
TOWARD A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH: CROSS-CULTURAL PRACTICES IN PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER'S NATIONALIST IDEAS

¹*Qie Lisha

¹*Research Center of Eastern Literature, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University, China

*Corresponding Email: lisaqie@pku.edu.cn

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ABSTRAK

Kebangkitan kolektif negara-negara Global South sedang berdampak besar pada restrukturisasi lanskap politik dan ekonomi internasional. Perkembangan negara-negara Global South dilandasi oleh akumulasi sejarah yang mendalam dan nilai budaya yang kaya. Dalam sejarah mereka, telah muncul banyak pemikir dan cendekiawan yang pemikirannya selaras dengan semangat Global South. Pada pertengahan abad ke-20, Pramodya Ananta Toer, salah satu sastrawan yang berpengaruh di Indonesia, telah mempunyai pemikiran nasionalis yang telah menunjukkan keselarasan dengan ciri khas Global South. Praktik lintas budaya Pramodya Ananta Toer menentang sentrisme Barat dan berupaya membangun subjektivitas negara-negara Selatan. Ia menyatukan tuntutan perjuangan pembebasan nasional Indonesia dengan gerakan anti-kolonial global, sehingga mewujudkan tiga ciri inti Global South, yaitu non-Barat, solidaritas dan perlawanan budaya. Pemikirannya mengalami perluasan cakupan dari Indonesia sendiri ke kawasan Asia-Afrika, kemudian meluas ke Global South. Pramodya senantiasa menghormati multikulturalisme. Imajinasinya tentang kebangsaan selaras dengan pembangunan Komunitas Senasib Umat Manusia yang mengusung ciri khas Global South.

Kata Kunci: Global South, Indonesia, Pramodya, Komunitas Senasib Umat Manusia, Praktik lintas budaya

ABSTRACT

The collective rise of Global South countries is greatly reshaping the international political and economic landscape. Rooted in rich historical heritage and profound cultural values, Global South countries have cultivated numerous intellectuals whose ideas closely echo the spiritual connotations of the Global South. As one of Indonesia's most influential literary figures, Pramodya Ananta Toer developed nationalist thoughts that bear close alignment with the core characteristics of Global South ideology as early as the mid-twentieth century. His cross-cultural thinking and practice challenge Western centrism and promote the establishment of the subjective status of Global South nations. By integrating Indonesia's national liberation pursuits into the global anti-colonial movement, his thoughts fully embody the essential features of the Global South: non-Western identity, cultural resistance, and solidarity for independent development. His ideological vision gradually extended from local Indonesian contexts to the Afro-Asian sphere and further to the broader dimension of the Global South. Advocating respect for cultural pluralism, his vision of national community resonates strongly with the construction of a Community with a Shared Future with distinctive Global South characteristics.

Keywords: Global South, Indonesia, Pramodya, Community with a Shared Future, Cross-Cultural Practices

BACKGROUND

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the collective rise of Global South countries has greatly reshaped the global political and economic order, making the Global South an essential force amid profound global transformations. While the concept of the Global South shares historical continuity with concepts including “the Third World” or “developing countries”, it carries distinct substantive differences. However, mainstream discussions often reduce the Global South merely to economic indicators, geopolitical positions, or diplomatic blocs. Although such interpretations are practically valuable, they tend to oversimplify the Global South as a mere geopolitical label and overlook its spiritual core as the collective identity of historically oppressed communities. Interpreted from the three dimensions of geo-economics, geopolitics and international relations, the Global South represents a collective group united by strong development demands, anti-Western hegemony traditions, and shared identity (Xu 2024).

As a typical Global South country, Indonesia has experienced colonial domination, ongoing post-colonial dilemmas, and decades of continuous modernization exploration. The country hosted the landmark Bandung Conference in 1955, a historic milestone that consolidated solidarity among Asian and African nations and left an indelible mark on modern world history. For these reasons, Indonesia has long held a pivotal position in Global South movements. Its intellectual and literary traditions contain rich ideological resources that align closely with the core spirits of the Global South, contributing unique “Indonesian wisdom” to the historical evolution of the Global South.

As a leading modern Indonesian writer, historian and social critic, Pramoedya Ananta Toer developed distinct nationalist and anti-colonial ideological positions throughout his creations, for which he was imprisoned three times over nearly twenty years in total. He produced more than fifty literary works, which have been translated into over forty languages, and received multiple nominations for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Regarded as Indonesia’s most internationally influential literary figure in modern history, Pramoedya remained a firm nationalist throughout his life. His nationalist ideology runs through his life experiences and extensive literary creations.

Born in 1925 in Blora, a small town in Central Java, Pramoedya grew up during a critical historical transition of the Dutch East Indies. Since the early twentieth century, a series of nationalist groups such as Budi Utomo and Sarekat Islam have been established one after another, marking the transformation of Indonesia’s nationalist movement from its embryonic phase to organized mass mobilization. Raised in a family with staunch nationalist convictions, Pramoedya was deeply influenced by his family environment during his youth. His father Toer worked as an educator while

serving as a radical left-wing nationalist who chaired the Indonesian National Party's Blora branch. His father's active political participation left a lasting impression on Pramoedya from an early age. By witnessing his father and local compatriots engage in anti-colonial struggles, Pramoedya developed a rudimentary understanding of colonial oppression and gradually nurtured his earliest aspirations for national independence.

Apart from family influences, the ideological heritage of early Indonesian nationalist pioneers Raden Adjeng Kartini and Tirta Adhi Soerjo also served as a major source of inspiration for Pramoedya. These indigenous intellectual traditions enabled him to view and reflect on Indonesia's national destiny, and provided solid spiritual support for the nationalist consciousness embodied in his later literary works. By learning from the life experiences and ideological thoughts of these predecessors, Pramoedya gained profound spiritual resonance and drew abundant ideological and creative resources for his literary writing.

Long before the formal emergence of the Global South as a theoretical concept, Pramoedya had already initiated the conceptual envisioning and practical exploration of core ideas embedded within the Global South discourse system. As the most influential figure in Indonesian nationalist literature, Pramoedya developed a sophisticated and multifaceted ideological system. An in-depth examination of his thoughts and propositions reveals extensive resonance between his ideological connotations and the primary attributes of the contemporary Global South concept. The colonial afflictions endured by Pramoedya and his fictional characters, the rising national consciousness inherent in his works, and his vision of an inclusive community collectively embody the experiences of oppressed nations across Asia, Africa and Latin America in the mid-twentieth century. Although such collective historical experiences predate the formal emergence of the term "Global South", they already encompass the foundational elements that later constitute the theoretical essence of the Global South: consistent anti-colonial stances, firm subjective awareness, systematic critiques of Western centrism, and persistent explorations of diverse modernity pathways.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Western academia has taken the lead in constructing analytical frameworks for Global South studies, providing effective theoretical tools for relevant academic research. Long before the formal emergence of the term "Global South", dependency theory and world-systems theory reveal the structural inequalities inherent in the global core-periphery system. (Prebisch 1950 and Wallerstein 1974)

Shifting the critical focus from global political economy to the politics of knowledge, Raewyn Connell and Boaventura de Sousa Santos mount decolonial epistemological critiques of Eurocentric intellectual hegemony. In *Southern Theory: The*

Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science, Connell demonstrates that Northern social science tends to be framed as universal, while ideas emerging from the peripheries are routinely overlooked (Connell 2007). In *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, Santos extends such decolonial epistemological critiques of Eurocentric intellectual hegemony, arguing that the Global South is bound together by shared colonial traumas and peripheral positionalities (Santos 2014). Nevertheless, mainstream Western scholarship has long overlooked Chinese academic perspectives and seldom integrates the vision of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind into theoretical dialogues on Global South theorization.

Since 2023, Chinese academia has pursued two primary lines of inquiry. The first employs reciprocal theoretical verification to demonstrate the value congruence between the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and the Global South paradigm. Both frameworks reject hegemonic world orders and advocate plural, equitable global governance, with the Global South constituting the core practical terrain for this vision (Bao 2026). The second consists of regional-empirical research focused on China-ASEAN, China-Latin America, and China-Africa South-South cooperation. This body of work substantiates that the Community framework provides viable non-Western modernization paths for Global South countries (Yang and Yang 2025).

Published in March 2026, *Global South: China's Perspective* systematically explores the origins and historical evolution of the Global South concept. The book defines the Global South as “a vast and complex bloc formed in the process of globalization in contradistinction to the Global North, namely the Western bloc. Upholding the principles of peaceful coexistence, equality and mutual benefit, it is marked by shared historical predicaments, consensus on practical aspirations, contextually situated solidarity, and dynamic identity politics, rendering it a vibrant agent with enormous potential” (Li 2026, 49). Furthermore, the book examines the positional coordinates of the Global South within the contemporary world-system, analyzes its diplomatic interactions, and elaborates China’s fundamental stances and practical engagements in Global South governance.

Nevertheless, existing Chinese domestic scholarship remains dominated by macro-level diplomatic narratives. It lacks mediating dialogues grounded in indigenous Southeast Asian intellectual traditions and omits cross-cultural theoretical corroboration based on Southeast Asian postcolonial literatures.

Globally, academic studies on Pramoedya predominantly focus on textual analysis and thematic interpretation of his literary works, with only a small number of studies engaging deeply with his cultural and ideological thoughts. In 2011, Liu Hong published the English monograph *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965*. One

chapter of the book examines how China and Chinese literary traditions shaped the evolution of Pramoedya's intellectual trajectory, elaborating on his ideological transformations influenced by Chinese literary communities and writers in the 1960s (Liu 2011, 234-256).

In 2019, Savitri Prastiti Scherer published her Indonesian-language monograph *Pramoedya A. Toer, Dari Budaya ke Politik, 1950–1965*. Her doctoral dissertation *From Culture to Politics: The Writings of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1950–1965* focuses on Pramoedya's ideological shifts and literary output between 1950 and 1965, a pivotal period that witnessed his fundamental intellectual reorientation. This transition entailed a departure from universal humanism, ideological alignment with Lekra (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat / Institute of People's Culture), and eventual adoption of the people-centered literary ethos of "art serving the people" (Scherer 2019).

Overall, current scholarship on Pramoedya primarily centers on his intellectual and literary development throughout the 1950s and 1960s. To date, few systematic academic analyses have explored the intrinsic connections between Pramoedya's ideological framework and Global South theoretical paradigms.

A comprehensive review of extant literature reveals three prominent research gaps. Existing studies have yet to leverage Pramoedya's ideological system to build cross-civilizational connections between Global South theories and the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind. Mainstream academia has long overlooked indigenous Southeast Asian critical perspectives on the Global South. Similarly, insufficient scholarly attention has been directed toward interpreting Pramoedya's national imagination through the lens of South–South cross-cultural praxis. These unaddressed research lacunae collectively establish the core innovative dimension and theoretical starting point of this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper adopts an interdisciplinary qualitative research approach, integrating close textual-reading of literary works, intellectual-historical analysis, and decolonial theoretical dialogue. It places Pramoedya's literary corpus, essays, interviews and historical-political context into conversation with contemporary Global-South theoretical resources, so as to unpack the inner ideological resonances between Pramoedya's nationalist thought and Global-South discourses.

The primary textual corpus draws upon Pramoedya's major works, most notably the *Buru Tetralogy* (*This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps*, *House of Glass*), alongside his non-fiction writings including *Hoakiau di Indonesia*, *A Mute's Soliloquy*, and serialized essays. In addition, this study incorporates selected 1950s short-story texts connected with Lekra, which enable balanced observation of both the

strengths and ideological limitations embedded within his literary-political practice. Archival materials, conference documents and available interview records are also mobilised to reconstruct Pramoedya's trans-national intellectual exchanges, particularly his participation in the 1958 Tashkent Afro-Asian Writers' Conference and his two visits to China.

The core theoretical lens of this study is Boaventura de Sousa Santos's notion of the "ecology of knowledges". In the Introduction of *Another Knowledge Is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*, Santos elaborates a systematic decolonial epistemological framework. His core critique targets the Western/Northern hegemony of monocentric knowledge. He advocates replacing the "monoculture of scientific knowledge" with an alternative "ecology of knowledges". The theory of the ecology of knowledges promotes non-relativistic and equal dialogues among diverse forms of knowledges, granting equal opportunities of participation to different bodies of knowledge. Diverse bodies of knowledge participate in wider epistemological contestations guided by two normative goals: maximizing the contributions of diverse knowledges to building a more democratic and equitable global society, and advancing the decolonization of knowledge and power (Santos 2007, xx). This strand of decolonial thought grounded in the Global South, which seeks to break Northern dominance over knowledge, does not arise out of pure academic contemplation. Long before these theoretical frameworks were systematically formalized, numerous anti-colonial intellectuals across Asia and Africa had already advanced comparable ideals through historical practice.

Pramoedya's nationalist thoughts and ideological propositions serve as a concrete embodiment of such collective historical experiences shared by Global South countries in the twentieth century, highlighting Indonesia's unique intellectual contributions to Global South traditions. From this perspective, Pramoedya is not merely a passive recipient of established Global South theories, but a seminal forerunner of core Global South ethos. His foundational ideological pursuits—anti-colonialism, inclusive solidarity, and historical subjectivity—foreshadow the central themes later systematized and theorized by contemporary Global South scholarship.

Furthermore, this study references Chinese scholarly interpretations of the Global-South and the vision of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind. As articulated in *The Global South: China's Perspective*, the rise of the Global South has disrupted the international political and economic order long dominated by the Global North. "Global governance centers on respect for sovereignty, equality and mutual-benefit and rests on the fundamental principles of multilateralism and equitable consultation. It ensures equal participation in global governance decision-making for all countries irrespective of their size, strength or wealth, so as to build an open and inclusive world economy, a pluralistic negotiation-driven

cooperation regime, and a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind centered on sustainable development.” (Li 2026, 449) This vision of an equitable international order and pluralistic coexistence resonates profoundly with Pramodya’s ideological system.

This study conducts reciprocal theoretical verification: it examines how Pramodya’s ideas furnish non-Western empirical evidence for Global-South theorisation, while using Global-South perspectives to re-interpret the multi-layered connotations of Pramodya’s nationalism. Three dimensions of ideological convergence are identified for analysis: resistance against Western centrism and the construction of Global-South national subjectivity; respect for cultural pluralism and advocacy of mutual accommodation among nations; and normative expectations for a community uniting Global-South countries and peoples. Taking Indonesia as a typical case, the paper unpacks the cultural meanings and spiritual essence inherent within Global-South discourse through analysing Pramodya’s ideological-literary praxis.

DISCUSSION

Resisting Western Centrism and Constructing Southern Subjectivity

Forged in the spirit of the Bandung Conference, the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization issued a solemn proclamation as early as 1957 in *Message of the Preparatory Committee of the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference to the Afro-Asian Peoples*: “The peoples of Asia and Africa once experienced glorious historical eras before enduring an epoch of colonial conquest and national humiliation. Today, our peoples hold their own destinies in their hands and are no longer powerless spectators of their own fate. They are resolved to become active, equal participants in addressing the shared challenges confronting humanity, particularly those issues closely tied to their survival and vital interests” (Preparatory Committee for the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference 1958, 1).

The rejection of Western centrism and the reconstruction of indigenous subjectivity across Global South countries constitute an in-depth decolonial movement, encompassing not merely political independence but also intellectual, cultural and psychological emancipation. Under Western-centric epistemic frameworks, Global South countries are permanently framed as the marginalized “Other” rather than autonomous subjective agents. Accordingly, the cultivation of Southern subjectivity constitutes an indispensable pathway for Global South countries to resist Western hegemony and achieve comprehensive decolonization. As a steadfast nationalist intellectual, Pramodya consistently rejects Western centrism. Through linguistic praxis that dismantles colonial discursive monopolies, he commits himself to forging a unified national culture, thereby dismantling colonial dominance over

local knowledge production. Pramoedya mounts a powerful literary resistance against Western-centrism throughout his Buru Tetralogy, represented by *This Earth of Mankind* (*Bumi Manusia*) and *House of Glass* (*Rumah Kaca*). In *This Earth of Mankind*, the protagonist Minke, who receives a Dutch-style colonial education, gradually casts off the ideological shackles of European civilizational superiority propagated by the colonial order. The novel lays bare the racial hierarchy embedded in Dutch colonial society, in which Western education and legal institutions are glorified as the sole symbol of modern civilization, while indigenous Javanese culture is devalued and marginalized (Toer 2005). Moving beyond overt physical colonial violence, *House of Glass* further exposes the epistemic violence of Western-centric knowledge. Dutch colonial administrators disguise surveillance, archival recording and social investigation as objective scientific research, deploying such knowledge tools to monitor and classify Indonesian indigenous communities (Toer 2002). By unmasking the neutral-sounding facade of colonial knowledge production, Pramoedya dismantles the self-legitimizing narrative of Western hegemony and reconstructs historical narratives from the standpoint of the colonized, refusing to evaluate Indonesian society entirely according to European normative frameworks.

Such anti-hegemonic critiques of Western-centrism embodied in Pramoedya's works resonate closely with the intellectual spirit of the Global-South, which advocates the decolonization of knowledge. Most Global South countries share a collective colonial legacy, and colonial linguistic systems constitute a critical dimension that reproduces historical societal hierarchies. In colonial societies, colonizers' languages were routinely constructed as "civilized, rational and superior", whereas indigenous languages were denigrated as "barbaric, backward and inferior". For Global South nationalists committed to national self-determination and social advancement, a unified national language functions as a banner of collective solidarity, a tool of anti-colonial resistance, and an essential medium for indigenous knowledge production.

A unified national language serves as a vital carrier of traditional national culture, a core symbolic marker of national identity, and an essential instrument in the struggles for national independence and unity. The Second Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in 1962 adopted a resolution urging writers from Afro-Asian nations to "attach special importance to national languages and take them as the foundation of literary creation, so that literature may play its due role in the struggle against imperial cultural hegemony" (China Liaison Committee for the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference 1962, 78).

As the world's largest archipelagic country, Indonesia consists of over 17,000 islands and hosts hundreds of ethnic communities with unique vernaculars, historical trajectories, and cultural traditions. Without a unifying national language, the integration of diverse ethnic groups, the overthrow of colonial domination, and the

construction of a prosperous, sovereign nation would have been virtually unattainable. A unified national language therefore carries profound historical significance for Indonesia's modern nation-building. Indonesian national consciousness denotes collective identification with the overarching national symbol of the "Indonesian nation", as well as a shared consensus regarding the nation's historical legacy and contemporary development. Cultivating a cross-ethnic sense of national belonging and robust national consciousness among Indonesia's diverse indigenous ethnic groups has remained a core challenge spanning the country's modern nation-building trajectory.

The historical evolution of modern Bahasa Indonesia is intrinsically intertwined with Indonesia's modern nationalist movement. The early twentieth century marked the dawn of Indonesia's national awakening, accompanied by surging aspirations for national independence. Within the repressive colonial social structure, the first generation of nationalist pioneers waged persistent campaigns for national liberation, giving rise to a series of organized nationalist associations. Young intellectuals influenced by Western culture constituted the core backbone of this ideological and political movement.

As the nationalist movement gathered unprecedented momentum, a shared cross-ethnic communicative medium became an urgent historical imperative. On 28 October 1928, the Second Youth Congress convened in Jakarta and formally adopted the landmark Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*). Beyond manifesting Indonesian youth's collective resolve to resist colonial hegemony, the Youth Pledge officially affirmed the transformative power of the unified national language of Bahasa Indonesia in galvanizing national awakening and advancing the decolonial nationalist movement.

A core normative demand of the Global South agenda is to advance the decentralization of global knowledge production and dismantle Western monopolies over international intellectual systems. Examining Pramoedya's nationalist ideology and de-Westernizing praxis through a linguistic lens reveals his consistent endeavors to elevate indigenous languages as critical carriers of modern national consciousness. Committed to writing in Bahasa Indonesia, he actively dismantled colonial monopolies over knowledge generation and dissemination. A nationalist from his youth, Pramoedya recognized the pivotal value of a unified national language for national rejuvenation long before Indonesia's full independence. Throughout his literary career, he never composed works in Javanese—his native ethnic vernacular—or Dutch—the language taught in colonial schools. Instead, he unswervingly adopted Bahasa Indonesia as his exclusive creative medium. Pramoedya explicitly elaborated on this deliberate linguistic choice, explaining that he wrote in Bahasa Indonesia instead of his native Javanese because the language functioned as a unifying bond for

Indonesia's multi-ethnic populace and enabled the country's diverse ethnic groups to coalesce into a cohesive national community (Rothschild 1999).

Language functions as a vital form of political capital that intersects with the allocation of political authority, economic resources, and social status, serving as a primary vehicle for constructing collective political identification (Sun 2013, 68). In early twentieth-century Dutch East Indies, a multiplicity of languages coexisted, stratified by the social status of their speakers and the contexts in which they were deployed. Such linguistic hierarchies largely mirrored the colonial sociopolitical order of the time. Pramoedya's advocacy for the national language extends far beyond the cultivation of a unified national culture: it constitutes a powerful instrument to dismantle the colonial elite's monopolistic control over knowledge production and counter Western epistemic centrism.

Beyond writing exclusively in Indonesian, Pramoedya took concrete practical action to foster the language's growth and dismantle colonial control over knowledge production. Starting from September 1963, the newspaper *Bintang Timur* published a 22-part serialized essay series authored by Pramoedya, entitled *Basa Indonesia sebagai Basa Revolusi (Indonesian as a Revolutionary Language)*, which ran continuously for 28 weeks. In this series, he systematically elaborated on the historical origins and evolutionary trajectory of Bahasa Indonesia, framing the language as both a national tongue and a language of nationalism (Miller 1992, 36). He also affirmed the historical contributions of writers who composed works in Low Malay (Melayu rendah/Melayu pasar)—the precursor of modern Bahasa Indonesia—and highly valued literary creations produced in this lingua franca, embodying his advocacy for the national language through tangible practice.

Pramoedya's nationalist ideology was deeply influenced by Tirta Adhi Soerjo, a pioneering Indonesian nationalist. As the founder of Indonesia's early indigenous journalism, Tirta was the first local intellectual to use news media as a tool for anti-colonial resistance. Written in Malay, his literary works truthfully portray the social context and emerging national consciousness of Indonesian society under colonial rule. Tirta chose Malay as his primary writing medium, viewing it as "the shared language of all oppressed peoples under Dutch colonialism". Writing for colonized communities naturally reflected his firm nationalist position (Liang 2003, 436).

Pramoedya shared strong ideological and spiritual affinity with Tirta. To honor this early nationalist pioneer, he published *Sang Pemula (The Pioneer)*. Moreover, he modeled Minke, the central character of his Buru Tetralogy, on Tirta's life and thoughts. As a young intellectual from Blora who devotes himself wholeheartedly to national liberation, Minke reproduces Tirta's activist experiences and ideological legacy, while also embodying Pramoedya's own core values and spiritual pursuit.

Consistent with this stance, Pramoedya firmly insisted on writing in bahasa Indonesia and refused to use the colonial language to narrate the lived experiences of colonized people. Since Pramoedya composed the Buru Tetralogy orally during his exile on Buru Island, with the text recorded by fellow political prisoners, the entire writing process became a powerful act of resistance against colonial oppression and the colonial monopoly on knowledge production.

Pramoedya's anti-colonial and anti-Western praxis covers multiple dimensions. He reconstructed the history of Indonesian national awakening from an indigenous standpoint to break the monopoly of colonial historical narratives. Through sustained literary practice, he challenged colonial discursive dominance and advocated for an inclusive and pluralistic modern national identity. He refused the singular framework of Western modernity and fulfilled the critical social responsibility of indigenous intellectuals. These joint efforts effectively challenge Western centrism and offer valuable intellectual resources for decolonial knowledge production across the Global South.

Upholding Cultural Pluralism, Advocating Mutual Understanding and Collective Self-Strengthening

Throughout the historical development of the Global South, colonial powers widely implemented divide-and-rule strategies and left long-standing ethnic conflicts after their withdrawal. During the Dutch East Indies colonial period, such divide-and-rule policies deepened divisions and estrangement among Indonesian ethnic groups and provided fertile soil for the proliferation of racial prejudice. These ethnic frictions continued to persist even after Indonesia achieved national independence. Against this historical backdrop, Pramoedya examined Indonesia's developmental trajectory with an open and inclusive perspective. Through literary creation, he reinterpreted national history, eased ethnic antagonisms intensified by colonial governance, and highlighted collective experiences of suffering, struggle and anti-colonial solidarity shared by diverse ethnic groups.

Pramoedya publicly defended ethnic Chinese communities and condemned systemic racial discrimination inherited from the colonialism. His nationalist sentiment transcends regional parochialism. Instead of focusing merely on Java or Indonesian national interests, he regarded all oppressed peoples worldwide as equals and companions. This broad-minded worldview is fully demonstrated in his representative work *Hoakiau di Indonesia* (*The Chinese in Indonesia*). His consistent advocacy for cultural pluralism and marginalized communities stands exceptionally rare among newly independent nations across Indonesia, Asia and Africa alike (ARI NUS 2025).

Pramoedya visited China twice in the 1950s. After Pramoedya returned to Indonesia, he still maintained long-term letter correspondence with Chen Xiaru in Beijing, a young woman who had served as his interpreter during his visit to China. These letter collections were officially published in March 1960 under the title *Hoakiau di Indonesia*. The book acknowledges the ethnic Chinese community's economic and cultural contributions to Indonesian society, while criticizing the discriminatory policies and unfair treatment they endured. In the foreword of the book's English edition, Pramoedya is praised as "an outspoken advocate of the need to study and publish the real history of the Chinese in Indonesia". "For Toer, the struggle for the Indonesian nation, for an internationalist and humanist national culture, for Indonesian socialism, and for an end to prejudice against Chinese-Indonesians and Chinese elsewhere were all elements of the struggle to complete the revolution. They were all tied together" (Lane 2007, 48).

Pramoedya did not only express his inclusive stance toward ethnic Chinese communities through written correspondence, but also embodied these beliefs in his literary creations. The Buru Tetralogy features progressive young Chinese intellectuals of roughly the same age as the protagonist Minke. Through these thoughtful and open-minded young activists, Minke learns about the national awakening movements in China and the Philippines and gains profound inspiration and encouragement. At the turn of the twentieth century, both China and Indonesia suffered harsh colonial oppression under Western imperial powers. Reform-minded intellectuals in both countries bravely dedicated themselves to public enlightenment. This shared historical experience reflects the profound similarities between the Chinese and Indonesian peoples. Pramoedya's historical narratives reveal the inherent connections between China, Indonesia, the Philippines and other colonized nations in their collective resistance to Western colonial domination, which carries profound symbolic significance. The multi-ethnic national community constructed in his works precisely echoes the multicultural spirit upheld by Global South theories.

As the pivotal transitional work of the Buru Tetralogy, *Child of All Nations* depicts Minke's intellectual growth from initial political awareness to full engagement in the national liberation movement, which earns him the title "Child of All Nations". This title honors the fictional protagonist while reflecting Pramoedya's own nationalist ideology. As a committed nationalist, Pramoedya transcended restrictive ethnic boundaries and showed sincere compassion for all colonized and oppressed peoples. His sentiment transcends racial barriers and develops into an inclusive and open form of nationalism. As Pramoedya voices through Minke: "Not only Europe, but my own nation, Japan, China, the Americas, India, Arabia—all peoples of the present age have nourished me... I humbly acknowledge that I am a child of all nations, of all ages past and present" (Toer 2006, 248).

This quotation faithfully captures Pramodya's inclusive nationalist stance and embodies the core ethos of Global South thought. Grounded in specific historical contexts yet transcending temporal and spatial limitations, his vision resonates universally with all peoples who strive for human dignity and collective liberation.

Indonesia entered the Reformasi era in 1998, when the national government implemented more inclusive ethnic policies. A series of unfair discriminatory regulations targeting ethnic Chinese residents, which had been strictly enforced during the New Order (Orde Baru, 1966–1998), were gradually abolished and revised. The official identity classifications based on race and ancestral origin were eliminated, while the cultural traditions of Chinese Indonesians gradually received formal national recognition.

The official recognition of the Spring Festival serves as a compelling case in point. In 2000, then-President Abdurrahman Wahid issued Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000, lifting the long-term ban on Chinese Indonesians' celebration of the Spring Festival (Hari Tahun Baru Imlek). In 2002, incumbent President Megawati Soekarnoputri signed Presidential Decree No. 19 of 2002, which officially recognized the Spring Festival as a traditional heritage of Chinese communities across Indonesia and designated it as a national public holiday (Database Peraturan JDIH BPK 2002). In 2026, Indonesia hosted its first state-sponsored national Chinese New Year celebration (Antara 2026).

Indonesia's multicultural roots are grounded in the state ideology of Pancasila and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This provides a real-world context for Pramodya's conception of a multicultural community. Such social conditions form the empirical foundation for Pramodya's multicultural imagination and serve as an important real-world reference for interpreting his literary vision of a plural community. As a key member of the Global South, Indonesia has grown increasingly open and inclusive toward multiculturalism during the Reformasi era. Against this historical shift, Pramodya's ideological vision shows remarkable foresight. On the one hand, his intellectual perspective accurately anticipated the orientation of national policy reform, as Indonesia's political development has largely advanced along the progressive trajectory he envisioned. On the other hand, he put forward an early conception of national identity that transcends the rigid binary opposition between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. Unlike conventional indigenous-centered nationalist narratives, his ideological framework regards non-indigenous ethnic communities, including Chinese Indonesians, as indispensable participants in Indonesia's nation-building process.

The Global South: Pramodya's Vision and Expectation for a Community with a Shared Future

Benedict Anderson proposed a highly influential theoretical framework for interpreting nations and nationalism in his seminal 1983 work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. This theory has redefined scholarly perceptions of national essence and provided a crucial analytical tool for postcolonial studies, historical sociology and cultural studies. Anderson's core argument frames the nation as an "imagined community". In this canonical study of Southeast Asian nationalism, he draws extensively on case studies of Indonesia and the Philippines to illustrate how print capitalism enabled colonized populations to construct a shared national community (Anderson 1983).

Nevertheless, this classic theory can be re-examined and reinterpreted from the contemporary perspective of Global South theory. As an Indonesian nationalist, Pramoedya's ideological vision transcends the boundaries of individual nation-states and focuses on the collective fate of oppressed peoples worldwide. His inclusive vision of national identity poses a fundamental challenge to Western centrism. He argued that Asian and African countries should draw on their own historical and cultural traditions to pursue modernization paths suited to their national conditions.

Pramoedya visited China in 1956 and 1958. The vibrant development of the newly founded People's Republic of China greatly inspired him. These two visits enriched his ideological thinking and encouraged him to advocate, after returning to Indonesia, for intellectuals to play an active role in national construction.

His first visit to China allowed Pramoedya to observe firsthand China's emerging development model, which offered a viable alternative development path for postcolonial Asian and African nations. By that time, he was already familiar with Lu Xun's prominent status in modern Chinese literature and had read the Dutch translation of *The True Story of Ah Q*. He was well aware that Lu Xun was widely regarded as "China's Gorky" (Toer 1995, 158). During this period, Pramoedya strongly hoped that Indonesian intellectuals could take a more active part in national development and state-building.

Pramoedya delivered a speech at the commemoration marking the 20th anniversary of Lu Xun's death and visited Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou. During his stay in China, he communicated and exchanged ideas with many renowned Chinese writers. "As a writer, Pramoedya was particularly concerned with the relationship between intellectuals and society, one of the central issues he had tried to come to grips with. The Chinese practice provided him not only a mirror for reflecting what had gone wrong at home, but a viable model for what could be done. One of Pramoedya's favourable impressions was of the high social and political status of writers and artists." (Liu 2011, 247)

Pramoedya's second visit to China took place during his return journey after leading an Indonesian delegation to the First Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in 1958. Deeply inspired by the conference's anti-colonial and solidarity spirit, he embarked on a cross-country tour covering China, Myanmar and other Asian nations immediately after the event. During his second stay in China, he conducted in-depth academic and cultural exchanges with Chinese writers before returning to Indonesia on October 21, 1958.

Hosted in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in October 1958, the First Afro-Asian Writers' Conference marked a key milestone that further enriched and refined Pramoedya's ideological system. The conference gathered delegates from more than 40 countries and regions across Asia and Africa. It focused on two core themes: first, the development of literature and culture in Afro-Asian nations, alongside their role in struggles for human progress, national independence, anti-colonial resistance and the preservation of global freedom and peace; second, the cultural interconnections among Afro-Asian peoples and their respective ties to Western civilizations. Participants carried out wide-ranging, in-depth deliberations and exchanges revolving around these two themes (World Literature Society 1959, 2).

Pramoedya's participation in this conference, together with his second visit to China, offered him valuable opportunities. He exchanged views on national liberation and developmental paths with fellow writers from Afro-Asian regions, and gained a deeper understanding of the vigorous development of the newly founded People's Republic of China, as well as the alternative development model it provided for all postcolonial Afro-Asian nations. Through joint discussions on anti-colonial issues with international writers, Pramoedya not only strengthened Indonesia's ties with the Global South community, but also foreshadowed the multilateral cooperation and cross-civilizational mutual learning mechanisms of the Global South. His unique experience provides important historical references for understanding the collective development of the Global South in the twenty-first century.

Pramoedya argued that "with knowledge of the Indian and Chinese peoples, Western powers were able to carry out more intensive colonial expansion. Indonesia and other Asian and African nations suffered the same fate. In the old days, Western strengths in science, academia and intellectual thought were exploited to subjugate other peoples and turn them into victims. Today, all progressive peoples across the globe refuse to let any nation become a victim. We hope to live side by side in peace and friendship, and treat one another with greater understanding and respect. Yet unbiased research on race is still deployed to advance agendas tied to the crimes of imperialism and colonialism from the liberal era. We have all stood against these evils, and peoples of both Indonesia and China deeply abhor them. (Toer 1998, 61-62)."

It is evident that Pramoedya was never merely a localized indigenous writer. Instead, he stood as a key participant in the transnational intellectual dialogue network formed among newly independent Afro-Asian states after World War II, embodying the identity of a Global South intellectual united by shared historical hardships and collective destiny. When Indonesia declared independence in 1945, the international system was taking shape under the US-Soviet Cold War framework. Hosted by Indonesia in 1955, the Bandung Conference enabled Afro-Asian nations to emerge as an independent political force on the global stage. From a Global South perspective, Indonesian nationalism inherently bears the transnational spirit of Southern solidarity and challenges the Western-dominated international order. As a defining milestone of the Global South movement, the Bandung Conference advocates anti-colonialism, international solidarity and independent development paths, which highly aligns with Pramoedya's core ideological beliefs.

Rooted in Indonesia's unique historical context, Pramoedya's interpretation of national awakening is not limited to a single national case. Instead, it reflects the shared liberation experiences of colonized nations across the Afro-Asian world. His vision of "a community of all oppressed peoples worldwide" demonstrates his global-minded nationalism, which resonates with the contemporary Global South proposition with a shared future community across diverse civilizations.

Across the contemporary globe, the rise of exclusionary nationalism and right-wing populism has spawned ideologies that define national identity along ethnic lines, eroding the foundations of pluralistic societies. Pramoedya's inclusive nationalism and his vision for building a human community offer profound historical wisdom to counter such xenophobic currents. Pramoedya "envision[s] an Indonesia that was constructed not only by those considered indigenous but the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Europeans and others who inhabited the nation." (ARI NUS 2025) This conception of national belonging was extraordinarily rare in Indonesia and other newly independent Afro-Asian nations of his era, and carries even greater revelatory significance in the present day. In an age of globalization, migration, transnational mobility and cultural fusion represent irreversible trends. Pramoedya's thoughts reveal that national cohesion relies not on ethnic homogeneity, but on collective recognition and respect for diverse identities. His ideology offers vital theoretical support for constructing inclusive nationalism and criticizing divisive political discourses that exploit ethnic differences.

From the perspective of global governance and international order, Pramoedya's ideology furnishes an ethical foundation for establishing more equitable and inclusive international relations. His vision of a multicultural community transcends conventional state-centric frameworks for analyzing international relations, pointing to a deeper awareness of shared humanity. Global crises including

climate change, pandemic outbreaks, wealth disparity and refugee dilemmas cannot be resolved within the isolated confines of individual nation-states, demanding cross-border solidarity and an ethical stance that acknowledges humanity's common destiny while honoring cultural diversity. Pramoedya's ideological and literary framework provides abundant intellectual resources for constructing such global ethics. Rejecting exclusionary cultural particularism, he explores a path that pursues unity amid plurality and sustains interconnectedness amid difference.

CONCLUSION

Pramoedya's nationalist ideology constitutes a complex, multi-layered system with unique value in the ideological evolution of the Global South. Rooted in Indonesian local social traditions, shaped by cultural inclusiveness and guided by the pursuit of social justice, his ideas stand in sharp contrast to the colonial assimilation policies and exclusive ethnic nationalism prevalent in his era. Instead, he aimed to build an inclusive national community that accommodates diverse social groups, upholds social equity and respects individual dignity. Rejecting Western centrism, Pramoedya firmly upheld the subjective identity of Global South countries. His inclusive nationalist vision envisions a unified community beyond ethnic divisions. Furthermore, through cross-regional spiritual solidarity across the Global South, he embedded Indonesia's historical experiences into the broader trajectory of Afro-Asian decolonization movements.

Pramoedya's intellectual practice validates the independent value of indigenous Indonesian experiences. In current academic circles, many scholars from Global South countries still interpret local social realities through Western theoretical frameworks, resulting in persistent intellectual dependence. Pramoedya's works demonstrate that universal and valid academic knowledge can also originate from local lived experiences. His thoughts inspire contemporary Global South scholars to reduce reliance on Western theories, draw intellectual sustenance from their own histories and cultural heritage, and construct locally rooted knowledge systems.

Nevertheless, Pramoedya's nationalist thought bears certain ideological limitations. His intellectual stance was deeply intertwined with the political line of Lekra, leaving distinct ideological imprints on his literary production of the late 1950s. His works depicting workers' and peasants' resistance from this period embody Lekra's literary principles. Yet ideological commitments caused these texts to prioritize political messaging, making it difficult to strike a full balance between ideological advocacy and artistic-literary merit. Furthermore, his reflections on the historical relationship between the concept of "Indonesia" and colonialism remain controversial. In several of his writings, Pramoedya also tends to romanticize the history of the oppressed classes, while partially downplaying internal contradictions, conservative

mentalities and intra-group conflicts within subaltern communities. These limitations, conditioned by historical context and objective circumstances, do not negate his incisive anti-colonial critique; instead, they lay bare the inherent boundaries of his nationalist imagination.

Indonesia has long occupied a pivotal position in Global South movements. The Bandung Conference serves as the most iconic symbol of Southern solidarity, and Indonesia maintains an enduring influential presence across multilateral platforms including ASEAN, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In recent years, as the Global South has re-emerged as a central strand of international discourse, Indonesia has actively explored avenues to deepen South-South cooperation in climate change, the digital economy, maritime governance and other domains. At the regional level, ASEAN members face the enduring challenge of balancing regional integration and national sovereignty. The construction of a Community with a Shared Future is intrinsically linked to the shaping of identity, which involves three interrelated dimensions: national identity, shared values and cultural identity (Xu 2022, 19). The challenge of cultivating a shared regional identity while honoring national disparities, and safeguarding each member state's autonomy amid cultural pluralism, stands as a core priority for ASEAN countries. Pramodya's vision of a multicultural community may offer valuable insights and viable approaches to address such dilemmas.

Viewed from this aspect, the Global South is more than merely a geopolitical category; it embodies shared historical memories and sustained anti-hegemonic practice. Although Pramodya never encountered the concept of the "Global South", his core propositions – anti-colonialism, cultural inclusiveness and historical subjectivity – resonate closely with the core theories developed by contemporary Global South scholars. In the context of growing global inequality and rising ideological confrontation, re-examining Pramodya's thoughts from the Global South perspective can still provide valuable insights rooted in "Indonesian Wisdom".

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