

Approaches to Indonesia's Foreign Policy: Area Studies, FPA Theory, and Global IR

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Abstract

The research traces the evolution of Indonesia's foreign policy studies, highlighting the major theoretical and methodological trends that have shaped their current form. As a starting point, the research introduces a discourse on non-Western Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), having developed beyond the dominance of the Western-rooted International Relations (IR) discipline. Indonesia's foreign policy studies evolve through two stages. The first stage occurred during the Cold War until the early 2000s. It demonstrates a scholarship development characterized by an attempt to promote a national-focused or area studies perspective, despite the influence of realism and positivism. The second stage, visible since the mid-2000s, shows the advancement of diverse theory-driven inquiries, having been moved by the younger generation of scholars more exposed to various theories and research methods in IR. Dealing with these two phases of the studies will likely build Indonesia's foreign policy studies' inclusive, critical, and unique identity. It can be realized by adopting and contextualizing approaches offered by state transformation theory, critical realism, and reflexive theorizing in IR to unpack the relatively overlooked aspects of Indonesia's foreign policy.

Keywords: area studies, Global IR, Indonesia's foreign policy, mainstream theories, multiplicity, non-Western identity

Introduction

The research examines the development of studies on Indonesia's foreign policy. The evolving discourses on the major theoretical and methodological trends influence the focus in International Relations (IR) discipline. This inquiry is relevant for two interrelated reasons. First, there is a growing interest in the Indonesian IR community to account for how IR is researched, studied, and taught at universities and research institutes in the country (Hadiwinata, 2009; Wicaksana, 2018; Wicaksana & Santoso, 2022). Nonetheless, the current scholarly works on IR in Indonesia have yet to specifically highlight the evolution of Indonesia's foreign policy studies. Hence, the research contributes to closing this knowledge gap. Second, thoroughly exploring the crucial phases of Indonesia's foreign policy studies can help researchers and scholars better understand which concepts, theories, and methods are most significant to employ for their academic purposes.

The research undertakes a comprehensive literature review between April and September 2022 to collect related sources informing three essential components of the studies: 1) the most influential pieces, 2) the major themes of discussion, and 3) what ideas make changes to the academic and practical interests. The research mainly argues that it is likely to construct an inclusive, critical, and unique identity on Indonesia's foreign policy studies. It endeavors to locate the intellectual basis to found a non-Western Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) stream from Indonesia.

The remainder of this article proceeds in five steps to explore the arguments. The first section tries to conceptualize what non-Western FPA means. The second part looks at the past trends in Indonesia's foreign policy studies from the Cold War until the early 2000s. Then, it outlines the development of a scholarship found upon an area studies perspective besides referring to FPA-dominant theoretical and methodological frameworks. The overview is followed by a discussion of Indonesia's foreign policy scholars' tendency to improve theory-driven research programs for academic and policy interests. Next, it further progresses the studies. In the fourth section, the research proposes prospective topics for the future horizon of Indonesia's foreign policy studies. The research considers the potential of advancing local-based knowledge by applying state transformation theory, critical realism, and reflexive theorizing in IR. Finally, the research emphasizes the contribution Indonesia's foreign policy studies can make to project the discourse of Global IR

What, and Why, is Non-Western FPA?

The research conceptualizes non-Western FPA within the context of the evolution of FPA as a sub-field of IR. FPA has developed since the 1950s, particularly at universities in North America and Western Europe. Seen from the origins, it is understandable that FPA was called part of Western Social Science. FPA was also labeled the core of the Cold War IR since the former reached its impressive theoretical and methodological advancements during the 1960s and 1970s. It appeared along with the surges of dominant IR theories, such as

neorealism and neoliberalism. Moreover, traditional FPA concentrated on analyzing decision-making through ideas, institutions, and practices describing the preoccupation with high political state-centric agendas, mainly military security, ideological conflicts, territorialism, and proxy wars. An excellent reference to understanding this past picture of FPA is Holsti (1996). However, following the collapse of the bipolar international system and the intensifying impacts of economic globalization, contemporary FPA was born and demonstrated the spirit to adjust to changes taking place in the real world and maintain its relevance by embracing new theories and methodologies (Alden & Aran, 2016; Hill, 2015; Hudson & Day, 2019).

Another significant development within the contemporary FPA is the emergence of foreign policy studies beyond North America and Western Europe. The new platform of FPA displays a broader geographical scope of the studies and appreciation of differences from more nationally or local-oriented perspectives on foreign policy (Brunner & Hudson, 2015). Hence, the research observes binary streams of FPA direction; the mainstream FPA keeps up the preponderance of Western-centrism on one side and the pro-local non-Western knowledge production practice on the other. The research settles the interpretation of the evolution of studies on Indonesia's foreign policy in this context of FPA narratives, shedding more light on the latter trajectory.

Yet, the research underscores the importance of the locally-framed studies and research on Indonesia's foreign policy; it does not mean to discard the relevance of the existing Western-minded FPA theories and methodologies. On the contrary, by exposing the significant contributions of the locale, it aims to foster a view of a genuinely global FPA. The research borrows the way of thinking about Global IR, as initiated and advocated by Acharya (2014a, 2014b), and enriches its debates by unpacking the intriguing case of the development of Indonesia's foreign policy studies.

Acharya and other proponents of the Global IR argue that the study of world politics has been hegemonized by theories and methodologies drawn upon Western (mainly European) social, cultural, and political experiences. This knowledge system was then claimed to be scientific with a universal truth, defying the rights of non-Western (beyond European) societies to uphold their native intellectual traditions (Eun, 2019). The universalization of Western IR must be rejected. The mainstream IR paradigms must be criticized. IR scholars and studies beyond Western Europe and North America must promote their original ideas, conduct theorization based on local knowledge and practices, and voice them in the international IR academic media. These enterprises appreciate inclusivity and plurality in contemporary IR. Over the last decade, the Global IR movement has risen everywhere, from Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Oceania, to Latin America.

Building upon this feature of the contemporary IR, non-Western FPA is characterized as: 1) produced through research emphasizing the saliency of local factors to explain foreign policy behavior; 2) taking a critical position or criticizing the established FPA theory; 3)

practicing reflexive thinking on national and international phenomena; and 4) acknowledging pluralism and complexity of worldviews from diverse nations.

The characteristics contrast with the West-originated FPA, which upholds the universal values of the major IR perspectives, considers all actors are similar or fails to distinguish national or local uniqueness, and perpetuates the dominance of positivism as the philosophy of research. However, it should be recognized that some local scholars prefer to use mainstream theories and methodologies and otherwise. Therefore, the emphasis on non-Western or Western FPA is more on the substance and process of knowledge production than the person or institution behind it.

Promoting Indonesia's foreign policy studies as a case for non-Western FPA is essential. First, it can change the traditional understanding of the conduct of Indonesia's foreign policy, which is regarded as reflexive of foreign actors' interests. Second, an Indonesian approach to Indonesia enforces the view that the country has intrinsic importance to reach in the global and regional arenas. Third, it opens up the space for new and different outlooks on policymaking and execution in Indonesia.

The Space for an Area Studies Perspective

Influential literature on the origins and evolution of Indonesia's foreign policy has long focused on the so-called *bebas aktif* (independent and active) idea and practice as the principal knowledge about the country's diplomatic affairs and international activism. This knowledge was produced and reproduced through the teaching and research of Indonesia's foreign policy, primarily referring to an approach introduced and developed by scholars such as Leifer (1983), Weinstein (1976), and Suryadinata (1996). They provide a framework of thinking and analysis of Indonesia's foreign policy guided by the established realist dictum that domestic politics is the primary source of foreign policy. Leifer (1983) explains Indonesia's foreign policy using factors like the nature of revolutionary nationalism, the dominant elite interests, and patterns of political power struggles. Weinstein (1976) reveals a conservative worldview that drove foreign policy under Sukarno and Suharto. Later, Suryadinata (1996) adds other domestic considerations, including political culture and regime structure, to understand Indonesia's international leadership aspiration in the early 1990s. Although taking different angles and highlighting diverse dynamics, such three works have said the same: it would be better to study Indonesia's participation in international politics by advancing a national or local perspective.

In line with this area studies orientation, variants of positivism are employed to guide foreign policy research. The inquiries began with establishing a general theoretical tool from which essential concepts, including national interests, power, and diplomacy, are connected systematically. In addition to these realist foreign policy metanarratives, a set of levels of analysis is selected to help direct the empirical investigation into the most relevant factors. Finally, particular local conditions are the basis for a hypothesis or argument. Of this deductive logic, the most significant variables to examine are the characteristics and

consequences of regime change from Sukarno's leadership (1945-1965) to Suharto's New Order (1966-1998). The result is an alteration in the state's foreign policy direction, notably from Sukarno's intimacy with the Eastern Bloc to Suharto's close friendship with the West capitalist governments and international organizations. The selections of cases are reflexive of the evolving conceptual guidance. Therefore, the conclusions are unsurprisingly predictable, confirming the constructed theory's applicability to the Indonesian context.

One of the crucial elements of the long learning process from Western scientific instruments was Indonesian foreign policy scholars' ability to translate the global/systemic-level theoretical features into local-nuanced knowledge building. Although there has never been any claim from Indonesian academics of a theory of Indonesia's foreign policy, the promotion of particularities is sufficient enough to recognize the value of 'Indonesianism'. The mainstream Western-centric FPA has been widely accepted and applied within the Indonesian IR community. It is not only about realism's entrenched influence on the older generation of Indonesian IR lecturers, researchers, and practitioners trained in North American tertiary institutions. The later acceptance of constructivism also convinces everyone that Indonesia should not have a dream about indigenous theories. However, the awareness about the meaning of difference and the search for the viability of the grand theories in country-specific situations have arisen among Indonesianists. The decolonization of the Third World nations successfully elevates the status of the colonized societies and brings their intellectual wealth to the center stage of global academia. So thanks to post-colonial studies with their emancipatory voices for opening up the covert South.

Local IR scholars in Indonesia have attempted to distinguish their views on Indonesia's external affairs and actions from the dominant theories. For example, Indonesian historical realism depicts the country's nationalist elite's outlook on the phenomenon of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism instead of the anarchical international system in Hans Morgenthau's classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's neorealism. The historical realist texts were mainly written during the 1960s (Abdulgani, 1964). Indonesian historical realists noticed that the foundation of post-colonial organizations, mainly the Asian African Conference, which gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement, had informed about Indonesia's highest profile foreign policy achievement on the Cold War stage. First, Jakarta accelerated decolonization worldwide. Second, it shaped an international order working beyond the great power bipolarity, thus allowing the Third World nations to obtain their equal international status and role vis-a-vis the developed West. This Global South project has received greater intellectual interest today because of its persistence and potential agency in post-bipolar world politics (Braveboy-Wagner, 2009).

Later, the regionalist vision adopted from the European experiences was localized in the form of normative but functional regional institutionalism of ASEAN. It was to serve Indonesian-defined objectives in Southeast Asia. Indonesia's foreign policy activity is continually understood as interlinked with ASEAN in regional geopolitics (Rüland, 2018). Anwar (1994) provides an excellent descriptive analysis of the ideologically-led power politics of regionalism in Southeast Asia and the significant contributions Indonesia and ASEAN had made together to stabilize and secure the region. Anwar has become one of the leading

references for ASEAN scholars to comprehend the inside picture of the first 30 years of the Association's development, certainly with Indonesia's leadership role turning out to be its chief institutional pillar. The discourse of ASEAN as Indonesia's foreign policy cornerstone was also vindicated by the regionalist interpretation of the intra-ASEAN interactions.

The post-Cold War international relations and domestic changes in Indonesia pave the way for the mushrooming of epistemological reformism in Indonesia's foreign policy studies. Following the rising popularity and utility of neoclassical realism, Rose (1998) first familiarizes the term, and the two-level game approach of Putnam (1988), gains traction in Indonesia's foreign policy scholarship. Working from an area studies perspective, Sukma (1999) studies how the regional and domestic environments had influenced decision-makers in Jakarta to normalize relations with China. Sukma's neoclassical realist modeling pioneered the agenda of synergizing the currents of Western FPA theories and the local explanatory variables. It matters when ones consider the foreign policy as the interface of internal and external dynamics of the state. He (2008) applies this style of analysis in his work on post-Suharto foreign policy, examining the impacts of democratization and international pressure on Indonesia's changing behavior toward sensitive security issues. Of course, in the way of thinking promoted by Sukma and other neoclassical realists, the local circumstances are given more weight in explaining policymaking, execution, and change. An essential historical realist study with a leaning toward neoclassical realist analysis is presented by Djalal (1995). He synthesizes geopolitics, diplomacy, and international law as the primary concepts to understand the central position of the UNCLOS in making Indonesia's modern archipelago. Djalal has led many who study Indonesia's maritime affairs and diplomacy to appreciate normative reasoning behind Indonesia's stance on issues like the South China Sea disputes. The descriptive study by McRae (2019) is excellent reading for this case.

Nonetheless, recently, a disagreement has arisen between Indonesian realists and regionalists, focusing on the prospects of ASEAN continuing to serve as the state's main diplomatic vehicle amid the multifaceted dynamics that have shaken the Indo-Pacific region. The realists oppose ASEAN, but the regionalist defends it. Their contending opinions indicate each other's penchant for relying on certain domestic factors in explaining the country's international priority. On one hand, the Indonesian realist version of geopolitics sends a message of faithfulness to internal structural constraints on the country's regional ambitions. Therefore, a traditionally-maintained skeptical outlook on regional institution building keeps on affecting. On the other hand, the regionalists and ASEAN apologists in Indonesia are confident in foreseeing the relevance of ASEAN, even though the great powers are returning to reorder East Asia (Natalegawa, 2018). Notwithstanding this inconclusive academic contestation, it is favorable concerning local knowledge development.

Progress through Diverse Theory-driven Inquiries

Entering the 2000s, the second phase of Indonesia's foreign policy studies has come about. The area studies perspective remains essential in research and publication on many aspects of the country's international relations. Interestingly, Indonesia's foreign policy

scholars are broadening the scope and substance of the studies' theoretical and methodological instruments. Theories and methods associated with constructivism, English School, post-colonialism, and feminism in IR are engaged, thus producing a broader spectrum of intellectual debates. However, it should be acknowledged that this positive development in Indonesia's foreign policy studies came late compared to FPA in other developing countries, such as Brazil, India, South Korea, and Turkey. One might blame the long-standing and unchallenged thinking of prominent academic figures and policy analysts who had directed IR in Indonesia to become realist-thought and positivistic. They wrote textbooks and published many pieces demonstrating the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the realist-positivist approaches. Since their works were considered compulsory reading materials for IR university students, their way of viewing the world was likely to become hegemonic (Wicaksana & Santoso, 2022). Suppose this academic landscape had allowed space for area studies on Indonesia's foreign policy, it can be considered it was a realist local foreign policy epistemology.

In addition, although non-realist theoretical and methodological tools have attained a larger ground in Indonesia's foreign policy studies, the research and publication trends are more interested in applying concepts and theories to empirical cases instead of building new ones. Of course, they are critical of the established realist arguments, but none has shown the will to replace realism as the dominant point of view. An excellent example is Laksmana's study (2011), which offers a counter-realist position explaining how Indonesia has strengthened its regional and global profile. Laksmana shows that the successful diplomacy of emerging powers varies from their material power possession. However, on the other hand, it is underpinned by a non-material source of strength, including policy initiatives, advocacy, and networks. A case in point is Indonesia's peaceful process of democratic consolidation, which has helped bolster the country's international image. Furthermore, Indonesia is actively fostering defense diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region, where contested big players are embraced through the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus. Despite its interesting narrative and rich interpretation, Laksmana's article lacks original theorization. It focuses on empirical analysis of Indonesian-specific factors instead of formulating a theory to argue against realism. A similar tendency can be easily encountered in many other works using Indonesia's foreign relations as an illustration to verify their critique of the realists.

Diversifying theory-led research on Indonesia's foreign policy is more effective in the middle-range theory application. Some streams of constructivism contribute significantly to this favorable development. Role theory is well-employed by many scholars to discover the ideational force that moves foreign policy. In the case of Indonesia, Karim (2017, 2021a, 2021b) provides an advanced conceptualization of the state's role and demonstrates the limits to its pursuance. Karim's role theory works have focused on foreign policy under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's administration. He aptly utilizes role conception, contestation, and legitimation theory to locate critical arenas of conflict of interest and identity between the government (elite) and the mass (public). Besides this, role theory is relevant for analyzing the limits of a foreign policy ideal and implementation. Therefore, as Karim argues, the state needs to legitimize foreign policy decisions through two mechanisms: glorifying history and

intensifying symbolic means to uphold national unity. Rüländ (2017) also refers to role theory to approach Indonesia's foreign policy.

Middle power is a popular concept adopted by Indonesia's foreign policy scholars to analyze the country's position in various regional and global issues. The basic assumption is that Indonesia stays between the powerful and weaker actors. Due to its limited economic and military capabilities, Indonesia is not strong enough to control the external environment. However, it is not merely the object of the big players' influence and interest. Indonesia is seen as an active and exemplary member of the international community that struggles through multilateral diplomacy to order its immediate regions and promote global cooperation (Thies & Sari, 2018). Proponents of the middle power concept in Indonesia's foreign policy expect that by conducting constructive diplomatic roles, Indonesia could climb the higher ladder toward international actorship (Rosyidin, 2017). This 'middlepowermanship' has risen to be one of the most exposed foreign policy features since the Yudhoyono government has deepened involvement within many world fora received worldwide appreciation. Acharya (2014c) notes Jakarta's rising global visibility as Indonesia matters as a newly democratic actor. Domestic and foreign academics' enthusiasm to learn about Indonesia's middle power importance has been presented in wide-ranging theoretical observations and methods of analysis. The middle power diplomacy of Indonesia and other regional states creates a security environment in which a rules-based order is its central infrastructure, and cooperative diplomacy is its most favored approach (Abbondanza, 2022; Emmers & Teo, 2015; Ping, 2017). However, the middle power concept is confined to the extent that domestic politics, historical legacy, and strategic culture can interrupt the state's stable external relations (Beeson, Bloomfield, & Wicaksana, 2021).

Indonesia's democratization provides an interesting arena in which foreign policy can be studied differently from Sukarno's and Suharto's regimes. Democracy shifts the traditional understanding of Indonesia's foreign policy, an affair of the elite or high-level diplomatic officials, to become more affected by nongovernmental factors. Policy-makers must accommodate new stakeholders, values, interests, and problems, resulting in unintendedly extensive debates on decision-making (Gindarsah, 2012; Wirajuda, 2014). Studies are expanded to examine the connections between democracy and identity in Indonesia's foreign policy. It is an exciting theme because of Indonesia's multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious social characteristics. In many respects, the state's domestic politics and international relations are steered by identity-related issues. Emmers (2021) acknowledges Indonesia's unalienable relationship between democracy, identity, and foreign policy. However, the country's improved quality of procedural democracy does not automatically promote liberal democratic ideals and practices. Foreign policy scholars, particularly Sukma (2011), who observe the implementation of Indonesian democracy, criticize the gap between rhetoric and reality. Indonesia only talks about democracy but does not walk to meet it. This critical voice extends to a pessimistic view of the ability and will of the Indonesian government to democratize its regional foreign policy institutions, especially ASEAN, as noted by Rüländ (2021).

How Indonesia hedges against the great power is an attractive research question. To some scholars and observers, hedging is perceived as the actualization of the independent and active principle of Indonesia's foreign policy toward the post-Cold War power contests in the Asia-Pacific region. Well-established literature on hedging strategy claims that middle-power states will continue to take a balanced relationship with the competing, more prominent actors (Jackson, 2014). It aims to achieve multiple objectives, from regime survival to war prevention. Hence, understandably, strategic hedging consists of economic, military, and political measures enabling the weaker states to maneuver flexibly amid the sharpening power polarization of the stronger ones (Kuik, 2016). Indonesianists agree with such a conception of hedging as the third-way choice. Indonesia has no sufficient material and diplomatic resources to balance against rival China and the United States. At the same time, bandwagoning toward each significant player is deemed unlikely for Indonesia's national interests. A deep analysis of why Indonesia chooses an equidistant stance toward Beijing and Washington informs three explanatory factors; elite perception, political culture, and geopolitical dynamics. They explain why Indonesia tends to play the role of an order-builder in the Indo-Pacific instead of building a formal military alliance with the great powers (Wicaksana, 2022a). Indeed, Indonesia shows that the more minor power can utilize regional institutions to support its agency.

The previous examples of middle-range theory-guided work on contemporary Indonesia's foreign policy support the agenda to substantiate local-oriented knowledge-building practices. The growth of more practically-oriented research on crucial policy areas strengthens this progress. They usually take on current issues of concern to the government and the public. Unlike purely academic inquiry, policy research does not produce sophisticated conceptual or theoretical discussions. Instead, it aims recommend feasible policy options to overcome specific problems (Elisabeth, 2016). Generally, the research discovers the five most significant issue areas resolved by policy research: 1) Since Indonesian President Joko Widodo launched his maritime doctrine in 2014, local and foreign analysts have discussed its challenges and prospects; 2) Achievements and problems of the conduct of Indonesia's economic diplomacy; 3) Issues related to bilateral relations with regional neighbors or international partners encompass various aspects of conflict and cooperation. One topic which attracts considerable public attention is the ups and downs in Jakarta-Beijing ties; 4) The realization of Indonesia's ideas within international organizations; 5) Reforming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and boosting the performance of the state's diplomatic bureaucracy.

Capturing Multiplicity for Global FPA

Having observed the two stages of the development of Indonesia's foreign policy studies, the research further elaborates on how to move toward the future trajectories of a non-Western FPA with Indonesian characteristics. Borrowing from Loke and Owen's (2022) typologies of the mode of knowledge production practices, Indonesia's foreign policy studies can be localized and diversified so that their open, progressive, and unique identity is well-

featured. The process of knowledge localization is something crucial to heighten the academic benefits of the Indonesian IR community and FPA scholars. Knowledge diversification helps the studies reach status and earn legitimacy in the eyes of global intellectual societies. Drawing upon the existing scholarship products and the two reliable patterns of epistemic activity, the discussion offers three prospective sites to Indonesian-ize PFA: 1) state transformation theory, 2) critical realism, and 3) reflexive theorizing. The references to these theories and methods are significant in the context of the emergence of multiplicity, which depicts the nature of the current global politics. Acharya (2018) stresses multiplicity or the multiplex world, instead of multipolarity or the multipolar world, to explain the necessity to build polyversality in contemporary IR. It challenges the hegemonic status of Western cultural, political, and scientific traditions.

State Transformation Theory

Critical political economists widely use state transformation theory to analyze the dynamics of modern state governance. Jessop (2007) explains the dimensions of internal changes happening to the state spurred by domestic forces and international influences. State power, understood as the central government's ability to impose regulations on subnational groups, is affected by social and political frictions, conflicts among dominant classes, and transnational movements. Major political and economic players struggle for domination and exploitation of vital resources. Hence, politics of scale turns into the logic of conflict and cooperation among substate actors within the sovereign state. Hameiri and Jones (2015, 2016) conceptualize the phenomena of state transformation into three models; decentralization, fragmentation, and internationalization. They are utilized to explain how state transformation has disrupted the making and conduct of foreign policies in rising Third World powers (Hameiri, Jones, & Heathershaw, 2019). The findings are thought-provoking, arguing that domestic actors' divergent political and economic interests have interrupted policy formulation and implementation processes usually controlled by the executives. It happens even in undemocratic systems in countries like China and Saudi Arabia. As a result, complete centralization of power in the top bureaucratic apparatus is impossible to occur in the modern state.

Karim (2019) displays the usefulness of decentralization, fragmentation, and internationalization to reveal center-periphery relations in cross-border regionalism operating between Indonesia and neighboring ASEAN members. Such a general picture of state transformation can be reflected in the Indonesian case. According to Karim, the local governments, who have received more administrative authority to rule their regions, tend to disapprove of Jakarta's policy and enforce their rules over extractive industries. Consequently, the miniregionalism projects, encompassing Indonesia's peripheries and those of ASEAN neighbors, become hot spots of contestation between the central and peripheral administration structures. This vertically-contested politics is exacerbated by competition among the high-level officials of in-charge state agencies and ministries, generating policy inconsistency and weakening the execution.

Further looking at the impact on state power, as explained by Zakaria (1998), the low degree of the central government's policy enforcement capacity influences the choices for international actions. The more power the state possesses, the more assertive its position toward others in international and regional relations. On the other hand, the vulnerable state will not risk expanding its interests externally. Employing this political economy framework, Wicaksana (2022b) explains the reasons behind the failure of the Widodo government to pursue its populist objectives through foreign policy. Widodo's populism is effective domestically, but it is not manifested in Indonesia's pro-people diplomatic profile and activism due to the enduring pragmatic orientation of Indonesia's foreign policy conduct, the fragmented and weak central government, and conflicting interests of the dominant political and economic elites. They constrain any ideological motivation in the government's international activity.

City diplomacy is a prospective subject of study and research using the approach of state transformation theory. Besides the ongoing importance of FPA within the frame of the central government's ideas and practices, the local leaders have also demonstrated increasing attention, interests, and impacts in international affairs. Globalization creates a conducive atmosphere where cities can develop their external relationships and build their institutional power. Studies on city diplomacy are increasingly attractive to IR scholars, particularly since enormous state failures have plagued today's world order. Municipals around the globe gather and move together to reorder the traditional Westphalian system. City leaders develop many diplomatic networks to resolve transnational problems (Amiri & Sevin, 2020). How Indonesia's cities carry out their external relations, what drives them, and how they manage the potential for conflict of interest with the government in Jakarta or the higher levels of bureaucracy are essential topics that can be explored.

Moreover, the multidimensional crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that has proven to be devastating to the state government shows that city diplomacy and international politics are more connected. Local diplomatic channels and strategies can provide insights into Indonesian home-grown international relations. One question in mind is how city diplomacy can be situated within the framework of *bebas aktif* and what is at stake if city diplomacy is highly effective.

Critical Realism

Critical realism is not a theory of IR. However, it is a strand of the philosophy of science popularized by philosophers such as Rom Harre and Roy Bhaskar. Critical realists focus on ontology. They argue against classical and modern philosophies which acknowledge the existence of a single reality. For instance, Bhaskar (2010) claims that reality is stratified into three layers. The first layer is an empirical reality that one can experience physically. A second stratum is an event that is observable directly or indirectly using a particular technological and methodological instrument. Finally, the most profound reality is a visible and invisible mechanism, so the mechanism consists of the entirety of reality. It has structure and power

that generate and operate the event and empirical reality. In IR, critical realism has been associated with constructivism concerning the latter's ontological ambition and scientific practice. Some critical constructivists have even moved further to integrate critical realist thinking into their epistemological formula, aiming to sharpen its explanatory tool (Fiaz, 2014). However, other IR scholars, such as Beeson (2017), criticize constructivist theories from a critical realist perspective. Beeson notices that the underlying material structural power moves international politics and security. Thus, what is commonly perceived as international political constraints matter to state behavior. A case in point is the excellent power competition in the Asia-Pacific, which has shaped and reshaped the region's geopolitical architecture for decades.

Despite the debate on the relevance of critical realism for IR, an important lesson can be learned. Bhaskar's idea of the multilayered reality sends a message that either positivist or post-positivist research method prioritizes causal relationships is debatable. Instead, critical realists in IR argue for causation (Kurki, 2008). The discourse on causation challenges IR theories and methodologies on two fronts. First, it uncovers the lack of IR academics' awareness about the possibility of looking more profound than the commonly grasped social world. Second, the attention to the hidden structural forces and consequences has destabilized the established notion that to be scientific; one must leave the unseen. Therefore, approaching world politics through the lenses of critical realism means analyzing the multilevel presence and operation of a particular phenomenon beyond human thought (Patomäki, 2002). Critical realist FPA suits this direction. For example, Yalvaç (2012) approaches Turkish foreign policy from critical realism. He finds that the concept of strategic depth promulgated by the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been constrained by the underlying hegemonic structure that orders the region of Eurasia. Hence, the Turkish position on the world stage is unchanged. Jeong (2019) looks at middle-power countries from a critical realist point of view. Interestingly, it offers a distinct understanding of a network of like-minded governments who identify themselves differently, not following the broadly understood definition of a middle power.

Critical realism can help Indonesia's foreign policy scholars to develop alternative explanations for three questions. First, it is finding out how and why an idea or foreign policy practice is maintained? The research endeavors to rethink the continuity of the state's diplomatic pillars, such as nonalignment; why Indonesia sustains non-aligned toward the changing regional and global geopolitics is an under-research theme. Second, by applying critical realism to understand the major events in Indonesia's foreign policy evolution, it can be proven that they did not happen unconditionally. Intangible structures and power operated beyond the governmental office but led policymaking. Critical political economists claim that an oligarchic system works behind the political stage to arrange strategic policies (Robison & Hadiz, 2017). With this in mind, critical realism opens up the space for allying critical political economy and FPA theory to studying Indonesia's foreign policymaking. Third, critical realism justifies deconstructing the general agreement on Indonesia's role and position in the international system. Although many believe Indonesia is a middle power, it may mean something other than such a conception representing the truth of the country's international relations. The puzzle is what material and non-material circumstances have

limited Indonesian regional and global ambitions so that it is only positioned as a middle power. Amid the multiplicity of today's world politics, one can relate middle-power diplomacy, multilateral institutions, and transnationalism as the ground upon which the state's foreign policy is played out.

Reflexive Theorizing

The final recommendation is to confirm and contribute to the agenda of making FPA a global field of study along with the expansive and impressive attempt of Global IR. What has been produced on Indonesia's foreign policy is leading toward this project. First, the space created for area studies-oriented foreign policy research and theorization is a promising enterprise for an Indonesian-style FPA program. Second, the open-ended character of the FPA studies on Indonesia is advantageous to the non-Western knowledge production paradigm. Essentially, no one must rely on West-centrism in FPA to build competence and epistemic community. For these two reasons, as Eun (2022) rightly argues, reflexive theorizing is a crucial component of research and teaching contemporary international relations in Asia and Indonesia (emphasis added). The FPA community in Indonesia and foreign scholars interested in Indonesia's foreign policy have long comprehended the potential for an indigenous theory. Still, they have consciously avoided it (we already mentioned this propensity in the earlier section). However, in this section, it is time to change. The academic and empirical momentums are ripe enough to do more work on Global FPA from an Indonesian side.

Chinese scholars have given a worthy example of the effort to internationalize their local knowledge at the Global IR level. Although the claim for an IR theory with Chinese characteristics remains controversial in the eyes of the West-centric IR defenders, it does not mean that the locally-grounded IR is unrecognized. Acharya and Buzan (2019) stress that bottom-up theorizing will be more and more meaningful in the globalized international society, where non-Western nations are increasingly culturally, economically, and politically powerful vis-a-vis the declining West order. Reflexive methodologies and theories in the context of Global IR promise a revolutionary reconceptualization of what it means by scientific. According to positivists and post-positivists, scientific knowledge must be produced through procedures that denote the reliability of deductive and inductive logic. Whatever differences are encountered between these procedural ways of research, their purpose is similar, that is, to enforce the Western standard of knowledge building. On the contrary, reflexives commit not to bind their minds and practices to the established Western scientific norms and rules. Principally, all scientific products are historical, cultural, and even political. Every society is rightful to develop its worldview, including one on science. Therefore, the claim of truth is reflexive of the prevailing social order.

Critics of reflexive theorizing are concerned about the strengthening ethno-nationalistic interests driving the moves toward non-Western science. However, as critical theorist Cox (1983) argues on the subjectivity of modern science, nothing is quite natural about academic

activity. It is essential to advocate for legitimate plurality and inclusivity in knowledge production. Indonesia's foreign policy studies should appreciate the initiative to advance reflexive theorizing. Scholars and researchers of the studies can benefit from the wealth of Indonesian indigenous ethnic groups' cultural, social, political, and philosophical traditions to build distinct outlooks on the country's external relations. There have been a few pieces on this pro-local theme, such as Nguitragool (2012) on God-king and Wicaksana (2019) on the family state.

Nonetheless, their interpretations are still limited to one element of the majority of Javanese intellectual heritages. Reflexive theorizing can be more effective in undertaking pure field research on the perceptions, habits, beliefs, and symbols expressed in various segments of the Indonesian IR academic community. Little is known about why the long-standing realist pragmatic-oriented foreign policy ideas of *bebas aktif* are taken for granted. Why not think of a new different essence of *bebas aktif* based on the views of many social-cultural communities in Indonesia? This alternative vision is likely to generate a more original notion about Indonesia's position in the world.

Another intellectual endeavor that Indonesian scholars can conduct is systematically interpreting insights from great Indonesian thinkers regarding international order. Those insights can enrich the debate on studying foreign policy in the country. For instance, Kusno (2003) has successfully unpacked Tan Malaka's understanding of the colonial city and informs us about the discourse on people's consciousness in the colonial world. The same line of inquiry can be a pursuit to understand Tan Malaka's ideas of collectivism and how it raises the concept of Indonesia's foreign policy toward order-making in the Global South.

Conclusions

The research has surveyed and interpreted two phases of development in the studies on Indonesia's foreign policy. The first stage, shaped under the Cold War, though continued through the 1990s, informed that mainstream Western FPA theory and methodology mattered. However, scholars focusing on Indonesia's diplomacy and relations with the outside world have made essential attempts to explore more local or domestic explanatory tools to get better pictures of the decision-making and its driving force. This area studies orientation contributed to substantiating the studies as only partially mimicking the Western-rooted FPA. At this stage, an identity with Indonesian characteristics was already formed. The second stage of development appeared in the mid-2000s when the younger generation of scholars was more familiarized with various new theories and research methods in IR. Consequently, the area studies perspective that had made its way into Indonesia's foreign policy analysis was recalibrated by adopting diverse theory-driven inquiries. Indonesia's foreign policy scholarship becomes more colorful with the emergence of middle-range theorization under the headings of middle power, democracy, hedging, and policy-oriented research.

In addition, the research discovers and hopes to foster three intriguing themes in advancing Indonesia's foreign policy studies. First, the research notices the relevance of thinking about multiplicity as the nature of the current world politics and order. Therefore, it is highly likely to consider adopting the trajectories of Global IR in Indonesia's foreign policy studies. The research offers three theoretical and methodological approaches; state transformation, critical realism, and reflexive theorizing, which are relevant and significant to provide critical, new, and visionary insights into the studies. First, instead of taking Western scientific tools and procedures as the only standard of truth, Indonesia's foreign policy scholars can study from them and develop their original thinking. Second, by recognizing the importance of both Western and non-Western FPA, Indonesia's foreign policy scholars have contributed to supporting the emerging Global IR and Global FPA. In other words, the decolonization of FPA has made it a reality. Third, Indonesia's FPA is a possibility when more exploratory work on the covert aspects of the social phenomenon is undertaken, thus invigorating the identity of Indonesia's foreign policy studies.

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