

P-ISSN: 2338-1361
E-ISSN: 2338-1353

JAS

VOL. 10 NO. 1 AUGUST 2022

JOURNAL OF ASEAN STUDIES

 **CBDS**

Centre for Business and Diplomatic Studies

Department of International Relations,
BINA NUSANTARA UNIVERSITY

in cooperation with Indonesian Association of International Relations

 **Binus
Journal
Publishing**

 **S1**
sinta
Science and Technology Index

 Indexed by
Scopus

 **DOAJ**

JOURNAL OF ASEAN STUDIES (JAS)

Editor in Chief Tirta N. Mursitama

Editor in International Relations
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Moch Faisal Karim

Editor in Area Studies
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Lili Yulyadi Arnakim

Managing Editors
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Noerlina
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Christian Harito

International Editorial Board
Australian National University, Australia Pierre van der Eng
National University of Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia Kuik Cheng-Chwee
University of South Florida, United States Abbas Mardani
KEDGE Business School, France Yahia H. Zoubir
Leeds University, United Kingdom Adam Tyson
National Cheng Keung University, Taiwan Jenn-Jaw Soong
American University, United States Amitav Acharya
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia Nanthakumar Loganathan

Editorial Assistant
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Dewi Novianti
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Shavira Sarashita
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia Holil



JOURNAL OF ASEAN STUDIES

Volume 10 Number 1 2022

Contents

EDITORIAL

Deepening Connectivity and Mobility in Post-Pandemic ASEAN
Moch Faisal Karim, Tirta Nugraha Mursitama, Lili Yulyadi Arnakim

ARTICLES

- ASEAN Centrality: Comparative Case Study of Indonesia Leadership 1–19
Ratih Indraswari
- A Visual Identity-Based Approach of Southeast Asian City Branding:
A Netnography Analysis 21–42
*Bahtiar Mohamad; Raji Ridwan Adetunji; Ghadah Alarifi; Ahmed Rageh Ismail;
Muslim Diekola Akanmu*
- Enhancing Social Integration through Intra-ASEAN Travel 43–59
Gabriella Fardhiyanti; Victor Wee
- The Effect of the Internet on Inflation: A Research on ASEAN-5 Countries 61–79
Mustafa Necati Çoban
- Far from Home: Profile of pro-IS Deportees' Mobility throughout 2016-2020
and Prevention Strategy of Indonesian Government 81–105
Andi Raihanah Ashar; Curie Maharani
- Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond 107–127
Md Rafiqul Islam; Umme Wara
- Journey to Justice: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples in the Context of West Papua 129–149
Ani Widyani Soetjipto

journal.binus.ac.id/index.php/jas

Focus and Scope

The Journal of ASEAN Studies (JAS) is an open-access international peer-reviewed bi-annual journal that enriches understanding of the past, current, and future issues relevant to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as regional organisation, community, and Southeast Asia as a region. The article shall address multidisciplinary research on theoretical and/or empirical questions. The topics addressed within the journal include a wide range of spectrum across social sciences and humanities such as but not limited to international relations, diplomacy, economy and business.

JAS expects the articles encourage debate, controversy, new understanding, solid theory, and reflection on ASEAN. The articles sent should have a sharp analysis and rigorous methodologies quantitative or qualitative as well as written in an engaging and analytical style. The JAS does publish original research articles, review article, book review, practice notes, and research notes. However, JAS does not publish journalistic or investigative style of article. The JAS would not be responsible for any implied or written statements of articles published. Each author would be responsible for their own writing.

Journal of ASEAN Studies publishes the following types of manuscripts:

- **Original research articles:** The manuscripts should be approximately 6000-8000 words. The manuscripts must contain a review of the current state of knowledge on the research question(s) of interest, then share new information or new ideas that will impact the state of theory and/or practice in the area of ASEAN Studies and/or Southeast Asian Studies.
- **Review article:** The manuscripts should be approximately 1500-3500 words. The manuscripts must contain the current state of understanding on a particular topic about ASEAN and/or Southeast Asian Studies by analysing and discussing research previously published by others
- **Book review:** The manuscripts should be approximately 1500-4000 words. The manuscripts must contain a critical evaluation of book by making argument and commentary on the particular book discussed about ASEAN and/or Southeast Asian Studies.
- **Practice notes:** These are shorter manuscripts approximately 1500-3500 words that are of specific interest to practitioners. These manuscripts must present new development for the ASEAN.
- **Research notes:** Similar to practice notes, these are shorter manuscripts approximately 1500-3500 words that have specific implications for ASEAN. The manuscripts should employ rigorous methodology either qualitative or quantitative.

Centre for Business and Diplomatic Studies

Centre for Business and Diplomatic Studies (CBDS) is established as part of the International Relations Department, Bina Nusantara (BINUS) University. Our aims are to undertake and promote research and deliberation on diplomacy, business, international relations and developmental issues particularly in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and Asia Pacific.

We also commit to build, connect and share research and others kinds of knowledge generating activities for the betterment of life of the people and earth. Our immediate constituency is International Relations Department, BINUS University and the larger constituency is the broader academic community of the BINUS University and other universities and institutions both national and international as well as policy community.

CBDS publishes scholarly journal, working papers, commentaries and provides training and consultancies services in the areas of diplomatic training, negotiations, commercial diplomacy, conflict resolutions for business, business and government relations, promoting competitive local government in attracting foreign investment, and understanding impact of regional economic integration on development specifically toward ASEAN Community 2015.

CBDS

Secretariat

Kijang Campus,
Binus University

Jl. Kemanggisian Ilir III No. 45, Kemanggisian / Palmerah Jakarta
Barat 11480 +62.21 534 5830 ext.2453

+62.21 534 0244

<http://ir.binus.ac.id/cbds>

EDITORIAL

Deepening Connectivity and Mobility in Post-Pandemic ASEAN

Moch Faisal Karim, Tirta Nugraha Mursitama, Lili Yulyadi Arnakim

Department of International Relations, Faculty of Humanities, Bina Nusantara University,
Jakarta, Indonesia, 11480.

mkarim@binus.edu, tmursitama@binus.edu, lili.yulyadi@binus.edu

How to Cite: Karim, M. F., Mursitama, T. N., & Arnakim, L.Y.& (2022). Deepening Connectivity and Mobility in Post-Pandemic ASEAN. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.8868>

Keywords: Connectivity, Mobility, ASEAN integration, infrastructure, Post-Pandemic

Introduction

It has been widely discussed in the literature on regionalism that connectivity and mobility are two critical concepts that underpin the deepening of the regional integration project. Connectivity allows increased mobility of ideas, people, and goods, creating a more robust regional community. Connectivity enables a regional integration project to be economically sustainable and resilient against external shocks (Bhattacharyay, 2010). Arguably, regional integration should facilitate the mobility of welcomed and trusted travellers while concentrating their control resources on those prone to 'irregular' forms of migration. As a result, regional integration often deepens the establishment or reconfiguration of mobility spaces (Gülzau et al., 2016).

However, connectivity and mobility should not be seen merely as economic and infrastructural issues. We contend that these two issues are linked with the context of geopolitics, especially in light of the growing great power rivalry in the region. Connectivity could be mobilized as an instrument for a rising power to increase its domination in the region as a way to counter geopolitical competition with the great power (Flint & Zhu, 2019).

This is why the notion of connectivity has become the major impediment to ASEAN regional integration. In 2009, ASEAN member states' leaders envisioned the importance of increasing ASEAN regional connectivity among ASEAN member states. Such vision is translated into Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 adopted in 2010. Arguably ASEAN Connectivity is a cooperation program between ASEAN countries by building transportation and infrastructure connectivity between Southeast Asian countries in order to create an ASEAN Community. ASEAN Connectivity exists for the development of infrastructure, institutions and community empowerment.

ASEAN connectivity refers to three important things: physical connectivity, institutional connectivity, and inter-community connectivity. Physical connectivity includes connectivity in transportation, information, communication, and technology (ICT), and energy. Institutional connectivity covers trade liberalization and facilities, service and investment liberalization along with its facilities, mutually beneficial agreements and agreements, regional transportation agreements, inter-border procedures, and capacity-building programs. Lastly, inter-community connectivity focuses on the fields of education, culture, and tourism (Das et al., 2013). Concerning the logistics service sector, connectivity will determine the development of the logistics sector in ASEAN member countries, as well as determine the direction of continued cooperation in an effort to realize the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Permatasari, 2020).

Such connectivity then arguably allows for better regional mobility. In the context of regional integration, mobility within the region can be seen as an indicator of successful regional connectivity. That is why connectivity and mobility have become the primary objective under the Presidency of Joko Widodo (Wicaksana, 2017). President Joko Widodo's speech at EAS in November 2014 emphasized the connectivity aspect of the Global Maritime Fulcrum scheme. This can be seen in the government's emphasis on infrastructure development and maritime connectivity by building a sea highway along the Java coast, deep seaports and logistics networks, and the shipping industry and maritime tourism.

Meanwhile, in the Plan of Action for Indonesia's Ocean Policy 2016-2019, maritime connectivity and the maritime industry are among the five priority program clusters (Muhibat, 2017). For this reason, it is not surprising that ASEAN will always strive to synergize between MPAC 2025 and BRI and enhance regional connectivity while noting the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and ASEAN Centrality presented in the ASEAN regional initiative, ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific, which puts Connecting the Connectivity. Indonesia is ready to collaborate with foreign investors from ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries, especially China, to develop connectivity infrastructure. One form of collaboration can be done by synergizing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The main goal of ASEAN Connectivity is to make the Southeast Asian region more competitive in the global environment. The basic foundation for the development of ASEAN Connectivity is the ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan (MPAC). Regional connectivity formed between the regions of ASEAN member countries is expected to increase the economic growth

of ASEAN member countries. Moreover, the ASEAN connectivity initiative should be put within the context of the ASEAN geopolitical objective. The objective of increasing ASEAN connectivity is to maintain ASEAN centrality amidst the growing regional tension. This is why Indonesia, as the largest country in Southeast Asia, puts so much emphasis on ASEAN connectivity, given Indonesia policymakers continue to view ASEAN as its priority for Indonesia's ambition to be a global player and regional manager (Karim, 2021; Rosyidin & Pattipeilohy, 2020).

The Challenges of Connectivity and Mobility

In this pandemic era, mobility becomes very limited when borders become stronger, and mobility is considered a threat. In an effort to recover after COVID-19, ASEAN member countries agreed to take advantage of the momentum of economic recovery in promoting ASEAN financial stability and integration and affirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation to mitigate economic risks and challenges after the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, digital disruption and geopolitical tensions (Mursitama et al., 2021). This ensures that connectivity and mobility remain integral to efforts to build the ASEAN regional community.

In creating capital mobility, ASEAN tries to encourage further integration of the regional financial services sector, including upgrading the Financial Services Annex in the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) negotiations. In addition, ASEAN is completing studies on improving the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework (ABIF) guidelines toward increasing banking integration in the digital era. In the context of digital banking, ASEAN has undertaken a bilateral Cross-Border QR Code Payment Linkages initiative among ASEAN member countries, which is expected to be the first step toward developing a cross-border payment network in the Southeast Asian region. This initiative could position ASEAN as a global leader in inclusive retail payments connectivity. It is continuing the commitment to increase financial inclusion through increasing access, use and quality of financial services in the region. The meeting also appreciated the achievement of the average level of financial exclusion in ASEAN, which had exceeded the target and welcomed the publication of the "Policy Note on Digital Financial Literacy" and "Measuring Progress 2021: Financial Inclusion in Selected ASEAN countries", which supports financial inclusion measures. Such efforts to create capital mobility align with the notion of regulatory regionalism that dominates the approach to ASEAN banking integration (Karim et al., 2021). Despite the institutional connectivity that ASEAN aims to achieve, the domestic social forces dominating the banking industry might resist a deepening regional integration in banking by focusing on their respective domestic market rather than going abroad.

The biggest problems faced by ASEAN member countries in developing sustainable infrastructure are coordination, ownership, political leadership, funding (insufficient resource mobilization), and managing stakeholder expectations. At the regional level, the coordination problem becomes more complex because it does not only coordinate between countries and stakeholders within them but also with the subregional organizations that cover them. Each sub-regional cooperation organization likely has different development priorities with varying levels of complexity of problems in other regions. To illustrate, sub-regional

cooperation organizations such as IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA have their connectivity projects and want their projects to be a priority. Therefore, ASEAN seeks to support the activities of sub-regional organizations as a form of cooperation in achieving common goals.

On the other hand, infrastructure projects are very vulnerable to external challenges from outside the Southeast Asia region. Uncertain world economic conditions will hamper the funding and project implementation. The global economic downturn will also hinder project completion because infrastructure projects are capital-heavy. Apart from economic problems, infrastructure projects also have big geopolitical nuances. Donor countries will tend to choose projects that provide not only economic benefits but also provide geopolitical leverage.

However, there is still a gap between the need for funds and the availability of funds for connectivity development. Based on data from the Asian Development Bank, the funds needed for connectivity development in 2016 – 2030 are around US\$ 26 trillion, or around US\$ 1.7 trillion per year, to meet regional infrastructure needs, including climate change mitigation and adaptation costs. Without climate change mitigation and adaptation costs, the essential infrastructure investment required for the region is about \$1.5 trillion per year (Ra & Li, 2018).

Understanding Connectivity and Mobility

In this issue, we present seven articles that address the issue of connectivity and mobility in ASEAN. The first contribution, entitled *ASEAN Centrality: Comparative Case Study of Indonesia Leadership*, examines why ASEAN should maintain its centrality in the regional integration process in Asia. Centrality allows ASEAN to be the hub for any connectivity built to strengthen cooperation in Asia. Indraswari (2022) further argues that ASEAN Centrality varies as Indonesia's leadership depends on mutually inclusive variables. The three primary variables influencing ASEAN Centrality are individual country competencies to exercise leadership, especially the institutional mandate they received, the domestic interest of followers, and prevailing external pressures.

The second article, entitled *"A Visual Identity-Based Approach of Southeast Asian City Branding: A Netnography Analysis"*, focuses on the importance of city branding to boost their competitiveness among the global city brands. Mohamad et al. (2022) show how city branding enables a city to be metaphorically seen as an entity with the advantage of displaying its own visual identities and characteristics for attracting visitors and tourists and ultimately enhancing the city's economic value. This shows the importance of city branding in improving mobility within the region.

The third article, entitled *"Enhancing social integration through Intra-ASEAN travel"*, examines whether the social integration dimension connects individuals in preference to travelling within the ASEAN region. Fardhiyanti and Wee (2022) find a strong relationship between cultural adaptations, positioning, interaction and the growth of intra-ASEAN travel. They further show how ASEAN countries have developed a stronger familiarity and a sense of belonging to the community over the past five years since the ASEAN Economic

Community (AEC) establishment. In other words, cultural interaction is important in increasing regional mobility.

The fourth article, “The Effect of the Internet on Inflation: a Research on ASEAN-5 Countries”, examines how the internet connection has had a significant economic impact and provided financial benefits to nations worldwide to increase productivity and efficiency and reduce costs. Specifically, Çoban investigates the internet’s effect on inflation in ASEAN-5 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). He finds that internet usage increases and inflation rates decrease in ASEAN-5 countries. Çoban’s article focuses on an important yet unexplored aspect of connectivity, namely internet connectivity, in enhancing regional integration.

While all four articles above focus on how connectivity and mobility enhance regional integration, the other three explore how mobility and the lack of it may create a threat at the state and human levels. The fifth article, “Far from Home: Profile of pro-IS Deportees’ Mobility throughout 2016-2020 and Prevention Strategy of Indonesian Government”, discusses how mobility could relate to security concerns. While mobility should be celebrated as part of the regional integration project, it also has a negative impact. Ashar and Maharani (2022) show how Pro-Islamic State terrorists exploit loopholes in border and immigration control to join IS abroad and the shortcoming in the Indonesian government’s strategy to counter their mobility. In the previous edition, JAS published research on how cooperation at the state level through the framework of EU-ASEAN Counter Terrorism cooperation has mainly focused on building a common normative framework in responding to terrorism within the corridor of democracy and pre-empting the terrorist networks from exploiting connectivity networks (Wibisono & Kusumasomantri, 2020). This article contributes to further the debate by unpacking how the Indonesian state restrict the ability of a terrorist network to exploit the connectivity networks.

The sixth article, entitled “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond”, investigates how Myanmar’s Rohingya conflict could generate a potential for conflict within the borders of Bangladesh and beyond. This is because Myanmar’s civil conflict had spilt over into Bangladesh’s borders due to a sequence of events starting from when Myanmar’s civil conflict erupted from its National Citizenship Act. Islam and Wara (2022) show how unregulated mobility might create potential conflict in other countries. In previous editions, JAS has published pieces on how the civil conflict in Southeast Asia can be resolved through the role of mediators that reduce the commitment issues of the negotiations and ensure the trust and confidence of the conflict parties (Candelaria, 2020). Such solution could be applied to the case of Myanmar by engaging ASEAN as the mediator.

The last article, entitled “Journey to Justice: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Context of West Papua”, examines the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), focusing on the rights of the Indigenous Papuan people in the Indonesian provinces on the western half of the island of New Guinea, commonly referred to in English as Papua or West Papua. As suggested by Soetjipto (2022), as a result of migration, Papuans are becoming strangers in

their land, with tens of thousands of migrants coming to the region every year. As in many other regions in Indonesia where migration is high, resentment toward migrants is widespread in Papua. This study shows how mobility should be put within the local context. Mobility, in other words, may create marginalization of indigenous people.

We hope that this regular issue Vol 10. 1 2022 would invite further examination of the notion of connectivity and mobility in the post-pandemic order. We look forward to more studies that aim to conceptualize connectivity and mobility through the experience of ASEAN.

Editorial Team,

Moch Faisal Karim

Tirta Nugraha Mursitama

Lili Yulyadi Arnakim

References

- Azhar, A. R., & Maharani, C. (2022). Far from Home: Profile of pro-IS Deportees' Mobility throughout 2016-2020 and Prevention Strategy of Indonesian Government. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7732>
- Bhattacharyay, B. N. (2010). Institutions for asian connectivity. *Journal of International Commerce, Economics and Policy*, 01(02), 309-335. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1793993310000172>
- Candelaria, J. L. (2020). Mediating Civil Conflicts in Southeast Asia: Lessons from Aceh and Mindanao. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 8(2), 111-127. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i2.6622>
- Das, S. B., Menon, J., Severino, R. C., & Shrestha, O. L. (2013). *The ASEAN Economic Community: A Work in Progress*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Fardhiyanti, G., & Wee, V. (2022). Enhancing Social Integration through Intra-ASEAN Travel. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.6929>
- Flint, C., & Zhu, C. (2019). The geopolitics of connectivity, cooperation, and hegemonic competition: The Belt and Road Initiative. *Geoforum*, 99, 95-101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.12.008>
- Gülzau, F., Mau, S., & Zaun, N. (2016). Regional Mobility Spaces? Visa Waiver Policies and Regional Integration. *International Migration*, 54(6), 164-180. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12286>
- Indraswari, R. (2022). ASEAN CENTRALITY: COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF INDONESIA LEADERSHIP. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7906>
- Islam, M. R., & Wara, U. (2022). Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.8215>
- Karim, M. F. (2021). Role Legitimation in Foreign Policy: The Case of Indonesia as an Emerging Power under Yudhoyono's Presidency (2004-2014). *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17(3), orab010. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orab010>
- Karim, M. F., Irawan, A. P., & Mursitama, T. N. (2021). Regulatory regionalism and the limits of ASEAN banking integration: The case of Indonesia. *Politics, OnlineFirst*.
- Mohamad, B., Adetunji, R. R., Alarifi, G., Ismail, A. R., & Kanmu, M. D. A. (2022). A VISUAL IDENTITY-BASED APPROACH OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN CITY BRANDING: A NETNOGRAPHY ANALYSIS. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7330>

- Muhibat, S. F. (2017). Indonesia's New Ocean Policy: Analysing the External Dimension. *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 13(2), 50-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2017.1410936>
- Mursitama, T. N., Karim, M. F., & Arnakim, L. Y. (2021). ASEAN and Its Relevance amidst Pandemic. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 9(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v9i1.7648>
- Permatasari, Y. (2020). Building Indonesia Through ASEAN Economic Community. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 8(1), 81-93. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i1.6040>
- Ra, S., & Li, Z. (2018). *Closing the Financing Gap in Asian Infrastructure* (ADB South Asia Working Paper Series, Issue 57). Asian Development Bank. <https://www.adb.org/publications/closing-financing-gap-asian-infrastructure>
- Rosyidin, M., & Pattipeilohy, S. C. H. (2020). Regionalism under Challenge: Ideas and Joko Widodo's Foreign Policy towards ASEAN, 2014-2019. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 8(2), 147-172. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i2.6596>
- Soetjipto, A. W. (2022). Journey to Justice: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Context of West Papua. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.8491>
- Wibisono, A. A., & Kusumasomantri, A. R. (2020). Assessing the Expectations and Limitations of ASEAN-EU Counter-Terrorism Cooperation. *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)*, 8(1), 61-80. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i1.6171>
- Wicaksana, I. G. W. (2017). Indonesia's maritime connectivity development: Domestic and international challenges. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 25(2), 212-233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2017.1339618>

ASEAN Centrality: Comparative Case Study of Indonesia Leadership

Ratih Indraswari

Department International Relations, Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, Indonesia
ratih.indraswari@unpar.ac.id

Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea
ratih@ewhain.net

How to Cite: Indraswari, R. (2022). ASEAN centrality: Comparative case study of Indonesia leadership. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7906>

Abstract

For almost 60 years of establishment, ASEAN has received praises and disdain from institutional scholars. It is heralded as the only regionalism in Southeast Asia able to manage regional order through its normative power, but also criticized for the same power. ASEAN once again faces a challenge with the looming of Myanmar crisis. The research aimed to find out whether ASEAN Centrality, the primacy of ASEAN in addressing regional issues, is still strong enough amidst the crisis. The research provided an analysis on ASEAN Centrality by adopting an individual-state leadership concept portrayed by Indonesia as a de facto leader of ASEAN. The research methods employed qualitative explorative research by focusing on comparative case studies on the Preah Vihear and Myanmar cases. The research finds that in both cases, ASEAN Centrality prevails. However, its strength varies as Indonesia's leadership depends on mutually inclusive variables. These determining variables are institutional mandates, the domestic interest of followers, and external pressures.

Keywords: Centrality, Indonesia, Leadership, ASEAN

Introduction

The discourse on the primacy of ASEAN in setting the regional tone evolves along with the concept of ASEAN Centrality. Within this framework, ASEAN has provided exemplary mediation mechanisms and inclusive engagement in network buildings. It assumes a central role in this network of states, creating a regional architecture that is centered on ASEAN. Its

centrality thus has become the contested 'reputation' ASEAN has to uphold in ensuring its relevance (Damayanti, 2018; Kassim, 2019; Mueller, 2019; Tsjeng, 2016). ASEAN faces a constant challenge on its Centrality conception. Recently with the looming Myanmar crisis, is ASEAN Centrality, the primacy of ASEAN in addressing regional issues, still strong enough?

The research provides an analysis on ASEAN Centrality by adopting an individual-state leadership concept portrayed by Indonesia as *a de facto* leader of ASEAN (Emmers, 2014; Kurus, 1993; Tan, 2015). Indonesian leadership is analyzed due to the assumed undebatable role provided by its strategic geopolitical position, large population, and natural resources. Especially under the Soeharto regime, Indonesia plays an enabling force allowing ASEAN to grow and develop as a regional organization. In return, Indonesia's leadership has gained acknowledgment not only by ASEAN Member State (AMS) but also by external parties who wish to engage with ASEAN. Despite receiving criticism, researchers and policymakers second the notion that Indonesia's leadership is indispensable in ASEAN regionalism (Anwar, 1994; Agastia & Perwita, 2015; Emmers, 2014; Rattanasevee, 2014; Smith, 2022).

The research finds that ASEAN Centrality prevails, yet its strength varied in each case as individual leadership depends on mutually inclusive variables; competencies to exercise leadership, the domestic interest of followers, and external pressures. Furthermore, ASEAN institutional framework is salient in determining leadership competency, as ASEAN institutional mandate can either constraint or boost states' ability to exercise leadership.

Analytical Framework

What is ASEAN Centrality: Rowing behind Legal Construct and Elite Endorsements

What is ASEAN Centrality? First reference towards the concept enshrined in ASEAN institutional documents. The ASEAN Charter Article 1.15 stated that the main aim of ASEAN is "*to maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive*" (ASEAN, 2008). It is accepted as a principle of ASEAN in which needing "*the centrality of ASEAN in external political, economic, social and cultural relations while remaining actively engaged, outward-looking, inclusive and non-discriminatory*" (article 2.m) (ASEAN, 2008). Another mention of centrality is captured on its external relations behavior, in which "*ASEAN shall be the primary force in regional arrangements that it initiates and maintains its centrality in regional cooperation and community building*" (article 41.3) (ASEAN, 2008).

This written concept is further seconded by ASEAN leaders. During the 17th ASEAN in Hanoi Chairman's Statement defines ASEAN Centrality as "*a regional architecture based on multiple existing regional frameworks which are mutually supporting and reinforcing with ASEAN as the primary driving force*" (Vietnam Chairmanship, 2010). It also highlighted that ASEAN Centrality is pursuing a two-pronged approach that gives priority to the acceleration of ASEAN integration while intensifying ASEAN's external relation (Vietnam Chairmanship, 2010). The latter understanding exemplified the concept of ASEAN Centrality takes place on

two levels. First is the level of internal integration and second is the level of external cooperation. Boost towards ASEAN Centrality is also reiterated by Indonesia, the *de facto* leaders of ASEAN. In his speech, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) emphasized that as the Chair of ASEAN, Indonesia's priorities one among others is, the *"maintaining the Centrality of ASEAN"* (Yudhoyono, 2011).

A similar endorsement was given by external power. President Obama's pivot to Asia increases the region's importance by signing the TAC (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation), sending a US permanent mission to ASEAN, and decided to attend the East Asia Summit in 2011 hosted by Indonesia (Clinton, 2011). Although Trump's administration showed a disregard for ASEAN Centrality by skipping all East Asia Summit, Biden's administration showed a rapprochement gesture. In a contested issue of QUAD, The Leaders Joint statement endorsed ASEAN Centrality that *"we reaffirm our strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality as well as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific"* (*"Quad leaders' joint statement"*, 2021). Support was also provided by China, during the ASEAN-China Summit in 2019, premier Li Keqiang said that China will stay firmly committed to supporting ASEAN Centrality in East Asian cooperation on the issues of COC (Code of Conduct) on the South China Sea and harmonization of BRI (Belt Road Initiative) and MPAC (Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity) (Lai, 2019). ASEAN Centrality is especially important amidst the recent heightened tension between China and the United States. As argued by Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, *"when I say centre, I don't just mean that we are geographically at the centre, but philosophically, diplomatically and strategically, ASEAN remains at the centre of Indo-Pacific area"* (Kassim, 2019).

Prominent scholars understand ASEAN Centrality in line with leaders' views, yet argue that ASEAN Centrality has yet been defined in a unified manner. The research highlights three main understandings on centrality in explaining the utilization of this framework within this research. First, centrality is understood as having two main purposes. Strategic purpose in the sense that centrality is benefiting ASEAN's position. By putting ASEAN at the core of the regional order, ASEAN's relevance is secured. Normative purpose in the sense of ASEAN Centrality is understood in the primacy of the ASEAN core beliefs and identity. Its principles of inclusivity, openness allows for the generation of shared understanding, thus positioning ASEAN as a neutral and safe platform in negotiating regional order (Acharya, 2017).

Second, ASEAN Centrality is argued interchangeably with that of leadership. Historically, the conception of leadership comes from the Realist branch of Hegemon; a single powerful state controlled or dominated the other (Gilpin, 1981). Leadership is obtained through the possession of material power, such as economic and military, to dictate others. However, a hegemonic relationship is not a one-directional force to shape other behavior but a consensual hegemony in which the hegemon assumes its position because it was permitted to do so (Goh, 2013). Therefore, the relationship between that of leader and its follower in which 'leadership is conferred by the follower' (Gardner, 1990, pg 24; Cerami, 2013 pg 20) can be argued highlighted the aspect of consensual leadership. In this sense, power must then be understood in terms of not only material but also ideational power (social power).

Since ASEAN is not a hegemon, it is essential to know the kind of leadership quality it possesses. Given its lack of hard power, ASEAN possesses an entrepreneurial leadership able to bring 'willing parties together' to achieve mutual benefit. ASEAN also possesses intellectual leadership that makes use of "the power of ideas to shape" how regional issues are understood (Young, 1991). ASEAN's normative power can persuade others to display a certain behavior. This normative power created a perception that ASEAN is not a threat for anyone, thus building ASEAN reservoir of trust in which ASEAN can transform the Southeast Asia region from trust deficit to strategic trust (Natalegawa, 2018).

Leadership can be generated through social power. Social power defines what ASEAN can do by depicting ASEAN as an important node within a social structure. Centrality is understood in the closeness and cohesiveness of nodes that lend to ASEAN's increased influence through resource access, agenda-setting, and framing debate (Beckfield, 2003). Social Network Theory explains ASEAN Centrality further by looking at how closely connected it is with the networks in the wider East Asia institutional framework; the position of ASEAN as 'a node in bridging the different networks' together (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). Its closeness and connection with others allow ASEAN to utilize the web of networks to advance its interests. The network is manifested through various meetings in which ASEAN drives the agenda within the regional multilateral platforms. By setting the agenda ASEAN is able to maintain and retain its centrality and as a consequence amplifying ASEAN's capacity to shape the regional order. This influence leads to the leadership role that is inherent to ASEAN's position in the structural web of networks (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). To understand ASEAN Centrality from a leadership approach, it must be seen in ASEAN ability to take the initiative in solving problems, the willingness to shoulder the leadership role, and the cooperation of follower states in the actions that are taken (Stubbs, 2014).

Third, centrality is most often portrayed as ASEAN relationship *vis a vis* another major or great external power. However, this one side portrayal failed to acknowledge that the centrality of ASEAN is also taking place when ASEAN is dealing with issues within the Southeast Asia region. ASEAN Centrality is a two-pronged approach "*starting with strengthening centrality within ASEAN, followed by maintaining its centrality within the dense cluster of networks in the regional arena*" (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). This argument then translated to what is called ASEAN 'centrality within' and 'centrality of'. Leadership in both levels, therefore "*entails one state, or a group of states, proposing, executing and getting others to agree on a course of action to deal with a specific problem or challenge*" (Stubbs, 2014).

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between ASEAN Centrality and individual leadership exercised by AMS. ASEAN Centrality can be analyzed through the individual leadership of AMS (Stubbs, 2014). Furthermore, borrowing from Caballero-Anthony's two-pronged approaches, ASEAN Centrality is applied on two levels; one is claimed as 'centrality within' ASEAN and the other is projected externally as 'centrality of' ASEAN (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). To investigate ASEAN Centrality within this framework, the research takes individual leadership of Indonesia toward its projection internally, in relation with the rest of AMS, and externally, in response to external stimulus.

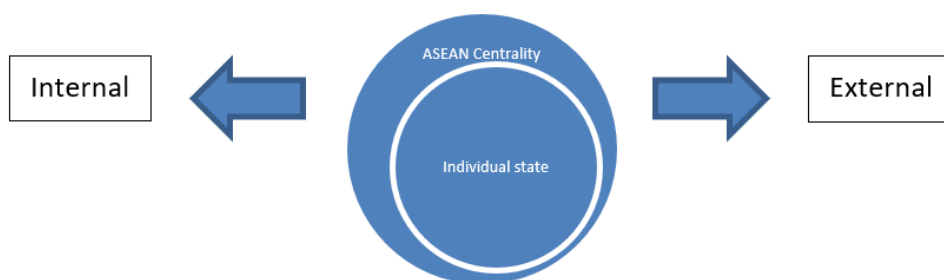


Figure 1. Relationship between ASEAN Centrality and Individual Leadership

Hence, as leadership can be projected by one state or a group of states, analyzing ASEAN centrality in the light of regional conflict shows different dynamics. It is argued that leadership can be seen from three main aspects, the ability to take initiative, taking responsibility, and support from other members (Stubbs, 2014). However, support from other members towards ASEAN leadership is influenced by the domestic interests of each member state. Furthermore, ASEAN is not immune from external pressure although the impact varies. Therefore, in analyzing ASEAN Centrality, the research proposes a new set of indicators cultivated from the previous framework involving individual country competencies to exercise leadership, the domestic interest of followers, and external pressures.

Research Methods

The adopted research methodology is structured and elaborated. First, as centrality can be exercised through leadership, the research scrutinizes Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN. This is done by looking at Indonesia's ability to take initiative, responsibility and gain support from other members. As support from other members towards ASEAN leadership is highly influenced by the domestic interests of each member state, an analysis of AMS interests is provided. However, it is beyond the aim of research to contest leadership quality between AMS leadership. Instead, the research focuses on the constituting variables that affects Indonesian leadership to uphold ASEAN Centrality.

Second, the research employs secondary data qualitative explorative research by focusing on comparative case studies. Two case studies are presented: 1) Preah Vihear's (Thai-Cambodia conflict) and 2) Myanmar case, an ongoing conflict. The research acknowledges that Preah Vihaer and Myanmar cases constitute a different set of domestic build-ups. Even so, to minimize random selection trap, the research opts to select a comparative approach based on the variation of explanatory variables. It means that contradictory cases are selected to understand the extent of Indonesia's leadership. One case exhibits strong leadership and the other case shows weak leadership. The analyses then proceed to investigate the explanation of the differences (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). However, a degree of comparability is presented. Both cases show the extent of Indonesian Leadership in solving the crisis. Thai-

Cambodia conflict is treated as the base for a reference toward Indonesia's leadership in taking the initiative and responsibility for ASEAN's internal problem and as it lies 'the methodology for dealing with future disputes' (International Crisis Group, 2011). At the same time, both case studies are chosen on the premise that conflicts are an internal ASEAN issue that also received attention from the international public. Additionally, the research acknowledges the limitation of the Myanmar case as a non-past factum and suggests that future events will impact current analyses. Nevertheless, by following the Myanmar case the research is able to provide insight to the discussion on ASEAN Centrality in which Indonesian leadership is constrained.

Third, the analyses take on two levels; the 'centrality within' and 'centrality of'. The first level refers to Indonesia, an individual ASEAN state, exercising its internal leadership amongst its fellows AMS. As ASEAN is not immune from external pressure, the second level assesses Indonesia's leadership in responding to external pressures and defending the unity of AMS against it.

Results and Discussions

Leadership Quality: Indonesia 'Appropriate Engagement' and Institutional Constraints

Clashes between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple rose when in 2008 UNESCO gave the World Heritage Site to the Cambodian government. Tension already erupted since, however, it is in 2011 the firefighters become noticeable. The then secretary-general Surin Pitsuwan argued that the clash is 'open conflict' (Wagener, 2011) even the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) has weighed into the conflict.

Issue of Preah Vihear was happening a few days before the 41st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in 2008 but the meeting failed to address the crisis. Cambodia then proposed the creation of the ASEAN Inter-ministerial group to Singapore as the chairman of ASEAN (Phan, 2015). Singapore chairmanship offered to establish a Contact Group to help the effort in finding a peaceful solution to the issues, but it was rejected by Thailand ("Statement by Minister for Foreign", 2012). When Cambodia asked Vietnam as ASEAN chair to mediate in 2010, it was also rejected by Thailand (Wagener, 2011). Any attempt was hindered because of the basic disagreement over the dispute settlement mechanism. Thailand sought to address the dispute bilaterally while Cambodia preferred a multilateral mechanism, involving the UN and ASEAN in the process. After the inaction for the past two years and upon the clashes that took place in February 4th and 5th 2011, Indonesia who just resumed its position as ASEAN chair in January 2011, took immediate actions.

In ensuring ASEAN 'centrality within' in the case of Preah Vihear, Indonesia exhibited leadership quality by taking initiatives, assuming responsibilities, and was followed by other ASEAN Member States (AMS). Indonesia as ASEAN Chairman under Foreign Ministers (FM) Marty Natalegawa took the initiatives by first contacting conflicting parties, ASEAN FMs, and

ASEAN Secretary-General in February 5th and 6th 2011 and followed immediately by a visit to each capital, Bangkok and Phnom Penh, in February 7th and 8th 2011 for shuttle diplomacy.

The shuttle diplomacy is important for several reasons: 1) to open a diplomatic window to solidify direct ASEAN engagement, 2) to show ASEAN's timely support towards the conflicting parties thus securing their confidence toward ASEAN objectiveness under Indonesia's leadership, 3) to find a shared common ground for conflict management leading to dispute settlements, and 4) to prepare for a unified ASEAN stance and cohesion on the issues (Natalegawa, 2018).

Thus Indonesia proposed 'appropriate engagement' referring to the comfortable middle way in between Cambodia's preferences of multilateralism and Thailand's reluctant (Natalegawa, 2018). The result of the shuttle diplomacy was then consulted to all AMS highlighting that despite the disagreement, both parties agreed to seek a peaceful settlement of the dispute and welcomed the willingness of Indonesia to take responsibility as a 'hotline' bridge between the two parties. The conclusion is well received by AMS thus legitimizing Indonesia's leadership in the process.

February 1st marks the start of the worsening condition in Myanmar, in which Myanmar's military force has acquired full control of the country's government in a coup d'état. The military managed to detain Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's civilian leader, and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party members. At the moment, Min Aung Hlaing, who served as Chairman of the State Administration Council of Myanmar, is considered the country's *de facto* leader as of February 2nd. Though Myanmar has gone back and forth between military and civilian leadership over the years, it is still considered to be a large step back for Myanmar from fully democratizing the country or simply having a stable government. Since 2011, the military has started to govern alongside and coexist with Suu Kyi's administration. However, during the November 2020 election, Suu Kyi has further advocated and campaigned for additional restrictions for the military's role in governing the country. Seen as a high threat, especially since she succeeded to win 83% of the body's available seats, generals accused the election to be a sham. Citing the 2008 Constitution, the military declared a national emergency, allowing them to remain in power for a year long. The country's infrastructure was fully controlled and seized by the military, which results in: 1) broadcasts suspended, 2) domestic and international flights canceled, 3) suspension of phone and internet access, and 4) closure of stock markets and commercial banks. This worsening condition has turned peaceful protests by civilians into violent and deadly when two unarmed protesters were killed by security forces on February 20th. Responding to the protests and civilian strikes, the armed forces have subsequently responded by violent means as well, by killing, assaulting, detaining, or torturing groups of civilians (Goldman, 2021).

Indonesia has led the effort to come up with a peaceful solution to the Myanmar crisis. It has given its best endeavors to rally up ASEAN response through shuttle diplomacy in the series of Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meetings led by Indonesian FM Retno Marsudi ("Singapore, Indonesia says ASEAN", 2021). Upon the escalation of the conflict, Indonesia proposed an initiative to hold the extraordinary ASEAN Leader's Meeting (ALM) (Strangio,

2021). The ALM was actually realized on 24th April 2021 in Jakarta, five weeks after Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, called for an ASEAN Special Summit (Drajat, 2021). Jokowi sent a rather assertive response in which he referred to the development in Myanmar as *“unacceptable and cannot be continued”* (“ASEAN leaders’ meeting”, 2021). He pressed for Myanmar’s commitment on a few fronts including the cessation of violence, initiation of inclusive dialogue process, and lastly the opening up access to humanitarian aid from ASEAN.

Indonesia took the opportunity to host the ALM meeting in ASEAN Secretariat, as Brunei Darussalam has declined to host the leaders meeting due to its limited diplomatic capacity and concern about the pandemic (Bland, 2021). By inviting General Min Aung Hlaing instead of Aung Su Kyi, to ALM ASEAN is criticized for its acknowledgment of the Junta as the official ruler. Nevertheless, Indonesia managed to bring General Min Aung Hlaing, the top person of Myanmar’s Junta, to the ALM in Jakarta. It highlights Indonesia's competence as a provider of good offices. It was also able to agree on the quite ambitious five points of consensus at the present of Myanmar delegation. The five-point consensus is an ASEAN collective response that highlight important follow-up states including; (1) there shall be an immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint, (2) constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people, (3) a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of ASEAN, (4) ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre, (5) the special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned (ASEAN Secretariat, 2021). Certainly, the meeting was heralded as a success of ASEAN in addressing an urgent crisis. Indonesia once again shows its experiences and leadership in managing the regional conflict.

However, further scrutiny shows that Indonesia’s role is limited in following up the 5 points of consensus due to further development. First, a tension on envoy election was taking place. The selected special envoys must have the qualification and experience to deliver mediation services and conflict management. To be legitimate, the special envoy must also have the confidence from Myanmar and the rest of the members. Indonesia preferred a single envoy and proposed Hassan Wirajuda, an experienced diplomat and the former Indonesia Foreign Minister who has been involved during the Preah Vihear conflict. However, Thailand was keener on sending a group of envoys further stressing the dissents amongst AMS (*“The failed mission”*, 2021).

Second, as the Chair of ASEAN, Brunei was entrusted to pick the special envoy, yet it failed to overcome the bureaucratic hindrances and resulted in a delay for more than a month since the five-point consensus agreed on ALM (*“ASEAN, hurry up”*, 2021). The delay was further when Myanmar Junta seems to back down its commitment arguing that *“only after we achieve a certain level of security and stability, we will cooperate regarding that envoy”* (Septiari, 2021). Indonesia's frustration was expressed by Retno Marsudi, Indonesian Foreign Minister arguing that the delay ‘does ASEAN no good’ as for months after the declaration of five-points consensus nothing is developed (Allard & Costa, 2021).

Third, on the 4th of June Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, met with Brunei's Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Erywan Pehin Yusof and the secretary-general of ASEAN, Lim Jock Hoi, in Myanmar's capital, Naypyitaw ("Myanmar's junta chief", 2021). The meeting was not handled well as Yusof's visit was done without prior notification to fellow ASEAN Foreign Ministers. What was more disappointing was that upon returning there were no briefings shared with the rest of the bloc ("The failed mission", 2021). Myanmar case, therefore, showed the limited role of Indonesia's leadership.

ASEAN Centrality within in Preah Vihear case is strong due to the leadership portrayed by Indonesia in taking the initiative and responsibility. However, the Myanmar case shows the extent of Indonesian leadership within ASEAN. Although Indonesia has accumulated experience in providing good offices and even took initiatives to solve the problem, the lack of institutional mandate, being not the Chairman, limits how far Indonesia can exercise its leadership. Indonesia did not encounter an obstacle in initiating the moves. However, its influence is seriously limited in following up the initiative and taking responsibility for the process of mediation when it stalled.

Domestic Interests; Rallying Support or Easing Dissent

In the Preah Vihear case, Indonesia as the ASEAN chair was finally able to achieve the first milestone in addressing the conflict. On the informal meeting of the ASEAN FMs in Jakarta, February 2011, Indonesia managed to broker an agreement that Bangkok and PnomPhen promised to take measures to prevent military clashes, welcome the dispatch of Indonesian observer group to the further area, and resume bilateral talk with Indonesia assistances (Padden, 2011). In the 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, the Cambodian and Thailand government agreed on the term of reference of the Indonesian Observer Team (IOT) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011). This is further supported by the Head of Government (HoG) meeting between President SBY, Prime Minister (PM) Hun Sen, and PM Abhisit Vejjajiva to reaffirm the Ministerial Summit decisions.

Further investigation reveals that the Preah Vihear temple conflict was driven by Thailand's domestic interests (International Crisis Group, 2011). The Cambodian decision to register the Preah Vihear temple to UNESCO was initially received as a non-threatening move. However, democratization caused the military to lose its power following the election of Thaksin Shinawatra. Due to the competition within Thailand Yellow Shirt vs Redshirt factions, the issue has been developed into a national narrative to undermine Thaksin's power. Thaksin's administration under PM Samak Sundaravej was accused of selling 'the motherland' as part of his business interest despite the policy having been previously supported by the military-installed administration (Pongphisoot, 2011).

Other ASEAN countries were not happy with the border tension between Cambodia and Thailand. Yet they show an unresponsive attitude and inaction both during Singapore and Vietnam chairmanships. Cambodia's attempts to seek mediation from ASEAN Secretary General both in 2008 and 2010 were without avail. AMS was basing its inaction under the ASEAN's non-intervention policy. Yet this behavior changes along with Indonesia's shuttle

diplomacy and constructive engagement. Through this approach Indonesia manages to rally support from AMS, creating a unified stance on the need to solve the border conflict immediately and in return giving Indonesia legitimacy.

Quite contrary in the Myanmar case dissents within AMS have been already apparent since the start of the issues. Each AMS has different views, in which Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore are pushing more to stop the use of force against unarmed civilians, while Thailand and Vietnam supported by Cambodia and Laos have somehow accepted Junta Myanmar based on non-interference principles (ANU Editorial Board, 2021). Brunei's response to Myanmar is in line with its capacity as ASEAN chair. Singapore expressed grave concern. PM Lee Hsien Loong argued the use of violence was 'not acceptable' and 'disastrous' (Aradhana, 2021). FM Vivian Balakrishnan denounced the armed forces for using lethal weapons against citizens but opposed sanctions to be imposed on Myanmar, arguing that widespread measures would only hurt ordinary citizens instead of the military ("Singapore says Myanmar situation", 2021). Malaysia Prime Minister (PM) Muhyiddin Yassin stated that the ASEAN's principle of non-interference should not lead to inaction if a domestic situation "jeopardizes the peace, security, and stability of ASEAN and the wider region" (Karmini, 2021). Both Singapore and Malaysia governments have been supportive of Indonesian efforts to create an ASEAN collective response.

On the other side, Thailand avoided criticizing the coup and evoked the non-interference principle calling the coup an internal affair. However, this move is highly influenced by its Junta rise making Thailand the closest friend of Myanmar military power (Johnson & Thepgumpanat, 2021). Its leader even opted out of ALM in April 2021 but instead sent Thailand Foreign Minister (FM) to attend the meeting. The Philippines' stance is in limbo. The government has condemned the military coup but also refused similar scrutiny towards its human rights record by the UN. It admitted the unifying role of Aung San Suu Kyi but also rejected the UN statement which called upon the release (Palatino, 2021). President Duterte has not attended the ALM in April, instead of sending his Foreign Minister. Cambodia and Laos take a similar stance with Thailand by calling the coup an internal affair. President Hun Sen even stated that "Cambodia does not comment on the internal affairs of any country at all, either within the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) framework or any other country" ("Cambodian leader Hun Sen", 2021). Laos abode the ASEAN principles and sought to cooperate with ASEAN (Phonevilay, 2021), but it failed to send its leader to the ALM in Jakarta. Vietnam did send its Leader to attend the ALM, but it was restrained in calling out to the Myanmar Junta leader. However, Vietnam has reiterated that the country is 'seriously concerned about the development in Myanmar and seeks cooperation with ASEAN' ("VN 'seriously concerned' about", 2021).

ASEAN Centrality in the case of Indonesia's leadership in Preah Vihear was strong. Marty Natalegawa was astute in his understanding that leadership quality requires support from another member. ASEAN's good office under Indonesia's presidency was only possible if it enjoyed the trust and confidence of the affected parties especially in terms of impartiality and objectivity (Natalegawa, 2018). AMS shows support and follows Indonesia's leadership.

AMS preferred to lean on its non-interferences policy and primacy of sovereignty but this only can be changed through a strong leadership portrayed by Indonesia.

While in the Myanmar case, Indonesia was only able to ease basic dissent by providing the first venue of mediation through the ALM. Further development showed that the stark dissent of AMS's stance toward Myanmar Junta lends to the un-employability of any leader-follower leadership framework.

External Pressures: Undermining ASEAN Unity vs Boosting Confidences

Indonesia was portraying its leadership further by assuming responsibility in its role as Chair of ASEAN to keep the issue of Preah Vihear within a regional jurisdiction of ASEAN. The issue of Preah Vihear was first brought to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) by Cambodia in 2008 when Indonesia was seated as part of the council at that time. Yet, there was no unified stance of ASEAN (Natalegawa, 2018). Considering this, Indonesia was firm to further sustain ASEAN Centrality. Several considerations drove Indonesia's ambitions. First, it was very important not to turn the peaceful region into a war-ridden region. Second, in line with ASEAN's fear of intervention and Indonesia's '*bebas-aktif*' foreign policy, Indonesia sought to avoid that the issue will be taken to an international setting. Based on UNSC article 8, conflict situation is brought to the UNSC in the absence of regional-level conflict resolution. Such a situation if happened will undermine ASEAN further. Third, Indonesia has been a supporter of advancing regional organization roles in conflict prevention, management, and resolution. As, Natalegawa argued, "*to ensure ASEAN becomes a 'net contributor' to international peace and security, principally by demonstrating its capacity to maintain the peace and stability of its immediate region*" (Natalegawa, 2018). Forth, acknowledging the ASEAN's effort to solve the issues is an example of subsidiarity principles that boost ASEAN's credibility.

As suspected, an invitation from UNSC came in during a special meeting on the 14th of February for Indonesia, as ASEAN Chairman under article 39 of UNSC provisional procedure. Indonesia was consulted on the issue at stake and was able to present unified agreements of ASEAN. UNSC was supportive of the ASEAN role and appreciated Indonesia's mediating effort as ASEAN Chair (Putra et al., 2013; UNSC, 2011). The document further specifying the reference of Indonesia as 'current chair of ASEAN' was seen as a boost toward Indonesia's credibility. Another support on ASEAN's primacy was given by the ICJ, when in July 2011 acknowledged rendered its provisional measures to both Cambodia and Thailand should cooperate with ASEAN (Phan, 2015).

In the case of Myanmar, international pressure is palpable. The United States labelled the takeover as a coup. US Secretary of State, Blinken accuses the security forces as a "reign of terror" ("Myanmar Coup," 2021). Biden administration imposed sanctions, freezing assistance directed to the Burmese government but will maintain support to the people ("Biden-Harris administration", 2021). There European Union has prepared a third sanction for Myanmar, even though the efficacy of sanctions has been in question as it has yet shown an obvious impact on the military regime ("ASEAN diplomacy in Myanmar", 2021). While

China argued that the situation in Myanmar is *"absolutely not what China wants to see"* ("ASEAN leaders to visit Myanmar", 2021), but still blocked UNSC's statement condemning the coup. Therefore, United National will be largely 'toothless' (ANU Editorial Board, 2021) in dealing with Myanmar. Despite their grave concern, major powers have left the issue of Myanmar to ASEAN to handle (Poling, 2021). European Union like other external power endorsed its support to ASEAN. Foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell emphasized that *"to find a political solution for the Myanmar situation belongs to ASEAN"* ("ASEAN diplomacy in Myanmar", 2021). It further reaffirms ASEAN primacy in solving the Myanmar issues. In April Liechtenstein with the support of 48 countries, drafted a UNGA resolution to apply arms embargo to Myanmar, *"calling for an immediate suspension of the direct and indirect supply, sale or transfer of all weapons, munitions and other military-related equipment to Myanmar"* ("ASEAN makes half-hearted", 2021). This resolution was opposed through a letter from the nine remaining AMS. ASEAN comes in defend of the Myanmar Junta regime has met with criticism (Taylor & Westfall, 2021), but further scrutiny reveals that it is in line with ASEAN principles. The limiting norms of non-interference and the fear of external intervention have led ASEAN to forge a united front amidst external pressure.

Although being postponed due to not having enough support to pass, the resolution is finally adopted in June when UNGA passed its resolution; 119 in favors, 36 abstains, and 1 against. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore with Philippines and Vietnam support in favors of the passing, while Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand vote against it. Brunei Darussalam as ASEAN Chair voted against the resolution (UNIFEED, 2021). Although the resolution was criticized due to its failure in including the arms embargo, it shows dissents within ASEAN member states in the external platform and the lack of internal regional leadership. The latest development shows a unifying stance within AMS to exclude Myanmar Junta from the ASEAN Summit. Instead, ASEAN chooses to invite the non-political figure to the annual summit (Geddie, 2021).

ASEAN Centrality of ASEAN on both issues prevails in which International organization, UN in both case and ICJ (International Court of Justice) in Preah Vihear conflict lend its support to ASEAN. UN and ICJ's confidence in ASEAN to manage the problem strengthened under the principle of subsidiarity. Although to a different degree, major powers were also show their preferences on leaving things to ASEAN in both cases. However, Indonesia delivered its leadership differently. In the Preah Vihear case, Indonesia's strong leadership supports ASEAN Centrality. However, Indonesia's leadership in Myanmar's case against the international community has yet on par with the Preah Vihear temple case.

ASEAN shows its unity by successfully toning down the UN resolution drafting to exclude the arms embargo, but the final vote shows a divided ASEAN. Indonesia is followed by Malaysia and Singapore, as well Philippines and Vietnam. While Brunei as the chair of ASEAN vetoed against along with Thailand, a strong supporter of Junta Myanmar as well fellow CMLV countries, Laos and Cambodia. Adrift between the mainland and continental ASEAN was apparent in the Myanmar case. However, this drift does not stay long as ASEAN FM has decided to exclude Junta Myanmar to attend its ASEAN Summit. Institutional

mandate has proven influential in assessing Indonesia's leadership in maintaining ASEAN unity against external pressure.

Conclusions

The research finds that in both cases, ASEAN Centrality varies as Indonesia leadership depends on mutually inclusive variables. The three main variables influencing ASEAN Centrality are individual country competencies to exercise leadership especially the institutional mandate they received, the domestic interest of followers, and prevailing external pressures.

In the discussed cases, Indonesia acts in line with the ASEAN Charter in its efforts as both ASEAN Chair and individual member to address the issues. Despite having experiences in conflict management and mediation as well as providing good offices. The ASEAN institutional mandate becomes a determining variable in ensuring how far Indonesia can extend its leadership.

Due to the sensitive nature of the ASEAN political bloc, any attempt of dispute settlement must be carefully weaved to produce the intended results. Domestic interests are projected regionally. The higher the gap within AMS, the lower the chance to produce a unified stance. More than often states use the ASEAN Charter principles involving the respect for independence and sovereignty and non-interference as a shield. Thus, enhanced consultation on matters seriously affecting an individual country is crucial in any leadership. External pressure is a constant variable in ASEAN regional building. ASEAN was created in response to it and this historical legacy stays intact until the present times.

A combination of those three variables determines ASEAN Centrality. As shown in the case of Preah Vihear, Indonesia's leadership was strong since it received support not only from external powers but also internally as the domestic stance is unified. While in the case of Myanmar, Indonesia's leadership is weak even though external powers lend their support towards the ASEAN mechanism, individual domestic dissent further complicates the process. Finally, this dissent spills over to the international platforms creating a vague cohesion.

Additionally, the research finds that a single sub-variable of the institutional mandate has a significant impact on the strong-week pendulum of ASEAN Centrality. In the case of the Preah Vihear temple, Indonesia has been able to defend ASEAN Centrality through its leadership as ASEAN Chairs. Meanwhile, in the Myanmar case, Indonesia's leadership has been constrained and limited due to the absence of the mandate as a Chair.

However, the research disagrees that institutional mandate is the sole indicator that can determine the strength of ASEAN Centrality as leadership quality comprises beyond only a mandate. The finding also contradicts the general confidence in Indonesia's natural leadership in ASEAN. Instead, the research shows that the exercise of leadership within an established institution is constrained by the very institutional framework. However, due to the limited scope of analysis presented here, it is beyond the aim of research to extrapolate the extent of

the institutional constraints. Further comparative research across the ASEAN presidency and how their leadership affects ASEAN Centrality is encouraged to provide the answer to this question.

In conclusion, whether ASEAN Centrality remains strong or eroded in the coming years depends on the leadership exercised by its member states. However, leadership requires not only competency and quality of individual AMS but also support from the rest of the member amidst external power influences.

Table 1. Comparative of Indonesia Leadership ASEAN Centrality

	Leadership Quality	Domestic Interest of followers	External Pressure
Preah Vihear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia's role as the ASEAN Chair is strong as it took initiative, held responsibilities and its actions were supported by the other AMS. Indonesia gain supports from its institutional mandate as the ASEAN chair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The domestic interest of AMS was quite unanimous, preferring the stability in the region. Hence resulted in support to Indonesia's leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External pressure was apparent. Subsidiarity principle was kept- UN and ICJ giving ASEAN the responsibility to address its regional problem. Indonesia shows a bigger role in its capacity as ASEAN Chair
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia's role was limited because it has no institutional authority: not the ASEAN Chair. It can take initiative but facing challenges to follow up the initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic interest is varied. Support to Junta comes from Thailand due to its own experiences. Other AMS has reservations as fear of intervention is high, even though official endorsement on ASEAN mechanism is given, albeit somehow vaguely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External pressure was apparent. ASEAN shows a degree of collective vs fragmentation. Indonesia's leadership is limited, specific to the 'like-minded'. The absence of institutional mandates.

About The Authors

Ratih Indraswari is a faculty member at Parahyangan Catholic University Bandung and currently a Doctoral Student at EWha Womans University, Seoul.

References

- Acharya, A. (2017). The myth of ASEAN centrality? *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39(2), 273-279.
- Agastia, I. G. B. D. & Perwita, A. A. B. (2015). Jokowi's maritime axis: Change and continuity of Indonesia's role in Indo-Pacific. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 3(1), 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v3i1.751>
- Allard, T. & Costa, A. B. D. (2021, August 02). Indonesia urges Myanmar to approve appointment of ASEAN envoy. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-urges-myanmar-approve-appointment-asean-envoy-2021-08-02/>
- ANU. (2021, May 24). On Myanmar, ASEAN needs to maintain the momentum. *East Asia Forum*. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/05/24/on-myanmar-asean-needs-to-maintain-the-momentum/>
- Anwar, D. F. (1994). *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*. Regional Strategic Studies Programme, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Aradhana, A. (2021, March 31). Analysis: Quiet Singapore turns up volume on Myanmar as regional fears grow. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-singapore-diplomacy-idUSKBN2BN0VS>
- ASEAN, hurry up. (2021, May 19). *Jakarta Post*. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2021/05/18/asean-hurry-up.html>
- ASEAN diplomacy in Myanmar intensifies as EU eyes more sanctions. (2021, June 4). *Aljazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/4/asean-diplomacy-in-myanmar-intensifies-as-eu-eyes-more>
- ASEAN leaders' meeting, 24 April 2021, di Sekretariat ASEAN, Provinsi DKI Jakarta. (2021, April 24). *Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia*. <https://setkab.go.id/asean-leaders-meeting-24-april-2021-di-sekretariat-asean-provinsi-dki-jakarta/>
- ASEAN leaders to visit Myanmar amid divisions within bloc over response to coup. (2021, June 02). *South China Morning Post*. <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3135695/asean-leaders-visit-myanmar-amid-divisions-bloc-over>
- ASEAN makes half-hearted attempt to solve Myanmar crisis: Jakarta Post. (2021, June 03). *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2021/06/03/asean-makes-half-hearted-attempt-to-solve-myanmar-crisis-jakarta-post>
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2021, April 24). *Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting*. <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-on-the-asean-leaders-meeting-24-april-2021-and-five-point-consensus-2/>

- ASEAN Secretariat. (2011, May 7-8). *Chair's Statement of the 18th ASEAN Summit Jakarta*. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Statement_18th_ASEAN_Summit.pdf
- Beckfield, J. (2003). Inequality in the world polity: The structure of international organization. *American Sociological Review*, 68(3), 401-424. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1519730>
- Biden-Harris administration actions in response to the coup in Burma. (2021, February 11). *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/11/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-actions-in-response-to-the-coup-in-burma/>
- Bland, B. (2021, April 26). Indonesia raises ASEAN's bar on Myanmar. *The Interpreter*. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/indonesia-raises-asean-s-bar-myanmar>
- Caballero-Anthony, M. (2014). Understanding ASEAN's centrality: Based and prospects in an evolving regional architecture. *The Pacific Review*, 27(4), 563-584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.924227>
- Cambodian leader Hun Sen terms Myanmar coup "Internal Affairs". (2021, February 01). *VOA Cambodia*. <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/cambodian-leader-hun-sen-terms-myanmar-coup-internal-affairs-/5759503.html>
- Cerami, J. R. (2012). *Leadership and Policy Innovation-From Clinton to Bush: Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Routledge.
- Clinton, H. (2011, October 11). America's Pacific Century. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>
- Damayanti, A. (2018). Regional maritime cooperation in maintaining maritime security and stability: A test case for ASEAN unity and centrality. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 5(2), 119-134. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v5i2.1888>
- Drajat, G. M. (2021, May 21). The Indonesia factor in ASEAN's response to Myanmar. *East Asia Forum*. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/05/21/the-indonesia-factor-in-aseans-response-to-myanmar/>
- Emmers, R. (2014). Indonesia's Role in ASEAN: A Case of Incomplete and Sectorial Leadership. *The Pacific Review*, 27(4), 543-562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.924230>
- Geddie, J. (2021, October 22). Myanmar decries move to block junta leader from regional summit. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-rejects-asean-decision-exclude-junta-leader-summit-2021-10-22/>
- Gilpin, R. (1981). *War and Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Goh, E. (2013). *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Goldman, R. (2021, May 29). Myanmar's coup and violence, explained. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/myanmar-news-protests-coup.html>
- International Crisis Group. (2011). *Waging peace: ASEAN and the Thai-Cambodian border conflict* (Executive Summary No. 215. Asia Report, pp. 1-38). <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/waging-peace-asean-and-thai-cambodian-border-conflict>
- Johnson, K. & Thepgumpanat, P. (2021, April 2). Analysis: Myanmar's neighbour Thailand unlikely to toughen stance on coup. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-thailand-analysis-idUSKBN2BP0LN>
- Kassim, Y. R. (2019). *US-China conflict: Will ASEAN centrality be derailed?* (RSIS Commentary No. 109). Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- Kaarbo, J. & Beasley, R. K. (1999). A practical guide to the comparative case study method in political psychology. *Political Psychology*, 20(2), 369-391. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00149>
- Karmini, N. (2021, April 25). ASEAN leaders tell Myanmar coup general to end killings. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/aung-san-suu-kyi-global-trade-indonesia-myanmar-singapore-2959338f61cbe0b0b7c6dd7599ee6e2c>
- Kurus, B. (1993). Understanding ASEAN: Benefits and raison d'Étre. *Asian Survey*, 33(8), 819-831. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645090>
- Lai, L. (2019, November 03). Asean Summit: China committed to supporting ASEAN centrality, says Li Keqiang. *The Straits Times*. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/asean-summit-china-committed-to-supporting-asean-centrality-says-li-keqiang>
- Mueller, L. M. (2019). ASEAN centrality under threat – the cases of RCEP and connectivity. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 8(2), 177-198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2019.1691703>
- Myanmar's junta chief meets with ASEAN representatives. (2021, June 04). *Nikkei Asia*. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Coup/Myanmar-s-junta-chief-meets-with-ASEAN-representatives>
- Myanmar coup: Generals celebrated amid global fury over massacre. (2021, March 28). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56547381>
- Natalegawa, M. (2018). *Does ASEAN Matter: A View from Within*. Singapore: ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Padden, B. (2011, May 5). Thailand, Cambodia Agree to Indonesian Observers at Border. *VOA*. <https://www.voanews.com/a/thailand-cambodia-agree-to-indonesian-observers-at-border-121401724/139040.html>

- Palatino, M. (2021, March 09). Myanmar's coup: The view from Manila. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/myanmars-coup-the-view-from-manila/>
- Phan, H. D. (2015). Institutional design and its constraints: Explaining ASEAN's role in the Temple of Preah Vihear Dispute. *Asian Journal of International Law*, 5(1), 7-15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2044251314000113>
- Phonevilay, L. (2021, March 15). Laos makes official statement on Myanmar. *The Laotian Times*. <https://laotiantimes.com/2021/03/15/laos-makes-official-statement-on-myanmar/>
- Poling, G. (2021, May 23). Events in Myanmar leave ASEAN behind. *East Asia Forum*. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/05/23/events-in-myanmar-leave-asean-behind/>
- Putra, T., Utomo, T. C., & Windiani, R. (2013). Strategi Indonesia dalam kepemimpinan ASEAN 2011 (Analisis peranan Indonesia sebagai penengah konflik Thailand-Kamboja 2008-2011). *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 2(2), 1-9.
- Pongphisoot, B. (2011, May 20). Thai-Cambodian conflict: An obstacle to the ASEAN community 2015? *East Asia Forum*. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/05/20/thai-cambodian-conflict-an-obstacle-to-the-asean-community-2015/>
- Quad leaders' joint statement: "The Spirit of the Quad". (2021, March 12). *The White House*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>
- Septiari, D. (2021, May 16). ASEAN awaits the appointment of envoy to Myanmar. *The Jakarta Post*. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2021/05/16/asean-awaits-the-appointment-of-envoy-to-myanmar.html>
- Singapore, Indonesia says ASEAN can play important role in Myanmar. (2021, February 18). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/myanmar-politics-asean-int-idUSKBN2A10VQ>
- Singapore says Myanmar situation 'alarming', but no need for broad sanctions. (2021, February 16). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-says-myanmar-situation-alarming-no-need-broad-sanctions-2021-02-16/>
- Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo Singapore, 22 July 2008. (2012, July 06). ASEAN. <https://asean.org/statement-by-minister-for-foreign-affairs-george-yeo-singapore-22-july-2008/>
- Strangio, S. (2021, April 16). Special ASEAN summit on Myanmar set for April 24. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/special-asean-summit-on-myanmar-set-for-april-24/>
- Stubbs, R. (2014). ASEAN's leadership in East Asian region-building: Strength and weakness. *The Pacific Review*, 27(4), 523-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.924229>

- Tan, S. S. (2015). Indonesia among the powers: Will ASEAN still matter to Indonesia. In C. B. Roberts, A. D. Habir, & L. C. Sebastian (Eds.), *Indonesia's Ascent* (pp. 287–299). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137397416>
- Taylor, A. & Westfall, S. (2021, June 18). U.N. Adopts resolution condemning Myanmar's military junta. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/06/18/un-set-adopt-resolution-condemning-myanmars-military-junta/>
- The failed mission to Myanmar: Jakarta Post. (2021, June 11). *The Straits Times*. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/the-failed-mission-to-myanmar-jakarta-post>
- Tsjeng, H. Z. (2016). *ASEAN centrality: Still alive and kicking* (RSIS Commentary No. 48, p. 3). Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- UNIFEED. (2021, June 18). UN/Myanmar General Assembly. *United Nations UN Audiovisual Library*. <https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/2633/2633966>
- UNSC. (2011, February 09). *Update Report No. 1: Thailand/Cambodia*. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/update-report/lookup_c_glkwlemtisg_b_6552935.php
- Vietnam Chairmanship. (2010, October 28). *Chairman's Statement "Towards the ASEAN Community: from Vision to Action"*. ASEAN Secretariat: https://www.eria.org/2010_1028_Chairmans%20Statement_17th%20ASEAN%20Summit.pdf
- VN 'seriously concerned' about Myanmar situation, asks for safeguarding of its citizens. (2021, March 11). *Viet Nam News*. <https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/901043/vn-seriously-concerned-about-myanmar-situation-asks-for-safeguarding-of-its-citizens.html>
- Wagener, M. (2011). Lessons from Preah Vihear: Thailand, Cambodia, and the nature of low-intensity border conflicts. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 30(3), 27-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F186810341103000302>
- Young, O. (1991). Political Leadership and Regime Formation: on the Development. *International Organization*, 281-308.
- Yudhoyono, S. B. (2011, May 7). *Speech by H.E. Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, at the Opening of the 18th ASEAN Summit*. Retrieved from <https://asean.org/speech-by-h-e-dr-susilo-bambang-yudhoyono-president-of-the-republic-of-indonesia-at-the-opening-of-the-18th-asean-summit/>

A Visual Identity-Based Approach of Southeast Asian City Branding: A Netnography Analysis

Bahtiar Mohamad^{1*}, Raji Ridwan Adetunji², Ghadah Alarifi³, Ahmed Rageh Ismail⁴, and Muslim Diekola Akanmu⁵

¹Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

²College of Communication and Media Sciences, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

³College of Business Administration, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

⁵Faculty of Applied and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Pauh Putra Campus, Malaysia.

¹mbahtiar@uum.edu.my; ²rajiridwanadetunji@gmail.com; ³gaalarifi@pnu.edu.sa; ⁴ahmed.rageh@uum.edu.my; ⁵adiekola@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

How to Cite: Mohamad, B., Adetunji, R.R., Alarifi, G., Ismail, A.R. & Akanmu, M.D. (2022). A visual identity-based approach of Southeast Asian city branding: A netnography analysis. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7330>

Abstract

Cities and places had been progressively being marketed as brands by using the concept of 'City Branding', which is a unique idea. The scholars of 'City Branding' believed that the concept of branding helps the city in marketing activities. A city metaphorically could be seen as an entity given the advantage to display its visual characteristics to tourists, visitors, and residents. Unique visual identity such as iconic architecture and graphic design could make a city stand out from the others. Thus, the research examined the role of visual identity in city branding. Specifically, the aim was to contribute to better understanding of the concept of 'visual identity' in Southeast Asian cities. Netnography approach was employed to gain better understanding of the notion of visual identity of city branding and refine a conceptual framework that has been developed based on the existing literature. Elements such as iconic structure and graphic design (logo and slogan) of four cities in Southeastern Asia were emphasized. The research concludes that the components of the visual identity of the cities need to be reshaped to be aligned with their visual characteristics in order to boost their competitiveness among the global city brands.

Keywords: city branding, city identity, netnography, place branding, visual identity

Introduction

Branding, in general, focuses on making products or services easier to recognise, identify, understand, and memorize. Virtually, branding can be applied in every ramification. Places (cities, regions, and countries) have been promoting their attractions and images throughout history due to the need to attract settlers, customers, visitors, traders, investors, and the category of people, who are called 'influencers' (Anholt, 2010). Brand elements such as logos, slogans, motto, tagline, and colour schemes play a critical role in most of the best city marketing campaigns since they enable a city to stand out from competitors. The alignment of the branding activities with the city identity is a key to make the city brand more authentic and distinctive to build reputation based on compelling and unique sense of place (Fasli, 2010). The concept of city and place branding has been widely discussed by many scholars as the image or representation developed to provide overreaching details of a city to market and generate economic, cultural, and political value for the city (Balakrishnan, 2009; Kavaratzis, 2004; Lucarelli & Berg, 2011). In addition, city branding is a way of communicating competitive advantages, quality, history, culture, and lifestyle of a place to visitors, tourists, and residents (Björner, 2013; Mohamad et al., 2018). One of the city's common visual identities is an iconic architectural building which can either be new or refurbished such as the cultural facilities, public buildings, mixed-use developments, offices or towers, shopping malls, transport interchanges, public art or installations, and extensions of historic sites (Evans, 2015).

In addition, Dinnie (2010), Foroudi et al. (2016), and Kavaratzis and Dennis (2018) have unanimously included the development of logo and slogan as part of the crucial elements of a city and place branding. Giovanardi et al. (2013) regard city branding as centralizing the marketing activities of a place on the development of symbolic logos, slogans, and other positive images to promote the development, sales, and marketing of the place. In other words, city branding is centered on the development of a unique visual identity (architecture, logo, slogan, etc.) to shape the brand of a city. In city branding, the scholars believe that the concept of branding will help the marketing activities of a city (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007). Brand enables a city to be metaphorically seen as an entity with advantage of displaying its own visual identities and characteristics for attracting visitors and tourists and ultimately enhancing the economic value of the city (Stigel & Frimann, 2006).

Previous studies have mentioned that cities and places are being progressively marketed as a brand along the line with many tremendously costly companies and product branding campaigns. As it is usually perceived in connection with branding, multiple effects are generated by city branding, placing cities with no strong branding under pressure. Meanwhile, the fact that cities are increasingly rated based on their attractiveness for tourist, residents, and investors is enforcing city planners and local authorities to strategize and prioritize the branding of their cities (Oguztimur & Akturan, 2016). City branding is a unique idea symbolizing a collection of representations that are the result of the city's architecture, art, lifestyle, and its reflections in mass communications such as graphic design (logo and slogan) for advertisement campaigns. In other words, a prosperous city brand should reflect

all the dimensions of the description of the city ranging from its geography, architecture, culture, commerce, and people.

The research aims to review and discuss the current elements of visual identity such as iconic architecture, slogan, and logo of four major cities in Southeast Asia (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, and Ho Chi Minh). It is to attain better understanding on the visual identities of the cities and provide city brand managers with insights on how to project a realistic and inspiring city image for tourists. Certainly, each city has its own unique distinctive characteristics and meanings in its culture, history, economy, politics, and religions. Hence, studying city branding element for each city and their roles in branding activities is of paramount. These elements can be uncovered by several methods, which complement each other; however, the current research takes the netnographic approach. The research, henceforth, broadens the process of understanding city branding especially in the region of South-Eastern Asia by highlighting the importance of reshaping the visual identities of the four major South-Eastern Asian cities. The four cities have been chosen due to the characteristics and the promotional campaigns done by the cities' authorities in the past 10 years. Singapore and Kuala Lumpur represent the architecture design of modern-day urban image while Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh Cities are rich with the historical elements of architecture that symbolize heritage values.

City branding in the context of Southeast Asia regions are believed to have two main problems. First, the visual identity of city brands varies in relation to the culture, social context, and lifestyle of people in the cities (Kavaratzis, 2005). Hence, the elements of visual identity used as basic tactics for city branding among Southeast Asian cities are often not centered on the unique characteristics of the cities. Meanwhile, place branding scholars have argued that the primary drive for city branding is developing an all-encompassing image which represents all that a city should be known for. It can be done by reflecting the iconic architecture or the specific culture and lifestyle of the city in the logo, slogan as well as the advertisement that are created and designed by city officials and consultants to drive the process of city branding (Oliveira, 2015). In contrast, the lack of uniformity in the elements of visual identities of Southeast Asian city brands is significantly limiting the adequate representation of the city brands (Govers, 2013).

Second, there is a paucity of literature concerning city branding in Southeast Asia region. It is believed essential to focus on the process of city branding due to the increasing importance of tourism in the economic development of the Southeast Asia region. In addition, the majority of the Southeast Asian cities have recently become some of the global tourist destinations. Hence, it is considered essential to study the underlying factors such as iconic architecture, slogan, and logo for developing strong and globally acceptable city brands in the Southeast Asia region. For instance, Bangkok is occupied with modern and cultural heritage buildings as its most visible characteristics. Siemreap of Cambodia is an enormous ancient city recognized by the UNESCO as a heritage site. However, it is unclear how the city council or the local authorities of such cities takes the representation of such heritage and iconic structure importantly as part of the process of city branding. Therefore, the main discussion of the research is to broaden the understanding of city branding through literature review on

both corporate branding and city branding. The research underscores the need for integrating strategic actions towards the development of the visual identities that reflect the unique characteristics of those cities to fully capitalize on their potentials and to increase their acceptance among the global competitive city brands.

Literature Review

City branding is relatively an emerging and new concept contrary to city promotion and city marketing. In Southeast Asia, city branding is often delimited by advertising, campaigns, designing visual images, and slogans (Kavaratzis, 2008). For example, Kuala Lumpur is branded along the line of its cosmopolitan characteristics through its slogan: "A City of Contrast and Diversity." On the other hand, Singapore exploits mind-set, serving, and attitude as global market using an attractive slogan of "Passion Made Possible." Furthermore, Ho Chi Minh City is simply branded as "Vibrant Ho Chi Minh." A further example is Jakarta, which emphasizes its lively characteristics through the slogan "Enjoy Jakarta".

Moreover, branding involves more than imagery but also identity building. Klein (2000) adds that the core value of a place is represented by a brand meanwhile advertisement simply means a way of communicating such identity. Brands are employed a means of interactions between residents, visitors, tourists, and business investors while city brand is predominantly used within the global marketplace as a competitive way of differentiation. In other words, Mommaas (2002) reports that city branding enabled people to have interaction through sharing of similar identity. According to Kavaratzis (2008), "the rationale behind city branding is that the city must first decide what it wants to become and how it can create the mental, psychological and emotional ties that are necessary for the city to become this brand."

Additionally, city branding can be the process of sharing to the world, an existing identity. For example, the features of a creative city may be in place while there is no awareness for external audience. A branding exercise in this context is more of marketing and promotion of what is in existence rather than conscious creation of imagery identity. The creation of such identity as the core of city branding is considered by Evans (2005), Hankinson (2004), Julier (2005), and Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005).

The unique characteristics of a city inspire the concept of city branding, and the same time primarily focus on the process of establishing, maintaining, and extending the identity of the city (Stigel & Frimann, 2006). Therefore, the city is viewed metaphorically as an organization with internal management of its members (Adamu, Mohamad, & Rahman, 2018; Adamu, Mohamad, & Rahman, 2016) while the management acts in accordance with the values of the city brand to be kept happy with presentable publicity for the organization and encouraged to act as the city ambassadors (Christgau & Jacobsen, 2004). In another view, Kavaratzis (2007) reports that branding is a tool to create city's self-attribution and to create positive image in the mind of the stakeholders to gain positive outlook. Additionally, places and cities are marketed increasingly as trademark with the known lines from campaigns of

product branding and many intensive costly companies (Mollerup, 1995; Olins, 1999; Schulz & Hatch, 2000).

As it has generally been observed in connection with branding, snowball effects are created by city branding, making cities with no brand to be under pressure to create self-development. However, it is made difficult for the local authority (city council) to maintain and improve the ratings of the places for attraction for residents, investors, and tourists (Langer, 2001). The research tends to focus on visual identity elements to connect to the concept of city branding. The visual identity is mostly defined as a collection of visual elements that serve to represent and differentiate a brand. More specifically, it refers to any visible components of the city such as an iconic architecture, logo, and slogan that help tourists identify a characteristic of the city.

Methodology

Netnography

The research is based on the data of tourist experiences on the selected Southeast Asian cities. Caru and Cova (2008) state that tourism is a singular experience enjoyed by individual which cannot be directly accessed for the purpose of the research. Therefore, the research only interprets what is expressed by their subjects in writing, verbal activity or through their behaviour. Caru and Cova (2008) add that verbatim are argued instead to be important to understand the private nature of the experience being studied. The ethnography approach has been conducted to deeply understand the emotions or feelings experienced by tourists (Caru & Cova, 2008; Rageh, Melewar, & Woodside, 2013).

Kozinets (2002) reports that to identify and understand the needs and decision that influence relevant online consumer groups, netnography has been employed as a tool of marketing research. Many people are now adopting internet as another medium in which they can chronicle their lives since internet access becomes widely more available with the additional dimensions of having more audience. Thus, alongside with the emergence of blogs, a great explosion in personal storytelling has arisen. Consumers are using virtual communities and other online platforms to share ideas such as boycotters, build communities such as on-line coffee communities and contact fellow consumers such as the Star Trek and X-Files fans (Kozinets, 1997; Kozinets, 2001; Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 1998).

The approach enables researcher to get access to discussion with tourists by participating or by observing in communications on publicly available online platforms and collecting data where tourist narratives are of interests to the researchers (Nelson & Otnes, 2005). With respect to the present research, netnography is the most suitable qualitative method done by utilizing a content analysis of tourist review of their past experiences within selected major cities in Southeastern Asian countries. The tourist experiences are used to conceptualize the research. In addition, the research follows Kozinets' criteria to choose the most suitable reviews. Therefore, the results are considered to be valid and reliable. The

research elaborates procedures and stages are recommended to adapt netnography to the online context (Kozinets, 2002).

Entrée

This is the identification of the online communities that are mostly related to the research interest and learning as much as possible about the identified communities. The research identifies one website called Tripadvisor (tripadvisor.com), a popular review platform in the industry of tourism for users and researchers. Several previous research have used the reviews on the website (Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019). Tripadvisor is chosen since the reviews are more focused and relevant to the questions raised in the research. There is also a higher post traffics and more rich data in details. Similarly, same procedures are used by Yang and Fang (2004) to analyze complaints and compliments from the customers with security brokerage services. In the research, a netnography in a form of non-participant observation is used in accordance with the customer reviews published on Tripadvisor. The rationale behind choosing the non-participant observation is due to the undesirable effect of the outsiders to the group (Elliot & Jankel-Elliot, 2003). Furthermore, the research is unobtrusively conducted as the netnography is capable of being conducted in a way that is entirely unobtrusive (Kozinets, 2002).

Data Collection

The researcher directly copied the tourist reviews that are relevant to the study from Tripadvisor, while some selective parts are considered when choosing the tourist messages. For example, all messages are examined, but some irrelevant messages and reviews are discarded. Moreover, the reviews are accessed for a long time to secure enough volume of reviews on city branding.

Analysis and Interpretation

Examination on data collection is implemented, in which the messages that are related directly to the research questions are evaluated while the qualitative analysis involving the constant comparative methods is performed (Strauss & Glaser, 1967; Kozinets, 2002; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The research analyses the tourist reviews following the principles of analysis and interpretation of qualitative data (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Spiggle, 1994; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The data is first coded into discrete parts, then closely evaluated and compared for differences and similarities with each code representing a specific aspect of the phenomenon of interests. Patterns are established across multiple sources of data to integrate and contextualize coding categories. By using the selective coding, relationships are specified between the constructs and move to a higher level of abstraction described as empirical grounding for an etic understanding (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). From the review

interpretation, the research could find out the measures of the customer's experience, its outcomes, and the main causes.

Analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data of the tourist reviews are directly examined with the research questions. The research analyses the experiences of the tourists from the journal entries following the analysis and interpretation principle of qualitative data (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Spiggle, 1994; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Related themes such as logo, slogan, and iconic architecture have been recognized, and the emergent themes are compared with presumptions from the previous research.

Results and Discussions

The City Identity and Its Characteristics

Within the personality and developmental psychology, the concepts of identity have been a problematic and contested issue for long time (Erikson, 1971). It is considered a challenge when the identity of a person is constantly subject to change and dynamic (Mohamad et al., 2016). Similarly, the identity of the city varies about situation and social context in which the residents of the city interact. "Identity is the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places," Lynch (1960) states. Identity is a distinction which is visible and obvious at first sight and active in echoing memories and striking a recall in the mind of people (Mohamad, Ismail, & Bidin, 2017). Therefore, identity is not reproducible but always exclusive. Every city has a unique and peculiar identity comprising memories and images that are either positive or negative. The image of a city is formed by the characteristics of a city which includes monumental building, geography, culture, and other historic features. The evidence of such an explanation is visible among cities that are strongly branded today.

The branding of a city is reflected in its slogan, name, and logo (Sáez, Perriáñez, & Mediano, 2013). First, it should be noted that when discussing the image of cities from a branding perspective, nowadays many cities make attempts to promote themselves with the aid of iconic structure, architecture, logo, and slogan. From a general perspective, three keys and characteristics are used to qualify city branding, namely: 1) authenticity, 2) image, and 3) uniqueness. Kavaratzis (2007) reports that virtually every city has city branding to redevelop its image on its agenda. Mainly, branding is developed from marketing strategies, and it is more applied for promotion and marketing of city like in the case of products. Kotler, Brown, and Knight (1999) argue that places are products of marketed values and identities. Ashworth (2009) states that to create or discover uniqueness, which distinguishes a city from others, is one of the purposes of place or city branding.

Articulation of cities to the global world is the major purpose of creating brands for cities. The city should work to generate enticing image and economic wealth. Therefore, branding of a city has to be linked with marketable identity that can be accepted by people, especially on the culture, history, social development, landscape, environment, architecture,

and economic growth (Deckker, 2000; Zhang & Zhao, 2009). As a holistic approach, city branding serves as a tool of promotion for creating unique image for a city. The city image accordingly can be considered as one of the most paramount key concerns for both city branding and city identity. The best interpretation of image concept can be an intersection of city identity and city branding as depicted in Figure 1 since the image is an indisputable constituent of both. In addition, in one way or the other, it can also be suggested that image influences the tourist intention to visit.

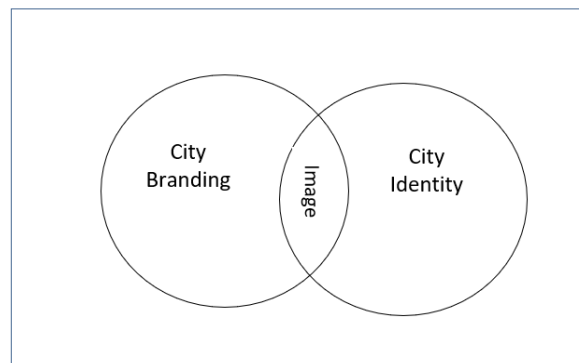


Figure 1. City Identity and City Branding and their Relations to Image

City identity is important with city marketing and place promotion to attract tourists. Moreover, the visual identity (e.g. the iconic architecture, slogan, and logo) during the entangling or capturing in a capital city is determined by the arena of place marketing and promotion. This is the part of the attempts by cities to forge distinctive atmospheres and images, which act as a bait to both people and capital of the right sort (e.g. influential and wealthy). Therefore, city branding and city identity are connected together through the practices of place promotion tools via images with effect on the tourist attention. The research is limited to the effects of visual identity based on iconic architecture, slogan, and logo for reshaping city branding in the context of Southeast Asian cities.

Table 1 presents the Tripadvisor total number reviews for each city. Singapore has the largest number of reviews (1.531.335), followed by Ho Chi Minh City (797.098), Kuala Lumpur (630.800) and Jakarta (359.581). On specific reviews like the iconic architecture as presented in Table 2, Gardens by the Bay receives 59.521 and becomes the famous landmark in Singapore among the tourists. Petronas Twin Tower has maintained her popularity as an icon for Kuala Lumpur with 30.112 reviews. National Monument (MONAS) of Jakarta at the top rank for many years since it officially opened on 2 July 1975 with 4.142 reviews. However, the Ho Chi Minh City Hall is not listed as one of the top 5 iconic buildings based on the numbers of tourists' reviews. It shows that the decision of city authority of Ho Chi Minh City is not in line with the tourist perception on the best architecture.

Table 1. The total number of reviews for each of the cities from TripAdvisor website

Cities	Number of Reviews
1. Singapore	1.531.335
2. Kuala Lumpur	630.800
3. Jakarta	359.581
4. Ho Chi Minh City	797.098

Table 2. The total number of reviews for each location within the selected cities

Top 5 Reviews	Number of Reviews
<i>Singapore</i>	
1. Gardens by the Bay	59.521
2. Singapore MRT	24.047
3. Singapore Zoo	22.361
4. Singapore Botanic Gardens	19.814
5. Singapore Flyers	17.341
<i>Kuala Lumpur</i>	
1. Petronas Twin Tower	30.112
2. KLCC Park	13.084
3. Menara Kuala Lumpur	8.641
4. Kuala Lumpur Bird Park	7.959
5. Jalan Alor	7.502
<i>Jakarta</i>	
1. National Monument (MONAS)	4.142
2. Grand Indonesia Mall	3.235
3. Istiqlal Mosque	2.681
4. Taman Mini Indonesia	2.289
5. Jakarta Old Town	2.005
<i>Ho Chi Minh City</i>	
1. War Remnants Museum	32.967
2. Chu Chi Tunnels	25.443
3. Central Post Office	17.100
4. Ben Thanh Market	13.049
5. The Independence Palace	10.200

The three elements of iconic architecture, slogan, and logo have been widely used by the selected cities for their promotional tourism activities. Therefore, the comparative marketing values for the promotional strategy will help the policy makers and the advertisers to enhance their marketing and promotional tools.

Singapore and Its Branding



Figure 2. Singapore – Passion Made Possible (2017)

Iconic Architecture

Singapore tries to associate its slogan with the city image, especially the new iconic building Marina Bay Sands. It is found by an integrated resort fronting Marina Bay and Las Vegas Sands Corporation in Singapore. In 2010 at the opening ceremony, it was named as the most expensive standalone casino property in the world with S\$8 billion, which includes the cost of the land. The resort designed by Moshe Safdie comprises convention and exhibition centre, hotels, malls, shops, art science exhibits, a museum, the world greatest atrium casino, two floating crystal pavilions, and restaurants. The most unique complex is the 340-metre-long SkyPark with an infinity swimming pool placed on top of the most significant world's public cantilevered platform which overhangs from the North tower.

Findings from the netnography study are more consistent with the popular iconic architecture in Singapore. Tourists reflect on the perception of the happiness and uniqueness of their experiences. For example, these three comments are emphasized on their experiences:

"It was stunning; magnificent tree structures with plants embedded in them, all illuminated at night, different sizes and a high-rise walkway between them giving you a different eye view."

And:

"I would 100% recommend visiting Gardens by the Bay (GBTB) whilst staying in Singapore, it was one of the highlights of my trip!"

Another example:

"It's one of the most iconic places in Singapore so you must visit to at least take a photo. You must visit this iconic place, which is large, green, crowded at times, and simply breathtaking".

These examples show that recognition of important iconic architecture is a catalyst for marketing strategy. Even though the photo of Marina Bay Sands has been used widely in many social media to represent Singapore, it is not officially used as part of the logo for marketing promotional activities.

Slogan and Logo

Singapore slogan of "Passion Made Possible" aims to entice business and tourism by showcasing the mind-set and attitude of Singapore to serve as a platform for Singaporean to globally market their images. The brand's development involves respondents from ten countries (Australia, Belgium, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, UK, and US) and from Singapore to understand what Singapore stands for. As a result, the spirit of Singapore is best reflected by the themes of 'passion' and 'possibilities' as shared by the respondents. The 'passion' to strive is said to drive 'possibilities' when possibilities are strongly linked with Singapore as a destination.

What Singapore stands for as a country is articulated by the brand of Singapore supported by telling many stories about the people and destination. This is appealing to more

influential tourists who are looking towards more inspiration and value as Singapore is making shift from being primarily an investment-driven economy to one that innovation will lead. International and local companies that are seeking to create new products, services, and solution successfully handle in Singapore and change possibilities to realities are sent a clear and loud signal by the brand.

While a logo coined as “SG Mark” is also featured by the unified brand with a circle of letters “SG,” and the TSLA design developed the brand identity within it. The TSLA is a design and branding practice of creative shop, the secret little agency (TSLA) in Singapore. The coming of age with quiet confidence and the true personality of the nation of Singapore are expressed by the SG Mark. It can be observed in the typeface of the custom and the abbreviation of the country “SG”. The logo is applied throughout the campaign of the Passion Made Possible and stands as a trademark as applicable to text headlines and key visual icons of Singapore with a ‘distinctive Singapore perspective’ in the same way to a trademark logo.

Although the logo of Singapore does not represent the iconic building such as Marina Bay Sand and other historical buildings, the slogan “Passion Made Possible” can be interpreted by the tourists as a representation of the iconic monument of Singapore. The iconic architecture offers the spirit of Singapore through “passion” and “possibilities”. However, it is difficult as a branding slogan to imagine what an associated development in tourism focus and plan should be for Singapore.

Kuala Lumpur and Its Branding



Figure 3. Kuala Lumpur – A City of Contrast and Diversity (2016)

Iconic Architecture

Argentine architect César Pelli designed the Petronas twin towers as a distinguished post-modern style which was selected to create a 21st century icon for Kuala Lumpur. Petronas Twin Tower as the tallest twin tower in the world remains to be relevant among iconic architecture globally. Its unique characteristic attracts a million tourist every year and is the most picturesque building in Kuala Lumpur. Tourists, through expressions, are amazed in their posts which stemmed from a discrepancy between what they expect and what is

experienced. A striking example explained the surprise element of Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) as an iconic architecture and must-visit place:

"It's often said that no visit to Kuala Lumpur is complete without visiting the iconic Petronas Towers, and observing the building lit up in the evening makes it very easy to see why."

"KLCC as we know is a must visit when you go to Kuala Lumpur. It's an iconic scene in KL."

"I think is pretty self-explanatory. Amazing twin tower. One of a kind. The pride of every Malaysia. The tallest twin tower in the world. A must tower if you are in Kuala Lumpur. There is no way you can miss this iconic tower."

Tourists consider KLCC as an iconic amazing place for Kuala Lumpur because the view, futuristic shape, and majestic skyline, which is illustrated in the tourists' comments:

"It is truly an amazing architectural design and a must see if in KL."

"Iconic building. I especially love it at night time."

"Excellent tour of this iconic building. Dizzying views of the city."

"What a majestic view of this skyline. It is certainly iconic! Plus, the fact that you could go shopping luxury brands!"

The iconic building of Kuala Lumpur does not appear in the logo, but the 'exciting', 'surprising' and 'enticing' elements are embedded in Petronas Twin tower. It shows that the city council of Kuala Lumpur has strategized contrast and diverse elements of the city's characteristics. In city branding models, the cityscape (or 'urban landscape') is characterized in several ways as a 'place physics' (Anholt, 2006).

Slogan and Logo

Regarding Kuala Lumpur as a city for future, a few developments and strategies have been set up to show its uniqueness and vibrant characteristics. The current development demonstrates the Kuala Lumpur aggressively offered a unique identity to the stakeholders. Kuala Lumpur is branded as 'A City of Contrasts & Diversity', and coherently tagged onto its new logo are the words 'exciting', 'surprising' and 'enticing'. Kuala Lumpur is unique, so 'contrasts and diversity' is a way to portray Kuala Lumpur's distinctiveness, and on the basis that the identity of the city is created on its people, history and traditions in the culture and arts.

The words "Kuala Lumpur" is featured in the logo written in grey colour with a drop shadow giving the city description as 'exciting, surprising and enticing' and brands it as a 'city of contrasts and diversity'. The logo and branding are specially designed to relate to the city heritage which established and grew due to tin mining industry. Since Kuala Lumpur grew as a significant tin trading centre as the tin mining industry developed in the environs of Petaling and Ampang, the logical direction of the approach of the brand design to connect

the tin and tin mining industry to the heritage of Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, the letters in the logo are crafted to appear with a metallic finishing in the texture of raw tin.

The new brand identity of Kuala Lumpur does not reflect the ‘contrasting heritage, multi-cultural society and religion, diverse attractions and metropolis.’ The destination attraction needs to spread throughout the city and does not concentrate on the iconic building.

Jakarta and Its Branding



Figure 4. Jakarta – Enjoy Jakarta (2004)

Iconic Architecture

The National Monument, well-known as Monas by the locals has been highlighted as a central part of the ‘Enjoy Jakarta’ campaign. Monas is historically important to Indonesians, especially to remember their struggle for the country’s independence. The netnography analysis shows how important Monas is as a central idea of the city branding campaign. The iconic architecture, people, and strong culture allow tourists to enjoy the Jakarta city. The architecture reflects the slogan which focuses on the tangible value of the visual identity.

The analysis of the tourist reviews shows the importance of Monas as an iconic architecture in Jakarta. Many references are made related to how this architecture shows its own characteristic and symbolism. Some particularly striking examples of this are provided by the tourists on TripAdvisor website:

“The iconic statue of Jakarta symbolic”

“The area of MONAS is large enough. And the place is peaceful and environmentally friendly with plants and deer around. This is iconic architecture of Jakarta.”

“Monas now becoming one of the iconic places to visit in Indonesia especially Jakarta. There will be laser/light show during night time.”

As a representation of the independence of the country, Monas stands by its own quality and historical value for many years. It is evident that tourists find interesting historical monuments. For example:

“Monas, a historical monument, covered with gold at the top, symbolizes the city of Jakarta. The build-up is impressive with white marbles and thick walls”.

“The largest monument in Jakarta. It's really huge and fascinating, I really enjoyed going there, and it's good to know about heroes and history behind the monument. It's also an excellent building concept, historical building and architecture. You can go to the top of Monas to see around the city from the top... that's really amazing.”

“It is a monument structure in Jakarta with gold on the top, is a must visit structure”

Monas is considered as iconic architecture for Jakarta based on two elements – symbol of country's independence and heritage. The iconic architecture of Monas is built on symbolic and heritage legacies, which creates new destinations and experiences and becomes a part of a city brand portfolio (Evans, 2015).

Slogan and Logo

The tagline of Enjoy Jakarta was launched in March 2005. The primary objective is to find a new branding for Jakarta using facts and not just the common desire of a person responsible and also to increase the number of international tourists to visit Jakarta to 2.2 million people by the end of 2005. The nine slogans have been shortlisted as following: 1) Enjoy Jakarta, 2) Jakarta, The Spice of Life, 3) Jakarta, its Real, 4) Jakarta, It's cool to be Hot, 5) Jakarta, there is more in Jakarta, 6) Jakarta, Asia's Hidden Secret, 7) Jakarta, Rhythm of Life, 8) Jakarta, Feel the Pulse, 9) Jakarta Smile City. Finally, the 'Enjoy Jakarta' has been chosen to represent the city of Jakarta. The city council has a major plan for the city, including the infrastructure development to transform Jakarta as a city that people enjoy (Suherlan, 2016).

Six areas are identified by the research where the city is “as good as or better than other Southeast Asian capitals”, and six areas where they are worse. The strengths are golf, shopping, dining, nightlife, marine tourism, and spas. “Enjoy Jakarta” is a city's brand that promotes ‘enjoy the good bits and ignore the bad’. The National Monument (Monas) appears as a central symbol of the city branding logo. It is based on two colours (blue and orange) palette, while the sketch word shows the informal fonts. Although, the logo appears simple, it represents the ‘enjoyment’ characteristic. The research has a problem to find the justification of the colours and the font type due to limited literatures.

Ho Chi Minh City and Its Branding



Figure 5. Vibrant Ho Chi Minh City (2011)

Iconic Architecture

Between 1902 and 1908, Ho Chi Minh City Hall or Saigon City Hall was built in a French colonial style in the city of Saigon. After 1975, it was renamed as Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee. It remains one of the most stunning colonial monuments, especially in floodlights at night. Although the monumental building is not open to the public, the Saigon City Hall is popular for its great opportunities in photos. Photographs can be taken outside by the tourists, and most of the tourists choose to do so at night when the building and its grounds are lightened up. Although, the Ho Chi Minh City Hall is an essential and historical monument to the city, the connection of the building to the slogan is unclear. The characteristics of the building seem not to be in line with the meaning of 'vibrant'. Moreover, the findings from the netnography analysis show that War Remnants Museum is the main iconic architecture discussed by the tourists. Similarly, the City Hall building is not in the top five list of the tourists' reviews.

Although the findings are not consistent with many literatures that suggesting the iconic architecture could be a central idea of place branding, Ho Chi Minh City Hall has a unique characteristic to be considered. Tourists have expressed their good experiences about the building. A further elaboration on their feelings is expressed:

"Looks beautiful in night when the city hall is lighted up & walking street alive, needs more development to make it more tourist friendly".

"Best visit is the evening when the weather is cooler. City hall is a beautiful photographic attraction. There is also a musical dancing fountain".

"Apparently, this is a beautiful garden with lots of colourful flowers and lovely fountains for a moment of calm in the middle of the busy city."

Contrast with the Marina Bay and KLCC, Ho Chi Minh City has a close historical characteristic with Monas of Jakarta. With full of history of French architecture, tourists always associate this building with the colonial era. Some tourists' comments are:

"You will be impressed with the European architecture, which is still being well taken care by local government."

"We undertook a self-guided tour of French colonial architecture, for us this building was the highlight, (built in the early 1900's) it overlooks a magnificent square with very walkable streets lining the square (hardly any scooters to contend with), it was the centre piece of the walk".

Although Ho Chi Minh City Hall is not popular based on the number of tourists' reviews, the building has chosen to be important element for the city branding. The historical value situated in a part of the Ho Chi Minh Square makes the iconic architecture stand out as compared to other buildings. It is in line with Evans (2015) suggesting that the heritage quarters indicate the importance of historical and symbolic association and contribute to the identity of the city.

Slogan and Logo

The "Vibrant Ho Chi Minh City" has been used to portray the tourism promotion program of the city. The slogan is familiarized with the part of the city's brand development campaign since 2011. The campaign as designed by a Cowan Company proposes the concept of an attractive, peaceful, powerful, and friendly land with its peculiar features. Moreover, many resolutions have been brought up by this company to create products for tourism and completing of traveling lines, especially the airlines in Ho Chi Minh City.

The slogan is made available in many printed materials for advertising tourism to promote the Ho Chi Minh City, a vibrant city. Besides, for foreign visitors and the economic centre of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City is also a top landing city. The colourful logos for the marketing tools of HCMC have presented the Ho Chi Minh City Hall buildings as a centre of vibrant activities. It shows the dynamic image regarding colours, but the iconic building does not reflect the context of 'vibrant'. The mixed characteristic between old and new makes it confusing for tourists to recognize the identity of the city.

Conclusions

The research illuminates that city branding is a process of developing concrete policies to achieve economic development, which concurrently serves as a channel for the residents to associate themselves with their city. Notably, it is vital to address urgent social issues like cultural diversity and social exclusion on the other hand. The conceptual ideas focus on the use of city branding and its possible impact on the residents, and the ways they relate with the experiences in their city; this is based on an integration of measures of city marketing. Furthermore, it is explained that the city brand is not only established in the design of logo,

slogan, and advertising campaigns but also in the collection of all those visual identity elements including iconic architecture. Therefore, a coherent branding strategy should focus on building an integrative identity along the lines of city logos, city slogans, and the iconic architecture of the cities. Nowadays, modern societies are using city identity such as slogan, logo, and iconic architecture as symbols of development and admiration in the world. Historic architecture has been an essential tool in communicating the symbols of cities and to entice visitors. Thus, in the branding and promotion of city image, visually attractive iconic architecture turns out to play a significant role.

The city agencies of some of these Southeast Asian cities have also attempted to create a brand for their cities across the elements of visual identity, including iconic architecture, slogan, and logo. However, the brand of those cities, including Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore has created disuniformity. As seen within the context of the Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur, iconic architecture influences the image of cities. Consequently, through the selected buildings in the research, the visual identity (architecture) is affected as it has been attempted to be questioned and evaluated regarding visual and spatial features. It is revealed from the past studies that the “Sand Skypark” was designed by Moshe Safdie while the Petronas Twin Tower was designed by an Argentine Architect Cesar Pelli. The tower has positive presentation on the visual identity of the city as they fit perfectly to the present context. In another vein, the City Council in Ho Chi Minh City is a non-contextual approach putting aside the existing context and reducing the value of the immediate surroundings. Lastly, it is noted that the old French building does not reflect the ‘vibrant’ city.

Funding Acknowledgement

The research was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University through the Fast-track Research Funding Program.

About The Authors

Dr. Bahtiar Mohamad is an Associate Professor of Corporate Communication and Strategy at Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, UUM Kuala Lumpur. He teaches Public Relations, Corporate Communication, Communication for Managers and Organizational Image management, which all combine to support his hybrid profession linking communication with the management. He is carrying out research and publication in the area of corporate identity, corporate image, crisis communication, and corporate branding from the point of view of public relations and corporate communication. Bahtiar has published over 100 research papers in reputed journals and conferences and has authored, co-authored, and edited 8 text-books.

Dr. Ridwan A. Raji is Assistant Professor in Integrated Strategic Communications in the College of Communication and Media Sciences, Zayed University, UAE. His research focuses on Brand Management, Marketing Communication, Media Management and Social Media. He has several publications in International Journals and has a book chapter published in Rutledge Research in Higher-Education book series. He is a reviewer of Indexed journals such as Journal of Brand Management, Computers in Human Behavior, Journal of Marketing Communication, Journal of Promotion Management, and Spanish Journal of Marketing and serves as the board of the editor for the Messenger Journal.

Dr. Ghadah Alarifi is the Dean of College of Business Administration, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University. Her research interest is related to entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, sustainability, impact investing, entrepreneurial orientation, social enterprise's performance, cognitive social perspective in entrepreneurship and gender.

Dr. Ahmed Rageh Ismail received the PhD degree in management studies (Marketing) from Brunel University, Brunel Business School, London, UK, in 2010. He is currently working as an Associate Professor of Management/Marketing at Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business (OYAGSB) Universiti Utara Malaysia. His main research and teaching interests fall into areas such as branding, sustainability, cross-cultural marketing, consumer behavior, value and ethics. He has published in the Qualitative Marketing Research: An International Journal, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Asia-Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Young Consumers amongst others.

Dr. Muslim Diekola Akanmu is currently a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Applied and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Malaysia. He bagged his Doctoral degree in Technology, Operations and Logistics Management and Master's degree in Technology Management from Universiti Utara Malaysia. He is also an External Moderator at Peninsula College and a Co-researcher with the Institute for Youth Research (IYRES) under the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Malaysia. He is a graduate member of Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE), an affiliate member of Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM) and an associate member of Malaysian Society for Engineering (AMSET).

References

- Adamu, A. A., Mohamad, B. B., & Rahman, A. A. (2018). Towards measuring internal crisis communication: A qualitative study. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 28(1), 107-128. <https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.00006.ada>
- Adamu, A.A., Mohamad, B., & Rahman, A. A. (2016). Antecedents of internal crisis communication and its consequences on employee performance. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(7S), 33-41.
- Anholt, S. (2006). *How the World Views Its Cities* (2nd Ed.). Bellevue: Global Market Insight.

- Anholt, S. (2010). Definitions of place branding – Working towards a resolution. *Place Brand Public Diplomacy*, 6(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2010.3>
- Arnould, E. J. & Wallendorf, M. (1994). Market-oriented ethnography: Interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31(4), 484-504. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3151878>
- Ashworth, G. J. (2009). The instrument of place branding: How is it done? *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 16(1), 9-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/v10105-009-0001-9>
- Balakrishnan, M. S. (2009). Strategic branding of destinations: A framework. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(5-6), 611-629. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090560910946954>
- Björner, E. (2013). International positioning through online city branding: The case of Chengdu. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 6(3), 203-226.
- Carù, A. & Cova, B. (2008). Small versus big stories in framing consumption experiences. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 11(2), 166-176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13522750810864422>
- Christgau, J. & Jacobsen, M. V. (2004). Byen i oplevelsessamfundet. (Unpublished MA dissertation, Copenhagen Business School).
- Corbin, J. M. & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988593>
- Deckker, T. (2000). Brasilia: City versus landscape. In T. Deckker (Eds.), *Modern City Revisited* (1st Ed.). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Dinnie, K. (2010). *City Branding: Theory and Cases* (11th Ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Elliott, R. & Jankel-Elliott, N. (2003). Using ethnography in strategic consumer research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International journal*, 6(4), 215-223. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750310495300>
- Erikson, E. (1971). *Identitet, ungdom og krise*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitze.
- Evans, G. (2005). Measure for measure: Evaluating the evidence of culture's contribution to regeneration. *Urban Studies*, 42(5-6), 959-983. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107102>
- Evans, G. (2015). *Rethinking Place Branding and Place Making Through Creative and Cultural Quarters*. Springer Books.
- Fasli, M. (2010). A model for sustaining City Identity. Case Study: Lefkosa (Nicosia) in North Cyprus. (Doctoral Dissertation). Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

- Foroudi, P., Gupta, S., Kitchen, P., Foroudi, M. M., & Nguyen, B. (2016). A framework of place branding, place image, and place reputation: Antecedents and moderators. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(2), 241-264. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QMR-02-2016-0020>
- Giovanardi, M., Lucarelli, A., & Pasquinelli, C. (2013). Towards brand ecology: An analytical semiotic framework for interpreting the emergence of place brands. *Marketing Theory*, 13(3), 365-383. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1470593113489704>
- Govers, R. (2013). Why place branding is not about logos and slogans. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 9(2), 71-75. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/pb.2013.11>
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: Towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/135676670401000202>
- Julier, G. (2005). Urban designscapes and the production of aesthetic consent. *Urban Studies*, 42(5-6), 869-887. <https://doi.org/10.1080%2F00420980500107474>
- Kavaratzis, M. (2008). *From city marketing to city branding: An interdisciplinary analysis with reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Groningen, Netherlands.
- Kavaratzis, M. & Ashworth G. J. (2007). Partners in coffeeshops, canals and commerce: Marketing the City of Amsterdam. *Cities*, 24(1), 16-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2006.08.007>
- Kavaratzis, M. & Dennis, C. (2018). Place branding gathering momentum. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 14(2), 75-77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41254-018-0098-6>
- Kavaratzis, M. (2004). From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding*, 1(1), 58-73. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990005>
- Kavaratzis, M. (2005). Branding the city through culture and entertainment. *Journal Aesop*, 5, 1-7.
- Kavaratzis, M. & Ashworth, G. J. (2005). City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick? *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 96(5), 506-514. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990056>
- Klein, N. (2000). *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. New York: Picador.
- Kotler, B. P., Brown, J. S., & Knight, M. H. (1999). Habitat and patch use by hyraxes: There's no place like home? *Ecology Letters*, 2(2), 82-88.
- Kozinets, R. V. & Handelman, J. (1998). Ensouling consumption: A Netnographic exploration of the meaning of boycotting behavior. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 25(1), 475-480.

- Kozinets, R. V. (1997). "I Want to Believe": A netnography of the X-Philes' subculture of consumption. In M. Brucks & D. J. MacInnis (Eds.), *NA - Advances in Consumer Research* (pp. 470 - 475). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2001). Utopian enterprise: Articulating the meanings of Star Trek's culture of consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(1), 67-88. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1086/321948>
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1), 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.1509%2Fjmk.39.1.61.18935>
- Langer, R. (2001). *Place Images and Place Marketing*. Institut for Interkulturel Kommunikation og Ledelse. Copenhagen Business School.
- Lucarelli, A. & Olof Berg, P. (2011). City branding: A state-of-the-art review of the research domain. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 4(1), 9-27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17538331111117133>
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Mohamad, B., Bakar, H., Ismail, A. R., Halim, H., & Bidin, R. (2016). Corporate identity management in Malaysian higher education sector: Developing a conceptual model. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(7S), 175-180.
- Mohamad, B., Ismail, A. R., & Bidin, R. (2017). Corporate identity management and employee brand support: enhancing marketisation in higher education sector. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 33(3), 178-195.
- Mohamad, B., Nguyen, B., Melewar, T. C., & Gambetti, R. (2018). Antecedents and consequences of corporate communication management (CCM): An agenda for future research. *The Bottom Line*, 31(1), 56-75. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BL-09-2017-0028>
- Mollerup, P. (1995) *Marks of Excellence. A Theory of Trademarks and How They Work*. Lund: University of Lund.
- Mommaas, J. T. (2002). City branding: The necessity of socio-cultural goals. In T. Hauben, G. Ball, & E. Brinkman (Eds.), *City Branding: Image Building & Building Images* (pp. 32-48). NAI Uitgevers.
- Nelson, M. R. & Otnes, C. C. (2005). Exploring cross-cultural ambivalence: A netnography of intercultural wedding message boards. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(1), 89-95. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(02\)00477-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00477-0)
- Oguztimur, S. & Akturan, U. (2016). Synthesis of city branding literature (1988-2014) as a research domain. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(4), 357-372. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2054>

- Olins, W. (1999). *Trading Identities: Why Countries and Companies are Taking on Each Other's Roles*. London: Foreign Policy Centre.
- Oliveira, E. (2015). Place branding as a strategic spatial planning instrument. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 11(1), 18-33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/pb.2014.12>
- Rageh, A., Melewar, T. C., & Woodside, A. (2013). Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(2), 126-149. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522751311317558>
- Sáez, L, Perriáñez, I, & Mediano, L. (2013). Building brand value in major Spanish cities. An analysis through municipal websites. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 6(2), 120-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-04-2012-0011>
- Schultz, M. & Hatch, M. J. (2000). Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational differences between identity, image, and culture in organizations. In M. Schultz, M. J. Hatch, M. H. Larsen (Eds.), *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*. Oxford University Press.
- Spiggle, S. (1994). Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(3), 491-503. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209413>
- Stigel, J. & Frimann, S. (2006). City branding—all smoke, no fire? *Nordicom Review*, 27(2), 245-268. <https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0241>
- Strauss, A. L. & Glaser, B. G. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick: AldineTransaction.
- Suherlan, A. (2016). Analisis karakteristik, perilaku, dan motivasi perjalanan wisatawan asal Sulawesi Utara ke Jakarta. *Esensi Jurnal Bisnis dan Manajemen*, 4(3), <http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/ess.v4i3.2432>
- Taecharungroj, V. & Mathayomchan, B. (2019). Analysing TripAdvisor reviews of tourist attractions in Phuket, Thailand. *Tourism Management*, 75(6), 550-568. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.06.020>
- Yang, Z. & Fang, X. (2004). Online service quality dimensions and their relationships with satisfaction: A content analysis of customer reviews of securities brokerage services. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 15(3), 302-326. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09564230410540953>
- Zhang, L. & Zhao, S. X. (2009). City branding and the Olympic Effect: A Case Study of Beijing. *Cities* 26(5): 245-254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2009.05.002>

Enhancing Social Integration through Intra-ASEAN Travel

Gabriella Fardhiyanti¹ and Victor Wee²

^{1,2}Faculty of Social Sciences & Leisure Management,
Taylor's University Lakeside Campus,
1, Jalan Taylors, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
gebriellafardhiyanti@sd.taylors.edu.my; victor.wee@taylors.edu.my

How to Cite: Fardhiyanti, G & Wee, V. (2022). Enhancing social integration through Intra-ASEAN travel. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.6929>

Abstract

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was established in 2015 with the goal of enhancing regional integration, including social integration, which has been linked to the ASEAN populace's motivations for regional travel. This paper examines emerging intra-ASEAN travel using Esser's (2001) social integration dimension theory. To fully comprehend the vision of social integration and sustainable tourism development, continuous efforts must be made to develop, promote, and protect the member states' common interests through ASEAN integration. This study aims to assess whether the social integration dimension connects individuals in preference to travelling within the ASEAN region. A questionnaire survey of ASEAN nationality passengers at Malaysia's KLIA2 Airport was used to collect the data. The study findings will present social integration arising from intra-ASEAN travellers and the benefits of promoting tourism for economic stability in the region.

Keywords: Social Integration, ASEAN Economic Community, intra-ASEAN travel, regional tourism

Introduction

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was back in the spotlight in 2017 while marking its 50th anniversary. The members have taken steps to further develop this regional community in the upcoming years following the establishment of the ASEAN Community at the end of 2015 (Permatasari, 2020). Tay and Zainul (2017) state that efforts are still being made to strengthen the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025. In order to achieve equitable economic growth in the region, the regional focus areas for economic integration

include a digital single market, financial integration, policy integration, and connectivity (Jones, 2019). ASEAN aims to make the region more integrated by focusing on the region's political stability, economic integration, and socio-cultural pillars. According to Chirathivat, Kunnamas, and Welfens, (2020), the increasing number of integration projects in the global economy and the growth in the number of countries engaged in regional integration initiatives have shown that regional integration is a crucial catalyst of economic integration, globalisation, and multilateralism.

The objective of social integration is to foster social and cultural development, but it is not as clearly defined as the economic objectives. This makes the accomplishments of ASEAN social integration hard to assess (Dosch, 2017), since social and cultural progress can be classified in many ways. ASEAN strives to facilitate this development by developing a community identity through collaboration in education, tourism, and non-governmental organisations. Many studies have discussed the impact of the Open Skies Policy on enhancing economic integration. There is still a lack of studies regarding the impact of air transport on social integration (Abeyratne, 2014). The ASEAN Community promotes efforts to forge a strong community identity that would exist within the unique characteristics of each member state. Nevertheless, ASEAN has not yet developed projects to achieve these objectives. Regional cooperation in tourism and non-governmental organisations is quite limited, and intra-ASEAN travel presents an opportunity for development.

The establishment of the ASEAN Community led to the growth of intra-ASEAN tourism due to the rise of intra-ASEAN travellers among the ASEAN populace, contributing to the growth of the economy in the region. In addition, increasing intra-ASEAN tourism facilitates social and cultural progress. Despite the significant contributions made by tourism in the area, the social integration aspect that influences the collaboration in tourism between ASEAN countries has received little coverage in the literature. The research investigates the role of intra-ASEAN travellers as catalysts for social integration. The research is considered important as it examines social integration arising from the growth of intra-ASEAN travellers in the region. This topic has received little attention among researchers in the field of tourism.

Furthermore, Southeast Asia as a region has the potential to develop into a major tourist destination due to its diverse cultures, which attract international tourists and can also be used to draw tourists within the region. Intra-ASEAN travel deserves to be given great attention because of the similarities between the member states (Oegroseno, 2013). The research reinforces our understanding of the issue by presenting empirical evidence describing the social integration conditions that promote intra-ASEAN travel. The research shows that there is a relationship between cultural adaptations, positioning, interaction, and the growth of intra-ASEAN travel. Intra-ASEAN travellers discover similarities in terms of language, culture, friendliness, and hospitality and actively absorbed knowledge and news about ASEAN countries throughout their tour. Additionally, the privilege of holding an ASEAN passport enables individuals to travel freely within ASEAN, which has increased their drive to travel more intra-regionally, enhancing the demand for more excellent connectivity. The research also finds that there is more social interaction within the ASEAN region because people have friends, family, and relatives who live in other ASEAN countries. Overall,

ASEAN countries have developed a stronger familiarity with each other and a sense of belonging to the community over the past five years since the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Literature Review

Esser's Social Integration Theory

Social integration refers to the inclusion of individuals in a system by creating relationships among individuals and their attitudes towards society. It results from the conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation of individuals and groups. Social integration can be derived from the bonds of attraction and similar interests that unite its members. A social integration system consists of the shared interactions in a certain social structure that includes the conceptions of conflict and order. Social integration is a practice of developing the values, interactions, and institutions necessary to attain the envisioned society. However, social integration can be seen from various perspectives (Ferguson, 2008) and emphasises the dynamics of power, governance, structures, and values that allow leaders and the well-off to protect their exclusive roles. According to Esser (2001), social integration focuses on integrating individual actors into the system. Although closely associated, system integration and social integration are theoretically distinct and independent, allowing for separate studies (Esser, 2001). In the ASEAN context, system integration occurs through the interplay of 10 member states, whereas social integration occurs through interpersonal interactions. As seen in Figure 1, the research focuses exclusively on the latter. Esser (2001) identify the following four dimensions of social integration: cultural adaptation, positioning, interaction, and identification.

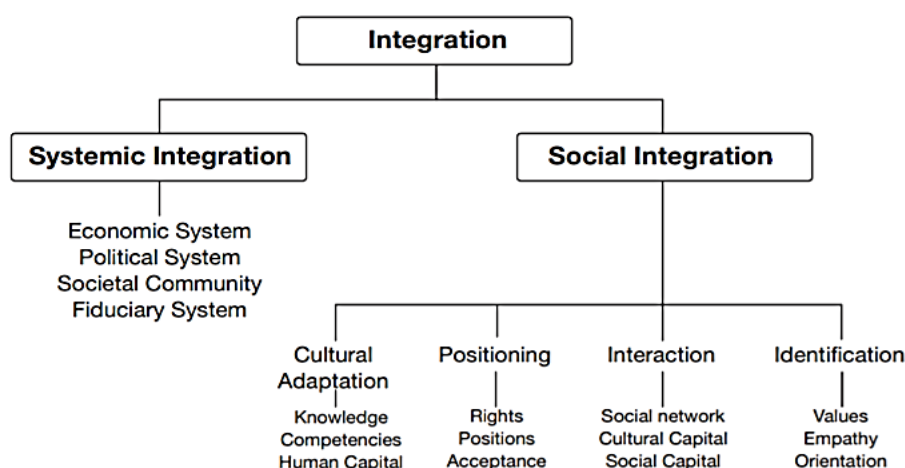


Figure 1. Own adaptation, based on Esser (2001)

Social integration can be conceived to foster principles, relationships, and structures that allow everyone to engage in economic and political social action on the basis of equality and opportunity, fairness, and decency. Afterwards, the concept addressed the social integration practice of building systems that foster a community based on social and economic equality values. These four dimensions comprise the important characteristics of social integration. Cultural adaptation, or acculturation, encompasses cultural knowledge and language competencies required for interaction and is part of the socialisation process in a society. Interaction refers to the building and maintaining social relationships in daily life by individuals who share a mutual orientation. On the other hand, identification encompasses the emotional relationship between the actor and society, a subjective feeling of belonging as it concerns cognitive and emotional aspects. The feeling of belonging may develop in the integration process later, which can be developed due to participation and acceptance. On the subjective level, inclusion in a new society is indicated by feelings of belonging to and identification with groups, particularly on the national level. Finally, positioning refers to the position in society and the rights gained with it by citizenship or economic position (Esser, 2001).

Cultural Adaptation

Cultural adaptation applies to individuals who acquire essential knowledge and special skills to behave and engage in an appropriate, informed, and effective manner. When it comes to cultural adaptation, specific language skills, societal values, and behaviour regulations are all important considerations (Esser, 2001). Acculturation is another term for cultural adaptation, which refers to the process of engaging with cultural change (Mittelstädt & Odag, 2015). Among the most often adopted acculturation concept developed by Berry (1997), cultural adaptation refers to the exchange of culture. One group assumes another group's beliefs, practices, and rituals without sacrificing the characteristics of its own culture. His research reveals that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds deal with two crucial issues: 1) the importance of cultural heritage preservation; and 2) the value of building relationships with mainstream culture. Lakey (2003), in his review of Berry's work, states the extent of the implication of four acculturation strategies: 1) integration, 2) separation, 3) assimilation, and 4) marginalisation. Integration refers to individuals that appreciate both cultural preservation and intergroup relations.

Positioning

Positioning, as Esser believes, is the essential dimension of integration. Positioning can be described as the acquisition by an individual of a particular social position. The individual is, thereby, integrated into the existing social system and its functions. Positioning may take place by granting certain rights to individuals, including the right to a nationality. It may also be linked to the recruitment of a job or the completion of education. Positioning, therefore, takes place at the level of the market and follows the rules of supply and demand (Stadler, 2016). Positioning is part of the integration, initially proposed by Slocum & Langenhove (2003)

(Figure 2). The positioning concept is further introduced as an analytical framework that illustrates the meanings attributed to space and individuals identified within the space.

Interaction

Interaction refers to the building and maintaining social relationships in daily life by individuals who share a mutual orientation. Interaction is ostensibly the third level of social integration. It is represented as a type of social activity in which people influence the knowledge and behaviour of one another (Esser, 2001). According to Stadler (2018), interaction applies to creating social contacts within the scope of the everyday environment. As in acculturation, prospects are essential to interaction, as is the willingness to embrace promising neighbourly approaches or relationships from both sides. Sciortino (2010) developed the notion of assimilation, which derives from the spontaneous and unintended interaction processes in the social construct.

Identification

Identification, on the other hand, encompasses the emotional relationship between the actor and society, a subjective feeling of belonging. As it concerns both cognitive and emotional aspects, the sense of belonging may develop later in the integration process due to participation and acceptance. The identification process is defined as an individual's association with the societies that are subject to the norms of those groups as a basis for comparing their behaviour. This process involves the identification of the group (Burnazoglu, 2020). In addition, the identification dimension has transformed into a social identity model which explains social identities related to guests (e.g., migrants) and host communities, particularly those linked to the socio-cultural order, such as racial, gender, and class identities. The social identity model can consider heterogeneities whose impact is not represented by simple comparisons, and which generate disparities in integration consequences (Duroy, 2011).

Assessing Intra-ASEAN Travel

The magnitude of intra-ASEAN travellers is expected to increase as the ASEAN Economic Community, launched in 2015, seeks a more integrated regional economic strategy and the mobility of travellers within the region. As ASEAN member states enter this new social integration era from very different economic perspectives, the movement of travellers will enhance the integration of the ASEAN populaces. The research examined a variety of characteristics perceived in the travel decision, and several variables emerged, such as: 1) affordability, 2) accessibility, 3) visa exemption for ASEAN nationality, and 4) business and tourism activity.

Affordability

Transport affordability has been regarded as the ability to make transport movements (i.e. making basic movements to work and school). The ease of travel with affordable fares is offered to facilitate visits to other destinations and other essential trips without substantially confining the ability to undertake other important activities (Carruthers, Dick, & Saurkar, 2005). The concept of "essential travel" remains vague as it relies significantly on exchange with further training. Affordability is not an absolute term but reflects the relationship between the cost of the service and the consumer's income. In this research, affordability refers to the cost associated with travelling between the regions. As a result, travellers consider having a pleasant vacation in any particular location based on their ability to pay (Murthy, 2016). In conjunction with the growth of low-cost carriers (LCCs) and national carriers in opening up new destinations, has greatly contributed to intense competition in the aviation industry. One of the main benefits of deregulation is that consumers have more affordable fares and a greater selection of choices (Fedosova, 2016). As a result, the business sector has grown, and fares are becoming more cost-effective and affordable.

Accessibility

Accessibility entails the ease of achieving the intended purpose of travel or selection of travel objectives and the nature of the amenities that may be accessible. According to Gwilliams (2017), accessibility is often influenced by the generalised cost of travel, such as time, money, and convenience. Though it involves fulfilling particular travel criteria, accessibility is often critically dependent on the relative location of the desired destination set and the origin of the trip. Thus, the accessibility indicator will be the average generalised costs associated with meeting a set of quality travel requirements. Changes in the location of operations can increase accessibility in this conventional sense while reducing aggregate mobility. Airlines industry play a major role in bringing people closer together through promoting connectivity and ensuring air travel are affordable for the passengers (Akgüç, Beblavý, & Simonelli, 2018)

Nonetheless, accessibility is undoubtedly preferable to mobility as a transport planning objective since it is free from the adverse external effects of increased mobility (Litman, 2013). Improving accessibility can adversely affect productivity. Adopting accessibility as a fundamental objective will lead to shorter trips that may facilitate reaching the destination by various forms of transportation.

Visa Exemption for ASEAN Nationality

Visa exemption is a cornerstone of the establishment of the ASEAN Community, including the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC), and the ASEAN Social and Cultural Community (ASCC). In 2015, all ASEAN Communities urged ASEAN Member States to strengthen and reform in all countries

to ensure ASEAN Member States' commitment. Moreover, to help the ASEAN Economic Community, the liberalisation of goods, services, and labour is taking place. In addition, ASEAN will establish an ASEAN framework agreement on the visa exemption scheme. The visa exemption policy adopted by a country aims to increase the number of foreign tourist arrivals. As a result, countries with a high welfare level generally apply visa-free policies to countries whose welfare levels are considered equal – observing these developments, as one of the countries with tourist destinations that are in high demand by foreign tourists, Indonesia has begun to implement visa-exemption policies. The main objective of this policy is to increase the enthusiasm of foreign tourists to visit Indonesia so that it can be directly proportional to foreign exchange earnings in the tourism sector (Dhesinta, 2017). The key objectives of the visa exemption for citizens of ASEAN member states are to support and facilitate intra-ASEAN acceleration and movements of people, particularly intra-ASEAN travel.

Business and Tourism Activity

According to Chon and Maier (2010), there are two purposes for travel: leisure and business. Individuals who travel for pleasure and not for business, or those who are on vacation and want to share their experiences with their life partner, friends, and family members, are considered leisure travellers (Smith & Warbuton, 2012). In contrast, business travellers are individuals who travel for work in an irregular location – such as conferences and tradeshows, government business, and sales trips – and stay for a short time. Meanwhile, Rini (2020) argues that a strong and sustainable regional economy is produced when existing resources such as the community and the government effectively collaborate. The government, acting as a regulator, has a strategic role to play in seeking out numerous opportunities for businesses to actively engage in regional economic activities including intra-ASEAN businesses and travel. Hakinson (2004) divide the tourist destination into business tourists and leisure tourists. However, the ease with which people may travel influences international business, and meetings, seminars, and events are the primary sources of business tourism. Therefore, two indicators of trading activity must be considered for business tourists, such as: 1) the investment process made by an investor from a particular country in a specific ASEAN country, and 2) bilateral trade among the member states. Although the statistics do not find evidence that foreign direct investment (FDI) impacts travel intention among business tourists, they find convincing evidence of the trade balance growth (Parikesit & Magribi, 2004).

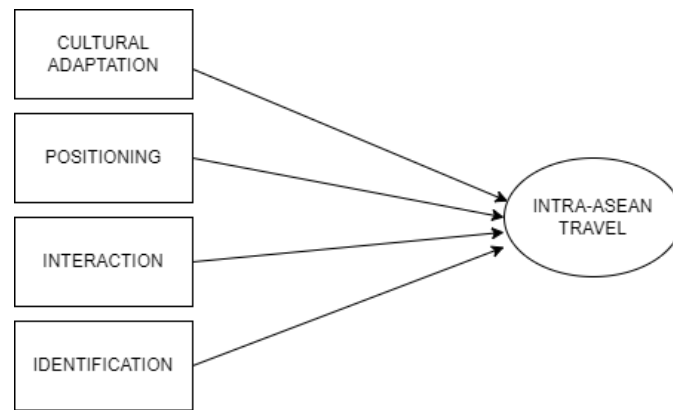


Figure 2. Research Framework

Method

In this quantitative research, a questionnaire survey is conducted to find the social integration dimension that connects individuals' preferences for travelling within the ASEAN region. Related secondary data is reviewed from the literature and previous research to verify the hypotheses. Subsequently, in February 2020, the research is conducted using a face-to-face and online survey platform to collect data from ASEAN nationality passengers at KLIA2 Airport Malaysia. Through the stratified random sampling technique, a total of 356 samples are obtained. The research evaluates the distribution of the data across some demographic characteristics of the respondents. The respondents are asked to indicate their age, nationality, educational level, and preferred destination based on this study. The quantitative data from the questionnaire responses are summarised and presented clearly. The current research adopts SEM (structural equation modelling) SmartPLs for statistical data analysis. The technique can model nomological networks by expressing theoretical concepts through constructs and connecting these constructs via a structural model to examine mediation relationships using regression analysis (Benitez, 2019).

Construct Validity and Reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to determine the validity of Esser's social integration dimension. It is found that the sets of items assessing the components had equal relative magnitudes (Ozturk, 2010). In the confirmatory factor analysis, the covariance matrix is analysed with the maximum likelihood estimation method. Sharif and Nia (2018) assert that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's sphericity tests performed to analyse the determinants factor extraction were based on eigenvalues > 1 , communalities > 0.3 . Hence, the second analysis for CFA based on model fit assessment is conducted using several model fit indexes, such as Chi-square (χ^2) test, Chi-square/degree of freedom ratio < 5 , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) > 0.90 , comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.90 , normed fit index (NFI) > 0.90 , and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) < 0.09 .

Results and Discussions

The majority of the participants are identified in the age range of 26 to 35 years old, consisting of 54% of the total respondents. Concerning nationality, the majority of the respondents are nationals of the six ASEAN founders. Indonesians constituted the majority (29%), followed by Malaysians (25%), Bruneians (11%), Thais (8.9%), Singaporeans (8.4%), and Filipinos (4%). As these six ASEAN countries are high middle-income countries, there is a greater likelihood for their citizens to use air travel for holidays overseas. The remaining travellers, on the other hand, are nationals of CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) countries. Regarding the education level, most of the respondents (51%) are graduates with a Bachelor's degree and are young (three-quarters are below 35 years) with tertiary education. Data also indicates that 83% of the respondents preferred to travel within the ASEAN region.

Table 1. Discriminant Validity

	AVE	CA	ID	IN	Intra-ASEAN	P
Cultural Adaptation	0.575	0.758				
Identification	0.797	0.743	0.893			
Interaction	0.609	0.812	0.815	0.780		
Intra-ASEAN	0.499	0.761	0.621	0.731	0.706	
Positioning	0.621	0.723	0.646	0.782	0.693	0.788

Discriminant validity – Fornell –Larcker

Table 1 shows that the research extracts the AVE and cross factor loading for all latent variables. All items have higher loadings on their corresponding constructs than the cross-loadings on the other constructs in the model. The cross-loading results pertain to the social integration dimension item. All indicators loaded high on their constructs but low on other constructs. All items in the measurement models achieve discriminant validity as the constructs are distinctly different from one another. The AVE for each construct factor exceeds the respective squared correlation between the factors, therefore providing discriminant validity evidence (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Enhancing Social Integration through Intra-ASEAN Travel

Construct	Items	Factor loading (CFA)	Cronbach's Alfa	rho_A	CR	AVE
Esser's Social Integration	Cultural Adaptation	0.765	0.851	0.890	0.705	0.515
	Positioning	0.730	0.794	0.810	0.933	0.521
	Interaction	0.781	0.919	0.922	0.920	0.509
	Identification	0.720	0.754	0.841	0.676	0.505
	Intra-ASEAN travel	0.701	0.706	0.704	0.703	0.501

As indicated in Table 2, the CFA results employing the dataset (n = 365) are used to corroborate and validate the factor structure determined by the EFA. The factor loadings ranged from 0.701 to 0.781. The model is found to be a good fit, as evidenced by goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2(23) = 83.016$, $p < 0.05$, $\chi^2/df = 2.598$, GFI = 0.840, CFI = 0.864, NFI = 0.850, SRMR = 0.060, Chi-square = 602.707). The Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.706 to 0.919. The composite reliability, which ranges from 0.676 to 0.933, is found greater than 0.7, indicating the construct's high reliability. Moreover, convergent validity is demonstrated as the AVE range for all the constructs exceeded 0.500, and the CR value is greater than AVE.

Table 3. Summary Hypothesis

	Original sample	Sample mean	STDEV	T statistic	P values	Decision
H ₁ -Cultural Adaptation→Intra-ASEAN	0.444	0.442	0.068	6.571	0.109	Accepted
H ₂ -Positioning→ Intra-ASEAN	0.214	0.213	0.065	3.287	0.092	Accepted
H ₃ -Interaction→ Intra-ASEAN	0.231	0.233	0.088	2.631	0.082	Accepted
H ₄ -Identification→ Intra-ASEAN	-0.034	-0.034	0.072	0.041	0.637	Rejected

The standardised beta estimates, Sample Mean (M), Standard Deviation (STDEV), T Statistics ($|O/STDEV|$), and probability value (P-value) for each construct in the research are tabulated in Table 3. Accordingly, H1 finds that there is a relationship between cultural adaptations and intra-ASEAN travel. Table 3 shows that the hypothesised path for H1 is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.001$, $p < 0.109$). Thus, hypothesis H1 is supported. This occurs because cultural adaptation as a dimension of social integration is examined by intra-ASEAN travellers' propensity to try local cuisine while visiting other ASEAN countries.

Consistently, H2 discovers that there is a link between position dimension and intra-ASEAN travel. According to Table 3, the relationship in H2 is positive and significant ($= 0.001$, $p < 0.092$). The relationship between positioning and intra-ASEAN travel is depicted in this research, indicating that while travelling, ASEAN travellers prefer to queue at the ASEAN line in the airport (ASEAN line for immigration checkpoints). Additionally, the privilege of holding an ASEAN passport enables individuals to travel freely within ASEAN, which has increased their drive to travel more intra-regionally, enhancing the demand for more excellent connectivity. Furthermore, H3 ostensibly indicates a positive and significant ($\beta = 0.009$, $p < 0.082$) relationship between interaction and intra-ASEAN travel. The research finds that there is more social interaction within the ASEAN region because people have friends, family, and relatives who live in other ASEAN countries. They are also more willing to interact with the locals while visiting to make new friends from other countries. Travelling within the ASEAN region is more convenient since it is easier to communicate with people than travelling outside the region. Lastly, H4 examines the association between identification and intra-ASEAN

travel, and Table 3 indicates that H4 is negative and not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.637$, $p < 0.01$). ASEAN countries have developed a stronger familiarity with each other and a sense of belonging to the community over the past five years since the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). This can be represented through collective spirit or national pride.

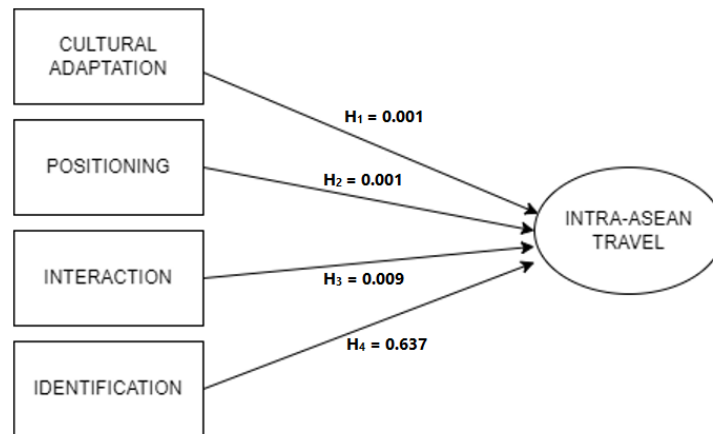


Figure 3. Hypothesis Result

The majority of respondents in this research are between 26 and 35 years old, making up 54% of the total. The research shows that most intra-ASEAN travellers are young adults, referred to as millennials. Millennials are important in ASEAN countries, where the populations have a high percentage of young people. The number of intra-ASEAN travellers has shown substantive figures over the past five years, as they represent nearly 70% of international arrivals into Malaysia. The remaining figures consist of travellers from other countries, such as China, India, Australia, etc. The five major ASEAN countries that contribute to arrivals in Malaysian are: Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, and Philippines. These countries have strong relations and share common objectives as a community. Furthermore, this group of travellers travels for various reasons, including vacations, school, business, and visiting friends. Backpacking is also a common option for young adults traveling within the region. Mazumder, Sultana, and Al-Mamun (2013) indicate that the ASEAN region shares a significant geographical, cultural, historical, archaeological, and social bond. Due to the convenience of air travel, Southeast Asia has the potential to become a fascinating destination for millennial travellers, which has made it a hotspot for cultural tourists in recent years. The data provides an exploratory account that links these four dimensions with ASEAN passengers to examine their motives for travelling within the region. Data shows that an exploration of passenger motives has improved understanding of the dimensions that influence their decision to travel, namely, cultural adaptation, positioning, and interaction.

Cultural adaptation or acculturation includes cultural knowledge and language competencies needed for interaction, which become a part of the socialization process into a society. It refers to the individual possessing essential language skills, cultural norms, and behaviour. Cultural adaptation occurs when groups of people with different cultures contact

each other for the long term, changing the culture of one or both groups. Cultural adaptation as a dimension of social integration is used in the research to describe travellers' willingness to try local cuisine during their vacation to another ASEAN country. The research finds that the people of the ASEAN countries share a common language, culture, friendliness, and hospitality. The willingness of intra-ASEAN travellers to try the local cuisine during their visit to the other ASEAN country. They also actively sought information about the ASEAN countries. Hence, the growing interest of ASEAN citizens in their region contributes to an increase in the frequency of flights between ASEAN member states.

Nevertheless, positioning is the main aspect of integration since it shows how individuals tend to integrate themselves into an existing social system and its established functions. This dimension is closely linked to cultural adaptation. The link between position and cultural adaptation can be seen in the willingness to move to other ASEAN countries due to the cultural and language similarity. Furthermore, the relationship between positioning and intra-ASEAN travellers demonstrates that while travelling within ASEAN countries, travellers prefer queuing ASEAN line at the airport if it is available (ASEAN line for immigration checkpoints). It shows that positioning helps in the growth of airlines by opening more ASEAN destinations to the secondary and tertiary cities and collaborating with the local airport to provide an ASEAN line at the immigration checkpoints. Additionally, the privileges associated with ASEAN passport holders make it easier for them to travel across ASEAN countries, encouraging them to travel more inside the ASEAN region.

Interaction dimension describes the social conduct in which individuals engage in reciprocal actions and behaviour. It refers to the social contact and communication between two people. In other words, interaction is closely linked to cultural adaptation since interaction further depends on the competencies acquired through cultural adaptation. However, these cultural and language skills can only be attained and developed through interaction with other social system members. The results shows there is increased social interaction throughout the ASEAN region due to people having friends, family, and relatives who live in different ASEAN countries. They are also more willing to interact with the locals while visiting to make new friends from other countries. Travelling within the ASEAN region is more convenient than travelling outside the region since communication is more accessible. Meanwhile, in terms of the relationship between the interaction dimension and the rise of intra-ASEAN travel, the high level of air connectivity plays a significant role. It means that, as a result of the rise of LCCs, numerous airlines have added new destinations to secondary and tertiary cities around ASEAN while maintaining affordable fares that encourage people to travel more.

Identification is the emotional relationship between individuals and the social system. It encompasses the emotional relationship between the actor and society, a subjective feeling of belonging, and identification with cognitive and emotional aspects. The feeling of belonging may develop later in the integration process due to participation and acceptance. For example, the identification process can be expressed through collective spirit or national pride. The identification dimension demonstrates that people have gained a stronger familiarity with ASEAN countries and a sense of belonging to the community over the last

five years since the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Therefore, identification is about integration as a process of becoming a member of the collective structures at the ethnic, local, national, and regional levels. Unfortunately, this identification is the only factor that does not contribute to the motivation to travel intra-ASEAN, as those who travel intra-ASEAN do not feel a sense of belonging to the region. Unfortunately, this identification is the only dimension that has no bearing on social integration. The feelings of people traveling within ASEAN are unaffected by their ties to the region.

In addition, while economic integration is the top agenda for ASEAN integration, serious consideration should also be given to the socio-cultural aspects of the integration initiatives, particularly improving people's mobility across the region, as strengthening people-to-people connectivity through intra-ASEAN travel can act as a stepping stone to heightened awareness of regional integration and a growing sense of connectedness to the initiatives. It is linked to the social integration theory on individuals' desire to integrate into an existing system and become involved in the community to foster an ASEAN-centric mindset among them. As a result, the situation is linked to integration theory, as ASEAN should be more open to the experience and insights from neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism to build the theory of ASEAN integration as a one community, so-called the ASEAN way.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The findings contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the social integration dimensions, which Esser (2001) divide into four: cultural integration, positioning, interaction, and identification. Furthermore, the research provides an exploratory account that links the four dimensions with ASEAN passengers to examine their motives to travel within the region. Data shows that an exploration of passenger motives has improved our understanding of the dimensions that influence their decision to travel, namely cultural adaptation, positioning, and interaction. Interestingly, identification has been noted to be of less influence. The finding may be explained by Jones (2011), who reports that little attention has been made to determining the measures necessary to integrate individuals with varied cultural and ethnic identities into a broader regional identity or citizenship. Onyusheva (2018) has found a lack of awareness among ASEAN communities' communities. This occurs since the AEC's benefits are underutilised due to cultural differences, non-tariff measures, internal competition, and a lack of awareness and understanding about the region or insufficient information. Thus, it is reiterated that this research will enhance the understanding of social integration theory, with a special emphasis on ASEAN, which can assist the community in addressing issues related to the identification. Strategies might, therefore, be introduced to nurture the feeling of belonging among the ASEAN community and forge a united ASEAN identity. In this regard, the findings indicate that strengthening ASEAN's social integration will contribute to the region's sense of belonging, which is shaped primarily by geographic and cultural proximity and facilitated by the region's ease of travel. ASEAN should encourage

their citizens to actively participate in tourism because most intra-ASEAN travellers are mainly from Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei.

In contrast, the research finds a lack of CLMV travellers. A joint promotion with a public-private partnership will be a good tourism promotion and development model. Developing and improving tourism in a country is important as a well-maintained and organised tourism destination will increasingly attract domestic and foreign tourists. The performance of tourism must be regulated and controlled by the member states. It can help boost community development, generate stable incomes for communities, boost sustainable tourism development through social integration, share the feeling of belongingness, and the growth of travel within the region has undoubtedly stimulated its economic growth through the communities' participation in various sectors. Eventually, this may lead to a complete understanding of ASEAN citizenship. For ASEAN to become a more people-centred organization, it needs to be less elitist, more accessible to everyone, and more aligned with the concerns and interests of the people of ASEAN. This can be done by encouraging the shift from a state-centred to a people-centred ASEAN. Lastly, the research provides the contribution of aspects of quantitative methods using SEM analysis in ASEAN studies and international relations. The research is expected to contribute to the development of international relations, especially the study of integration in the ASEAN region, with a quantitative approach, especially SEM, since this type of effort must be increased to improve international relations analysis.

Future research is suggested to enhance Esser's social integration theory by providing more comprehensive perspectives on ASEAN integration in other sectors such as tourism, education, and business. Another factor to examine is the states' interest in benefiting reciprocity from the integration plan. In addition, future research can also consider adding more sample sizes and broadening the location for data collection. Multiple LCCs in the region can also be investigated, followed by multiple international airports for data collection. Lastly, another important recommendation is to conduct an extensive study on several ASEAN countries to get more accurate information based on the involvement of more member states as it could generalise ASEAN as a whole.

Acknowledgement

The authors thank the anonymous reviewers and members of the editorial team for their constructive comments. The authors would also like to thank the ASEAN Tourism Research Association (ATRA) based at Taylor's University Malaysia, for the scholarship.

Disclosure statement

This manuscript has not been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

ORCID

Gabriella Fardhiyanti <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1411-5365>

References

- Akgüç, M., Beblavý, M. & Simonelli, F. (2018). Low-cost airlines: Bringing the EU closer together, 15 May 2018. CEPS Research Report. [Online]. <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/low-cost-airlines-bringing-eu-closer-together/>
- Abeyratne, R. (2014). Immunities and privileges of international organizations and the international civil service. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 6(3), 34-43.
- Benitez, J., Henseler, J., Castillo, A., & Schuberth, F. (2019). How to perform and report an impactful analysis using partial least squares: Guidelines for confirmatory and explanatory IS research. *Information & Management*, 57(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2019.05.003>
- Burnazoglu, M. (2020) Built-in normativity in tailoring identity: the case of the EU skills profile tool for integrating refugees. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 27(2), 117-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350178X.2019.1680856>
- Carruthers, R., Dick, M., & Saurkar, A. (2005). *Affordability of public Transport in developing countries* (Transport Papers series; No. TP-3). World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17408>
- Chirathivat, S., Kunnamas, N. & Welfens, P.J. (2020). Regional integration in the EU and ASEAN in the period of declining multilateralism and corona shocks. *International Economics and Economic Policy*, 17, 555-561. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10368-020-00480-4>
- Chon, K. & Maier, T. A. (2010). *Welcome to Hospitality an Introduction* (3rd Ed.). New York: Delmar.
- Dhesinta, W. S. (2017). Fungsi pengawasan keimigrasian dalam pengendalian radikalisme pasca penerapan kebijakan bebas visa kunjungan. *Seminar Nasional Hukum Universitas Negeri Semarang*, 3(1), 15-28.
- Duroy, Q. (2011). North African identity and racial discrimination in France: A social economic analysis of capability deprivation. *Review of Social Economy*, 69(3), 307-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2010.502834>
- Dosch, J. (2017). The ASEAN economic community: Deep integration or just political window dressing? *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 5(1), 25-47. <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2016.28>
- Esser, H. (2001). *Integration und Ethnische Schichtung* (Working Paper No. 40). Mannheim: Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung. <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/publications/wp/wp-40.pdf>

- Ferguson, C. (2008). Promoting social integration. *Report commissioned by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) for the Expert Group Meeting*. Helsinki, Finland. <http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/se6.pdf>
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: Towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135676670401000202>
- Jones, C. (2019). A value chain approach to support Southeast Asian Economic regionalism. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 7(1), 40. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v7i1.5009>
- Jones, S. L. & Butman, R. E. (2011). The integration of psychology. In Jones, S. L., Butman, R. E. (Eds.), *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* (pp. 27–59). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Mazumder, M. N. H., Sultana, M. A., & Al-Mamun, A. (2013) Regional tourism development in Southeast Asia. *Transnational Corporations Review*, 5(2), 60-76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19186444.2013.11668679>
- Mittelstädt, A. & Odag, Ö. (2015). Social media use and social integration of ethnic minorities in Germany: A new interdisciplinary framework. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 2(1), 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajmmc.2.1.2>
- Murthy, S. L. (2016). A new constitutive commitment to water. *Boston College Journal of Law & Social Justice*, 36(2), 159-233.
- Oegroseno, A. H. (2013). ASEAN as the most feasible forum to address the South China Sea challenges. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law)*, 107, 290-293. <https://doi.org/10.5305/procanmeetasil.107.0290>
- Permatasari, Y. (2020). Building Indonesia through ASEAN economic community. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 8(1), 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i1.6040>
- Rini, A. D. (2020). Digitalization in the community-based tourism development in peripheral areas: A case study of Sumbermanjing Wetan Village, Malang Regency. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v7i2.6115>
- Lakey, P. (2003). Acculturation: A review of the literature. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 12(2), 103-118.
- Litman, T. (2013). Transportation and public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 34(1), 217–233. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114502>
- Parikesit, D. & Magribi, L. O. M. (2004). Development of a dynamic model for investigating the interaction between rural transport and development: A case of Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Journal of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies*, 6, 2747-2761.

- O'Connell, J. F. & Williams, G. (2005). Passengers' perceptions of lowcost airlines and full service carriers: A case study involving Ryanair, Aer Lingus, Air Asia and Malaysia Airlines. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 11(4), 259-272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2005.01.007>
- Onyusheva, I. (2018). Analytical and managerial issues of human capital in conditions of global competitiveness: The case of Kazakhstan. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 16(2), 198-209. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17512/pjms.2017.16.2.17>
- Ozturk, M. A. (2010). An exploratory study on measuring educators' attitudes toward educational research. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 5(12), 758-769.
- Sharif, S. P. & Nia, H. S. (2018). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS*. Tehran: Artin Teb.
- Slocum, N., & Langenhove, L. (2003). The meaning of regional integration: Introducing positioning theory in regional integration studies. *Journal of European Integration*, 26(3), 227-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0703633042000261625>
- Smith, J. D. & Warburton, F. (2012). *Cambridge IGCSE Travel and Tourism*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Stadler, A. M. (2016). *The challenged nation state: How to successfully integrate refugees into German society*. [Master Thesis, Uppsala University]. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:934209/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Tay, C. & Zainul, E. (2017, October 17). ASEAN Open Skies implementation remains slow – IDEAS. *The Edge Markets*. <http://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/asean-open-skiesimplementation-remains-slow-%E2%80%94-ideas>

The Effect of the Internet on Inflation: A Research on ASEAN-5 Countries

Mustafa Necati Çoban

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Turkey
necati.coban@gop.edu.tr

How to Cite: Çoban, M. N. (2022). The effect of the internet on inflation: A research on ASEAN-5 countries. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7310>

Abstract

Information and communication technologies have become widespread with the onset of globalization, affecting almost every facet of human life. Increasing internet usage has made accessing information swift and easy. The internet has also had a significant economic impact and provided financial benefits to nations all around the world to increase productivity and efficiency and reduce costs. Customers had been able to access products at lower prices as a result of the reduction in market entry barriers and search costs, which led to an increase in competition in the markets. The research aimed to investigate the effect of the internet on inflation in ASEAN-5 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). Consumer prices (annual %) were used as an indicator of inflation, and individuals using the internet (% of population) were used as an indicator of internet usage. Control variables such as unemployment rate, real interest rate, energy use and money growth were also included in the research. Panel data analysis was performed using the data of ASEAN-5 countries covering the period of 1994-2014. Pooled least squares method (Pooled OLS) was applied to obtain an estimation of the model. As a result, it is found that as internet usage increases, inflation rates decrease in ASEAN-5 countries.

Keywords: internet, inflation, panel data analysis, ASEAN-5 Countries

Introduction

Technological innovation has played a very important role in the advancement of humanity. Education and health facilities have been developed as a result of new technologies and other innovations, and these improvements have spread all over the world with unquestioned efficiency. Such advancements have had a positive effect on the quality of life of people across the globe. The world mortality rate decreased by approximately 50% between 1960-1990 through modernization in science technology, trade, agriculture, and similar fields (Ejemeyovwi et al., 2019; Hettiarachchi, 2006).

In the last thirty years, there has been a significant increase in the use of information and communication technologies throughout the world (Chavanne et al., 2015). The use of such technologies has made significant contributions to the increase of productivity, which has led to a new awareness of energy efficiency (Salahuddin et al., 2016).

The internet is a global system consisting of interconnected computer networks used by billions of users worldwide. It is defined as the network consisting of millions of private and public, academic, business, and local networks connected by fiber optic cables, copper wires, wireless connections, and other technologies (Simsim, 2011).

The various economic consequences of this growth in internet usage are currently being researched, although the overall effect of the internet on the economy should not be discussed in such a narrow field. It is seen that the internet has a direct impact on foreign investment, technological productivity, inflation, democracy, as well as the shadow economy (Elgin, 2013; Salahuddin & Gow, 2016; Sassi & Goaid, 2013).

The internet promotes economic growth by facilitating the spread of information (Romer, 1986, 1990) to just about every aspect of life. Employees can access information about their jobs via the internet. They can communicate with others, call potential customers, and use the internet for commercial transactions. On the other hand, researchers can also access data for their subjects online. Consumers can purchase goods and services and access information about the product they want to purchase all through the convenience of the internet. Consumers can also make payment transactions for invoices, etc. via the internet without physically leaving their homes or places of business. During this recent worldwide pandemic, online educational activities have gained momentum and countries have started to develop their distance education learning programs. Most of these activities tend to increase productivity, increase private expenditure, reduce the cost of doing business, and increase the welfare level of people and the national output (Hsing et al., 2020).

The internet has been described as the eighth wonder of the world and is defined as one of the most important works of humanity (Sathiaseelan et al., 2013). It has changed the way we work, socialize, create, and share information, which mediates the flow of ideas and communication between people all over the world. Big businesses and national economies have gained significant benefits from the internet. If the internet were its own financial sector,

it would likely have a greater share in GDP than either the agriculture or utility sectors (Manyika & Roxburgh, 2011).

With the advancement of internet technology, shopping options allow for quick and easy online purchases, a major advancement from offline shopping methods, which require a potential customer to physically travel to the business to collect information and make decision. It allows for much more efficient use of time. For example, a consumer may access information about prices over the internet instead of physically visiting different stores to compare them. Through the increase in internet usage and the development of internet technology, consumers can now use the internet for various purposes such as researching, communicating, online banking, and shopping (Shanthi & Desti, 2015).

It is also well-known that the internet increases economic productivity. Market entry costs end up reduced while an increase develops in competition in industries related to various products. It also helps to shorten the supply chain and significantly reduce internet search costs. Prices fall with the lowering of internet-related search costs. Lower search costs and fewer market entry barriers lead to more competition in product markets (Wadhvani, 2000).

There is a widespread belief that inflation rates will decrease as the rate of internet usage, which is one of the digital economy indicators, becomes widespread; and productivity will, therefore, see an increase. Today, as the effects of globalization and digitalization are being clearly felt, it can be argued that studying the correlation between internet usage and inflation has become even more important.

With the increasing use of the internet, the e-commerce industry has grown rapidly and provided an equally important opportunity to remove barriers to entry. As online competition is increasing, businesses are doing their best to offer low prices to consumers, which puts downward pressure on the price of goods. People can now showcase their products on giant e-commerce platforms such as Alibaba and Amazon, and they can access international markets as well (Charbonneau et al., 2017; Mentsiev et al., 2020).

Increasing use of the internet through technological advances has also contributed to the creation of a productive business environment in many different countries. As the level of ease of doing business locally or abroad has increased, bureaucratic obstacles and time costs have decreased. Businesses are also able to file their taxes online, making it easier for people to find their way into the tax network (Mentsiev et al., 2020; Nuccio & Guerzoni, 2019).

The internet has disinflationary effects in the short and medium-term. Transparency of prices subject to e-commerce paves the way for a more competitive environment than traditional retail trade. The internet, which supports international trade in goods and services, has a positive effect on the trend of globalization, resulting in disinflationary effects. Higher productivity levels brought on by internet usage also lead to significant reductions in the costs of producers (Coffinet & Perillaud, 2017).

Over the past few decades, ASEAN economies have undergone a significant transformation, with liberalization and fiscal deregulation. Such initiatives have resulted in

the expansion of the banking and financial services sectors in ASEAN countries, significant growth in capital markets, and the emergence of private-sector financial institutions. The correlation between digitalization brought by globalization and its indicators and macroeconomic variables in these economies that have liberalized with globalization has mostly remained unexplored.

ASEAN-5 countries have made significant breakthroughs in information and communication technologies in recent years (Jing & Ab-Rahim, 2020). The development in information and communication technologies has a significant role in the transformation of Singapore from a third world country to a country with a high level of welfare. Information and communication technology plays a crucial role in Singapore's policy and development strategy. To stimulate economic growth, Singapore started its strategy of embracing the ICT revolution in the early 1980s, when the first generation of personal computers showed its potential. The effort is concentrated in two directions: 1) promoting ICT adoption and 2) promoting ICT production (Vu, 2013). The importance of information and communication technologies in Malaysia's fundamental transformation of society, politics, and economy has been expressed in Malaysia's Third Outline Perspective Plan. ICT in Malaysia has been identified as one of the 12 New Key Economic Areas (NKEA) (Salleh et al., 2020). Thailand was the world's second-largest hard disk drive (HDD) country after China in 2015. The Communication Technology Policy (2011-2020) adopted in Thailand is the basis for developing information and communication technologies (Charnsripinyo & Inluksana, 2015). Liberalisation and privatisation of the Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Indonesia only started in the early 1990s. The situation has led to Indonesia's telecommunications infrastructure being inadequate to other ASEAN-5 countries (Eick, 2007). Although access to the wireless internet connection in Indonesia is concentrated in big cities, it is stated that access to the internet is limited outside the big cities. In Indonesia, Electronic Information and Transaction Act was introduced in 2008 and created the legal infrastructure of e-commerce (Ruslijanto, 2012). It can be said that Indonesia has made significant progress in the field of ICT in recent years (Jing & Ab-Rahim, 2020). Although internet usage in the Philippines was shallow between 2000 and 2009, it can be said that there was a severe increase, especially after 2009. It is stated that e-commerce will create enormous growth potential in the Philippines, although the growth of ICT has come later compared to other ASEAN-5 countries (Villegas, 2014).

With the spread of information and communication technologies, the increase in internet usage, and the digital economy's development, competition between online and traditional retailers is increasing, which puts downward pressure on prices. The situation is defined as the Amazon Effect in the literature (Cavallo, 2018). ASEAN-5 countries are increasing their level of integration into the digital economy day by day, and it also helps these countries achieve price stability. In the Philippines, one of the ASEAN-5 countries, the Central Bank of the Republic of the Philippines cooperates with the Philippine Statistics Authority to evaluate the impact of increasing e-commerce. It is also working with The Ministry of Commerce of Thailand to add more online pricing to the Bank of Thailand consumer price index. Central banks of ASEAN-5 countries are putting forward policies to create downward pressure on prices by taking advantage of the increasing competition

between online and traditional retailers, increasing internet usage, and the spread of information and communication technologies.

In the research, the effects of internet usage on inflation in ASEAN-5 countries were investigated. The research result has found that inflation rates decrease as internet usage increases. It can be stated that the increase in internet usage in ASEAN-5 countries causes a rise in the level of productivity, which reduces the costs of producers. This, in turn, leads to a decrease in inflation rates. It has become clear that the level of competition in ASEAN-5 countries has increased and inflation rates have decreased due to the role of the internet.

The relationship between the internet and inflation is also an object of curiosity within the scope of the economic effects of the digital age. There are not many studies on the subject in the literature. The research aims to investigate the effect of the internet on inflation in ASEAN-5 (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) countries. In accordance with the specified purpose, the inflation rate (consumer prices annual %) was used as the dependent variable. As an indicator of internet usage, the ratio of people using the internet to the population is preferred. Panel data analysis will be conducted using the data of the mentioned countries covering the years 1994-2014. The following section will constitute the literature review, and that will be followed by the research method. After the research method, there is an analysis section and a conclusion section to finalize.

Literature Review

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the relationship between the internet and inflation has not been the subject of many studies. However, a significant number of researchers have found that as internet use increases, inflation decreases (Priyono, 2016, Friesenbichler, 2018; Koyuncu & Unver, 2018; Yi & Choi, 2005). Some researchers have accepted that while the internet has been able to lessen inflation in the short-term, the long-term effect of the internet on inflation is uncertain (Coffinet & Perillaud, 2017). It is possible that the internet could even lead to higher inflation in the long term (Meijers, 2006). Some of the researchers examine the correlation between e-commerce activities and inflation with the spread of the internet (Calson-Öhman, 2018; Charbonneau et al., 2017; Goolsbee & Klenow, 2018; Kulakov & Vinogradov, 2020).

Regarding the studies on the subject, first, the arguments put forward in these studies will be discussed, and then the findings obtained in the literature will be discussed in detail. Yi and Choi (2005) have stated that increasing investments in internet infrastructure in a country may help reduce inflation. It has been also stated that the rapid development of the internet will affect the traditional correlation between money and inflation. Likewise, it has been indicated that monetary authorities should act more cautiously in the transition to contractionary monetary policy when faced with increased employment and production. The development of the internet may cause downward pressure on inflation in the new economy as a result. Meijers (2006) has stated that as more companies invest in the internet, competitive pressure will increase among both internet users and non-internet users, which will reduce

the profit margin. This situation explains the low inflation rate in knowledge-based economies. It means that the prices in the output market decrease depending on the fixed factor prices. Fixed wages and fixed energy prices are examples of this situation. If the spreading process of the internet stops, the markets will revert to a situation consisting of a fixed profit margin on the unit cost of production and fixed prices, even when some firms do not invest in the internet. This process implies that inflation falls during the spread of the internet. Priyono (2016) argues that the use of the internet should be used not only for communication but also for research and development and cost-efficiency. It has been indicated that the use of the internet, which may have an impact on the productivity of commodity costs, will have an inflation-reducing effect. Charbonneau et al. (2017) have shared findings from European countries regarding the inflation-reducing effects of digitalization, but believe they are an issue best left to policymakers. Some have suggested that research should be conducted on whether the effects of digitalization on inflation are permanent or temporary. Calson-Öhman (2018) has suggested that increasing e-commerce with the increase in internet usage contributes to increased competition, which causes downward pressure on prices. Eventually, the slowed rate of price increase and lower inflation rates will be encountered. Friesenbichler (2018) believes that the widespread use of broadband internet supported by infrastructure and economic policies will reduce consumer price inflation rates. Koyuncu and Unver (2018) remarked that more investments should be made in information and communication technologies to spread the use of the internet in economies that aim to reduce inflation and that policies making internet access easier and cheaper should be supported in these economies. Kulakov and Vinogradov (2020) add that inflation has disinflationary effects on the internet.

Yi and Choi (2005) investigate the effects of the internet on inflation. In the research examining 207 countries, the data of these countries covering the years 1991-2000 were used. The effects of the internet on inflation were analyzed with pooled least squares and random-effects model. The result finds that the internet does, in fact, reduce the inflation rate.

Meijers (2006) has in-depth discussion on the relationship between internet diffusion and inflation in information economies. He makes an assessment on the discourses of high production, low unemployment, and low inflation of the supporters of the new economy. It is stated that the internet will reduce inflation in the short term, but the suppressive effect of internet use on inflation will end in the long term which will increase inflation.

Priyono (2016) analyzes the effects of the number of internet users on inflation. A panel data analysis is performed in the study in which China, India, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea are examined. It is determined that as internet usage increases in these countries, inflation decreases.

Charbonneau et al. (2017) study the disinflationary effects of digitalization in the Canadian economy. They find that as e-commerce grows, the downward pressure on inflation may increase in the future with the effect of increasing competition.

Coffinet and Perillaud (2017) make an assessment on the direction of the relationship between internet use and inflation in European countries. In the research, in which the

statistical data of European countries are examined and put into tables, it is stated that the increased use of the internet has an effect on inflation in the short term, but it is claimed that it is still difficult to determine the effects of the internet on inflation in the long run.

Calson-Öhman (2018) examines the effect of increasing e-commerce activities on inflation. A panel regression analysis is conducted on data from 28 European countries for the period 2016-2017. In the study, in which the model is estimated with the fixed effects model, it is found that increased e-commerce activities affect inflation negatively.

Cavallo (2018) analyzes the effects of internet transparency and online competition on the pricing behavior of large retailers and aggregate inflation dynamics. It is found that online competition increases the frequency of price changes, and is also stated that there has been a uniform pricing degree among locations in the USA in the last 10 years.

Together with the increase in e-commerce, Goolsbee and Klenow (2018) examine the effects of these increases on CPI inflation. The research uses data from online transactions between 2014 and 2017. It is concluded that inflation could be lower by 1,5% to 2,5% with the increase in e-commerce. Additionally, the net increase in the number of new products has a significant effect on the decrease in inflation.

Fabo and Slovenska (2018) analyze the potential implications of e-commerce for the National Bank of Slovakia. Recent developments and available data in the economics literature are utilized in their research. They find that although the short-term effect of e-commerce is not noteworthy, there is a significant impact potential on price stability in the long run. Therefore, central banks should follow the developments in e-commerce by collecting data and examining prices online.

Friesenbichler (2018) looks at the effects of broadband internet usage on inflation in OECD countries. The research is conducted by an unbalanced panel data analysis by using data of 30 OECD countries covering the years 1995-2014. Yi and Choi (2005) have proven the effect of the internet in reducing inflation.

Jo et al. (2019) examine the effects of e-commerce on inflation in Japan. Data challenges are overcome by utilizing datasets covering a wide period of time and past catalog sales. As a result, they find that the relative inflation rates for goods sold heavily online by e-commerce decrease. Koyuncu and Unver (2018) review the effects of internet use on inflation in OECD countries.

In the research conducted by unbalanced panel data analysis, data of 22 OECD countries covering the period 1995-2015 are included. The results obtained after the analysis indicate a negative and statistically significant relationship between variables. As internet usage increases in OECD countries, the rate of inflation decreases.

Csonto et al. (2019) investigate the effects of digitalization on domestic inflation. In the research, panel data analysis is carried out using the data covering 2009-2014 in China. It appears to be no definitive evidence that digitalization affects inflation through inflation expectations. However, it is stated that as long as the digitalization process affects trend

inflation and contributes to reducing inflation, central banks will have to readjust their policy responses to the reality of the new digital world.

Lv et al. (2019) investigate the relationship between technological development and inflation. The New Keynesian Philips Curve (NKPC) model is used in the research, which looks at trends in the United States. The results find that technological development has more of an effect than globalization on low inflation in the US.

Kulakov and Vinogradov (2020) study the effect of the development in e-commerce on inflation in the euro area. A panel data analysis is conducted within the scope of the study in which 19 euro area countries are examined. It has been found in the model estimated with fixed effects that the development of e-commerce affects inflation negatively.

Lindgren et al. (2021) examine the effects of increasing use of the Swedish price comparison website PriceSpy on prices. It is determined that the website led to a potential savings of 290 million SEK in 2016 as a result of its increased use. Manufacturers benefit even more, saving approximately 2,9 billion SEK. It is emphasized that price comparison sites increase economic efficiency by creating downward pressure on prices.

Research Methods

In the research, panel regression analysis is performed using data of ASEAN-5 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) covering the period 1994-2014. Inflation rate is used as the dependent variable. The rate of individuals usage of the internet to the overall population is included as an indicator of internet usage among the independent variables. Unemployment rate, broad money growth, real interest rate, and energy use are also included in the research as explanatory variables. The data of all variables are obtained from World Development Indicators, the database of the World Bank.

Information about the variables in the research is shown in Table 1. It contains variables, definitions of variables, and the expected sign of the coefficients expressing the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 1. Information on Variables

Definition of Variable	Variable	Expected Effects on Inflation
Individuals using the internet (% of population)	INTERNET	-
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	UNEMPLOYMENT	-
Broad money growth (Annual %)	MONEYGROWTH	+
Real Interest Rate (%)	INTERESTRATE	-
Energy Use (kg of oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP (constant 2017 PPP)	ENERGYUSE	+
Consumer Prices (Annual %)	INFLATION	

To briefly note the correlation between the unemployment rate and inflation, which are both control variables, the Phillips curve is known to explain the correlation between these two variables. In simple terms, the Phillips curve states that full employment causes inflation (Piore, 1978). As it tries to reach full employment, increases are observed in the general level of prices. In terms of the correlation between monetary growth and inflation, it is well understood that increasing the money supply will raise aggregate demand, resulting in inflation (Thoma, 1994). Regarding the correlation between real interest rate and inflation, it can be claimed that lowering real interest rates will lead to higher real output and increase the inflation rate. If the inflation forecast is lower than the target inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee lowers the policy rate. This leads to higher inflation (Kose et al., 2012). It is stated for the correlation between energy use and inflation that energy use will increase the inflation rate of a country. The cost of energy resources is lowered when they are used optimally. It does not result in a significant rise in production costs. However, the non-optimal use of energy resources leads to more of them being consumed. This increases overall energy costs and costs per unit. Careless and excessive use of energy resources, therefore, helps cause inflation (Wasti & Zaidi, 2020)

A number of similar research in the literature are reviewed in determining which variables ought to be included in this research. Descriptive statistics are stated first, and then the validity of the classical model is investigated. Then, analysis is performed with the appropriate resistant estimator after heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation tests.

The hypothesis is developed under the research:

H_0 = Increases in internet usage have no effect on the decrease in inflation.

H_1 = Increases in internet usage have an effect on the decrease in inflation.

After the hypothesis is expressed, the model created under the research is given.

$$\text{INFLATION}_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{INTERNET}_{it} + \alpha_2 \text{UNEMPLOYMENT}_{it} + \alpha_3 \text{MONEYGROWTH}_{it} + \alpha_4 \text{INTERESTRATE}_{it} + \alpha_5 \text{ENERGYUSE}_{it} + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Description:

INFLATION_{it}	: consumer prices (annual)
INTERNET_{it}	: ratio of internet usage to population internet
UNEMPLOYMENT_{it}	: unemployment rate
MONEYGROWTH_{it}	: monetary expansion
INTERESTRATE_i	: real interest rate
ENERGYUSE_{it}	: energy usage
α_0	: to constant parameter
α_i	: unit effect

λ_t : time effect

ε_{it} : error

The model is estimated with the panel OLS method, and Stata 14 package program is used in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics of the variables are shown in Table 2. It contains the number of observations, average values, standard errors, minimum and maximum values of the variables are expressed.

Table 2. Summary Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Number of Observations	Average	Standard Error	Minimum	Maximum
INFLATION	105	4,723	6,235	-0,845	58,451
INTERNET	105	22,696	24,407	0,001	80,902
UNEMPLOYMENT	105	3,682	1,677	0,21	8,06
MONEY GROWTH	105	12,091	8,179	-2,049	62,762
ENERGY USE	105	107,743	22,156	57,023	141,243
INTEREST RATE	105	4,050	4,512	-24,600	12,322

Analysis

The F-test is conducted first to test the existence of the classical model, and to test the existence of unit effect and time effect, respectively. After testing the existence of unit effect and time effect through the F-test, the likelihood ratio test is applied to test the classical model against the random-effects model. The heteroscedasticity in the model will be tested, and then the presence of autocorrelation will be studied. After all these tests are completed, the model will be estimated with the appropriate resistive estimator.

Table 3 shows the results of F-test to test the unit effect and the time effect. However, Table 3 shows the results of Likelihood Ratio test to determine whether the random effect model or classical model is effective.

Table 3. F-Test and Likelihood Test Results

Testing the Existence of Unit Effect	
F Statistics	0,92
Probability Value	0,565
Testing the Existence of Time Effect	
F Statistics	1,91
Probability Value	0,114
Likelihood Ratio Test	
LR Test Statistics	0,00
Probability Value	1,000

In the F-test, the hypothesis that all units are equal to zero ($H_0: \alpha_i=0$) and that all-time effects are equal to zero ($H_0: \lambda_t=0$) are tested. The likelihood ratio test is used to test the classical model against the random-effects model. The H_0 hypothesis is established as the classical model is true (Tatoğlu, 2016).

According to the results of F-test conducted to test the unit effect, it is found that there is no unit effect. H_0 hypothesis is accepted. The classic model has been deemed suitable. According to the results of F-test conducted to test the time effect, it is seen that time effects are insignificant. H_0 hypothesis is not rejected. When the likelihood test results are examined, it is found that H_0 hypothesis, which states that the classical model is correct, is valid.

After determining that the classical model, otherwise known as the pooled regression model, is valid, the next steps are to investigate the existence of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation in the model.

Heteroscedasticity is frequently encountered in panel data models due to the presence of unit size. This causes the assumption that conditional covariance is zero between the error terms of different periods. In other words, there is no autocorrelation. In addition, if there are unit effects in the error term and the model is estimated by the pooled least squares method, the previous assumption is likewise invalid since the unit effect (α_i) causes autocorrelation in the error term for each unit (Tatoğlu, 2016).

Table 4 shows the results of Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg (Breusch & Pagan, 1979; Cook & Weisberg, 1983) test to examine the existence of variance. The basic hypothesis is established as “ H_0 =no heteroscedasticity” in the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test.

Table 4. Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg Heteroscedasticity Test

Step 1	
chi2(1)	144,62
Prob>chi2	0,000
Step 2	
F(1,103)	45,12
Prob>F	0,000
Step 3	
chi2(1)	31,98
Prob>chi2	0,000
Step 4	
chi2(5)	157,35
Prob>chi2	0,000

The chi2(1) (χ^2) test statistics with 1 degree of freedom was calculated in tests 1 and 3, F-test statistics with (1,103) degree of freedom is calculated in test 2 and chi2 (1) (χ^2) test statistics with 5 degrees of freedom is calculated in the final test. H_0 hypothesis, which describes the constant variance, is rejected according to all test results. There is heteroskedasticity in the model.

It is known that autocorrelation in panel data models occurs mostly due to the unit effect. If there is no unit effect in the model, the autocorrelation in the combined error will decrease, but the correlation in the error will no longer be affected. For this reason, it is important to test the autocorrelation in the residual error element (Tatoğlu, 2016).

Wooldridge's test is used to investigate autocorrelation in the model, whose results is shown in Table 5 (Wooldridge, 2002). Wooldridge proposed an autocorrelation test with the H_0 hypothesis of "there is no first-order autocorrelation" to test autocorrelation in panel data models. Drukker (2003) finds that the test is powerful even in small samples thanks to the simulation results he has concluded (Tatoğlu, 2016).

Table 5. Wooldridge Autocorrelation Test

F value (1,4)	Probability Value
14.330	0,019

Table 5 shows F statistics with (1,4) degree of freedom and probability value. According to the results, H_0 hypothesis stating that there is no first degree autocorrelation is rejected. The model includes first degree autocorrelation.

After the relevant tests are conducted, heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation findings are found in the model. The next step is to perform the regression analysis with the resistant estimator that takes into account heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation. Arellano, Froot, and Rogers' resistant estimator can produce resistant standard errors in the existence of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation. In the research, the estimation of the model is made by the Arellano, Froot, and Rogers (Arellano, 1987; Froot, 1989; Rogers, 1994) resistant estimator. Table 6 shows the results after the analysis made with Arellano, Froot, and Rogers resistant estimators.

Table 6. Estimation Results

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Probability Value
INTERNET	-0,060	0,010	0,005***
UNEMPLOYMENT	0,763	0,221	0,026**
MONEYGROWTH	0,330	0,123	0,055*
ENERGYUSE	-0,004	0,020	0,853
INTERESTRATE	-0,545	0,061	0,001***
R ² = 0.6173			
***: 1%Significance Level			
**: 5%Significance Level			
*: 10%Significance Level			

Considering the coefficient of INTERNET variable, it is seen that the direction of the coefficient is negative. It is observed that as internet usage increases in ASEAN-5 countries, the rate of inflation decreases. Although the direction of the coefficient is as expected, the result is statistically significant.

The estimated coefficient of UNEMPLOYMENT is positive and significant at the 5% level. UNEMPLOYMENT has the unexpected sign. The estimated coefficient of the MONEYGROWTH is positive and significant at the 10% level. MONEYGROWTH have the expected sign. The estimated coefficient of ENERGYUSE is negative and insignificant. ENERGYUSE have the unexpected sign. The estimated coefficient of INTERESTRATE is negative and significant at the 5% level, and has the expected sign.

It is seen that the results are compatible with a significant part of the results in similar studies (Yi & Choi, 2005; Priyono, 2016; Calson-Öhman, 2018; Cavallo, 2018; Friesenbichler, 2018; Goolsbee & Klenow, 2018; Koyuncu & Unver, 2018; Kulakov & Vinogradov, 2020) The increase in internet usage in ASEAN-5 countries has increased competition and led to a decrease in the general level of prices.

Conclusions

Within the scope of the research, the effect of internet usage on inflation in ASEAN-5 countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) between 1994-2014 is investigated. Balanced panel data analysis is performed in this regard. Consumer prices (annual %) are used as inflation indicator in the research where the pooled least squares method is applied. Individuals using the internet (% of population) are used as an indicator of internet usage. Unemployment rate, money growth, real interest rate, and energy use are also included as control variables in the research.

Regression analysis results on the relationship between internet use and inflation has shown that internet use in ASEAN-5 countries leads to a decrease in the rate of inflation. The result is found statistically significant at the 1% significance level. These results are consistent with the results obtained in other studies in the literature (Friesenbichler, 2018; Koyuncu & Unver, 2018; Yi & Choi, 2005).

When the relationship between the unemployment rate (a control variable) and the inflation rate (the dependent variable) is analyzed, it is seen that the direction of the coefficient is positive. As unemployment increases in ASEAN-5 countries, the rate of inflation also increases. The result is statistically significant at the 5% significance level. Similar results are obtained in previous studies analyzing the relationship between relevant variables in ASEAN countries (Furuoka & Munir, 2009; Puzon, 2009).

Regarding the effect of money growth on inflation, it is found that increases in money supply increase inflation in ASEAN-5 countries. The result also seems to be statistically significant at the 10% significance level. These results obtained are in the expected direction.

It is observed that the direction of the coefficient is negative in the relationship between energy use and inflation. However, the results are statistically insignificant. The relationship between real interest rate and inflation is analyzed to finally find a negative relationship between these two variables, as expected. The result also indicates a statistically significant at

the 1% significance level. In ASEAN-5 countries, as real interest rates increase, inflation rates decrease.

It is widely believed that information and communication technologies reduce costs by leading to high efficiency, in this case, reduces consumer prices by affecting inflation rates. It is stated that the increase in internet usage contributes to the decrease in inflation rates. The effects of internet use on inflation in ASEAN-5 countries are investigated, and it is found that inflation rates decrease as internet usage increases. The results obtained within the research scope are consistent with the findings in similar studies (Calson-Öhman, 2018; Cavallo, 2018; Friesenbichler, 2018; Goolsbee & Klenow, 2018; Koyuncu & Unver, 2018; Kulakov & Vinogradov, 2020; Priyono, 2016; Yi & Choi, 2005).

Digitization has varying effects on inflation. It can affect inflation directly through the prices of information and communication technology products, and through the sharing of these products in the household consumption basket. Indirectly, it can affect inflation through firms' pricing behavior, market power and market concentration, productivity, and marginal costs (Koester et al., 2021).

Technological developments and globalization have made the use of information and communication technologies widespread. Digitization and the accompanying widespread use of the internet have increased efficiency and productivity, while significantly reducing costs. It has been stated that inflation rates will decrease significantly as the costs decrease (Friesenbichler, 2018; Litan & Rivlin, 2001; Salvatore, 2003; Yi & Choi, 2005).

The use of the internet is increasing rapidly in the world, the digital economy is rapidly spreading, and its influence is increasing. This makes it more important for policy makers and economic agents to understand the effects of internet use and digital economy indicators on macroeconomic variables, including inflation (Csonto et al., 2019). Considering that the use of the internet reduces inflation through increased productivity or increased competition, it should not be forgotten that countries must give importance to information and communication technologies and the sector that hosts these technologies.

With the increase in internet use, consumers become more conscious and knowledgeable. The formation of a more aware consumer profile, on the other hand, contributes to the increase in price competition. Using smart phones, people can compare prices of products and services with a single click. Companies that are aware of the situation enter into competition with other companies by applying lower prices and various discount campaigns to continuously attract customers. This can lead to a significant decrease in inflation rates (Matolcsy et al., 2020).

The research suggests that governments make productivity, competition, and e-commerce become widespread by ensuring there are no obstacles to internet usage. Consumers, who are spared significant time cost and search cost by shopping online, will be able to buy products and services at lower prices with the increase of competition. Central banks should follow the developments related to e-commerce and continue their activities since e-commerce is effective on price stability. It is seen that there are very few studies on the

subject in the literature. It is believed that studies to be conducted to review the relationship between these two variables in different country groups will enrich the relevant literature.

About The Authors

Mustafa Necati Çoban is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University. His research interests are welfare economics, environmental economics, institutional economics, and digital economy.

References

- Arellano, M. (1987). Computing robust standard errors for within-groups estimators. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 49(4), 431–434. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0084.1987.mp49004006.x>
- Breusch, T. S. & Pagan, A. R. (1979). A simple test for heteroscedasticity and random coefficient variation. *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, 1287–1294. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1911963>
- Calson-Öhman, F. (2018). *The effect of increased e-commerce on inflation*. [Master essay, Södertörns högskola – Institution for Social Sciences]. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-effect-of-increased-e-commerce-on-inflation-Calson-%C3%96hman/f92f752fdffa77d73c89f83bacf2a2d362ee6809>
- Cavallo, A. (2018). *More Amazon effects: Online competition and pricing behaviors*. Working Paper 25138. National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w25138>
- Charbonneau, K. B., Evans, A., Sarker, S., & Suchanek, L. (2017). *Digitalization and inflation: A review of the literature*. Staff Analytical Note, Bank of Canada. <https://econpapers.repec.org/RePEc:bca:bocsan:17-20>
- Charnsripinyo, C. & Inluksana, S. (2015). *National Broadband Policy*, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society Thailand. http://www.mdes.go.th/view/10/Al_INews/e-Publication/24
- Chavanne, X., Schinella, S., Marquet, D., Frangi, J. P., & Le Masson, S. (2015). Electricity consumption of telecommunication equipment to achieve a telemeeting. *Applied Energy*, 137, 273–281. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apenergy.2014.10.027>
- Coffinet, J. & Perillaud, S. (2017). *Effects of the internet on inflation: An overview of the literature and empirical analyses*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Cook, R. D. & Weisberg, S. (1983). Diagnostics for heteroscedasticity in regression. *Biometrika*, 70(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2335938>

- Csonto, M. B., Huang, Y., & Mora, M. C. E. T. (2019). *Is digitalization driving domestic inflation?* Working Paper No. 19/271. International Monetary Fund.
- Drukker, D. M. (2003). Testing for serial correlation in linear panel-data models. *Stata Journal*, 3(2), 168-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1536867X0300300206>
- Ejemeyovwi, J. O., Osabuohien, E. S., Johnson, O. D., & Bowale, E. I. K. (2019). Internet usage, innovation and human development nexus in Africa: the case of ECOWAS. *Journal of Economic Structures*, 8(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40008-019-0146-2>
- Eick, S. (2007). A history of Indonesian telecommunication reform 1999-2006. *Proceedings of 40th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences No. 1530-1605/07*. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Xplore Digital Library. <https://doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2007.16>
- Elgin, C. (2013). Internet usage and the shadow economy: Evidence from panel data. *Economic Systems*, 37(1), 111-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecosys.2012.08.005>
- Fabo, B. (2018). Implications of e-commerce for central banking: A review. *Biatec*, 26(4), 27-30. https://www.nbs.sk/_img/documents/_publik_nbs_fsr/biatec/rok2018/04-2018/07_biatec4_fabo.pdf
- Friesenbichler, K. (2018). Inflation and broadband revisited: Evidence from an OECD Panel. A replication study of Yi and Choi (Journal of Policy Modeling, 2005). *International Journal for Re-Views in Empirical Economics (IREE)*, 2(2018-1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.18718/81781.5>
- Froot, K. A. (1989). Consistent covariance matrix estimation with cross-sectional dependence and heteroskedasticity in financial data. *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, 333-355. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2330815>
- Furuoka, F. & Munir, Q. (2009). "Phillips Curve" in selected ASEAN countries: New evidence from panel data analysis. *Sunway Academic Journal*, 6, 89-102.
- Goolsbee, A. D. & Klenow, P. J. (2018). Internet rising, prices falling: Measuring inflation in a world of e-commerce. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 108, 488-492. <https://doi.org/10.1257/pandp.20181038>
- Hettiarachchi, C. (2006). Role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in human development in South Asia. *Sri Lanka: Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa*.
- Hsing, Y., Morgan, Y.-C., Phillips, A. S., & Phillips, C. (2020). Internet usage and economic growth: The case of Mexico. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies*, 1(6), 383-389. <https://doi.org/10.35877/454RI.gems224>

- Jing, A. H. Y. & Ab-Rahim, R. (2020). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and economic growth in ASEAN-5 Countries. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 10(2), 20-33.
- Jo, Y. J., Matsumura, M., & Weinstein, D. E. (2019). *The impact of e-commerce on relative prices and consumer welfare*. NBER Working Paper 26506, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Koester, G., Lis, E., Nickel, C., Osbat, C., & Smets, F. (2021). *Understanding low inflation in the euro area from 2013 to 2019: cyclical and structural drivers*. ECB Strategy Review Occasional Paper Series No. 280.
- Kose, N., Emirmahmutoglu, F., & Aksoy, S. (2012). The interest rate-inflation relationship under an inflation targeting regime: The case of Turkey. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 23(4), 476-485. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asieco.2012.03.001>
- Koyuncu, J. Y. & Unver, M. (2018). The Impact of Internet on Inflation in OECD Countries. X. *International Balkan and Near Eastern Social Science (IBANESS) Congress Series*. Ohrid/Macedonia, pp. 261-265.
- Kulakov, M. V. & Vinogradov, A. A. (2020). Study on the impact of e-commerce development on inflation in the euro area. *π-Economy*, 13(2), 129. <https://doi.org/10.18721/JE.13210>
- Lindgren, C., Daunfeldt, S.-O., & Rudholm, N. (2021). *Pricing in retail markets with low search costs: Evidence from a price comparison website*. HFI Working Paper.
- Litan, R. E. & Rivlin, A. M. (2001). Projecting the economic impact of the Internet. *American Economic Review*, 91(2), 313-317. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.2.313>
- Lv, L., Liu, Z., & Xu, Y. (2019). Technological progress, globalization and low-inflation: Evidence from the United States. *PLoS One*, 14(4). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215366>
- Manyika, J. & Roxburgh, C. (2011). The great transformer: The impact of the Internet on economic growth and prosperity. *McKinsey Global Institute*, 1-9. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-great-transformer>
- Matolcsy, G., Nagy, M., Palotai, D., & Virág, B. (2020). Inflation in the digital age: Inflation measurement and bias in the 21st Century. *Financial and Economic Review*, 19(1), 5-36. <http://doi.org/10.33893/FER.19.1.536>
- Meijers, H. (2006). Diffusion of the Internet and low inflation in the information economy. *Information Economics and Policy*, 18(1), 1-23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.infoecopol.2005.02.005>

- Mentsiev, A. U., Khaliev, M. S. U., Guzueva, E. R., & Ashakhanova, M. Z. (2020). Digitalization as a New Stage in the Formation of Economic Relations. *ISCFEC*, 128, 3096–3100. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.200312.443>
- Nuccio, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2019). Big data: Hell or heaven? Digital platforms and market power in the data-driven economy. *Competition & Change*, 23(3), 312–328.
- Piore, M. J. (1978). Unemployment and inflation: An alternative view. *Challenge*, 21(2), 24–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/05775132.1978.11470418>
- Priyono, A. F. (2016). Internet Dan Inflasi: Cross-Country Panel Analysis Atas 5 Negara Di Asia. *Quantitative Economics Journal*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.24114/qej.v5i1.17481>
- Puzon, K. A. M. (2009). The inflation dynamics of the ASEAN-4: A case study of the Phillips curve relationship. *The Journal of American Science*, 5(1), 55–57.
- Rogers, W. (1994). Regression standard errors in clustered samples. *Stata Technical Bulletin*, 3(13).
- Romer, P. (1986). Increasing returns and Long-run growth. *Journal of Political Economy*, 94(5), 1002-1037.
- Romer, P. (1990). Endogenous technical change. *Journal of Political Economy*, 98(5), S71–S102.
- Ruslijanto, P. A. (2012). Digital Signature's Legal Position in Electronic Commerce. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research*, 28. International Conference on Economics Marketing and Management. Singapore: IACSIT Press. <http://www.ipedr.com/vol28/36-ICEM M2012-G00001.pdf>
- Salahuddin, M., Alam, K., & Ozturk, I. (2016). The effects of Internet usage and economic growth on CO2 emissions in OECD countries: A panel investigation. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 62(C), 1226–1235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2016.04.018>
- Salahuddin, M. & Gow, J. (2016). The effects of Internet usage, financial development, and trade openness on economic growth in South Africa: A time series analysis. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33(4), 1141–1154. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2015.11.006>
- Salleh, F., Yatin, S. F. M., Radzi, R. M., Kamis, M. S., Zakaria, S., Husaini, H., ..., & Rambli, Y. R. (2020). Malaysian's new digital initiative to boost e-commerce – Where we are. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(11), 1138-1154. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i11/8188>
- Salvatore, D. (2003). The new economy and growth in the G-7 countries. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 25(5), 531-540.
- Sassi, S. & Goaid, M. (2013). Financial development, ICT diffusion and economic growth: Lessons from MENA region. *Telecommunications Policy*, 37(4-5), 252–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2012.12.004>

- Sathiaseelan, A., Trossen, D., Komnios, I., Ott, J., & Crowcroft, J. (2013). *Information centric delay tolerant networking: An internet architecture for the challenged*. Technical report, University of Cambridge, Computer Laboratory.
- Shanthi, R. & Desti, K. (2015). Consumers' perception on online shopping. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*, 13, 14-21.
- Simsim, M. T. (2011). Internet usage and user preferences in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of King Saud University-Engineering Sciences*, 23(2), 101-107. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.jksues.2011.03.006>
- Tatoğlu, F. Y. (2016). *Panel Veri Ekonometrisi Stata Uygulamalı*. Beta Yayınevi, Genişletilmiş 3. baskı, İstanbul.
- Thoma, M. A. (1994). The effects of money growth on inflation and interest rates across spectral frequency bands. *Journal of Money, Credit and Banking*, 26(2), 218-231. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2077906>
- Villegas, B. M. (2014). *The ICT sector in the Philippine economy*. Nomura Foundation. https://www.nomurafoundation.or.jp/en/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2014/09/20010525_Bernardo_Villegas.pdf
- Vu, K. M. (2013). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Singapore's economic growth. *Information Economics and Policy*, 25(4), 284-300. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoecopol.2013.08.002>
- Wadhvani, S. (2000). The impact of the Internet on UK inflation. *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin*.
- Wasti, S. K. A. & Zaidi, S. W. (2020). An empirical investigation between CO2 emission, energy consumption, trade liberalization and economic growth: A case of Kuwait. *Journal of Building Engineering*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jobbe.2019.101104>
- Wooldridge, J. M. (2002). *Econometric Analysis of Cross Section and Panel Data*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Yi, M. H. & Choi, C. (2005). The effect of the internet on inflation: Panel data evidence. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 27(7), 885-889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpolmod.2005.06.008>

Far from Home: Profile of pro-IS Deportees' Mobility throughout 2016-2020 and Prevention Strategy of Indonesian Government

Andi Raihanah Ashar¹ and Curie Maharani²

^{1,2}International Relations Department, Faculty of Humanities,

Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia 11480

curie@binus.ac.id; aandiraihanah@gmail.com

How to Cite: Ashar, Andi Raihanah & Curie Maharani (2022). Far from home: Profile of pro-IS deportees' mobility throughout 2016-2020 and prevention strategy of Indonesian government. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 81–105. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.7732>

Abstract

Transnational terrorism has been a worldwide challenge, especially after the declaration of Islamic State (IS) that was based in Syria and Iraq in 2014. By 2017, most foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) from Southeast Asia were Indonesian nationals, of almost 700 individuals. The actual number might be higher as some departed to Syria and other destination countries, like Afghanistan, the Philippines, and India, undetected. The research aimed to examine how Pro-IS terrorists exploit loopholes in border and immigration control to join IS abroad and the shortcoming in Indonesian government strategy to counter their mobility. The novelty of the research rested on its use of Supreme Court's record of 38 Pro-IS deportees to build a dataset of their profile and travel history from 2016 to 2020. Profile of individual deportee was categorized into demography, affiliation, and funding. Travel history was mapped in accordance with the point of departure in Indonesia, transit country, final destination, and location where the arrest took place- which then led to deportation. The research finds that Indonesia needs improvement in human resources, law enforcement, immigration management, border control, as well as cross-border cooperation.

Keywords: terrorist mobility, terrorist mobility strategy, the Islamic State (IS), departure, immigration

Introduction

Following the call of Islamic States' (IS) so-called "caliphate" Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's for all Muslims to immigrate (*hijrah*¹) to the caliphate state in late June 2014, waves of departure of pro-IS fighters came from all over the world. Such movement is dubbed as 'terrorist mobility,' which Ginsburg (2006) defines as "the ability to move people across borders and within nations without being detected by hostile authorities." Around 27,000 to 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) from 86 countries have travelled to Syria or Iraq, 75% of whom are from 12 countries, including Indonesia (Longo, 2017). The cross-border terrorist threat became a worldwide challenge that exposes the weaknesses in border and immigration control.

For members and sympathizers of terrorist groups in Indonesia, cross-border mobility or migration is nothing new. Solahudin, Fealy, and McRae (2017) mention that from 1985 to 1992, 192 recruits of Darul Islam (DI) migrated to join military training in the border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Upon returning, they played a vital role in several Indonesian notable terror attacks, such as the first and second Bali bombing, the JW Marriot Hotel attack, and the Australian Embassy bombing. Another group like Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) sent fighters to train at Hudaibiyah Camp in Mindanao between 1995 and 1999; later on three out of the 144 Mindanao graduates—Noordin M. Top, Dr. Azhari Hussein, and Ali Fauzi—became the mastermind behind several terror attacks (Solahudin et al., 2017).

The number of Indonesians responding to the appeal of the IS leader is particularly concerning. National Counterterrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme/BNPT) estimated about 514 Indonesians have joined IS in Syria and Iraq by 2014 (Taufiqurrohman, 2015), other estimations mentioned 980 people by 2017 (Longo, 2017) and 689 people by 2020 ("Pemerintah tidak berencana", 2020). Furthermore, according to the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (2018), Indonesian nationals who were caught and deported from transit countries before arriving at the country of destination, or "deportees", increased from 171 in 2016 to 226 people in 2017. The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict also records that as of mid-2018, more than 500 people were deported for attempting to cross into Syria from Turkey to join IS. The actual number might be higher due to the availability of other routes and the possibility of some returning undetected. Those numbers reflect IS' success in promoting the narrative of migration as a manifestation of the caliphate that will emerge before *al-malhamah qubra* or the Islamic Armageddon, although part of its attraction includes worldly incentives – such as allowance, health care, free education, and housing facilities - for professionals to take part in running the IS territory as administrators, accountants, teachers, doctors, engineers, or religious experts (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2018).

Path of cross-border mobility of Indonesian extremists further diversified following the expansion of IS activities. In 2015, IS decided to expand to the Khorasan region, an area historically part of Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018). While the number of Indonesians that joined IS-Khorasan is unknown, there is the case of Muhammad Aulia, a travel facilitator for eleven people, who

was deported from Bangkok before joining IS-Khorasan via Thailand and Iran (Briantika, 2019). Between 2016 and 2018 around 40 Indonesian extremists attempted to cross the border following Southeast Asian Pro-IS fighters' pledge via the internet to support the Mindanao fight in the Philippines, nine of them were later deported (Arianti & Azman, 2019).

Under President Joko Widodo's administration, BNPT tried to improve its deradicalization and rehabilitation program for deported terrorist suspects and returnees through interagency collaboration, especially after the ratification of Law No. 5/2018 on terrorism. However, national strategy or specific regulation to counter terrorist mobility remains absent. While there is plethora of literatures on terrorists who travel from Indonesia (Nuraniyah, 2015; Kibtiah, 2016; Anindya, 2019; Timur & Yani, 2019), none touched upon the issue of mobility strategy. To fill the gap in academic literature and policy-making formulation, the research aims to investigate the limitations of the Indonesian government in preventing pro-IS deportees in 2016-2020. In doing so, the research will first describe the profile of Indonesian pro-IS deportees and their exploitation of the border and immigration system, and then assess the government's capability and its obstacles to effective counter of terrorist mobility strategy (TMS).

Although terrorists who travel outside their country are interchangeably labeled as either "deportee," "returnee," or "foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)," there is no consensus on the definition of the terms. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2178 defines FTFs as individuals who travel to a state other than their origin to perpetrate, plan or prepare, or participate in terrorist acts. They could be the providers or receivers of terrorist training. Whereas the Indonesian government defines "returnees" as nationals who managed to cross into Syria or Iraq and voluntarily returned (Laelani, 2018). Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (2018) differentiates both terms from "deportees," defined as individuals who tried to reach *hijrah* destination but got caught before arriving.

When it comes to which category carries higher security risks, arguably, a returnee with military experience would be a bigger risk than a deportee with no combat experiences. However, frustrated deportees could also pose a significant danger compared to non-combatant returnees. They could carry out terror attacks at home because the continuous illusion of IS collides with reality that *hijrah* is no longer a feasible option. The research will focus on Indonesian deportees because of their potential risks.

Literature Review

Migration as a security issue touches upon a range of matters directly affecting migration policy, including border integrity, national security, and citizenship (International Organization for Migration, 2010). A compromised border integrity and immigration system becomes the weak point that terrorist groups exploit in today's borderless world. Citrawan and Nadilla (2019) argue that immigration policy intersects with terrorist activities. Hence, countermeasures to terrorist mobility should include optimization of intelligence gathering, pre-inspection of travel documents and immigration permits, and border checks. However,

further literature that touches upon this particular subject, such as dismantling illicit markets that provide travel documents, arresting terrorist travel facilitators, and cooperating with countries of choice to *hijrah*, are hardly found.

Ginsburg (2006) argues that understanding the elements of terrorist mobility is essential since it helps to exploit terrorists' needs to remain mobile and cross borders. Terrorist mobility comprises three elements: (a) management of travel function, (b) exit routes and transportation practices, and (c) entry and residence tactics. Firstly, management of terrorist travel functions requires an understanding of the actor who arranges the travel, either a travel facilitator or an illicit travel organization, and the actor who provides the illicit travel documents (the illegal market exists and has supported many terrorists attempting to cut corners to avoid detection by the authorities). Secondly, understanding key jumping-off points and checkpoints and preferred choices of practices require information on means of purchasing a certain passage and whether terrorists are trained in particular kinds of transportation ranging from small boats to airplanes. Thirdly, there are two approaches to exploit the border and immigration control: 1) to make illegal use of legal channels and 2) to utilize illegal ones. Legal channels are used illegally when a terrorist passes through any of the legal checkpoints nations and their immigration systems by using tourist visas and residence permits. Whereas the use of illegal channels refers to any discreet travel outside immigration control and border ports of entry, i.e., the use of boat or land crossing in remote places to enter illegal routes. These elements will be used to analyze Indonesian deportees' travel history and planning to *hijrah*.

The research borrows Ginsburg's (2006) argument that a national and global terrorist mobility strategy (TMS) is essential as it serves three broad purposes, which are defensive, offensive, and deterrent. A defensive operation is to secure travel, immigration, and transportation channels at borders against undetected terrorist movements. The offensive measure is to exploit the vulnerability of border and immigration systems exposed by terrorists' need to disrupt their network. Combined, an effective defensive and offensive countermeasure will deter or raise the risk for the terrorist movement. A deterrent, offensive, and defensive countermeasures can be set within a single terrorist mobility framework. Ginsburg emphasizes seven elements that would identify the roles of government institutions and agencies in every terrorist mobility phase, as seen in Table 1. These elements will be used as the benchmark to evaluate the existing Indonesian strategy pertaining to terrorist mobility.

Since Indonesia does not have a single framework or an established expert group that focuses on responding to this problem, some countermeasures overlap. Hence, the TMS is simplified into three indicators. First, immigration and border control, including understanding terrorist mobility knowledge while modernizing the border and immigration system for effective management. Second, crime control by arresting criminal travel networks, including travel facilitators and illegal document providers. Lastly, cross-border cooperation to help identify and track terrorists on the move.

Table 1. Elements of Terrorist Mobility Strategy (TMS)

No.	Element	Description	Indicator
1	Foundation: Terrorist Mobility Knowledge	A basic guideline or report for top officials and front-line managers on terrorist mobility trends and detection methods.	Immigration and border control
2	Border and Immigration Management: Securing Legal Entry Channels	Securing legal channels from terrorists and other threats through a “smart borders” policy that relies on modernized infrastructure to make use of foreign and domestic intelligence about terrorists, as well as on risk management tools.	
3	Perimeter Control: Denying Access Through Illegal Channels	Control over infiltration by terrorists through illegal entry channels that avoids screening by crossing surreptitiously away from a port of entry.	
4	Targeting: Terrorists Who Act as Travel Facilitators	Strategy against terrorists who facilitate travel for groups, cells, and networks.	Crime control
5	Crime Control: Attacking Illicit Travel Network	Disrupt illegal market that provides travel services, including criminal exploitation of law-abiding travel agencies.	
6	Domestic Constraining Mobility	Security: A strategy to protect against or exploit terrorist use of public and private systems to move around including the immigration system with its regulation of employers, which confers legal status and verifies identity, and the public and private transportation systems.	
7	Global Tracking Route	Awareness: Strengthen the ability to identify and track any individual or small group of terrorists on the move.	Cross-border cooperation

Source: Ginsburg (2006)

Research Methods

The research employs a qualitative methodology to understand Indonesia’s Pro-IS jihadists movement and how counterterrorism strategy intersects with border security and immigration reform. The analysis captures terrorist movement trends within the period from 2016 to 2020. The originality of the analysis comes from a dataset of mostly primary sources constructed from the Supreme Court’s record of 38 Pro-IS deportees’ convictions. Selection of documents are based on several keywords: “*putusan*”, “*kejahatan terhadap keamanan negara*”, “*teroris*”, and “*deportasi*”. In addition, data of two Pro-IS deportees, Rullie Rian Zeke and Ulfah Handayani Saleh, were collected from media coverage and official statements by the

Philippines authorities.² In total, the dataset collects 40 profiles of the arrested for terrorism-related charges or successfully launched a terror attack from 2016 to 2020. Whereas to examine the Indonesian government's strategy in countering terrorist mobility, the research depends on both primary data, i.e. court documents and government regulations, and secondary sources.

Two datasets are built to analyze personal data and travel history. Personal data contains birth location, age, gender, domicile, profession, and education. Travel history includes departure, transit, arrival, arrest, and deportation, as well as detailed information regarding the amount and source of funds. The terrorist mobility trends are then compared with the Indonesian government strategy in order to assess the gap in the implementation. Furthermore, the analysis is supported a report by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights' Research and Development Agency (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Hukum dan HAM/Balitbang HAM), and media coverage. The research has two limitations that could be addressed for future research. First, the authors have contacted governmental institutions and agencies for interviews but received no welcoming response. Second, although the authors have collected all deportees' data from the supreme court, it is possible that the digital archive is not complete. Challenges are found in obtaining equally complete information from each verdict.

Analysis

Profile of Deportees: Demography, Affiliation, Funding

Prior to this research, the first and only attempt to profile Indonesian deportees was conducted by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) in 2018. The think tank collects data from 92 Indonesian deportees from January to April 2017 from the University of Indonesia's Center for the Study of Terrorism and Social Conflict. Their finding covers country of deportation, demography (origin, sex, education, age group), and sentiment towards IS (supportive to IS or another group). Around 89% were deported from Turkey while the rest were deported from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan. The basic data shows that 56% of the adults were women and 44% were men, while 76% travel with their families. Moreover, on education, 43% were high school graduates, 30% had tertiary education whereas the remaining deportees only reached junior high school or lower. More than half of the deportees originated from Java, which most of these areas correlate with the strongholds of terrorist group *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah* (JAD). Only eight percent of deportees supported non-IS groups. Based on this profile, IPAC argued that deportees mainly were middle-class and paid their own travel expenses.

The research finds both similarities and differences in the profiling of Indonesian deportees with that of IPAC. Among similarities are transit hub countries, deportees' origin, and education background, while the differences are related to financial aspects, including deportees' financial state, source of funds, and each destination's travel expenses. Around 67% deportees were arrested in Turkey, followed by Thailand (16%), the Philippines (9%),

Hong Kong (2%), and Sri Lanka (2%). It is important to note that these numbers include terrorists who were deported not only once but also twice and even three times. In terms of profile, a high number of deportees were from areas deemed vulnerable to terrorism-related activity: West Java (25%), Aceh (20%), DKI Jakarta (10%), Lampung (10%), and Central Java (7%). Although the supreme court documents lacked personal background information, the data show that 27% of deportees do not hold a bachelor's degree or higher – high school graduates or lower are more probable. Ten people, or 25% of the deportees, has a bachelor's degree, and one person has a master's degree. While men outnumbered women by 7 to 1, the latter may hold critical roles from funding *hijrah* expenses to the executor of suicide bombing. As example, Meilani Indria Dewi used to sell Islamic clothing for Muslim women online to fund her trip to Syria and join ISIS, and Arti Alifah Aviandari Rahardjo, was responsible for purchasing flight tickets and visa applications for herself and family.³

Contrary to IPAC report, the research argues that profession as well as income might not necessarily determine the preparedness of an individual for *hijrah*, as other means of funding are available such as support and loan (Figure 1). By profession, 67% of the deportees work in informal sectors, while the rest were private employees, civil servants (*aparatur sipil negara/ASN*), and unemployed. In parallel, some deportees were radicalized during their time as migrant workers abroad as in the case of Ika Puspita Sari who was deported from Hong Kong in 2016. Their suspicious activities related to terrorism became the reason behind their deportation back to Indonesia.

Half of the deportees were self-funded, around 57%, by most likely selling existing properties for funding. Around 19% of the case was partly aided by others and 2,3% was fully funded. Aided individuals mostly received financial help from their travel facilitators, fellow sympathizers, or other cell group members. For instance, Fathu Yahya Hasan received an additional US\$ 701 from Ibrahim, his travel facilitator, to go to Syria after collecting US\$ 1,402. While Uzair Cholid received US\$ 70,090 from his brother Ziad Cholid who is also a Pro-ISIS sympathizer. Fathu Yahya's second attempt to *hijrah* was fully funded by his travel facilitator, Mr. Joko. Angga Irawan, who was deported in 2014 from Turkey, received loans for US\$ 8,271 from Central Java Regional Development Bank. Therefore, contrary to IPAC, the research finds that many deportees are partly or even fully aided by others.

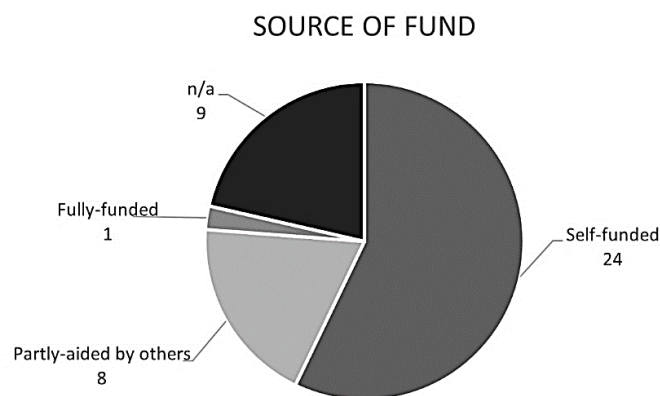


Figure 1. Source of fund for *hijrah*.
Source: Authors, from Supreme Court Verdicts

While most deportees are caught in Turkey, there are many destination choices for *hijrah*. The travel routes map, as seen in Figure 2, shows travelers who transit through Turkey by air legally would likely to cross into Syria. Other routes that serve as a pair of transit point and destination are: 1) Iran to Afghanistan, 2) Manila to Mindanao in the Philippines, and 3) New Delhi to Jammu Kashmir in India. In parallel, taking the sea route from Indonesia is also an option to enter Mindanao, the Philippines, illegally. As the most favorable choice to enter Syria, Turkey's border area with Syria is deemed a strategic transit hub for foreign fighters joining IS. This *hijrah* highway starts from Istanbul in the West of Turkey towards Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, and Kilis. In fact, the country has welcomed and accepted refugees and migrants from Syria, taking the same route as foreign fighters who attempt to cross the border and vice versa (Yayla, 2019). In the past few years, Iran is deemed as the new transit hub choice to various *hijrah* destinations since the departure of Indonesian Pro-IS terrorists in 2019. Furthermore, cheaper option of destinations from Indonesia is India and the Philippines. Not only is it more affordable than Syria, but the Philippines is also a closer destination from Indonesia (Figure 3).

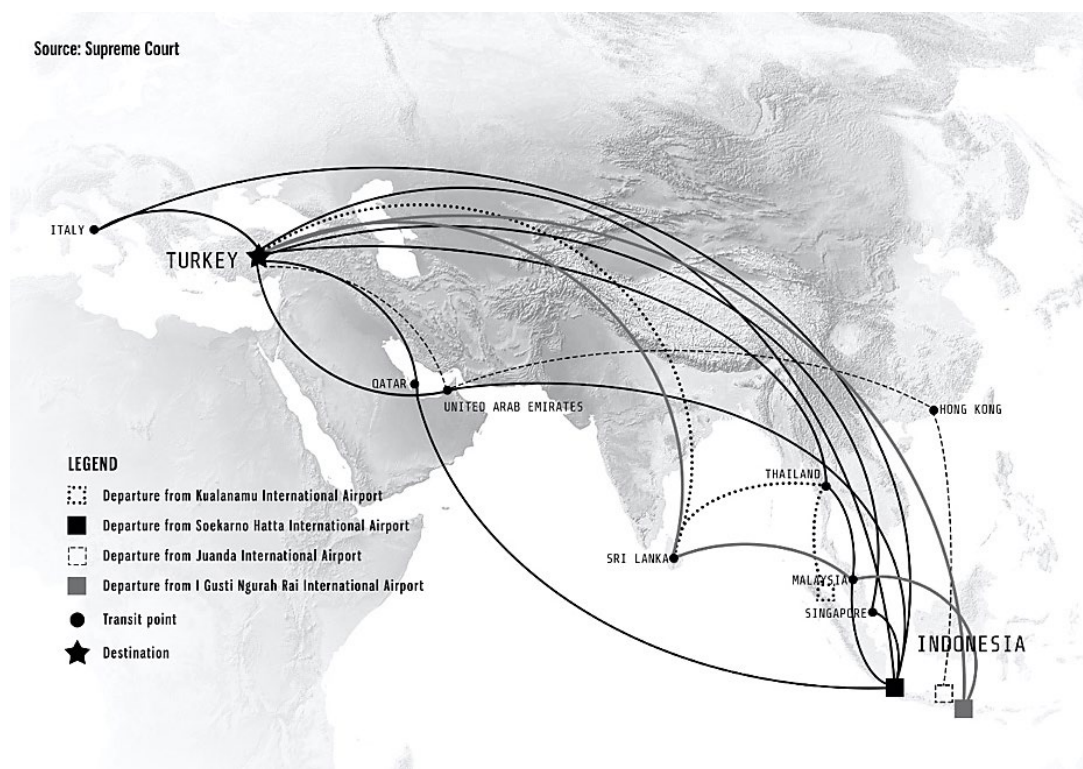


Figure 2. Map of travel routes taken by Indonesian Pro-IS deportees to Turkey.

Source: Authors, from Supreme Court Verdicts

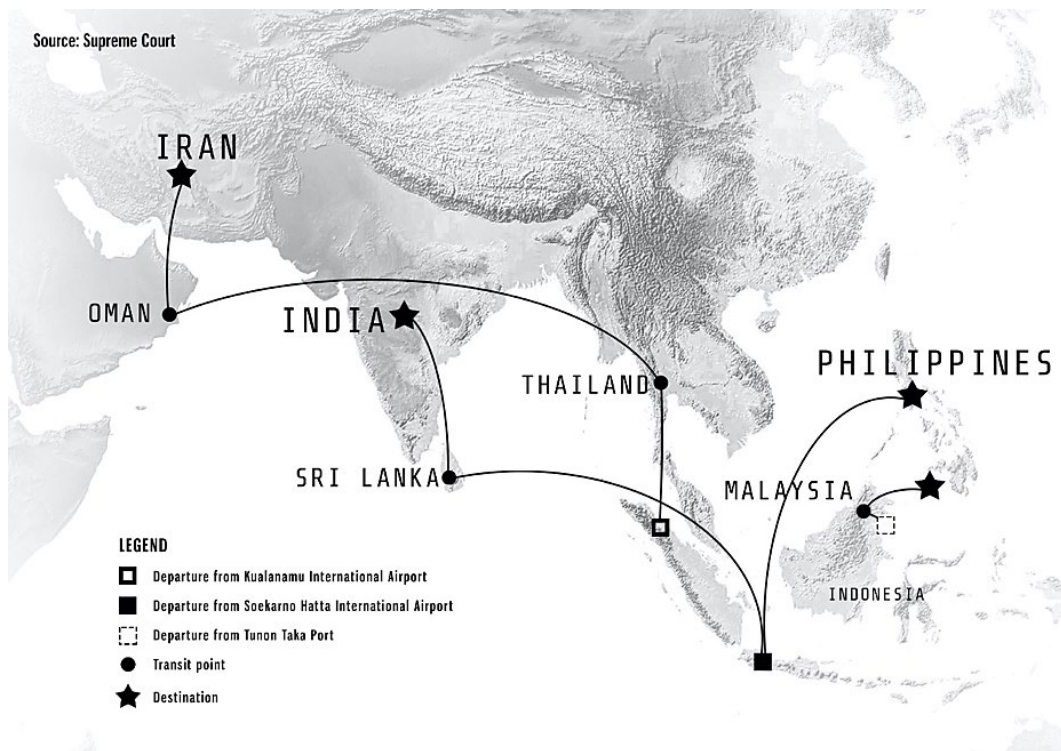


Figure 3. Map of alternative travel routes taken by Indonesian Pro-IS deportees to Iran.
Source: Authors, from Supreme Court Verdicts

The amount of funds collected seems to affect a terrorist's choice of destination. The total cost of *hijrah* for each person in Turkey could reach Rp 50 to 100 million (US\$ 3,482 to US\$ 6,963). There is also the additional fee of US\$500 per person for smuggling into Syria. In 2018, Uzair Cholid and Arti Alifah prepared Rp 1.05 billion (US\$ 73,164) to cover travel expenses and buy an apartment in Turkey with the help of Arpiet Mahfuz Fitri Kemora. The next year, a group led by Muhamad Aulia attempted to travel to Afghanistan by taking the Thailand-Iran route, where each member prepared between Rp 20 to 150 million (US\$ 1,392 to US\$ 10,443). In other cases, those who travelled to India and transited in Sri Lanka like Farid Ramadhan, as well as those who travel to the Philippines like Agistya Agriyana and Muhammad Ghufon Damanhuri, prepared Rp 20-50 million (US\$ 1,392 to US\$ 3,480) each.

How Terrorists Exploit the Border and Immigration Control

A traveler requires travel documents and immigration permits to be able to depart. Based on Law No. 16/2011 on Immigration Article 24 and Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights No. 30/2016 on Immigration Intelligence, immigration permits encompass travel documents, visa, entry, and exit proof. Immigration control starts from applying for a passport and visa application, followed by pre-inspections of these travel documents at the immigration checkpoint.

Not all deportees require to apply for new passports since many of them have had applied before for pilgrimage trip to Mecca. Those without passports would go through legal or illegal channels, as in the case of Wahyu Deddy Saputra, who managed to apply for another passport despite being deported from Turkey before. After his passport application was rejected, Wahyu requested assistance from a friend, Jannah, who had access to the data center, to secure a new passport. Another example, Uzair Cholid managed to obtain a new identity card (IC) under the name Husein Ali Asegaf with the help of his brother. He was then able to apply for a new passport with his new IC through a middleman without further background checks and other proper documentation check and other proper documentation.⁴

Travel facilitators have a vital role as a travel planner, including but not limited to deciding travel routes, acting as a middleman with travel hosts in the destination country, as well as arranging tickets and visas. Recruitments are mostly done through social media and chat applications such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, which are also used to communicate with prospective *mujahideen*. More than half of the facilitators travelled together with their travel group and mostly acted as *amir*, as in the case of Muhammad Aulia and Ahmad Supriyanto. The ones not travelling would likely be part of criminal networks, either in Indonesia or abroad.

These deportees knew how to identify and exploit exit points with the least security control as well as having the capability to infiltrate immigration systems without detection during document validation and interview at several checkpoints. In Indonesia there are five ports of departure in total: 1) Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang as the favorite choice, 2) Kualanamu International Airport in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, 3) Juanda International Airport in Sidoarjo, 4) I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali, or 5) Tunon Taka Seaport in Nunukan, North Kalimantan. Muhammad Aulia decided to depart from Kualanamu International Airport to avoid detection from authorities while Triyono took the sea route from Tanon Taka Port and crossed into Zamboanga via Malaysia acting as a merchant.

Deportees were also able to exploit stealth travel beyond immigration control. Cici, the daughter of 2019 Jolo Church Bombing perpetrators, evidently took her family to enter the Philippines through illegal channels from Keningau, Malaysia with the help of two Indonesian facilitators (Latief, 2019). The Philippines authority claimed that Cici and her family took the sea route to enter Mindanao, were held up in Lampinigan Island for a few days and then sailed to Jolo by pump boat (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2019).

In between the legal and illegal ways, there are also the grey areas used by these terrorists. Examples include the use of tourist visas and residence permits. Arpiet Mahfuz and his family used an *ikamet* to prevent the authorities from detecting terrorist-related activities while extending their stay in Turkey. *Ikamet* is a residence permit for foreigners who want to stay longer in Turkey – up to six months. After acquiring the residence permit, Arpiet bought an apartment in Sogutluceme, Istanbul and he even managed to return to Indonesia and travel back to Turkey undetected.

Counter to Terrorist Mobility Strategy: Obstacles to Effective Implementation

There have been efforts by the Indonesian government to counter the terrorist mobility of the mentioned profiled militants. In 2016 the police prevented two families comprising ten people from Tangerang, a suburb of Jakarta and Singkawang (in West Kalimantan) from departing Soekarno-Hatta airport, suspecting that they will join IS in Syria (Tristiawati, 2016). Again in 2019, Detachment 88 (Densus 88) captured Hari Kuncoro in the same airport when he was about to depart to Syria, using Iran as a transit point (Rico, 2019). Nevertheless, terrorist mobility issues have not been effectively addressed.

Table 2 shows the institutional arrangements in countering terrorist mobility in Indonesia, based on the existing regulations such as Law No. 16/2011 on Immigration and Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights No. 44/2015 on Entry and Exit Procedures at Immigration Checkpoints. Accordingly, efforts to combat terrorist mobility can be divided into immigration and border control, crime control, and cross-border cooperation.

Table 2. Institutional Arrangements for Countering Terrorist Mobility

Factor	Variable	Indicator	Institution	Limitation
Immigration and Border Control	Detection Method for Immigration Officers	Guideline	The Immigration and BNPT	Absence of technical guideline; lack of integrated and accessible information systems; institutional culture; poor infrastructure condition of immigration checkpoints at borders
	Travel Document Application	SIMKIM	The Immigration, Dukcapil, BNP2TKI, Ministry of Religious Affairs, National Police, and INTERPOL	
		INTERPOL's I-24/7 system		
	Document Validity During Inspection at Checkpoints	SIMKIM, BCM	INTERPOL's I-24/7 system	
BCM				
		ASEANAPOL Chain (e-ADS)		
Crime Control	Dismantle Illicit Market for Travel Documents	Investigation and intelligence exchange	National Police, the Immigration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, BAIS, BNPT, PPATK, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, BIN, Special Detachment 88,	Lack of coordination and cooperation between critical entities during investigation
	Arrest Travel Facilitator		Ministry of National Development	

			Planning, and UNODC	
Cross- Border Cooperation	Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation	Information and Intelligence Exchange	The Immigration, POLRI, BNPT, and Ministry of Defence	The need to expand cooperation with new transit hub countries

Immigration and Border Control

For passport application examination, Rahmanto et al. (2020) describes that officers use the Immigration Management Information System (*Sistem Informasi Manajemen Keimigrasian/SIMKIM*), already integrated with several systems from different stakeholders, such as the Population and Civil Registration Agency (Dukcapil), the National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI), and documents from Ministry of Religious Affairs. If all required documents are complete, the holder will proceed to the interview session. However, if the documents are invalid, the immigration officer will deny the passport or visa application. During the interview session, the officer observes the applicant's facial expression, body gestures, and behavior. If the applicant's intention is suspicious, officers could coordinate with the Directorate of Intelligence or Directorate of Investigation and Enforcement. Both directorates coordinate for document verification using SIMKIM which has been integrated with INTERPOL's I-24/7 system. In addition, officers could also observe by visiting the applicant's residence for a more convincing decision. If the applicants are students, officers could verify by contacting their sponsors or institutions that granted them scholarships (Rahmanto et al., 2020).

Similar to inspections during passport application, Rahmanto et al. (2020) explains that an immigration officer examines a traveler's documents at checkpoints with the support of data and information available in the SIMKIM that controls all application systems at every immigration office, points of entry and exit, immigration detention centers, and representatives' offices abroad. The inspection reveals an individual's profile, travel history, or whether the document is stolen or manipulated to falsify travel. Moreover, an interview session will follow to detect false personas (Putra & Arifin, 2020).

Effective law compliance and enforcement could be achieved if immigration checkpoints are information-rich environments that continuously improve biometric screening systems and provide denied visa or admission information and a watchlist. To improve clearance systems, Putra and Arifin (2020) explain that SIMKIM has been integrated with the Border Control Management (BCM) system since 2010. The BMC system includes visa and residence permit system, departure ban and entry ban data (Enhanced CEKAL System or ECS), passenger's movement system (PMS/APK), passport application (SPRI/E-Office), detention center application system, and immigration and enforcement system (Nyidakim). This integration of systems allows law enforcement agencies to detect travelers connected or engaged with transnational criminal activities, including terrorism. The

prevention list also includes names of individuals who are in the National Police's wanted list (DPO) (Citrawan & Nadilla, 2019).

BCM is also synchronized with INTERPOL's I-24/7 system and ASEANAPOL Chain (e-ADS) at regional and international levels. Based on the State Police Regulations No. 5 in 2011 on the Use of the INTERPOL Network (I-24/7) and ASEANAPOL Chain (e-ADS) in Indonesia Article 1 Clause 2, INTERPOL's Global Police Communications System works nonstop, used for information exchange between member states of the ICPO-INTERPOL. The State Police Regulation also explains that Electronic ASEANAPOL Database System (e-ADS) is a database system based on the agreement of the ASEAN Chief of Police for criminal intelligence exchange between member states. These databases include but are not limited to personal and biometric data, INTERPOL notices, stolen or lost travel and identity documents (SLTD), criminal records, criminal syndicate, and modus operandi.

Cooperation between Immigration and NCB-INTERPOL Indonesia started post-Marawi Siege. From 2017 to 2018, the INTERPOL Borders Management Task Force (IBMTF) with NCB-INTERPOL Indonesia and the Directorate General of Immigration conducted border control operations at several immigration checkpoints across Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to anticipate a wave of Pro-IS fighters leaving and entering the country (*Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI*, 2018a). The operation focused on the southern region of the Philippines: Tarakan, North Kalimantan; Balikpapan, East Kalimantan; North Sulawesi; and West Nusa Tenggara. Using the Mobile INTERPOL Network Database (MIND), immigration officers could counter and detect foreign terrorist fighters' mobility.

In the field, immigration officers acknowledge four critical challenges: 1) lack of fiber optic network along with bad weather conditions and lack of real-time data; 2) uneven facilities and infrastructure development at immigration offices in remote areas, such as Immigration Office Class II Tahuna, North Sulawesi; 3) lack of access to data and profiling terrorist; and 4) lack of capacity building measures on counter-terrorist mobility for front line officers (Rahmanto et al., 2020). For example, SIMKIM Ver. 1 and Ver. 2 could be used to check applicants' passport details. However, only the Directorate General has access to the database. Meanwhile, at the border checkpoints, existing infrastructure realities hamper immigration officers to get real-time information, especially in remote areas. No border checks are using BCM with international standards. Most border posts use portable BCM without the ability to provide the real-time information. The immigration office in Tanjung Perak uses an offline portable BCM, which could only be synchronized once every one to two days. Besides Tanjung Perak, immigration offices in West Kalimantan do not use fiber-optic networks and only rely on satellite communication. In fact, due to geographical conditions, immigration offices in remote areas are less likely to be monitored, allowing further immigration violations.

Furthermore, without having a guideline to detect terrorist suspects during an interview, immigration officers could only rely on their intuition and suspicious signs from facial expressions, body gestures, and behavior. This further shows that the lead agency on counterterrorism, BNPT, has not optimized its role—according to Governmental Regulation No. 77/2019 on Terrorism Prevention and the Provision of Compensation, Restitution and

Assistance to Witness and Victims—in coordinating, integrating, and evaluating analysis involving multiple agents to produce such information and intelligence as a terrorist detection method.

Another problem that should not be ignored is the government's plan to integrate BCM with INTERPOL's I-24/7 system in every departure point across the country by 2020 (Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI, 2018b). At first, integration of the two systems was launched back in 2017 at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport and I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. In 2018, representatives from the National Police (Polri) and Directorate General of Immigration signed the Standard of Procedure (SOP) on alert for INTERPOL's I-24/7 system integration with BCM. However, there has not been any update or media coverage on this matter. In addition to lack of infrastructure modernization, as argued before, it would be difficult to expect an even installation across the archipelago by 2020. An equal development is required as other international airports and small seaports are also vulnerable to terrorist mobility.

Crime Control: In-Country Identification and Tracking

Rejecting an issuance of passport or visa application is not enough as government needs to attack the illicit market of terrorist mobility support to constrain terrorist mobility at the pre-travel phase, most predominantly travel document providers and terrorist travel facilitators. They are relatively easier to find since these illicit businesses focus more on money than ideology. Arresting a single travel facilitator would not guarantee the rise of future unknown successors, but it could slow down operations (Ginsburg, 2006).

Although there has not been any law and regulation that specifically target the disruption of the travel facilitator network, there are laws against individuals as illegal documents providers. Law No. 16/2011 on Immigration clearly states the consequences for immigration officers who attempt any violation that threatens the security of the immigration system. Firstly, an immigration officer or other appointed officials who knowingly and unlawfully provide travel documents or give or extend immigration documents to a person they know is not entitled will face imprisonment for up to seven years. Moreover, if officers allow an individual to commit an immigration-related crime, they will face a maximum of five years of imprisonment. There are also legal actions related to the information system: immigration officers or other officials who deliberately leak confidential immigration data to unauthorized parties will face imprisonment for up to five years. As a matter of fact, if they intentionally and unlawfully do not input data into the Immigration Management Information System, they will be in six months of prison time. Clues from the arrested travel facilitator could be traced back to the document provider and vice versa.

The government should prioritize the arrests of terrorists travel facilitators due to the following reasons. First, their arrest could disrupt the day-to-day functioning of the terrorist network. Second, terrorist facilitators could be the source of contacts providing clues for tracking other members of the terrorist network (Ginsburg, 2006). Travel facilitators who also travel with a particular group are likely to get arrested. On the other hand, the facilitators who

do not travel remain free. Their arrest would provide law enforcement with a huge advantage in tracking other previously undetected terrorist network members.

As the primary counterterrorism investigative authority, Rahmanto et al. (2020) argue that Polri is responsible for arresting these illicit travel service providers. Effective law enforcement would also need intelligence exchange with vital and relevant ministries and agencies about the latest terrorist mobility trends, potential terror attacks, and identification of terrorist networks. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs formed several task forces, including the group responsible for the List of Suspected Terrorists and Terrorist Organizations (*Daftar Terduga Teroris dan Organisasi Teroris/DTTOT*) from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – such as the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (*Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan/PPATK*), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, BNPT, State Intelligence Agency (*Badan Intelijen Negara/BIN*), Densus 88 and Directorate General of Immigration. Their meeting discusses the individual profile of a suspected terrorist, which then requires approval from the Central Jakarta District Court before adding it to the information immigration system (“Anti pencucian uang”, n.d.). Using the DTTOT might be a challenge as the immigration needs real-time information as all the Indonesian deportees who were detected abroad are not on the list in the first place.

At Polri, a man-to-man program focuses on coordinating law enforcement and other agencies to observe suspected terrorists. The investigation result would be used for the next coordinated meeting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also conducted training with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and coordinated with the Ministry of National Development Planning based on the priority of each institution and agency. Meanwhile, trainings conducted by PPATK focus on analysis and detection methods of terrorism funding.

After collecting raw intelligence, analysis is needed either for investigation or policymaking. However, issues such as sectoral ego and lack of analysts are undermining efforts to counter terrorist mobility. Despite training on intelligence by Ministry of Internal Affairs that involved Polri and Armed Forces as well as analysts provided by BNPT, data and information exchange is impossible if sectoral egos persist within institutions and agencies (Rahmanto et al., 2020). In this regard, other entities that should have helped law enforcement could not optimize their role as front-line officers to detect terrorism-related activities. Head of Class I Immigration Office at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport stressed the fact that they are dealing with a lack of data integration with BIN, the Armed Forces’ Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS), INTERPOL, Densus 88, and the Immigration Office itself, which is vital to prevent the issuing of passport (Citrawan & Nadilla, 2019).

Cross-Border Cooperation

When terrorists exit or enter official access points, they will take measures to conceal themselves from the detection of both the Indonesian and transit country authorities. They could either take a route beyond border and immigration control, choose transit countries with visa-free access, or apply for a residence permit at the country of destination. The latter

is a worldwide challenge for counter-terrorism policy considering territorial borders between conflicting states are arguably the least patrolled; thus, making them a promising transit zones (Ginsburg, 2006). Our dataset shows numerous countries have been deemed as new transit hubs, which require cross-border cooperation with Indonesia (Figure 4). In order to travel to four destination countries, namely Turkey, Iran, the Philippines and India, individuals can take routes through 10 transit countries, which are Thailand, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, Oman, Brunei Darussalam, Sri Lanka, and Qatar.

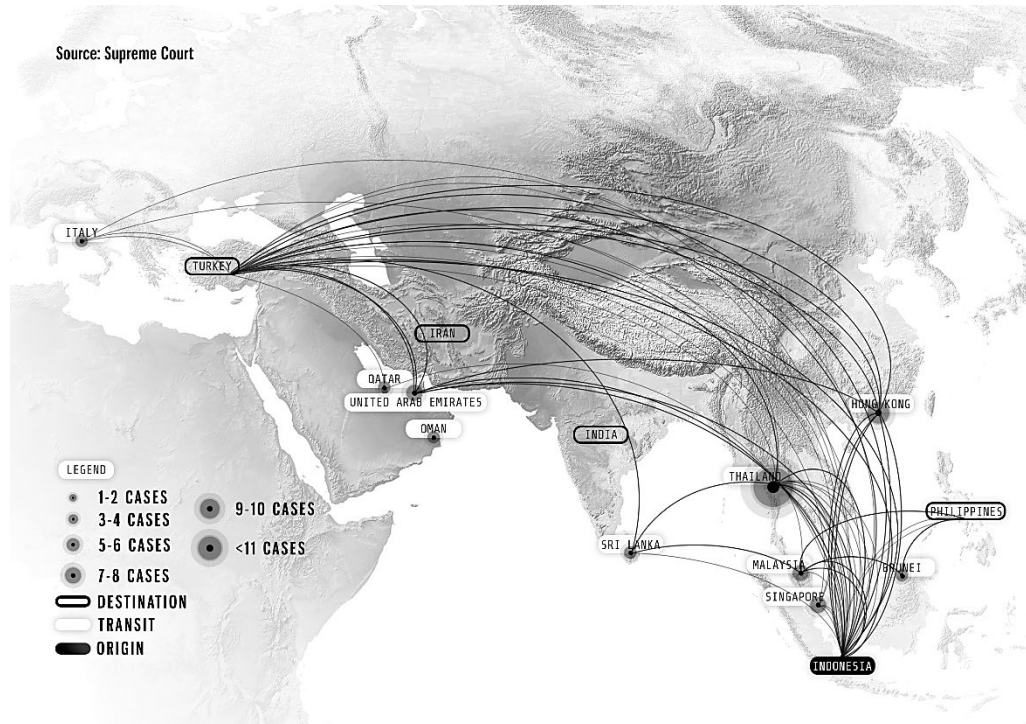


Figure 4. Indonesian Pro-IS deportees' travel history from departure points to arrest location.
Source: Authors, from Supreme Court Decisions

Indonesia has been actively involved in both bilateral and multilateral initiatives for information exchange and capacity-building efforts for effective immigration management, including with visa-free access countries, such as Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (VisaIndex, 2022). For example, in 2016 the Directorate General of Immigration opened a meeting Singapore's Immigration Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to plan the strengthening of respective borders from FTFs mobility ("10th bilateral meeting", 2016).

Moreover, in 2016 the 20th ASEAN Directors - General of Immigration Department and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) agreed to adopt three recommendations from the Indonesian delegation: a framework called the ASEAN Heads of Major Immigration Checkpoints Forum (AMICF), the establishment of Ad-Hoc Working Groups on ASEAN Common Visa, and a joint statement for Regional Cooperation on Prevention of FTFs Movement ("Usulan Indonesia disetujui", 2016). Furthermore, on July

6, 2018, the Three Supplementary Activities between ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments, Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) and Australia was held in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, to discuss and strengthen immigration cooperation. The event was attended by ten ASEAN countries and Australia, addressing among others intelligence exchange and countermeasures towards FTFs between DGICM member states and Australia (“Tingkatkan kerjasama keimigrasian”, 2018). Finally, on November 5, 2019, the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration and Immigration Department of Malaysia participated in the Indonesia-Malaysia Immigration Consultation focusing on border control and management, mobility at the entry and exit points, migrant workers protection, stay permit for families, joint training, and capacity building efforts (Susilo, 2019).

Another multilateral initiative is the Plan of Action (POA) of European Union to ASEAN (EU-ASEAN) interregional cooperation. From 2013 to 2017, one of the implementations of POA is the Comprehensive Border Management Program, which enables the EU to provide capacity building for ASEAN member states to develop an effective border management system (Wibisono & Kusumasomantri, 2020).

As for cooperation with the destination country, Indonesia has established contact with Turkey since 2017. The Turkish National Police (TNP) held a meeting Polri and the head of BNPT to discuss counterterrorism efforts, including how to address FTFs who used Turkey as an entry and exit point to Syria. TNP has assigned analysts and researchers in 33 locations across Turkey to monitor and detect potential terrorists; as of 2017, *Divisi Hubungan Internasional* POLRI (2017) reported that TNP has monitored 17,000 and interviewed 10,000 people. The Turkish government has also deported 4,000 people back to their original countries. Both countries’ police have agreed to strengthen cooperation in information and intelligence exchange to counter transnational crime.

In assuring border control from stealth travelers, increasing enforcement (physical barriers and detection measures) and joint operation with neighboring countries are considered not enough. The ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) was adopted during the 5th ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) in 2018 (Ryacudu, 2018). It serves as a critical regional platform that facilitates strategic intelligence exchange with an integrated database, joint training and operation, and capacity-building measures. Unfortunately, the case of Jolo Church Bombing in the southern Philippines in 2019 shows that intelligence exchange has not gone far enough. After the attack, the Philippines authorities claimed that the perpetrators were an Indonesian couple who received help from the Islamic State. The Indonesian government denied the claim and decided to deploy its officials for verification (“Indonesian couple with ties”, 2019). Since Ulfah Handayani Saleh and her children entered the Philippines illegally from Sabah to Jolo, there were no entrance records, which hampered the investigation. It took the Indonesian government six months to clarify that the suicide bombers were indeed Indonesian nationals, after arresting two other suspected terrorists from the JAD network – Novendri and Yoya. The case study shows that state members of ASEAN, including Indonesia and the Philippines, should improve coordination in intelligence exchange to optimize the existing regional initiative against cross-border terrorist threats.

Postscript

The fall of IS in 2017 after losing 95% of its territory did not lessen the importance of the counter-terrorist mobility strategy (CTMS) (Glenn, 2019), and neither did the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic did cease most illegal travel to terrorist destinations and therefore reduced the number of potential targets globally (Basit, 2020), but this was temporary. IS' influence might have been abating in the Middle East, but they remain to have supporters who continue carrying out violence in Indonesia (Abuza & Satria, 2020). Two years into the pandemic, the world starts to reconnect as international commercial aviation gradually returns to the pre-pandemic condition (Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) UN Security Council, 2021). The most recent development shows that after the *coup* in Afghanistan, IS supporters in Indonesia believe the Taliban is now “the near enemy” - while western countries, including the US, as “the far enemy” - of IS-Khorasan (Arianti & Rahmah, 2021). While it is too early to conclude whether Afghanistan will be the next hotspot for *hijrah*, anticipating a post-pandemic resurgence of terrorist cross-border mobility threat necessitates better screening and border management measures.

The Indonesian government issued President Regulation No. 7/2021 on National Action Plan (NAP) for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCEV) that Leads to Terrorism 2020-2024, which led to the establishment of the Joint Secretariat of the NAP on PCEV in March 2021 (BNPT, 2021c). The plan has three pillars: (a) prevention; (b) law enforcement, witness, and victim protection, and strengthening of the National Legislative Framework; (c) international partnership and cooperation. The first pillar aims to provide and integrate a system of data management that includes profiles and studies that analyze networks, vulnerable areas, trends, and evaluation of previous cases. The second pillar focuses on increasing the institutional capacity of law enforcement to optimize the deterrence effect through coordination and information exchange between relevant actors. Finally, the third pillar enhances international cooperation between relevant countries and communities. There are eight ministries and eight institutions or agencies involved in implementing the action plan.⁴

Besides forming a joint secretariat, BNPT also created working groups and mechanisms to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the NAP on PCEV (BNPT, 2021a). Although BNPT claimed that the agency had implemented most of the strategies from each pillar, the details have never been disclosed. It is also important to note that the first report of the NAP on PCEV was produced recently during the 2021 annual meeting (BNPT, 2021b). Thus, it is too early to assess the implementation, let alone its impact on TMS.

On the ASEAN level, assessing the implementation of terrorism-related initiatives such as AOE remains difficult due to its confidentiality status. As of January 2022, AOE had conducted six working groups to discuss the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures of ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE SOP), update on the mechanism and facility of each member states' Our Eyes Command Center (OECC) and ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure, and exchange information on the regional and global level on terrorism threat (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021). The SOP was adopted in 2020 during the 14th

ADMM and was finalized during the 6th AOE Working Group in early 2022. Real implementation of the initiative would contribute to the strengthening of ASEAN cooperation on managing the transborder terrorist issues.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research has produced two main analyses from a novel dataset on pro-IS deportees. First, profession and income are not the determining factor of *hijrah* as individuals, who wish to do so, could seek, or get funding through support and loan through travel facilitators. There are four choices of the transit and destination country, namely Turkey to Syria, Iran to Afghanistan, Manila to Mindanao in the Philippines, and New Delhi to Jammu Kashmir in India, which precondition different levels of financial capability. Although Turkey to Syria routes was the favorite among deportees, Manila to Mindanao routes proved to be the most economical choice for *hijrah*.

Second, the migration pattern of pro-IS deportees confirmed the vulnerabilities of the immigration system and border control along with weak law enforcement to constrain those wishing to join the IS abroad. Travel facilitators have a vital role in exploiting the system. They were responsible for travel arrangements: 1) choosing exit-entry points, 2) acting as the middleman with illegal document providers, and 3) playing the host in the destination country. These individuals have the capability to infiltrate the immigration system without getting detected starting from the first process of the journey, which is passport applications. The deportees are also aware of the exit points with the least security control to conceal their false persona during document validation. On the other hand, deportees also utilize illegal channels to cross the border, such as sea routes to enter the Southern Philippines.

An effective CTMS should be able to constrain terrorists' movement through coordination, law, and diplomacy at both domestic and international levels. Nevertheless, the implementation of current countermeasures has shown that Indonesia needs to improve its deterrent and offensive strategies. All obstacles to effective implementation of CTMS by the Indonesian government highlight the need for detection method guidelines for immigration officers, travel facilitator arrestment and its illegal market, clearance system and infrastructure improvement at borders, as well as intelligence cooperation optimization.

About The Authors

Andi Raihanah Ashar is an alumnus from Department of International Relations, Bina Nusantara University, and a research analyst focusing on counterterrorism (CT) strategy and maritime security at Semar Sentinel PTE Ltd. Curie Maharani is a faculty member with Departement of International Relations, Bina Nusantara University.

References

- Abuza, Z. & Satria, A. (2020, June 23). How are Indonesia's terrorist groups weathering the pandemic? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/how-are-indonesias-terrorist-groups-weathering-the-pandemic/>
- Anindya, B. C. R. (2019). Indonesia's counterterrorism policy: An appraisal. *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Commentary*, 188. <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CO19188.pdf>
- Anindya, B. C. R. (2019). The deradicalisation programme for Indonesian deportees: A vacuum in coordination. *Journal for Deradicalization*, 18, 217–243.
- Anti pencucian uang dan pencegahan pendanaan terorisme. (n.d.). *Bank Indonesia*. <https://www.bi.go.id/id/fungsi-utama/sistem-pembayaran/anti-pencucian-uang-dan-pencegahan-pendanaan-terorisme/default.aspx>
- Arianti, V. & Azman, N. A. (2019). The IS Threat in Indonesia. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 11(7), 1–5.
- Arianti, V. & Rahmah, U. (2021, September 15). What the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan means for IS supporters in Indonesia. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/what-the-taliban-takeover-in-afghanistan-means-for-is-supporters-in-indonesia/>
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2021). ASEAN Security Outlook 2021. Association of Southeast Asian Nations. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ASEAN-Security-Outlook-ASO-2021.pdf>
- Basit, A. (2020). COVID-19: A challenge or opportunity for terrorist groups? *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 15(3), 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2020.1828603>
- BNPT. (2021a). Bahas dan Finalisasi Laporan Pelaksanaan RAN PE, BNPT Kembali Gelar Rapat Koordinasi Kedua Sekber RAN PE Tahun 2020-2024. Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme. <https://www.bnpt.go.id/bahas-dan-finalisasi-laporan-pelaksanaan-ran-pe-bnpt-kembali-gelar-rapat-koordinasi-kedua-sekber-ran-pe-tahun-2020-2024>

- BNPT. (2021b). Gelar Rakor II RAN PE Tahun 2021-2024, Sekber Siapkan Laporan Implementasi Untuk Presiden. Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme. <https://www.bnpt.go.id/gelar-rakor-ii-ran-pe-tahun-2021-2024-sekber-siapkan-laporan-implementasi-untuk-presiden>
- BNPT. (2021c). Optimalkan Perpres RAN PE, BNPT Gelar Rapat Koordinasi Pembentukan Sekretariat Bersama RAN PE 2020-2024. Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme. <https://www.bnpt.go.id/optimalkan-perpres-ran-pe-bnpt-gelar-rapat-koordinasi-pembentukan-sekretariat-bersama-ran-pe-2020-2024>
- Briantika, A. (2019, July 24). Bongkar jaringan JAD & ISIS, Densus 88 akan bertemu Liaison Officer. *Tirto.id*. <https://tirto.id/bongkar-jaringan-jad-isis-densus-88-akan-bertemu-liaison-officer-eeYk>
- Center for Strategic and International Studies. (2018). Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K). *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 1-9. <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/terrorism-backgrounders/islamic-state-khorasan-k>
- Citrawan, H. & Nadilla, S. (2019). Model kontrol keimigrasian dalam mencegah tindak pidana terorisme di Indonesia. *Lentera Hukum*, 6(1), 71-96. <https://doi.org/10.19184/>
- Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) UN Security Council. (2021). *Update on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism* (June). https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/files/documents/2021/June/cted_covid_paper_15june2021_1.pdf
- Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI. (2017). *Kunjungan Kehormatan Delegasi Polri Kepada Kepala Kepolisian Nasional Turki*. Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI. <https://divhubinter.polri.go.id/dbi/viewBerita.php?id=38>
- Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI. (2018a). *INTERPOL Border Operation 2018*. Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI.
- Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI. (2018b). *Penandatanganan SOP Polri-Ditjen Imigrasi tentang Penanganan Hits atau Alert pada sistem INTERPOL I-24/7 yang berintegrasi dengan sistem Border Control Management Imigrasi*. Divisi Hubungan Internasional POLRI.
- Ginsburg, S. (2006, February). Countering terrorist mobility: Shaping an operational strategy. *Migration Policy Institute*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/countering-terrorist-mobility-shaping-operational-strategy>
- Glenn, C. (2019, October 28). Timeline: The rise, spread, and fall of the Islamic State. *Wilson Center*. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state>

- Indonesian couple with ties to JAD behind Jolo church attack: Police. (2019, July 24). *The Jakarta Post*. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2019/07/24/indonesian-couple-with-ties-to-jad-behind-jolo-church-attack-police.html>
- Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict. (2019). The Jolo bombing and the legacy of ISIS in the Philippines *IPAC Report No. 54*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24206.3?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict. (2018). Managing Indonesia's pro-ISIS deportees. *IPAC Report No. 47*. http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2018/07/IPAC_Report_47.pdf
- Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict. (2019). *Press Statement of Police Director General Oscar D Albayalde* (Issue 54). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24206.10>
- International Organization for Migration. (2010). International Terrorism and Migration. *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/tcm/international_terrorism_and_migration.pdf
- Kibtiah, T. M. (2016). Mobilizations and movements of foreign fighters from Southeast Asia to Syria and Iraq. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 4(1), 79-86. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v4i1.1533>
- Laelani, R. (2018, November 8). Kapolda Bali: Jamin stabilitas regional melalui kerjasama dalam penanggulangan terorisme. *Tribun Bali*. <https://bali.tribunnews.com/2018/11/08/kapolda-bali-jamin-stabilitas-regional-melalui-kerjasama-dalam-penanggulangan-terorisme>
- Latief, M. N. (2019, August 22). Pengebom di Jolo gunakan Sabah sebagai Berita terkait. *Anadolu Agency*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/id/regional/pengebom-di-jolo-gunakan-sabah-sebagai-kawasan-transit/1562050>
- Longo, H. (2017). Sharing information in order to fight against terrorism. *Hong Kong ICAO TRIP Regional Seminar*. <https://www.icao.int/Meetings/TRIP-HongKong-2017/Documents/1.HERNAN LONGO.pdf>
- Nuraniyah, N. (2015, January 9). How ISIS charmed the new generation of Indonesian militants. *Middle East Institute*. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/how-isis-charmed-new-generation-indonesian-militants>
- Pemerintah tidak berencana pulangkan teroris lintas batas. (2020, February 11). *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia*. <https://www.kominfo.go.id/content/detail/24334/pemerintah-tidak-berencana-pulangkan-teroris-lintas-batas/0/berita>
- Putra, B. H. & Arifin, R. (2020). The adoption of border technology of immigration control and autogates in Indonesia. *SINTECH (Science and Information Technology) Journal*, 3(2), 137-148. <https://doi.org/10.31598/sintechjournal.v3i2.645>

- Rahmanto, T. Y., Firdaus, Utami, P. N., Citrawan, H., Rachmawati, Y., & Fathony, A. (2020). *Teknik Pengawasan Keimigrasian dan Manajemen Kolaboratif Dalam Pencegahan Terorisme*. South Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Hukum dan HAM (BALITBANGKUMHAM) Press.
- Ryacudu, R. (2018). Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The need for joint counter-terrorism frameworks. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 10(11), 1-3.
- Sarkar, S. (2019, August 22). Afghanistan's terror threat is much bigger than the Taliban. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/afghanistans-terror-threat-is-much-bigger-than-the-taliban/>
- Solahudin, Fealy, G., & McRae, D. (2017). *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jem'ah Islamiyah*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801470202>
- Susilo, J. (2019, November 6). Imigrasi Indonesia-Malaysia bahas penanganan permasalahan keimigrasian. *ANTARA News*. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1149796/imigrasi-indonesia-malaysia-bahas-penanganan-permasalahan-keimigrasian>
- Taufiqurrohman, M. (2015). The road to ISIS: How Indonesian jihadists travel to Iraq and Syria. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 7(4), 17-25.
- Timur, F. G. C. & Yani, Y. M. (2019). Facing ISIS returning foreign terrorist fighters: Indonesia perspective. *Jurnal Pertahanan*, 5(2), 38-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.33172/jp.v5i2.553>
- Tingkatkan kerjasama keimigrasian, 10 negara ASEAN dan Australia gelar pertemuan di Lombok. (2018, July 03). *Kantor Wilayah Nusa Tenggara Barat-Kementrian Hukum dan HAM Republik Indonesia*. <https://ntb.kemenkumham.go.id/berita-kanwil/berita-utama/2851-tingkatkan-kerjasama-keimigrasian-10-negara-asean-dan-australia-gelar-pertemuan-di-lombok>
- Tristiawati, P. (2016, March 14). Diduga akan gabung ISIS di Suriah, 10 orang ditangkap di Soetta. *Liputan6*. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/2457835/diduga-akan-gabung-isis-di-suriah-10-orang-ditangkap-di-soetta>
- Usulan Indonesia disetujui dalam sidang DGICM ke-20 di Bali. (2016, September 23). *Tribun Bali*. <https://bali.tribunnews.com/2016/09/23/usulan-indonesia-disetujui-dalam-sidang-dgicm-ke-20-di-bali>
- VisaIndex. (2022). Indonesia Passport Visa Free Countries List 2022. *Guide Consultants*. <https://visaindex.com/visa-requirement/indonesia-passport-visa-free-countries-list/>
- Wibisono, A. A. & Kusumasomantri, A. R. (2020). Assessing the expectations and limitations of ASEAN-EU counter-terrorism cooperation. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 8(1), 61-80, <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i1.6171>

- Yayla, A. S. (2019). Turkish ISIS and AQ foreign fighters: Reconciling the numbers and perception of the terrorism threat. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 44(12), 1125-1147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1628613>
- 10th bilateral meeting on immigration cooperation. (2016). *Kantor Wilayah Jawa Timur-Kementerian Hukum dan HAM Republik Indonesia*. <https://jatim.kemenkumham.go.id/pusat-informasi/artikel/2230-10th-bilateral-meeting-on-immigration-cooperation>

¹ The Islamic State (IS) has exploited the term *hijrah* to attract foreign Muslim followers and join the fight in Syria and Iraq. The concept of *hijrah* itself traditionally refers to Prophet Muhammad's migration in 622 CE from Mecca to Medina as Muslims were unable to practice Islam (Uberman & Shay, 2016).

² The Indonesian couple were the perpetrators of Jolo Church Bombing in southern Philippines that killed 23 people and wounded 95 others back in early 2019 (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2019).

³ Ulfah Handayani Saleh was deported from Turkey in 2016 and was the suicide bomber of the 2019 Jolo Church Bombing in southern Philippines.

⁴ According to the Directorate General of Immigration (n.d.) website, the required documentations to apply a passport are a valid identity card, family card (KK), and birth certificate, marriage book, diploma, or baptismal certificate.

⁵ The eight institutions/agencies are BNPT, Polri, PPATK, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Statistics Indonesia (BPS), National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN), Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), and Attorney General. And the other eight ministries are Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Law and Human Rights, State Intelligence Agency (BIN), Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection.

Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond

Md Rafiqul Islam^{1*} and Umme Wara²

¹Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

²Department of Criminology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

*Corresponding author

*rislampacs@du.ac.bd; wara.criminology@du.ac.bd

How to Cite: Islam, M. R. & Wara, U. (2022). Conflict potential of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh and beyond. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 107–127. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.8215>

Abstract

The article addresses how Myanmar's Rohingya conflict could generate a potential for conflict within the borders of Bangladesh and beyond. The conflict in Myanmar due to the Rohingyas being deprived of their national citizenship had led to the mass exodus in 2017 to Bangladeshi land and the subsequent conflict in the host place. It was referred to various situations, including disputes, killing, abduction, and tensions between the refugees and host people. Based on existing theories of 'exporting conflict' such as displacing conflict and spill over effect of ethnic conflict, the article attempted to show how the Rohingya conflict originated in Myanmar lead to serious conflicts taking place in Bangladesh. The theoretical basis proposed in the article had been supported with reliable secondary sources of information and published expert opinions on the contemporary situation of the temporary Rohingya settlements in Bangladesh with regards to their sheltering, refugee management, and progress towards their repatriation process to Myanmar. The article argued that Myanmar's civil conflict had spilled over into Bangladesh's borders due to a sequence of events starting from when Myanmar's civil conflict erupted from its National Citizenship Act. Findings suggest that the Myanmar conflict has been displaced to Bangladesh through many refugee settlements that puts Bangladesh's population in midst of a host of issues concerning livelihood, safety, and security. This has been done while touching upon Bangladesh's position as a host country to millions of Rohingya refugees and shouldering issues already stemming from the temporary shelter of Rohingya people within its borders.

Keywords: Rohingya, Myanmar, displacement, conflict, Bangladesh

Introduction

Bangladesh is now hosting the highest number of over 1,1 million Rohingya¹ people who have been brutally tortured and persecuted by the Myanmar army (Bakali & Wasty, 2020; Alam, 2019). This large number of displaced people are living in temporary relocation facilities in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh, with additional measures for their relocation taking place in the Bhasan Char Island near the coast of the Bay of Bengal (Islam et al., 2021). Effectively stateless, the development of the Rohingya refugees² in Bangladesh over the years may prove to be critical for Bangladesh as a host country for these displaced people. With its shortage of resources and high unemployment rates, and refusing to become full signatories to the international conventions for protecting refugees, Bangladesh is in a unique and complex position with its displaced Rohingya population (Chowdhury, 2019; Bhattacharya & Biswas, 2020). Indeed, the Rohingya people have not been idle within their camps in Cox's Bazar. Their high birth rates and long duration of stay within the borders of Bangladesh have led to entire generations being raised in the camps (Milton et al. 2017). Moreover, their efforts to persist and mobilize to regain what they have lost have led to sprawling economies being born within these settlements as they cope with the reality of their longterm statelessness (Crabtree, 2010), and not always of the lawful kind of economies. Drug trafficking has spiralled to the point that this now bustling economy is threatening to destabilize the Cox's Bazar region (Banerjee, 2019). Moreover, Rohingya women are falling victims to organized large-scale trafficking networks with connections in nearby countries. These trafficking syndicates have spawned to take advantage of helpless Rohingya women with false promises of having better lives in countries such as Thailand, India, and Malaysia, and have even promised as such in their home country Myanmar, where Rohingyas have still not been guaranteed proper human rights assurances (Routray, 2019).

When these factors are taken into account, other issues such as how this growing population of stateless people can affect Bangladesh as a host country, in the long run, can also influence the existing problems of aid delivery and healthcare assurances for the Rohingya population. Although it cannot be denied that ensuring proper aid to the Rohingya taking refuge in the country is of significant importance to Bangladesh as well as the broader international community until their repatriation succeeds, it is not the only set of issues that require attention. Moreover, the potential for conflict from hosting this particular stateless community may prove to be detrimental to Bangladesh in the long run or even in the near future, as the reportedly high criminality of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh may indicate (Uddin, 2015). With rising environmental costs in the back and refugee management costs and housing logistical dilemmas at the forefront, Bangladesh may be at further risk from

¹ The Rohingya population in Bangladesh have not been given an official refugee status, since Bangladesh is not an official signatory to the international instruments that protect the rights of refugees. Instead, their official status is officially stated by the government of Bangladesh as Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) (Roy, 2020).

² Although the government of Bangladesh does not officially recognize the Rohingya people taking shelter within its borders as refugees, they are mentioned as such in this article for strictly academic purposes.

spill over effects from Myanmar's own civil strife (Farzana, 2021). The article seeks to bring attention to this particular side of the Rohingya refugee crisis, which is how Myanmar's Rohingya conflict can generate a significant potential for conflict within the borders of Bangladesh. Briefly touching upon the background of the Rohingya exodus and its reasons, the article goes over the sheltering of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh and the contemporary status of their post-settlement situation in Bangladesh. The article provides a review of relevant literature from reliable sources to discuss theories of conflict displacement, civil war and spill over effects, a concern of neighbouring states of a country's ongoing civil war, refugee flow, refugee sheltering and management, refugee repatriation, and the crisis and stresses a host state experiences from hosting refugee populations. Afterwards, the article critically analyses Bangladesh's position as a host country for Rohingya people to discuss areas of Bangladesh that is affected due to this position and the conflict potential that this position entails for the country. A summary analysis providing a bird's eye view of the critical aspects proceeds the article with some concluding remarks.

Rohingya Settlement in Bangladesh: Background and Effects

The Rohingya people principally reside in the Arakan province, also known as the Rakhine state of Myanmar from 788 to 810 AD (Rahman, 2010). The Rohingyas are predominantly Muslim descendants of immigrants from the Middle East and later of Bengalis during the fifteenth to the seventeenth century (Milton et al., 2017). It has been argued that the British occupation before Myanmar's independence in 1948 is the precursor to the Rohingya crisis that is prevalent in Bangladesh and in some other parts of the world today. With the 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonial powers, the seeds of dissent were sown in Myanmar's fragmented ethnic diaspora of predominantly Buddhist Burmese populations (i.e., over 87%) (Ansar, 2020). After the independence of Burma, the military-backed government used their legislative authority to fully remove the citizenship rights of the Rohingya minority people in 1982. The infamous Myanmar Citizenship Act of this year officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups as part of Myanmar's ethnic population, and this list does not include the Rohingyas (Parashar & Alam, 2019). This has led to the apparent stateless status of the Rohingya population and has given Myanmar's military apparatus free reign to violently prosecute this community in their own ancestral lands. The Rohingyas faced persecution at the level seen in systematic genocides, with first their movements restricted by laws and legal obstructions, and their identity compromised via mandatory identification checks at designated checkpoints in the Rakhine region, and fines and property confiscation from their now compromised identification documents (Uddin, 2019).

The flow of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh started in the 1970s despite them arriving in larger groups in the early 1990s. The cause behind the first influx of Rohingya refugees that had led to around 200,000 coming into Bangladesh due to oppression, discrimination, violence, and forced labour practices by the Myanmar authorities (Uddin, 2019). Since then, from around 600,000 Rohingya refugee people in Bangladesh during 2017 (Milton et al., 2017) has swelled up to an estimated 800,000 Rohingyas or more in the following year (Martin, Margesson, & Vaughn, 2018), with the latest exodus in 2017 alone bringing in 700,000

Rohingyas (Rahman et al., 2020). Now with over 1,1 million Rohingyas taking refuge in Bangladesh as of 2020, it has become increasingly difficult for the country to assist this growing population (Islam, Inan, & Islam, 2020).

The Rohingya people are taking shelter in camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf areas of Bangladesh, located in the Cox's Bazar district in the South-East corner of the country (Imtiaz, 2018). Bangladesh has been heavily involved in properly sheltering this large Rohingya population within its borders and seeing to their necessities with helps from international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) despite not being directly affiliated with the international legal instruments such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its protocols (Milton et al., 2017; Mia et al., 2021).

The presence of a large number of Rohingyas has led to many security complications for the GoB and the Rohingya population in the form of human rights violations by organized crime groups, a thriving black market economy of narcotics, contrabands, and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Taufiq, 2019), and health complication for the Rohingyas in the forms of malnutrition, outbreaks of contagious diseases, declining material health, and poor family planning (Chowdhury et al., 2018; Islam & Nuzhath, 2018; Islam et al., 2020). The initial acceptance of the local host community has waned at present, with tensions escalating in various issues ranging from speedy environmental degradation, health risks, challenges concerning national security and negative impacts on the economy, food security, employment, and tourism of Bangladesh (Mia et al., 2021). The population problems of the Rohingya population, and the criminal activities involving drugs and human trafficking of the Rohingyas alongside the resource competition has further contributed to insecurity and conflict between the Rohingya people and the host community (Banerjee, 2019). This insecurity and conflict can be considered as a precursor to further changes in the relationship among these communities in the near future, with lasting changes in bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar. The exodus of Rohingyas to Bangladesh is a direct result of the conflict taking place within Myanmar, and the literature can be perused to effectively argue that the potential for further and more intense results of this conflict remains to be seen in Bangladesh.

Existing literature on migration and displacement induced conflict

Migration and displacement induced conflict in the host place has been a nascent topic with the increasing number of migrants and displaced people across the world. Thus, different theories are used to analyse how conflict of the country may affect the neighbouring one through population migration and spill over effects. The review of literature concerns primarily findings related to the theories of conflict displacement and civil war spill over effects. The discussion moves on to neighbouring state's concerns regarding an ongoing civil war in a country. The discussion brings the context of Bangladesh and its position as a neighbouring country to Myanmar.

Displacing the Conflict Theory

Displacement as a result of conflict has been studied for decades and is prominently known as 'conflict-induced displacement' (Swain, 1996; Muggah, 2000). Established literature on the topic agrees that the threat created from war or outbreak of violence can cause people to make difficult decision to leave their homes behind and move on to elsewhere (Edwards, 2009). There is debate on the minimum scale and scope of a conflict to force people to migrate away from their homes, but studies show that violence from either government or rebel forces can force migration (Davenport, Moore, & Poe, 2003). Large-*n* analyses have also shown that economic opportunity in origin and destination countries are related to forced migration if measured in terms of economic development and poverty levels. There have been mixed results for other factors that force people to migrate outside their country of origin, but it suggests that people tend to migrate from their country of origin only when their threat to life outweighs the economic security they lose by leaving their homes and localities, and the attachment and belongingness they feel towards their homes (Adhikari, 2012). For the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the causes of migration, according to the records of activities of Myanmar's military wing in the Arakan region, involve state-sponsored violence and oppression, and severe threats to the lives of Rohingyas in the region.

Civil Wars and Spill Over Effect

Civil war in a country and the resulting possible spill over effects onto other countries have been discussed extensively in the literature on civil wars and their impacts. An empirical study regarding what types of civil wars tend to spill over to other countries (i.e., to spill over international boundaries) by Bosker and de Ree (2014) strongly indicates that only civil wars involving ethnic conflicts (i.e., ethnic wars) have such a tendency (Salehyan, 2010; Bosker & de Ree, 2014). From the point of Myanmar's civil war, and the ethnic divide that the National Citizenship Act has legally brought to the forefront, this is particularly relevant. Another finding regarding the spill over effects of a country's civil war indicates that neighbouring states are more likely to increase their military expenditure as a result of an erupting or ongoing civil war in a neighbouring state (Phillips, 2014). This is explained as resulting from a perception of a possible future threat by the neighbouring states embroiled in a civil war. Bangladesh's military expenditure, on the other hand, has alternated between slight rises and declines in their military expenditure as a percentage of the country's GDP in the years after 2010 (SIPRI, 2021). The latest military expenditure of the country in 2020 is also less than the previous year (i.e., 2019). Another finding regarding the spill over effects of civil wars indicates that states that are fragile (i.e., when the state has the weak capacity and weak state legitimacy and is unable to deliver the fundamental state functions to its people) are more prone to be affected by civil wars in neighbouring states, as is seen for countries in Africa which are deemed as fragile states. The effects on these neighbouring fragile states have been found to be even greater than the state where the civil conflict originated (Dunne & Tian, 2019). A very relevant findings in the case of spill over effects of conflicts suggest that influx of refugees and intentional (i.e., 'artificial') separation of ethnic groups explain a part of the

spill over effect of civil wars in neighbouring states observed in Sub-Saharan Africa (Carmignani & Kler, 2016). These spill over effects are primarily measured in terms of economic changes and triggering civil wars in neighbouring states. This leads to the discussion on if states should be concerned of other effects besides a full-fledged civil war or serious economic problems if a neighbouring state is embroiled in a civil war.

Civil War and Neighboring States' Concerns

The findings by Carmignani and Kler (2016) also observe that in the Middle East, Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia, spill over effects can be in the form of terrorism and/or other forms of violence. These instances of violence can lead to social destabilization in neighbouring states even if they are not directly classified as civil wars. This has been reflected in another work on the spill over effects of the Syrian War where the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) threat and the changing nature of the Kurdish insurgency led to political and security issues for neighbouring Turkey. The open support of the Turkish government of the Syrian oppositional regime, and the armed insurgency of ISIS and the Democratic Union Party (PYD or Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat)-Peoples Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel or YPG)/Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê or PKK) led to heavy political, economic and security problems for Turkey (Dal, 2016). This is very pertinent to the concerns of Bangladesh in terms of the ongoing civil conflict in Myanmar, a crucial starting point of which is the segregation and denial of citizenship of a segment of Myanmar's population. This concern stems from the notion that its spill over effects would hamper international peace and security. Not only has the Rohingya crisis led to more than 700.000 displaced Rohingyas fleeing to Bangladesh's border after 2017, but fighting in the Kokang region in 2015 forced about 30.000 refugees to enter China while Thailand had still been hosting 120.000 war-victims by that year (Belkania, 2020). For Bangladesh, the civil war in Myanmar has already become costly as it manages a very large portion of now what it terms as Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN). The issue of whether third party states intervene when a civil war is ongoing in a state within a particular region has been looked into by Kathman (2011) where it has been found that only when countries and their interests are linked to the region where a state is experiencing a civil war or to that state itself, they are more likely to intervene. This is different to the concern of neighbouring states wherein the interveners are third parties not directly adjacent or close to the state/s that experience civil wars. The article shows that third parties are increasingly likely to intervene in states experiencing a civil war when the effects of the war threaten to spill over to neighbouring states and threaten regional destabilization and to that end, threaten the regional interests of the third parties (Kathman, 2011). This indicates how civil wars, being international events, concern entities outside the immediate regional proximity of the state/s experiencing a civil war precisely because they can have a tendency to disperse and spill over to its surrounding region and affect parties outside of the said region. The logical framework, as seen in Figure 1, can be formed for analysing the conflict potential in Bangladesh due to the Rohingya presence.

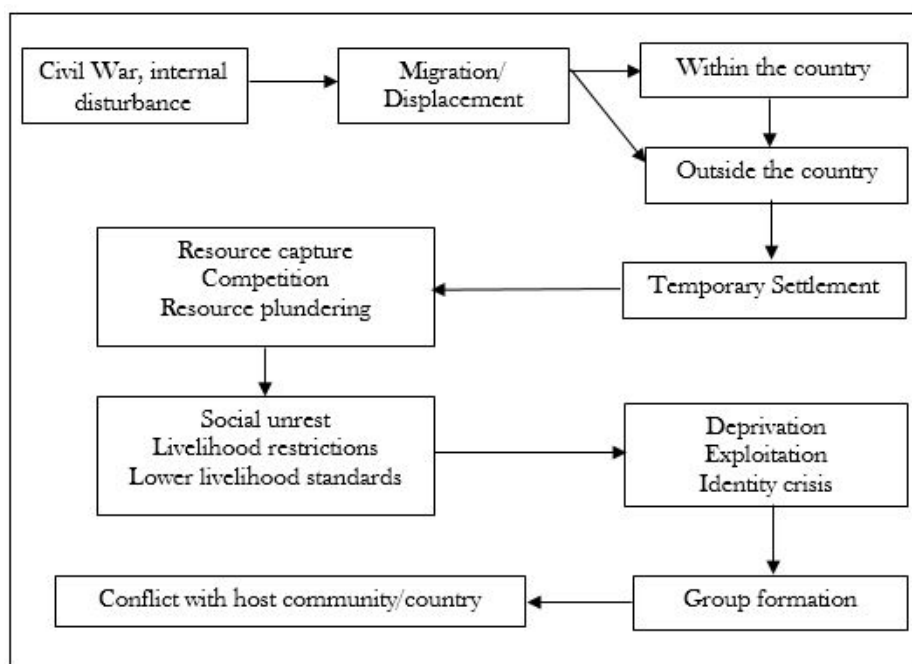


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Source: Developed by the author by reviewing literature

The framework starts with the onset of civil war and internal disturbance within a state. This leads to migration and/or displacement either within the borders of a country where the civil war manifested, or it can take place beyond its borders (Reuveny, 2007; O'Malley, 2018; Bohnet, Cottier, & Hug, 2018). When it is the latter, these displaced populations take refuge in host countries. For survival, these displaced populations, sometimes recognized as refugee populations in the host countries settle in, capture resources and compete for them with the host population as they become increasingly scarce (Homer-Dixon, 2010). This leads to social unrest, restrictions on livelihood for both the displaced and the nearby host community, and decreasing livelihood standards as resources become scarce and market prices increase with the decreasing supply (Homer-Dixon, 2010; Ghimire, Ferreira, & Dorfman, 2015). This leads to the livelihood standards where the displaced populations reside to drop for both the displaced and host communities. The social unrest can stem from these disruptions in livelihood, or they can arise from differences in ideology, origin, or any form of difference that can be seen as a distinct feature of any of the displaced or host communities (Khal, 2006; Amusan, Abegunde, & Akinyemi, 2017). Furthermore, such changes in the host society can then lead to deprivation of resources and livelihood opportunities for both displaced and host communities (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016). Moreover, this deprivation combined with the exploitation of the displaced populations by interest groups can lead to an identity crisis where distinct in-groups and out-groups can take shape between the displaced and host communities, even where initial differences were minimal and the initial responses from the host community were positive (Salehyan, 2010). The result is a conflict with the host community and/or country depending on the level of incompatibility between the two

communities. The article has used some important aspects of this framework, such as competition over resources and conflict, livelihood and conflict relationship, and deprivation and conflict formation, for answering the research question. The presence of many the Rohingyas have already put pressure on resources, jobs, and the environment which have strong connections and potentials for conflict formation in the host areas in Bangladesh.

The available data on the situation in Bangladesh hosting the Rohingya people will be analysed in various sections, starting with how the situation changed over time for the host country after the displacement.

Methods

The article is written based on qualitative methodology using mixed data of secondary information and published opinion and arguments of the relevant experts. Secondary information, opinion, and interviews of the relevant experts published in discussion forums and webinars have been scrutinized and assessed for constructing the arguments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, seminars and symposiums over the issue of the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh have been organised using online platform. Some of the seminars are available online for public use. For example, the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) have made available the opinion and interviews of the participants of seminars online. The policy briefs have also been published in their websites. The article uses the published opinion and interviews of the participants and experts in various seminars organized by the relevant organisations in Bangladesh. Such methods are suitable to collect data and information regarding the topic of security and conflict potential of the Rohingya issue during the pandemic period. Moreover, relevant literature has been assessed for constructing a framework and supporting the arguments. Moreover, different newspapers, articles and opinions of experts published in periodicals have also been examined for analysing how the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar has the potential to generate a new form of conflict in Bangladesh after the mass exodus in 2017.

Analysis

Analysis of conflict potentials in Bangladesh

The crises and stresses experienced by people in the host place can be separated into the experiences of the Rohingya population and the experiences of the host population. The experiences of the Rohingya population in the host place range from issues of livelihood and economy to socio-political and security issues. The conflict potentials of the Rohingya refugees to the host society is a complex issue that can be illustrated based on existing literature, findings, perceptions of the experts and media reports.

Non-traditional security issues (livelihood, health, and environment)

The Rohingya people in Bangladesh receive aid from government subsidized programs and relief from aid agencies such as CARE, IRC, UNHCR, and WASH, among many others. These combined efforts to support the Rohingyas in the host country are often inadequate to meet their basic needs (Karin et al., 2020). These people then look to other economic activities to gather enough resources and income to compensate for their gap in basic necessities. The livelihood strategies that the Rohingya population engage in for income generation involve engaging in day labour, selling products in local markets, receiving the aid of friends and relatives of registered camps (for the many unregistered Rohingyas), and receiving remittances from family and relatives abroad (as a study shows that 39% of the households have at least one member abroad in a third country), selling relief in exchange for money or other necessities, and a limited form of self-employment via services (Crabtree, 2010; Rieger, 2020; Momem, 2021). These alternative methods and channels of income have the side-effect of being particularly uncertain and unsustainable, leading to long delays between work, businesses, and receiving money and help from relatives (Momem, 2021).

Moreover, the livelihood options for the unregistered Rohingya people (which are well over 200,000 of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh) primarily consist of working with the forest resources in the hilly areas of Cox's Bazar, which contributes greatly to deforestation and the destruction of the local ecosystem, thereby exposing the Rohingya and the host community to extreme weather events (Mowla & Hossain, 2021; Rahman, 2021). Furthermore, the overall unsanitary conditions within the cramped camps have generally been prone to contagious diseases, and the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2019 hit the area quite severely. The drop in overall maternal health and child nutrition has been alarming among the Rohingya population at the onslaught of this recent pandemic, notwithstanding how it also greatly affected the livelihoods of the Rohingya people in the process, thus leaving the populations vulnerable (Hossain, 2021).

The host community alongside the Rohingya refugee population feel the decrease of food and the drop in employment opportunities. Nearly half of the families in the host community have suffered from a decrease in income (i.e., 49,5%) (Bhatia, et al., 2018; Zaman et al., 2020). It is considered that there are still a few and limited field studies conducted on the host community in Cox's Bazar regarding the impact upon their collective lives for hosting the Rohingya population. However, all previous research share a collective picture, which there are both positive and negative outcomes due to the Rohingya influx and their subsequent refuge in the host place, and that the positive impacts are outweighed by the negative impact on the host community from the Rohingya population in the host place. Businesses, hotels, students working part-time jobs and people who own houses in the region for rent are part of the host community that have benefitted from the Rohingya influx and their refuge (Siddique, 2019). On the other hand, low-wage labourers and educational institutions are part of the host community that have been negatively impacted from the Rohingya influx and their refuge. Moreover, shortage of food and daily goods such as fish and vegetables, shortage of land for housing, deforestation of hilly areas in the region, a lack of low-skill jobs for the local population, and the blanket security restrictions imposed upon

the people in the area due to the rampant crime and drug trade, have led to a decrease in the quality of life for the host community significantly (Bhatia, et al., 2018; Zaman, Sammonds, Ahmed, & Rahman, 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of the Rohingya population in the host place has led to complications in the overall health of the host community in the case of a significant spread of contagious diseases such as COVID-19 (Lopez-Pena et al., 2020), water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea (Faruque et al., 2021) among the general host population, and non-communicable diseases such as heart diseases, arthritis, diabetes among the elderly (i.e., geriatric) people within the host community (Begum et al., 2021). The widespread of these diseases have been attributed to the decrease in the quality of life for people in the Cox's Bazar, which is a direct result of the changes that have started from the Rohingya influx over the years (Siddique, 2019; Lopez-Pena et al., 2020).

National security

The national security issues that Myanmar's conflict has caused for Bangladesh as a host country can lead to the host country adopting drastic measures to protect its national interests. The organized crime groups that have been increasingly active in the Cox's Bazar region thrive because of the dense population within the Rohingya camps. The black market of small arms and light weapons, contraband, and narcotics have led to a sprawling black-market economy in the area. Although the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh are in many ways becoming victims of such organized crime, the host country can see it as an issue that requires unavoidable preventive measures on a large scale. The consequences of guerrilla warfare conducted by organized rebel forces operating in Bangladesh's Rohingya camps can decrease the credibility of Bangladesh as a host country while giving avenues for Myanmar to indefinitely prolong its Rohingya rehabilitation measures, thus raising the costs upon Bangladesh for hosting the Rohingya population. For the Rohingya community, this can lead to a forced dependence of organized criminal groups and black-market economies for their livelihoods and survival. As succinctly mentioned in a pertinent discussion between people of three think tanks:

“Rohingyas are highly vulnerable to transnational crimes like human and drug trafficking, radicalization, and other dangerous ventures which could generate trickle-down effects on the regional security status,” (Azad, 2021)³.

If the host country, in this case, utilizes its security forces in a more significant capacity to counter the security deficits in the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region, the resulting

³ This quote is from the segment delivered by Major General Md Emdad Ul Bari, ndc, psc, te, Director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS). The other two think tanks from the cited seminar video are the Bangabandhu Centre for Bangladesh Studies, Canada (BCBS), and the Center for Genocide Studies (CGS), Bangladesh.

scenario may prove to be detrimental for the local host community as well as the Rohingya community, while deteriorating Bangladesh-Myanmar relations to a significant degree.

Social Cohesion

The social cohesion between the host and Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar have already begun to deteriorate, particularly since the 2017 exodus. The worsening social cohesion can lead to an unwanted change in attitudes and behaviour from both the host and the Rohingya community in the region. The decreasing levels of trust from both communities as competitions for resources become more and more intense, can lead to increasing levels of dispute between the two communities. The security measures to prevent any catastrophic event in the region will lead to more stringent blanket security measures, which will only increase tension between the two communities in Cox's Bazar. Ellis et al. (2016) have explored the decreasing social cohesion due to refugee populations in a host state, and their findings indicate a concerning conclusion. The finding is consistent with previous research showing that exposure to violence and adversity was associated with greater support for both legal and illegal political activism (Ellis et al. 2016).

When these activities are linked with traumatic past events that have a lasting effect on the present conditions of the refugee populations, then a lack of progress in repatriation can worsen the social cohesion as the displaced populations become increasingly engaged in violent activism. If the host community sees the Rohingya population as being increasingly detrimental to the very well-being of the host community, it can lead to collective action from the host community to socially restrict the Rohingyas from any forms of opportunities for their livelihood. This in turn may result in a countermeasure where the alienated Rohingya community are forced to increasingly fall back on the unlawful channels of revenue generation with increasing support from the Rohingya community in Bangladesh as a whole. While this can be taken by the Rohingyas to prevent the possibilities of their collective exploitation by the host community, such a situation can only exacerbate the tensions in the host country.

Safety and security of the host community

The safety and security of the host community will be increasingly put in jeopardy as the security of the region deteriorates from the organized crime and unlawful drug and weapons trade. The host community's security can be viewed as an increasingly important case at the expense of the safety and security of the Rohingya refugee population. The lack of official refugee status of the Rohingya population may accelerate increasingly harsher security measures on the Rohingya population, but the lack of such measures can prove detrimental for the host community in return. With regards to this security risk, Major General Md Emdad Ul Bari, ndc, psc, te, Director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), has mentioned that,

“Different reports said that the Rohingya have shown a tendency to flare up conflicts and threaten both social and national security at both transit and destination countries,” (Gazi Md Abul Kalam Azad, 2021).

If the host community does not see government interventions to raise the security of the region as satisfactory, then collective measures from the host community outside government involvement to make the region more secure (e.g., through the local government and law enforcement, active exclusion from income opportunities) can lead to civil unrest and a communal divide between the host and the Rohingya community in the region.

Impacts on natural resources

A reduction of natural resources in the form of deforestation and destruction of natural hilly terrain can lead to severe long terms negative consequences for the region of Cox's Bazar. Not only are events such as landslides and flash floods more common, but such extreme weather events along with cyclones and storm surges hit the area with increasing intensity. Such extreme weather events greatly decrease the quality of life with people from both the host and the Rohingya community losing their lives as a result. The reduction of forest resources can lead to a decrease in optimal weather for the host country while decreasing soil fertility and contributing to global warming in the region. Moreover, the destruction of hilly ecosystems as a result can lead to a decrease in endemic wildlife and fauna. The resource conflicts that can stem from this situation as natural resources become increasingly scarce in the area can have severe consequences for the overall stability of the region.

Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in the South and South-East Asian Regions

The conflict potential of the Rohingya people and its widespread implications within the borders of Bangladesh have already been discussed. The discussion shows the enormous pressure it puts on the government of Bangladesh and its administration as well as on the lives of the citizens of Bangladesh. However, this has far reached consequences outside of its borders as well. The over 1,4 million Rohingya people living across the 34 camps in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh can in time be a grave concern within the South and South-East Asian region.

It is to be noted that the Rohingya people in the camps of Cox's Bazar have frequently attempted to leave the confines of their camps and migrate to other countries, notably to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. These journeys have often been taken via risky routes and more often via human traffickers (Routray, 2019). It does not only put the desperate Rohingyas themselves at risk, but also poses serious concern for the host countries they are moving to as the numbers of such migrants increase. Even around 10,000 Rohingya people have become a serious concern for the people in India, leading to social tensions among the local Indian and Rohingya populations (Basavapatna, 2018), and such numbers can be seen in these South-East Asian nations if this issue continues to be overlooked.

Moreover, the Rohingya have consistently shown to have a strong national identity, which becomes the reason that they continue to pursue insurgent endeavours to regain their place in their home country in Myanmar. These insurgent endeavours have taken place from the peripheral areas of Myanmar, involving a varied level of support from Rohingya people across the South and South-East Asian region (Fair, 2018). Although their efforts may be justified on moral grounds due to their continued long-standing oppression by Myanmar's government, the process itself compromises the countries that are hosting the Rohingya refugees and migrants. Through limiting the bilateral and multilateral negotiating capabilities of these host states in the long run by being indirectly implicated of hosting 'insurgents' (Chaijaroenwatana & Haque, 2020), host states can become compromised in international relations. This has already been observed in the case of Bangladesh and to a very limited extent in Thailand (Banerjee, 2019; Chaijaroenwatana & Haque, 2020).

Insurgent tendencies of the Rohingya populations in host countries can be seen as a very limited concern when compared to the social tensions their presence can create. As their populations continue to flee their country and to other states in South and South-East Asia, their stateless situation remains unresolved and pressures on Myanmar's government to take a positive stance on the matter remain little to non-existent. This over time can become a more serious regional issue across countries of South and South-East Asia. This issues, in turn, can not only impact individual states negatively, but can also deteriorate the bilateral and multilateral arrangements of the existing prominent regional coalitions and organizations such as the Associate for South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). It is believed that only speedy collective actions in resolving this issue can prevent it from becoming a disastrous regional conflict for the South and South-East Asian regions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The article has discussed how the Rohingya people living in Bangladesh after the persecution are complicating the local environment and putting pressure on the local people. The start of the civil war in Myanmar stemming from an ethnic conflict between the Burmese government and the Rohingyas community has led to the migration of the Rohingya populations in large numbers to Bangladesh. The Rohingya population have started to occupy increasingly scarce land resources and their consumption of forest resources and competition for livelihood with the local population have led to social unrest within the settlement area. This unrest comes with a host of other issues that involve decreasing livelihood standards and decreasing availability of desirable income opportunities for both the displaced community that seek to adjust to the new lifestyle and the host society that have received the displaced Rohingya community. The situation coincides with the conflict displacement theory where a conflict in a neighbouring state leads to populations being displaced in the host country, bringing with them several issues of concern for the host government (Homer-Dixon, 2010; Reuveny, 2007; Ghimire et al., 2015).

The resulting deprivation of being delegated an FDMN status with reduced rights and opportunities, as well as the less than optimal livelihood standards for the Rohingya refugee population leads to an identity crisis where they seek to raise their own position at the cost of the host society, with alternative channels of revenue and guerrilla initiatives to return to their home country with the rights and opportunities they have lost in the civil war (Milton et al., 2017; Elis et al., 2016). This opens up this displaced community to exploitation as organized crime groups take advantage of the Rohingya people to further their own interests and involve them in crimes such as human trafficking, drug trade, and illegal importation of small arms and light weapons across the border and inside the host country. This raises concerns for the host government even further. As per the theory of conflict spill over, the civil war in Myanmar now becomes an interlinked issue for the host country Bangladesh as the displaced populations create a significant security issue for it (Salehyan, 2010). This leads to the conflict to shift from the displaced population and the origin state to between the displaced population and the host state and its society.

Myanmar's civil conflict involving the Rohingya population has affected the host country Bangladesh in a myriad of ways. The positive effects of introducing income opportunities and revenues from aid and relief are overshadowed by the negative consequences the conflict has brought to the area (Karin et al., 2020). From national security concerns to issues regarding the safety and stability of the region, the conflict in Myanmar can lead to a manifestation of intractable conflict in Bangladesh. This can, in turn, lead to the host community being gravely affected by a fall in overall security in the area while putting the Rohingya community at risk of further exploitation by organized crime groups and Myanmar's government. The conflict potential in the host society due to Myanmar's civil conflict can lead to an overall drop in the security within the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region (Rahman, 2010; Taufiq, 2019). Actions undertaken by the host government to protect its national interests by preventing organized crime and illegal trade in the area can lead to a more hard-line approach from these organized groups to protect their own interests, thus putting the Rohingya population and the host community at risk.

The decrease in social cohesion between the host and the Rohingya community can lead to the Rohingya community being alienated and looking for alternative sources for their survival in illegal channels. It will cause social cohesion to further decrease and cause instability of the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region. Moreover, the safety and security of the host community can lead to the host community adopting harsher security measures which can exclude the Rohingya community from income and livelihood opportunities through proper channels, thus forcing them to become dependent on unlawful channels of income and livelihood. The natural resources of the region are decreasing at a rapid pace due to the high dependence on forestry and land, which leads to harsher weather events in the region that decrease the overall quality of life for the people. This can lead to a resource conflict in the near future where the stability of the region can be at risk.

The theories and case studies conducted on conflict displacement and conflict spill over effects are believed to coincide with the data from the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh. The conflict displacement has led to Myanmar's civil conflict generating conflict potentials in

Bangladesh by negatively impacting available livelihood opportunities for the host population, and by lowering the security of the region through the heavy involvement of Rohingya refugee populations in organized crime at both intrastate and transborder levels. However, if further studies are conducted in-depth to explore how exactly the conflict displacement and the conflict spill over that have taken place in the host country Bangladesh, particularly with the help of some primary data, then that would provide an even more concrete and robust foundation where a case can be made in support of the host country and the displaced Rohingya refugees. Therefore, the foundation can pave the way for a more reliable approach to the repatriation of the Rohingya displaced people with the full extent of their rights and opportunities and thus effective action towards proper conflict resolution in both Myanmar and in Bangladesh.

The Rohingya community have been prosecuted for over half a century by this point in time, and their situations remain to be improved, while their plight remains to be unanswered. For the host community, however, the possible conflict looming in the near future should not be overlooked. The Rohingya community, being destitute are prone to be exploited by organized groups for their own purposes. It is a pressing need for the host country to act in favour of facilitating smooth repatriation for the Rohingya community while tackling the ongoing issues that Myanmar's conflict has spilled over within its borders.

Acknowledgment

This article acknowledges the Centennial Research Grant (CRG) provided by the University of Dhaka in observance of her 100 years of birth anniversary.

About the authors

Md Rafiqul Islam *PhD* has been teaching at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. Graduating from the University of Dhaka, the most premier university of Bangladesh, and United Nations mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica, Dr Islam took up teaching at the University of Dhaka by choice. Dr. Islam loves teaching and articleing in the area of climate change, migration, refugees, security and conflict issues. Currently, Dr. Islam has been engaged in article and investigation on the Rohingya issue which is a crucial problem for Bangladesh and the region. Email: rislampacs@du.ac.bd

Umme Wara is an Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology, University of Dhaka. She did three Masters from University of Dhaka, University of Wollongong and University of Torino specialized on crime and prevention. Her article interests are on Refugee and Migration, peace and conflict, Gender-based violence, international crimes etc. Email: wara.criminology@du.ac.bd

References

- Adhikari, P. (2012). Conflict-induced displacement, understanding the causes of flight. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(1), 82-89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00598.x>
- Alam, J. (2019). The current Rohingya crisis in Myanmar in historical perspective. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1575560>
- Alam, S. (2019, August 24). INFOGRAPHIC - Top Rohingya-hosting countries. *Anadolu Agency*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/infographic-top-rohingya-hosting-countries/1563674>
- Ansar, A. (2020). The unfolding of belonging, exclusion and exile: A reflection on the history of Rohingya refugee crisis in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Muslims Minority Affairs*, 40(3), 441-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1819126>
- Azad, G. M. A. K. (2021, November 11). Joint Webinar on The Rohingya Exodus in Bangladesh: Regional and Global Security Implications [Video]. *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWBgLGXUxKg>
- Bakali, N. & Wasty, S. (2020). Identity, social mobility, and trauma: Post-conflict educational realities for survivors of the Rohingya genocide. *Religions*, 11(5), 241. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11050241>
- Banerjee, S. (2019, March 15). Drug trafficking and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *Observer Article Foundation*. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/drug-trafficking-and-rohingya-refugees-in-bangladesh-49005/>
- Banerjee, S. (2020). From Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char: An assessment of Bangladesh's relocation plan for Rohingya refugees. *Kolkata: Observer Article Foundation*. https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ORF_IssueBrief_357_BhasanChar.pdf
- Begum, I. A., Raiyana, Z., Azad, M. A., Huda, M. S., Anwar, A., Khalil, M. E., & Rizwan, A. A. (2021). Disease pattern of geriatric people of the host community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. *Journal of Medical Article and Surgery*, 2(6) 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.52916/jmrs214062>
- Belkania, B. (2020). How do civil wars impact international peace and security? Examples from Asia and Africa. *Free University Journal of Asian Studies*, 2. <https://journals.org.ge/index.php/asianstudies/article/view/37>
- Bhatia, A., Mahmud, A., Fuller, A., Shin, R., Rahman, A., Shatil, T., . . . Balsari, S. (2018). The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: When the Stateless Seek Refuge. *Health and Human Rights*, 20(2), 105-122.

- Bhattacharya, S. & Biswas, B. (2020). International norms of asylum and burden-sharing: A case study of Bangladesh and the Rohingya refugee population. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(4), 3734-3751. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa122>
- Bosker, M. & de Ree, J. (2014). Ethnicity and the spread of civil war. *Journal of Development Economics*, 108, 206-221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2014.02.002>
- Bremner, L. (2020). Sedimentary logics and the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. *Political Geography*, 77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.102109>
- Carmignani, F. & Kler, P. (2016, March). The geographical spillover of armed conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Economic Systems*, 40(1), 109-119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecosys.2015.08.002>
- Chowdhury, A. R. (2019). International-domestic linkages in a developing-country context: the case of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh. *Policy Studies*, 40(3-4), 303-319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2018.1557623>
- Chowdhury, M. A., Billah, S. M., Karim, F., Khan, A. N., Islam, S., & Arifeen, S. E. (2018). *Demographic Profiling and Needs Assessment of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Care for the Rohingya Refugee Population in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*. icddr,b. Dhaka: Maternal and Child Health Division. <http://dspace.icddr.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/9067/2/Special%20Report%20153.pdf>
- Crabtree, K. (2010). Economic challenges and coping mechanisms in protracted displacement: A case study of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 5(1), 41-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564901003610073>
- Dal, E. P. (2016). Impact of the transnationalization of the Syrian civil war on Turkey: conflict spillover cases of ISIS and PYD-YPG/PKK. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29(4), 1396-1420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2016.1256948>
- Davenport, C., Moore, W., & Poe, S. (2003). Sometimes you just have to leave: Domestic threats and forced migration. *International Interactions*, 29(1), 27-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620304597>
- Dunne, J. P. & Tian, N. (2019). Costs of civil war and fragile states in Africa. *Review of Development Economics*, 23(3), 1220-1237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rode.12612>
- Edwards, S. (2009). *The Chaos of Forced Migration: A Means of Modeling Complexity for Humanitarian Ends*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag.
- Faruque, A. S., Khan, A. I., Islam, S. M., Nahar, B., Hossain, M. N., Widiati, Y., . . . Ahmed, T. (2021). Diarrhea treatment center (DTC) based diarrheal disease surveillance in settlements in the wake of the mass influx of forcibly displaced Myanmar national (FDMN) in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2018. *PLOS One*, 16(8), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0254473>

- Faruque, A. S., Khan, A. I., Nahar, B., Islam, S. M., Hossain, M. N., Abdullah, S. A., . . . Va, M. (2021). Cholera outbreak in Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National (FDMN) from a small population segment in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 2019. *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, 15(9), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0009618>
- Farzana, K. F. (2021). State and violence in Burma/Myanmar: The Rohingya crisis and its implication for South and South-East Asia. In M. Mio, K. Nakamizo, & T. Fujikura (Eds.), *The Dynamics of Conflict and Peace in Contemporary South Asia* (pp. 55-73). London: Routledge.
- Faye, M. (2021). A forced migration from Myanmar to Bangladesh and beyond: humanitarian response to Rohingya refugee crisis. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 6, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-021-00098-4>
- Hossain, A. N. (2021, October). Sustainable development and livelihoods of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: The effects. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 16(6), 1141-1152. <https://doi.org/10.18280/ijstdp.160615>
- Imtiaz, S. (2018). Ecological impact of Rohingya refugees on forest resources: remote sensing analysis of vegetation cover change in Teknaf Peninsula in Bangladesh. *Ecocycles*, 4(1), 16-19. <https://doi.org/10.19040/ecocycles.v4i1.89>
- Islam, M. M. & Nuzhath, T. (2018). Health risks of Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh: A call for global attention. *Journal of Global Health*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.08.020309>
- Islam, M. N., Inan, T. T., & Islam, A. K. (2020). COVID-19 and the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: The Challenges and Recommendations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 32(5), 283-284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1010539520932707>
- Islam, M. R., Islam, M. T., Alam, M. S., Hussain, M., & Haque, M. M. (2021). Is Bhasan Char Island, Noakhali district in Bangladesh a sustainable place for the relocated Rohingya displaced people? An empirical study. *SN Social Sciences*, 277. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00281-9>
- Karin, S., Chowdhury, M. A., Hasnat, M. A., & Tarin, N. J. (2020). Status of Rohingya in refugee camps of Bangladesh: A review study. *Open Access Library Journal*, 7(9), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106575>
- Kathman, J. D. (2011). Civil war diffusion and regional motivations for intervention. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55(6), 847-876. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711408009>
- Lopez-Pena, P., Davis, C. A., Mobarak, A. M., & Raihan, S. (2020). Prevalence of COVID-19 symptoms, risk factors, and health behaviors in host and refugee communities in Cox's Bazar: A representative panel study. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 1-17.

- Martin, M. F., Margesson, R., & Vaughn, B. (2018). The Rohingya crises in Bangladesh and Burma. *Current Politics and Economics of South, Southeastern, and Central Asia*, 27(3/4), 333-375.
- Mia, M. J., Hossain, M. K., Biswas, R. N., & Khan, M. R. (2021). Risk acceptance for humanitarian crisis response: Evidence from Rohingya influx into Bangladesh. *International Journal of Disaster Response and Emergency Management*, 4(1), 14-30. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJDREM.2021010102>
- Milton, A. H., Rahman, M., Hussain, S., Jindal, C., Choudhury, S., Akter, S., . . . Efirid, J. T. (2017). Trapped in statelessness: Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Environmental Article and Public Health*, 14(8), 942. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14080942>
- Momem, M. N. (2021). The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Implications for Regional Security. In Ú. O. Spring, & H. G. Brauch (Eds.), *Decolonising Conflicts, Security, Peace, Gender, Environment and Development in the Anthropocene* (pp. 615-629). London: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62316-6_21
- Mowla, D. Q. & Hossain, S. T. (2021). Rohingya settlements in Ukhia and Teknaf and its impact on the ecosystem. *Journal of Business, Society and Science*, 8(1), 62-82.
- Muggah, H. (2000). Conflict-induced displacement and involuntary resettlement in Colombia: Putting Cernea's IRLR Model to the Test. *Disasters*, 24(3), 198-216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00142>
- Parashar, A. & Alam, J. (2019). The National Laws of Myanmar: Making of statelessness for the Rohingya. *International Migration*, 57(1), 94-108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12532>
- Phillips, B. J. (2014). Civil war, spillover and neighbors' military spending. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 32(4), 425-442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894214530853>
- Rahman, M. R., Faiz, M. A., Nu, M. Y., Hassan, M. R., Chakrabarty, A. K., Kabir, I., . . . Rashid, H. (2020). A rapid assessment of health literacy and health status of Rohingya refugees living in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh following the August 2017 exodus from Myanmar: A cross-sectional study. *Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease*, 5(3), 110. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tropicalmed5030110>
- Rahman, M. Z. (2021). Livelihoods of Rohingyas and their impacts on deforestation. In M. Tani, & M. A. Rahman (Eds.), *Deforestation in the Teknaf Peninsula of Bangladesh* (pp. 113-125). Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5475-4_9
- Rahman, U. (2010). The Rohingya refugee: A security dilemma for Bangladesh. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 8(2), 233-239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562941003792135>

- Rieger, J. (2020). *Navigating at the Margins: Family, Mobility and Livelihoods Amongst Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: The Asia Foundation.
- Roth, K. (2020, November 8). Myanmar: Events of 2020. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/myanmar-burma>
- Routray, B. P. (2019). *Onwards Malaysia: Rohingya Focused Human Trafficking Networks* (Special Report#17). Goa: Mantraya. http://mantraya.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Mantraya-Special-Report_Onwards-Malaysia-Rohingya-focused-Human-Trafficking-Networks.pdf
- Roy, S. (2020). The archaeological and historical validation of Rohingya citizenship in Burma. *International Journal on World Peace*, 37(1), 7-22.
- Salehyan, I. (2010). The delegation of war to rebel organizations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(3), 493-515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709357890>
- Siddique, W. (2019, May). The impact of Rohingya refugees on the local host community: The case of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. [Master Thesis]. Tampere, Finland: Tampere University. <https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/116089/SiddiqueWahiduzzaman.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>
- Stockholm International Peace Article Institute (SIPRI). (2021). Military expenditure (% of GDP) - Bangladesh. (S. I. Institute, Producer). *The World Bank*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2020&locations=BD&start=2010>
- Swain, A. (1996). Environmental migration and conflict dynamics: Focus on developing regions. *Third World Quarterly*, 17(5), 959-974. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599615209>
- Taufiq, H. A. (2019). Rohingya refugee crisis and the state of insecurity in Bangladesh. *Genocide and Mass Violence: Politics of Singularity*, 145-180. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2107.12080>
- Uddin, N. (2015). State of stateless people: The plight of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. In R. E. Howard-Hassmann, & M. Walton-Roberts (Eds.), *The Human Right to Citizenship: A Slippery Concept* (pp. 62-77). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812291421-005>
- Uddin, N. (2019). Ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Ethnicity* (pp. 1-17). Singapore City: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0242-8_116-1
- Uddin, N. (2019). The state, vulnerability, and transborder movements: The Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh. In N. Uddin, & N. Chowdhory (Eds.), *Deterritorialised Identity and Transborder Movement in South Asia* (pp. 73-90). Singapore: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2778-0>

Zaman, S., Sammonds, P., Ahmed, B., & Rahman, T. (2020). Disaster risk reduction in conflict contexts: Lessons learned from the lived experiences of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2020.101694>

Journey to Justice: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Context of West Papua

Ani Widyani Soetjipto

Department of International Relations, University of Indonesia
ani.soetjipto@gmail.com

How to Cite: Soetjipto, A. W. (2022). Journey to justice: The United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of West Papua. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 10(1), 129–149.
<https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v10i1.8491>

Abstract

This article aimed to examine the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), focusing on the rights of the Indigenous Papuan people in the Indonesian provinces on the western half of the island of New Guinea, commonly referred to in English as Papua or West Papua. By drawing on the theory of norm diffusion in the study of international relations, this article argues that despite adopting a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Indonesian government seems to find fulfilling the rights of Indigenous Papuans challenging due to obfuscation and lack of political will. This article finds that the implementation of special autonomy in Papua has been a failure, as the human rights situation has deteriorated and the fundamental rights of Indigenous Papuans remain unfulfilled.

Keywords: UNDRIP, indigenous rights, West Papua Indonesia, special autonomy, norm diffusion

Introduction

After a long process, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the landmark UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. The declaration is significant for indigenous peoples because it is the first universal instrument to protect indigenous people's rights, including the right of self-determination (Isa, 2019). Unfortunately, although many countries have adopted and implemented UNDRIP, its implementation is unsatisfactory and there is no consensus on policy of indigenous people of some commonwealth countries (Lenzerini, 2019, Whall 2003). One argument that helps explain the limited progress is states' suspicion around the right of self-determination. Many

states worry that the recognition of self-determination rights will threaten the state's own sovereignty. The basic principle of self-determination is to accommodate the participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes that affect them (Cambou, 2019). Lenzerini (2019) argues that the implementation has varied significantly around the world, ranging from full acceptance to modification and even outright rejection.

In recent decades, states around the globe have increasingly given rise to illiberal norms (Glasius, Schalk, & De Lange, 2020). Introducing new restrictions against non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is particularly common. Such restrictions are problematic because civil society has an essential role in educating the public and providing information, especially in terms of transnational community and advocacy networks (Soetjipto & Yuliestiana, 2020). Civil society campaigns on specific issues, strategies, and tactics have a real impact on international relations. However, although NGOs contribute positively to transnational advocacy, their advocacy is not always successful. One of the keys to the success or failure of advocacy is political opportunity. This is how domestic groups usually attempt to bring domestic issues onto the international agenda (Soetjipto & Yuliestiana, 2020). On the other hand, it should be noted that the state – as one of the main advocacy targets – is not passive in the situation. Rather, states may actively strive against NGOs by restricting foreign funding and constraining the space for external support for domestic civil society (Poppe & Wolff, 2017; Glasius et al., 2020). In other words, Keck & Sikkink (1998) argue that transnational advocacy networks will always succeed is not necessarily accurate.

De Almagro (2018) analyses internal power dynamics inside transnational advocacy campaigns by using case studies. He finds that the process of norm diffusion is not always linear, as stated by Finemore and Sikkink (1998). In contrast with previous literature, current studies and research on norm diffusion shows that there are many possibilities of norm diffusion due to norm clashes and shifting during this process (Zimmermann, 2014). For example, the adoption and implementation of UNDRIP in Peru (Alva-Arévalo, 2019), Canada (Robinson, 2020), and various Africa nations (Mitchell & Yuzdepski, 2019; Claridge, 2019) has had varying challenges and results. Effective implementation depends on domestic structure and culture.

In Africa, Mitchell and Yuzdepski (2019) argue that UNDRIP could potentially create conflicts in the future, so all governments and stakeholders must be careful in the development of land policies. Meanwhile in Canada, the country's constitution does not fulfil Canada's UNDRIP obligations. If Canada wants to assure the rights of indigenous peoples, the government must not rely upon the courts to implement their UNDRIP obligations (Robinson, 2020). A different and more successful result has been observed in Peru, which is now seen as a model for other countries in Latin America to implement UNDRIP through legislation (Alva-Arévalo, 2019). The previous studies highlight and focus on the diffusion and implementation of UNDRIP in several countries around the world. This research attempts to enrich the study of norm diffusion of the rights of Indigenous Papuans in Indonesia.

Indonesia's central government has tried an array of different approaches to resolve the ongoing low-level conflict in Papua. None have been successful so far. The most recent

approach has been a prosperity approach, using special autonomy (*otonomi khusus* or *otsus*) policies alongside the establishment of new provinces (through what is known as *pemekaran* or proliferation of new administrative regions).

Indonesia has been unable to handle the issues in Papua due to a lack of serious engagement with human rights, which is reflected in the government's repeated denial of allegations of human rights violations in the region (Karim, 2020, p. 10; Wangge & Lawson, 2021). Recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples is the key to bringing peaceful and inclusive societies for development. In practice, both *otsus* and *pemekaran* have created more complex social problems in Papua, such as horizontal conflict, because these policies have been trapped in technical and administrative issues and have not been adapted to the social context in Papua. The Indonesian government's reliance on such policies and the continuous failure to address human rights violations, violence, and racial abuse, especially against indigenous Papuans, has been causing significant problems in Papua for decades without resolution. In December 2021, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People, along with the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Execution and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, raised the issue with the Indonesian government regarding the use of excessive force against indigenous Papuans. Allegations from the UN Special Rapporteurs, based on various reports, indicate extrajudicial killings, including of young children, enforced disappearance, torture and inhuman treatment, and the forced displacement of at least 5000 Indigenous Papuans by security forces between April and November 2021 (OCHCR, 2022).

The deterioration in Papua's human rights situation was previously raised by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, in 2019 after a series of protests and riots across Papua and Indonesia in response to physical and racial abuse of indigenous Papuans by authorities (Septiari, 2019; ICP & the Westpapua-Netzwerk, 2021). To defuse the tension, the Indonesian government responded by blocking internet access across Papua, allegedly in the name of state security, but in fact an appalling attack on people's right to freedom of expression (Lantang & Tambunan, 2020). Civil society groups heavily criticised and condemned the Indonesian authorities' actions.

The research aims to examine the rights of indigenous people and the fulfilment of these rights in Papua. The article argues that despite achieving some progress in providing more opportunities for Papua, including giving special autonomy and becoming a signatory to UNDRIP, the Indonesian government has not realised the rights of indigenous Papuans. It is due to distrust between indigenous Papuans and the Indonesian government, development strategies that lack socio-cultural dimensions, and unresolved long-term conflict and violence.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the Process of Norm Diffusion in the Study of International Relations

To understand the failure of the implementation of UNDRIP in the case of Papua, the article mobilises the notion of norm diffusion. Norm diffusion allows us to understand why despite ratifying UNDRIP, Indonesia is reluctant to implement the provisions.

When discussing norm diffusion, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) are the key thinkers behind this prominent theory in international relations. They argue that norms are integral to the study of international politics. The academic discipline has transformed to acknowledge the empirical research on the role of norms in advocating and creating political change. Finnemore and Sikkink, then, introduces the theory of the 'norm life-cycle', which moves from norm emergence into norm cascade and finally into internalisation.

Constructivist scholars believe that norms cannot be applied without the involvement of agents or actors advocating for them. It means that 'norm entrepreneurs' are essential in the dissemination and even the creation of issues. In this case, following the first stage of the norm life-cycle - norm emergence - indigenous movements play an essential role as norm entrepreneurs to put forward and advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples globally. They seek international allies to work on pressuring state actors and international organisations to achieve their goals.

It was in 1982 that Indigenous peoples came together, forming the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP). WGIP became a prominent forum for Indigenous peoples from around the world, working primarily to advocate for indigenous peoples' rights and fundamental freedoms (Sanders, 1989). However, networks of indigenous movements have had to take political opportunities thoughtfully to "secure the support of state actors to endorse their norms and make norm socialization a part of their agenda" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2019). Following the establishment of WGIP, the International Labour Organization (ILO) issued the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention in 1989, also popularly known as ILO Convention 169 or C169. In 2000, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was established, and it was only in 2007 that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted. Even though Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States voted against UNDRIP, 144 member states voted in favour, including Indonesia (United Nations, 2007). This can be said to be the first stage of norm diffusion: norm emergence. In the second stage, the global norm has become more institutionalised (norm cascade) in persuading state actors to adopt the norm progressively. At the highest or more advanced level, the norm is widely internalised by signatories. They "take for granted" the ability to transform global norms into domestic politics (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Although the theory of norm life-cycle offers an effective approach to understanding norm diffusion in the study of international relations, this model is unlikely to be able to capture "when norms clash or shift during norm diffusion" (Soetjipto & Yuliestiana, 2020). Moreover, norm diffusion cannot be simplified as a linear process toward changes in politics and human rights (Setiawan & Spires, 2021). Therefore, the article utilises a more critical approach to examine the implementation of UNDRIP as a global norm at the domestic level in Indonesia, and specifically to understand main issues in the region of Papua. In this context,

the Indonesian government is the actor that plays an essential role in the implementation of UNDRIP, along with civil society in advocating the rights of indigenous Papuans.

Methods

The research aims to provide a deeper examination of the dynamics of the implementation of the rights of indigenous Papuans by using case selection (Klotz & Prakash, 2008). The research design draws on an interpretive approach and uses a critical perspective toward traditional theories in international relations, scrutinising the failure of liberal constructivism in understanding historical and political context (cultural relativism) (Schippers, 2018).

Research for this article was conducted between March and April 2022 in Jakarta. The discussions are based on a semi-structured interview approach, with meetings held virtually through Zoom. Participants are from the Papuan Customary Council (*Dewan Adat Papua/DAP*), academia, civil society organisations, the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission (*Komisi Nasional HAM/Komnas HAM*), and the Directorate for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia (MoFA RI). The research also utilises data from previous field research conducted in Papua in 2017, updating several findings based on the 2022 interviews. In addition to being more contentious than the previous research, this research synthesises the literature to enable new theoretical frameworks and perspectives to emerge (Torraco, 2005; Snyder, 2019).

Analysis

Sovereignty is central how we understand the state system. It is a fundamental principle enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations (Croxtton, 1999; Musgrave, 2015). This traditional paradigm in international relations has led to the broad subjugation of indigenous peoples around the world, which means that conventional theory is unable to address the root problem of identity or indigeneity in this context (Elisabeth, 2017; Krause, 2015). The Act of Free Choice (*Pepera*), held in Papua in 1969, gave Papuans the option of remaining a member of Indonesia or declaring independence. However, the implementation was contentious, leading to the choice to remain as part of Indonesia. (Chauvel & Bhakti, 2004; Situmorang, 2010; King & Johnson, 2018; Heryanto, 2018; Chao, 2021). Since then, the struggle for self-determination in Papua has been largely dismissed by the Indonesian government. In other words, indigenous Papuans have not been able to exercise a genuine act of self-determination.

Since Papua was legally incorporated into Indonesia as a result of the 1969 Act, the journey to justice for the rights of the indigenous Papuans has been a long and arduous one. Even the term 'indigenous' itself is highly controversial in Indonesia. Hadiprayitno (2017) argues that "the [Indonesian] government believes that Indonesia is a nation that has no Indigenous peoples, or that all Indonesians are equally Indigenous". However, this claim is problematic since it seems remarkably phlegmatic to acknowledge the rights of indigenous

peoples. For that reason, indigenous Papuans set up international fora in an attempt to create a 'compulsory power'. Compulsory power here refers to the concept coined by Baldwin (2002) and Barnett and Duvall (2005). It means that power is a relationship of interaction of direct control by one actor over another. Compulsory power is not only limited to material resources as it also entails symbolic and normative resources.

By exercising the concept of compulsory power, activists in indigenous transnational networks may construct cognitive frames through immaterial forces (Baldwin, 2002; Barnett & Duvall, 2005). Doing so has achieved the networks' goals of influencing the international community to adopt a new norm on Indigenous rights, leading to the development of UNDRIP in 2007. This global norm provides a shared scheme to create a better world and a more sustainable future for indigenous peoples' survival, dignity, and well-being worldwide (Cambou, 2019). Nevertheless, in Indonesia, even though the Indonesian government has pledged to adopt UNDRIP into domestic law, the government still tends to obfuscate when identifying the concept of Indigenous peoples.

Debates over Terminology

In the Indonesian language, terminology used to refer to Indigenous peoples is unclear and often confusing. Multiple terms are commonly used, including *masyarakat [hukum] adat* ('customary [law] societies'), *orang asli* (literally 'native people'), and *penduduk suku asli* ('native ethnic inhabitants') (Li, T., 2000, p. 155). Unlike its neighbour, the Philippines, Indonesia does not have legislation on Indigenous people's rights. A draft law has been proposed in parliament, but limited progress has been made. Part of the issue is that, in Indonesia, the rights of indigenous peoples overlap with other legal issues such as the existing forestry and agrarian laws.

AMAN (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*/Alliance of Indigenous People of the Archipelago) is Indonesia's peak indigenous civil society organisation. At their national congress on 17 March 1999, AMAN defined indigenous peoples by referring to UNDRIP and ILO 169, as "a community that lives based on ancestral origins from generation to generation over a customary area that has sovereignty over land and natural wealth, socio-cultural life, which is regulated by customary law and customary institutions that manage the sustainability of human life" (AMAN, 2021). AMAN argues that the Indonesian government needs to establish a definition for indigenous peoples, but so far, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not want to have a dialogue on the meaning of indigenous peoples in Indonesia. In AMAN's view, the Indonesian government, which supports UNDRIP, believes this norm will not apply, as they argue that Indonesia does not have any indigenous peoples (Nababan, interview, 2022).

According to the Indonesian government, the definition of indigenous peoples cannot be determined permanently. Ellen Tambunan, the Coordinator of the Civil and Political Rights Function in the Directorate of Human Rights and Humanity, Directorate General of Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, states that the concept of indigenous peoples is not applicable in Indonesia. Ellen gave an example of how the definition of

indigenous peoples appears in ILO Convention 169, relating to tribal communities and indigenous peoples. Therefore, even though Indonesia has agreed to UNDRIP, Indonesia acknowledges terms such as *masyarakat adat* and *masyarakat hukum adat* to promote and consider ethnically diverse cultures and societies in Indonesia (Tambunan, interview, 2022; Join Communication Ref. No. AL IDN 11/2021). *Adat* itself can be translated as 'custom, tradition, or customary law'. Under Dutch colonial rules, customs and traditions were codified and associated with ethnic groups across the archipelago.

In response to a critical report on Papua before the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2004, Indonesia rejected criticism of its refusal to attribute the status of indigenous to Papuan peoples. As a matter of principle, Indonesia regards all of its more than 500 ethnic groups as equally indigenous, therefore arguing that a reference in the forum report was irrelevant (Bertrand, 2011).

The government of Indonesia reiterated this position in its 2006 report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD). Instead, Indonesia offered four principles to determine Indigenous ethnic groups (*masyarakat adat*): names, language, environment, and customs. The report also mentioned new legislation that made no distinction between indigenous and other groups, and differentiated *masyarakat adat terpencil* (isolated or remote ethnic groups) from the broader category of *masyarakat adat* (UNCERD, 2006).

The Struggle for Indigenous Papuans Rights

Transnational advocacy on the rights of indigenous Papuans began internationally in the 1980s. Advocacy conducted by an NGO named ELSAM Papua at both national and international fora created alliances with other self-identified indigenous groups to put pressure on the state for recognition and rights. To advocate for the case of Papua, advocates allied with the Melanesian Spearhead Group because of its ethnic similarity (Melanesian) with Papua, and began engaging in international fora and trying to sustain state attention (Lawson, 2016; Blades, 2020).

Leonard Imbiri from DAP, the Papuan Customary Council, acknowledges that international lobbying and advocacy has been beneficial for advancing the struggle for indigenous Papuans' rights. In an interview with researchers, Imbiri (2022) states that this framework is used to help encourage the government to act fairly because domestic voices are not being heard. This framework shows how indigenous Papuans use international fora to strengthen coalitions to encourage fulfilling the rights of indigenous Papuans. Furthermore, through struggles in international fora such as the United Nations, Indigenous peoples' groups can negotiate with representatives of the Indonesian government and other countries to provide support, especially regarding these countries' cooperation with the Indonesian government (Imbiri, 2022).

During the authoritarian regime of President Suharto, the struggles of indigenous people in Indonesia to obtain their rights were arduous. The situation was similar across the

entire Asian region due to the absence of a clear distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous in domestic political situations and policies. It was only when the Suharto regime fell in 1998, that the following period of regime change and state vulnerability led to a decision of accommodation in response to the Papuan demand of self-determination, culminating in the introduction of a special autonomy policy in 2001 (Special Autonomy Law no 1/2001). In the end, most Asian states including Indonesia began paying attention to the indigenous movement when it entered the UN system in the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the majority signing UNDRIP upon its creation. Indonesia itself formally recognised ILO Convention 169 in 1989, before signing UNDRIP in 2007.

After being integrated into Indonesia in 1969, Papua was restructured to conform to Indonesia's political and administrative structure, obtaining the status of province. Its territory was subdivided into regencies, districts, and villages as specified in the regional autonomy law (Law No. 5 of 1974 concerning the Principles of Regional Government). No modifications were made to consider the different socio-economic, political, and cultural differences that distinguished the area from the rest of Indonesia. Crucially, the government imposed restrictions on Papua cultural expression. Indonesian was adopted as the sole language of education, and the national curriculum was imposed on Papua with no local content (Widjojo, 2009; Gietzelt, 1989).

The central government also controlled the management of land and national resources. Under the Indonesian Constitution of 1945, natural resources are part of the public domain and can be exploited according to policies set by the central government in Jakarta. Indeed, one of the most controversial issues in Papua is mining, particularly the Freeport-McMoRan mine in Mimika, which is frequently a target for protests due to its failure to benefit indigenous Papuans (ICP & the Westpapua-Netzwerk, 2021).

Since the 1980s, indigenous Papuans have used international fora by sending representatives to the Working Group for Indigenous People (WGIP) in the hope of pressuring the Indonesian government to recognise them as indigenous people. In their first appearance, they contested the legitimacy of the 1969 Act of Free Choice and the United Nations' support for Papua's integration into Indonesia. Significant emphasis was placed on the disappearances and alleged killings perpetrated against Papuans by the Indonesian armed forces, the repression of Papua culture, the seizure of land for mining, and the Indonesian government's policy of transmigration (Kluge, 2020; Bertrand, 2011).

After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, Papuans increased their networking internationally, particularly in indigenous peoples fora. Legal aid organisation Elsam Papua tapped the international human rights network to present the Papuan case at WGIP (Elsam, 2003). After 2002, the newly created DAP, composed of representatives of all 253 Papuan tribal groups, assumed Papua's leadership role in international fora (Mandowen, 2005).

By casting all its people as Indigenous, Indonesia supports UNDRIP without recognising its applicability within Indonesia. In Indonesia, the coalition of Indigenous peoples have attempted to connect *adat* with Indigenous people's rights but has failed to gain

much traction. Papuan peoples, as a result, have continued their dual strategy and made some gains as a sub-state nation (province) but few as indigenous peoples.

Special Autonomy Law and Political Compromise

Despite being a signatory of UNDRIP, Indonesia is not fully committed to the declaration. It has been mentioned that the Indonesian government argues that the concept of indigenous peoples is not applicable in Indonesia, as the country has more than 500 ethnic groups. In the eyes of the Indonesian government, all Indonesians are indigenous and thus have the same rights (Tambunan, interview, 2022; AMAN, 2017). The same argument also applies in Papua: the government simply views Papuan peoples as part of Indonesia's 500 ethnic groups. This overlooks the fact that Indonesia has already recognised the existence of indigenous peoples in Article 18 B of the 1945 Constitution, implicitly including indigenous Papuans.

Moreover, Indonesia also did not support the recommendation to ratify ILO Convention 169 (ILO 169) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. ILO 169 is the major binding international convention concerning Indigenous and tribal peoples, and is the forerunner of UNDRIP. The objective of this convention is to protect indigenous peoples' lands and resources. This means it could disrupt a nation's desire to exploit its natural resources for economic development. As a result, Indonesia still has not ratified ILO 169 because it could potentially allow millions of Indonesians to self-govern their own resources and lands (Bedner & Van Huis, 2008). Indonesia's robust economic development relies heavily on natural resource extraction, making the ratification of ILO 169 unlikely.

Papua is incredibly rich with natural resources, especially forests, mineral deposits, oil, and gas. This has made the region become a fundamental source of revenue for the Indonesian government. The largest mining operation is the Freeport-McMoRan mine in Mimika, run under the Indonesian company PT Freeport Indonesia. In 2020, the company reported total production of 0.8 billion pounds of copper and 0.8 million ounces of gold (Freeport-McMoran, 2020). This makes the mine one of the world's largest copper and gold mines for Freeport-McMoRan.

With this in the background, special autonomy (*otsus*) is thus seen as a compromise between the Indonesian government and indigenous Papuans in the fraught space of political contestation over West Papua's place within the nation. There are various literature to analyze Special Autonomy Law of 2001 (MacLeod, 2007; 2011; Aspinall & Fealy, 2004), all agreed that the policy is an avenue for Indonesia central government to preserve Papua within the Indonesian nation. *Otsus* is, therefore, a way for the Indonesian government to deal with the main causes of conflict in Papua but still within the framework of the Indonesian state. In preambular paragraph (f), the Special Autonomy Law stipulates that "the administration and development of the Papua Province has not complied with the feeling of justification, has not yet achieved prosperity for the whole community, has not yet fully supported legal enforcement and has not yet shown respect to human rights in Papua Province, in particular

the Papua community". In other words, *otsus* was adopted to respond to the sense of injustice felt by indigenous Papuans.

On the other hand, *otsus* can be seen as a partial implementation of UNDRIP. The Special Autonomy Law was drafted by Papuan leaders and intellectuals, denoting a new Indonesian approach toward Papua and marking a new stage of the Papuan struggle for their rights (McGibbon, 2004; Macleod, 2007; 2011). The law gave Papua special authority, political, cultural, economic, and special revenue. Additionally, through *otsus*, Indonesia has recognised the terms '*orang asli Papua*' ('original Papuan people') and '*masyarakat adat*' ('customary societies') in Article 1 of the Special Autonomy Law, meaning the government explicitly recognises indigenous Papuans' existence and rights.

The Indonesian government and Papuan peoples have different interpretations of the concept of indigenous peoples. For indigenous Papuans, *adat* and the representation of *adat* communities (specifically *orang asli Papua* [OAP] in the Papuan People's Assembly [*Majelis Rakyat Papua* or MRP], the institution which oversees the implementation of special autonomy in Papua), as stated in the Special Autonomy Law in articles 19-25, accommodates the Papuan peoples' demands for sovereignty and recognition of their identities as Indigenous Papuans. In contrast, although the Indonesian government indeed gave increased recognition and accommodation for Papuan identity, this was only seen as a way of strengthening indigenous Papuans' trust in the state (Ruhyanto, 2016; Macleod 2007; 2011). These differing interpretations lead to the Indonesian government and the Papuan peoples' holding different ideas on how to fulfil the rights of indigenous Papuans, especially since the power held by the MRP is ambiguous and restricted, it requires consultation and approval from government on issues dealing with customary rights (Imbiri, 2022).

The special autonomy package was designed to support greater Papuan self-rule but within the framework of the Indonesian state. Under special autonomy, tax revenue generated by resource projects that previously went to the central government in Jakarta was supposed to return to the provincial government in Papua. The special autonomy law also allowed Papuan symbols, such as the morning star flag, previously associated with independence movement and banned by the government, to be displayed, while structural mechanisms such as the MRP were instituted to facilitate a measure of Papuan self-rule.

However, the implementation of special autonomy has not been especially successful. This is for several reasons, including the lack of capacity within civil service in Papua, endemic corruption by local government leaders at the district and regency levels, and the failure of the central and provincial governments to implement various legal mechanisms that would enable policy to be operationalised. Progress toward self-rule has also been hampered by disunity and fragmentation among the people of Papua, and although the non-violent movement for self-determination and independence continues, competition and factionalism among resistance organisations have mitigated against success (MacLeod, 2007).

A culture of impunity, ongoing human rights violations by Indonesian police and military, and a confusing and contradictory policy mix eventually led to Jakarta's decision to divide the territory into two separate provinces in 2013 and again in 2022, bringing the total

number of Papuan provinces to five. Papuans have been profoundly disappointed and frustrated with the splitting up of the region into additional administrative areas, mainly because the government has not entered into genuine dialogue with them on the issues. In 1999, the then-province of Irian Jaya (which changed its name to Papua Province in 2000) only had nine regencies. By 2012, Papua was made up of two provinces (Papua and West Papua) and 42 regencies/cities. Now in 2022, the Indonesian parliament has agreed on a bill to further sub-divide the region, adding three new provinces: South Papua, Central Papua, and Highland Papua. Suppose the bill passes next year, after *pemekaran* (proliferation of administrative regions). In that case, the total number of provinces in Papua will be seven and more than 72 regency/cities with a total population of only 3.6 million people (Asmara, CNBC Indonesia, 2022).

Despite these changes, Papuans have obtained no power to manage key issues such as transmigration or mining and development that threatens their livelihoods, lands, and natural resources. Ultimately, special autonomy has failed to address the underlying causes of injustice in Papua. The government must move beyond *ad hoc* policy development in responding to Papuan issues and cease relying on the armed forces to sustain control in Papua.

By drawing the contested concept of special autonomy between the Indonesian government and Papuans, we illustrate that UNDRIP is very challenging to implement. In addition, it proves that UNDRIP is too vague, so the government interprets UNDRIP based on their own interests. The conception of Indigenous peoples in UNDRIP is, therefore, unable to represent indigenous peoples comprehensively.

Marginalisation, Impoverishment, and Depopulation of Indigenous Papuans

Since Papua's integration to Indonesia in 1963, and especially followed by the Act of Free Choice in 1969, the composition of the region's population has significantly altered with the influx of Indonesian migrants. There are two types of migrants coming to Papua. First are the migrants brought into Papua by the Indonesian government under the transmigration program. From 1964 to 1999, nearly 250,000 households (over 500,000 people) have settled in Papua in 200 settlements or villages built by the government (Scott & Tebay, 2006). For the Indonesian government, transmigration is pursued to reduce poverty and undertake social engineering around promoting the Indonesian identity. However, the transmigration program has failed to alleviate poverty and strengthen nationalism. Conversely, this program marginalised indigenous Papuans and created economic disparities between migrants and local Papuan (McGibbon, 2006; Elmslie, Webb-Gannon, & King, 2015). For Papuan people, the transmigration program also means the presence of a larger military force, increased deforestation, a large number of settlements for non-Papuan migrants, and land grabbing (McGibbon, 2006).

The second type of migrant is those who migrate of their own accord and using their own means. The majority are better educated and have more skills than the local Papuans, and quickly come to play a dominant role in Papuan society. They excel in trading, services,

construction, and contracting, and all government offices and private companies in Papua are now dominated by migrants.

As a result of migration, Papuans are becoming strangers in their land, with tens of thousands of migrants coming to the region every year. According to the 2010 census, Papua's population was 3.6 million: 2.83 million in Papua Province and 760,000 in West Papua Province. Based on historical growth rates, it is estimated that the 2010 population consisted of 52% indigenous Papuans and 48% non-Papuans. Elmslie (2010) stated that Papuans are becoming a minority in towns and urban areas of Papua, with the non-Papuan urban population in excess of 70%, while in rural and remote areas, Papuans remain the majority. Similarly, Ananta, Utami, and Handayani (2016) found that ethnic heterogeneity in the province of Papua and West Papua is very high (0.91), although the ethnic polarisation index is low (0.29). As in many other regions in Indonesia where migration is high, resentment toward migrants is widespread in Papua.

The phenomenon of depopulation is also triggered by difficulties experienced by indigenous Papuans to effectively access national development programs. As previously mentioned, civil servant positions in Papua are dominated by non-Papuans, and even the provincial houses of representatives are filled by non-Papuans. Meanwhile, migrants easily adapt and readily participate in the massive development activities taking place in Papua, in comparison with indigenous Papuans, who are not prepared for the large inflow of investment into Papua.

Finally, indigenous Papuans are further marginalised because their customary council is weakened by the government. The Indonesian government only recognises the Papua Indigenous Peoples' Institution (*Lembaga Masyarakat Adat Papua*), a government-controlled institution, and have rejected the DAP (Kusumaryati, 2019). This has triggered horizontal conflict among Papuan peoples within the scramble for natural resources, positions, and funds.

Land Grabbing, and the Violation of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent Principle

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is a principle recognised by both UNDRIP and ILO 169. The principle has become the legal foundation for Indigenous peoples to negotiate projects that affect their rights to land, livelihoods, social traditions, natural resources, and so on (FAO, 2016). Hence, FPIC is an essential tool to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

The 2011 Special Autonomy Law stipulates in Article 43 that companies are required to reach agreement with indigenous Papuans if they try to access indigenous communal land (*tanah ulayat*). In practice, however, legal procedures are not in line with the FPIC principles (ICP & the Westpapua-Netzwerk, 2021). As a result, land rights violations are rampant in Papua and have been documented across the region. The majority relate to plantation companies running their business operations on Indigenous communal land, and some natural resource companies in Papua even reportedly obtained their operational licenses before receiving the FPIC of the local Indigenous communities (ICP & the Westpapua-

Netzwerk, 2021). FPIC is required before the approval and/or beginning of any project to ensure the collective rights of Papuan peoples to self-determination and to their lands, territories, natural resources, and other rights.

Logging, mining, and plantation companies are valuable to the Indonesian government because they contribute significantly to national revenue and create labour opportunities in remote areas. In Papua, these operations are often under the protection of security forces, who consider the investment as vital assets for the state. Accordingly, security forces often act in the company's interests and readily resort to repressive acts when conflict between local communities and the company occurs.

As of 2020, the government has approved concessions for 1,080,1961 hectares across Papua and West Papua provinces, prior to the decision to further split the area into three additional provinces (ICP & the Westpapua-Netzwerk, 2021). Currently, there are 60 agricultural companies with operational licenses in Papua (Al Rahab, interview, 2022). The number of requests is expected to increase in the coming years as the central government continues to support mega projects such as the Merauke Integrated Food Estate Enterprise in the southern part of the island.

Major issues associated with private companies are broken promises, fraud, and inadequate compensation for land. Companies frequently fail to keep their promises to provide jobs, improve infrastructure, and build health care and education facilities. If communities decide to claim their rights, the local government and its responsible institutions often fail to take a neutral position. The same applies to the police and military, who are among the most critical stakeholders in land rights conflicts in Papua.

Land grabbing in the region is the primary motive for the state to exploit natural resources. Since the ratification of Law no. 11 of 1967 concerning Mining and Law no. 1 of 1967 concerning Foreign Investment, profits from land grabs were not only obtained by the central government but also by multinational corporations such as PT Freeport Indonesia in Papua.

However, the economic development logic pushed by the central government does not always work successfully for local governments and communities in Papua. For example, in 2021, the government of West Papua Province revoked permits for 12 oil palm concessions in five districts, covering a total of 267,857 hectares (Jong, 2021). This step was taken after an audit was taken of the winning bidding company for the oil palm concession. The audit found administrative and legal violations, such as the lack of necessary permits and abandoned lands. The action of the West Papua government led to protests by various indigenous groups in West Papua because it can threaten the sustainability of forests that related to indigenous Papuans life. Indigenous Papuans are fighting for the recognition of land rights and defending their territory against natural resource companies. On that account, it can be concluded that the state's approach to extract Papua's natural resources is not in line with the needs of the local government nor the Indigenous people.

Conclusions

The research analyses how, even though the Indonesian government supports UNDRIP, the human rights situation in Papua has continued to deteriorate and the fulfilment of fundamental rights of Indigenous Papuans has declined. The problem of uncontrolled migration, absence of the rule of law, and extreme level of corruption remains widespread across Papua. The Indonesian government's development strategy lacks an indigenous perspective and, as a result, causes continued conflict and human rights violations.

In the implementation of UNDRIP, there is a condition that can be called the "Asian Controversy", where many countries, especially in the Asian region, agree with and ratify UNDRIP, yet do not recognise the existence of Indigenous peoples in their homelands. This controversy can be explained in several arguments. First, the rejection of the concept of Indigenous peoples arose from states who claimed that all their people are indigenous peoples who have long lived in the territory of the country, so this norm is not applicable. Second, the incompatibility of definitions of indigenous people with the country's constitutions, with the exception for a small part of the population who are immigrants. Third, the implementation of UNDRIP is not inappropriate with the countries' internal policies.

Therefore, for some scholars, UNDRIP is considered as a counter-productive human rights instrument (Merlan, 2009). This argument is based on the fact that UNDRIP has a progressive agenda that attempts to prioritise implementing human rights for Indigenous peoples, yet the debate over the concept of indigenous peoples has led to some states only agreeing to recognise the norm without implementing it.

This controversy corresponds to Indonesia's condition, where the government has refused to recognize the special needs of groups who identify themselves as indigenous peoples. However, the issue of special autonomy law for Papuans can be interpreted as that the Indonesian government has a strong interest in accommodating the basic rights of indigenous peoples in Papua. It is driven by the state's institutionalization of the customary council (Anderson, 2015), their basic rules, as well prioritization of indigenous Papuans to fulfil the fundamental rights in their territory.

The research analyses the situation in Papua in an attempt to bridge a small part of UNDRIP's vision with the objectives of the Special Autonomy Law. It finds that the political will of the state still has a large influence on the implementation of special autonomy, which is a legal product of the central government to resolve the conflict in Papua. Therefore, any action to accommodate the rights and welfare of Indigenous Papuans can be interpreted as efforts by the central government to minimise potential conflict.

In conclusion, the struggle for indigenous rights in Papua requires building and strengthening effective and accountable institutions at all levels. However, the continued failure to uphold the promotion and protection by the revolutionised concept of understanding human rights is, in addition to (lack of) political will, a significant obstacle. This concept argues that human rights are indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated.

Furthermore, although liberal constructivism provides a better theoretical framework regarding the importance of re-defining world politics and challenges of the nation-state system, this perspective is inadequate for broadening understanding of historical, cultural, and political context. In brief, it is argued that further research beyond the liberal constructivism approach is required to understand the concept of indigenous people fully.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Muhammad Iqbal Yunazwardi, Arivia Dara Yuliestiana, Irvan Aladip Mahfuddin for handy comments on the original draft of this article. I extend my gratitude to Amirrudin Ar Rahab (the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission- KOMNAS HAM), Abdon Nababan (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara/AMAN - The Alliance of Indigenous People of the Archipelago), Leonard Imbiri (Dewan Adat Papua/DAP - Papua Traditional Council), Ibu Elleanora Tambunan (Koordinator Fungsi Hak Sipil dan Politik, Direktorat HAM dan Kemanusiaan Ditjen Kerjasama Multilateral, Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia - Coordinator of the Civil and Political Rights Function, Directorate of Human Rights and Humanity, Directorate General of Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia), Bernada Meteray from Universitas Cenderawasih for insight and update of the issues of Indigenous rights (UNDRIP), Indigenous Papua, and Transnational/ national advocacy on the issues of indigenous people as well as policies related to these issues.

References

- Anderson, Bobby. (2015). *Papua's Insecurity: State Failure in the Indonesian Periphery*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
- Anderson, J. E. (2015). Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition* (pp. 769-778). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.64078-3>
- Ananta, A., Utami, D. R. W. W., & Handayani, N. B. (2016). Statistics on ethnic diversity in the land of Papua, Indonesia. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 3(3), 458-474. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.143>
- Asmara, Chandra G. (August 1, 2022). Sah! Jokowi Teken Pembentukan 3 Provinsi Baru Papua, Ini Dia. *CNBC Indonesia*. <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20220801085207-4-360015/sah-jokowi-teken-pembentukan-3-provinsi-baru-papua-ini-dia>
- Aspinall, E & Fealy, G. (2004). *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia Decentralisation and Democratisation*. Singapore: ISEAS.

- Alva-Arévalo, A. (2019). A critical evaluation of the domestic standards of the right to prior consultation under the UNDRIP: lessons from the Peruvian case, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1-2), 234-248, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2018.1562914>
- Baldwin, D. (2002). Power and international relations. In W. Carlsnaes T. Risse, & B. A., Simmons *Handbook of international relations* (pp. 177-191). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781848608290.n9>
- Barnett, M., & Duvall, R. (2005). Power in international politics. *International Organization*, 59(1), 39-75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818305050010>
- Bedner, A., & Van Huis, S. (2008). The return of the native in Indonesian law: Indigenous communities in Indonesian legislation. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia and Oceania*, 164(2), 165-193. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003655>
- Blades, J. (2020). *West Papua: The Issue That Won't Go Away for Melanesia*. The Lowy Institute
- Bertrand, J. (2011). Indigenous peoples rights as a strategy of ethnic accommodation: Contrasting experiences of Cordillerans and Papuans in the Philippines and Indonesia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(5), 850-869. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2010.537358>
- Cambou, D. (2019). The UNDRIP and the legal significance of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination: a human rights approach with a multidimensional perspective, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1-2), 34-50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2019.1585345>
- Chao, S. (2021). Can there be justice here? *Borderlands*, 20(1), 11-48. <https://doi.org/10.21307/borderlands-2021-002>
- Chauvel, R & Bakti, I. N. (2004). *The Papua Conflict: Jakarta's Perception and Policies*. Washington: East-West Center Washington.
- Claridge, L. (2019). The approach to UNDRIP within the African Regional Human Rights System. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1-2), 267-280, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2019.1609761>
- Croxton, D. (1999). The peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the origins of sovereignty. *The International History Review*, 21(3), 569-591, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1999.9640869>
- de Almagro, M. M. (2018). Lost boomerangs, the rebound effect and transnational advocacy networks: a discursive approach to norm diffusion. *Review of International Studies*, 44(4), 672-693. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000086>

- Elisabeth, A. (2017, November 22). Understanding the root problem in Papua and its solution. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/understanding-the-root-problem-in-papua-and-its-solution-87951>
- Elmslie, J., Webb-Gannon, C. B. & King, P. (2015). *Get up, Stand up: West Papua Stands up for its Rights*. (Report). Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, The University of Sydney.
- Elsam. (2003). *Potret HAM Papua*. Jayapura: Elsam Papua.
- FAO. (2016). *Free, Prior and Informed Consent: An Indigenous People's Right and Good Practice for Local Communities*. <https://www.fao.org/3/i6190e/i6190e.pdf>
- Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). International norm dynamics and political change. *International Organization*, 52(4), 887-917.
- Freeport-Mcmoran. (2020). *2020 Annual Report: Freeport Foremost in Copper*. Phoenix: Freeport-Mcmoran
- Gietzelt, D. (1988). The Indonesianization of West Papua, *Oceania*, 59, 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.1002/J.1834-4461.1989.TB02322.X>
- Glasius, M., Schalk, J., & De Lange, M. (2020) Illiberal norm diffusion: How do governments learn to restrict non-governmental organizations? *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(2), 453-468. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaa019>
- Hadiprayitno, I. (2017). The limit of narratives: Ethnicity and indigenous rights in Papua, Indonesia. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 24(1), 1-23.
- Heryanto, A. (2018). Decolonising Indonesia, past and present. *Asian Studies Review*, 42(4), 607-625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2018.1516733>
- ICP & the Westpapua-Netzwerk. (2021). *Human Rights in West Papua*. Wuppertal: International Coalition for Papua
- Imbiri, L. (2022, April, 5). Personal communication [Personal interview]
- Indrawan, M., Sumule, A., Wijaya, A., Kapisa, N., Wanggai, F., Ahmad, M., ..., Heatubun, C. D. (2019). A time for locally driven development in Papua and West Papua. *Development in Practice*, 29(6), 817-823. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2019.1609907>
- Isa, F. G. (2019). The UNDRIP: An increasingly robust legal parameter. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1-2), 7-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2019.1568994>
- Jong, H. N. (2021, June 3). West Papua revokes quarter of a million hectares of land from palm oil. *Mongabay*. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/west-papua-revokes-quarter-of-a-million-hectares-of-land-from-palm-oil/>

- Kadir, M. Y. A. (2015). Revisiting self-determination conflicts in Indonesia: An international law perspective. *Indonesia Law Review*, 5(2), 123. <https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v5n2.116>
- Karim, M. F. (2020). The limits of global human rights promotion: Indonesia's ambivalent roles in the UN Human Rights Council. *Contemporary Politics*, 26(3), 351-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2020.1720065>
- Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn. (1998). *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press
- Kirsch, S. (2010). Ethnographic representation and the politics of violence in west Papua. *Critique of Anthropology*, 30(1), 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X09363213>
- King, J. M., & Johnson, A in Mahly, L. (2018). West Papua Exposed: An Abandoned Non-Self-Governing pr Trust Territory. *Griffith Journal of Law & Human Dignity*, 6(2), 70-106.
- Kingsbury, B. (1998). "Indigenous Peoples" in international law: A constructivist approach to the Asian controversy. *The American Journal of International Law*, 92(3), 414-457. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2997916>
- Klotz, A., & Prakash, D. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Kluge, E. (2020). West Papua and the international history of decolonization, 1961-69. *International History Review*, 42(6), 1155-1172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2019.1694052>
- Krause, S. R. (2005). *Freedom Beyond Sovereignty Reconstructing Liberal Individualism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kusumaryati, V. (2020). Adat institutionalisation, the state and the quest for self-determination in West Papua. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 21(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2019.1670238>
- Lantang, F., & Tambunan, E. M. B. (2020). The internationalization of West Papua issue and its impact on Indonesia's policy to the south pacific region. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 8(1), 41-59. <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v8i1.6447>
- Lawson, S. (2016). West Papua, Indonesia and the Melanesian Spearhead Group: competing logics in regional and international politics. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 70(5), 506-524. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2015.1119231>
- Lenzerini, F. (2019). Implementation of the UNDRIP around the world: achievements and future perspectives. The outcome of the work of the ILA Committee on the Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(1-2), 51-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2019.1568993>

- Li, T. M. (2000). Society for comparative studies in society and history articulating indigenous identity in Indonesia: Resource politics and the tribal slot author. *Society and History*, 42(1). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500002632>
- MacGibbon, R. (2004). *Secessionist Challenges in Aceh and Papua: Is Special Autonomy the Solution?* Policy Studies-10. Washington D.C: East-West Center Washington
- MacLeod, J. (2007). Self-determination and autonomy: The meanings of freedom in West Papua, *Security and Development in the Pacific Islands: Social Resilience in Emerging States*, London: Boulder.
- Macleod, J. (2011). *The Struggle for Self-Determination in West Papua (1969-present)*. <http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/>
- Mandowen, W. (2005). West Papua and the right to self-determination: A challenge to human rights. In T. Rathgeber (ed.), *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in West Papua. A Study on Social Reality and Political Perspectives*. Wuppertal: Foedus Verlag.
- McGibbon, R. (2006). *Pitfalls of Papua: Understanding the Conflicts and Its Place in Australia-Indonesia Relations*. New Youth Wales: Lowy Institute
- Meteray, B. (2022, April, 6) Personal communication [Personal interview]
- Mitchell, M. I. & Yuzdepski, D. (2019). Indigenous peoples, UNDRIP and land conflict: An African perspective, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 23(8), 1356-1377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2019.1612374>
- Mollet, J. A. (2011). La dynamique des politiques gouvernementales locales modernes et du gouvernement économique en papouasie occidentale. *Development in Practice*, 21(2), 232-243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2011.543273>
- Musgrave, T. D. (2015). An analysis of the 1969 Act of Free Choice in West Papua. In C. Chinkin & F. Baetens, *Sovereignty, Statehood and State Responsibility* (pp. 209-228). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781107360075.017>
- Nababan, A. (2022, April 9). Personal communication [Personal interview].
- OHCHR. (2022). Indonesia: UN Experts Sound Alarm on Serious Papua Abuses, Call for Urgent Aid. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/indonesia-un-experts-sound-alarm-serious-papua-abuses-call-urgent-aid>
- Poppe, A. E. & Wolff, J. (2017). The contested spaces of civil society in a plural world: Norm contestation in the debate about restrictions on international civil society support. *Contemporary Politics*, 23(4), 469-488, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1343219>
- Robinson, A. M. (2020). Governments must not wait on courts to implement UNDRIP rights concerning Indigenous sacred sites: Lessons from Canada and Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 24(10), 1642-1665. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2020.1747441>

- Ruhyanto, A. (2016). The perils of prosperity approach in Papua. *Peace Review*, 28(4), 490-498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2016.1237126>
- Rahab, Al A. (2022, April, 11) Personal communication [Personal interview].
- Sanders, D. (1989). The UN working group on indigenous populations. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 11(3), 406-433. <https://doi.org/10.2307/762100>
- Scott, C., & Tebay, N. (2005). The West Papua conflict and its consequences for the Island of New Guinea: Root causes and the campaign for Papua, land of peace. *Round Table*, 94(382), 599-612. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358530500331826>
- Schippers, B. (2018). *Critical Perspectives on Human Rights*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Setiawan, K. M. P., & Spires, A. J. (2021). Global concepts, local meanings: How civil society interprets and uses human rights in Asia. *Asian Studies Review*, 45(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2020.1849028>
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333-339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Situmorang, M. (2010). *International Dimensions of the West Papua Complexities*
- Soetjipto, A. (2018). *Transnasionalisme: Peran Aktor Non-Negara dalam Hubungan Internasional*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor
- Soetjipto, A. W., & Yuliestiana, A. T. D. (2020). Transnational relations and activism in international relations: Debates and consensus in literature. *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional*, 22(1), 142. <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v22i1.479>
- Tambunan, E. (2022, April, 13) Personal communication [Personal interview]
- The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: West ... - ohchr.org. (n.d.). https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/SR/Urban-areas_Submissions/Indigenous_Organisations_Civil_Society/solidarity-for-indigenous-papuans.pdf
- Torraco, R. J. (2005) Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4, 356-367. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283>
- UNCERD. (February 20, 2006). 1730th meeting (sixty-eighth session), CERD A/62/18. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f62%2f18&Lang=en
- Wangge, H. R., & Lawson, S. (2021). The West Papua issue in Pacific regional politics: explaining Indonesia's foreign policy failure. *Pacific Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1931417>

- Whall, H. (2003). The challenge of indigenous peoples: The unfinished business of decolonization. *Round Table*, 372, 635-659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0035853032000150645>
- Widjojo, M. S. (2010). *Papua Road Map: Negotiating the Past, Improving the Present, and Securing the Future*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor
- Septiari, D. (2019, September 4). UN human rights chief calls for dialogue with Papuans. *The Jakarta Post*. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/09/04/un-human-rights-chief-calls-for-dialogue-with-papuans.html>.
- Zimmermann, L. (2014). Same same or different? norm diffusion between resistance, compliance, and localization in post-conflict states. *International Studies Perspectives*, 17(1), 98-115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12080>

JOURNAL OF ASEAN STUDIES

WWW.IR.BINUS.AC.ID/JAS

ISSN 2338-1361 (print) / 2338-1353 (online)

Volume 10 Number 1 August 2022



JAS

JOURNAL OF ASEAN STUDIES

Volume 10 Number 1 August 2022