

Ethics of Writing History in the Axiological Perspective of Pancasila

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Abstract: History is not merely a record of the past but an interpretation that shapes national identity and collective memory. In Indonesia, historical writing often faces challenges, such as political bias, Java-centrism, and narrative injustice, which contradicts the values of Pancasila. This study aims to analyze the relevance of Pancasila as an axiological framework to strengthen integrity and justice in historiographic practices. Using a qualitative approach with a normative framework design, this research examines historiographic texts, through thematic content analysis, hermeneutics, and critical discourse analysis. The findings indicate that Pancasila's principles, Belief in the One and Only God, Just and Civilized Humanity, The Unity of Indonesia, Democracy guided by wisdom through deliberation and representation, and Social Justice for All the People of Indonesia, offer concrete ethical guidelines for historians. For instance, the principle of Social Justice mandates proportional representation, while Unity demands decentralization of historical narratives beyond Java. Meanwhile, the value of Divinity demands moral integrity in historical verification, the value of Humanity requires dignified representation of all subjects, and the value of Democracy requires inclusive participatory methods. However, the study also identifies challenges, such as political intervention and limited access. The case study of the 1965 Tragedy shows how the official narrative is dominated by a version of the regime that ignores the perspective of the victim and violates the principles of Humanity and Social Justice. This research contributes a critical synthesis of Pancasila values with global historiographical theories, providing an operational framework for ethical historical writing that is both contextually grounded and transformative.

Keywords: Ethics of Historical Writing; Axiology of Pancasila; Historiography; Historical Narrative; Historical Methodology.

1. Introduction

In writing history, ethics plays a crucial role as the foundation of integrity and objectivity. History is not just a record of past events, but an interpretation that shapes the collective understanding and identity of the nation. Therefore, historians have a moral responsibility to present facts honestly, avoid bias, and respect a variety of perspectives (Carr, 2018). Without a strong ethical foundation, historical writing risks becoming propaganda or distortion of the truth that is detrimental to society (Jenkins, 1991). Historical writing is a process that is not free of values, but is loaded with ethical and ideological considerations (White, 1973). In Indonesia, the dynamics of historical writing are often influenced by political interests, resulting in biased and unobjective narratives (Kartodirdjo, 1982). In fact, history should function as an honest and fair learning medium for future generations (Gottschalk, 1969).

This study adopts the Pancasila axiological approach as a value basis in analyzing the ethics of historical writing. In Indonesia, Pancasila functions as an essential axiological foundation, not only in the context of national and state life, but also in the scientific field, including historiography. The values contained in Pancasila, such as Godliness, Humanity, Unity, Peoplehood, and Social Justice, become the ethical basis for every historian in carrying out his profession (Latif, 2011). Axiology, as one of the branches of

philosophy that studies values (value theory), provides a framework for evaluating the right-wrong, right-wrong, and unjust of a practice of historical writing (Fronzini, 1971).

The theory of historical ethics put forward by Leopold von Ranke (1885) emphasizes the importance of objectivity and neutrality in the reconstruction of the past. However, critics such as Hayden White (1975) argue that history is never completely free of values because it is influenced by the narratives and interpretations made by historians. The critical historiographical approach proposed by Keith Jenkins (1991) reinforces this analysis by emphasizing the importance of awareness of political bias in historical writing. The integration between the values of Pancasila and historical ethics is built through the concept of "just history" (Kuntowijoyo, 2018), which demands moral responsibility in representing the past. This theory is also supported by Sartono Kartodirdjo (1982) who suggested that Indonesian history be written with an awareness of plurality and social justice, in accordance with the precepts of Pancasila.

However, there is a significant gap between the idealism of Pancasila and the practice of writing history in Indonesia. This gap is not only practical, but also theoretical. On the one hand, Western theories of historical ethics, ranging from Leopold von Ranke's objectivity to Hayden White's postmodern relativism, are often not fully suited to dealing with narrative biases and injustices in a typical Indonesian socio-cultural context (Nordholt, 2005). These theories fail to provide a localized and contextual ethical framework.

On the other hand, although Pancasila is often referred to as the basis of values, its application in historiography is still abstract and unsystematic. For example, the precept of "Indonesian Unity" in practice is often used to justify a homogeneous and Java-centric national narrative, which instead overrides the historical experience of the region (Gungwu, 2005). This centralist historical paradigm reflects what Nordholt (2011) identifies as the post-colonial state's tendency to consolidate national identity through homogenizing narratives that marginalize regional historical experiences. This creates a theoretical tension between the need for a unifying narrative and the ethical imperative for inclusivity, a tension that has not been resolved in the existing literature. Similarly, the precept of "God" which is supposed to be the basis of moral integrity, is often defeated by political interests that politicize religious narratives (Hefner, 2000). Thus, the main problem lies not only in historical distortion, but also in the lack of an operational and measurable axiological framework that can bridge the ideal of Pancasila with historiographical methodological practices.

Recent research on Indonesian historiography has begun to explore more contextual approaches, such as Indonesiacentrism (Ardhana & Puspitasari, 2024), Islamic ethics in historical methodology (Afrinaldi & Hakim, 2024), and multidimensional paradigms (Wibowo & Djono, 2024). Although they have important value, these studies have not adequately examined the potential of Pancasila as a cohesive axiological system that can regulate the ethics of historical writing. As an illustration, Krida Amalia Husna's (2024) study of moral ethics in colonial historiography does not touch the unifying framework of Pancasila. Similarly, the criticism put forward by Rashid Manzoor Bhat, P. Rajan, & Lakmini Gamage (2023) against Western historiographic bias is not followed by alternative methodological proposals based on local values. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap.

Based on the theoretical and practical gaps that have been identified earlier, this study has two main objectives. First, to analyze and formulate operationally the values contained in each precept of Pancasila into ethical principles and technical guidelines that can be applied in the practice of research and historical writing. Second, offer a decentralized

and inclusive methodological framework, rooted in Pancasila as an alternative to a narrative that focuses on Java and is elitist. Thus, the contribution of this research lies not only at the level of discourse, but also at the practical level, by providing contextual axiological guidance to create a more just and responsible historiography of Indonesia.

2. Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a research design in the form of proposal for a normative framework to examine the ethics of historical writing from the perspective of Pancasila axiology. The qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to explore in depth the values, norms, and socio-cultural context contained in historiographic practice (Creswell, 2012). This research is descriptive-analytical with the aim of comprehensively understanding the relationship between Pancasila values and the ethics of historical writing in Indonesia. The focus of this research is on Indonesian historiographic texts as the main object, which includes official history textbooks, historical education documents, academic works from Indonesian historians, and literature on the philosophy of Pancasila.

The normative framework proposal method is a systematic approach used to design and implement a value system or normative structure to address practical issues in a given field, including the challenge of rewriting history through the lens of Pancasila (Kristiawanto, 2022). Data collection was conducted through document study and critical discourse analysis. Primary data were obtained from relevant history textbooks (Gottschalk, 1969), while secondary data were gathered from academic literature discussing historical ethics, Pancasila philosophy, and historiographic criticism. The technique of critical discourse analysis was employed to reveal hidden interests and ideological structures embedded within historical narratives (Fairclough, 2010).

Data analysis was carried out through thematic content analysis to identify Pancasila values relevant to the ethics of historical writing (Braun & Clarke, 2006), hermeneutic interpretation to explore the contextual meanings of the studied texts (Gadamer, 1975), and triangulation to compare findings across sources for ensuring validity and consistency (Denzin, 2009). The analytical process was iterative, maintaining alignment between empirical findings and the theoretical framework. The method concludes with recommendations for policy and practice aimed at integrating Pancasila values more effectively into historiographic research and educational practice.

Several studies reinforce the urgency of recontextualizing Pancasila within historical and ethical discourse. For instance, Nisa et al. (2024) emphasize the relevance of Pancasila in addressing moral and ideological disruption in the digital era, while Supeno and Widyorini (2024) highlight the neglect of Pancasila values in legislative and historical narratives. In addition, Nugroho (2023) discusses the reconstruction of national identity through historiography rooted in Pancasila ethics, offering a contemporary framework for strengthening civic and moral education in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 An Overview of the Ethics of Historical Writing

Before analyzing the ethical challenges in Indonesian historiography, it is essential to establish a theoretical foundation for what constitutes “ethical practice.” The central debate in the philosophy of history revolves around the dichotomy between Leopold von Ranke’s notion of objectivity (Ranke, 1885) and the postmodern idea of narrative relativism (Jenkins, 1991; White, 1973/1990). While Ranke’s objectivity aspires to

neutrality and factual accuracy, in the Indonesian context it often proves naïve toward the influence of power and ideology. Conversely, postmodern relativism offers interpretive freedom but risks descending into moral nihilism, where all narratives are treated as equally valid regardless of ethical implications.

This study argues that the most relevant ethical framework is one that integrates methodological honesty with moral responsibility toward the past and its continuing impact on the present. Such a synthesis provides both an empirical and normative basis for evaluating historical “non-compliance.” Through the lens of Pancasila, this approach aims to formulate a scientific and ethical standard for responsible historiography in Indonesia.

Recent studies reinforce this argument. Darmawan & Mulyana (2020) reveal how ideological interests have influenced the content of Indonesian history textbooks, emphasizing the need for ethical reflection in historical education. Similarly, Akhyat (2022) revisits Max Weber’s ideal type to mediate between objectivity and subjectivity in Indonesian historical writing, offering a methodological bridge between empirical rigor and moral accountability. These perspectives contribute to constructing a contextualized framework for ethical historiography grounded in Pancasila values.

Writing history as an academic discipline requires not only methodological rigor but also ethical responsibility in reconstructing the past. Historical objectivity is a foundational principle, demanding that historians present past facts neutrally, without distortions caused by subjective or ideological interests (Novick, 1988). However, this concept does not imply the absence of interpretation; rather, it signifies a systematic effort to minimize bias through disciplined and transparent methodology. As Richard J. Evans (2001) explains, objectivity in history is “regulative,” not an assertion of absolute truth but a professional ethos that entails verification of evidence, acknowledgment of conflicting data, and transparency throughout the interpretive process. This professional ethos aligns closely with the ethical ideals

The main challenge in achieving historical objectivity lies in three levels: (1) The selection of facts that are never completely neutral because they are influenced by the availability of sources and research priorities (Becker, 1932); (2) Narrative language that inherently contains values and viewpoints (Ankersmit, 1983); and; (3) The social context of the historian that influenced his questions and views (Collingwood, 1993). In Indonesia, this challenge is further complicated by the legacy of colonial historiography that often obscures facts in favor of a group (Abdullah, 1999). Nevertheless, objectivity can still be pursued through: (1) Triangulation of sources that compare evidence from different types of sources (archival, oral, material) to test consistency (Denzin, 2009); (2) Strict historicism, that is, understanding the past in the context of its own time, not with the standards of the present (Butterfield, 1931), and; (3) Explicit recognition of limitations that state methodological assumptions and gaps in research (Campbell, 2000).

Source verification is a critical procedure in historical methodology that guarantees the reliability of historical evidence. According to Marc Bloch (2024), this process involves two fundamental stages, that is external criticism (assessing the physical authenticity of the source) and internal criticism (analyzing the credibility of the content of the source). These steps are essential to distinguish historical facts from fabrications, distortions, or documentation errors that often appear in primary sources (Gottschalk, 1969). In practice, source verification faces complex challenges: (1) Author bias, where each source contains the subjectivity of its creator. Dutch colonial newspapers, for example, often contained racist stereotypes that had to be

contextualized against the natives (Kartodirdjo, 1982); (2) Fragmentation of archives, where many key documents on human rights events have been deliberately destroyed or have not been accessed (B. T. Wardaya, 2009), creating a historiographical "black hole"; (3) Oral sources in the form of eyewitness testimony require cross-checking with material evidence, considering that human memory is susceptible to time distortions (Portelli, 1991). Therefore, cutting-edge verification techniques include: (1) Provenance, which is tracking the chain of ownership of documents to ensure their authenticity (Duranti, 1989); (2) Textual analysis in the form of identifying language styles, terminology, and anachronisms that indicate falsification (Grafton, 2019), as well as; (3) Digital forensics, which is using tools such as radiocarbon dating for manuscripts or metadata analysis for electronic documents (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2008).

The classification of bias proposed by David Hackett Fischer (1970), Barbara Wertheim Tuchman (1982), and Eric John Hobsbawm (1998) offers a useful perspective, although it is general and inadequate for analyzing structural bias in a postcolonial context such as Indonesia. This study argues that the "Javanese-centric bias" (Gungwu, 2005) is not just an ordinary ideological bias, but rather an epistemological legacy of Dutch colonial historiography that deliberately places the narrative on the island of Java as an administrative and economic center. Thus, this bias is deeply integrated into the structure of Indonesian historical knowledge. Therefore, the strategy to overcome this cannot rely solely on individual "positionality reflection", but requires collective and institutional efforts that consciously decentralize sources and narratives, something that is clearly mandated by the principle of Indonesian Unity. Therefore, a strategy to overcome bias is needed, namely: (1) Reflection on positionality, where historians must explicitly acknowledge their own social, political, and cultural background (Harding, 1991); (2) Combining sources from various historical actors, including marginal groups (Wieringa, 2002), as well as; (3) Methodological triangulation, which is combining textual, oral, and material evidence (Denzin, 2009).

3.2 The Axiology of Pancasila as the Basis of Ethics

The following is a table of translations of Pancasila values into technical guidelines for historians, equipped with conceptual and operational explanations.

Table 1. Pancasila Axiology Operational Framework for Historiographic Ethics

Moral Principles of Pancasila	Ethical Principles	Technical Guidelines	Application Examples
<i>Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa</i> (Belief in One and Only God)	Transcendental Integrity	Verification of historical sources with cross-reference of multireligious sources and deconstruction of political myths masquerading religion.	Writing a Historiography of Manunggal Jaya Village, East Kalimantan from the perspective of Islam, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, and religious believers.
<i>Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan</i>	Respect between Fellow	Use neutral language (avoid	Writing the history of the 30 September

<i>Beradab</i> (Just and Civilized Humanity)	Human Beings	abusive and demeaning language) as well as prioritize the victim's oral history.	Movement with the term "political prisoner" rather than the term "betrayal" and using historical sources from interviews with ex-political prisoners.
<i>Persatuan Indonesia</i> (The Unity of Indonesia)	Geographic Inclusion	Allocation of at least 30% of resources to outside Java so as not to cause Javanese-centric bias and collaboration with local historians.	Writing the history of the proclamation of independence, involving local figures such as Soekarni, Latief Hendraningrat, and Suhud Sastro Kusumo.
<i>Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/ Perwakilan</i> (Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom in the Unanimity Arising Out of Deliberations Among Representatives)	Epistemic Democracy and Togetherness	Involve the community in validating data and collecting local archives from local communities.	Reconstruction of the history of marginalized groups, such as Chinese people in Indonesia through Chinese family archives and interviews with Chinese people.
<i>Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia</i> (Social Justice for All of the People of Indonesia) (BPIP, 2022)	Narrative Restoration	Proportional representation of marginal groups and correction of bias in historiography for the sake of shared justice.	Rewriting the history of the Green Revolution during the Suharto era with the perspective of traditional workers, farmers, and fishermen.

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

Pancasila as a philosophical system includes five axiological values that form an ideal ethical framework for historical writing in Indonesia. The first precept, Belief in One and Only God (*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*), demands moral integrity in historical research, where factual truth must be upheld as a form of devotion to universal truth. According to Franz Magnis-Suseno (1984), the value of the Divine implies that historical writing must be done with an awareness of metaphysical responsibility, where factual truth becomes a form of devotion to the Absolute Truth.

In practice, this means a rejection of deliberate distortion of history, as it is considered a violation that is not only academic but also spiritual (Bertens, 1993). Kuntowijoyo (1991) emphasized that this precept requires methodological integrity that combines empirical rigor with an awareness of human limitations in understanding historical reality as a whole. Operationally, the value of One and Only God requires: (1) Deconstruction of political myths that elevate certain figures as if they have divine legitimacy (Bourchier, 2015); (2) Critical reinterpretation of historical narratives that claim "God's Mandate", such as the concept of the Javanese Kings in colonial historiography (Moertono, 2009), as well as; (3) Recognition of multi-religious perspectives in historical events, for example by combining Islamic (Babad), Catholic (Church Chronicles), and Hindu (Inscription) sources for events such as the 1849 Bali War (Wiener, 1995).

The second precept of a Just and Civilized Humanity (*Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab*) provides a fundamental ethical framework for a more humane and just reconstruction of Indonesian history. Human values in the context of historiography require respect for human dignity as historical subjects, not just as narrative objects. In practice, this means deconstructing historiography that discredits or dehumanizes certain groups (Wieringa, 2002). Methodologically, the application of the precepts of Humanity requires: (1) The inclusion of the voices of victims in the historical narrative, especially from marginalized groups such as women and indigenous peoples an approach that aligns with recent genocide studies scholarship emphasizing victim-centered historiography (McGregor, Melvin, & Pohlman, 2018); (2) The avoidance of dehumanizing language that often appears in the historiography of violence, such as the terms "mob" or "rebel" without context (Sulistyo, 2000), and; (3) Recognition of cross-group suffering without discrimination (Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2010).

The third precepts Unity of Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia*) provide an inclusive-integrative paradigm for writing national history that transcends the bias of Javanese centralism and elitism. Daud Aris Tanudirjo (2011) stated that the value of unity in the context of historiography does not mean uniformity of narratives, but rather recognition of the "unity in diversity" of the history of various groups in Indonesia. Wang Gungwu (2005) notes that modern Indonesian historiography is still trapped in a "Javanese-Centric Paradigm", where the contributions of regions outside Java such as Sumatra, Papua, or Kalimantan are often marginalized. The application of the precepts of Unity in the rewriting of history requires: (1) Decentralization of narratives by integrating local history into the national framework, such as the history of the Kingdom of Banjar or the Pattimura Resistance which is often only considered as a footnote (Sutherland, 2007); (2) Deconstruction of the "center-region" dichotomy in historiography (Kahin, 1999), as well as; (3) The use of multilingual sources (Jawi manuscripts, Balinese lontar documents, Dutch colonial documents) to obtain a more comprehensive perspective (Ricklefs, 2007).

The fourth precept of Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom in the Unanimity Arising Out of Deliberations Among Representatives (*Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan*) offers a participatory-deliberative approach in historical writing, in which the voice of the people is not just an object but an active subject in the construction of the past. According to Onghokham (1987), the value of populism demands a deconstruction of the elitist historiography that has dominated the writing of Indonesian history, where only the actions of major figures are considered worthy of being recorded. In fact, as James C. Scott (1985) points out, history is actually formed from millions of small actions of

"ordinary people" that are often ignored. This perspective is reinforced by contemporary anthropological research on Indonesian modernity, which demonstrates how ordinary citizens actively shape historical processes through everyday practices (Barker & Lindquist, 2018).

The implementation of the precepts of the People's Liberation in the rewriting of history requires: (1) The use of vernacular sources, such as the diaries of ordinary people (e.g. colonial court archives on farmers) (Carey, 1985); (2) Oral traditions (folklore, folk songs, spoken stories) as a counterbalance to official documents (Portelli, 1991), and; (3) The oral history of labor activists, peasants, and marginalized groups (Lucas, 1991). A history from below approach is needed by: (1) Reconstructing people's daily experiences, such as the history of rice prices, spontaneous migration, and cultural practices (Burke, 2001), as well as; (2) Uncovering forms of everyday resistance to politics (Scott, 1985). In addition, democratization of historical production is also needed through: (1) Community involvement in local history writing (Nordholt, 2005), and; (2) The use of popular mediums (historical comics, podcasts) to improve accessibility (Jenkins, 2003).

The fifth precept of Social Justice for all the people of Indonesia (*Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*) provides a moral imperative to reconstruct Indonesia's history through the lens of restorative justice, especially for groups that are systemically marginalized in the official narrative. The concept of social justice in historiography has gained resonance in both global and local discourses. Howard Zinn (2015) with his idea of "history for justice" argues that writing history should serve as a tool to uncover the structures of injustice that existed in the past. This aligns with global transitional justice frameworks that recognize narrative restitution and historical truth-telling as essential components of social repair (Gready & Robins, 2017). This idea is reinforced and contextualized by Taufik Abdullah (1999) who emphasizes that social justice in the Indonesian context is not only related to equal representation, but also involves active efforts to correct historical inequities that have been institutionalized. This is where the core of the problem of "non-compliance" lies with the majority of Indonesian historiography which is still focused on elite and Javanese-centric narratives (Gungwu, 2005), thus actively ignoring the imperative of social justice that has been established both by the theory of global critical history and by the basic values of the country itself (Pancasila). In other words, there is a double violation of academic standards and national norms.

Therefore, the implementation of the Social Justice Precepts, namely: (1) Narrative restitution for victims of state violence through official recognition of the victim's version (McGregor, 2007) and the integration of victim testimony into the educational curriculum (Wieringa, 2002); (2) Deconstructing class bias in historiography by revealing the role of workers, peasants, and indigenous peoples as historical actors (Lucas, 1991) and analysis of economic history from the perspective of inequality (Booth, 2016), as well as; (3) Criticism of the colonial legacy that still forms injustice, namely the *Cultuurstelsel* inheritance system (Sojourn, 1997) and race-based social stratification (Suryadinata, 2015).

3.3 Solutions and Ethical Dilemmas in Writing History Based on the Axiology of Pancasila

Political pressure is the main challenge in the consistent application of Pancasila values in the writing of Indonesian history. Research conducted by Katharine E. McGregor (2007) reveals how regimes systematically create a monopoly on historical

narratives by emphasizing Social Justice and Humanity. Ariel Heryanto (2006) documents cases of censorship against research on human rights events, where historians who seek to uncover the perspective of victims often face bureaucratic pressure and the threat of cancellation of research permits. An ethical dilemma arises when compliance with Pancasila is interpreted as an obligation to support the official version of the country's history. The case of the ban on the book *The Pretext of Mass Murder* by John Roosa (2008) is a clear example of how political pressure can sacrifice the principle of Truth contained in the precepts of One and Only God.

Contemporary challenges in historical writing include political influences, namely: (1) Manipulation of social media algorithms to support partisan historical narratives; (2) The use of Pancasila rhetoric to disguise certain political interests, as seen in the prohibition of critical historical discussion on the grounds of "threat of disintegration" (B. T. Wardaya, 2006), and; (3) The choice between maintaining scientific objectivity (based on the precepts of One and Only God) or adapting to state policies for the sake of career continuity (Patunru et al., 2018). Therefore, historians recommend solutions that include: (1) Advocacy for the independence of historical institutions, such as the Indonesian Historians Association (Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia), to protect academic freedom; (2) A multi-perspective approach that includes the state and society versions in a balanced manner (Kuntowijoyo, 2018), as well as; (3) Critical historical literacy education to strengthen public resilience to the politicization of history.

The diversity of interpretations of Pancasila values in historical writing creates complex epistemological and practical dilemmas. Keith Foulcher's (2000) research reveals how the concept of "One and Only God" can be interpreted diametrically differently, on the one hand as an imperative to seek transcendent truths, while on the other hand as a justification for censoring research that is perceived as "disrupting religious harmony" (Magnis-Suseno, 1984). The case of the controversy over the writing of the history of the spread of Islam in Java between the *santri* and *abangan* versions shows how the first precept can be used to support conflicting narratives (Ricklefs, 2007). In the precepts of Humanity, there is a tug-of-war between interpretations, such as: (1) Universalism of human rights that emphasizes the importance of victim protection (Wieringa, 2002); (2) Cultural relativism that considers local values (Geertz, 1983), and; (3) Ethical nationalism that prioritizes "national interests" (Heryanto, 2006).

Kuntowijoyo (2018) notes that the debate on "Indonesian Unity" in historiography is often caught in the dichotomy between an integrative history that emphasizes unity (Abdullah, 1999) and a particularistic history that maintains diversity (Nordholt, 2005). The biggest challenge arises when translating Social Justice into historical methodology. Research by Baskara Tulus Wardaya (2006) identified at least three schools of thought, namely: (1) Structural schools that focus on economic inequality (Miksic, 1997); (2) Cultural schools that emphasize the recognition of identity (Onghokham, 2005), and; (3) Reconciliation schools that seek common ground (Mietzner, 2008). Therefore, the proposed solutions to deal with the diversity of interpretations of Pancasila values in historical writing are: (1) A holistic interpretive approach that considers the historical context of each precept; (2) Recognizing the legitimacy of various approaches as long as they are in accordance with basic values (Purwanto, 2006), and; (3) Creating a space for dialogue between paradigms (Habermas, 1985).

The limited number of historical sources poses a significant ethical dilemma in an

effort to consistently apply Pancasila values in Indonesian historiography. Research conducted by Ann Laura Stoler (2010) shows that colonial archives that dominate Indonesian historical sources contain structural biases, where indigenous voices are only recorded as administrative objects, not as complete historical subjects. This is contrary to the spirit of the people's precept which guarantees the right of every citizen to be represented in the historical narrative. Some of the main problems related to the limitation of historical sources include: (1) Systematic destruction of documents; (2) Limited access to existing archives, especially for research on human rights violations; (3) Dominance of resources from the elite, and; (4) Destruction of primary sources due to tropical climate and lack of preservation efforts.

Ethical dilemmas arise when writing history based on the axiology of Pancasila, namely: (1) The verification of the precepts of the One and Only God (seeking the truth) is contrary to the absence of documentary evidence; (2) The demand of the humanitarian precept to include the victim's voice is not supported by adequate sources, and; (3) The spirit of the precepts of Unity is hampered by the fragmentation of regional archives. Innovative solutions proposed by experts, namely: (1) Oral history methods to fill archival gaps (Portelli, 1991); (2) Digitization of resources scattered through projects, such as "Indonesian Archives" (Bloembergen & Eickhoff, 2020); (3) Interdisciplinary approaches by utilizing archaeology and anthropology, and; (4) Advocacy for freedom of information through judicial review of the Archives Law.

Azyumardi Azra (2013) proposed overcoming biases in historical writing through a Theo-historical approach, emphasizing divine values by considering the authenticity of religious documents, theological contextualization of historical actors' motivations, and an ethics of representation to avoid profaning sacred symbols. Concurrently, Kuntowijoyo (2018) offered several historiographical solutions: (1) Humanizing approach utilizing oral history to elevate marginalized perspectives; (2) Critical discourse analysis of dehumanizing language, and; (3) Multidisciplinary integration of history with trauma psychology for reconstructing violent events. He also suggested an "integrative history" approach through comparative historical methods across regions and mapping unifying themes like inter-island trade or cultural migration. Furthermore, Kuntowijoyo proposed a "Folk Historiography" model that employs microhistorical methods to uncover representative small worlds (Ginzburg et al., 1993), critiques individualistic "hero" concepts, and reinterprets major events from the perspective of mass participation. Finally, his transformative historiographic approach advocated for oral history to elevate marginalized voices (Portelli, 1991), critical discourse analysis of official texts (Fairclough, 2003), and interdisciplinary approaches (anthropology and legal studies) to understand structural injustice.

Kuntowijoyo with the concept of "humanization of history" (2018) actually provides a strong basis for implementing the Precepts of Humanity through an emphasis on respect for the dignity of historical subjects. However, his analysis often stalls at the level of citation without showing how this principle of "humanizing historical writing" can be embodied in concrete methods such as oral history or critical discourse analysis. Franz Magnis-Suseno (1984) through his "Javanese Ethics" offers a relevant interpretive framework for understanding the cultural dimension of the Precepts of Divinity and Social Justice. However, this has rarely been further explored to establish a source verification methodology that accommodates the spirituality of the Nusantara. Meanwhile, Keith Jenkins (1991) critique of the politics of historical narrative can strengthen the application of the People's Precept by revealing the

mechanism of domination of discourse. However, this potential has not been utilized to design a strategy to democratize the production of historical knowledge in Indonesia. Therefore, a more coherent integration is needed by: (1) Mapping the meeting point between these theories and each of the precepts of Pancasila; (2) Providing examples of operationalization of their concepts in specific research techniques, and; (3) Conducting a reflective critique of the limitations of Western thought when faced with historiography in the context of Indonesian values.

The historiography of opportunist regimes is generally characterized by three main characteristics: (1) Monopoly of truth that ignores marginal voices; (2) The use of history as a tool for political legitimacy, and; (3) The suppression of alternative narratives. These three aspects are clearly contrary to the spirit of Pancasila. Pancasila as a defense against the historiography of opportunist regimes can be seen through the following table.

Table 2. Critical Reflections of Pancasila against the Historiography of the Regime

The Value of Pancasila	Principles of Historiographic Ethics	Regime Deviations	Academic-Social Consequences
Divinity	Intellectual honesty and transparency of methods.	The regime hides archives that do not support the official narrative.	People have lost their right to truth and history has become a propaganda tool.
Humanity	Respect human dignity as a subject of history and anti-dehumanization.	Language that demeans and alienates certain groups.	There are legitimacy of mass violence and a culture of sustainable intolerance.
Unity	It is the geographical and cultural inclusivity that makes history plural.	Javanese-centric history and ignoring the role of outside Java.	Narrow nationalism and identity inequality between the central and regional regions.
Citizenship	Democratization of historical production and public participation.	History is only written by a handful of elites close to power.	People are alienated from their own history so that distrust of the authority of knowledge is born.
Justice	Proportional representation and narrative restitution.	Victims of state violence are erased from the narrative.	There are no restorative justice and collective trauma is never resolved.

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

Thus, Pancasila emphasizes that every ethical violation in Indonesian historiography is not only a methodological violation, but also a violation of the lives of all levels of Indonesian society. Pancasila must be seen as a resistance to elitist history, which calls for more egalitarian, inclusive, and responsible historical writing. This approach not only makes Pancasila relevant in academic discussions, but also returns it to its most basic function, namely as a guardian of the nation's morality, including in the way we understand the past.

An example of the application of the Ethical Historiography Typology of Pancasila with a case study of the September 30, 1965 Movement in Indonesia is as follows.

Table 3. Examples of the Application of History Writing based on the Typology of Pancasila

Criterion	Descriptive (Current Facts)	Prescriptive (Improvement of Rewriting History Based on Pancasila Axiology)
Source	Relying only on military documents.	Add sources from the oral perspectives of ex-political prisoners of the time and the people who experienced the event.
Language	The term "savage and betrayal group").	Use more civilized language, such as "defendant group" or "political prisoner group."
Representation	100% version from the sovereign of the country.	The rewriting of history should be 30% victim version, 30% state version, 30% academic version, and 10% neutral version so as not to cause historiographic bias.

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The tragedy of September 30, 1965 Movement in Indonesia was chosen as a crucial case study because it reflects the center of the politicization of Indonesian historiography that lasted for more than three decades and even today (Yuwono, 2025). The official narrative built by the New Order not only contains massive distortions of facts, but also systematically violates ethical principles in historical writing and the values of Pancasila itself. In the dominant historiography, this complex event is simplified into a black and white narrative, namely the Indonesian Communist Party as a traitor and the Indonesian National Army as a hero. This narrative is supported by language deliberately designed to dehumanize, such as the terms "treacherous mob", "immoral", and "barbaric" (McGregor, 2007; B. T. Wardaya, 2006), which is clearly contrary to the precepts of Just and Civilized Humanity.

More problematic, this bias is not just a relic of the past. An analysis of 12 history textbooks published between 2010-2024 shows that 75% of them are still dominated by military-centric perspectives, with less than 15% including victim testimony or critical perspectives (Gunawan & Rachmah, 2025). This persistent exclusion of victim narratives contradicts developments in international scholarship that emphasize multi-perspectival approaches to violent historical events (McGregor, Melvin, & Pohlman, 2018). Limited access to important archives that are still classified for reasons of national stability is a structural barrier to more equitable historical reconstruction efforts (B. T. Wardaya, 2009). This is a violation of the spirit of Social Justice which mandates equal access to knowledge.

Table 4. Violation of Historiographic Ethics in the Dominant Narrative The tragedy of September 30, 1965 Movement

Ethical Principles	Manifestations of Violations	Violated Pancasila Principles
Factual Honesty	Concealment of victim data and mass violence.	Divinity (obscuration of transcendental truths).
Language	The use of dehumanizing	Humanity (violation of

Nuances	diction, such as mobs and rebels.	human dignity).
Geographic Inclusivity	Focus on Java-centric and ignore violence in other areas.	The Unity of Indonesia (the marginalization of the collective experience of local communities).
Balance of Perspective	The total elimination of the victim's voice and alternative narratives.	Democracy (wisdom in deliberation).
Narrative Justice	Obscuring the long-term socio-economic impact on victims.	Social Justice (Absence of restorative justice).

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The main problematization lies in the epistemological inconsistency between the state's claims regarding Pancasila and existing historiographic practices. On the one hand, the state establishes Pancasila as the official ideology, but on the other hand, it allows and even strengthens historical narratives that clearly ignore the core values of Pancasila. The absence of the victim's perspective is not just a methodological negligence, but a political deliberate that aims to maintain power by creating a one-sided collective memory (Heryanto, 2006). Therefore, the historical ethical approach based on Pancasila offers a solution. The application of the five precepts can serve as operational guidelines for deconstructing biased narratives: (1) One and Only God encourages high honesty in source verification; (2) Humanity requires the use of polite language; (3) Unity requires the integration of perspectives from various regions; (4) The people emphasize the importance of involving the community (especially victims) in data validation, and; (5) Social Justice mandates proportional representation and narrative restitution efforts for victims. Only in this way can Indonesian historiography free itself from the shackles of politicization and transform itself into a tool of reconciliation, not a tool of power.

The descriptive findings reveal a problematic reality in the practice of Indonesian historiography today. Research shows that 85% of history textbooks published between 2010-2025 are still dominated by Javanese-centric narratives, with only 12% of sources coming from outside Java (Gunawan & Rachmah, 2025). Archives on the events of 1965 and 1998 in Indonesia are still 67% closed to the public (Setyawan et al., 2025), while discourse analysis reveals the use of dehumanizing terms, such as "traitors" and "rebel hordes" in 92% of history book literature published during the New Order period (Wieringa, 2002). These facts reflect the incompatibility between actual practice and the values of Pancasila. Prescriptive findings provide operational solutions based on Pancasila. The One and Only God precepts are manifested through the obligation of cross-verification of three types of sources (national, local, and international) for each historical claim. The Humanitarian Principles are translated into language guidelines that prohibit the use of pejorative terms and require a 40% quota for oral history sources from victims. The precepts of Social Justice mandate a 30% allocation of content for marginalized groups in historical publications. This solution is designed to address the gap between the ideal of Pancasila and real practice.

4. Conclusion

This research has revealed the fundamental contradiction between the idealism of

Pancasila as a value system and the practice of Indonesian historiography which is still dominated by regime interests and power biases. Pancasila is not only a symbol of the state, but also a tool of epistemological criticism that is able to expose the monopoly of truth by the rulers and provide space for voices that have been marginalized. The main finding of this study lies in the formulation of the operationalization of the five precepts of Pancasila into methodological principles that can be applied in the practice of writing history. The values of Pancasila in historiography consist of: (1) The precepts of the One and Only God demand moral integrity in verifying sources; (2) The precepts of Humanity require respect for the dignity of historical subjects; (3) The precepts of the Unity demand geographical and cultural inclusivity; (4) The precepts of the People mandate democratization in the production of historical knowledge, and; (5) The precepts of Social Justice require narrative restitution for oppressed groups.

The novelty of the argument in this article lies in the attempt to synthesize the values of Pancasila with the discourse of global critical historiography, as well as offer a more contextual approach. By engaging with international debates on transitional justice (Gready & Robins, 2017), genocide studies (McGregor, Melvin, & Pohlman, 2018), and post-colonial state formation (Nordholt, 2011), this research demonstrates how Pancasila can serve as a bridge between local ethical frameworks and global historiographical conversations. Pancasila is no longer considered a passive ideology, but rather an active paradigm that is able to interact with contemporary historical thought, ranging from Leopold von Ranke's objectivism to postmodern deconstructionism, while providing solutions rooted in local values. The theoretical implication of this research is the enrichment of the axiological approach in the study of history, by showing how the philosophical values of a nation can be used as a basis for building contextual-specific ethical practices. In terms of practical implications, the findings of this study can serve as operational guidelines for historians, educators, and policymakers in producing historiographic works that are more equitable and meet the community's sense of justice.

The limitation of this study lies in its nature which is still a normative framework that requires further testing through empirical research. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct further research which includes: (1) Development of measurable evaluation instruments to assess the consistency of the application of Pancasila ethics in historiographic works; (2) Conduct field studies involving historians, communities, and stakeholders to identify practical challenges in the implementation of this framework, as well as; (3) Exploring the role of digital technology, such as digital history archives, in expanding access to more diverse and inclusive historical sources. In this way, Pancasila can function effectively as a transformative tool to create an Indonesian historiography that is not only academic, but also fair and liberating.

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