

## Constructing Narratives: Indonesia-Australia Relations in Indonesian History Textbooks

Wawan Darmawan<sup>✉</sup>, Annisa'a Ambarnis, Andromeda Aderoben,  
Wildan Insan Fauzi  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, <sup>✉</sup>[wawand@upi.edu](mailto:wawand@upi.edu)

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze how Australian history is represented in Indonesian history textbooks and how these narratives have evolved. Specifically, it examines the differences in the portrayal of Australian history in high school history textbooks published during the New Order government (1966-1998) and the Reformasi government (1999-2023). To achieve this objective, this study employs the critical discourse analysis method, which allows for systematically examining communication symbols embedded in historical narratives. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how historical events are framed and contextualized in Indonesian history textbooks. The findings reveal that during the New Order period (1966-1998), Australian history was primarily linked to Indonesia's independence struggle (1945-1949) and the Guided Democracy period (1959-1965). During this time, Australia was depicted as a nation that supported Indonesia's independence. However, in the Reformasi era (post-1999), significant changes emerged in the historical narrative, particularly in depicting Australia's involvement in the East Timor referendum. Textbooks published after 1999 reflect a more complex relationship, highlighting Australia's role in East Timor's separation from Indonesia. These findings indicate that the representation of history in textbooks is influenced by political dynamics and diplomatic relations between the two nations. The shift in historical narratives demonstrates how government policies and national discourse shape students' collective understanding of international history. Therefore, the history curriculum must adopt a more critical and balanced approach to avoid being solely shaped by political interests. This study confirms that historical narratives in textbooks are not static but are shaped by contemporary political contexts and bilateral relations.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana sejarah Australia direpresentasikan dalam buku teks sejarah Indonesia serta bagaimana narasi tersebut berkembang dari waktu ke waktu., khususnya yang diterbitkan pada masa pemerintahan Orde Baru (1966-1998) dan masa Reformasi (1999-2023). Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan metode *critical discourse analysis* (analisis wacana kritis) yang memungkinkan penelusuran sistematis terhadap simbol-simbol komunikasi yang terkandung dalam narasi sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada masa Orde Baru, sejarah Australia umumnya dikaitkan dengan perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia (1945-1949) dan masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959-1965), di mana Australia digambarkan sebagai negara yang mendukung kemerdekaan Indonesia. Namun, pada masa Reformasi (pasca-1999), narasi sejarah mengalami perubahan signifikan, terutama terkait peran Australia dalam proses referendum Timor Timur. Buku-buku teks yang diterbitkan setelah 1999 menunjukkan hubungan yang lebih kompleks, dengan menyoroti peran Australia dalam pemisahan Timor Timur dari Indonesia. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa representasi sejarah dalam buku teks sangat dipengaruhi oleh dinamika politik dan hubungan diplomatik kedua negara. Perubahan narasi mencerminkan bagaimana kebijakan pemerintah dan wacana nasional membentuk pemahaman kolektif siswa terhadap sejarah internasional. Oleh karena itu, kurikulum sejarah perlu diarahkan pada pendekatan yang lebih kritis dan seimbang agar tidak didominasi oleh kepentingan politik semata. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa narasi sejarah dalam buku teks bersifat dinamis dan sangat dipengaruhi oleh konteks politik serta hubungan bilateral yang sedang berlangsung.



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## INTRODUCTION

Textbooks serve as instruments for achieving national educational objectives in alignment with the prevailing curriculum. In the Indonesian context, curriculum changes often influence the content of history textbooks, particularly in interpreting national and international historical events (Purwanta & Novianto, 2022; Saripudin, Fauzi, & Nugraha, 2022). Consequently, the relationship between history textbooks and the curriculum is dynamic, reflecting evolving ideological, political, and educational policy interests (Apple, 2004). Schools and textbooks are important media for spreading political ideas. Therefore, textbooks reflect the ideology of the time while conveying values, goals, and myths to the younger generation (Anand & Lall, 2022). On the one hand, government control of the textbook industry functions as an ideological filter and is essential for maintaining and developing quality (Purwanta, 2015).

Parkes (2011) also shows that conservative or progressive politics often influenced textbook revisions in power at the time. History education in various countries appears to be similar to that in Indonesia, functioning not only as an academic instrument but also as an ideological tool that can shape national identity and diplomatic relations. In Australia, history textbooks are often influenced by debates surrounding the "History Wars," which involve disputes over how colonialism, relations with Aboriginal communities, and Australia's role in World War II should be taught. In Japan, the government has strict control over the curriculum and textbooks (Nozaki, 2008). A study by Hein & Selden (2000) indicates that Japan's government-led historical revisions have often been criticized by neighboring countries such as China and South Korea, particularly regarding the removal or simplification of narratives about Japanese military atrocities during World War II. Fukushima (2020) adds that many textbooks portray Japan as a victim of war rather than an aggressor, which has led to diplomatic tensions with other nations. In the United States, the education system is decentralized, with primary responsibility falling on state governments and school districts. As a result, historical narratives in textbooks can vary across regions, reflecting local values and needs. Loewen (1995) points out that many U.S. history textbooks tend to omit controversial aspects, such as American involvement in foreign interventions or the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities.

Historical narratives in South Korean textbooks are often used to instill patriotism and na-

tional identity while constructing an anti-Japanese narrative. Shin & Sneider (2011) note that the South Korean government actively revises textbooks to ensure historical narratives reflect Korean nationalism. Kang (2018) also highlights that the government seeks to control the curriculum to emphasize South Korea's achievements in economics and democracy while underscoring the threat from North Korea. In China, Japan's occupation period is exploited to serve the purpose of Chinese nationalism, justifying Mao's modernization and open-door policies as well as China's security and foreign policies (Wang, 2020). Chinese history textbooks are designed to advance Chinese nationalism by highlighting historical conquests by Japan and Western powers, promoting Han-centered unity, and championing the "Chinese Dream" (Lyu, 2021; Wang & Lee, 2025). Xiang Gu (2021) observes that while China strengthens patriotic education using the Nanjing Massacre as an ideological weapon for national solidarity, Japan accelerates its nationalist historiography efforts to reconstruct its normal national image by marginalizing the massacre. Since the 19th century, Swedish history textbooks have emphasized democracy, nationalism, and religious and ethnic minorities (Redvaldsen, 2021). In Israeli textbooks, a key priority is the ethno-national model of the nation-state over commitments to democratic values, including minority rights, which reflects the penetration of neo-Zionist discourse into the citizenship curriculum (Pinson & Agbaria, 2021).

The historical events studied in Indonesian history textbooks cannot be separated from the material on diplomatic relations between countries, especially Australia and neighboring countries. In several narratives, Australia is described as a neighboring country advanced in technology, education, and economy. History textbooks sometimes use comparisons between Indonesia and Australia to show the challenges and opportunities for future cooperation. The long chain of Indonesian historical events compiled in Indonesian history textbooks involves Australia's role in some materials studied. Australia's involvement in historical events in Indonesian history textbooks shows good relations between the two countries. The bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Australia is unique (Kristanto & Utomo, 2020). The history of bilateral relations between Indonesia and Australia since 1945 has always been marked by ups and downs (Dugis, 1996).

In the context of writing history textbooks in Indonesia, constructing the relationship between

Indonesia and Australia is an interesting topic. This study analyzes how Australian history is presented within Indonesian history textbooks and how these narratives have evolved. Specifically, it examines the portrayal of Australian history in Indonesian high school textbooks published during the New Order government (1966-1998) and the Reformation government (1999-2023). Moreover, this research offers insights into the role of history textbooks in constructing collective memory and national identity, particularly in Indonesia-Australia relations. By critically engaging with these narratives, the study highlights the impact of history education on students' perceptions of international relations and cross-cultural understanding. The question in this research is (1) How has the representation of Australian history in Indonesian history textbooks changed between the New Order and Reformation governments? (2) What political and ideological factors have influenced the inclusion and framing of Australian history in Indonesian history textbooks?

## METHOD

This study employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine the construction of Australian history narratives in Indonesian history textbooks. The research is framed within Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which involves textual analysis, discourse practice analysis, and socio-cultural practice analysis (Tuhaitah, 2019). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used in this study because this approach allows for an in-depth analysis of discourse in history textbooks, including how power relations, ideology, and government policies shape historical narratives. According to Fairclough (1995, 2005), CDA highlights how language is used to reproduce or challenge dominant societal ideologies. In the context of history textbooks, this analysis can reveal how the state constructs narratives of nationalism, identity, and international relations. Another reason for using the CDA approach is its ability to explore the social construction of reality (Van Dijk, 1993, 2008). To ensure the analysis in this study is highly relevant, the selection of textbooks is based on the following criteria: alignment with the national curriculum,

**Table 1.** Identity of the Textbooks Reviewed

| Reign Period  | Writer                                                          | Title                                                                                                                      | Publisher (year of publication)                                                                                                      |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| the New Order | Karso, dkk.                                                     | History Lessons in the 1984 Curriculum for Senior High School Grade 3)                                                     | Angkasa (1988)                                                                                                                       |
|               | I Wayan Badrika                                                 | Indonesian and General National History Volume 2 and 3                                                                     | Erlangga (1997)                                                                                                                      |
|               | Z.H Idris dan Tugiyono                                          | History for Senior High School                                                                                             | Mutiara Publisher (1979)                                                                                                             |
|               | Nugroho Notokusanto dan Yusmar Basri                            | Indonesian National History for Senior High School                                                                         | of Education and Culture (1981 and 1992)                                                                                             |
|               | Moedjanto, Nani Soenarti, Kristanto, Anton haryono, dan AA Padi | Indonesian National History Volume 3.                                                                                      | Gramedia Widiasarana (1992)                                                                                                          |
| Reformation   | Sardiman AM, Amurwani Dwi, Lestariningsih                       | Indonesian History for Senior High School/ Vocational High School/Islamic Vocational High School Grade XI Semester 1 and 2 | Curriculum and Textbook Center, Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture (Revised Edition 2017)            |
|               | Abdurakhman, Arif Pradono, Linda Sunarti, Susanto Zuhdi         | Indonesian History for Senior High School/ Vocational High School/Islamic Vocational High School Grade XII)                | Curriculum and Textbook Center, Research and Development Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture (Revised Edition 2018)            |
|               | Martina Safitry, Indah Wahyu Puji Utami, Aan Ratmanto           | History for Senior High School Grade XII)                                                                                  | Book Center Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (2022) |

publication time range, education level, international relations context, and use in learning.

MAXQDA software analyzes qualitative data, including written texts such as history textbooks. In this study, MAXQDA is used for coding and data categorization. This software helps in: 1) Identifying key themes in textbooks, such as representations of colonial history, diplomatic relations, and nationalism; 2) Analyzing word frequency and key phrases; 3) Comparing discourse across countries; and 4) Visualizing findings. This tool allows for creating diagrams and charts that illustrate discourse patterns, theme distribution, and relationships between concepts in textbooks.

The primary data for this study consists of Indonesian high school history textbooks published during two distinct political periods: the New Order (1966-1998) and the Reformation government (1999-2023). Data collection was conducted through document analysis, focusing on the textual content of history textbooks. The selection criteria for the textbooks included: (1) official recognition by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, (2) publication during the specified political periods, and (3)

the inclusion of narratives related to Indonesia-Australia relations. Digital versions of Reformation-era textbooks were accessed through official government platforms, while New Order-era textbooks were obtained from physical archives and libraries. The sample of books studied and the data taken were history textbooks for grade 3 high school during the New Order government and history textbooks for grades XI and XII according to the curriculum in effect during both governments.

Table 2 presents the findings of the representation of the fields of material that are the teaching materials of history in writing history textbooks for Senior High Schools in Indonesia.

The table shows the representation of Australian historical writing in Indonesian history textbooks divided into two government periods, namely the New Order era and the Reformation era. Significant differences exist in the quantity and diversity of narrative construction between the two government eras. In the New Order era, narratives about Australia were concentrated on two major themes, namely efforts to maintain independence and the Guided Democracy era, which were reflect-

**Table 2.** Findings on Australia's role by field and content in textbooks

| Field                   | Role (code)                                                                       | Books and quantity of discourse |                                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                         |                                                                                   | the new order                   | Reformation                        |
| Politics and diplomacy  | Australia as a supporter of Indonesian diplomacy in international forums          | 2 narrative                     | 7 narrative                        |
|                         | Australia as Indonesia's initial mutualism partner                                | 1 narrative                     | -                                  |
|                         | Australia as a supporter of East Timor's integration into Indonesia               | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
| Military and security   | Australia as Japan's enemy                                                        | -                               | 7 narrative                        |
|                         | Australia as part of the Western powers facing Indonesia                          | 1 narrative                     | 6 narrative                        |
|                         | Australia as Indonesia's partner in UN peacekeeping missions                      | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
| Economy and development | Australia as a contributor to the development of banking in the Dutch East Indies | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
|                         | Australia as ASEAN trade dialogue partner                                         | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
| Social and cultural     | Australia as a cultural interaction partner                                       | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
|                         | Australia as a facilitator for Indonesian student organizations                   | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
| Law and territoriality  | Australia as an opponent of the expansion of Indonesia's maritime territory       | -                               | 1 narrative                        |
| Humanity                | Australia as a provider of humanitarian aid                                       | -                               | 1 narrative, 1 picture             |
|                         | Australia as a source of information on Indonesian geopolitics and independence   | -                               | 3 narrative                        |
| Hubungan masyarakat     | Australian public support for Indonesian independence                             | -                               | 1 narrative, 1 picture, 1 activity |

ed in four narratives in the fields of politics, diplomacy, and military security. Meanwhile, in the Reformation era, narratives about Australian history were more diverse. Although some themes, such as Australia's role in international diplomacy, did not experience substantial changes between the two eras, there were significant differences in proportion.

To ensure data credibility and validity, this study employed triangulation, which involved: (1) cross-referencing historical narratives across different textbooks, (2) consulting existing historiographical research on Indonesia-Australia relations, and (3) validating findings through expert reviews in history education and discourse analysis. The data analysis process followed Fairclough's three-dimensional model: (1) Textual Analysis (Examining vocabulary, grammar, and rhetorical structures to identify recurring themes in the portrayal of Australian history). (2) Discourse Practice Analysis (Investigating the production, distribution, and consumption of history textbooks within Indonesia's education system). (3) Socio-Cultural Practice Analysis (Contextualizing the narratives within broader political, ideological, and diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Australia).

## RESULTS

### *Writing Australian History in The New Order Era*

During the New Order era (1966–1998), history textbooks used in Indonesian schools generally did not provide special attention or extensive narratives about Australia. The primary focus of these books was on Indonesia's national history, the struggle for independence, and national development. Information about Australia was usually presented in the context of international relations or specific events involving both countries. The historical narratives in textbooks tended to reflect the interests of national stability, economic development, and regional security, which were the priorities of Suharto's administration. As a result, the New Order focused on national integration and territorial sovereignty, portraying Indonesia-Australia relations mainly in the context of potential external threats.

Some key patterns in the representation of Indonesia-Australia relations in history textbooks from this era highlight the conflict between Indonesia and Australia regarding East Timor as a major issue. Australia was depicted as being at odds with Indonesia, particularly following its involvement in the East Timor referendum (1999), which, although occurring after the New Order, still influenced historical narratives written at the time. Indonesia-

Australia relations were largely represented in the context of threats to national sovereignty, especially in cases like the Dwikora operation and Australia's role in Indonesia's relations with Western countries. There was a lack of narratives about bilateral cooperation. Textbooks from this era did not emphasize economic cooperation, education, and Australia's aid in Indonesia's development, even though programs like the Colombo Plan had been in place since the 1950s.

In the book written by Karso et al (1988), Australia began to appear in Indonesia's historical narrative in two main contexts: the Struggle to Defend Independence (1945–1949) and the Guided Democracy Era (1959–1965). The narrative in this book portrays Australia as a country that played a role in supporting Indonesia's diplomatic struggle on the international stage but also as part of the Western bloc with specific interests in Indonesia. One of the prominent descriptions in the book is Australia's role in mediating the Indonesia-Netherlands conflict at the UN. Australia is depicted as a participant in the Three Nations Commission (KTN). The construction of Australian history in Indonesian History textbooks during the New Order era began to be written in the history material of the Indonesian Independence Revolution. The narrative presented reflects Australia's three primary roles: as part of the Western powers facing Indonesia, as an early mutualist partner, and as a supporter of Indonesian diplomacy in international forums. This representation spans four chapters covering armed struggle, diplomatic efforts, the Round Table Conference (RTC), and the Guided Democracy period. Australia's first role as part of the Western powers facing Indonesia is seen in the narrative of events in Makassar (Badrika, 1997; Karso et. al., 1998). Australia's first role as part of the Western powers facing Indonesia is seen in the narrative of events in Makassar (Karso et. al., 1998).

The narrative presented in the history textbook written by Karso et. al (1998) describes the situation in Makassar after the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence. The writing emphasizes the confrontation between local pro-independence forces and foreign troops, including Australia. This text constructs a picture of Australia's role as part of the Western forces facing Indonesia in the struggle to maintain independence in South Sulawesi. However, Australia's representation shifts significantly in the subsequent narrative. This can be seen in the event of R.C. Kirby's presence mentioned in the chapter "Between Diplomacy and Combat," marking the beginning of a more cooperative relation-

ship (Karso et. al., 1998). This event marked a turning point in Indonesia-Australia relations or, in other words, strengthened the legitimacy of Indonesia's struggle for independence. Moreover, Australia as a supporter of Indonesian diplomacy in international forums was increasingly highlighted in the narrative about the Dutch Military Aggression and the formation of the Three Nations Commission (KTN) (Karso et. al., 1998).

Narratives in Indonesian history textbooks during the New Order era describe the dynamic transformation of Indonesia-Australia relations. Initially, Australia was represented as part of the Western powers confronting Indonesia's struggle for independence. However, this relationship experienced a positive shift through the visit of R.C. Kirby, which marked Australia's recognition of the legitimacy of the Indonesian government. At its peak, Australia played an active role in supporting Indonesian diplomacy in international forums, especially in the Dutch Military Aggression and the formation of the KTN, which showed Australia's position as a country that supported Indonesia's diplomatic struggle. There are dynamics in Indonesia-Australia relations that are not revealed in textbooks. For example, in 1986, the Indonesian government reacted strongly and considered an article by David Jenkins, a journalist from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, a lie and insulting (Dugis, 2017). In the April 10, 1986, edition, David Jenkins described the Soeharto family business and its cronies. He analogized the fortunes of the Soeharto family with those of the Marcos family in the Philippines, which led to its downfall due to the people's power revolution (Dugis, 2017). This case, widely known as the Jenkins Affair, has caused Indonesia-Australia bilateral relations to enter their coldest phase in the New Order era.

Tensions between Australia and Indonesia during the latter part of Sukarno's reign also find no place in Indonesian history textbooks. President Sukarno's rhetoric of neo-colonialism, confrontation, and non-alignment contrasted with Prime Minister Menzies' pro-Western, Cold War, and Whites-only policies of the 1960s (Karunaratne, 1982). In addition to the remnants of the past, several socio-political factors contributed to the lackluster international relations between Australia and Indonesia during the Old Order era. Australia was overly concerned about Indonesia becoming a communist state and the opportunities it would give Beijing to project its influence further into the region, its impact on US-led involvement in South Vietnam, and the perceived marginalization of Brit-

ish and Commonwealth Forces in Malaysia and other Western treaty partners in the region (Najjarine, 2004).

History textbooks during the New Order era heavily narrated military interests by emphasizing the physical conflicts of the War of Independence and portraying diplomacy as a "defeat" and the worst possible solution (Purwanta, 2013). Australia, through the UN Good Offices Commission (KTN), was said to have "forced" the Indonesian government to participate in the Renville negotiations, despite its highly disadvantageous terms (Moedjanto, 1992). The author depicts KTN as a "highly detrimental" treaty and a symbol of diplomatic defeat.

### ***Writing Australian History in the Reform Era***

Entering the Reformasi era, or post-Suharto period, history textbooks began presenting a more balanced narrative of Indonesia-Australia relations. This shift can be observed in how textbooks started to highlight positive aspects of bilateral cooperation, such as Australia's role in post-tsunami Aceh relief efforts in 2004, collaboration in education (e.g., the Australia Awards scholarship program), and Australia's involvement in the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Partnership. Indonesia-Australia relations began to be represented from a more dynamic perspective, including both countries' engagement in regional security, trade, and environmental issues. Unlike during the New Order era, history textbooks in the Reformasi period emphasized Indonesia's democratization process and how it influenced bilateral relations with Australia. This study found that domestic political dynamics and national interests heavily influence the representation of Indonesia-Australia relations in history textbooks in each era. New Order textbooks tended to be nationalistic and defensive, while Reformasi-era textbooks presented a more balanced view between conflicts and bilateral cooperation. These findings suggest that history textbooks serve as educational tools and reflections of a regime's political policies in shaping historical understanding for future generations.

Regarding the production of history textbooks, political changes should have an impact on changes in the narrative of History in textbooks (Purwanta, 2017), but did this happen to the narrative about Australia? The history of Australia in the Reformation era textbooks has been mentioned at the beginning of the textbook as a partner for cultural interaction (Safitry et al., 2021). Australia is one of the nations that has often visited and interacted with ethnic groups in Indonesia (Sardiman &

Lestariningsih, 2017). Furthermore, Australian history is in the material against the entry of Japan into the tyranny of the fascist nation in Indonesia. When Japan entered Indonesia in January 1942, the Allied Bloc, of which Australia was a part, could not stem the Japanese attack in Ambon, so Japan could control Maluku entirely (Sardiman & Lestariningsih, 2017).

Australia's resistance to Japanese tyranny in Indonesia continued and peaked in mid-1945. For example, there was an incident in Balikpapan, a city that produced advanced oil during the Dutch East Indies era, which Japan successfully captured. This area was considered vital, and as a supporter of Japan's war economy, it turned out that Australian troops began their steps to attack Japan in Balikpapan (Safitry et al., 2021). Australia and KNIL had defeated Japan in Balikpapan, so the Indonesian civilians felt it there. The Emotional Resonance, written by Safitry et al. (2021), describes this condition with a fairly dramatic narrative. "The attack not only destroyed the Japanese defense but also added to the burden and misery of the people. Many of them were starving because they had not eaten for days". Australia became a party with a conscience, not to let this continue to be felt by the civilians in Balikpapan. Five days after the war ended, the Australian army provided humanitarian assistance through staple foods. Australia's noble role was manifested and visualized through text discourse.

The attack not only destroyed the Japanese defense but also added to the burden and misery of the people. Many of them were starving because they had not eaten for days. After Japan surrendered, the Australians distributed food in the form of rice, biscuits, soybeans, and so on to the people of Balikpapan (Safitry et al., 202).

Japan's surrender to the Allies increased Australia's role in the eyes of Indonesian fighters and society. Based on the textbook narrative, Australia was a source of geopolitical information, and Indonesian independence was realized through two forms of roles, namely radio media and the Australian army (Safitry et al., 2021). Radio Australia not only broadcast news about Japan's surrender to the Allies but also became a medium for spreading news of the proclamation of Indonesian independence. The significance of Radio Australia became increasingly apparent when its broadcasts managed to reach the Papua region, which then became the starting point for spreading information about the proclamation to various regions. This role was strengthened by the involvement of the IPEA (Indonesian Political Exile Association), which uti-

lized information from Australian radio broadcasts to create and distribute leaflets to various major cities in Australia and Indonesia. Second, the Australian army took a direct role as the bearer of news of the Indonesian proclamation, especially in the South Kalimantan region (Safitry et al., 2021). While disarming Japanese soldiers, they spread information about the proclamation to various regions, such as Puruk Cahu, Martapura, Marahaban, and Pelaihari. This shows that the Australian army played a role in the military aspect and in disseminating information crucial for the Indonesian independence movement.

Australia's dual role is also inseparable from the narrative of Indonesian history. The dual role in question is not only as a supporter of Indonesian independence but also as part of the Allies or Western powers that Indonesia faced. This code has indeed existed in books published during the New Order era. Australia's involvement in political and military pressure on Indonesia has been identified in six narratives. Explicitly using the actor "Australia" and implicitly using the word "Allies" (Sardiman & Lestariningsih, 2017b). Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum seems to be in a dilemma in narrating this local event:

The Allies also promised not to interfere with the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. The attitude of the Indonesian nation changed when they learned that the former prisoners of war who had been released in Magelang and Ambarawa were armed. They (the Dutch whom Japan captured) also tried to disarm the Indonesian army. This sparked a clash between the Indonesian side against the Allies and NICA. The Indonesian troops, consisting of the TKR and the people's troops, won. Nevertheless, unfortunately, this victory had to be paid for dearly, with many casualties (Safitry et al., 2022).

Allied troops began landing in Makassar at the end of September 1945. Among them were Australian soldiers and also NICA. As in various other regions, initially, they intended to carry out the task of disarming the Japanese and taking care of prisoners of war. However, NICA had its agenda, namely wanting to restore Dutch power in Sulawesi ... The battle broke out again the next day. In this conflict situation, as part of the Allies, Australian soldiers helped NICA (Safitry et al., 2022).

After the narrative above, Safitry et al. (2022) added that Australia was not an "antagonist" actor or trigger of war in Indonesian history. Australia or the Allies, are depicted as actors who only want to shackle Japanese tyranny and maintain stability in

## Indonesia:

...the Allied forces were initially only to disarm the Japanese army, free prisoners of war, and try to maintain security ... British and Australian troops under the auspices of the Allies never intended to occupy Indonesia for a long time. This is inseparable from the Atlantic Treaty, which prevented territorial expansion after World War II (Safitry et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the narrative showing Australia as a supporter of Indonesian diplomacy in international forums has existed since the New Order era. Respect for Australia's role is maintained, including the figure of Richard C. Kirby. For example, Sardiman & Lestariningsih (2017, p. 177) highlight the narrative "The Three-Nation Commission (KTN) consisted of Australia, represented by Richard C Kirby whom the Republic of Indonesia chose..." and "The Netherlands appointed Belgium as a member, while Indonesia chose Australia". The diction "chosen" is also maintained until the following curriculum, namely "The UNSC formed the Three-Nation Commission (KTN) consisting of Australia (Indonesia's choice) ..." (Safitry et al., 2022).

The textbook does not describe the facts of the dynamics of Australia's support for Indonesia in diplomacy during the 1945-1949 war of independence. During the Labor Party government from 1945-1949, Prime Minister Ben Chifley showed his disapproval of the return of the Netherlands to Indonesia. However, when Indonesia asked for help bringing its dispute with the Netherlands to the UN Security Council, Australia did not dare to act because it feared deviating from British and American politics (Husain, 2023). Australia also did not fulfill Indonesia's second request for Australia to bring its problem to the Security Council. After India intended to bring the problem to the Security Council, Australia rushed to bring the problem to the Security Council (Husain, 2023).

Another narrative about Australia's role towards Indonesia in international forums is stronger. Adding the word "government" shows their de facto and de jure towards Indonesia in international forums. Even the Independence Curriculum presents Australia as a non-European country that defends Indonesia while European countries support the Netherlands (Safitry et al., 2022). Support after support was always given by Australia until Australia became a supporter of the integration of East Timor into Indonesia (Abdurakhman et al., 2018). East Timor was a conflict that attracted international attention after the Portuguese colonial left the region, creating a power vacuum that could

potentially cause regional instability. This situation raised concerns about the entry of communist influence in the Southeast Asian region. Based on the textbook narrative, Australia and the United States supported the integration of East Timor into Indonesia, both de facto and de jure, as a strategic step to prevent the spread of communist influence in the region.

The relationship between Indonesia and Australia during the New Order also showed interesting dynamics. Australia is often described as a strategic partner in various fields, such as trade, education, and culture. The textbook narrative describes positive cooperation through joint participation in the UNEF peacekeeping mission during the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict and becoming a dialogue partner for ASEAN in developing international trade relations (Abdurakhman et al., 2018). However, there was diplomatic tension when Australia and other Western countries protested Indonesia's policy regarding expanding the territorial sea limit from 3 miles to 12 miles. This illustrates the complexity of bilateral relations between the two countries, which contain elements of cooperation and conflicts of interest (Abdurakhman et al., 2018).

These narratives illustrate the complexity of Indonesia-Australia relations during the New Order, where there was cooperation in peace missions and economic dialogue, but also marked by tensions regarding Indonesia's territorial maritime policy. Several events in Indonesia-Australia relations after the reformation have not been widely reviewed and described in Indonesian History textbooks. These events include Australia's intervention in the East Timor referendum, the 2002 Bali Bombings, which killed many Australians, cooperation in countering terrorism, suspicions of Australia's involvement in the Papuan problem, including the most recent regarding the tapping of President SBY's phone (Kristanto & Utomo, 2020; Laksmi, 2021; Nicholls & Marching, 2002).

## DISCUSSION

### **Dilemma of Change and Consistency of Discourse Narrative**

Both during the New Order and the Reformation, the Indonesian history curriculum attempted to present domestic geopolitical dynamics and the involvement of foreign countries in a balanced manner. However, this effort faced challenges involving confrontations between Australian troops and local fighters. As seen in the narrative of the New Order era textbook by Karso et al. (1988),

when describing the situation in Makassar, "Since then there has been tension between the youth troops and the NICA troops." The use of the word "tension" instead of "battle" or "conflict" reflects caution in choosing diction to describe a confrontational situation. Another intention of using the diction "tension" between the PPNI and Australia is to show equality of social standing, not subordination or domination of one party over the other.

The narrative dilemma becomes increasingly complex in Reformation-era textbooks, especially how to narrate the war events that occurred in parts of the Republic of Indonesia (where there were victims), both in Makassar and in other regions. In the multiperspective theory, there are opposing actors. This also occurs in the dilemma of writing narratives, such as how the Australian party, under the Allies, is still mentioned to fulfill the local historical historiography in national history textbooks. For this reason, Safitry et al. (2021) prefer to use "Allies" as the party that started the war to describe a great power as a disruptor of the stability of a small region in the Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, Australia's actions in helping NICA are narrated as a "commitment" that Australia must carry out. Nuraida (2023) explains that Australia began coming to Sulawesi based on post-war security duties, including securing used Japanese weapons, repatriating Japanese soldiers to their country, and releasing former Japanese prisoners.

Changes in the narrative of the Australian judge Richard C. Kirby. The narrative shown by Karso et al. (1988) is that the presence of Judge Kirby was a step taken by the Australian Government to collect evidence of Japanese war crimes in Bogor. On the other hand, it is manifest that Judge Kirby stated that he received assistance from the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, Amir Syarifuddin, and Prime Minister Sutan Syahrir, which is a step by Karso et al. to continue to highlight the strength of the Republic of Indonesia. This is also the political situation described by Karso et al., which is the legitimacy of the Indonesian nation recognized by Australia as an Allied country.

Different from the Reformation era textbook. The mention of the role of the two ministers of the Republic of Indonesia was eliminated; in fact, Australia and Richard R. Kirby were "chosen/chosen" by the Republic of Indonesia. This means that the Reformation era textbook does not highlight the strength of the Indonesian Government under the two ministers mentioned in the previous era, but rather the Indonesian Government that wanted the bilateral relationship. In other words, Australia was

the sole interpreter of Indonesian diplomacy then, and Australia did not agree to military pressure from the Netherlands. Cahyantara (2007, p. 2) explained that Australia condemned the First Dutch Military Aggression and defended Indonesia because of their solidarity with the struggle of the Indonesian people. The UN Security Council finally heard Australia's agile movement to help Indonesia fight the Netherlands. Australia is a country that dares to propose and bring the Indonesia-Netherlands issue to be discussed together with the great leaders of the UN.

This Reformation-era writer tries to highlight Australia's role, which is considered to support Indonesian Independence, with the attitude given, one of which is sending judges to assist in the investigation of the murder of Australian officers by Japanese soldiers. Setiyono (2020) explains the existence of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTT), a human rights trial for war crimes, from May 3, 1946, to November 12, 1948. The IMTT prosecution team consisted of judges from allied countries: Australia, China, Canada, India, England, France, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the US, and the US. With the arrival of R.C. Kirby in July 1946, Indonesia was considered to increase its support to be recognized as a country. That year, Indonesia struggled to be recognized *de facto* and *de jure* in the international political arena. Support from other countries is one of the requirements for a country to be recognized as sovereign.

Next, how does the Indonesian history curriculum describe the instability of Indonesia's political situation after independence and political and military pressure from the Netherlands? On the other hand, is there much support from other countries (including Australia)? The New Order book uses the phrase "Between Diplomacy and Fighting." In contrast, the reform era book, namely the 2013 Curriculum, prefers "Between War and Diplomacy," and the Merdeka Curriculum uses "Diplomacy and Guerrilla Struggle." Semiotic studies are indeed needed to examine this, but historically, it can be said that the presence of Australia is what made the word "diplomacy" exist (achieved).

In the textbooks of the New Order and Reformation era (2013 Curriculum), the topic is consistently included only in verbal text, without any additional supporting features. This is different from the Merdeka Curriculum, which not only does the same thing as the previous curriculum but also uses special presentations to narrate international support (recognition) (including Australia) for the

Republic of Indonesia in the eyes of the world. "Viva Historia," according to the instructions in this book, "Contains enrichment related to the theme in each chapter or sub-chapter. Students can expand their historical knowledge by reading this section (Safitry et al., 2021)".

### **The Effect of Australia's Large Role on Indonesia**

Relations between Indonesia and Australia warmed again with the fall of Soekarno and the start of the New Order era, which prioritized an independent and anti-communist foreign policy (Indriani, 2017; Sulisty, 2017). History textbooks often highlight Australia's position as an ally of Western countries, especially the United States and Britain, in the context of the Cold War. In several narratives, Australia is depicted as supporting anti-communist policies in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. The two leaders of Indonesia and Australia often made reciprocal visits during the New Order era. The steps of this cooperation were increasingly closely linked with forming a consortium of financial institutions, namely the Intern Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) in 1967, which aimed to assist development in Indonesia. In addition, a Cultural Agreement supports the cultural and educational fields between the two countries.

The strong and intimate ties between Indonesia and Australia greatly influence the compilation of history textbooks that are never free from the spirit of the times and even the rulers' interests. This is manifested as "simple," as Karso et al. preferring to include the country "Australia" before "... other KTN members" instead of just "KTN members." Moreover, there is the diction "trying," so it can be interpreted that Australia (through its representatives, including Judge Richard C. Kirby) is a historical actor that contributed significantly to the negotiations between the Netherlands and Indonesia. Another significant role is that Australia and America supported the Integration of East Timor as the 27th province in 1975 in the Republic of Indonesia. Australia is a country that has extraordinary security interests, so it does not want East Timor, which is a security buffer zone from northern attacks, to become a source of instability for its country (Kusuma, 2015). This is because communist influence has entered the territory of East Timor. Australia explicitly supports Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor.

Australia is often mentioned in the context of its involvement in East Timor. These narratives note Australia's support for East Timor's independence efforts, which are sometimes seen as interfer-

ence in Indonesia's internal affairs. Fatmawati and Tarunasena (2018) explain that after President Habibie's 1999 offer of special autonomy to the people of East Timor, Australian Prime Minister John Howard fully supported East Timor's struggle for independence from Indonesia. Australia's drastic change in attitude shows that there are elements of interest that Australia is intensifying. The interests of Australia have a detrimental impact on Indonesia, namely the release of East Timor from the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The advantage Australia obtained in releasing East Timor is the freedom to exploit oil wealth in the Timor Sea, which previously had to obtain approval from Indonesia according to the Timor Gap Treaty. The Australian government's attitude has resulted in Australia-Indonesia relations being at their lowest point in three decades.

The author of the book *History of Indonesia*, published during the Reformation era, has not clearly described the dynamics of the relationship between Australia and Indonesia in the East Timor issue. The author's explanation stops with a discussion of the integration process of East Timor into a new province in Indonesia. There are complicated historical events that need to be explicitly explained to show the practice of bilateral relations between Indonesia and Australia, which are not always warm. The interests of each country trying to be realized become a source of tension between the two. The compilation of Indonesian History textbooks during the Reformation government that discuss the role and relationship between Australia and Indonesia is not extensive. The explanation of Australia's role is more dominant in the material on efforts to spread news of the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence.

Political changes in Indonesia, such as the New Order and Reformation regimes or changes in party leadership in Australia, influence relations between the two countries. The Labor and Liberal Parties in Australia have very opposing concepts, which significantly affect Australia's political relations with other countries, especially Indonesia. The Australian Labor Party is open with a pro-Asia orientation. Meanwhile, the Liberal Party is conservative and does not want to interfere in Indonesia's domestic problems, but carries arrogant capitalism because it always prioritizes pragmatic benefits. The Australian Labor Party is depicted as very solid in helping Indonesia in its efforts to spread the news of independence in Indonesian history textbooks during the New Order and Reformation. During the Reformation era, the direction of Indonesia-

Australia relations fluctuated depending on cases that occurred in international contestation. This study found that domestic political dynamics and national interests significantly influence the representation of Indonesia-Australia relations in history textbooks in each era. New Order history textbooks tended to be nationalistic and defensive, while Reformasi-era textbooks presented a more balanced view between conflict and bilateral cooperation. These findings suggest that history textbooks serve as educational tools and reflections of a regime's political policies in shaping historical understanding for future generations. Darmawan et al. (2018) stated that history textbooks often reflect the ideology of the ruling government, and regime changes can influence the content presented in these textbooks.

### **Nationalism, Historiography, and Potential Bias in History Textbooks**

Indonesian history textbooks tend to represent relations with other countries based on national interests, emphasizing Indonesia's role as the primary actor in bilateral relations. According to nationalism theory (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983), this demonstrates how historical narratives are constructed to reinforce national identity. The writing of history textbooks can reflect the shift from traditional nationalism to cosmopolitan/global nationalism, which is more open to bilateral relations. Based on the historiography of nationalism (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), history textbooks can contribute to shaping collective memory regarding events such as Australia's involvement in Indonesia's independence struggle or Indonesia's role in regional diplomacy.

The historical narrative in textbooks can be analyzed through postcolonial historiography (Said, 1978) to examine how Australia's representation in Indonesian textbooks reflects colonial legacies and how these narratives assert Indonesia's sovereignty in bilateral relations. In line with national historiography theory (Carr, 1961), textbooks present history from the state's perspective. If Australia is depicted as a supporter of Indonesia's independence, this indicates state control in shaping a positive historical narrative of bilateral relations. A comparative study between Indonesian and Australian history textbooks can uncover how each country frames the same historical events, such as bilateral relations, colonialism, and conflicts. Research by Taylor & Guyver (2011) shows that history is often used to shape national identity, and differences in historical representations in textbooks can influence public

perceptions of other nations. Australian history textbooks emphasize analytical approaches and primary sources, compared to the linear narratives commonly found in Indonesian textbooks (Clark, 2008).

Historical narratives in textbooks can shape public understanding of international relations and impact diplomatic relations between nations. Nye's (2004) study on soft power suggests that history education can be a powerful diplomatic tool in fostering intercountry relations. Similarly, Schissler & Soysal's (2005) research indicates that a nation's perception of another is often shaped by how history is taught in schools. A history education model emphasizing international cooperation and diplomacy could help foster a more positive understanding between the two nations. As demonstrated by Haydn et al. (2015), an approach highlighting shared contributions in history can strengthen bilateral relations.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The writing of Indonesian history textbooks during the New Order government (1966-1998) emphasized the close ties between Indonesia and Australia. This is shown from the author's diction, which shows Australia's significant role with Indonesian leaders in helping the government and the Indonesian people, especially in the material on the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence. During the New Order, Indonesia and Australia cooperated strongly, such as conducting mutual visits, so the spirit of the era at that time influenced the writing of Indonesian history textbooks. Meanwhile, the writing of textbooks during the reform era still shows Australia's role in it. However, it is not associated with bilateral cooperation, especially in state leaders' relationships. However, the narrative related to Australia's active role in the polemics in Indonesia is increasingly varied by including various images and enrichment in the writing of textbooks during the reform government (Independence Curriculum).

This study has implications in three academic fields: education, social, and political. Academic implications the research provides insights into how historical narratives are constructed in textbooks and how political changes influence historical interpretation. Additionally, this study can serve as a reference for further research in historiography, history education, and international relations studies. Educational implications of the study's findings can serve as an evaluation tool for education policymakers in designing a more objec-

tive and comprehensive history curriculum. History teachers can utilize these findings to enhance students' critical understanding of historical content and how ideological perspectives influence history. Socio-political implications: This research highlights how the construction of history in textbooks can shape society's collective perception of other nations, such as Australia. The findings may contribute to Indonesia's foreign policy formulation in building stronger bilateral relations based on a more objective historical understanding.

**Recommendations for textbook development**, in drafting history textbooks, it is essential to promote a balanced narrative, especially in portraying Indonesia-Australia relations. The history of both nations is not solely marked by diplomatic tensions but also by cooperation in various fields such as education, trade, and humanitarian aid. As an improvement, comparative studies with Australian history textbooks can be conducted. Such an analysis would reveal how each country represents its bilateral relations in educational materials. Differences in perspectives can serve as a reflection point for adjusting narratives to be more objective and aligned with mutual interests. History education is crucial in shaping young generations' perceptions of other countries. Overly biased representations may create misunderstandings and impact future diplomatic attitudes. In contrast, a more balanced narrative can encourage harmonious and constructive relations between Indonesia and Australia.

However, this study has limitations, as it only focuses on high school history textbooks from two governmental periods, excluding other historical sources such as diplomatic archives or mass media, which might offer different perspectives. Additionally, the research only compares historical representations from two periods (New Order and Reformasi), without deeply exploring how curriculum changes after Reformasi have influenced Indonesia-Australia historical representations up to the present. Furthermore, this study employs critical discourse analysis, which emphasizes textual analysis but does not consider reception analysis—how students and teachers interpret history from these textbooks. To address these limitations, future research could expand data coverage by incorporating more historical sources, examining newer curricula, and analyzing the impact of historical representation in textbooks on young generations' understanding of Indonesia-Australia relations.

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