External Perceptions and Indonesia's Leadership Role in Indo-Pacific Maritime Affairs

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Abstrak

Visi Indonesia untuk menjadi pemimpin kawasan dalam hal kemaritiman telah menjadi isu yang diperdebatkan oleh akademisi maupun politis. Beberapa akademisi berargumen bahwa Indonesia tidak dapat menjalankan peran sebagai pemimpin kawasan dalam hal kemaritiman karena lemahnya kehendak politik, kurangnya sumber daya, serta lemahnya persepsi diri sebagai pemimpin. Dengan menggunakan kerangka analisis teori peran, tulisan ini menghadirkan jawaban alternatif terhadap isu kepimimpinan regional Indonesia dalam hal kemaritiman. Tulisan ini berargumen bahwa Indonesia memang memandang diri sebagai pemimpin kawasan dalam hal kemaritiman, namun masalah dalam menjalankan kepemimpinan tersebut terletak pada lemahnya persepsi eksternal atas kepemimpinan Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Indonesia; Kemaritiman; Kepemimpinan; Indo-Pasifik; Teori peran.

Abstract
Indonesia's aspirations of becoming a leader in regional maritime affair has become a point of contention among scholars and politicians alike. Many scholars argue that Indonesia is unable to effectively take on the role of a regional leader in maritime affairs due to weak political will, lack of resource, or lack of self-perception as both a maritime state and regional leader. Building upon the analytical framework of role theory, this paper brings forth a different answer to the question of Indonesia's leadership in regional maritime affairs. This paper argues that Indonesia does view itself as a maritime state and regional leader, and that the issue of Indonesia's leadership is rooted in the lack of external perception towards Indonesia's leadership in regional maritime affairs.

Keywords: Indonesia; Maritime affairs; Leadership; Indo-Pacific; Role theory.

Introduction

The conception of the Indo-Pacific, can be traced to the works of Karl Haushofer an early twentieth century German geopolitician. Haushofer identified the Indo-Pacific as a unified region based on the premises of a similarity in many aspects, including social-political ones, namely ethnographic, historical, and political features. The political feature of the region is highlighted by Haushofer, stating that political entities in the region such as China, Japan, India and other colonised nations at that time were potential allies for Germany as these nations had a fervent anti-west sentiment (Li, 2022). Fast forward to the Cold War, the concept of the Indo-Pacific became less prominent as the American conception of the Asia-Pacific region emerged. Likewise, the emergence of the Asia-Pacific region was political in nature with the United States (US) linking its western maritime frontier with Asia to justify presence and involvement in the region (Dirlik, 1992).

The prominence of the Indo-Pacific region was later revived in 2007 when Shinzo Abe, then Prime Minister of Japan, delivered a speech to the Indian congress. In the speech titled "Confluence of the Two Seas", Shinzo Abe stated that the Indian and Pacific oceans have become "coupled" as "seas of freedom and prosperity" and further mentioning that both countries can and have to nurture and enrich the region in the pursuit of freedom and prosperity (Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007). Shinzo Abe's thoughts on the Indo-Pacific later manifested as part of the Japanese foreign policy, particularly in the field of security with the launch of the "Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation" policy. The US formalised the Indo-Pacific as a region of interest in 2019 with the "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision" document. This period saw a proliferation of foreign policy strategies towards the Indo-Pacific region: Australia included a whole chapter dedicated for the Indo-Pacific in their Foreign Policy White Paper, China's Maritime Silk Road, and India's Act East and Security and Growth for All also encompasses this region. These strategies are a testament to the importance of the Indo-Pacific in contemporary global politics. Another state keen on this rediscovered importance of the region is Indonesia (Hakata & Cannon, 2021).

During the 2014 presidential elections in Indonesia, Joko Widodo who would become Indonesia's President, announced his visions of Indonesia as a maritime state with the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) strategy. Since then, the concept has become a point of contention between scholars and politicians alike. There has been criticism towards the implementation of the strategy such as the works of Liow (2017) and Weatherbee (2019). Some of the critics (Wicaksana & Wardhana, 2021; Rosyidin, 2017) argue that the GMF was more of a political jargon to win over votes in domestic political contestation rather than an actual guideline for Indonesia's foreign policy in the maritime domain. Nevertheless, the GMF persisted in academic and policy discourse. In 2022, the Indonesian government even issued a policy document titled "*Rencana Aksi Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia*" or Indonesia's Maritime Policy Action Plan. This document, along with the previous *Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* or Indonesian Maritime Policy, points out Indonesia's aspiration to become a regional leader in maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific region (Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investments of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017; President of Indonesia, 2022).

In this case, Indonesia seems to be fighting an uphill battle against the likes of China and the US for leadership in regional maritime affairs. Apart from this, Indonesia also faces the challenge of convincing other powers in the region such as Japan and India of its leadership. In its closest vicinity Indonesia also needs to show leadership towards Southeast Asian states. This paper seeks to analyse the strength of Indonesia's leadership in regional maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific through the lens of role theory. While numerous works such as Rosyidin (2021), Agastia (2021), Dannahauer (2022) and Parameswaran (2020) have engaged in this topic,

these analyses tend to focus on Indonesia's inward-looking identity and role-perception as a leader in regional maritime affairs.

Departing from such a finding, this paper analyses how other actors' perception towards Indonesia has hindered the state's ambitions for regional leadership in maritime affairs. In doing so, this paper is divided into several parts. The first part discusses Indonesia's self -identification of regional leadership in the Indo-Pacific. The second part unpacks competing regional maritime strategies in the Indo-Pacific. In the third part, this paper shows the views of regional actors towards leadership in maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific. Finally, the paper delivers a conclusion on the findings and their implications.

Analytical Framework

Role Theory

The theoretical postulations of the role theory are based on the constructivist paradigm of International Relations. Role theory emphasises on how an actor's identity affects its role in the international society. As a theory within the constructivist tradition, identity is viewed as something that is socially constructed rather than something that is given, meaning that identities are not something that comes naturally but rather the product of social processes. Sources of an actor's identity can be its history, interactions with other actors, as well as values from both within and outside the actor itself (Adler-Nissen, 2016). The historical experiences of actors often become sources of identity as it evokes a sense of belonging within the nation as well as the actor's purpose. Such historical accounts of are often used as a national myth, a narrative used to assert the actor's values and identity. These values and identity can then be altered and/or transferred upon interaction with other actors in a process known as socialisation. Socialisation is the process in which interaction between actors causes a transfer of information. Furthermore, this transfer of information will create intersubjectivity and thus acknowledgement of an actor's identity (Thies & Breuning, 2012; Epstein, 2011).

The identity of an actor itself is tied to the actor's role. A role is defined as a place and function occupied by an actor within the international society. The perception of an actor's identity determines how an actor acts within international society as identities carry with it the actor's values (Thies, 2012; Berenskoetter, 2017). There are several roles that actors can occupy within the international society which includes, but is not limited to, leader, follower, middle power, great power, norm entrepreneur, competitor, revisionist actor and so on (Harnisch, 2011). An example of how identity determines an actor's actions can be how Indonesia opposes Western powers during the early years of its independence. The identity itself is rooted in historical experiences regarding Western colonisation of Indonesia prior

to the state's existence. This shows how historical experiences create values and identity which in turn determines the actions of states.

External perception and Role

While the identity of actors in international relations may come from within the actor themselves, their identities need to be acknowledged by other actors in order for it to function. The ego may come up with an identity, but this identity needs to be confirmed by the alter in order to exist (Alexandrov, 2003). For example, the US identifies itself as a global leader and this identification is corroborated by other actors in their environment and thus this identity is solidified. However, this is not always the case as sometimes, an actor is subject to environmental ideational powers meaning that an identity can be imposed by the environment towards a certain actor. An example of this is North Korea that may not identify as an outlier state in the international system but is considered a pariah state by several states in the international system. In other cases, a state can promote a certain identity yet this identity is not recognized by other actors in the international system. In this case, the identity will have a weak existence (Fioramenti & Lucarelli, 2008).

The concept of intersubjectivity also apply for the roles that actors occupy within the international system. While states can aspire to occupy certain roles in the international system, acknowledgement from other actors is needed for that aspiration to be legitimate. In order to achieve the legitimation from other actors to occupy a role, an actor needs to fulfil the expectations that are tied to said role. Fulfilling these expectations will grant an actor credibility to occupy a role (Nabers, 2011).

Regional Leadership

The role of the regional leader encompasses several functions that need to be performed by actors. These functions include ensuring the cohesion and stability of a region, protecting and ensuring the achievement of regional interests, and the ability to transform or influence change in the region. In addition, regional leaders also need to be able to provide and distribute "public goods" in the international system. In this case, public goods can be defined as security, stability, access, and connectivity (Flemes & Lobell, 2015). In order to perform these functions, there are several traits that a regional leader has to have. These traits include a superior capability or the image of superiority in certain aspects, having the image of a traditional leader, being perceived as an authoritative voice, and the ability to shape regional policies (Holsti, 1970).

Furthermore, there are two forms of leadership in international relations. The first is a form of leadership rooted in material capabilities. This form of leadership is known as structural leadership. This form of leader is able to create international

political arrangements as well as operationalise them. Structural leaders should also be able to troubleshoot problems in the implementation of international political arrangements. The second form of leadership is rooted in non-material capabilities that are either normative or intellectual in nature or both. This form of leadership is known as ideational leadership. This form of leader is able to consolidate the interests of other states in the system and also create the blueprint of international arrangements (Young, 1991).

Research Method

A qualitative approach is used in this research in order to support the needs of the analytical framework that focuses on analysis of identity and roles. This method is adequate for the needs of the research which seeks to understand how external perceptions of role and identity impact how an actor can occupy a certain role. In this case, that is the external perception of Indo-Pacific states with stake on maritime issues towards Indonesia's leadership role in regional maritime affairs in particular and leadership in regional affairs in general (i.e. which actors are fit to occupy the role). The research will use data from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources will include documents on government policy and regulations. While the secondary data will consist of journal articles, books, news, and official reports. Data will be on Indonesia identity and role as regional leader in maritime affairs as well as other regional states' policy and perceptions towards leadership in maritime affairs. This data is important to gauge external perception towards Indonesia's regional leadership in maritime affairs.

Discussion

Indonesia's National Role Perception in Regional Maritime Affairs

Analysis towards policy documents as well as academic literature on Indonesia's maritime affairs gives an image of how Indonesia perceives its role: a leader in regional maritime affairs. This perception is closely linked to Indonesia's self-identification as a maritime state which in turn is linked to Indonesia's national myth, historical experiences, values, and geographical conditions (Rosyidin, 2021). Indonesia's national myth and historical experiences are often evoked for the promotion and legitimization of Indonesia's maritime aspirations. In the past, several empires ruled over the archipelago which was then known as Nusantara, a word that is still popularly used today in Indonesia. The word refers to the archipelagic nature of the territory which is the location of many islands (Faqih, 2015; Nugroho, 2014). The word Nusantara first appeared in ancient Hindu-Javanese scripts describing the Majapahit Empire. The Majapahit empire is considered to be Indonesia's predecessor due to the territorial span of the empire which covers the Malay Islands, the islands between Indo-China and Australia.

The Majapahit Empire is not the only political entity that existed in what is modern day Indonesia. Several other empires have ruled over the archipelago or parts of it. Another empire is the Buddhist empire of Sriwijaya. The Sriwijaya Empire had territories that cover major parts of Sumatra, Java, and the Malayan Peninsula (Wolters, 2017). It also held control of the Malacca Strait and several other important trading routes at that time. The Sriwijaya Empire existed alongside the Kediri Empire which had control over major parts of what is now Eastern Indonesia. The two empires created a nexus that connected trade between the eastern part of modern Indonesia with mainland Asia. A common theme to be found among these empires, as well as many other social-political entities in pre-modern Indonesia, is that these people are closely connected to the maritime domain (Bottenborg, 2010).

The history of Indonesia's maritime affairs continued well into the independence movement era. Early on in Indonesia's independence, the state's maritime territories were not what it is like today. The Netherlands handed over sovereignty to the Indonesian government based on the *Territoriale Zeeën en Maritieme Kringen Ordonnantie 1939* which regulates Indonesia's maritime territory and environment. According to the regulation, Indonesia only has sovereignty over the waters that span three miles from the land of every island in the state. Based on this regulation, Indonesian maritime territories were divided by international waters and therefore ships of any nationality can sail these waters. This created security concerns for Indonesia as this means that foreign military vessels can be present between Indonesian islands and create problems for national territorial integrity and political unity. In response to such conditions, an Indonesian prime minister by the name of Djuanda Kartawidjaja put forward the idea that the seas between Indonesia's islands are not meant to separate the state, but to unite it. With this in mind, Indonesia negotiated for expansion of Indonesian sovereignty in the maritime domain. This was accepted by the United Nations and later regulated in the United Nations Convention On The Law of The Sea 1982. Djuanda's ideas are recognized as the Djuanda Declaration and remain an important part of Indonesia maritime history in terms of origins as well as diplomatic prowess (Ali & Sulistiyono, 2020).

The rich history of Indonesia's maritime identity has always been perpetuated within Indonesia. One way this is done is by teaching Indonesian students regarding Indonesia's history and the history of its predecessors which were narrated as maritime states which strengthens the identity within Indonesia (Sulistiyono, 2017). Furthermore, the Indonesian national myth concerning maritime affairs is mentioned from time to time by Indonesian government officials, both in remarks towards domestic and foreign audiences. This is done to also strengthen the image of Indonesia as a maritime power both domestically and internationally. This also indicates how the national myth of Indonesia has shaped

the way the state identifies itself, that is as a maritime power (Lampe, 2021; Prasetya et al., 2020).

Material sources of identity also shaped Indonesia's self-image as a maritime power. Geographically, Indonesia's identity is shaped by its shape, size, and location. Indonesia is considered to be the world's largest archipelago, and one of Indo-Pacifics largest states. The image and function of a regional maritime power is essential for Indonesia both politically, economically, and for the sake of security. Indonesia's geographic location is also often mentioned in discourse regarding Indonesia's identity. Indonesia is often said to be placed strategically at the crossroads of the world because it is located between the Indian and Pacific Ocean as well as between mainland Asia and the continent of Australia. The narrative that often accompanies this idea is that because Indonesia is located at the crossroads of the world, Indonesia has a strategic advantage in the maritime domain that has to be fully utilised by maximising maritime capabilities (Arif & Kurniawan, 2019). Being a large archipelago, it is almost imperative that Indonesia becomes a regional power.

Indonesia's self-identification as a maritime power in turn informs Indonesia's perception towards the role it holds in the international system, particularly in the Indo-Pacific maritime affairs, that is as a leader. The presumed role as a leader in regional maritime affairs informs Indonesia's actions on the matter. This is apparent in Indonesia's policies pertaining to regional maritime affairs. The *Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* or Indonesia Maritime Policy that was released in 2017 states that a regional geopolitical and geostrategic shift creates potential harm for both the region's stability as well as Indonesia's defence and security. In the face of such conditions, according to the Indonesia Maritime Policy document, Indonesia "must be able to display leadership in regional and global maritime affairs." Indonesia must also "play the role of the leader in creating a security architecture in Asia." The document also mentions Indonesia's maritime diplomacy policy. In the maritime diplomacy policy part of the *Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* document, leadership is the theme of two points out of seven. The first program mentions that Indonesia will increase leadership in bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation while the second one states that Indonesia will take a leading or active role in shaping international norms pertaining to maritime affairs (Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investments of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017; Office of the President of Indonesia, 2017).

An elaboration on Indonesia's policies to achieve regional leadership in maritime affairs is given in the *Rencana Aksi Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* or Indonesia Maritime Policy Action Plan. In this document, the Indonesian government starts to explicitly mention that the Indian Ocean is a region of increased power projection competition and the Indo-Pacific is a region of strategic interest for Indonesia. It is

also mentioned that despite the proliferation of regional maritime strategies or initiatives, Indonesia is to stay neutral and not take sides (Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investments of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Office of the President of Indonesia, 2022). Furthermore, the points about regional leadership in maritime affairs that is mentioned in the *Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* document is broken down into several actions that are shown below:

Table 1. Indonesia Policies to Strengthen Leadership in Regional Maritime Affairs (Office of the President of Indonesia, 2022)

No.	Activity	Objective	Expected Outcome
1.	Optimization of diplomacy related to international law and treaties	Strengthen Indonesia's leadership in international organisations and meetings related to fisheries and maritime affairs	Increased percentage of international cooperation documents in fisheries and maritime affairs
2.	Gathering international support for Indonesia membership in IMO Council Category	Indonesia becomes a member of the Category C Council of IMO	Indonesia becomes member of the Category C Council of IMO
3.	Indonesia to participate actively in the SPLOS, ISA, IORA, ASEAN Maritime Forum, AOIOP, meetings	Optimisation of diplomacy related to international laws and treaties	Participation in SPLOS meeting
4.	Garnering support for acceleration of the formation of the Archipelagic and Island State Forum as a treaty based organisation	Increase Indonesian leadership in international maritime affairs	Support for establishment of AIS as a treaty based organisation
5.	Indonesia's active participation in regional level forums in the field of safety and security at sea	Optimization of diplomacy regarding international laws and treaties	Participation in forums

6.	Participation of Indonesia in global forums in the field of safety and security at sea	Optimization of diplomacy regarding international laws and treaties	Participation in forums
7.	Indonesia's active participation in SEAMLEI	Optimization of diplomacy regarding international laws and treaties	Participation of Indonesia in SEAMLEI meetings
8.	Indonesia's active participation in bilateral and multilateral cooperations regarding safety and security at sea	Optimization of diplomacy regarding international laws and treaties	Commencement of diplomatic activities in the field of safety and security at sea
9.	Involvement in ASEAN Navy Chiefs Meeting, IONS, and WPNS	Gain support for national policy towards ASEAN centrality through active participation of the Indonesian Navy in defence cooperation. Create the positive image of Indonesia as an active and independent international actor	Increase in average number of recommendation or response towards Indonesia initiated ideas in the field of maritime defence. Indonesian Navy charimanship in the ANCM. Increased Indonesian Navy presence in IONS and WPNS
10.	Compiling of *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*	Optimization of diplomacy	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction policy document

| 11. | Supervision of fisheries resource management | Strengthening RPOA IUU to support sustainable fisheries and abolishment of IUUF in region | Adding two member states to RPOA IUU |
| 12. | Supervision of fisheries resource management | Strengthening RPOA IUU to support sustainable fisheries and abolishment of IUUF in region | Ratification of RPOA IUU documents |

From the activities outlined in Table 1, Indonesia seeks to become an active participant in forums and organisations that pertain to the matter of fisheries and maritime affairs. According to the program's objectives, these activities are meant to enact Indonesia's leadership in regional maritime affairs. These policies are tied to Indonesia's self-perception of identity and role in the international system, particularly at the regional level.

Competing Regional Actors and Maritime Strategies

Indonesia has to compete with several other states for leadership in the Indo-Pacific. So far, China and the US has been identified as major powers that are competing for leadership in the region. Other states include Australia, Japan, and India. The one thing that these states have in common is a clear grand strategy towards maritime governance in the Indo-Pacific. The US grand strategy in the Indo-Pacific is the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) which advocates for freedom of access and navigation of the Indo-Pacific oceans (US Department of State, 2019). The adoption of the FOIP concept in US foreign policy strategies formalises the Indo-Pacific as a region of strategic interest for the US. The goal of the FOIP is to strengthen the respect for sovereignty and independence in the Indo-Pacific, drive the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region, protect free, fair, and reciprocal trade, as well as strengthen and protect a rules-based order in the region. In addition to economic and political interests, the FOIP also guides US security interests in the Indo-Pacific. According to the US, the emergence of threats to security in the Indo-Pacific will have implications for the national security of the US (White House, 2022).

As a means of solidifying its leadership in the Indo-Pacific, the US has taken part in the establishment of multiple regional organisations, two notable ones being the Quadrilateral Alliance, better known as the Quad, and the AUKUS. The Quad

membership consists of the US, Australia, Japan, and India while the AUKUS, as the name suggests, consists of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US. These groups are focused on the issue of security and defence in the Indo-Pacific region and shows the US's ability in institutional building in the region as well as indicating the US has a vision for what the state wants for the future of the region. In other words, it shows that the US has a plan for what it wants the region to be and has the means to realise it (Kaura, 2020; Barnes & Makinda, 2022).

The US shows that it has the traits of what is termed "executive leader" in international relations. This sort of actor is characterised with the ability to create institutional arrangements as well as operationalize these arrangements. The US, as an executive leader, is capable of mobilising resources to create and operationalize regional institutional arrangements in the Indo-Pacific. This is evident in the establishment of several alliances as a means of achieving the goals of the FOIP (Chen & Wang, 2023).

Before the US developed minilateral cooperations in the region, The US already had a strong bilateral tie with Japan *vis-a-vis* the Indo-Pacific, even adopting the concept of the Indo-Pacific and the FOIP from Japan (Watanabe, 2019). US relations with Japan not only represents a strong US presence in the Indo-Pacific, it also shows that Japan is a regional power that is respected by a global major power. Inspiring the US, Japan's conception of the FOIP strategy also has the end goal of establishing and ensuring freedom of access and navigation in the Indo-Pacific. Japan also seeks to uphold democracy and rule- based order in the region as well as free and fair trade. "Free" in the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" also refers to the goal of ensuring social and political freedom in the Indo-Pacific region. In order to achieve the policy goals of the FOIP, the US utilises military, economic, and political strength in the region (Satake & Sahashi, 2020).

Japan's actions have so far shown its ability to occupy the role of what is termed the "ideational" or "intellectual" leader of the region. This sort of leadership role is characterised by the ability to formulate interests and consolidate them as well as creating and diffusing norms to other actors. Japan has so far been a leader in this respect, particularly by being able to influence major actors such as the US and India among others to align themselves with the FOIP framework (Suzuki, 2020).

Other than Japan, Australia can also be considered as an intellectual or ideational leader in the Indo-Pacific. The concept of the Indo-Pacific itself has been a part of foreign policy discourse in Australia throughout the 1950s, 1970s, and early 2000s. Australia's conception of the Indo-Pacific and middle-powership has made Australia an important strategic actor in the Indo-Pacific and a leader in some respects. Australia is a strong normative influence on regional cooperation frameworks. This includes the AEPC, CPTPP, RCEP, and the FOIP. These Initiatives are formulated by Australian scholars and policymakers and have

influenced other regional actors with significant impact for regional affairs (He & Feng, 2020).

Finally, China is also a strong contender for the regional leader role in the Indo-Pacific. While China is often antagonised by western powers and some states in the region (Brown et al., 2019), China is well positioned to lead a developing region. The Indo-Pacific mostly consists of developing states and China takes advantage of this by branding itself as the greatest developing state in the world (Wang, 2021). By doing this, China represents itself both as an equal partner to many developing states in the Indo-Pacific while also being a leader in regional development. This, along with a less complex method of aid, assistance, and investment provision to developing states has given China major influence in the Indo-Pacific (Gong, 2019).

China also has a comprehensive vision for the region, including in maritime affairs. China's Maritime Silk Road or Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative policies have provisions for cooperation in the field of blue economy, maritime connectivity, ocean sustainability, and maritime security. The end goals of China's policies for the Indo-Pacific region are mutual growth, regional peace, regional prosperity, and collaborative governance in regional maritime affairs (State Council of PRC, 2015).

Like the US, China has also shown an aptitude of leadership in regional maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific. China shows the abilities of an executive or structural leader as well as entrepreneurial leader, being able to create and operationalize regional institutional arrangements. China also has the material strength to sustain these arrangements which is evident in the provision of funding and loans for infrastructure projects. China's identity as a developing state also helps with this as many of its regional partners are also developing states that show varying degrees of scepticism towards the west while being rather sympathetic to China (He & Feng, 2019).

(Lack of) External Perception Towards Indonesia Leadership in Regional Maritime Affairs

The relative abundance of actors that are fit for the role of regional leader in maritime affairs as well as their respective strategies and actions are making it difficult for Indonesia to occupy the role. States in the region will mainly look up to well established powers such as China and the US, also towards Japan, India, and Australia to some extent (He & Feng, 2020). This is because Indonesia does not display the traits of an actor that can play the role of regional leader in maritime affairs to other states. Unlike China and the US or even Japan, India, and Australia, Indonesia does not have a comprehensive idea of regional maritime architecture, let alone the means to achieve it.

A leader in international relations has to be able to provide or manage the distribution of public goods for other states. In international relations, public goods consist of international security, stability, order, and geographical access (Flames & Lobell, 2015; Young, 1991). While such goods and their provisions are a part of Indonesia's GMF doctrine and are explicitly mentioned in the GMF policy document, it tends to be oriented inward (Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment, 2017). Provisions of these goods are focused in or immediately around Indonesia. Unlike China, India, the US, Australia, or Japan, Indonesia does not provide these goods in a regional scope. The US, for example, uses naval presence in the Indo-Pacific as a means of providing regional security, especially towards allies and "client" states (Scott, 2018). Some states rely on security provided by the US naval presence and therefore the US has a major influence on these states and is able to lead them. China does the same thing through development cooperation. For example, Chinese international aid and investment has contributed to the development of maritime infrastructure throughout the Indo-Pacific and thus increased regional maritime connectivity. This is something that Indonesia has not yet done and thus perceptions of Indonesia's leadership in regional maritime affairs is limited (Long & Yen, 2021).

Indonesia is able to contribute to the preservation of public goods, however it is not able to provide it. Indonesia is able to follow the already existing order however cannot lead it nor create a new order. In this case, the roots of Indonesia's limited role as a leader in the region is material in nature (Scott, 2019). Indonesia simply lacks the economic and military prowess to present itself as a regional leader. Without being able to provide public goods for regional states, Indonesia will not be able to be considered a leader in regional maritime affairs. This is something that will be difficult to address for Indonesia if the state still seeks regional leadership in maritime affairs. Solving this issue will not only require a long time but a massive commitment by national leaders. This is something that probably would not be viable any time soon (Nabbs-Keller, 2020).

Provision of public goods however are not always based on material power as it can be done through influencing the regional system pertaining to the distribution of public goods by means of ideas. This is also known as ideational leadership. In this kind of leadership, Indonesia can lead by way of providing ideas of how regional maritime governance is to be conducted and influencing the regional maritime governance architecture with this idea (He & Feng, 2020). Again, this is also something that Indonesia is unable to provide to the region (Parameswaran, 2020; Scott, 2019). Unlike other states, say maybe Japan, Indonesia does not have a clear idea of what maritime governance in the Indo-Pacific should be like. Japan, through the conception of the FOIP has been able to influence the US and Australia,

two important regional actors, among others and lead the region through this idea (Envall & Wilkins, 2022).

The GMF doctrine mainly provides ideas on how domestic maritime governance is to be conducted within Indonesia (Agastia, 2021). While Indonesia also participates in several maritime governance forums and organisations in the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia has yet to lead in the provision of ideas in regional maritime governance (Dannahauer, 2022). The GMF doctrine only provides guidelines for following already existing international regional maritime regimes. It does not provide novel ideas of how regional maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific should be governed.

Some argue that Indonesia uses ASEAN as a cornerstone of its foreign policy and uses it also for leadership in Indo-Pacific maritime affairs. The centrality of ASEAN is mentioned in the Indo-Pacific strategy of several major actors in the region, those that can be considered leaders, such as the US, Japan, Australia, and India. Based on this notion, the state that leads ASEAN, leads the Indo-Pacific (Parameswaran, 2020). This argument, however, rests on a weak foundation. ASEAN has often been depicted as a central actor in regional affairs, having influence on powerful actors such as the US and China or Japan and South Korea. This notion does not reflect the truth of the matter. In reality, most of the time ASEAN is merely an instrument of more powerful extra-regional actors. This is because ASEAN is already a major platform and so far more stable than any other regional arrangements in the Indo-Pacific. This makes it a beneficial diplomatic vehicle for powerful states in the regions. An example of this is the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), and the ARF. These forums were initiated by Southeast Asian states with the aim of increasing ASEAN influence in the region. However, in the process these platforms have been used in the interest of major powers (Acharya, 2017).

The notion of a weak ASEAN centrality has even been implicitly hinted at by former ASEAN Secretary General, the late Surin Pitsuwan. Pitsuwan stated that in order to realise ASEAN centrality, ASEAN must be able to go beyond centrality in "form" and become central in "substance." By this, Pitsuwan means that in order for ASEAN to be a central actor in the region, ASEAN must not only provide frameworks or forums for regional cooperation, but must also be able to set goals and agendas as well as manage and resolve disputes and conflicts. So far, ASEAN tends to be central in form instead of substance. The existing ASEAN frameworks have either failed to provide substance or have gone ignored in the Indo-Pacific with ASEAN centrality being a mere lip-service by other regional powers (Acharya, 2017; Habibie Center, 2020).

Apart from the lack of existing perception for Indonesian leadership in regional maritime affairs and the weak notion of ASEAN centrality in regional affairs, states in the region also tend to already view states like the US, China, Japan, Australia, and India as regional maritime governance leaders. These states possess the

qualities of a regional leader as well as are able to perform the role. For instance, India is able to provide security for regional actors, especially adjacent island states such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles, and Mauritius. The US is able to provide security for the island states in the Pacific, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. China is able to provide developmental leadership for many states in the region. As for Japan and Australia, these states are able to consolidate the interests of states in the region. The stronger leadership of these states make it harder for Indonesia to be perceived as a regional leader.

Conclusion

Indonesia has aspirations of becoming a leading actor in Indo-Pacific maritime affairs. This is indicated by the prevalence of the notion in Indonesian policy documents, particularly the *Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia* and the *Rencana Aksi Kebijakan kelautan Indonesia*. Indonesia's regional maritime policy states that Indonesia has to increase leadership in the region. In order to achieve this, Indonesia enacts the GMF doctrine which seeks to make Indonesia the centre for international maritime affairs, not only in a geographical sense, but also in a political sense, meaning that Indonesia should be able to influence the shaping of international norms on maritime affairs. This shows that Indonesia Identifies itself as a leader. Leadership, as all roles, however, requires the identification of other states. The identification of Indonesia's leadership in maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific by other states is not as strong as Indonesia's self-identification. While Indonesia is identified as an important state for maritime affairs in the region, other states are perceived to be better suited for the role of leadership. These states include the likes of the US, China, India, Japan, and Australia.

The lack of other states' perception towards Indonesia's leadership is caused by the lack of Indonesia's ability to carry out the functions associated with the role of leadership. To be a leader in international affairs, states need to be able to provide public goods to other states in the system. In the case of leadership in maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific, for a state to be a leader, it must be able to provide public goods such as creation and consolidation of common interests, security, or development. Indonesia, has so far been unable to provide these goods. Indonesia has a maritime governance initiative in the form of the GMF that should be able to guide Indonesia's regional maritime policies. In relation to Indonesia's aspirations to become a regional leader in maritime affairs, this means that the GMF and related policies should provide clear guidelines The issue with the GMF and related policies is that it does not provide clear guidelines and no clear goals for what Indonesia wants in regional maritime affairs in the Indo-Pacific. The GMF merely provides vague notions of actions and goals.

The lack of comprehensive actions and goals in Indonesia's maritime initiative becomes even more of a hindrance to Indonesia's leadership aspirations when considering the existence of other states and their maritime initiatives. Unlike Indonesia's GMF, the regional maritime initiatives proposed by other states provide the public goods that are needed for a state to be perceived as a regional leader. For instance, the US and India are able to provide security for states in the region, India and China are able to provide regional maritime development, and Japan and Australia are able to provide the region with intellectual leadership. Indonesia lacks these qualities and are unable to fulfil the functions needed to act in the role of regional leadership in maritime affairs. The cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign affairs, ASEAN, with its "centrality" is also unable to help Indonesia achieve leadership in regional maritime affairs. ASEAN's centrality in this case merely means that ASEAN, like Indonesia, is an actor of significant importance but not that of leadership. With this in mind, Indonesia needs to emulate the initiatives of other states if it seeks to achieve leadership in regional maritime affairs, not in substance, but in spirit. While Indonesia is clear with its self-identification as a leader, Indonesia needs to be identified by other states as a leader. In order to achieve this, Indonesia's regional maritime initiative will require a clear goal and action.

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