

Thinking Beyond the Grand Narratives

Anatolii Kulibaba, a farmer from Bilka, Ukraine, was compelled to evacuate his home following the Russian invasion in February 2022. This invasion came shortly after Russian artillery bombardment claimed the life of his son, Oleksandr, while he was returning to Bilka from a trip, just 25 miles away from the Russian border. The devastating consequences continued as Russian forces occupied his farm, forcing him and many other residents to flee Bilka. When Kulibaba returned in April 2022, he found his 494-hectare fields in ruins. The Russian troops had used his tractor to dig trenches, stayed in his barn, killed and cooked his pigs, and parked their tanks in his cornfield.

The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War since February 2014 has witnessed deliberate targeting of the agricultural sector by Russian forces. This strategy was not without purpose. Ukraine, alongside Russia, accounted for over a quarter of the world's wheat exports. As a result, the "breadbasket of Europe" has been devastated by the war. Disruptions in food supply and distribution have caused inflation and a global food crisis. The Indonesian government, which imports 28 percent of its wheat from Ukraine, has issued a warning to prepare for a food crisis by seeking domestic food alternatives. The production of wheat-based food is now facing the threat of decline.

Furthermore, the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian War has extended to various sectors, including disruptions in energy supply to multiple countries. Over the past two years, the energy market, particularly fossil fuels, has experienced extreme price fluctuations. Being the second-largest exporter of natural gas and oil, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted fossil fuel supplies and the energy market as a whole. Consequently, the energy market has become more expensive and difficult to access. Even though economic sanctions and import embargoes on Russian fossil fuels have hastened the shift towards renewable energy in Europe, the escalating energy prices pose a danger to more vulnerable countries, potentially excluding them from the energy market.

Currently, the international community is working towards managing the crisis while striving to keep the global temperature increase within the limits defined by the Paris Agreement, not exceeding 1.5°C. However, the intensity of these issues appears different

when viewed from a cross-national perspective. While Northern countries are urged to balance energy consumption and long-term sustainable development, Southern countries are grappling with ensuring their energy supply can sustain their economies and meet the needs of their populations as a whole.

The crisis resulting from the war reveals the fragility of the imaginary bonds upon which the world is built. Ultimately, Southern countries emerge as the most vulnerable parties affected by the crisis. Northern countries, which contribute to food, energy, and climate crises, have not fully taken responsibility or sufficient action to address the situation. Simultaneously, they continue to promote narratives that seemingly aim to tackle these crises. However, skepticism is necessary to understand these narratives, considering their interests in the competition for economic and geopolitical resources.

At this juncture, history has a significant role to play in constructing alternative perspectives to the narratives presented by major powers in addressing crises. Autonomous history should be seen not only as an endeavor to establish national identity through historical justifications and narrative reversals but also as a means of erosion—and perhaps even resistance—to grand narratives. It becomes evident that it is impossible to formulate a single approach suitable for the entire world. That is why locally rooted and contextualized historical writing is crucial, even when addressing transnational issues. Such efforts should stem from the awareness that every local value, be it in Indonesia or elsewhere, carries equal significance.

History, in its formal sense, may be associated with the victors. However, does that mean the defeated are not entitled to continue their resistance?

Pengantar Redaksi

Berpikir Melampaui Narasi Besar

Anatolii Kulibaba, seorang petani di Bilka, Ukraina, terpaksa mengungsi setelah artileri Rusia membombardir ladangnya pada Februari 2022. Invasi tersebut berlangsung hanya beberapa waktu setelah serangan bom Rusia menewaskan putranya, Oleksandr, ketika dia sedang melakukan perjalanan pulang ke rumah mereka di Bilka, sekitar 25 mil dari perbatasan Rusia. Tak cukup sampai di situ, pasukan Rusia menduduki peternakannya, memaksa dirinya dan sejumlah besar penduduk lain meninggalkan Bilka. Ketika Kulibaba kembali pada April 2022, dia menemukan ladang seluas 494 hektarnya telah hancur. Pasukan Rusia telah menggali parit menggunakan traktornya, tidur di lumbungnya, menyembelih dan memasak babi-babinya, serta memarkirkan tank mereka di ladang jagungnya.

Dalam Perang Rusia-Ukraina yang meletus sejak Februari 2014, pasukan Rusia dengan sengaja menargetkan sektor pertanian sebagai objek serangan mereka. Hal ini bukan tanpa alasan. Bersama Rusia, Ukraina menyumbang lebih dari seperempat dari ekspor gandum dunia. Perang telah menghancurkan “lumbung Eropa” tersebut. Gangguan pasokan dan distribusi makanan kemudian mendorong inflasi dan krisis pangan di seluruh dunia. Pemerintah Indonesia, yang mengimpor 28 persen gandumnya dari Ukraina, mengingatkan untuk bersiap menghadapi krisis pangan dengan mencari substitusi bahan makanan di Indonesia. Intensitas produksi makanan berbahan dasar gandum terancam menurun.

Selain ancaman krisis pangan, dampak Perang Rusia-Ukraina telah merambah ke berbagai sektor, termasuk gangguan pasokan gas ke beberapa negara. Selama dua tahun terakhir, pasar energi, terutama bahan bakar fosil, mengalami fluktuasi harga yang ekstrem. Sebagai eksportir gas alam dan minyak terbesar kedua di dunia, invasi Rusia ke Ukraina telah mengganggu pasokan bahan bakar fosil dan pasar energi secara keseluruhan. Akibatnya, pasar energi makin mahal dan sulit ditembus. Walaupun sanksi ekonomi dan embargo impor migas dari Rusia telah mempercepat transisi energi di kawasan Eropa, kenaikan harga energi mengancam negara-negara yang lebih rentan menghilang dari pasar.

Saat ini, masyarakat antarbangsa sedang berupaya mengelola krisis sembari mempertahankan target untuk tidak melampaui kenaikan suhu global sebesar 1,5°C, seperti tertuang dalam Persetujuan Paris. Namun, intensitas permasalahan tersebut tampaknya akan berbeda ketika dipahami melalui kacamata lintas negara. Ketika negara-negara Utara dituntut menyeimbangkan konsumsi energi dan pembangunan berkelanjutan jangka panjang, negara-negara Selatan tengah bersusah payah memastikan persediaan energi mereka mampu menopang perekonomian dan mengakomodasi kebutuhan seluruh warga.

Krisis akibat perang menunjukkan dunia ini dibangun di atas ikatan-ikatan imajiner yang sangat rapuh. Negara-negara Selatan, pada akhirnya, muncul sebagai pihak yang paling rentan terdampak krisis. Negara-negara Utara yang berkontribusi terhadap krisis pangan, krisis energi, dan krisis iklim belum sepenuhnya mengambil tanggung jawab dan tindakan yang memadai untuk memperbaiki situasi tersebut. Mereka, pada saat bersamaan, justru terus mereproduksi narasi yang seolah-olah berusaha menangani krisis. Namun, tanpa mengesampingkan kepentingan mereka dalam perebutan sumber ekonomi dan geopolitik, skeptisisme tampaknya diperlukan untuk memahami narasi tersebut.

Di titik ini, sejarah memiliki kontribusi untuk membangun perspektif alternatif dari narasi-narasi yang dicetuskan oleh kekuatan-kekuatan besar dalam menangani krisis. Sejarah otonom harus dimaknai tidak hanya sebagai upaya menubuhkan identitas bangsa melalui justifikasi historis dan pembalikan naratif, tetapi juga pengikisan—bahkan, mungkin, perlawanan—terhadap narasi besar itu. Kita tampaknya harus menerima kenyataan bahwa pendekatan yang sesuai untuk seluruh dunia mustahil dicetuskan. Itu sebabnya penulisan sejarah yang mengakar dan kontekstual dengan masyarakat tempatan dibutuhkan, bahkan untuk menjawab permasalahan transnasional. Upaya tersebut harus berangkat dari kesadaran bahwa setiap nilai lokal, baik di Indonesia maupun di tempat-tempat lain, memiliki kedudukan yang sepadan.

Sejarah, dalam artian formal, mungkin milik para pemenang. Namun, bukankah itu tidak berarti mereka yang dikalahkan tidak berhak untuk terus melawan?