

Beyond Racial Boundaries: The Liminal Intellectuality and Authenticity of Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr (1911–1918)

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Abstract

This article examines the authenticity and intellectual capacity of Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr (1882–1958) within the sociopolitical context of the Dutch East Indies from 1911 to 1918. It analyses his writings across four newspapers: *Sin Po*, *Pertimbangan*, *De Indiër*, and *Perniagaan*. Grounded in the premise that the colonial press functioned as a platform for ideological contestation rather than a neutral conduit, the study conceptualises authenticity as Razoux Kühr's reflexive awareness of his positionality as an Indo-European intellectual situated between colonial authority and Indonesian society. Furthermore, intellectuality is defined as his capacity to articulate rational critiques of colonial power relations through journalistic discourse. Methodologically, the research integrates historical methods with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the interaction between micro-level textual strategies, social cognition, and macro-level colonial structures. The findings demonstrate that Razoux Kühr consistently advocated a liberal ideological stance that was adaptable to various editorial and sociopolitical contexts, including pluralistic engagement with Chinese nationalism, public moral critiques of colonial legitimacy, and intra-press polemics. This article contributes to Indonesian colonial historiography by illustrating how press discourse analysis can reveal the dynamic development of intellectual agency within the liminal social position of Indo-European actors in late-colonial society. symbiosis.

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Introduction

This study examines the career, ideas, and perspectives of Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr (1882–1958) from 1911 to 1918, as reflected in his pamphlets and journalistic writings published in various newspapers. The analysis focuses on two interconnected aspects, namely authenticity and intellectuality, within the framework of intellectual history. Authenticity is understood as an individual's reflective awareness of and response to their positionality within a dominant colonial structure (Heidegger, 1962; Laceulle, 2018). Intellectuality pertains to the capacity to articulate and disseminate critical ideas through public discourse in order to negotiate power relations (Gramsci, 2013; Hoare & Smith, 1992; Said, 2012). These concepts provide an analytical perspective for examining how individual agency functions within the structural limitations of colonial society.

Razoux Kühr's life trajectory demonstrates a significant transition from a colonial civil servant (*ambtenaar*) who became embroiled in a scandal in Landak, West Kalimantan, to a journalist who adopted a critical stance toward the colonial government. The scandals that involved him in 1907 and 1910 attracted wide attention in the colonial press; however, in both cases, the courts declared him not guilty (Termorshuizen, 2012). Despite his acquittal, he chose to resign from the colonial bureaucracy and subsequently entered the world of journalism (Vierhout, 1910; Wybrands, 1907a). This transformation marked a crucial turning point in his biography and in the dynamics of the colonial press, particularly during his tenure as editor-in-chief of *Sin Po*, *Pertimbangan*, *De Indiër*, and *Perniagaan*.

Indigenous (Bumiputra) and Chinese communities utilized the press to articulate demands for social reform, to promote nationalist ideas, and to contest colonial discrimination in the Indies (Fachruruzi, 2019; Jayusman & Fachruruzi, 2021; Rahzen, 2007). *Sin Po*, a Peranakan Chinese newspaper led by Razoux Kühr, is generally recognized as a proponent of the ideals of the Chinese Revolution associated with Sun Yat-sen, while also demonstrating sympathy towards Indigenous political movements (Kosasih, 2013; Nafisah & Suwirta, 2021). Razoux Kühr's role as editor-in-chief exemplifies how an Indo-European individual could play a pivotal role in enhancing both the credibility and the ideological orientation of a non-European publication.

Despite his involvement in influential newspapers, scholarship on Razoux Kühr remains limited. While biographical studies have reconstructed his life, they have not sufficiently examined his intellectual agency as articulated through discourse. Addressing this gap, this article advances a discourse-centred approach to intellectual history by analysing the structure and orientation of his writings. This study addresses two questions: how was Razoux Kühr's authenticity articulated as a strategy of negotiating his colonial positionality, and how did his intellectual discourse represent colonial power relations in the Netherlands Indies? Through a diachronic reading of his writings across multiple newspapers, this article examines the forms of criticism he advanced and situates them within the broader dynamics of colonial society.

Research Methods

This study employs the historical method as its primary methodological framework. The historical method is understood as a systematic process with stages that include heuristics, source criticism (verification), interpretation, and historiography (Gottschalk, 2006; Ismaun et al., 2016). The heuristic stage involves identifying and collecting sources relevant to the research topic (Renier, 1997). The primary sources consist of sixteen articles written directly by Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr, selected from a corpus of thirty identified texts published in *Sin Po*, *Pertimbangan*, *De Indiër*, and *Perniagaan*. These materials were accessed at the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in microfilm and digital formats. The selection was based on chronological relevance, thematic coherence in colonial critique, and the intensity with which issues of authenticity and intellectuality were articulated.

The stage of source criticism assesses the accuracy and reliability of sources in terms of their credibility and authenticity. It is divided into external and internal criticism (Lubis, 2020). During this phase, a thorough evaluation was conducted on the primary sources, which were available in microfilm and digital formats following media conversion as part of the Library's preservation initiatives. Several copies exhibited signs of physical deterioration, such as illegibility, tears, and material defects, indicative of their age and historical condition. This process was carried out to ensure the credibility and contextual integrity of the collection.

The interpretation phase represents the fundamental aspect of the analysis, as it relies on the historian's interpretive capacity to assign meaning to historical phenomena through designated theoretical perspectives (Ankersmit, 2018). In this study, interpretation is carried out using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) grounded in Teun A. van Dijk's model, which analyzes discourse as an interconnected framework of textual organization, social cognition, and wider societal contexts. The methodology emphasizes the reproduction of power dynamics and ideological dominance while acknowledging the subjectivity of the text producer across both micro- and macro-structural levels (Van Dijk, 1980, 2006, 2008, 2009). Consequently, this research examines lexical selections, argumentative structures, and prevailing themes to reveal representations of colonial power relations and the positionality of an Indo-European subject concerning notions of authenticity.

Finally, historiography relates to the process of presenting and narrating the results of historical research to a wider audience through the assumptions and creative faculties of historians as part of constructing new meanings (Sjamsuddin, 2016; Tosh, 2015). Through this methodological integration of historical research and discourse analysis, the study aims to produce a coherent interpretation of Razoux Kühr's intellectual agency within the dynamics of colonial society.

Result

This result and the analysis trace the development and evolution of Razoux Kühr's recognition as an Indo-European subject and his role as a critical scholar, examining how these aspects have transformed in response to evolving socio-political contexts through a diachronic methodology.

The Beginning of His Journalism Career at *Sin Po* Newspaper

Razoux Kühr was born in Ternate on January 17, 1882, into an Indo-European family with strong roots in the colonial bureaucracy. He was a descendant of Cornelis Kühr, a Dutch government official who settled in the Indies and married Helena Johanna du Riel Razoux, hence the name "Razoux Kühr" reflects his mixed European and Indo genealogy (Fortgens, 1930; Termorshuizen, 2012). With this social background, he was educated at the Willem III Gymnasium in Batavia and entered the colonial service as a controleur, later stationed in Landak, West Kalimantan (Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië 1907, 1907; Thieme, 1906; Van Paasschen, 1906). His assignment sparked controversy when allegations of embezzlement were widely reported in the colonial press, although investigations and trials ultimately found him innocent, even after a retrial in 1910 (Termorshuizen, 2012; Van Schaik, 1907; Vierhout, 1910; Wybrands, 1907a, 1907b). This public and administrative pressure prompted him to resign from his bureaucratic position, and it was this experience that shaped his critical attitude towards the colonial system and led him to enter the world of journalism as a new space for political articulation.

Razoux Kühr observed that the judicial system implemented by the Netherlands and its colonies in the East Indies was inherently unjust and lagged behind those of other nations. His critique was articulated in an English-language pamphlet titled "*Dutch Justice in Java: Are the Dutch Worthy of His Beautiful Island with Its 35,000,000 Inhabitants?*" published in 1911 in Singapore, specifically targeting English-speaking audiences (Anonim, 1911; Razoux Kühr, 1911; Thieme, 1911). Subsequently, on October 1, 1912, Razoux Kühr again garnered public attention when he was

appointed editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Sin Po*, a publication renowned for its progressive stance at that time (Jayusman & Fachrurozi, 2021; Rahzen, 2007; Termorshuizen, 2012). The trajectory of Razoux Kühr's life may be characterized as one marked by strategic maneuvering and opposition against the colonial government of the Indies.

Razoux Kühr frequently utilizes pronouns linked to social status as an initial point for his critique. An illustrative example is his reproach of the inauguration ceremony for the South Sumatra Railway, which was conducted in an excessively luxurious manner yet did not involve the local community.

Table 1. Razoux Kühr on *Sin Po* (July 3, 1914)

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Boeat apa? Kita menanja. Boeat apa itoe semoea dan siapa jang moesti bajar onkost dari itoe semoea? Z.S.S. atawa G.G. atawa barangkali pendoedoek negri?</i> | What for? We must ask. What is the point of all this excessive preparation, and who should bear the costs? Is it Zuid Sumatra Spoorweg (Z.S.S), or the Governor-General (G.G), or... perhaps the people of the Indies? |
| <i>Ja, aneh sekali! Apatah kita tiada betoel, pambatja, kaloe kita bilang jang itoe perkara boeka djalan kreta api melaenkan satoe pembilangan sadja aken didjadiken satoe alasan boeat G.G. datang disana? (J.R.R.K., 1914)</i> | Yes, how strange! Are we not right (?), readers, when we say that the inauguration of the railway line was actually just an excuse to legitimize the Governor-General's visit there? |

Through the use of inclusive pronouns such as “*kita*” and direct addresses to the reader, Razoux Kühr constructs a collective narrative position that transcends his individual identity. The phrase “*Boeat apa? Kita menanja*” serves not only as rhetorical emphasis but also as a positioning act, shifting criticism from personal grievances to shared public issues. By questioning who bears the costs of development and mentioning the possibility of “*pendoedoek negri*” as the burdened party, he shifts the focus from the symbolic celebration of colonial progress to the material consequences experienced by the colonised people. This linguistic choice shows how moral authority is symbolically transferred from colonial officials to the reading community.

This discursive strategy further exemplifies Razoux Kühr's liminal status as an Indo-European individual operating within the colonial press. By employing inclusive pronouns, he navigates his social positioning and symbolically differentiates himself from the colonial administrative elite, while concurrently aligning with non-European groups. Authenticity in this context resides not solely in the content of his critique but also in the manner in which he positions himself as part of a collective voice that questions the legitimacy of colonial rule. Therefore, his writing transcends mere critique of specific policies, aiming instead to reformulate the sources of authority within the colonial public sphere.

Regarding the colonial discourse concerning press circulation, Razoux Kühr also contended that *Sin Po* expanded significantly due to the contestation and competition among newspapers in the Indies.

Table 2. Razoux Kühr on *Sin Po* (October 31, 1915)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>... <i>Perniaga'an</i> telah adoeken kita pada justitie, kita bilang, baik begitoe! ... Kita tiada oesa pergi pada justitie boeat dapetken keadilan tentang toelisannja <i>Perniaga'an</i> jang ditoedjoeken pada kita. Kita dapet keadilan dari orang banjak, jang senantiasa djadi bertamba-tamba dateng pada kita dan berlaloe dari <i>Perniaga'an</i> ... Itoelah adanja vonnis dari pengadilan dimana kita madjoeken perkara kita, jaitoe ORANG BANJAK. Vonnis begitoe ada lebi berharga bagi kita dari pada itoe vonnis jang <i>Perniaga'an</i> harep nanti dapet dari Raad van Justitie dengan pertoeoengannja drukpersregiement. (Razoux Kühr, 1915)</p> | <p>... The <i>Perniagaan</i> (newspaper) has indeed taken us to court, and we say: so be it! ... We have obtained justice from the general public, who continue to come to us and leave <i>Perniagaan</i> ... That is the true court ruling for us, namely THE PUBLIC. Such a ruling is far more valuable than the ruling the <i>Perniagaan</i> might expect from the Raad van Justitie with the help of the drukpersreglement (press law).</p> |
|---|---|

Through this text, Razoux Kühr frames the conflict with *Perniagaan* as a matter of legitimacy rather than merely a legal issue. Razoux Kühr shifts the locus of authority from the colonial state to the reading public by referring to “*orang banjak*” as a “court” more valuable than the *Raad van Justitie* and colonial press regulations. The contestation over newspaper circulation thus becomes a contestation over who has the right to determine the truth in the public sphere of the Indies. Razoux Kühr's authenticity lies not only in his personal attitude but also in the discursive practice that positions *Sin Po* as an alternative medium that relies on public legitimacy rather than colonial institutions.

Razoux Kühr's intellectual prowess in the *Sin Po* newspaper is demonstrated by his ability to articulate rational arguments, make conceptual distinctions, and situate his criticism within the colonial discourse. This phenomenon is reflected in the text's rhetorical and argumentative structure, characterized by contrasting sentences, expansive sentences, and presuppositions.

Table 3. Razoux Kühr on *Sin Po* (July 3, 1914)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Banjak</i> antara pembatja tentoe kenal itoe gambar-gambar bagoes ... Ja, itoe gambar-gambar bagoes ada mendjadi oempan dari Moelaikat El Maoet! (J.R.R.K., 1914)</p> | <p>Many readers are surely familiar with the beautiful posters ... Yes, those beautiful posters turned out to be bait for the Angel of Death!</p> |
|---|---|

The quote represents Razoux Kühr's intellectuality through his ability to critically deconstruct the mechanisms of colonial discourse. By beginning the sentence with the assumption of shared knowledge with the reader, “*banjak antara pembatja tentoe kenal*”, he constructs an argumentative position that is both inclusive and rational. The metaphor “*oempan dari Malaikat El Maoet*” serves as a conceptual device to contrast the government's visual image of progress with the exploitative reality behind colonial projects. This strategy shows that Razoux Kühr's criticism is not merely emotional but rather an intellectual effort to reveal the ideological function of colonial propaganda by reversing meaning and exposing contradictions in discourse.

Furthermore, Razoux Kühr exemplified his intellectual capacity by developing rational, systematic, and multi-layered arguments.

Table 4. Razoux Kühr on *Sin Po* (July 3, 1914)

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|--|--|
| <p>... Boeat Gouvernemenr boekankah segala rahajat ada sama?... Ingatlah pematja, (kasatoe) onkost-onkost boeat bikin djalanan kreta api di Sumatra Selatan telah diambil dari padjek-padjek ... (Kadoea) Pada djalanan kreta api ada bekerdja berpoeloe-poeloe orang Europa, tapi djoega beriboe-riboe anak negeri dan berates-ratoes koeli Tionghoa ... (Katiga) Kaloe djalanan kreta api disana soeda salese, siapatah nanti jang paling banjak goenaken itoe, Boemipoetra dan orang Tionghoa atawa orang Europa? ... Hoofdingineur Van der Waerden sendiri telah bilang: oleh toekang-toekang tanem lada Boemipoetra. Haaaaaaa Ja, ajah tiri kita melaenkan maoe kenal kita kaloe kita moesti kaloe ar oewang, tapi kaloe tida? (J.R.R.K., 1914)</p> | <p>... Does the government not consider all citizens to be equal? ... (First), the cost of constructing the railway line in South Sumatra was taken from taxes, ... (Second), there are indeed dozens of European workers involved in the construction of the railway, but there are also thousands of native workers and hundreds of Chinese coolies ... (Third), after the railway is completed, who will use it the most—the natives and Chinese or the Europeans? ... Chief engineer Van der Waerden himself admitted: the indigenous pepper farmers. Haaaaaaa... Yes, our stepfather only wants to recognize us if we have to spend money, but if we don't?</p> |
|--|--|

Razoux Kühr opens his critique with a rhetorical question that challenges the colonial government's claims of equality and justice, then proceeds with an enumerative structure (*kasatoe*, *kadoea*, *katiga*) that resembles analytical-expository logic. Razoux Kühr shifts his critique from the moral realm to the rational-material realm by presenting social data on taxation. Furthermore, the strengthening of the argument through references to colonial technocratic authorities (*Hoofdingineur Van der Waerden*) demonstrates intellectual prowess in utilising internal colonial sources to expose the contradictions in government discourse. The metaphorical conclusion about “*ajah tiri*” serves as a critical synthesis that summarises the inequality of colonial power relations, while articulating how the colonial state built paternalistic relations, namely, recognising colonial subjects only to the extent that they functioned economically.

Razoux Kühr's textual practice allows for a broader reading of the socio-cultural configuration of the Indies in the early 20th century. His discourse reflects the fragmentation of colonial society, racial and class tensions, and the emergence of alternative public spaces that challenge colonial symbolic domination. The dialectical relationship between text, social cognition, and macro structures shows that his criticism was not merely an individual expression, but part of a broader social dynamic that simultaneously shaped and was shaped by colonial power. In addition, Razoux Kühr devoted his energy and intellect to developing the newspaper and fighting for collective interests, even to the point of being imprisoned twice (K.H.T., 1916). Thus, Razoux Kühr also clarified *Sin Po*'s ideological direction amid institutional competition among newspapers.

Founded *Pertimbangan* and became Editor-in-Chief of *De Indiër*

Razoux Kühr resigned as editor-in-chief of *Sin Po* in April 1916 due to his uncertain health and moved to Bandung, which had a cooler climate, at his doctor's advice (Razoux Kühr, 1916a). This resignation marked an important transition, as it also marked the beginning of *Sin Po*'s direct leadership of the Chinese community while maintaining ideological continuity (Jayusman & Fachruruzi, 2021; Redacteur, 1935; Yamamoto, 2019). After settling in Bandung, Razoux Kühr founded the newspaper *Pertimbangan* in 1916 with an ideological orientation not far from that of “*Soera Kaoem Terprenta*” (Voice of the Oppressed) (Razoux Kühr, 1916b), but with a unique editorial structure because it was divided based on the colonised groups in the Indies: Razoux Kühr as editor-in-chief; Darna Koesoema (Bumiputra affairs); Njo Tian Pang (Chinese affairs); Said Muhammad bin Hachim bin Yahya (Arab affairs); and Minami (Japanese affairs). This formulation seems to reflect colonial legal classifications such as the *Wet op het Nederlanderschap 1892*, which placed the Japanese in the Asian category

(Winarno et al., 2020). Razoux Kühr retained his central role in shaping the ideological line while also serving as a representative model.

The authenticity of Razoux Kühr in the *Pertimbangan* newspaper will be evident from the pronouns and diction he uses, just as in his writing in Sin Po.

Table 5. Razoux Kühr on *Pertimbangan* (June 5, 1916)

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Kita membilang setoedjoe dengan poedjiannja itoe atas kelakoeannja pemerenta Inggris pada orang-orang tahanannja ... Tjoba liatlah begimana adanja pemelihara'an dalem pendjara di Hindia ini pada kaoem journalist kaloe ia orang menoelis bebrapa patah perkata'an jang ada mengina kepada pemerenta. Journalist itoe di djebloskan kedalem pendjara dan ditjampoerken bersama pendjabat pendjahat pendjahat jang hina ... Kaloe ia orang ada bangsa Europa, marika misti tidoer diatas satoe karoeng terisi roempoet dan apa bila boekan itoe bangsa, di atas papan atau djoebin. (Razoux Kühr, 1916c)</i> | We/I agree with the praise for the British government's attitude towards its prisoners ... Consider the conditions in prisons in the Indies for journalists who wrote a few words that were considered insulting to the government. They were thrown into prison and mixed with despicable criminals ... If those imprisoned were Europeans, they slept on sacks filled with grass; but if not, they slept on boards or stone floors. |
|--|---|

Razoux Kühr's authenticity in the *Pertimbangan* newspaper is reflected through the use of the inclusive pronoun “*kita*,” which positions him as part of a colonial community that experienced collective injustice, rather than as a distant European observer. This pronoun builds shared social cognition while affirming Razoux Kühr's alignment as a subject speaking from within the space of the Indies. Spatial markers such as “*di sini*” and “*di Hindia ini*” reinforce the contextual nature of his testimony, indicating that his criticism stems from concrete colonial experience rather than universal moral abstraction. Meanwhile, the lexical opposition between “*pemelihara'an*” and “*pendjahat jang hina*,” as well as between “*orang ada bangsa Europa*” and “*boekan itoe bangsa*,” explicitly highlights the institutionalised colonial racial hierarchy. Through his choice of pronouns and diction, Razoux Kühr's authenticity is present as an epistemic position that is conscious, engaged, and critical of colonial power structures.

In addition, Razoux Kühr commented on Insulinde as a progressive association with many followers and noble ideals. However, the existence of Insulinde received a negative response from Europeans in the Indies.

Table 6. Razoux Kühr on *Pertimbangan* (June 5, 1916)

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Ha, ha, ha! Ada kedjadian apa? Di Semarang ada satoe perhimpoean dari fihak Europa dan Boemipoetra, jang senetiasa dihina oleh soerat soerat kabar Olanda ... Adapoen perhimpoean itoe namanja “Insulinde”. Haloennja perhimpoean itoe ja'ini mendedjer kemadjoennja semoea orang jang mendoedoeki Hindia dan tjinta pada tanah ini ... tetapi sebaliknja terbanjak bangsa Europa di Hindia selamanja tida soeka perdoeliken pada perhimpoean terseboet dan djika soerat soerat kabar Olanda menoelis hal itoe, senantiasa dengan menghina. (Razoux Kühr, 1916d)</i> | Ha, ha, ha! What on earth is going on? In Semarang, there is an association consisting of Europeans and native Indonesians, which is constantly being disparaged by Dutch-language newspapers ... The name of this association is “Insulinde”. The association's goal is to fight for the progress of all people living in the Indies who love this land ... most Europeans in the Indies do not care about this association at all, and when Dutch newspapers write about it, it is always in a derogatory tone. |
|---|---|

Through this quote, Razoux Kühr's authenticity is consciously manifested by placing himself outside the mainstream European colonial consensus. By opening his writing with the rhetorical irony

“Ha, ha, ha!”, he is not merely mocking Dutch press reports, but exposing the colonial mechanism of delegitimisation against cross-racial organisations such as Insulinde. Razoux Kühr articulated an authenticity grounded in his liminal Indo-European positionality by affirming Insulinde’s inclusive vision of the Indies as a shared political space. His intervention thus reveals how colonial newspapers shaped European social cognition by normalising hostility toward emancipatory movements, while he, in turn, used public discourse to contest such macro-colonial structures and defend the possibility of political solidarity across racial boundaries.

Razoux Kühr’s intellectuality in the *Pertimbangan* newspaper is reflected in texts that use complex sentence structures, contradictions, and preconceptions, prompting readers to question colonial discourse. This became the beginning of the revelation of colonial discourse that Razoux Kühr wanted to discuss.

Table 7. Razoux Kühr on *Pertimbangan* (June 5, 1916)

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Apakah pemerenta Hindia ini tida merasa maloe kaloe meliat pemelihara’annja D.D. di Singapore? Kenapakah ra’jat Olanda ditananja sendiri diperlakoeken lebi djelek dari pada di tana asing? Kaoem Journalist di Hindia bisa liat D.D sebagai boekti, begimana kesenangannja ia orang bakal dapet djika bangsa Inggris dapet mereboet daerah Hindia ini.</i> (Razoux Kühr, 1916c) | Doesn't the Indies government feel ashamed when they see how Douwes Dekker is treated in Singapore? Why are Dutch citizens treated worse in their own country than in a foreign country? Journalists in the Indies can see Douwes Dekker as proof of how happy they would be if the British succeeded in seizing the Indies. |
|---|--|

This quote demonstrates Razoux Kühr’s intellectualism as a form of rational criticism of the moral and political legitimacy of the Indies colonial state. Rather than simply expressing personal empathy for Douwes Dekker, Razoux Kühr uses this case as an epistemic tool to reveal the internal contradictions of Dutch colonialism. The rhetorical question he asks, “*Apakah pemerenta Hindia ini tida merasa maloe...?*” serves as an intellectual strategy to shift the reader’s position from passive obedience to critical reflection on the colonial government’s ethical claims.

Cognitively, Razoux Kühr activates a transimperial comparison between British and Dutch colonial practices as a strategy of delegitimisation, not to praise the British, but to humiliate the Indies regime through standards of governance that are considered more civilised. Thus, power is assessed not by its national origin but by concrete practices towards political subjects. The statement that Indian journalists would be “happy” if the British took over the territory should be read as an intellectual provocation, namely, as structural criticism of a colonial state that failed to guarantee the dignity of its citizens and therefore lost its moral legitimacy. At the macro level, this text reflects the crisis of colonial authority in the 1910s, when the press became the main arena for articulating opposition. Through considerations, Razoux Kühr constructed a counter-discourse that linked individual experiences with systemic criticism, so that his writing appeared not merely as journalistic opinion, but as an intellectual intervention in the colonial political sphere.

The fate of *Pertimbangan* was not entirely clear, and Razoux Kühr’s contribution to it was relatively limited. About seven months after its publication in Bandung, his name appeared as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *De Indiër* on January 1, 1917, a progressive media outlet directly affiliated with the Insulinde organisation as its political mouthpiece (Termorshuizen, 2012). Although his tenure lasted only about a month, he left behind an important piece entitled *Ter Inleiding*, which reveals his ideological orientation and the position he established for himself in the political arena of the Indies.

Table 8. Razoux Kühr on *De Indiër* (January 1, 1917)

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>De Indiër wil zijn een dagblad voor iedereen, in de eerste plaats voor allen, die hier geboren en getogen zijn en wien de belangen van Indië bovenal ter harte gaan. De redactie veronderstelt bij haar lezers liefde voor Indië en zal hen pogen op te wekken tot deelneming aan politieke actie binnen de perken der bestaande en nog te maken wetten en verordeningen ...</i> (Razoux Kühr, 1917) | <i>De Indiër aims to be a daily newspaper for everyone, especially for all those who were born and raised here and who prioritize the interests of the Indies above all else. The editors assume that their readers love the Indies and will try to encourage them to participate in political action within the limits of existing and future laws and regulations ...</i> |
|---|---|

Razoux Kühr's authenticity in *De Indiër* is articulated through the choice of collective pronouns and affective diction that consciously position him within the Indies community. The use of the phrase “voor allen, die hier geboren en getogen zijn” marks a claim to social belonging, namely the recognition that the subjects being addressed (and the author himself) are those who grew up in the Indies, not merely temporary colonial arrivals. Normative diction such as “belangen van Indië” and “liefde voor Indië” reveals an affective-political orientation that transcends European racial loyalty, while also affirming an ethical attachment to the Indies as a shared homeland. Meanwhile, the call for “deelneming aan politieke actie” affirms Razoux Kühr's position not only as a commentator but also as a subject who articulates collective political consciousness within the limits of the colonial legal structure. Thus, Razoux Kühr's authenticity is present as the position of an Indo-European subject who affirms “Indiesness” as the basis of moral and political legitimacy in colonial discourse.

Furthermore, in *De Indiër*, Razoux Kühr displayed considerable optimism in asserting his political actions. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of his political actions through his efforts as a journalist for the newspaper *De Indiër*.

Table 9. Razoux Kühr on *De Indiër* (January 1, 1917)

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Want Tjipto ... is blijkbaar weer hersteld, opnieuw geschikt voor den schoonen arbeid der verheffing zijner bruine broeders tot den heilstaat der zelfstandigheid. Het is een aardig spannetje: Razoux Kühr en Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. De eerste hoofdredacteur, de tweede redacteur.</i> (Razoux Kühr, 1917) | <i>For Tjipto ... seemed to have recovered and was once again ready for the noble work of lifting his brown-skinned brothers to the utopia of independence. It was a good team: Razoux Kühr and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. The first was the editor-in-chief, the second the editor.</i> |
|--|---|

Razoux Kühr's authenticity in this quote is manifested through the way he reflexively positions himself in clear political relations within the colonial field. By associating his own name with Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Razoux Kühr explicitly places himself alongside radical Bumiputra movement figures, not as an external observer, but as a comrade-in-arms in the project of “verheffing” towards “zelfstandigheid”. His reference to himself as “de eerste hoofdredacteur” is not merely structural information, but an affirmation of his authoritative position in articulating the discourse of resistance. At the same time, the subtle irony in the phrase “den schoonen arbeid der verheffing” serves as a critique of the colonial discourse that often reduced Bumiputra emancipation to a European moral mission. Thus, Razoux Kühr positioned himself as a defender of the Bumiputra and the non-cooperative political movement, while at the same time confronting the repressive colonial apparatus and political delegitimization discursively. His authenticity was present as an Indo-European who was aware of his position in colonial discourse, openly negotiating his identity and allegiance within the colonial power structure.

Razox Kühr's intellectualism in the newspaper *De Indiër* will be analyzed in the same way as the previous text, namely argumentative sentences, contradictions, details, assumptions, metaphors, and rhetoric.

Table 10. Razoux Kühr on *De Indiër* (January 1, 1917)

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Ja, lezer, dat noemt men nu anti-Nederlandsch. Dat begrip is zoo rekbaar en plooibaar</i> | Yes, readers, that is what is called anti-Dutch. The term is so flexible and can be interpreted in many ways |
| <i>Het enkele feit dat ik die artikelen ... in mijn blad had opgenomen, stempelde mij anti-Nederlandsch ...</i> | The fact that I included these articles ... in my magazine, led to me being labeled anti-Dutch ... |
| <i>Een blad dat plaatsing verleent aan zoogenaamde opruiende artikelen ... werkt als veiligheidsklep ...</i> | A magazine that publishes articles considered inflammatory ... as a safety valve ... |
| <i>Ik zie niet in dat het uitgeven of redigeeren van een dergelijk blad anti-Nederlandsch is ... maar, als het een of andere ambtenaartje, natuurlijk achter de schermen, volhoudt dat het toch anti-Nederlandsch is ... Ave Imperator, moritu te salutant! Eat is PRO-Nederlandsch! Bah!</i> (Razoux Kühr, 1917) | I do not see that publishing or editing such a magazine is anti-Dutch ... However, if a minor official, behind the scenes of course, insists that it is anti-Dutch ... Ave Imperator, moritu te salutant! (Hail Emperor, they salute you with death!) That is PRO-Dutch! Bah! |

This text demonstrates Razoux Kühr's intellectuality in dismantling colonial political categories as constructions of power. By referring to the term “*anti-Nederlandsch*” as “*rekbaar en plooibaar*”, he reveals that this label is not an objective marker, but rather an administrative instrument that is elastic and can be adapted to the interests of the state. He then shifts the issue from the personal to the structural realm by asserting that the articles he published represent collective unrest, not individual opinions that can be silenced just like that. His argument is reinforced by rational cause-and-effect logic: restrictions on the press actually encourage political expression to take illegal forms that are more difficult to control. Within this framework, the press is positioned as a “*veiligheidsklep*,” a social mechanism that channels tension openly and in a controlled manner.

At the cognitive level, Razoux Kühr constructed a mental model of the Indies as a political community that had the right to speak and participate, regardless of colonial racial classifications. The satire “*Ave Imperator*” served as an ironic conclusion that exposed the absurdity of demands for absolute loyalty to the state. Macroscopically, this text reflects the crisis of legitimacy of colonial power, which relied on the criminalization of opposition, while the press and intellectuals functioned as counter-actors in an alternative public sphere. Thus, Razoux Kühr's intellectualism lies in his ability to transform contextual criticism into a collective rational framework that challenges colonial domination while affirming the right to political participation in the Indies.

Razoux Kühr finally left the newspaper *De Indiër* and was replaced by a European named Later as editor-in-chief. Razoux Kühr's dismissal as editor-in-chief was likely triggered by the editorial leader's ideas not being in line with those of Insulinde officials, particularly Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, who was more radical in his nationalist ideas (H.S. (Henk Sneevliet), 1918). We assume that this was most likely because Razoux Kühr was more inclined towards liberal political movements with a cooperative tone.

Table 11. Razoux Kühr on *De Indiër* (January 1, 1917)

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>... de redactie persoonlijk de algehele zelfstandigheid van Indië als het hoogst bereikbare ideaal beschouwt, zal zij koch in haar streven voeling trachten te houden en samen te werken met de Regeering</i> (Razoux Kühr, 1917) | ... the editorial board personally considers the complete independence of the Indies to be the highest ideal that can be achieved, and even so, will strive to maintain contact and cooperation with the government. |
|--|--|

Ultimately, this statement confirmed the ideological conflict between Razoux Kühr, who was liberal and cooperative, and Insulinde, which was a nationalist-radical party. The two were on opposite sides of the political spectrum, even though they had once been united in their criticism of colonial rule.

Concluding the Journey in *Perniagaan* newspapers

On January 1, 1918, Razoux Kühr decided to become editor-in-chief of the *Perniagaan* newspaper. It can be said that Razoux Kühr's return to journalism attracted considerable attention because there had been no news about him for about a year. Razoux Kühr last served as editor of the newspaper *De Indiër* in January 1917. In addition, *Perniagaan* was a major newspaper and *Sin Po's* main competitor (Rahzen, 2007), where Razoux Kühr began his journalism career.

The authenticity of Razoux Kühr in the *Perniagaan* newspaper was analysed using pronouns, diction, and certain keywords.

Table 12. Razoux Kühr on *Perniagaan* (January 1, 1918)

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Begimana tjetek pengertiannja marika itoe! Begimakah bisa djadi pranakan Tionghoa jang pri pengidoepannja ada tjotjok betoel dengan pengidoepan di ini kolonië, dengan mendadak maoe dibilang tiada ada poenja kaperloean lagi di sini? [...] tentoe bagi sasoeatoe orang Tionghoa ada sanget penting djika ia poenja tana aseli Tiongkok, bisa djadi madjoe, tapi [...] dengan ini ia ada kaperloean [...] [...] keada'an dari negri, [...] [...] iaorang tinggal. [...] [...] keadaän di ini negri [...] dibilang iaorang soeda [...] [...] pada Tiongkok, malahan djoestroe Tiongkok nanti djadi beroentoeng, djika ia poenja poetra poetra bisa bikin satoe negri, jang bersobat sama Tiongkok dan jang njata bisa membri kekajaän, mendjadi seperti kolonie di Tionghoa dan boeka pasar di ini negri boeat barang-barang perniaga'an dan barang-barang asli peroesahan dari Tiongkok. (Razoux Kühr, 1918a)</i> | How shallow their understanding is! How could the Chinese peranakan, whose entire lives are truly in harmony with life in this colony, suddenly want to be considered as no longer having any interests here? [...] Of course, it is very important for a Chinese person if his homeland, China, can become advanced, but [...] with that he still has an interest [...] [...] in the state of the country where [...] [...] he lives. [...] [...] the situation in this country [...] is said to have [...] [...] to China; in fact, it is China that will ultimately benefit if its sons are able to build a country that is friendly to China and that can actually provide wealth—becoming a kind of colony for China and opening up the market in this country for Chinese goods and products. |
|--|---|

Razoux Kühr's authenticity in this quote is articulated through his choice of pronouns, evaluative diction, and keywords that place him within the social sphere of the Indies, rather than as an outside observer. The use of the distant pronoun “*marika itoe*” marks a position of opposition to the discourse that negates the existence and importance of Peranakan Chinese in the Indies. Still, this distance is immediately offset by relational diction such as “*ini kolonië*” and “*di ini negri*”, which affirm attachment to a shared living space. By repeating references to the place of residence and the conditions of the country where “*iaorang tinggal*”, he shifts the debate from ethnic origins to concrete social realities. In this framework, the keyword “*kaperloean*” serves as the axis of the argument, showing that identity and loyalty are determined by socio-economic involvement in the place of residence, not solely by the land of origin. At the same time, diction such as “*bersobat*”, “*boeka pasar*”, and “*membr i kekajaän*” reveal the formulation of rational and pragmatic Chinese-Indonesian relations as Indies relationships, transcending the narrow dichotomy between “here” and “there.” Thus, Razoux Kühr's authenticity serves as both a defence of the social legitimacy of the Peranakan Chinese in the Indies and a challenge to the colonial narrative that separates the Chinese community from the social space in which they live and contribute.

Razoux Kühr's intellectualism in the *Perniagaan* newspaper is analysed through argumentative sentences, contradictions, details, assumptions, metaphors, and rhetoric.

Table 13. Razoux Kühr on *Perniagaan* (January 1, 1918)

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>... di Pern. dikasi denger sadja swaranja orang-orang dengan pendapat dan pikiran jang mateng, dengan adat sabar serta aloes, sedeng halaman ini soerat kabar nanti ditoetoepe bagi itoe orang-orang jang seboet dirinja pembela bangsa, padahal iaorang tiada lebi dari pada toekang mendjerit tiada karoean ... Dengan djalan begitoe Pern. nanti djadi perimbangan bagi itoe gerakan jang semingkin lama djadi semingkin madjoe dan jang saja anggep bole meroesaken oeroesan bangsa Tionghoa. (Razoux Kühr, 1918a)</i> | <i>... in Perniagaan who are patient and tactful, are heard in the Chamber of Commerce, while this newspaper will be closed to those who call themselves “defenders of the nation,” when in fact they are nothing more than reckless loudmouths ... In this way, Perniagaan will serve as a counterbalance to this increasingly progressive movement, which I believe could be detrimental to the Chinese community.</i> |
|---|--|

In this excerpt, Razoux Kühr's intellectualism is evident in his ability to construct argumentative criticism through clear conceptual distinctions, evaluative metaphors, and editorial affirmations. The conflict between those with “*pikiran jang mateng*” and those who call themselves “*pembela bangsa*” but are reduced to “*toekang mendjerit*” forms a normative boundary between mature rationality and opportunistic emotional activism. By detailing the ethical qualities of discourse participants, he positions the press as a space for disciplined reasoning, not an arena for agitation. His assumption that movements that are increasingly “*madjoe*” still have the potential to “*meroesaken oeroesan bangsa Tionghoa*” shifts the focus from the quantity of mobilisation to the quality of rationality. At the same time, the use of “*saja*” affirms editorial authority and responsibility in regulating the boundaries of discourse.

From a socio-cognitive perspective, this discourse reinforces the conceptualization of the Indies as a collective social space characterized by practical relationships rather than solely by ethnic background. The emphasis on engagement and “*kaperloean*” normalizes the Peranakan Chinese as legitimate social actors within the colonial framework. At a macro level, this text exemplifies the crisis of discursive authority and political representation in colonial society, with the press serving as a rational counterbalance amid negotiations of identity and the pressures exerted by repressive power. Consequently, Razoux Kühr's intellectualism attains its reflective form through the regulation of the public sphere, the affirmation of community legitimacy, and the development of rational alternatives to colonial discourse.

Discussion

Razoux Kühr's journalistic trajectory across *Sin Po*, *Pertimbangan*, *De Indiër*, and *Perniagaan* exemplifies a sustained dedication to a liberal ideology, alongside the articulation of authenticity as an Indo-European rooted in the Indies rather than in a normative European colonial identity. Razoux Kühr's ideological transformation did not occur in a vacuum; rather, it resulted from a complex interplay of colonial structural pressures, internal fragmentation, the ecosystem of the printing industry, and even his own physical condition. Over a span of at least ten years, Razoux Kühr experienced an ideological shift from serving as a colonial instrument in the role of a civil servant to becoming a critic of colonial policies through his work as a journalist at *Sin Po* (Redacteur, 1935; Termorshuizen, 2012). This evolution is closely associated with psychological symptoms indicative of the intense pressure exerted by the colonial order, rendering journalism an essential means of escape (Freud, 2004; LaCapra, 2001; Taylor, 2012). Accordingly, the trajectory of Razoux Kühr can also be interpreted as that of an oppressed individual enduring the oppressive colonial regime.

In *Sin Po*, this authenticity manifests through its alignment with the Peranakan Chinese as an integral component of Indies society, framing liberalism as a recognition of cross-ethnic interdependence within the colonial order (K.H.T., 1916; Razoux Kühr, 1915; Redacteur, 1935; Termorshuizen, 2012). Ideologically, *Sin Po* integrates liberalism and Chinese nationalism (Jayusman & Fachrurozi, 2021; Redacteur, 1935; Yaqiin & Nasution, 2024). Liberalism emphasises individual freedom, equality before the law, and democratic principles (Bell, 2014; Gaus et al., 2025), whereas Chinese nationalism was inspired by Sun Yat Sen's anti-colonial movement and his opposition to the Qing Dynasty (Kuo, 2017). In the Indies, this nationalist movement was predominantly propagated by Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan (THHK), with *Sin Po* serving as a significant platform (Jayusman & Fachrurozi, 2021; Wahid, 2025). As editor-in-chief, Razoux Kühr actively reinforced this ideological movement within colonial discourse, illustrating that his role extended beyond formal editorial responsibilities and positioned him as a supporter of liberal values and a sympathiser of Chinese nationalism.

Conversely, transformations within the discourse of the printing business ecosystem also transpired when Razoux Kühr transitioned from *De Indiër* to *Perniagaan*. The ideological rift that manifested during his collaboration with Insulinde figures such as Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo suggests that this shift originated from a fundamental disagreement (H.S. (Henk Sneevliet), 1918; Termorshuizen, 2012). Although he shared similar concerns about colonial injustice, Razoux Kühr's liberal-cooperative stance was inherently difficult to reconcile with the nationalist radicalism that was increasingly emphasising mass agitation. Consequently, when the rhetoric in *De Indiër* was considered to have deviated too far from the boundaries of legal discourse, Razoux Kühr either resigned or was dismissed to uphold the integrity of his liberal principles.

By 1918, Kühr's moderate stance in the *Perniagaan* newspaper reflected a strategy of adaptation to the increasingly repressive and turbulent political landscape of the Dutch East Indies. At the national level, this shift was closely linked to the transition from Governor-General Idenburg to Limburg Stirum, who both mobilised and curtailed local authority within the *Volksraad* (Geyer, 1976; Holtrop, 2000). During this period, Razoux Kühr intentionally positioned himself as a balancing force responsible for regulating the public sphere by highlighting the significance of "mature thinking" (*pikiran jang mateng*) over uncontrolled emotions amidst the evolving national political context (Razoux Kühr, 1918a). Regrettably, the intellectual focus that should have been directed toward critiquing the macro-colonial structure was often hindered by personal disputes, notably his intense conflict with Hauw Tek Kong concerning past financial matters (Razoux Kühr, 1918b). Consequently, Kühr's moderate stance was not merely an ideological preference but also a pragmatic approach to safeguarding a space for meaningful discourse in the face of potential press criminalisation, as well as an effort to uphold the "Indiesness" he cherished through economic initiatives and social harmony rather than through open confrontation.

Razoux Kühr's authenticity is demonstrated by his ability to maintain narrative consistency despite facing vastly different audience segments. In *Sin Po*, his authenticity manifests as ethical solidarity, positioning liberal values as a bridge to acknowledge the existence of the Chinese community and the integral nature of Indian society. Conversely, *De Indiër* had an audience dominated by radical political activists and nationalist groups (Fakih, 2023; Niwandhono, 2011), thereby shifting the narrative toward political courage. However, the core of both approaches remained the same: rejecting the position of a detached "European spectator" and instead choosing the role of an "insider" or domestic subject possessing the solidarity and morality to correct the direction of power. This consistency demonstrates that his linguistic adaptation of an inclusive-pluralist style is not a form of intellectual inconsistency but rather a rhetorical strategy for voicing criticism of the same colonial structures to different audiences. Thus, Kühr's authenticity transcends racial boundaries, making him a unique figure capable of articulating the pluralistic discourse of "Indies for the people of Indies" long before the idea of formal independence had widely crystallised.

Razoux Kühr's intellectual pursuits transcended mere textual rhetoric by actively reshaping the social cognition within Dutch East Indies society through dismantling rigid racial identity boundaries. His writings introduced a novel perspective wherein "Indiesness" was defined beyond biological lineage or colonial legal status, aligning with the progressive Indo-European ideals of the period (Nugroho et al., 2025; Wijayanto, 2024). Razoux Kühr transformed his audience's consciousness from that of passive colonial subjects into that of critical citizens cognizant of their civil rights. For example, his incisive critiques in *Sin Po* and *Pertimbangan* (J.R.R.K., 1914; Razoux Kühr, 1916b) provided a cognitive framework that helped society recognise that their suffering was not an unavoidable fate but the consequence of structural policies that could be challenged. His intellectual acumen served as an "epistemic bridge" linking universal liberal values to local realities, thereby fostering the emergence of cross-ethnic solidarity that government segregation policies had previously fractured. Consequently, Razoux Kühr's intellectual influence resides in his capacity to alter the societal paradigm—from a submissive society to absolute authority to one that demands transparency, justice, and the recognition of human dignity within the colonial context.

Overall, the trajectory of Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr across various media reflects the complexity of an Indo-European intellectual striving to formulate a political identity amidst the rigidity of colonial structures. Although his career path showed fluctuations from radicalism toward moderation influenced by health factors, ideological tensions, and personal polemics, the "common thread" of his intellectuality remained consistent, the effort to use the press as a space of negotiation for the Indies society. Kühr's authenticity lay in his courage to remain a critical subject in his liminal position, neither fully European nor fully Bumiputra, allowing him to voice cross-ethnic aspirations that transcended narrow group interests. Ultimately, Razoux Kühr's contribution to colonial journalism in the 1911–1918 period proves that liberal voices from the Indo-European community played a crucial role in sowing the seeds of critical public awareness. Through the deconstruction of colonial authority and the formation of new social cognition, Kühr not only left behind a textual legacy but also helped imagine an Indies society that was more equal, rational, and civilised within a pluralistic public sphere.

Conclusion

This article asserts that Jacobus Rudolph Razoux Kühr's writings in *Sin Po*, *Pertimbangan*, *De Indiër*, and *Perniagaan* form a cohesive intellectual enterprise rooted in the sociocultural dynamics of the Indies. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis, the study reveals that his liberalism was adaptively situated within its historical context, articulated in response to evolving political landscapes and audiences rather than as a rigid doctrine. Razoux Kühr's identity as an Indo-European served as a moral authority, enabling him to transcend normative colonial solidarities and conceptualise the Indies as a shared social and political domain. His critique functions not merely as resistance to colonial authority but also as engagement with ethical responsibility and political participation within colonial society. Furthermore, this research demonstrates that Kühr's intellectual agency significantly influenced his readership's social cognition by deconstructing racial hierarchies and fostering a cross-ethnic conception of "Indiesness." More broadly, this investigation contributes to the field of intellectual history by emphasising the inseparability of ideology, discourse, and positionality. The case of Razoux Kühr exemplifies how colonial intellectual agency was historically situated and discursively constructed, illustrating that the colonial press was not solely a vehicle for information but also a vital catalyst for negotiating modern political identity in the Indies.

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