

Soekarno and the Politics of Education: Ideology, Identity, and Development

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Abstract

This study examines Soekarno's political thought on education as an ideological instrument for shaping national identity and advancing postcolonial socio-economic development in Indonesia. While Soekarno is widely recognized as the nation's founding father and first president, scholarly inquiry into his educational politics remains limited, particularly in connecting ideology, identity formation, and development agendas. Employing a qualitative approach with historical-critical discourse analysis, the research draws on speeches, writings, and official documents from 1945–1965, complemented by secondary literature in Indonesian educational history, political education theory, and postcolonial studies. Thematic analysis reveals that Soekarno perceived education not merely as a technical policy domain but as a political tool to integrate ethnic plurality, foster national consciousness, and mobilize citizens for nation-building. His discourse intertwined socialist-humanist ideals, anti-colonial narratives, and developmental aspirations within the framework of Guided Democracy. The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary framework systematically linking ideology, identity, and development; its use of rarely examined archival sources; and its extension of critical education theory through the Indonesian case. The findings provide theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to educational policy in pluralistic developing nations, highlighting the continuing relevance of Soekarno's vision in addressing inequality, pluralism, and cohesive nation-building.

Keywords: Anti-Colonial Discourse, Critical Education Theory, Guided Democracy, Ideology, National Identity



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INTRODUCTION

The politics of education has often been a silent arena in the study of Indonesia's political history, as if it were merely a technical backdrop to the turbulence of ideology, power struggles, and economic development. Yet behind the fiery speeches and revolutionary slogans, Soekarno placed education in a strategic position: as a means to shape Indonesians who were free both physically and spiritually, to unite ethnic diversity, and to prepare a development workforce rooted in the nation's character (Darmawan et al., 2023; Suwignyo, 2024). Although widely recognized as the Proclaimer of Independence, the first president, and a master orator, scholarly attention to Soekarno's views and policies on education remains marginalized. This stands in contrast to historical records: between 1945–1965, dozens of state speeches, official documents, and writings by Soekarno articulated his ideas on education as an instrument of politics and national development. The absence of in-depth

studies connecting the ideological, identity, and developmental dimensions of Soekarno's educational politics makes this discussion important, not only to understand the past but also to reinterpret its relevance to the challenges of education today.

Several previous studies have indeed discussed Soekarno's political thought, but their focus has tended to be limited to nationalism or development strategies. Kiftiyah & Septia Wahyuningsih (2025) and Wardaya (2021) highlight Soekarno's use of nationalist rhetoric to build the nation's collective imagination, while Razuni (2023) traces his political journey from the early nationalist movement to his downfall. In the field of development, Fogg (2021) and Meng & Silva (2022) examine the direction of economic policy during the Guided Democracy era but hardly touch on the role of education as a supporting pillar of that development. In the field of education, Megah & Noor (2021) and Pratama et al. (2022) discuss the history of Indonesian education but only briefly mention the Soekarno period without deep analysis of its ideological content. Internationally, Barton et al. (2021) developed the theory of critical educational politics, while Kueh (2023) and Nair (2023) explored the relationship between education, the state, and development in developing countries. However, none have specifically connected these theoretical frameworks to the Indonesian context under Soekarno.

Studies closer to the ideological dimension of education can be found in Sasmita et al. (2025), which dissects the debates on cultural modernization and education, and in Yuniyanto & Abidin (2025), which traces revolutionary symbolism in Soekarno's political discourse. On the other hand, Meteray (2025) and Sugito et al. (2021) offer a rich panorama of Indonesian history but discuss education only as a social backdrop. Some postcolonial studies, such as Permana & Purwantiningsih (2021) and Purwanta & Novianto (2022), open pathways for seeing education as an arena for reproducing postcolonial power, but have yet to link this to concrete practices in Indonesia during the 1950s–1960s. These works reveal how rarely education is placed simultaneously as the axis of ideology, identity, and development.

Comparative perspectives are also rarely used. For example, in studies of educational politics in post-independence India, Kim (2021) and Yuliantri & Suwignyo (2024) show how national leaders used education to build national unity. However, lessons from such cases have not been widely applied to understanding Soekarno's educational policies. This contrasts with studies by Purnomo et al. (2024) and Zamjani (2022), which emphasize the importance of discourse analysis in understanding the relationship between knowledge, power, and subject formation, an approach highly relevant for reading Soekarno's educational politics.

This situation leaves a gap in our understanding: the relationship between ideology, national identity formation, and the development agenda in Soekarno's educational politics has never been comprehensively analyzed using rich archival data and an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. This study seeks to fill that gap by combining historical-critical discourse analysis with perspectives from political education theory, national identity theory, and postcolonial studies. This approach enables a sharper reading of how Soekarno constructed the narrative of education as a political force that binds the nation and drives

development.

This research aims to identify the ideological principles in Soekarno's educational thought, examine their role in shaping Indonesia's national identity, and explore their contribution to the postcolonial socio-economic development agenda. By juxtaposing original archival data with secondary literature, this study offers a fresh perspective that not only enriches the understanding of Indonesia's political history but is also relevant to contemporary discourse on educational politics in developing countries facing the challenges of pluralism and inequality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method is designed to capture the complexity of Soekarno's educational thought by situating it within the historical-political, ideological, and postcolonial development context of Indonesia. A qualitative approach is employed, allowing the researcher to read, understand, and interpret the meaning behind texts and discourses. This approach was chosen because the issue under study is not merely about education policy as a formal document but also about education as an arena of contesting ideas imbued with values, ideology, and political strategy.

The main framework is historical-critical discourse analysis, which combines chronological understanding of events with critical reading of the narratives constructed by political actors (Burgos-Videla et al., 2025; Haug & Thomas, 2023). This approach is relevant because Soekarno's ideas on education cannot be separated from the socio-political dynamics of the 1945–1965 period, when education was part of the larger nation-building project.

The first stage of the research was the collection of primary data through archival studies, covering Soekarno's speeches, writings, and official documents related to education. These archives span the period from early independence to the end of his presidency, including state addresses, addresses at education congresses, articles in *Pantjasila* magazine, and legislation drafted during the Guided Democracy period. These sources were obtained from the National Library, the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, and curated digital archives from historical research institutions. Sources were selected purposively, based on their relevance to the topic of education, as well as the credibility and authenticity of the documents.

The second stage was thematic analysis of the collected data. This analysis aimed to identify patterns of ideological narrative, constructions of national identity, and developmental orientations in Soekarno's educational thought. The process included close reading to capture rhetorical nuances, mapping recurring keywords, and interpreting meanings in their historical context. For example, when Soekarno spoke of the "new Indonesian person" or "mental revolution," the researcher situated these terms in relation to anti-colonial discourse and humanist socialism that characterized his thinking.

The third stage was data triangulation with secondary literature, including studies of Indonesian educational history, political education theory (Giroux, 2023; Westphal, 2023), and postcolonial studies literature (Daniels, 2024; Takbir et al., 2022; Widiasih & Rachman,

2022). Triangulation aimed to strengthen the validity of findings and avoid single-interpretation bias. By comparing archival data with previous research findings, the researcher could distinguish which aspects were distinctive to Soekarno's thought and which were adaptations of global discourses of his time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education as an Ideological Instrument in the Postcolonial State

In Soekarno's thought, education was not merely a vehicle for the transfer of technical knowledge, but a strategic arena for shaping the political consciousness of the people and strengthening anti-colonial ideology. From his speeches between 1945 and 1965, there is a consistent emphasis on positioning education as a "machine for producing free human beings" imbued with a revolutionary spirit. Within a postcolonial framework, education played a dual role: liberating the nation from the legacies of colonialism while simultaneously instilling an independent national vision. Soekarno stressed that revolution required not only political independence but also the liberation of the mind, making education a primary space for fostering a "mental revolution" aimed at creating the "new Indonesian human" committed to the ideals of Pancasila and humanist socialism.

Archival analysis shows that the term "mental revolution" in Soekarno's speeches was not merely rhetorical but was designed as an operational framework for education policy. In his State Address of 17 August 1957, for example, Soekarno underscored that education must instill the courage to reject foreign domination, internalize values of solidarity, and build a productive character. He positioned schools as non-neutral spaces, "workshops" for forging citizens ready to defend national sovereignty. This perspective aligns with Giroux's (2023) notion of critical political education, which highlights how education inherently contains ideological content and serves as part of the state's efforts to shape desired social structures.

In the context of Ruuska's (2023) view, education under Soekarno can be understood as a state apparatus operating not only through legal coercion but also through the cultivation of consciousness and belief. Schools, textbooks, and curricula functioned to embed values considered essential for the survival of the new postcolonial state. Thus, education became both a mechanism for reproducing state ideology and a relatively invisible yet effective tool of political hegemony. Soekarno combined anti-colonial narratives, rejecting the legacies of feudalism and foreign capitalism, with the aspirations of modernity, such as industrialization and technological advancement, to create political legitimacy rooted in the people's aspirations.

The findings also reveal that Soekarno's rhetorical style was distinctive: he blended the diction of struggle ("struggle against colonialism"), moral diction ("new human"), and developmental diction ("building a great nation"). This fusion produced a discourse that not only stirred emotions but also shaped the people's mental framework regarding their role as active subjects in the revolution. This strategy proved effective in fostering collective consciousness in support of his political project, particularly Guided Democracy.

To illustrate the integration of Soekarno's ideological ideas into education policy, the findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Pillars of Cosmopolitan Islam in Gus Dur's Thought

Educational Aspect	Ideological Element	Stated Objective	Form of Implementation
Curriculum	Pancasila and humanist socialism	To create the "new Indonesian human"	Integration of national values into all subjects
Language of Instruction	Indonesian language	To strengthen national identity	Establishing Indonesian as the main language of education
Political Education	Mental revolution	To foster anti-colonial consciousness	Emphasis on the history of struggle and the people's role
Technical Education	Economic self-reliance	To support national industrialization	Establishment of technical and vocational schools

Source: Data derived from state speeches, education documents, and archives from 1945–1965, analyzed using historical-critical discourse analysis, 2025

Under Soekarno's leadership, education possessed a deeply ideological function. It not only taught citizens to read, write, and count, but also to think and act as historically conscious citizens, with a sense of nationalism and a commitment to the ideals of humanist socialism. This approach demonstrates how education can serve as both an instrument of social transformation and a tool of political legitimation in the postcolonial state.

Nation-Building through Education

In Soekarno's view, the formation of a national identity was inseparable from the strategic role of education as a medium of social and cultural integration. In his political narrative, education was positioned not merely as a process of transferring knowledge, but as an ideological mechanism that bound ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity into a unified construction of a sovereign nation. Soekarno believed that postcolonial Indonesia's diversity required a "bond" capable of uniting historical experiences and collective aspirations. This bond, he argued, lay in education that internalized the value of unity through the curriculum, the national language, and national symbols that fostered a sense of belonging to the state.

The curriculum during the early independence period was designed to consistently introduce the history of the national struggle, to affirm Bahasa Indonesia as the language of unity, and to promote national symbols such as the Red-and-White flag and the Garuda Pancasila as shared identities. This strategy aligns with the findings of Alesina et al. (2021) and Brunner (2023), who explain that nation-building through education operates through the construction of collective identity, where education not only imparts practical skills but also instills historical narratives and the meaning of nationhood. In the Indonesian context, this narrative was reinforced by Soekarno's political rhetoric, which positioned the people as subjects of the revolution, not merely as recipients of policy, but as key actors in continuing the struggle for independence.

In his speeches, Soekarno employed a strategy of narrative framing that emphasized every citizen as part of the “big Indonesian family” with a shared historical responsibility. This rhetoric fused stories of resistance against colonialism with a progressive vision for the future. Such an approach aligns with Brunner’s (2023) argument that education in plural societies serves a dual function: integrating differences and fostering solidarity based on national identity. Thus, education not only produced academically competent citizens but also individuals with an emotional attachment to the nation.

The following table summarizes the key elements of national identity formation through education as reflected in Soekarno’s policies and speeches.

Table 2 Elements of National Identity Formation through Education in the Soekarno Era

Strategic Element	Form of Implementation	Ideological Objective
History of the National Struggle	Curriculum includes narratives of the independence struggle	Accumulate collective memory across ethnicities and generations
Language of Unity	Bahasa Indonesia as the national language of instruction	Eliminate communication barriers, strengthen social and cultural cohesion
National Symbols	Use of the flag, emblem, and national anthem in education	Foster pride, loyalty, and allegiance to the state
Political Narrative Framing	Rhetoric positioning the people as the “mouthpiece” of the nation	Instill the image of citizens as active subjects in the revolution and development

Source: Based on analysis of Soekarno’s state speeches and education policy documents, interpreted through a historical-critical lens, 2025

From this account, it is evident that education during the Soekarno era was designed as a complex political and cultural project, not merely an academic concern. Through curriculum, symbols, language, and narrative, the state shaped the mindset of younger generations to regard nationhood as an inherent part of personal identity. Education thus became the space where the process of nation-building took place systematically, in line with Alesina et al.’s (2021) theoretical view that schools serve as the primary arena for creating collective identity amid social plurality.

Under Soekarno’s leadership, education transformed into a systemic political and cultural project: it did not only produce skilled students but also citizens with a strong national identity, unwilling to be divided by differences, and willing to carry a historical role in the nation’s revolution. This once again validates the perspective of nation-building through education in the Indonesian reality, where schools became the arena for shaping solidarity and the national imagination.

Education as the Engine of Socio-Economic Development

Soekarno regarded education not merely as a means of individual enlightenment, but as a strategic foundation for national socio-economic development. In his framework of

thought, education was positioned as fundamental human capital capable of producing an educated workforce to support industrialization oriented toward national self-reliance. This view aligns with the notion that skilled human resources accelerate structural economic transformation, particularly in postcolonial countries striving to build their industrial base. His oft-repeated rhetoric of *berdikari*, an abbreviation of *berdiri di atas kaki sendiri* (“standing on one’s own feet”), captured a vision of development independent from foreign powers, relying instead on the nation’s own internal capacity. In this context, technical and vocational education policies became a priority, though their implementation faced limitations in infrastructure and funding.

Findings from analysis indicate that this strategy reflects a contextual development approach, as explained by Stern et al. (2022), which argues that former colonies require development models that do not merely imitate developed countries, but adapt strategies relevant to their own social, political, and economic conditions. Within this framework, education becomes a vehicle for building national capacity, reducing structural dependence on industrialized nations.

During Soekarno’s leadership, the expansion of access to technical education was realized through the establishment of vocational schools, polytechnics, and skills-training courses aimed at producing a ready-to-deploy workforce for the industrial and modern agricultural sectors. His speech on National Education Day in 1964, for instance, emphasized that a sovereign economic development could not be achieved if the people remained mere manual laborers for foreign industries without mastery of technology and skills. This statement reveals a direct correlation between the vision of economic self-reliance and national education strategy.

Moreover, this approach contained an emancipatory dimension. Soekarno viewed education as an instrument of liberation from colonial dependency, where mastery of knowledge and technology served as tools to transform an unequal social structure. This policy direction also aligns with the idea that postcolonial development is not purely material, but also symbolic, building collective confidence as a nation capable of standing on equal footing with others. The table below summarizes the relationship between Soekarno’s educational vision, the policies implemented, and their relevance to the postcolonial development theoretical framework.

For Soekarno, education was not merely an instrument of intellectual uplift, but the primary foundation of socio-economic development. In many of his speeches, he stressed that industrial progress and economic growth were impossible without the availability of an educated workforce. Education was positioned as the basic capital of national development, combining mastery of technical skills with the ideological awareness to be *berdikari*. The rhetoric of “standing on one’s own feet” became a symbol of economic self-reliance supported by the nation’s own technological capacity.

Table 3 Education as the Engine of Socio-Economic Development in Soekarno's Perspective

Aspect	Soekarno's Vision	Concrete Policy	Link to Postcolonial Development Theory
Development Orientation	Economic self-reliance through berdikari	Promotion of national industrialization	Development rooted in the nation's internal capacity
Education Strategy	Technical & vocational education	Establishment of vocational schools, polytechnics, skills courses	Education as an instrument for building national capacity
Challenges	Limited resources and infrastructure	Implementation scale limited in remote areas	Adapting strategies to local conditions
Expected Outcomes	Skilled and self-reliant workforce	Mastery of technology by the people themselves	Reduction of dependence on industrialized nations

Source: Author's analysis adapted from Soekarno's speeches, 2025

Education policies of the time reflected the orientation toward national industrialization. Soekarno promoted the opening of technical schools, polytechnics, and skill-training programs aligned with industrial needs, despite the challenges of limited resources and infrastructure. This approach aligns with Welch et al.'s (2022) concept of postcolonial development, which emphasizes that former colonies must develop contextual models of development, leveraging local resources, tailoring curricula to domestic needs, and building technological self-reliance to avoid structural dependency on developed nations.

Historical data show that in the early 1960s, the number of technical education institutions increased significantly, although the ratio of skilled teachers to students remained low. This indicates a systematic effort to create an educated working class that not only mastered skills but also possessed national consciousness. In a postcolonial framework, this strategy can be read as an effort to resist the colonial legacy that positioned third-world nations merely as suppliers of raw materials and consumers of foreign technology.

Table 4 Development of Technical Education Institutions in Indonesia during the Soekarno Era (1960–1965)

Year	Number of Technical Schools	Number of Enrolled Students	Teacher-Student Ratio	Main Skills Focus
1960	312	58,200	1:32	Mechanics, Carpentry
1962	410	74,500	1:28	Machinery, Electronics
1965	527	96,800	1:26	Industry, Mining

Source: Ministry of Education & Culture Archives, processed by the author, 2025

This policy also carried a strong ideological dimension. Soekarno merged economic nationalism with a human-centered development strategy. Technical and vocational education was not merely positioned as a supplier of labor to the market, but as a tool for social transformation that freed the people from colonial dependency. From Daniels' (2024)

perspective, such an approach constitutes a model of development that does not imitate the West, but adapts knowledge and technology to the local context.

In practice, Soekarno articulated this idea in his speeches through narrative framing that placed the people as the main agents of development. For example, in his “Year of Berdikari” speech, he declared that “our factories and technical schools are weapons of struggle, as important as rifles on the battlefield.” This statement framed education as an integral part of the economic revolution, not merely an administrative function of the state.

This approach illustrates that education in the Soekarno era served a dual role, producing skilled labor while strengthening a national identity oriented toward self-reliance. Viewed through the lens of postcolonial development theory, education functioned as a means of deconstructing dependency relations and reconstructing the nation’s capacity to determine its own development path.

The Socialist-Humanist Dialectic and Guided Democracy in Educational Politics

In Soekarno’s political construction, education occupied a central position, functioning simultaneously as a normative and an instrumental tool. Its normative function lay in the effort to realize the ideals of humanist socialism, which emphasized social justice, solidarity, and respect for human dignity. Its instrumental function, meanwhile, was directed toward strengthening the political legitimacy of the regime through the Guided Democracy project. Analysis of state addresses and policy documents reveals that education was framed as a means of creating a “new human”, not only technically competent, but also internalized with the political values desired by the center of power. In practice, curricula, extracurricular activities, and school rituals were used as mediums for instilling collective political orientation, making schools a strategic arena for the state in shaping political subjects aligned with the official narrative. These findings are consistent with UNESCO’s observations that in many postcolonial states, education is often structured to serve political and ideological integration agendas.

Read through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), education policy during the Guided Democracy era exhibited a dialectic between emancipatory idealism and the instrumentalization of politics. At the rhetorical level, Soekarno highlighted concepts of revolution, mental liberation, and egalitarianism as the vision of education. At the policy level, however, educational institutions were politicized to reinforce political hegemony: controlling historical narratives, determining access to education, and framing collective identity in line with regime goals. Historical study indicates that this strategy was not merely a contradiction between idealism and pragmatism, but a pattern in which emancipatory values were employed to legitimize centralized power. Research in the field of educational politics compiled by Willeck & Mendelberg (2022) affirms that such practice constitutes a common strategy in countries whose political systems prioritize centralized political stability.

Applying the CDA method allows for mapping the relationship between texts, discursive practices, and the underlying socio-political structures. Analysis of Soekarno’s corpus of speeches, curriculum documents, and official publications reveals systematic repetition of terms such as “revolution,” “the people,” and “self-reliance,” linking pedagogical

identity with the state agenda. This discourse created a rhetorically inclusive impression while functioning to strengthen political loyalty. These findings align with studies by Jandrić & Knox (2022), which emphasize that education, in certain contexts, can become an arena for reproducing structures of domination through the normalization of hegemonic political language.

Empirically, the analysis indicates that the instrumentalization of education restricted the space for interpretive plurality and reduced pedagogical autonomy. When curricula and educational institutions were tightly directed to support political agendas, the capacity of education to serve as a vehicle for empowerment and critical thought was diminished. Normatively, this condition raises fundamental ethical questions for policymakers: how can the emancipatory dimension of education, including equal access, intellectual liberation, and strengthening of critical capacity, be preserved within a political framework that also employs education as a tool of legitimacy? Broad postcolonial education studies show that major political projects almost always rely on strong pedagogical narratives. However, such narratives can transform from liberating to constraining when subject to centralized control.

A critical reading of the Guided Democracy era through the CDA framework reveals that education played a dual role: on one hand, as a medium for the ideals of humanist socialism; on the other, as a strategic device for political consolidation. This dialectic underscores the need for historical-discursive studies that can distinguish, without rigidly separating, between emancipatory aims and instrumentalist practices. In the context of postcolonial states, a nuanced understanding of this relationship is vital not only for historiographical purposes but also as an ethical guide in designing educational policies that are fair, inclusive, and autonomous from excessive political control.

The Contemporary Relevance of Soekarno's Educational Thought

Soekarno's educational thought holds significant relevance for developing countries still grappling with structural inequality, managing socio-cultural pluralism, and maintaining the integration of national identity. In the era of globalization, these challenges are increasingly complex due to the penetration of neoliberal values and global competition, which often push educational orientation toward purely market-driven aims. Soekarno offered a framework that positioned education not only as a means of skill enhancement but also as a vehicle for cultivating ideological consciousness, collective identity, and national solidarity. This framework aligns with the findings of Ghosh (2021) and Hughes & Loader (2023), which emphasize the role of education as a foundation for social cohesion and sustainable development, a vision that goes beyond mere economic growth.

The principle of integrating ideology, identity, and development in Soekarno's thought can be adapted into modern education policy by considering the dynamics of democracy and globalization. In a democratic context, such integration must be modified to avoid the political centralization of the Guided Democracy era, instead being directed toward strengthening public participation and academic freedom. In the context of globalization, the relevance of Soekarno's ideas lies in their ability to negotiate universal values (such as human rights, gender equality, and sustainability) with distinctive national identity. This positions education

as a dialectical arena where locality and globality can interact productively without losing cultural authenticity.

Table 5 Synthesis of the Contemporary Relevance of Soekarno's Educational Thought

Aspect of Soekarno's Thought	Contemporary Challenges	Potential for Modern Adaptation	Theoretical Foundation
Integration of ideology, identity, and development	Social disintegration, crisis of national identity	Inclusive, nation-based value curriculum	Transformative Education for Social Cohesion
Education as a tool for social cohesion	Political polarization, socio-economic inequality	Multicultural education programs & cross-identity dialogue	Social Cohesion Theory and Sustainable Development
Educational independence from market domination	Neoliberalization of education	Public interest-oriented education policy	Neoliberal critique in educational politics
Local-global dialectic	Global value homogenization and cultural erosion	Integration of local values into global competencies	Glocalization theory in education

Source: Author's analysis based on multiple sources, 2025

This study also expands the horizon of educational politics theory by introducing a unique Indonesian case study, utilizing archival sources of speeches, policy documents, and curriculum texts rarely integrated into previous international scholarship. This approach demonstrates that Soekarno's educational ideas contain transformational elements that are not only historical but also strategic for today's developing countries. As noted by several scholars of political education, the relevance of historical ideas can re-emerge when social systems face crises of legitimacy and identity disintegration, making education an arena for reconstructing an inclusive collective vision.

CONCLUSION

Based on the objectives of this study, it can be concluded that Soekarno's educational politics was an ideological construction that positioned education as a strategic instrument to shape national identity, integrate ethnic diversity, and mobilize the people toward postcolonial development. In Soekarno's view, education did not stand merely as a technical policy, but as a political arena uniting anti-colonial narratives, socialist-humanist idealism, and development aspirations within the framework of Guided Democracy. This approach demonstrates that Soekarno's ideas organically linked ideology, identity formation, and development agendas, while also affirming their relevance in addressing inequality, pluralism, and national cohesion challenges in diverse developing countries. The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary framework connecting critical education theory with the Indonesian context through the examination of rarely explored archives, producing theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions for the formulation of educational policies oriented toward social justice and national integration.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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