

# Maritime Content in Indonesian History Education: The Development and Alternative Solution

Wasino  
Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
State University of Semarang

## Abstract

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For a long time ago, Indonesia was identified as maritime country. The collective memory remembered from several islands in Indonesia shows that Indonesia is a large maritime space. The original name of the country was *Nusantara*, (called archipelago in English). From historical data in some location, there are some evidences about the glorious of the maritime kingdom in the continent. However, maritime perspective is not to be ‘important issue’ in the mind of Indonesian people nowadays. History education makes an important rule at the moment. Indonesian independence needs history education based on political perspective, especially to enhance nationalism. The orientation is continued until the New Order, and it is especially focused on the rule of Indonesia military. Reformation since 1998 should make democratization in Indonesian history teaching, but the reality, the tradition of writer in history education, was still stagnant. The content of maritime history in Indonesian History Education still become a big problem. This paper aims to analyze the development of the maritime content in Indonesian History education at school and to give the new alternative in teaching history based on maritime content. The alternative curriculum based on local competitiveness in maritime history related with regional and global region, is the best solution for it.

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**Corresponding author:**  
swasino3@gmail.com

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## Introduction

Indonesia is a country having changes in school curriculum frequently. The most interesting thing is that the curriculum change is not solely based on scientific studies about the content of curriculum, but it is often caused by political changes and state leader turnover. The curriculum change has effects for the structure of the taught subject.

Curriculum is known as a plan and regulation containing of goal, content, learning material, and a used method, that is a guide of executing and learning activity for achieving certain educational purposes. Then history teachers are guided to have dialogue about the learning material with the students through curriculum.

Teaching materials in the school are reflected in historical teaching materials and in history curriculum in Indonesia, and the main teaching material is textbooks. History textbooks are the central pillars in the implementation of history curriculum. The making of history textbooks based on curriculum content and historiography books being references in history text writing. Related in those, for studying the maritime content of the history textbooks, it can be known as three references, that is curriculum content, history textbooks, and historiography books as references.

## Revealing Colonial Content, Strengthen National Content

According to Indonesia historiography, national consciousness is developed in many ways, one of the important ways is, reading history. National figures who established country, such as Abdul Gani, Sukarno, Muhammad Yamin, etc. love reading history books and it used as developmental content of national consciousness. Through history books, they make their own interpretation about their position in the Indonesia's historical flow being a basis of the national existence.

Related in the importance of historical content in the educational process of nationality, history learning in the school becomes an important issue of political transformation from colonial country becoming independent country, that is Indonesia State Unity, *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI)*. History learning content begins interpreted in turning perspective from colonialistic history into Indonesia-centric history.

Indonesia-centric concept, in the first time, is thought by giving history content which is nationalistic. Books written by Sanusi Pane (*Sejarah Nasional Indonesia or Indonesian National History*),<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Yamin (*6000 tahun Sang Saka Merah Putih or 6000th year of Red White Indonesian Flag*),<sup>2</sup> dan Sukarno (*Indonesia Menggugat*)<sup>3</sup> become important references in learning history in the school. In other words, nasionalistic histography becomes a reference in school learning for changing mindset from *Neerlando-centris* into *Indonesia-centris*.

In the first period of independence revolution, the historical content appoints "main role" of Indonesian nation dominancy. Historical material seen in "nationality" political framework placing big political knots of Indonesian nation becomes a reference point. The knots are "the first archipelagic State (*Negara Nusantara Pertama*), *Sriwijaya*; the second archipelagic State (*Negara Nusantara II*), *Majapahit*; and the Third archipelagic State (*Negara Nusantara III*), *Republik Indonesia*". Historical period after Majapahit's victory is illustrated as "a dark history", when West Country occupied and colonized Indonesia.

In this period, maritime content was illustrated in the victory of Sriwijaya and Majapahit Kingdom. Furthermore, at the time, Indonesia has very strong navy. Sriwijaya is known as the first maritime kingdom uniting and integrating whole Indonesia, although, according to the historical evidences, it just focuses on West Indonesia and around Malacca strait. In addition, Majapahit is a kingdom which has strong navy supported by a great harbour, that is Cangu.

Maritime content in post Majapahit Kingdom can't be illustrate clearly. Despite maritime power in Indonesia still exists factually in 15-17 century, the history books taught in the school can't explain those freely. On the other hand, at the time, most of the books illustrated about Islamization in terms of establishing Islamic Kingdom and community in Indonesia in the early century. Another illustration is about western colonizer entering Indonesia in the end of century.

Maritime content has been changed when the learning material tells about "The Period of Western Colonization in Indonesia". In this part, we can look that the position of our nation in the maritime world is not clear. On the other hand, the illustration of western maritime world is clear, and the proof is that there is a study about "Ocean Expedition". The study clearly tries to show Western people in the maritime world and makes Indonesian people 's figures in the maritime world becoming disappear. The situation has

<sup>1</sup>Sanusi Pane, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* (Djakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1936).

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Yamin, *6000 Tahun Sang Merah Putih* (Djakarta: Siguntang, 1951).

<sup>3</sup>Sukarno, *Indonesia Menggugat: Pidato Pembelaan Bung Karno di Muka di Depan Pengadilan Kolonial, Bandung* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 2001).

clearly contrary with history reality. Anthony Read's research tells that when western people came in Indonesia, maritime world in Indonesia was commensurate with western maritime world. Colonial content period doesn't teach maritime world. The learning material in the history books emphasizes the history of Netherland and Japan cruelty, and Indonesian people strategy against the colonization.

### **The Strengthening of Political Power in The New Order**

The New Order is a period which makes history subject in the school as an important subject. A history is placed in the two positions. In the first side, it becomes a part of social subjects, and in the other one, it becomes national education. As a part of social education, history is a science which is on the same level as economy, sociology, anthropology, and geography. Meanwhile, as national education, a history is closer with civics education which has function to develop national values and nationality for the students in the school.

A history subject in the social studies education is learned like other social sciences together. There is integrated social studies education in the elementary school. while in the junior high school, history was correlated to another social sciences disciplines as a part of social education. Fore moment at the Senior High School I, history was learned as mono discipline.

As a part of social science, general history and national history are chosen. A general history learns historical material developing outside Indonesia especially for creating huge important events in history correlated with Indonesia's history. In the junior high school and senior high school, the material will start from the first world civilization history especially the classic near east, India, China, Latin America, and West Europe (Greek and Roman, then in the next class, Europe history will be dominant discussing Modern Europe history from Reformation period, Industrial Revolution, into Modern Europe. Finally, the important world events will be learned in the end of class, such as America revolution, Russia Revolution, World War I and II, and the other modern events.

If we notice to the historical content, a general history taught in the junior high school and senior high school is lack of the maritime history. The historical material is just mentioned if it has connection with other history events, especially politic and economy. Almost of the history book's writers in the school never think that maritime network decides political development and world civilization.

Indonesia history content is also lack of maritime information. The writing method of history textbooks in the school still continue a tradition hold in independent revolution era. Curriculum changing during The New Order, begun curriculum in 1976, 1984 and 1988 don't change the history books in the school substantially. There are many history books written by recycling from the previous history books.

The lack of maritime information in the history textbooks in the school is supported by historiography appearance as references. Since 1976, Indonesia National History had been published and it becomes a reference for writing textbooks. The book consists of 6 volumes edited by Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto. The book is written following political and economic periodization, namely prehistory era (volume I), The development of Kuna Kingdoms in Indonesia (Volume II), Islam Development Era (volume III), Dutch Colonization Era (volume IV), National Resurgence Era (volume V), dan Japan Occupation Era, Physical Revolution until The New Order (volume VI).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, Volume I-VI (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan-Balai Pustaka, 1992).

An official historiography, government version, reflected in national history of Indonesia, is lack of maritime content. A big frame of the books is political history connected with economic history correlated with political development in the whole Indonesia. A maritime is connected only correlated with our political aspect and it just talks about pre-history era. When we talk about migration in Indonesia, the development of Sriwijaya as maritime kingdom, the development of Malacca Kingdom, Islam development in Indonesia through trading, and Western people arrival in Indonesia.

The maritime content disappears since Dutch colonization in Indonesia started. The material focuses on occupying process and political defence of Indonesian people against Dutch colonization. It is not only maritime world of Indonesia which is not taught, but also a maritime world placed in colonial era does not become an important part taught. Because of the given material, it decreases children mind' collectivity related with the importance of Indonesia maritime world as communication among tribes and national integration.

Indonesia National History book volume VI becoming superior reference for writing history book in the high school is also lack of information about maritime history. Japan occupation era materials tell Japan cruelty, Indonesian people suffering, and the growth of potential army in Indonesia. Furthermore, historical material from proclamation into The New Order is full of political history and especially the military role of army in Indonesia history.

When the Minister of Education is a historian, Nugroho Notosusanto, since 1983, besides a history as social science, there is History of National Struggle (*Pendidikan Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa, PSPB*). The subject has clearly different name with general history because it purposes to implant struggle values (constitution values) for the next generations. A history is not taught as truth science, but it is inheriting values, behavior forming and personality for students.

The material source of *PSPB* book is a history book published by The Ministry of State Secretary entitled *30 Tahun* then becoming *40 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka*.<sup>5</sup> The book consists of the documentation of Indonesian people struggle history against colonialism in the first volumes and The New Order's role in the last volumes. The books almost contain of military struggle, especially army, and only few civil roles on the way of Indonesia history. It is certainly lack information of maritime content in the book. One of the important maritime content is Aru Sea incident when the navy commanded by Jos Sudarso Commodore led to give freedom for West Irian.

One of the important historical material's note in The New Order makes history revenge and excessive outstanding history's figures. The history revenge is about conflict among Indonesia historical actors, such as PRRI dan Permesta material, DI/TII, and the most important is 1965 tragedy caused the army general death and the loss of hundred thousand people lives, especially for accused people and Indonesia Communist Party sympathizer.

### **Historical Content Redefinition in the Post of Reformation Era**

Political reformation in Indonesia in 1998 did not bring a new case for maritime content development in the school subject. History curriculum and history textbooks just focus on a political history problem. The difference is who or which group has a role of political history stage in Indonesia.

<sup>5</sup>Tim Penyusun, *30 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka 1945-1949* (Jilid I-IV) (Jakarta: Tira Pustaka, 1981).

If Suharto figure and military become central problem in the previous curriculum and history textbooks, it is different with the new one. Everything correlated in Suharto's role and military army accused in Indonesia historiography causes curriculum appearance and history textbooks. In early reformation, that earnestly "de-Suhartoisasi curriculum and history textbooks."<sup>6</sup>

Historical material debate in the two important events, that is "Common Offensive in 1 March 1949" and "Supersemar". The two events had been sanctified and made into myth in the previous curriculum and history textbooks because they told Suharto as a central figure. On other hand, "Common Offensive in 1 March 1949" event showed Suharto as an initiator in the curriculum and history text book in The New Order era. Besides, the post reformation (2006) curriculum placed Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX as attack initiator. While the interpretation of 1965 tragedy is known in public, there is one interpretation of curriculum and history books in The New Order told that the event activator is Indonesia Communist Party. Meanwhile, the new textbooks make many interpretation and historiography debate related 1965 tragedy brought into the history textbooks in the school. Material curriculum and Indonesia history textbooks pre-independence don't place narration of the maritime content. They are not included social history and social-economy history outside political history. Structural aspects of historiography had influenced textbooks in 2004.

Historical period (XV until XVII century) should be able to learn about maritime content freely, but in the fact, it doesn't happen. In 2014 curriculum, for example there is basic competence, namely "The Hindu-Buddha and Islam religion and culture in Indonesia influences" emphasized in the social history aspect and it doesn't decide social and religion groups relation in Indonesia at the moment. The Dutch Colonization era is a period which is lack of Indonesia maritime history. The curriculum and textbooks as reference don't explore maritime world in Indonesia, either Dutch or Indonesian people as an actor.

### **Alternative Solution**

2013 history curriculum gives a new case. A history subject gets much time learning in 2013 curriculum compared with the previous curriculum. A history is taught for all school category, both senior high school and vocational high school. The previous curriculum was not taught in the vocational high school and only an hour for senior high school (natural science concentration).

Complaints about no maritime content in Indonesia has been solved by the 2013 curriculum. A history curriculum for senior high school is divided in compulsory subject and chosen subject. As compulsory subject, the curriculum frame is national integration and nationalism. The maritime aspect can be elaborated becoming an important aspect for history textbooks or history enrichment books through the frame. Then maritime historians can write history enrichment books about maritime content for senior high school and vocational high school.

Together with curriculum changing which gives a chance to receive maritime content in the school, the history material should be developed is the superiority of local maritime content. There are some regencies and cities having maritime basis geographically and

<sup>6</sup>The similar case on *de-Soekarnoisasi* in history curricula occurred during Soeharto era. See details in Asvi Warman Adam, *Membongkar Manipulasi Sejarah* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2009). Indeed, there is a tendency that Indonesian historical content is highly dependent on the regime power, when the revolutionary period it was colored by the spirit of decolonization in teaching history. See details in Haryono Rinardi, Proklamasi 17 Agustus 1945: Revolusi Politik Bangsa Indonesia, *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha* 2 (2), p. 143-150.

historically, such as Rembang, Jepara, Tegal, Makasar, Medan, etc. Hence, the regions can develop learned history model based on local maritime superiority.

Local history learning based on maritime superiority can be done by two models. The first model refers to maritime network either among countries or islands followed by their position description in both Indonesia and world maritime development. Another model is done by explaining region maritime ability now and looking for the origin or source in the past.

## Conclusion

Indonesia is an archipelago country, so it is called Nusantara” in the past. Nevertheless, the mind collectivity of maritime country is dispersed. One of the phenomena is lack of maritime content in the curriculum and history textbooks. The history textbooks read by the students for decades don't give maritime mentality. 2013 Curriculum gives a big space for developing material of maritime history because it emphasizes integration and nationalism integration. Hence, the maritime history writers should make enrichment books of history material in the school. Maritime aspect becomes important history in the school through this way.

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