



Reflections of Teaching of Controversial Topics to the Field of Classroom Education *

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Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to determine the opinions and practices of the teacher candidates educated on Classroom Education, academicians working in the Department of Classroom Education, and primary school teachers on the controversial subjects in the teaching-learning process. The research is patterned from qualitative research approaches through a case study. The study carried out in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year included 29 students studying in the third grade of the Faculty of Education at three different public universities, 15 classroom teachers working at schools affiliated to the Ministry of Education, and 5 Ph.D. academicians within classroom education. In the study, the data were collected by semi-structured interview forms, and the obtained data were analyzed by the thematic presentation of certain codes and categories. When the findings of the research are examined, it is seen that the information, culture (respect, conflict), and environment codes related to the importance of the culture of discussion are frequently expressed. The findings are remarkable in that the acquisition of necessary and sufficient knowledge related to the discussion culture encourages individuals to conduct the discussion process with different individuals or platforms in a healthy way. The style used in the efficiency of the discussion process, the acceptance of different ideas with respect and the ability to listen effectively are vital. The findings that positive school and classroom climate, which expresses the existence of suitable environments where controversial issues can be discussed, contributes to the development of respect-based attitudes and behaviors among individuals, are also very important. Academics and teachers are responsible for creating ideal discussion environments. Moreover, the formation of positive thoughts on

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controversial issues should not be overlooked to encourage the expression of scientific, fair, and democratic ideas. Both academics and teachers should be a model for their students by ensuring correct communication with students. Participants in the teaching of controversial issues have some concerns and worries caused by pressure. Legal arrangements can be made to eliminate these situations.

Introduction

Social events involve a complex and controversial structure. It is necessary to think critically and comprehensively about the solution to controversial issues and events that turn into chronic problems. Training may be required to acquire critical and multi-faceted thinking skills. The education system and schools also perform a social function, such as gaining thinking skills in the development of individuals (Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010). Although schools have direct targets for raising individuals who are aware of social problems, there is also a perception that individuals cannot achieve these goals with their general apolitical stances and non-participatory behaviors (Hess, 2004). Apolitical posturing and non-participatory behaviors may be associated with the controversial nature of issues and events.

Although it is known that there is no social or scientific consensus on controversial issues, the expressions about the need for compromise may also be controversial (Ersoy, 2010; Oulton, Dillon, & Grace, 2004). Generally, controversial topics include issues of different values, beliefs, interests, and thoughts that lead to political, economic, religious and moral areas experienced in social and individual areas (Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010). The fact that the results of an issue cannot be estimated and that judgments are made based on the questioning of the information at hand makes that issue controversial (Yılmaz, 2012).

The controversy of the issues is based on certain criteria According to Oulton et al. (2004), these criteria are as follows: (i) Expressing different views on issues in the social sense. (ii) Opinions based on different information groups and different interpretations based on such information. (iii) Interpretations based on different understandings and perceptions of the world. (iv) different worldviews based on different value systems. (v) Not being always filtered of controversial issues through reason, logic, and experiment. (vi) That controversial issues can be solved by feeding on different areas of knowledge. In addition to these statements, the effectiveness of local or global (bullying, religion, politics, personal lifestyles, and values, etc.) dynamics that make the solution of controversial issues difficult should not be ignored.

It is seen that the reasons for the inclusion of controversial subjects in the curriculum are aimed at raising individuals who are critical thinking, able to communicate, self-confident active citizens, and who have adopted pluralistic democratic citizenship values (Yılmaz, 2012). The exchange of views on controversial issues is also an indicator of political participation (Hess, 2004, 2008). Critical knowledge, skills, and values of daily life through the use of political literacy, one of the priorities of political participation, will also serve the purpose of social studies course in effective citizenship (Kuş & Tarhan, 2016). In addition to all these statements, the teaching of controversial subjects provides an environment for students to acquire interrogative skills as well as their participation in political life (Baloğlu-Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016; Demircioğlu, 2016; Ersoy, 2010; Hess, 2008; Kuş, 2015; Oulton et al., 2004; Payne & Gainey, 2010; Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010).

It is observed that there are differences in the fields of social and science in the discussion of controversial issues and these subjects are included in 11 different academic disciplines (Oulton et al., 2004; Payne & Gainey, 2010). It is also thought that Science and Citizenship Education are associated with open and democratic societies and that citizenship skills are important in discussing scientific-technological issues and making solutions (Linhares & Reis, 2016). Among the controversial issues expressed under socio-scientific subjects in science lessons; It is seen that issues such as brain drain,

environmental pollution, global warming, genetically modified products, cloning, and sexuality education (Kuş, 2015).

It is seen that controversial issues are drawn attention especially in the field of educational sciences through the social studies curriculum (Camicia, 2008). Besides, the relationship between curriculum and ideology affects controversial issues, but also directly leads to educational issues that will be given in the curriculum (Camicia, 2008). Social studies are not only a field where ideological perspectives are exhibited (DeLeon, 2008; Leming, 1992), but also it seems that differentiating between the liberal and conservative ideologies directing the curricula in this field, and raising citizens among their aims (Gainous & Martens, 2016). The expressed variables indicate that educators significantly differentiate their thoughts on citizenship education (Evans, 2006).

It is seen that the mission of raising good citizens in social studies education is based on the approach of transferring citizenship information, one of the three approaches to social studies education. For an effective citizenship education, it should not be forgotten that the teacher has a responsibility to provide an appropriate classroom environment and to address the experienced social problems (Ersoy, 2010). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) listed the types of citizenship guided by the need for effective citizenship education as a personally responsible citizen, participatory citizen, and justice-oriented citizen. It is also among the statements that controversial issues are considered a central component of education for democracy education (Camicia, 2008). In addition, controversial issues have become indispensable for school-based democracy education as well as the need for a general democracy (Hess, 2004). It should be noted that controversial topics are based on the necessity of using them in social studies teaching, setting an environment for effective and active teaching of democracy education, including interdisciplinary flexibility and the necessity of touching the whole of society. Therefore, the aim of the social studies educator is to emphasize the necessity of educating effective citizens who are reflective and critically minded (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009).

Classroom is not only a living part of society but a similar one. For this reason, it is observed that students express and evaluate controversial issues by basing on their families in the first years of school (Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010). It is seen that it is planned or unplanned to move controversial topics to the classroom environment, and the process can be continued with the free will of the students as well as the direct expressions of the teacher (Kuş, 2015; Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010). Also, it should not be ignored that teachers, schools, external factors, and subject-based limitations are effective in the selection of controversial topics (Stradling, 1984). Despite all these limitations, an open classroom climate that supports the discussion can also be considered as a measure of effective citizenship knowledge and sustainability of education. In addition, open class environments prioritizing democratic values and participation in political debates are the guarantee of effective and active citizenship (Gainous & Martens, 2016; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Hess, 2004).

It is stated that controversial issues are not far from the country's history due to Turkey's historical development and social memory (Ersoy, 2010). It is observed that these issues are based on Turkey's rich culture, historical development, and rapid constitutional change processes based on differences (Kuş, 2015). While differences based on citizenship understanding and education that are directly affected by these processes of change and transformation go back to the Second Constitutional Period (Meray, Karatekin, & Kuş, 2012) Today, it is observed that it is considered as an independent course under the name of Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy at 4th-grade level (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2018). In addition, with the changes in 2005, which expresses our recent history and the major transformations in education programs, controversial issues included in the Social Studies curriculum (Kemalism, freedom of the press, democracy, secularism, population, freedom of thought, etc.) appear to be concrete (Öztürk, 2017).

In the studies on the teaching of controversial subjects: (i) Definition of the term (ii) Methods and techniques used in teaching (iii) Perceptions of teachers (iv) Limitations of teachers in teaching controversial issues (v) The benefits and disadvantages of teaching controversial issues are noted (Abu-

Hamdan & Khader, 2014). Besides, in other researches, the points that draw attention are briefly; curriculum developers (Camicia, 2008), teachers' attitudes and practices (Oulton et al., 2004), classroom climate and controversial issues (Hahn & Tocci, 1990), How social studies teachers can teach controversial topics (Avaroğulları, 2015) and it is also seen that there are many types of research on controversial topics that teacher candidates and teachers involved in the process (Baloğlu-Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016; Byford et al., 2009; Ersoy, 2010; Kuş, 2015; Öztürk, 2017; Yazıcı & Seçgin, 2010; Yılmaz, 2012) In this study, it was aimed to determine the opinions of the teacher candidates of Primary School Level Teaching Department, which took into consideration the learning experiences of controversial subjects, the opinions of Classroom Education academics towards the teaching of controversial subjects, and the teaching practices and process-based thoughts of active-duty classroom teachers on controversial topics.

Method

Type of the Study

The research was patterned by case study from qualitative research approaches. This approach is based on the examination of individuals in their natural environment. Based on these principles, it is very important to evaluate facts and events from participatory points of view and to base them on data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). For this purpose, the data were obtained through pre-structured interview forms based on open-ended questions from teacher candidates, and semi-structured interview forms from classroom teachers and faculty members.

Research Group

In the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year, the study included 29 students studying in the third grade of the Faculty of Education at three different public universities, 15 classroom teachers working at schools affiliated to the Ministry of Education, and 5 Ph.D. academicians within Classroom Education During the selection of the study group, attention was paid to the selection of academicians, teachers and students from the universities where the researchers worked. During the process of collecting data on the research subject, it was noticed that the classroom teachers were not particularly willing to express their views on the subject, so schools with gatekeepers were preferred. The reason for the classroom teacher candidates to be 3rd-grade students is that Social Studies Teaching course and School Experience course were taken in this period, where the controversial issues are more and more. At the beginning of the research process, students were informed about controversial subjects and teaching. These presentations were made to the whole class. Then, research was carried out with volunteer students. Participants who may take part in the research were informed about the purpose and process of the research and participation was committed on a voluntary basis. Taking into account ethical principles, each participant was given nicknames. Tables 1, 2 and 3 provided information about the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Data on Academics in the Research Group

Nickname	Year of Birth	Gender	Professional Seniority	Corporate Seniority	Academic Title	Field of Study	Interview Details
Senem	1976	F	21	21	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Turkish Education	04.03.2019
Serkan	1979	M	18	18	Dr.	Science Education	04.03.2019
Eylem	1981	F	16	16	Dr.	Turkish Education	04.03.2019
Şule	1985	F	10	10	Dr.	Social Studies Education	08.03.2019
Nuray	1985	F	12	2	Dr.	Turkish Education	09.03.2019

Table 2. Data on Demographics of Classroom Teachers in the Research Group

Nickname	Year of Birth	Gender	Professional Seniority	Corporate Seniority	Field of Study	Graduate Education	Interview Details
Fatma	1979	F	17	4	Biology	No	06.03.2019
Abdullah	1972	M	23	5	Classroom Education	No	06.03.2019
Ahmet	1968	M	28	5	Classroom Education	No	06.03.2019
Kemal	1967	M	24	3	Technical Education	No	05.03.2019
Burak	1988	M	8	1	Classroom Education	No	05.03.2019
Murat	1980	M	7	1	Classroom Education	No	05.03.2019
Seda	1977	F	20	4	Program Development	No	08.03.2019
Furkan	1973	M	20	4	French Teacher	No	08.03.2019
Celil	1979	M	17	1	Classroom Education	No	08.03.2019
Ceylan	1981	F	13	1	Classroom Education	No	08.03.2019
Asiye	1961	F	32	3	Classroom Education	No	08.03.2019
Cem	1980	F	17	3	Classroom Education	No	08.03.2019
Ayşe	1977	F	20	9	Classroom Education	No	29.03.2019
Güven	1974	M	22	4	Classroom Education	No	28.03.2019
Serpil	1975	F	22	1	Classroom Education	No	29.03.2019

Table 3. Data on Demographic Characteristics of Classroom Teacher Candidates in the Research Group

Nickname	Year of Birth	Gender	Interview Details	Nickname	Year of Birth	Gender	Interview Details
Tuğçe	1998	F	22.02.2019	Elzem	1997	M	13.04.2019
Ecrin	1998	F	01.03.2019	Songül	1979	F	14.04.2019
Erkin	1998	M	01.03.2019	İpek	1997	F	14.04.2019
Umay	1998	F	27.02.2019	Adem	1997	M	15.04.2019
Esin	1998	F	28.02.2019	Nur	1996	F	15.04.2019
Tuğba	1997	F	22.02.2019	Ali	1993	M	15.04.2019
Enver	1998	M	07.03.2019	Cevat	1998	M	13.04.2019
Nur	1996	F	27.02.2019	Kürşat	1996	M	14.03.2019
Ülkü	1994	F	22.02.2019	Yağız	1997	M	13.04.2019
Eda	1998	F	28.02.2019	Sevgi	1998	F	14.04.2019
Fatma	1998	F	29.02.2019	Eda	1998	F	20.03.2019
Seyyale	1997	F	22.02.2019	Elif	1998	F	20.03.2019
Aylin	1998	F	08.03.2019	Mutlu	1998	F	20.03.2019
Bilge	1997	F	22.02.2019	Yusuf	1996	M	20.03.2019
				Hilal	1998	F	20.03.2019

The majority of academicians work in the field of Turkish education. In the classroom teachers, while there is a majority of those who are trained in primary school teaching, there are also those who receive education in different branches and teach in the classroom. Classroom teacher candidates also consist of students from similar age groups.

Data Collection Tools and Data Collection Process

In the research, the data were collected through interview forms and forms were prepared based on the literature based on controversial topics. The measurement tool prepared and used for prospective teachers in the research consisted of open-ended questions about how and how controversial topics were reflected in the undergraduate course contents and pedagogical processes. The semi-structured interview form for classroom teachers and academics in the field of classroom education includes the importance, purpose, necessity, use in pedagogical processes, and evaluation of the received feedback. The development process of measurement instruments was completed with feedback from three

different field experts to meet the criteria of suitability, comprehensibility, and applicability by scanning the field literature. The following questions were asked to prospective teachers, classroom teachers, and academicians:

Table 4. Data Collection Tools Used in Research

Classroom Teacher Candidates', Classroom Teachers' and Classroom Education Academicians' Experiences on Teaching Controversial Subjects		
Classroom Teacher Candidate	Classroom Teacher	Classroom Education Academician
1. What do you think about the discussion of controversial issues in lecture?	1. What do you think about the discussion of controversial issues in the lecture?	1. What do you think about the discussion of controversial issues in the lecture?
2. When you think about the curriculum, what subjects are within the scope of controversial topics? What are your thoughts on this subject?	2. Are you concerned about discussing controversial issues?	2. Are you concerned about discussing controversial issues?
3. What are the problems you encounter while discussing the topics in your lessons?	3. When you think about the curriculum in primary school, what subjects do you think fall within the scope of controversial subjects? What are your thoughts on this subject?	3. When you think about the curriculum, what subjects do you think fall within the scope of controversial topics? What are your thoughts on this subject?
4. How should the teacher take the position against his / her students when handling controversial topics?	4. How should the teacher take the position against his / her students when handling controversial topics?	4. How should the teacher take the position against his / her students when handling controversial topics?
5. Would you consider controversial issues in your future professional life? Why?	5. What are the experiences of Primary School students on controversial political issues? What are the factors affecting students' experiences?	5. How do students' race, gender, and their preferred in-class communication styles affect their classroom discussion experiences on controversial political issues?
6. Why would teachers include controversial topics in their lessons?	6. Do the students think they can talk to you about different topics?	6. Do the students think they can talk to you about different topics?
7. Does the focus of students on controversial political issues improve their ability to participate effectively? So how?	7. Are the topics discussed by the students in your course your reason for choice? If your answer is yes, please explain the reasons?	7. How do you evaluate the teaching of controversial topics in terms of the implicit curriculum?
	8. Should teachers include controversial topics in their lessons?	8. Are the topics discussed by the students in your course your reason for choice? If your answer is yes, please explain the reasons?
		9. Should teachers include controversial topics in their lessons?
		10. Does the focus of students on controversial political issues improve their ability to participate effectively? So how?

Data Analysis

The data collected from the teacher candidates through the structured interview form are subject to content analysis and collected under certain codes. The thematic presentation, which refers to the coding and categorization of data, is also based on the analytic relationships of theories with each other (Glesne, 2012). The main theme and codes are given in Table 5:

Table 5. Examples of Themes, Categories, and the Given Answers

Themes	Category	Example Expressions
Discussion	Knowledge and Culture Environment	If only the issues could be discussed in the framework of respect, I could speak, even if they were trying to reach a conclusion. <i>It is these kinds of issues that will develop rather than theoretical. This time, the east-west point goes to the right-left point. We're talking about if that's what we want. These issues can be discussed with respect.</i>
Education	Curriculum Endoctrination (ideology)	<i>The fact that controversial issues are covered and left in the background is similar to the bleeding in each itching of an untreated wound. As long as controversial issues are carried out in Democratic class environments, they become unique places for students to participate effectively, to be sensitive to the problems of society, to develop problem-solving skills, to experience the beauty of freedom of thought.</i>
Pressure	Position (neutrality) Parental/school management pressure Stereotype	<i>When I say I have concerns about discussing controversial issues, we are all human, and we appeal to students, children, and their families, from many different backgrounds. It is also very important what and how much the child tells at home. Those who say there is no relation also have a concern. I'm worried that you don't actually notice it in class, but after you talk and talk, or I wonder if the children have misunderstood it, or if they can understand it, you may experience a worry.</i>
Student Development	Participation Self-confidence Critical thinking	<i>If we include controversial topics, it will bring much learning. For example, when they are asked to discuss a current topic, they will inevitably go home to watch the news or do research. Or he/she will examine the work done to prove his/her own thinking. In doing so, he/she will improve himself/herself in many areas.. We can think of it as a chain. If we want to train individuals to investigate, why not include a topic we can discuss in that lesson?</i>
Inclusion in Professional Practice	Attitude	<i>It would be the smartest answer to say that I wouldn't work in order not to compromise the place and comfort I was hiding in the community. As a result, while there is an option to be able to teach lessons from the slide through the presentation, there is a range of possibilities such as the students' quarreling with each other and the system they place can be troubled in terms of politics by expressing the system they will hit on the ground while sometimes saying that they wish.</i>

The data obtained from the interviews were then transcribed and converted into written form. With the direct quotations given in the process of combining data under certain themes, it was aimed to increase reliability and the process based on data analysis was terminated with the feedbacks received from the field expert. In qualitative research, while the reality in the outside world is expressed as internal validity, the transfer of findings can be expressed as external validity. In addition, descriptions and sampling selections to be made in the research process should not be ignored (Merriam, 2013). Checking the data obtained in this research at short intervals and reliability by feedback from experts; Validity was tried to be achieved by collecting the obtained data through diversification and by making a member check regarding the data of all participants.

Results

The results of the study are given within the framework of the themes, categories and codes determined depending on the research questions. These themes, categories, and codes are summarized in detail in Table 6, with each theme detailed as a title. To include a variety of views on the determined themes, categories, and codes, the opinions of all participants were tried to be detailed.

Table 6. Themes, Categories and Codes Relating to the Teaching of Controversial Subjects

Themes	Categories	Codes
Discussion Culture	Information and Culture Environment	Respect
		The place which there is no conflict
		Knowledge-based ideas
		Cultural experiences
		Transformations and intellectual movements in the world
		Openness and tolerance to other ideas
		Self-confidence and intellectual responsibility
		Dealing with the pressure of collective thoughts
		Using Turkish correctly and effectively
		Elusion of Critical thinking and dogmatic thinking
		Empathy
		Active participation
		Class environment where freedoms are recognized and there is no orientation
		Non-router, guide teacher
A classroom environment where self-assessment and self-judgment skills will develop		
Experience		
Education	Curriculum and Indoctrination	Ideology
		Multifaceted thinking skills
		A dynamic educational process
		Use of controversial topics that take into account the family's culture level and experiences and enhance them
		Creating a democratic classroom culture and environment
		Selection of discussion topics suitable for class level
		Selection of controversial topics, the framework of which is determined and can be used without entering political polemics
		The idea that controversial issues are limited to Social Studies, Human Rights and Citizenship lessons.
		The use of controversial subjects is influenced by teacher and student characteristics and the difference in perception of subjects
		Communication and interaction problems in the process limit the use of controversial topics

Pressure	Position (neutrality)	Political concerns and problems in classroom management are effective in the use of controversial issues. Active participation in human rights issues and decisions to be taken in the classroom, etc. caused by families' reactions Lack of prior knowledge in students on controversial topics
	Parental/school management pressure	What happened on the country's agenda and polarization in society caused reservations about teachers Beliefs that children are at a level and age that they cannot understand certain issues Considerations regarding the fact that controversial subjects are not included in the curriculum and that it is not obligatory or necessary to process them
	Stereotype	Ideas that teachers should be objective, equal and fair There are conflicts between the information given in the school and the information in the family about Atatürk, the national struggle, and religious issues.
		Current and controversial issues will make students active To enable individuals to see social, political, economic, scientific and technological developments as a whole Ataturk, national struggle and religious issues to learn more objectively and correctly will be effective in the process related to controversial issues
Student development	Participation Self-confidence Critical thinking	The use of controversial topics to educate critically minded and self-confident individuals will be effective The use of controversial topics will be effective in encountering students' different thoughts and reviewing their thoughts.
Inclusion in professional practice	Attitude	Controversial issues will be effective for the isolated individual to question their own truth Controversial issues will be effective in raising individuals who think critically and question as well as being equipped with academic knowledge. The use of controversial issues in solving social problems is likened to a method of treatment The use of controversial topics aims not to impose thoughts, but to respect thoughts.

Themes 1. Discussion Culture

There are also admissions that there is a need for cultural richness in the teaching of controversial subjects. The nature of the environment and interpersonal dialogues is important when teaching controversial topics. Background information in interpersonal communication can be decisive in terms of content and quality of communication. Even if the position of the students varies both with each other and in the classroom, the communication language established in their relations with the teachers in the position of authority may be based on information exchange. In terms of the culture of debate, information gives clues about how the dialogue will take shape. When conversations on information are structured during the discussion, communication can develop holistically in terms of the course of the discussion. The views of Ecrin and Aylin, the classroom teacher candidate, on the accumulation of knowledge in the culture of discussion are as follows:

"Discussing any subject brings out the level of man. I think if we're advocating an opinion on something, we need to know enough. We can think of it for all our lives." Ecrin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"I think the political issue will contribute to the student's participation based on his / her interest and knowledge. I am someone who had the opportunity to discuss some controversial issues during the lesson in my high school life. If I knew, I would actively participate in these issues and enjoy it. If I had no knowledge and interest, I would be content to listen." Aylin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

The teacher candidates stated that the level of knowledge is important in the discussion culture and that sufficient knowledge must be gained to defend an idea. The style and accumulation used by people during the discussion also affect the atmosphere of teaching controversial and political issues. There are courtesy and etiquette that must be followed during the sharing of information in the classroom or outside the classroom. These rules are tried to be achieved to students through both explicit and implicit curriculum. It is also repeated through the root values in terms of the values of education. When teacher candidates have pre-knowledge, the subjects are more productive. Different methods such as research, group studies, class discussions, and questioning should be used in teaching controversial subjects.

Democratic classroom atmosphere is necessary in the teaching of controversial subjects (Ersoy, 2010). The opinions of academician Eylem, classroom teacher candidate Ali and Tuğba about the environment in the classroom are as follows:

"I don't want tension in the classroom. Our students aren't quite that mature yet. In fact, if there is a maturity of debate, if they grow up like that, these controversial issues will make them reach professional maturity. But we are not at a level to make those discussions. If only the issues could be discussed in the framework of respect, I could speak, even if they were trying to reach a conclusion. It is these kinds of issues that will develop rather than theoretical. This time, the east-west point goes to the right-left point. We're talking about if that's what we want. These issues can be discussed with respect. But I never bring it myself." Eylem, Academician

"We have acquired a negative mood like taking and perceiving the subject personally... Because they could not be a party, we cannot get the desired efficiency in the subject to be discussed. In another aspect, there is a situation like getting away from the main discussion and revealing ideas that have taken place. In general, students will tend to withdraw from discussion issues such as religion due to misunderstanding or prejudices." Ali, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"The fact that the lessons are student-centered rather than teacher-centered can make students more active and express themselves more comfortably." In this way, with the discussion of controversial issues, it is important for the students to discuss an idea or event with each other, to learn to listen and respect each other's thoughts, to change their mind when necessary, or to continue defending their own idea." Tuğba, Classroom Teacher Candidate

Academician Eylem, who works in the subjects of Turkish education in the field of classroom education, thinks that teacher candidates in the field of Classroom Education are not at a level to carry out controversial issues because they are not mature enough. Classroom teacher Furkan also considers similar views for Primary School students. Expressing similar criticisms for both primary and higher education students makes us think that different reasons may lie under the "age" and "maturity" problem in the teaching of controversial subjects. These reasons may indicate problems originating from both teachers and students.

"For example, we cannot discuss when the time comes. Sometimes we have no patience in the teachers' room. In other words, we do not have tolerance for each other even when we grew up in the smallest incident because even teachers did not argue in the past. Here, we can raise our voices to each other when necessary. But if we allow children to express their thoughts freely, they can understand each other at a young age." Murat, Classroom Teacher

It is also noteworthy that the culture of debate among adults is not enough, and that this situation is also experienced in discussions in the teachers' room. Academician Senem, who speaks of polarization in the social sense, also states that this situation is reflected in the classes.

When there are controversial issues in the classroom, we often encounter two scenarios (Payne & Gainey, 2010): (i) few students make their views accepted by other students or few students express their views (ii) students abstain from making eye contact with the teacher. The age group is also important in bringing controversial issues into the classroom. The opinions of Abdullah Teachers who have 23 years of experience and Murat Teachers who have 7 years of experience as well as teacher Cem, classroom teacher Asiye and classroom teacher candidates Yağız and Elif are as follows:

"So if it suits the class level it can be brought in if it suits the age and class level of the child. For example, when we evaluate our own time, children are now looking at these controversial issues as if they are in space. I mean, this age group doesn't really have anything to do with it. They have no problem perceiving controversial issues. If you mention it, he gets involved." Abdullah, Classroom Teacher

"Political issues are current issues. Everyone has more or less ideas on these kinds of issues. In these issues, attention should be paid to the development of the expression skill of the child rather than her/his ideas. Discussing these topics in the course also improves the student's ability to distinguish between right and wrong." Yağız, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"I do not find the handling of controversial issues in the course completely correct in the first two years of primary education, as it does not fully pass the students' period of abstract processing. In later periods, discussing controversial topics in the classroom will help students improve their perspective and help them to have critical thinking structures. It will distract students from dogmatic thinking." Elif, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"Of course, they should have discussions that are appropriate to the level of the children, but it would be a debate, for example, we used to do a lot of discussion subjects like this, our teachers were determining a topic for us, we were discussing it within the framework of that topic. So, first of all, the teachers of the children in the same way that teachers determine the subject of course, if they can discuss the subject in their lessons." Cem, Classroom Teacher

"...children's self-expression skills, their personalities, and characters are developing. The most important thing is that I think and I will do Turkish right there, is the oldest stereotype that we call opportunity education. This topic of discussion raises awareness of the other's empathy. What can I do right there? What I am doing there is developing another tolerance." Asiye, Classroom Teacher

The style and accumulation used by people during the discussion also affect the atmosphere in the teaching of controversial and political issues. There are differing views that students and primary school students in the field of classroom education are not in a position to discuss and conduct controversial issues. It is stated that the students in higher education are not of the relevant maturity, while the primary school students are in the period of concrete processes. Academics and classroom teachers determine the initiative for bringing controversial topics to the class rather than leaving them to the students. They interpret the framework of the discussion accordingly.

Discussion topics can be adjusted according to age and class level, or the subject can be brought to the classroom by the student and teacher. The creation of appropriate environments where controversial issues can be discussed contributes to the development of positive political attitudes and behaviors. Positive classroom climate on students to express their views on controversial topics like promoting them helps develop more positive feelings about social science. The teacher should both provide the appropriate discussion environment and help students understand the thinking behind the discussion (Harwood & Hahn, 1990). For an effective and efficient discussion to be held, after providing the appropriate environment and discipline in the classroom, it should be made arrangements for the

preparation of the environment where students can express themselves without feeling pressure (Akman & Bastık, 2016). Some of the opinions of teacher candidate, teacher and academician for introducing controversial issues to the class and conditions related to the environment are as follows:

"Many problems can be encountered. These are personal and non-personal problems. The most important of personal problems is timidity. Based on this, some psychological behaviors such as self-assessment, self-judgment, and decreased personal dignity are effective. Non-personal problems are problems such as lack of empathic understanding, low respect for the individual, and the fact that the director of the discussion cannot fully control the rules." Sevgi, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"Once the child develops his self-confidence, his ability to explain his thoughts freely in the classroom environment shows that he is in a democratic environment, and it should not be interrupted, the child should be able to express his thoughts freely, how people can express their thoughts freely in Turkey, because the child is a member of that class in his class." Cem, Classroom Teacher

"Teachers should include controversial topics in their lessons. Because, thanks to these topics, students gain the ability to look at things from different angles, with a high level of motivation." Şule, Academician

Controversial topics are often brought to the classroom by teachers. The participants were asked, "Do the students think they can talk to you about different topics?" While they say they can mostly talk as an answer to the question, they are reluctant to bring a controversial subject to the class. Classroom teacher Burak, Academician Senem and Ahmet Teacher's views are as follows:

"They ask what they are curious about. That's the kind of environment I provide for the kids, obviously. You know, I don't take a very hard, disciplined attitude to get kids to express their thoughts more freely at work. I'm trying to make them more comfortable. They ask me their questions when they're curious, but when it comes to private matters, they might be shy there, of course." Burak, Classroom Teacher

"I do not leave areas to allow students to discuss issues such as mother tongue teaching. We don't go over what laws and regulations say and discuss at all. I'm not crossing legal boundaries. I'm not open to students getting too far out of the subject and expressing opinions." Senem, Academician

"When I say controversial issues, I first think of human rights, children's rights, children's knowledge about their rights, social issues, economic things, equality, religion, but I'm talking about these issues without going into too much detail. Frankly, I do not enter the content at the point where it is controversial." Ahmet, Classroom Teacher

Information, Culture (respect, conflict) and environment codes are mentioned in the discussion culture theme. The participants stated that the style used by the parties in the discussion process is important in the tone of the discussion, respect for the ideas and differences, and listening to each other in the discussion process are the factors to be considered. Opinions have emerged that creating appropriate environments where controversial issues can be discussed will contribute to the development of positive attitudes and behaviors. According to the participants, an appropriate discussion environment should be provided in the classrooms. As a reason, it is stated that positive classroom climate will contribute to students' willingness to express their views on controversial issues. It is the general view of the participants that the most important task in providing such an environment belongs to the teachers.

Theme 2. Education

Controversial issues are sometimes carried into the educational environment on a planned basis, sometimes without depending on a specific plan. Because the school and its community are constantly interacting. For this reason, the controversial issues that take place in social life and are on the agenda may be reflected in the educational environment. These controversial issues are sometimes carried to the class by students and sometimes by teachers. It can be said that controversial topics that provide students with critical skills such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, decision making, problem-solving, self-expression, and acting with democratic values are extremely important in terms of education.

Tuğçe and Ecrin, the candidate teachers who aim to make students gain critical thinking skills, which is one of the skills in the curriculum, state that processing courses through a single judgment will create deficiencies in terms of providing students with multi-faceted thinking skills. Academician Nuray, who has 12 years of professional experience in dealing with controversial topics as part of the curriculum in the lessons, states that the academic teaching and practice of all types of courses in education faculties are open to debate as the functioning of the education system is always dynamic. Serpil, the classroom teacher, says that controversial issues should be brought to the classroom, taking into account the cultural level and experience of the family, to capture better and to be able to make self-criticism. While the concerns that controversial issues may remain at a high level according to the level of students' education level, classroom teacher candidate Songül approached the subject from a different perspective:

“The fact that controversial issues are covered and left in the background is like bleeding an untreated wound itches every time. As long as controversial issues are carried out in Democratic class environments, they become unique places for students to participate effectively, to be sensitive to the problems of society, to develop problem-solving skills, to experience the beauty of freedom of thought.”

Songül stated in the form of an aphorism that controversial issues will be covered temporarily if not addressed at the relevant time, but may come to light again in the future. While opinions about the low level of debating skills are expressed at both primary and higher education levels. The question that needs to be asked is: "When can we give controversial topics?". The idea that it is early age for primary school and that the level of maturation is not sufficient for adults may cause the issue to remain in limbo.

The idea of preparing students for life is the reason why the lessons such as Life Science and Social Studies are included in the educational programs. Comparing the complex and variable problems that an individual may encounter in life will give him the ability to solve the problems that he will encounter effectively. For this reason, it is necessary to address issues and problems related to life, especially in Life Science and Social Studies lessons, and to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (Kabapınar & Baysal, 2004). While there are opinions that controversial subjects are not suitable for each lesson, Ecrin, primary school teacher candidate, who takes teaching lessons at the undergraduate level, interpreted the subject by considering the achievements and learning areas:

“When we look at the primary school level and examine the Turkish Education Program, we see the learning outcome of ‘Talking about a certain subject’ in 1st-grade achievements. In such a lesson, students can discuss an issue that is open to discussion about the news on the agenda or the events around them. When we examine the Social Studies curriculum, there can be many discussions about the ‘Science, Technology, and Society’ learning area in the 4th grade.”

Democracy education in primary schools is more integrated with Life Science and Social Studies lessons and is carried out with an interdisciplinary approach.

“Our topics of discussion are generally our responsibilities, our wishes, our needs in social studies lesson. There is also a human rights issue, we are talking about justice, we are talking about compromises. Human rights and freedoms are very important because I entered the 4th-grade students’ lessons, I just got out of that lesson now that they do require compromise or not. It is very nice for the children to say things that we and even adults cannot think of, even if they are young.” Kemal, Classroom Teacher

Kemal Teacher stated that he dealt with controversial issues within the scope of the Social Studies lesson. In addition, club activities in schools make an important contribution to this training. The Social Studies course, which has a critical role in this education, should not be an environment where information about democracy is memorized, but an environment in which these values are gained by doing and living (Güven, 2009). Classroom teacher Furkan and academician Serkan working in the field of Science Education and teacher candidate Kürşat's views on the controversial issues are as follows:

“There will be social issues such as solidarity, love, respect, environmental sensitivity, global warming, and more on issues that concern our world and our universe. I think today’s children need them now. Of course, it can be secondary school or high school in the older age groups. Social studies teachers may be interested in these situations, children may know, but I think it is early in the age group.” Furkan, Classroom Teacher

“In science teaching, I discuss socio-scientific issues with six thinking hats and debating technique for a week. I want students to divide into groups and do research on the positive and negative aspects. Students come to the classes to make preliminary readings on controversial topics such as GMO, nuclear power plants, abortion, endangered animals. I’m on the scientific side. For example, if they have read something about evolution, I am looking at it. I am reviewing whether they are knowledgeable. For example, I asked them if there are nuclear power plants in Turkey. Half of the class say ‘yes’. I say good or bad, they all say bad. There is no discussion when there is hearsay information.” Serkan, Academician

“There is a lot of controversial issues in the Social Studies course in the curriculum. For example, human rights, current environmental problems, wars, important historical personalities and events are among the controversial topics. These issues can be discussed in any sense. Discussing them gives the individual the ability to question, defend justice, and see the differences between the past and the future. Scientific and technological developments can also be among the controversial topics.” Kürşat, Classroom Teacher Candidate

When the teacher does not have enough knowledge about controversial topics, it is not possible to teach them effectively. However, it is not sufficient for the teacher to have knowledge about these subjects alone for effective teaching. Also, the quality of the communication that the teacher establishes with the students, their attitude towards controversial issues, and how they conduct the discussion process are extremely important. First of all, the teacher should always consider the individual differences among the students and take a tolerant attitude towards different views (Deniz, 2018). The opinions of the classroom teacher Abdullah and academician Senem on this subject are as follows:

“To handle controversial topics, for example, when I say controversial topic, the content of the controversial topic is important in life sciences or social studies, for example, there is a subject called my country, for example, there is a unit. In our country, we can enter into controversial issues when the love of homeland, nation, and the flag are such issues. We consider these issues as to why we should value our homeland, our nation, our flag, how we should value or how we should evaluate Turkish or non-Turkish elements in the country. Of course, there are among us,

but there are evaluations from these feelings that come from the family, and of course my own. There can be leads from my side.” Abdullah, Classroom Teacher

“I don’t think that classroom interaction is very strong among students. Students who have reached 3rd grade still do not even say good morning to each other. They get to know each other in a debate like that. Polemic or so feelings come out They have the attitude to shut down the debate because the lesson is going to get longer. If the discussion is prolonged, if everyone expresses their opinion. Our students also disagree. When they go with a certain method, they express their opinions.” Senem, Academician

The teacher's handling of controversial topics according to a specific plan increases the effectiveness of the teaching process. Because acting in accordance with a specific plan gives the opportunity to prepare for controversial issues. In this way, the teacher will be able to determine the strategies, methods and techniques that he / she will apply in the course in accordance with the controversial subject (Deniz, 2018). There are three obstacles in the teaching of democracy education programs in general (Hess, 2004): (I) differing views on the aims of democracy education (II) sharp discussions on what is right in which teachers, students or the formal curriculum will indoctrinate students to a specific position on the subject (iii) sharp debate on what is right. Ülkü, the candidate of the classroom teacher, states the following about adopting or not adopting democratic education:

“Everyday life needs a brain that thinks to survive. It is not necessary to be a robot but to be following. This is not a matter of narrow thoughts. For this, we need to create an atmosphere of discussion for the students. Because we aim to educate people who are sensitive to cultural and intellectual differences who have the ability to think critically. With these stereotyped judgments, with fixed ideas, this doesn’t work. Of course, that depends on how much democratic education we embrace.”

Endoctrination refers to the participation of totalitarian regime propaganda by eliminating the ability of individuals in the educational process to make informed choices (Momanu, 2010). Endoctrination embodies itself in education through unshakable commitment and methods (Barrow & Woods, 2006). The aim of teaching, its multidimensionality, and the expectation of success based on natural tasks and responsibilities can form the basis for the connections between indoctrination and education (Barrow & Woods, 2006; Crittenden, 2010). The concepts of political science related to indoctrination come into play in the classroom. The expressions of Nuray and Şule, one of the academicians regarding the determination of the boundaries in terms of not allowing indoctrination and propaganda, are given below:

“Politics is debatable, but politics should not be done in a class environment. The red lines on this issue should be determined by intervening in the first course in the discussions that enter into the Propaganda process. Otherwise, a negative class climate is created and the parties can get hurt.” Nuray, Academician

“I have no worries. I think the reason for this lack of concern is because I have the ability to approach the subject without going beyond the boundaries of the topic of discussion.” Şule, Academician

The curriculum and indoctrination codes are mentioned in the theme of teaching controversial subjects. Opinions have emerged that implicitly addressing controversial topics, whether or not they are directly involved in the curriculum, will improve students' diverse thinking skills. Passing the controversial topics without mentioning or completing the lessons without opening the discussion may cause the culture of discussion not to occur between students and teachers in different years at different grades.

Theme 3. Pressure

Teacher factor in schools is one of the main factors in gaining discussion culture (Yeşil, 2004). Teachers may encounter some obstacles in the teaching of controversial topics. These obstacles can be caused by the teacher or the student. In addition, various barriers can be encountered due to the values and beliefs that have become entrenched in society. In addition, the attitudes of school administrators and the structure of the education system can also be seen as factors that should be taken into consideration in the teaching of controversial subjects. Many views have emerged on the issue of repression.

“Controversial issues are generally avoided by our instructors, with thoughts that they may cause problems in terms of classroom management in the course environment, or that the issue may be associated with the policy.” Tuğçe, Classroom Teacher Candidate

“The parents are coming. My teacher says that when I talk about human rights, I have a say at home when talking about children’s rights. In other words, in family management, the child has the right to have a say but what does the child know when creating a family budget. I also say that the child does not know, but the child knows that she/he will contribute to the family budget at least by saving. When she says so, she says okay, she says I did not think about it. They can have such thoughts.” Eşref, Classroom Teacher

“Because of the polarization in the country in recent years, issues can be linked to politics. From there, the issues can go to different places. Regarding this, I am not in favor of opening the subject if it is not suitable for primary school. Or I pass myself and report my opinion roundly. I try to avoid. I express my opinion and withdraw.” Senem, Academician

“When we say I have concerns about discussing controversial issues, we are all human, and we appeal to students, children, and their families from many different backgrounds. It is also very important what and how much the child tells at home. Those who say there is no relation also have a concern. Am I worried, you do not realize this in the classroom, but after the conversation is over, you may worry whether the children got it wrong or did they understand it.” Seda, Classroom Teacher

Participants; different issues such as controversial issues can create problems in terms of classroom management (Tuğçe, Eda), problems caused by parents' pressure (Eşref, Seda, Furkan), tension caused by the atmosphere in the country (Senem), different / misrepresentation of the discussion or issue to the families of children (Güven). They expressed their views.

In the teaching of controversial issues, the various pressure factors mentioned above appear as obstacles to the classroom teachers' handling of controversial issues in their classrooms. Class teachers can take various positions against the pressures mentioned above.

Table 7, defined by Kelly (1986) and consisting of four positions, can be used to determine the position of teachers on controversial issues (as cited in Kuş, 2015):

Table 7. Positions Teachers Can Take on Controversial Issues

Position	Behaviour
The first position: Exclusive neutrality	As a teacher, I do not communicate controversial topics to the class and express my own views on the relevant topic.
Second position: Limited-sided (Exclusive partiality)	I try to convince my students about the right position on the controversial topic. As a teacher, I explain my personal opinion for students to accept.
Third position: <i>Neutral impartiality</i>	I support discussion of controversial issues in the classroom. I do not express my personal opinion on the controversial subject, but I encourage my students to express their views.
Fourth Position: Committed impartiality	I support controversial topics in the classroom; I express my position and personal opinion on the subject; and I encourage my students to express their personal views.

Classroom teacher candidate Umay and academician Serkan, who advocate a neutral position, think that the students cannot explain their views for reasons such as grade anxiety.

"...on controversial issues, the teacher should certainly not make it clear which side he stands for. Because students have anxiety etc. they cannot develop a healthy discussion for such reasons." Umay, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"Students do not share anything with each other because it is a bell curve. They influence their opinions and their contradictions. Grading system affects students' sociability. They value the note very much. Some are very introverted." Serkan, Academician

Adem, Elif, and Esin also emphasize the "respect and not being nervous in the style when the subjects are being processed" together with impartiality during the controversial issues:

"A student should be able to have information about the topics discussed by the society, if not all. He should be able to learn the views of the people around him and express his own views. Teachers should explain these when teaching their lessons, but they should not follow biased attitudes. They should improve the students' horizons." Adem, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"The teacher should listen to all students impartially, without comment, let them finish their words, after expressing their views should not speak as if they were right or wrong, and should not respond to the students' answers in an offensive way. He should not approach them all with the same attitude and behavior." Elif, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"Teachers should take a critical view on controversial issues. Students must be confronted with other ideas, even if they are different from the teachers' ideas. The teacher must be impartial. The said ideas must form a bad or good idea about one's own from the point of the teacher's view". Esin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

Fatma teacher pointed out an interesting point when she declared that she was trying to stay neutral about being a party:

"I mean, I try to be neutral, but I want the discussion to end as soon as possible because in some matters, for example, children want to give a lot of examples. In the Life Science lesson, for example, the curriculum was reduced from five hours to four hours. In five hours we were whipping from it and doing math, four hours is not enough now. Why is it not enough? Children want to talk so much. Here are some of the accidents that they watch on the news, here are the ones that watch something that we don't want to show differently. Somehow they follow. They have so much to tell." Fatma, Classroom Teacher

In the previous results, while the classroom teacher candidates, class teachers, and classroom education academicians were not told that the students were not suitable for the age level, Fatma stated that the students especially touched these issues in the Life Science course. It is also important that the teachers take time from courses such as Life Science, where controversial topics are mostly involved, and that they do mathematics in the lesson.

While Abdullah and Asiye teachers tend to remain neutral in general, they leave their neutrality aside by choosing topics. In particular, teacher Abdullah takes care to study subjects in an indoctrinating manner on issues indexed to nationalism. He said:

"My position is that I am a supporter of not being a party but I am still interfering in events. I'm intervening as a party. In other words, my feelings of nationalism prevail in this regard, and I am influential on children, and rather, we should not be a nationalist, but rather we should be giving importance to the country, the nation, humanity and the flag of independence, for example, to the children coming from all over our country. They are stateless, they have taken refuge in our country right now, they have no flags, they have no national anthems, we are addressing these issues and bringing up these controversial issues." Abdullah, Classroom Teacher

"It should be impartial, absolutely impartial, but it should also support what is in the public interest in the issues I have determined myself. At the end of the debate, the teacher should honor both sides, but he/she should also give a slight boost to what is in the best interest of the community. Now, according to the environmental psychology of this debate, or the opportunity to say what children are experiencing at that moment, but as I said, community benefit should be at the forefront." Asiye, Classroom Teacher

The attitude of the teacher on controversial issues, the quality of the communication she/he has with her students, and the disciplined understanding she/he has adopted have an important place in the teaching of controversial subjects. It is not possible for a teacher who is not tolerant of different thoughts, has the ability to look at events from different perspectives, is inadequate at the point of classroom management, and does not act in line with pedagogical principles, to be successful in teaching controversial subjects. In addition, the competence level of teachers for the teaching of controversial issues also plays a decisive role in the teaching of these topics. For the controversial issues to be handled effectively, the teacher should create a democratic classroom environment in which students can express their views without pressure and should not force students to think in certain patterns (Deniz, 2018).

"When we think about it from the point of the teacher's view, besides revealing the neutrality of the controversial issues, it provides critical thinking and questions. In a way, he should be directing and moderating. But it should not make comments that would prevent students from thinking or break requests." Ecrin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"People think very simply, I can have reservations about parents. Because they thought that I would do wrong to the parents, that people look at everything in black and white, and that they could not think in a wide range, from very narrow patterns, and that they could easily complain about me." Ahmet, Classroom Teacher

“You agree that controversial issues need to be addressed. And I do that, so sometimes I get my kids’ opinions on some issues. Of course, I say this in the beginning, so we will listen to each other’s ideas, everyone will express their opinion freely, we will only listen, then we will tell our opinion, we will look at the last, which one is accepted in general, we will organize it, we will hang it in a frame.” Kemal, Classroom Teacher

If the teacher does not have sufficient knowledge of controversial subjects, it is not possible to teach these subjects effectively. However, it is not sufficient for the teacher to have knowledge about these subjects alone for effective teaching. Besides, the quality of the communication that the teacher establishes with the students, their attitude towards controversial issues, and how they conduct the discussion process are extremely important. First of all, the teacher should always consider the individual differences among the students and take a tolerant attitude towards different views.

Teachers' viewpoints and attitudes regarding taboos are seen to be driven by opposing views and opinions (Yılmaz, 2012). In this study, it can be concluded that belief, moral factors and ideological thoughts play an active role in the origin of taboos. There are also statements that family and media play an active role in the acquisition of taboos, largely from outside school. This was reflected in the views of the participants as follows:

“I think the issues related to Atatürk are controversial issues. In fact, once I heard from a village teacher about a subject related to Atatürk, I heard that a parent came to the school the next day and had a discussion that you were telling Atatürk about my child.” Kürşat, Classroom Teacher Candidate

“Atatürk, the National Struggle and religious issues are controversial issues. Generally, students adopt the opinions and thoughts of their families on these issues. Information that is not included in the curriculum but is sure of its authenticity can be given. I do not think the curriculum is very sufficient for Atatürk.” Eda, Classroom Teacher Candidate

“The fact that we are biased and closed ourselves off to new learning without having sufficient knowledge of the subject. Problems such as perceiving the correctness or inaccuracy of the person’s information as a criticism of his own and therefore not making progress in renewing the information he possesses and insisting on the share of error.” Songül, Classroom Teacher Candidate

In the theme of pressure; position (impartiality), parent/administration pressure, and stereotype codes were mentioned. Participants stated that the impartiality of the teacher in the discussion process, his / her attitude on controversial issues, and the quality of communication he / she has established with his / her students have an important role in the handling of controversial issues. But a number of teachers stated that he intervened according to the course of the debate, particularly on issues of nationalism or community interest. Participants stated that they faced some obstacles in the teaching of controversial subjects, especially school administrators and parents had an obstacle to teaching controversial subjects. Another view that was mostly stated by the participants was that the topics discussed in the classroom environment could be explained differently to the parents by the students. They also stated that they were afraid to bring issues such as politics into a discussion environment. Participants stated that the students' perspectives on the subjects that could be described as taboos were within the framework of the ideas adopted by their families and at this point they were not very open to different ideas.

Theme 4. Student Progress

The active participation of students in learning activities in the classroom can be considered as class participation (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). Class participation can be divided into three as emotional, cognitive and behavioral participation. Emotional participation can be stated as being interested in the lesson and enjoying the lesson. Cognitive participation is the use of interpretation, strategy use, concentration and meta-cognition processes during the lesson. Behavioral participation is also behavior that can be observed such as completing the homework, asking questions and being active in team work (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). In terms of students' development, classroom teacher candidates seem eager to participate in and engage in controversial topics:

"If we include controversial topics, it will bring many learning. For example, when they are asked to discuss a current issue, they will watch the news or do research when they go home. Or he will examine the work done to prove his own thinking. In doing so, he will improve himself in many areas. We can think of it as a chain. If we want to raise individuals who are researching, why not include a subject we can discuss in that lesson?" Ecrin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"Teachers should include controversial topics in their lessons because individuals now face many complex and controversial developments in the political, economic, social, environmental, scientific and technological fields. Therefore, I think it is correct to provide this requirement from the lessons during school years to raise individuals who can keep up with these developments." Yağız, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"If I can reach the profession I want in the coming years, I will of course also include controversial issues. Because controversial issues develop students' critical views. It provides indirect self-confidence in individuals both in their social and educational lives." Elzem, Classroom Teacher Candidate

A teacher candidate expressed his concern at including controversial topics in the course as follows:

"It would be the smartest answer to say that I would not work in order not to compromise where I was hidden and comfortable in the community. As a result, while there is an option to be able to teach lessons from the slide through the presentation, there are possibilities for the students to fight with each other and the system they are going to hit the ground when they say they wish it to be, and sometimes the system they set up may be politically troubled by me." Tuğçe, Classroom Teacher Candidate

The inclusion of critical thinking skills in primary education programs gave teachers the mission of raising individuals equipped with these skills and becoming models. For these purposes, it is very important that the teacher training process is structured on the basis of these knowledge and skills (Ekinçi & Aybek, 2010). The statements of the class teacher candidates Erkin and Esin also support this view:

"If teachers include controversial topics, they will both learn how students think about the subject and help students develop their thoughts and change their perspective." Erkin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"They should discuss these issues if they want to prepare their students for life. In the future, it should be to teach to be more concerned with social problems, open to different ideas, to be tolerant, to show respect, to get away from blindly connected thoughts, to question." Esin, Classroom Teacher Candidate

Teacher candidates' achievements in teaching controversial topics; It is seen that it is expressed as being able to look at the subjects from different windows, equipped with knowledge, awareness, and respect for different thoughts (Baloğlu-Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016). In addition to these achievements, the thinking skills of teacher candidates in the process; While it is stated that problem-solving, creative and

critical thinking, communication and effective listening are empathy, the biggest obstacle to the inability to create healthy classroom environments where controversial topics are used in the classroom environment is among the expressions that the teacher candidates' negative attitudes and behaviors towards each other (Baloğlu-Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016).

In the theme of student development; Participation, gaining different perspectives and critical thinking codes were mentioned. Classroom teacher candidates, classroom teachers and academicians related to this theme; stated that the participation of students, gaining a different perspective and critical thinking affected the discussion environment. The participants stated that attracting the interest and attention of the students to the subject being discussed was of great importance for ensuring their active participation in the discussion process. They also stated that students willing to participate in the discussion process would be eager to do research on the subject. When the opinions of the participants are analyzed, it is seen that the most important achievements of the students from the teaching of controversial subjects are to gain different perspectives on the subject, having knowledge, learning and respecting different thoughts, and evaluating the subject from different perspectives. Participants point out that they relate the realization of healthy communication in society to the approach of facts and events with a critical and questioning understanding.

Theme 5. Inclusion in Professional Practice

The attitude of the individual performing the teaching profession to his/her own profession is one of the most important factors that determine teacher behaviors (Üstüner, 2006). Attitude towards the profession can be expressed as the sum of the feelings, behaviors, and commitment of the individual regarding his profession (Hussain, Ali, Khan, Ramzan, & Qadeer, 2011). The teacher candidate Tuğçe makes interesting statements about the role of the teacher:

"...His realization that he is in a glass that holds the key to the mind and is insulated against the environment by his teacher is nothing more than a subject that could break the glass of his mind deeply and possibly provoke a debate that would make him question the truth he accepts." Tuğçe, Classroom Teacher Candidate

The interaction of teachers and students in the discussion education conducted in schools significantly affects the efficiency of the discussion education that will be given to the students in terms of their attitudes and behaviors regarding the discussion activity. Just because the teacher has mastered the subjects in his / her field does not mean that he / she is an equipped teacher and that he / she will bring the students to the gains. Because knowing any subject is not enough to teach that subject to others. In addition to having a general culture and general talent knowledge, teachers, who are in the position of being the implementer of the curriculum, are also expected to be able to apply the teaching methods effectively (Deniz, 2018). The existence of effective communication and learning environments in the teaching process also depends on cultural awareness and tolerance between teacher and student. For these purposes, it should not be overlooked that the quality of communication and interaction between teacher and student depends on the acceptance and understanding of students with all their differences and their safety with all their differences (Rengi & Polat, 2014).

"...the students I will train must be sufficient not only in academic terms but also as universal values. However, there must be individuals who question and investigate. Therefore, they should question the truths, wrongs, and wonder about controversial issues." Enver, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"I would have discussed controversial issues. Because the problems of the society, which has not been solved, will always rise to the sky. The solution phase of a problem starts with addressing that issue. Every untreated wound will bleed as it is scratched. This is not because we are itching, but because we cannot find the treatment of the wound." Songül, Classroom Teacher Candidate

"I don't think I'll be addressing controversial issues too much in my teaching life. Political views, power, etc. I seriously avoid these issues that will make the environment tense. I don't

like it very much myself. Even if it is his blood, the people who can take a stand and harm the people with whom he has political differences are now around us. If I talk about such topics, not to defend and impose a thought; It would be to explain that respect and love are more important than everything, and not to judge or exclude someone for his opinion." Bilge, Classroom Teacher Candidate

The attitude code is mentioned in the theme of giving place in professional practice. The participants stated that the attitude of the teacher affected the discussion environment. While teacher candidates stated that they would include controversial issues when they started the profession, few teacher candidates stated that they did not want to address controversial issues with the idea that differences in opinions such as politics because politics negatively affect human relations.

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The choice of topics in social studies has been a concern for educational theorists and reformers for many years (Evans, Avery, & Pederson, 1999). Indeed, there are very few subjects that are not involved in discussions and conflicts about history, geography or politics. In this context, the economy focuses on scarcity and competition in terms of resources, goods and services. While sociology and anthropology are concerned with the differences of opinions and struggles of survival of groups and cultures; It gives important clues to humanitarian conflicts such as history, genocide and racism (Philpott, Clabough, McConkey, & Turner, 2011). Even though the discussions on these and similar issues sometimes focus on details, they include central links about broader narratives, parties' identities, and worldviews and therefore sometimes cannot be resolved (Zembylas & Kambani, 2012). However, in a democratic society, debate is a tool that defines social studies and controversial topics include concepts such as opposition, diversity and decision making (Philpott et al., 2011). In the "culture of discussion" theme of this research, it was determined that information, culture (respect, conflict) and environment codes were generally addressed by the participants. In the dimension of knowledge, the conflict between the information obtained in the education and training environments of the participant teachers who form the working group of Yılmaz (2012) and the information obtained outside these environments is noteworthy, the expressions that it will be important for students to apply to the culture of discussion in reaching the correct information are remarkable, but they also reflect the necessity of the category of information in the culture of discussion in this study. Soley (1996) also states that teaching controversial subjects is important for raising individuals with vision and knowledge. There are studies in the literature that emphasize the importance of knowledge in teaching controversial subjects (Hess, 2008; Huddleston & Rowe, 2015). As a matter of fact, the participants stated that the level of knowledge is important in the culture of discussion and that sufficient knowledge must be obtained to defend an idea. The willingness to access correct information, the effort to update and expand the information acquired will support the effective approach to the focal points while discussing controversial issues. In this sense, the teacher who carries the most controversial subjects to the classroom needs to know the students correctly, identify the information infrastructure and have knowledge about the society.

Some deficiencies in style can negatively affect communication in general and the ability to discuss in particular. Barutçugil (2003) emphasized that if the approaches of the parties are directed correctly, the discussion environment can turn into a process that benefits more than harm, helps to find new and correct solutions and to win more together. The participants also stated that the style used by the parties in the discussion process is important in the course of the discussion, that respect for ideas and differences, and listening to each other during the discussion process are the elements to be considered. For this purpose, it is stated that educational environments with cultural differences will provide concrete experiences to meet negative perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors, and to resolve conflicts regarding them, and to ensure justice and equality at the end of the process (Rengi & Polat, 2014). As a matter of fact, it is inevitable for people with different lives and beliefs in the same geography to have a polyphonic mindset and to defend different values (Başbay & Bektaş, 2009). The listening skills emphasized by the participants play an important role in maintaining and maintaining a healthy

and effective discussion environment. Discussion is an interactive effort by nature and reflective dialogue encourages the person to listen and respond to the expressed ideas (Harwood & Hahn, 1990). It should be remembered that different perspectives gained in a process depend on many factors and vary among individuals. For these reasons, classroom environments where controversial subjects are used in a healthy way also prepare an environment for asking questions, expressing anxieties and raising individuals who learn to listen to each other (Baloğlu-Uğurlu & Doğan, 2016). In Shapiro's (1997) study, children are encouraged to cope with problems and express their feelings correctly in situations of debate; He advocated the need to teach listening skills to help them communicate properly today and in the future.

In the research, opinions emerged that creating appropriate environments where controversial issues can be discussed will contribute to the development of positive attitudes and behaviors. Similarly with this result, Othman, Sahamid, Zulkefli, Hashim, and Mohamad (2015) underlined that a properly structured discussion environment contributes to students' critical thinking skills in particular. They also emphasized that participants should be provided with an appropriate discussion environment in the classroom. As a result, they showed that the positive classroom climate contributed to students' willingness to express their views on controversial issues. It was determined that the most important task of providing such an environment was the general opinion of the participants. In this sense, teachers play important roles in supporting all kinds of democratic behaviors such as supporting positive thoughts among students on controversial issues, always standing with the right and right information, valuing every thought. Again, in the teaching environment, it can be considered as an important and necessary effort for teachers to work to create a social interaction environment among all students, to appreciate their cultural backgrounds, to accept their differences and to support students to give examples from their own life experiences.

Throughout the history of social studies, many prominent thinkers have advocated curriculum reform with a greater emphasis on the in-depth study of taboo or controversial topics (Evans & Saxe, 1996; Oliver & Shaver, 1966). Because controversial topics fall into the classroom in numerous ways, both in the formal and informal curriculum (King, 2009). In the research, the curriculum and indoctrination codes were mentioned by the participants in the theme of teaching controversial topics. Accordingly, opinions have arisen regarding the implicit reference of controversial issues, whether they are directly involved in the curriculum or not, and that students will develop various thinking skills. By discussing controversial issues, students develop cognitive skills such as hypothesis creation, evidence collection, and evaluation. As a matter of fact, while students participate in the discussions, they also develop important attitudes and communication skills such as attentive listening, empathic response, persuasive speech, and easy collaboration with others in a group (Harwood & Hahn, 1990). Many studies also show that moving controversial topics into the classroom is a useful approach for developing and maintaining verbal communication skills as well as critical thinking skills (Alasmari & Ahmed, 2013; Camp & Schnader, 2010; Doody & Condon, 2012; Kennedy, 2009; Omelicheva, 2007; Paul & Elder, 2007; Roy & Macchiette, 2005; Zare & Othman, 2013). Preparing to participate in a discussion also encourages active learning. In this context, preparation for discussion develops the skill of expressing the topic of discussion with important and correct concepts, maintaining the principles of collecting and using data, categorizing and transmitting information, tries to develop a comprehensible approach and thinks, evaluates and reconstructs contradictory arguments (Rudd, 2007). However, Marttunen (1994) concluded that students were inadequate to use their discussion skills when discussing a topic in their practice study with university students to measure their discussion skills. In the study of Doğanay, Akbulut-Taş, and Erden (2007), in which university students' critical thinking skills were evaluated in the context of a current controversial subject, it was found that students were weak in discussing their own views and thoughts using critical thinking skills.

In the pressure theme of the research, the "position (impartiality)", "parent/administration pressure" and "stereotype" codes were mentioned by the participants. Participants stated that the impartiality of the teacher in the discussion process, his / her attitude on controversial issues, and the

quality of communication he/she has established with his / her students have an important role in the handling of controversial issues. But several teachers have stated that he intervened according to the course of the debate, particularly on issues of nationalism or community interest. Similarly, King (2009), who examined the experiences of students and teachers who had difficulties in addressing national and cultural identity issues in Northern Ireland, concluded that from time to time, teachers did not avoid intervention to advance the discussions positively. Participants stated that they faced some obstacles in the teaching of controversial subjects, especially school administrators and parents had an obstructor attitude to teaching controversial subjects. Reaching similar conclusions with this result of the research, Stradling, Noctor, and Baines (1984) stated that teachers, who are the participants of the study conducted in England, are afraid of the possible reactions of school principals, colleagues, parents and influential local administrators during the teaching of controversial issues. Misco and Patterson (2007), who argue that academic freedom is a prerequisite for the teaching of controversial subjects, firstly realized that teachers should be aware of their freedom and alleged that they should deal with controversial issues in a common and conscious way. In this respect, teachers who are starting the profession in particular should be able to express their academic freedom and the necessity of teaching on controversial topics, regardless of school, administrators, society and other contextual characteristics (Misco & Patterson, 2007). Another view stated mostly by the participants in the study was that the subjects discussed in the classroom could be explained differently by the students to their parents. They also stated that they were afraid to bring issues such as politics into the discussion environment. Participants stated that the students' perspectives on the subjects that can be described as taboos are within the framework of the ideas adopted by their families and at this point they are not open to different ideas. There are studies in the literature that teachers are undecided in bringing some controversial issues into the classroom environment because they have some reservations from parents (Dean & Joldoshaieva, 2007; Günal & Kaya, 2016; McKernan, 1982; Seng & Jaffar, 2014; Waliaula, 2011; Zembylas & Kambani, 2012).

Students who participate in discussions involving controversial topics are well positioned to be agents of change. These students can actively take normative decisions, which improves the process of recognizing, reflecting and adopting diversity among and within groups (Crossa, 2005). In the student development theme of the study; participation, gaining different perspectives and critical thinking codes were mentioned. Classroom teacher candidates, classroom teachers and academicians related to this theme; stated that the participation of students, gaining a different perspective and critical thinking affected the discussion environment. Discussing controversial issues is a powerful tool in developing democratic capacities because it provides students with a forum for accessing and evaluating information, claims and perspectives beyond those associated with their personal experiences and positions (King, 2009). The participants stated that attracting the interest and attention of the students to the subject being discussed was of great importance for ensuring their active participation in the discussion process. As a matter of fact, the sense of curiosity created by controversial issues in terms of teachers seems to be important in motivating students more strongly and providing them with effective learning experiences (Strauss & Westlund, 2005). They also stated that students willing to participate in the discussion process would be more eager to do research on the subject. Yılmaz (2012), who alleged that only interest and attention to the subject would not be sufficient, stated that the teachers, who constituted the study group, increased the intensity of emotional reactions towards the social and communication skills of the students and therefore underlined that the healthy decisions fed from the culture of discussion were not made. In addition to attracting attention and interest to the subject discussed in this sense, a teacher must also have socially acceptable behaviors and communication skills that will enable them to interact with the community and the classroom. When the opinions of the participants were analyzed, it was seen that the most important gains of the students from the teaching of controversial subjects were gaining different perspectives on the subject, having knowledge, learning and respecting different thoughts, and evaluating the subject from different perspectives. In this context, Zare and Othman (2015) propose to create an environment of developmental tension especially in the classroom, since the inclusion of controversial issues into the class requires reflecting thoughts,

continuing rational judgment and also taking into account various perspectives. The participants of the study also supported this proposal and emphasized that it was important to realize healthy communication in society and to educate individuals who did not accept events as they were, and who thought, questioned and investigated critically and that these concepts should be included in the educational program.

In the study, on the theme of “giving place in professional practice”, the code of “attitude” was mentioned. The participants stated that the attitude of the teacher affected the discussion environment. In the study of Avaroğulları (2015), which designed her work as action research, it was necessary to teach controversial subjects after the education given to teachers who had a negative attitude towards teaching controversial issues, it was important to teach students how to deal with conflicts. There is no doubt that the attitudes of teachers change positively in this sense, as there is a need for a systematic preparation to teach the topics, they consider themselves more adequate in this regard, the education system should be structured in a more supportive way to discuss controversial issues, and that it is not just right to teach the facts and avoid discussions. she concluded that it would positively affect their environment and their approach to controversial issues. Therefore, pre-service training on this subject is also important, as teacher education will affect the attitudes of teacher candidates towards controversial issues. In the study, prospective teachers stated that they would include controversial issues when they started the profession, while a small number of prospective teachers stated that they did not want to address controversial issues with the idea that differences in opinions such as politics and politics negatively affect human relations. Ersoy's (2010) study, which indicates that pre-service teachers who experience controversial issues in their education, also have a positive attitude towards teaching such subjects in professional life and that they have created their teaching strategies. it is generally in line with the views of the participants in this study who stated that they would be involved in controversial issues when they started the profession.

Based on the results obtained from the research, some suggestions can be presented. These;

- Communication skills have an important role in the teaching of controversial topics. Both academics and teachers should be a model for their students by ensuring correct communication with students.
- Teachers have great responsibilities in controversial issues. Therefore, the teacher's approach should support the students' critical thinking skills, be able to design the classroom environment in accordance with respect to different thoughts, and should consciously approach controversial issues by realizing their academic freedom.
- Participants in the teaching of controversial issues have some worries and concerns arising from pressure. Legal arrangements can be made to eliminate these situations.

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