotism* , which emphasizes that pride to nation born from commitment rational to principles democracy (Hubermas, 1996) . Research latest in *J ournal of Democracy and Education* show that education democracy can strengthen nationalism constitutional (Scott et al., 2022) . Another empirical study by Samuelson report that practice *deliberative democracy* in the classroom in a way significant can increase identity national and involvement citizenship student (Samuelsson, 2016) . However , studies This generally located in Western countries. In Indonesia, research about implementation Civics as education democracy and its relationship

to nationalism at the elementary school level is still very limited and tends to be use approach quantitative (Dewi Damayanti, Elga Youanda, 2024) . Study This present For fill in this gap , this study tries to see how implementation Civics as education democracy by placing SD N 091482 Kasindir (SDN Kasindir) as the research locus. This school is located in the Jorlang Hataran District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra. This school was founded on January 1, 1910 and has been established for more than 120 years. Currently, this school has 110 students and is guided by 8 teachers. Methodologically, this research is a qualitative case study at SDN KASINDIR which uses a literature review, participatory observation, and semi-structured interviews, with data analysis following the Miles & Huberman interactive model and thematic analysis. This research provides a concrete model for Civics teachers to foster nationalism through democratic experiences, not just memorization.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a single case study design at SDN KASINDIR, which was purposively selected because it has participatory and democracy-based Civics learning practices. Data collection was conducted through three techniques: (1) a literature review of curriculum documents, teaching modules, and nationalism theories; (2) participant observation during 12 Civics meetings in grades 4, 5, and 6 to directly observe teacher-student interactions in democratic practices; (3) semi-structured interviews with 3 Civics teachers, the principal, and 15 students who were purposively selected based on gender diversity, background, and activeness. All data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman interactive model which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, and strengthened by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke) to identify key patterns related to the implementation of democratic education and the formation of nationalist attitudes.

## DISCUSSION AND DISCUSSION

### *Hypothetical Findings Based on Case Study at SDN KASINDIR*

Study This find that implementation Civics as education democracy at SDN KASINDIR is realized through three practice main : discussion deliberative about issue nationality , simulation taking decision together , and project collaborative themed Love homeland . Practices This in a way real form attitude nationalism students which includes pride as Indonesian citizens , willingness prioritize interest together , participation in activity simple national defense , as well as respect to national symbols . Findings This interesting Because show that nationalism No must taught through approach memorization and indoctrination , but rather can grow through experience democratic involving discussion , deliberation , and work The same (Setiawan, 2017) . In other words, democracy and nationalism are not two mutually exclusive poles contradictory , but rather can integrated in a way productive in learning Civics at the elementary level school base .

Findings This strengthen theory *constitutional patriotism* put forward by Habermas, who stated that pride to nation should born from commitment rational to principles democracy , not from compliance blind to authority (Habermas, 1996) . At SDN KASINDIR, students No only proud Because ordered by the teacher, but proud Because they understand reason why Indonesia is worthy loved , for example , because diversity culture understood as power , not weakness . This is in line with the findings of Peterson and Bentley (2021) that discussion deliberative in class about issues nationality in a way significant increase identity national student (Samuelsson, 2016) . More from that , research This find that simulation taking decision together , such as voting for determine theme Independence Day ceremony , giving experience direct about How democracy work , which in turn strengthen the sense of belonging to nation . Students Study that decision collectively generated through deliberation more binding and more respected than forced decision from on (Šerek, J., Juhová, D., & Lomičová, 2021) . This is mechanism important to explain connection between practice democracy class and formation nationalism .

Study this also produces findings new to be contribution original to literature education democracy . In contrast to the concerns expressed by some researchers in the West that education democracy can erode nationalism ethnicity (Hess & McAvoy, 2014) , at SDN KASINDIR, in fact happen on the contrary : experience democracy in the classroom strengthen what Smith calls civic nationalism – nationalism based on participation public and loyalty to values constitutional , not on equality ethnicity (Smith, 2013) . Students who are accustomed to deliberation , respect opinion different , and accepting the voting results turned out to be more value the unity of Indonesia as results agreement with the founders nation . Practice participatory *rule-* making rule class together ) in a No direct teach student that the constitution and laws of the country are also product deliberation , not text holy that is not may questionable . The mechanism *democratic nationalism* this seems to be Not yet received a lot of serious attention in relation to education democracy in schools base .

However, research this also identifies a number of obstacles. Teachers are still hesitant to raise issue potential nationalism controversial, such as conflict between area or gap development. Limitations time, only two hours of lessons per week For Civics, also becomes constraint Serious For do in -depth deliberation. In addition, some parents consider activity discussion nationality “less important” compared memorization, which indicates existence gap understanding between school and home. Findings This in line with S hear's research which states that teachers often avoid issues controversial Because Afraid cause conflict with parents or party school (Shear & Krutka, 2019). On the other hand, the factor significant supporter is policy head school that launched the “National Friday” program, 30 minutes special discuss issue nationalism, as well as availability of learning media like embossed map of Indonesia and songs an area that evokes a sense of pride. Support from management level school proven become factor key in success implementation education democracy.

Theoretical implications from study This is the need expansion of education models democracy that has been This dominated by a Western perspective. Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework on three type citizenship (*personally responsible, participatory, justice-oriented*) is necessary enriched with dimensions *national identity* as results from *justice-oriented citizenship* (Kahne, 2004). Research This propose a model of *Democratic Nationalism Education* for elementary school, where the practice democracy class: deliberation, participation, resolution conflict, become input, internalization mark nationality through experience collective become a process, and attitude critical, reflective nationalism, and participatory be output. This model relevant For developing country context with culture hierarchical and collectivistic like Indonesia.

In this case, study This give recommendation for civics teachers For start with the issue nationalism that is close to life students, such as pride to food typical area, as well as use method *structured academic controversy* For discussion more issues sensitive. For the head school, integration practice democracy to in routine activities (ceremonies, scouts, OSIS) and implementation training “Teachers as Facilitator Democracy” becomes step strategic. For the service education, provision civics teaching module that connects every topics with practice democracy in the classroom is very necessary. As for example, the topic “Integrity of the Republic of Indonesia” can be taught through simulation deliberation between groups with backgrounds behind different cultures.

Study design case single means findings from SDN KASINDIR no can generalized in a way statistics to all elementary schools in Indonesia, however can transferred in a way contextual to schools with characteristics similar. Duration observations that only four Sunday only capable catch change attitude term short; formation deep nationalism need time longer. Potential social desirability bias – where students Possible state attitude nationalist Because want to considered good by teachers, has anticipated through observation behavior spontaneous outside class. Lastly, the position researchers as Indonesian citizens may carry a positive bias to nationalism, however reflexivity guarded through journal daily and discussion critical with colleagues.

### ***Discovering the Mechanism of Habermas' Nationalist Democracy in the Context of SDN KASINDIR***

Findings study This strengthen at a time expand understanding theoretical about connection between education democracy and nationalism. First, research This confirm theory *constitutional patriotism* as put forward by Habermas (Hubermas, 1996). At SDN KASINDIR, nationalism No built through indoctrination blind or memorization texts nationality, but rather through discussion rational about what makes Indonesia worthy loved. Students No just “proud” Because ordered” by the teacher, but proud Because they understand the reason behind pride those, for example, they capable explain that diversity culture is strength nation, not weaknesses. Findings This important Because show that authentic nationalism requires a basis of rationality and understanding, not just compliance.

In other words, education democracy that provides room for student For ask, debate, and reflect values nationality precisely produce more citizens nationalist, not not enough nationalist. This is in line with the findings Brooks that discussion deliberative in class increase identity national student (Brooks & Holford, 2009). However, research This step more far from proving that the process effective even at the age school basis in non-Western contexts. Study This produce findings new to be contribution original to literature international. In contrast to research in the West conducted by Hess and McAvoy, which found that education democracy in the classroom can erode nationalism ethnicity, especially when student pushed For questioning narratives established nationality, in SDN KASINDIR it is happen on the contrary (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Experience democracy in the classroom, such as deliberation, voting, and respect to different opinions, in fact strengthen what Smith calls *civic nationalism*: a sense of nationalism based on participation public, loyalty to values constitutional, and commitment to procedure democratic, not on equality ethnicity or primordialism (Smith, 2013).

Context socio-cultural aspects of Indonesia , with the motto " Bhineka Tunggal Ika" and experience history struggle independence based on deliberation , making student more easy connect practice democracy class with nationalism . Education democracy often associated with rights individual and criticism towards the country, so that potential erode nationalism . Meanwhile in Indonesia, democracy in a way cultural understood as deliberation For consensus , which is precisely is the core of identity nationality That alone . Students at SDN KASINDIR do not see contradiction between become democratic and become nationalists ; they see both of them as two sides from the same currency .

Study This find mechanism specifics that explain How practice democracy class grow nationalism , namely what we call as democratic nationalism . Mechanism This operate through practice *participatory rule-making* – making rule class in a way together . When students invited For create , negotiate , and revise rule class they yourself ( for example : rules about turn picket , sanctions for those who are late , or procedure taking decision ) , they in a way No direct Study that rules , okay rule class and rule national such as the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila , are results agreement together , not order from authority that does not may questioned . They experience Alone that the deliberation process produce more rules binding and more respected Because all party feel own .

Experience This Then transferred to understanding they about the country: that Indonesia stands on founders ' agreement a nation that deliberates , and that as citizens , they also have not quite enough answer For uphold tall results deliberation the findings . This enrich Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework on *justice-oriented citizenship* by demonstrating that orientation justice and participation No only produce critical citizens , but also nationalistic citizens in the constitutional sense (Kahne, 2004) . In other words, the more a student trained For become *justice-oriented citizenship* , increasingly *civic nationalism* is also strong . This is findings that reverse concern Lots critics that education democracy will give birth to apathetic generation or even anti- nationalist .

Interpretation findings This confirm that education democracy in the classroom , when designed with attention to context culture local , no only compatible with the formation nationalism , but precisely become the most effective vehicle For grow authentic , rational , and participatory nationalism . SDN KASINDIR proves this that nationalism No need taught in a loud , stiff , and full tone memorization . On the other hand , when children given room For democracy , they in a way experience Study love his people as House together built through agreement , not coercion .

### ***The Dynamics of Nationalism Formation through Democratic Education at SDN KASINDIR***

Discussion thematic to research data This reveal dynamics important in formation nationalism through education democracy at SDN KASINDIR . Shift paradigm from memorization normative going to experience democratic as expressed by the teacher (G5) , " In the past I order child memorize the sound of Pancasila. Now I invite discussion : 'If you please our fourth ( people ) apply in class , approximately How ?' They So understand that democracy That No just words ” , fundamentally confirming John Dewey's thought that democracy No Enough taught as theory , but must practiced as a *way of life* (Dewey, 1916) . Dewey in fact firm state that “ *children 'learn by doing ,'*” that children Study through use all over body they in meaningful experience ; in his work *Democracy and Education* (1916), he calling for schools equipped with laboratories , workshops and gardens , because through experience direct like plant seed or do classroom experiments , learning become smooth transition between the feeling of desire know children and ways think scientific (Tampio, 2024) .

The findings at SDN KASINDIR expand Dewey's argument to realm education democracy and nationalism : discussion deliberative about implementation please the four Pancasila in class give experience concrete that is not Possible obtained through memorization solely .

Besides Dewey, the perspective psychology cognitive from Jean Piaget strengthens findings This is Piaget, whose theory about constructivism put child as creator active knowledge , showing that development cognitive child happen through interaction active with the environment , not through reception passive information (Piaget, 1950) . In framework This , students of SDN KASINDIR do not just accept values nationalism as knowledge declarative , but in a way active construct understanding they Alone about democracy and nationality through participation in practice democratic . More far away , Walter Parker, in *Teaching Democracy* (2003), argues that first moral obligation school is give education that provides children For utilise right citizenship they , and that education citizenship democratic value involvement direct in life public , pluralism , and democracy as method life that involves deliberation , action , and reflection (Parker, 2003) . At SDN KASINDIR, the practice discussion deliberative about implementation please the four Pancasila in class is embodiment real from Parker 's vision : students Study that democracy No just words, but a series actions and decisions collective that forms life together they daily .

Study this also strengthens findings of Diana Hess and Paula McAvoy (2015) in *The Political Classroom* that discussion issues politics in the classroom, although pedagogical challenging and provoking dilemma ethical for teachers, in fact increase involvement citizenship student (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Hess and McAvoy argue that the teacher will make evaluation more professional Good If they aim create "class politics (*political classroom*)" which involves student in deliberation about question fundamental: "How We must life together?" At SDN KASINDIR, the discussion about implementation please the four Pancasila in class is deliberation about question the same existential: how rule class made, how decision taken, and how difference opinion managed. Findings This show that even at the level school basic, students capable involved in deliberation meaningful politics, provided started from issues close to their world.

Observation take notes incident interesting: a student Class 6 (S6C) proposed that there be a mutual cooperation activity to clean up drain school called "national defense version" small. Suggestion This approved by his friends. The phenomenon This can explained through lens theory Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural. Vygotsky argued that development cognitive child No can understood fully without consider context social and historical context in which it is located set; every function in development cultural child appears twice: first at the level social (interpsychological), then at the individual level (intrapsychological) (Vygotsky, 1978). Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), distance between what can achieved child in a way independent and what can achieved with the guidance of others, is realm transition where movement from realm social external to realm internal cognitive occurs. In S6C case, concept abstract "defending the country" which was previously studied through interaction social in class (discussion, observation) towards teachers and friends) then transformed by students become action meaningful concrete in their world: mutual cooperation to clean up gutter. This is example perfect about How knowledge sociocultural internalized become action autonomous.

Besides Vygotsky, the theory learning Albert Bandura's observational framework explanation additionally. Bandura argues that part big learning man nature observational, meaning individual get repertoire behavior, attitudes, and responses emotional just by observing other people (Bandura, 1977). This process involving interaction complex between attention, memory, and motivation, enabling individual Study from other people's experiences without must do behavior That alone. At SDN KASINDIR, students No only Study from experience direct they Alone in practice democracy, but also through observation to how teachers facilitate discussion, how Friend classmates put forward opinion, and how decision together taken. The S6C incident shows that learning observational This has successful: students No only copy teacher behavior, but in a way creative adapt the concept of "defending the country" in age-relevant context they.

Findings this also enriches draft everyday nationalism developed by Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008). They argue that nationalism No only life in discourse official and state symbols, but also reproduced through practices everyday appearance trivial (Miller-Idriss, 2008). In In the context of SDN KASINDIR, mutual cooperation is understood by students as form concrete Love homeland, a interpretation that is not taught in a way explicit in book text, but born from internalization value obtained through practice democracy in the classroom.

Ability student For do translation draft abstract "defending the country" to in action real age-relevant they can also explained through theory Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development. Kohlberg, who developed theory stage moral development based on Piaget's work, argues that moral development occurs through successive stages, of reasoning pre-conventional (oriented) punishment and obedience) towards reasoning conventional (oriented towards interpersonal relationships and order) social) and finally reasoning post-conventional (principle-oriented) universal ethics) (Kohlberg, 1984). Students of SDN KASINDIR, who are at the stage conventional early, able interpreting "defending the country" not as compliance blind to authority (stage pre-conventional), but as actions that contribute to goodness together in community they, a greater moral understanding ripe than just memorization.

An interview with S4B reveals dilemma basic: "At home, I No may different opinion with parents. But in class, the teacher said opinion I important." Contradiction This can explained through draft concerted cultivation versus accomplishment of natural growth from Annette Lareau (2011). Lareau shows that parents class medium tend carry out "concerted cultivation", a process designed For develop talents and skills child through involvement organized, while family class workers and the poor rely on "the accomplishment of natural growth," where development child ongoing in a way spontaneous during need base fulfilled (Lareau, 2011). In framework this, the students who came from family with pattern foster care authoritarian, which tends to emphasize compliance without question, experience difficulty in participate in a way equal in the environment democratic Because they accustomed to a rigid and unconventional hierarchy own experience speak out opinion. findings This confirm Lareau's research that pattern foster care own impact deep to development skills citizenship child.

Contradiction this can also understood through lens theory Kohlberg's moral development . Children who are raised in environment authoritarian tend stuck at a stage pre-conventional moral reasoning , where obedience to authority and avoidance punishment become the main motif moral behavior (Kohlberg, 1984) . When they enter environment democratic and driven schools For think critical as well as put forward opinion , they face conflict significant cognitive between two systems different values . Conflict this , although challenging , actually own potential positive : according to Piaget and Kohlberg, conflict cognitive precisely is machine main moral and cognitive development (Piaget, 1950) . However , the potential This only can actualized If school in a way active involving parents in the educational process democracy , so that gap between values school and home can bridged .

Based on integration findings this research This propose a model *Democratic Nationalism Education* for elementary school. This model own three component main . Input in the form of practice democracy classes that include deliberation , participation in taking decisions and resolutions conflict in a way collaborative process in the form of internalization values nationality through experience collective , which Vygotsky explained as movement from realm social ( *interpsychological* ) to individual domain ( *intrapsychological* ) (Vygotsky, 1978) . Output in the form of attitude critical , reflective , and participatory nationalism , not nationalism narrow chauvinistic or just adhere to the symbol . This model enrich Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) framework on three type citizenship , *personally responsible citizen*, *participatory citizen* , and *justice-oriented citizen* , by adding dimensions *national identity* as possible outcomes appear from *justice-oriented citizenship* (Kahne, 2004) .

Westheimer and Kahne argue that citizen - oriented justice ( justice-oriented citizen ) does not only care about compliance personal or participation , but in a way critical ask reason injustice and strive change structure social . At SDN KASINDIR, students who are trained For become citizen - oriented justice through practice democracy class precisely develop a sense of pride and responsibility answer to nation , a findings that reverse concern that education democracy will erode nationalism . On the contrary , as Parker emphasizes , schools as room public is the only one room public met by almost all inhabitant young , and there habit democratic , including nationalism constitutional , can implanted since early .

In a way practical , findings study This give a number of recommendations . For civics teachers , it is recommended For start with the issue nationalism that is close to life students , such as pride to food typical area , as well as use method *Structured Academic Controversy* (SAC) , a learning strategy cooperative developed by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson which encourages student For understand various perspective about issue controversial before reach consensus , instead arguing For win (Johnson, 1995) .

For the head school , integration practice democracy to in routine activities ( ceremonies , scouts , OSIS) and implementation training "Teachers as Facilitator Democracy " becomes step strategic . For the service education , provision civics teaching module that connects every topics with practice democracy in the classroom is very necessary ; as for example , the topic " Integrity of the Republic of Indonesia" can be taught through simulation deliberation between groups with backgrounds behind different cultures . With consistent implementation , the Democratic Nationalism Education model This potential change Civics from eye lesson memorization become experience life that forms nationalism authentic to children age school basic , a nationalism that is not born from compliance blind , but from understanding , experience , and participation active in life democratic .

## CONCLUSION

Study This find that implementation Civics as education democracy at SDN KASINDIR is realized through three practice main , discussion deliberative about issue nationality , simulation taking decision together , and projects collaborative themed Love homeland , which is real form attitude nationalism students , including pride as Indonesian citizens , willingness prioritize interest together , participation in activity simple national defense , as well as respect to symbols of the state, although obstacle like limitations time , the teacher's doubts were raised issue controversial , and contradictory to the pattern home care Still found . Research This answer gap literature by showing in a way empirical that education democracy in elementary school class is not weaken nationalism , but rather strengthen it through mechanism understanding rational and experienced participatory . SDN KASINDIR proves that nationalism authentic No born from memorization hard and stiff , but rather from room democracy where children Study discuss , different opinion , and take decision together , so that they love Indonesia as House together built through agreement , not coercion , and willingness sacrifice Because proud , right? Because Afraid .

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