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An Epistemological Study on Somantri's Thought about the Social Studies as a Synthetic Discipline

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Abstract

This study analyses Somantri's thought about the epistemology of social studies as a scientific discipline. The Study is a qualitative-interpretive (philosophical inquiry) using his academic works as a primary source, and related expertise references as secondary sources selected by annotated bibliography and literature review techniques; then analyzed by a qualitative content analysis technique. The results of the study show, epistemologically, the social studies within Somantri's thought conceptualized as a synthetic discipline and an integrated educational program, a product of synergistic reengineering from two or more disciplines equivalent for the social studies purposes. The synthetic discipline is the nature, identity, and a culture of faculty and postgraduate of the social studies. It has four academic status namely 'advance knowledge', 'middle-studies', 'primary structure'; and 'integrated educational program' developed at all levels of the school and teachers' college.

Keywords: *Epistemology, social studies, synthetic discipline, Somantri*

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Introduction

This study examines, delves, reconstructs and describes on Somantri's thought about the rationale statements, various terms, and expertise references used to build the foundations in the social studies as synthetic discipline. In the social studies, this study is important and crucial to examine a fundamental problem related to the "ways of seeing the world and of practicing science in it" (Kuhn 1970, p. 4); to the formation of a *shared paradigm* within the social studies community in Indonesia; and its further implications to the significance of "a new and more rigid definition of the field" (p. 19). As asserted by Saxe (1991), "one critical attribute of any profession is the study of the field's theory, the foundation of this theory should include some knowledge, and understanding the field's history" (p. xv).

In the field of social studies as a scientific discipline (Becker 1965; Barth 1991; Saxe 1991; Nelson 2001; Mc Cutcheon 2001; the National Council for the Social Studies/NCSS 1994, 2010) such studies are newly conducted since mid-1970s by Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977, 1978). Their study had reconstructed the mainstream traditions of the social studies as a field of study based on the various, overlap, and controversy in definitions; diversity of and controversy of theoretical/philosophical creed used by social studies professionals. Recently, Evans (2004) and Ross' (2006) studies had also reconstructed the principal traditions and ideas among experts about the definition and nature of social studies curriculum. All studies have provided important models and exemplars in the epistemological studies on thinking foundations of social studies as a scientific discipline.

In Indonesia—as so far as the researcher knew—epistemological study on the expert's ideas and thought about social studies is very rare. Therefore, this study is an academic's necessity, especially in relation with their nature both as a field of study, scientific discipline, school program, and/or as a profession (Becker 1965; Barth 1991; Saxe 1991; Nelson 2001). The problem is, experts or researchers faced to the largest academic difficulties related to the complexities and diversities in analysis, including a philosophical, conceptual, sociological, and/or a historical analysis (Stanley 1985b). However, experts agree that such an epistemological study is very important for the social studies to describe, review and/or to analyze some aspects of the social studies in the past; and to present rationale statements of some sort, or delved into the meaning of various terms used by social studies professionals (Wallen and Fraenkel 1988, p. 2)

Theoretically, an expert's thought in a field of discipline not only important as a scientific mechanism for reaching a consensus, but also important as "the most authoritative and frequently used mechanism, and the one most often cited as proof...and provide accumulated important scientific repertoires and exemplars in any dynamics occurring within a discipline" (Shwed and Bearman 2010, pp. 836-837). Kuhn's (1970) study on the structure of scientific revolutions asserts "one such effect—a shift in the distribution of the technical literature cited in the footnotes to research reports—ought to be studied as a possible index to the occurrence of revolutions" (p. ix). Furthermore, Kuhn asserts that separating the invention and discovery of individual scientists from a process of science as a whole is difficult. However, "these individual contributions to science were thought to have been compounded" (p. 3). Stanley (1985, 1985b) also asserts that to ignore it is to ignore much of what constitutes the social studies as the field of study and a scientific discipline. Furthermore, this area investigation represents and relates to rationale building, definitions, the history of and philosophy, and other normative issues about social studies.

The nature of substantive structure of social studies as the "*ill-structured domains*" (Cornbleth 1985, p. 29) or "*the less clearly structured*" (Welton and Mallan 1988, p. 67) is another reason why Somantri's thought about defining social studies is very important to be studied epistemologically. As stated by Geiger (1986), "the social sciences initially faced some serious problems of definition. Their emergence thus involved...the contested establishment of their respective fields of knowledge, and difficulties in gaining legitimacy in the academic world" (p. 24). Shortly, it is a special area of scientific research may often be critically needed for a particular development, extension of knowledge and new ideas; and is justifiable and important in areas of science closely related to the operations of the social studies as the field of study and a scientific discipline.

Methods

This study is a '*philosophical inquiry*' in the foundation of social studies (Stanley 1985a; Wallen and Fraenkel 1988; Fullinwider 1991) which is one of the grounded theory research approaches in qualitative-interpretative tradition (Glasser and Strauss 1971). The primary source is 25 of 36 academics works of Somantri about aspects of ontology, methodology, and epistemology of social studies collected in an edited book entitled "*Promoting Social Education Reform*" (Supriadi and Mulyana 2001). Secondary sources are experts' professional works (papers, articles, books, thesis and/or dissertation) about social studies that have a substantive connection with Somantri's ideas and thoughts. The sources were collected using a 'bibliographic annotation technique' (Galvan 2006), and 'literature review' (Evans and Kowanko 2000).

Data were consisted of 'textual narrative' (words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), in which the meanings are constitutive in the article itself. As asserted by Ricoeur (1991), "any discourse fixed by writing...fixation by writing is constitutive of the text itself" (p. 106). Data were collected and selected purposively sampling, and documented using reflective-interpretive techniques such as written reflective exercises, reflective notes, or interpretive memos (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009). Then, data were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis (Stemler 2012), and hermeneutics phenomenology (Ricoeur 1991) which is focused on to find specific and emergent themes or patterns within the textual narrative. Finally, it reconstructed their meanings in relation with Somantri's thought about the social studies as a synthetic discipline.

Results

Social Studies as A Synthetic Discipline

Social studies is an academic concept, a synthetic discipline proposed by Somantri since 1990 at the first meeting of the forum of the Indonesian Social Studies Scholars Association (HISPIPSI, now HISPISI) in Bandung. The term, firstly, used explicitly in two his writing published in 1996, "*Consolidation between Educational Sciences Disciplines and Subjects Education Disciplines*" presented at Indonesian Education Association (*Ikatan Sarjana Pendidikan*) meeting in Medan; and "*Social Studies Development Strategy in Anticipating the Future*" presented at a seminar in Jakarta Institute of Teachers' Training and Science of Education (now Jakarta State University/UNJ).

According to Somantri, social studies as a synthetic discipline is an integrated educational discipline, the result of a synergistic merger or modify two or more disciplines are equivalent (i.e. social sciences, science education, and humanities) for the social studies purposes at all levels of education (elementary to higher education). Social studies as a synthetic discipline is the identity, nature, characteristic, and culture of faculty and postgraduate. Thus, in Somantri's thought, social studies as a scientific discipline is independent and have an integrity, although its contents come from other disciplines.

Somantri asserts, conceptually, social studies as synthetic discipline is '*a new discipline*' that synthesizes two or more disciplines, and it not just about the content areas of social sciences, humanities, education, religion, etc. Such synthesized character of social studies as synthetic discipline has provided an epistemological basis for synthesizing three tradition/paradigm of social studies simultaneously, such as: (1) *citizenship/civic education*, which emphasizes to the inheritance of values, attitudes and behavior of a good citizen; (2) *social sciences*, which emphasizes to understand and gain the concepts of social sciences; and (3) *reflective inquiry*, which emphasizes to decide on the problems faced in society.

The philosophical foundation and approach were used by Somantri for developing of social studies as a synthetic discipline is a *Restructured Philosophy of Education* (Brameld 1966) in addition to '*Pancasila*' (Five Principles of the State) as the philosophy of education in Indonesia. Some reasons proposed by Somantri for the use of a reconstructionist philosophy as the philosophical foundation and approach for developing social studies as a synthetic discipline are followed.

First, it allows development of social studies addressing to the inter- and trans-disciplinary study in accordance with the original purposes of each discipline, and educational purposes (national and institutional).

Second, it can put the subjects' education, including social studies, as a "*central value*" and "*director of power*" which could build a human becomes a source of change forces and a controller of natural forces in the cybernetics cycle of educational process involving effector, detector, selector elements for the development of human Indonesia fully through "knowledge as virtue, truth, beauty and goodness" (Brameld 1966, pp. 3-6).

Third, it also allows to: (1) take and synthesize the goodness of various philosophies of education such as perennialism, essentialism, and progressivism; (2) place the national culture based on faith and piety as core values of education, (3) use of reconstructionism principles as the central idea of the development of education, (4) orient to the value (*a philosophy of value*), (5) became a philosophy of crisis; and (6) open the possibility of inter-disciplinary cooperation (inter, cross, trans) between the disciplines of social sciences, education, and humanities. The Somantri's reconstructed model of social studies as a synthetic discipline as Figure 1.

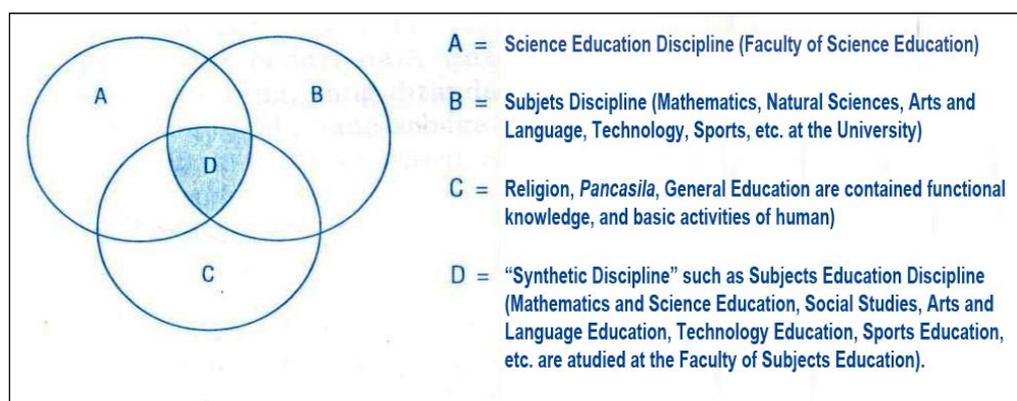


Figure 1. The Somantri's model of reconstructed social studies as a synthetic discipline (p. 36).

According to Somantri, the identity of social studies as synthetic discipline has four academic status simultaneously, namely 'advance knowledge', 'middle studies', 'primary structure', dan 'disciplinary education'.

Social Studies as an Advanced Knowledge

Social studies as 'advanced knowledge' is a body of knowledge formulated, organized, built or developed by the existing knowledge into more advanced knowledge. Citing Mehlingers' opinion, Somantri view that "discipline or structure is not a thing waiting to be discovered, it is a way to organize existing knowledge in a field to advance knowledge. A given structure is to be judged as well or bad according to its[sic] utility in achieving its purpose." The existing knowledge structure is then further developed, corrected, and improved, so able to explain the past, present, and future; and help solve social problems through the best mind, attitude, and action. Shortly, 'advanced' means that a body of knowledge of social studies as synthetic discipline, essentially as a 'new discipline', the result of a synergistic modification or integration the number of elements of knowledge from other disciplines into a united body of knowledge of social studies as an autonomous discipline.

Based on the scientific integration or synergy, social studies can establish and develop the fundamental ideas and the body of knowledge as a frame of mind, reference, justification, or paradigm in solving problems or finding new generalized theory for the benefit and improvement of the quality of human life in its broadest sense. One thing that is impossible made or solved by a mono-disciplinary. Based on this argument, Somantri rejects the opinions of the university community who state that social studies or any disciplines of subject's education are just a nurturance effect of disciplines, science, technology, and/or education developed at the universities.

Development of social studies as advance knowledge, according to Somantri influenced by "the new philosophy of science" movements, and "the hermeneutics case" affecting to "naturalistic social sciences." The movements allow the use of various scientific methods from several disciplines in interpreting the data, including actions, customs, and social practices. The new philosophy movement is intended to anticipate the trend of excessive specialization of a discipline, in which they "often break away from social issues related to public interest, and creates a major dilemma for developing speculative ideas."

Social Studies as a Primary Structure

Social studies as *primary structure* is groups of core or major courses in the structure of studies social curriculum at teachers' college. It consisted of two groups courses focused on "subject matter" (MKBS) and on "foundation of education" (MKDK) as a form of appropriate and effective academic consolidation for achieving educational goals of social studies as a synthetic discipline. MKBS is to facilitate the development and strengthening of fundamental ideas and body of knowledge of social studies. MKDK is to facilitate the development and strengthening of the foundations of theoretical and practical sciences of education; and to strengthen of scientific thinking skill and delivery system content of social studies in MKBS. These courses aimed to (1) establish and develop basic understanding of social studies as a synthetic discipline and discipline of subject education, and (2) produce qualified teachers of social studies in terms of academic and professional.

In general, to strengthen the structure of curriculum, contents of both should include the main topics that support for building the identity of social studies such as national education philosophy; definition

conceptual of social studies; characteristics of learners and learning, and science; characteristics of social studies curriculum, learning materials and resources, and organizing principles; instructional strategies; lesson planning; evaluation systems, and social communication practices. In specific, contents of both substantively are consisted of 'key and effectiveness areas' and 'the great importance' as the main elements and driving force of the curriculum and all courses of social studies.

It consisted of (1) *scientific contents*—conceptual and syntactical—that are systematically structured bodies of scholarly content of the social sciences, educational sciences, and the humanities as a whole. These contents are 'non-functional or fundamental *knowledge*' with a degree of academic quality is same or equivalent with scientific contents commonly studied and developed at the university; and enriched with "*functional/ practical knowledge*" are developed and sourced from reality and social problems in society; (2) *Capita Selecta* contains "*intracaptive and extracaptive knowledge*" to support and control the unity of structure or body of scientific content; and (2) *learning method* is modes of delivery system or a formalized or systematized procedure for carrying on instruction of social studies at the level of school. Three materials should have a 'readymade', and able to building the character of social studies.

In Somantri's thought, the existence of a primary structure within MKDK-MKBS can be academic solutions to prepare teachers of social studies at the level of schools that academically is strong, high-quality, professional and accountable; and can be a driving force in creating a creative dialogue climate in the class as a laboratory of democracy. In this regard, Somantri views a significance of synergy between Faculty/Department/Study Program of Social Studies, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social sciences and Humanities at University, the Consortium for Science Education, and the HISPIPSI/HISPISI. This synergy is very important and crucial for (1) building together the fundamental ideas of social studies that will be broken to the theories and generalizations to strengthen of systematically structured bodies of scholarly content of the MKBS and MKDK as primary structure of the social studies curriculum; and (2) reorganizing/manipulating the social studies curriculum that capable of build a simultaneous-synergistic-symbiotic relationship between social sciences and science of education in order to strengthen its functional relationship with "general courses of subject" (MKDU). To that end, the functional relationship between the content of social studies in the curriculum structure of MKBS-MKDK-MKDU must be strong.

Social Studies as a Disciplinary Education

Social studies as '*disciplinary education*' is distinguished in two categories based on the level of abstraction or difficulties of content, that are disciplinary education of social studies or a discipline of subject' education (PIPS) developed at the level of teachers' college, and a social knowledge (IPS) developed at the level of school. Both are integrated educational disciplines, and a study program. In professional literatures, social studies as a discipline of subject' education formally used as the names of a disciplinary education that often referred to the original name of scientific disciplines, such as a science education, social sciences education, language education, engineering, and/or sports education.

Contents of social studies at the teachers' college contains systematically structured bodies of scholarly content of the social sciences, educational sciences, and the humanities as commonly studied at the university and developed through the "*syntactical structure*" and "*conceptual structure*" approaches. This is important, because social studies at the teacher's college have a sense as disciplines of education equivalent to the nature and level of difficulty of contents at the university. In other words, the contents are '*a selected*' of systematically structured bodies of scholarly materials in accordance with social sciences purposes. Otherwise, at the level of schooling, contents of social studies are "*a simplified*" bodies of related materials that selected and adapted based on a psychological or pedagogical approach; and organized into units, topics, issues, projects, or portions of content subject extensively. According to Somantri, this is fundamental in order to make curricular materials from the disciplines can be used for learning, and relevant to student interest and social studies purposes of the school.

Both conceptual categories have become a shared paradigm of social studies agreed between the members of HISPIPSI since 1991. In 1994, it has been adopted in a programmatic assumption by a Consortium of Science of Education (*Konsorsium Ilmu Pendidikan*) as an identity of social studies through a workshop on Master curriculum development in the field of elementary social studies at the University of Huston, Texas and Ohio State University, in which Somantri as the chairman of HISPIPSI is one of the keynote speakers. Then, in 1995 it accepted as a conceptual foundation for Master curriculum development in the field of elementary social studies, which opened for the first time in the Bandung Teachers' Training College, and became the official formulation of the Association of Indonesian Scholars of Education (ISPI) 1995. Finally, in 1998 HISPIPSI reaffirmed their consensus on the social studies conceptualization as one of the essences of position paper about social studies as a disciplinary education that proposed to the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

Discussions

Result of analyse show that Somantri's thought about social studies as a synthetic discipline is based on Wesley's ideas (1942, 1946, 1950), Welton and Mallan (1987), and Johnson (1963, 1965). To reconstruct their ideas, Somantri uses a *Restructured Philosophy of Education from Brameld* (1955, 1965). This philosophy provides a foundation and model of epistemology, which considers that the nature of science growth occurred and formed as a result of a 'holistic, integrative or systemic' processes of various disciplines.

Wesley's views on 'the principles of selecting, simplifying, grading, and organizing content'; and Welton and Mallan's view on 'the nature of school subjects' provide an epistemological foundation for Somantri in terms of content of social studies. Somantri recognizes, that his construction of ideas and thoughts about the social studies adapted from Wesley's definition, "The social studies are the social sciences *simplified and reorganized* for instructional [pedagogical] purposes" (Wesley 1942, p. 6; 1946, p. 22; 1950, p. 34). In the Wesley's conception, contents of social studies are "the transition from adult scholarship to requirements of the classroom" (1950, p. 135); or "breakdown from various disciplines of social sciences as basic materials to be selected, synthesized and integrated into the single field of social studies" (1946, p. 23; 1950, p. 29). The contents then organized "psychologically and pedagogically" (1950, p. 36) and compose with "*broad-field*" or "*unified*" approaches in accordance with the social studies purpose, regardless of their knowledge barriers (but not ignore or remove) (Wesley 1942, p. 137).

According to Somantri, Wesley's concept about social studies is simpler and the most accepted than the others, and is '*middle way*' that can to bridge the two extreme positions between the social scientists and educational scientists related to the social studies at the level of schooling. Therefore, Somantri asserts that "a synthesis between content and process continuum will cover the lacks of the two extreme positions". His concept also allows the curriculum developers to arrange a variety of alternative programs of education for all levels of education, from elementary to teachers' college. Parallel with Wesley, Welton and Mallan (1987) also state, "the major difference between subjects like social studies and arithmetic, for example, is *the content*." (p. 63). That the content of social studies as *synthetic discipline* is "a composite subject area based on findings and processes drawn [intermingled or merged] from the social sciences' disciplines" (pp. 15-16, 47).

Meanwhile, Johnson's (1963) views on social studies as middle studies provide an epistemological foundation for Somantri about a synergy of intellectual and spiritual dimensions for the purposes of social studies in the context of a '*general education*'. In Johnson's view (1956, p. 65), the social studies as democratic education is "a broad, general framework that facilitates the interdisciplinary thinking". Therefore, contents of the social studies are not meant "survey courses or compendiums of bits of specialized information...[but] that draw from any and all of disciplines...to foster the democratic social character: freedom, responsibility, individuality, and respect for the selves of others" (Rosengren 1985, p. 559). Social studies as a middle studies also provides content "appropriate to the abilities of young people in the high school...to make its unique contribution to students becoming cultured persons" (Johnsons 1963, p. 391). This goal can be achieved if educational programs developed to educate students to do improvement in judgment about values; intelligent, skilled, and caring for "the fullest and richest development of intellectual and spiritual potentials which that dimension of experience allows" (p. 392). The intellectual and spiritual potentials are associated with the formation of a democratic social character, ie "freedom, responsibility, individuality, and respect for the selves of others" (Rosengren 1985, p. 559).

Based on the Johnsons's synergistic views, Somantri also conceptualizes the significance a synthesis or unity of '*intrareceptive knowledge*' (spiritual dimension) and '*extrareceptive knowledge*' (intellectual dimension) in building and developing identity of the social studies as an integrated discipline. On the one hand, in contrast to Johnson, Somantri uses the concept not in the context of "*the experiences of human beings*" or as an integral unity of the human struggle in social life or society as conceived by Johnsons (1963), but he uses in the context of *philosophy of mind* about 'dualism of knowledge argument'. This Somantri's views based on the philosophy of Pancasila as "*central values*" not recognize a dichotomy between absolute knowledge/truth (*intrareceptive knowledge*) or creed on '*intellectus quarens fidem*' (mind overcomes or more primary than faith/religion) in Semitism tradition, and relative knowledge/truth (*extrareceptive knowledge*) or creed '*fides quarens intellectum*' (faith/religion overcomes or more primary than mind) in Hellenism tradition. On the other hand, Johnson and Somantri agree to place social studies as general education' is "the road to which is a synthesis"" (Johnson 1963, p. 402), or is "a broad, general framework that facilitates the interdisciplinary thinking" (Denemark 1956, p. 65).

Somantri's thought about the social studies as a synthetic discipline can be considered as an academic effort to build and develop a shared paradigm, so every member of the social studies community in Indonesia have a clarity and firmness about what and how the social studies must be understood, constructed and/or developed for the future. In context of science, as Kuhn (1970) states, that the existing of a shared paradigm is important and fundamental as a parameter of "what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm" (p. 176).

Somantri's thought about four academic status of the social studies, basically reflect the unique characteristics of the field, which synergize two essential elements of a scientific foundation of social studies, that are: (1) the *scholarship* elements, associated with acquiring the structure of a body of knowledge of scientific disciplines; and (2) *pedagogy* elements, associated with the selecting and organizing content for educational purposes at every level of the school. Without these two elements "there is little hope for sound and effective study of society" (Cartwright 2001, p. 203). Therefore, Cartwright asserts that every scientist and practitioner of social studies must self-educated and united in the common cause of enlightenment, in terms of expertise and pedagogic. The integration of these two essential elements, also reflected in the conceptual definition of social studies from NCSS (1994, 2010) follows: "Social studies are the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provide coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines..." (p. 3).

In some literature, Somantri's thought about social studies as synthetic discipline also called an interdisciplinary integration (Barr et al. 1977, 1978), integrated social studies (Dufty 1986); integrated knowledge system (Hartoonian 1992); integrated subject (Lindquist 1995), or an integrated study (NCSS 1994, 2010). In the context of NCSS definition, Somantri's thought about the social studies as a synthetic discipline, on the one hand, reflects '*the integrated study*' of the social sciences and humanities within the teachers' college program. On the other hand, this reflects a coordinated, systematic study drawing upon disciplines '*within the school program*' (NCSS 1994, 2010, p. 3). Thus, Somantri's conceptualization of the social studies as a synthetic discipline has become the consensus and shared paradigm of social studies in the world community, especially among communities that are members of social studies in the NCSS which is one of the centers of excellence in the development of Social Studies in the world. NCSS in one vision affirms, "social studies are powerful when they are meaningful, *integrative*, value-based, challenging, and active" (NCSS 1994, 2010, p. 213).

This Somantri's thought has also placed social studies as an autonomous discipline, although the content (substantive and syntactic) derived from the social sciences. As suggested by Becker (1965), "social studies as a discipline intellectually autonomous from the social sciences while acknowledging them as sources of instructional methods and materials" (p. 319). Model organizing scientific content like this, according to Becker is justified, because in the new approach to science selecting and organizing the content more emphasis on "understanding of the method and function of the discipline" (p. 320). McCutcheon (2001) also asserts, that the existence of a discipline, including social studies discipline "can weld separate elements of subject matter into a single field which will have its own integrity...a scholarly discipline...in organizing the data thus amassed into systemic frameworks" (p. 230).

In a continuum of knowledge evolution, Somantri's thought also can be seen as an effort to provide an academic answer to the need to develop a '*synthetic theory*'. A new type of theory, the scientific knowledge is not "*disciplinary silos or domains*" or "*silos or stovepipes-like thinking*" but is '*multi-field*'. Through the new theory is expected communication between scientists from different disciplines can be established, so they can be able to get understanding the complexity of reality with various problems or enigmas faced better and comprehensive (Kragt, Robson and Macleod 2011). Therefore, epistemologically, Somantri's thought is based on the reality of life, problematic, enigmatic, and uncertainty situations, which no anyone scientist and classical disciplines with a tendency to oversimplification be able to recognize and translate it systematically. In this context, Bammer (2005; 2008) emphasizes the importance of cooperation and coordination between scientists and disciplines beyond the boundaries of the domain of a field of discipline. "Experts from various disciplines must be able to communicate and share knowledge effectively" (Mayer et al. 2005, p. 405).

This scientific synergistic movement first proposed by Dobzhansky in "*Genetics and the Origin of Species*" (1937). The Dobzhansky's studies are given significant contributions to the need for development a '*synthetic theory*', a new type of theory is '*multi-field*' which is different with '*inter-field theory*'. His theory inspiring and raising common awareness the scientists on the importance of interdisciplinary '*interactional expertise*,' and building '*trading zones*,' that is areas or spaces that provide cooperation or collaboration among disciplines to overcome obstacles in scientific communication (Wikipedia 2013). Besides that, this new theory not only provides connections between fields that already exist but also provide "postulates the need for development of a new field" (Jordan 1989, p. 101). Models of disciplinary integration such as the '*multi-discipline*' or '*pluri-discipline*', '*inter-discipline*', '*cross-discipline*', '*trans-discipline/transdisciplinarity*', and '*integrated discipline*' are the results of a long-time movement since the 1940s to the present. Even, the experts claim, this synthetic theory is the identity and character of the development of the scientific life in the 20th century, which allows disciplines to provide "great explanatory gain to developing models of mechanisms that integrate knowledge over several levels of organization" (Bechtel and Hamilton 2007, p. 41).

Geiger (1986) and Etzkowitz (1988) studies on the growth of American Research Universities also show that the number of universities focused on the specific scholarly areas of research and development

interdisciplinary. It is intended, so that the development of disciplines more appropriate or consistent with the complexity or integrality of social demands. Epistemologically, integration or unity of disciplines is based on assumptions about the nature of reality. That the order of the universe is not only as a whole composed of parts separated from each other (physical, biological, social, etc.), but is built on the principle of inter-related and interdependent. Each element is expected to give meaning to the creation of the integrity and sustainability of the universe as a whole system. In the other words, interconnectedness or interdependence is the essence of existence or reality (Capra 2000).

Finally, Somantri's thought about the social studies as a "simplifying the social sciences" who adapted from Wesley also need to be criticized. Experts considered it was degrading dignity and position of social studies (Al-Muchtar 2007, p. 274); deemed insulting the existence of the social sciences (Lybarger 1991, p. 7); and misplace of social studies as 'offspring' or 'a part of' the social sciences (Welton and Malan 1988, p. 14), or the social sciences are "the parent disciplines" of the social studies (Lybarger 1991, p. 6). According to Saxe (1991) the conceptualizations "were in air" (p. 17) and this is caused by their mistake in looking relationships between social sciences and social studies. In a confession to Shermis and Barth (1978), Wesley also states, "We're all guilty of oversimplification. I realize in the course of time that my definition of the social studies as the reorganization of social sciences for instructional purposes is nothing but an oversimplification" (p. 37).

Conclusions

In Somantri's thought, the social studies as a synthetic discipline is an integrated scientific discipline and subject education discipline, the result of a merger or synergy between two or more disciplines equivalent for the social studies purposes. It has provided a theoretical-philosophical basis for synthesizing of three traditions/paradigms of social studies simultaneously, namely citizenship/civic education, social sciences, and reflective inquiry. Social studies as a synthetic discipline has four academic status: advance knowledge, middle studies, primary structure and a disciplinary education at level of teachers' college and school; and became the nature, identity, characteristic, and the culture of faculty and postgraduate.

Epistemologically, Somantri's thought reconstructed based on ideas of social studies experts such as Wesley, Welton and Mallan, and Johnson. Their theories provide epistemological foundations for Somantri in term of the principles for selecting, simplifying, grading, and organizing content; the characteristics of content; and the significance of synergy between intellectual and spiritual dimensions for the purposes of social studies. Meanwhile, a restructured philosophy of education from Brameld provides a foundation and model of epistemology which allows Somantri builds his ideas/thoughts in line with the identity and character of the development of the scientific life in the 20th century are characterized by the nature of science growth is the holistic, integrative or systemic. However, his thought about the social studies as a simplifying the social sciences need to be criticized.

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