



## Student Mobility in The Rising Peripheries

Rika Theo 

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Utrecht University, Netherlands

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### Abstract

This research aims to investigate the different pattern of Chinese Indonesian student mobility following three main political sequences defined by not only different period but also the dominant mode of each time. The object of this research is Chinese Indonesian student. Using historical comparative analysis, this paper explores and compares the historical trajectory of transnational mobility of Indonesian students to China. In every sequence, the particular mobility pattern of Chinese-Indonesian students will be analyzed in relation to national politics within certain bilateral and global framework. Drawing on the comparative historical analysis, this research explores how a specific sequence affects specific student mobility between Indonesia and China. The analyses go further to investigate the continuity between sequences, the linkages between the past mobility to a contemporary one. Building on these analyses, this research argues that nation-states policies and trans-state relation that develop overtime play a significant role in defining Indonesian student mobility to China.

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 Correspondence Author:  
Domplein 29, 3512 JE Utrecht, Belanda  
Email: [rika.theo@gmail.com](mailto:rika.theo@gmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Within the contemporary rise of Asian economy in the era of market globalization, the growing student mobility between countries in the region has further complicated the pattern of the current transnational student mobility. The inequality of North-South pattern that has dominated the student mobility academic discussion has been extended to the discussion of the South-South mobility, or in a more neutral term, the intra-mobility between the emerging countries in Asia. Several research have been done to explore this developing trend, for instance, those revolving around the expansion of Chinese internationalization of education and the increasing competition between Asian education hubs such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. Many of these studies focused on the economic factors that structurally drove the internationalization of higher education and student mobility. However, transnational student mobility in this region is not a one-off phenomenon that just happened lately due to economic globalization but could be traced back to the broader transnational mobility during the colonial era a few centuries ago. As a result, the region has closely knitted by colonial experiences, cultural connection, and complicated regional cooperation bloc. The political factors, in particular, the state, trans-state relation, and the geopolitical shifts in the region are important factors that in turn have affected the current burgeoning student mobility between neighboring countries in Asia. Yet, this link between historical and contemporary is still less investigated despite its overarching implication on student mobility and immobility in Asia overtime.

This paper will fill the gap by investigating the case of Indonesian student mobility to China, which has strong historical and political circumstances. The flows of Indonesian students to China have accelerated when both countries strengthened themselves into world emerging economies in the post-1998 Asian financial crisis. With China rising to be-

come Asia's (and the world's) core and Indonesia being the largest and quickly expanding economy in South East Asia, the two have established closer economic and political ties which were previously always in turbulences and caution after 23 years of suspended relation (Sukma, 2009). The increasing business and investment from China to Indonesia created a rising demand for highly skilled workers who master Mandarin language. This latest development provided the initial push factors of student mobility from Indonesia to China. It coincidentally entangled with the changing national politics in both China and Indonesia.

In China, there was a heightening promotion of higher education for international students as part of its Open Door Policy, whereas Indonesia has just undergone the regime changing from authoritarianism to democracy after Reform happened in 1998. The latter has implication in particular through the lifting of several discriminatory policies towards Chinese-Indonesians, which were framed as minority others under political discourse and institutionalized legal discrimination (Tjhin, 2012). Having breathed a freer expression of their cultural identity, the Chinese-Indonesians have become the majority of Indonesian students who study in China. Many Chinese-Indonesian parents have sent their children to China in order to reconnect their children to Chinese cultural and values that have been limited or even suppressed during 32 years of Indonesian authoritarian era (Hoon, 2011).

However, Indonesian student mobility to China is nothing but new mobility. It was started in the 20th-century colonial era when Chinese-Indonesian students sent to universities in China, mainly due to lack of access to education in Indonesia. During the Cold War period, not only the Chinese-Indonesians but also Indonesian students went to China under the political cooperation when Communism was robust in both countries. But this had come to an end in 1967 after Communism was banned in Indonesia and the diplomatic tie between Indonesia and China was suspended for the next 23 years.

Considering the historical and political trajectory is necessary to look beyond the assumption of cultural root searching and/or economic motive that shaped student mobility from Indonesia to China. Built upon that, this paper will link the historical trajectory to the contemporary mobility. It argues that the mobility and immobility of the students are also products of the politics of belonging towards Chinese-Indonesians, the changing geopolitical power, and the tumultuous diplomatic relation between the two countries overtime. All of those factors interconnect with the current cultural and economic motives that drive the young Chinese-Indonesian students to 'return' to China.

## **METHODS**

Using historical comparative analysis, this paper explores and compares the historical trajectory of transnational mobility of Indonesian students to China in different political sequences and time. The comparative historical research will ask questions and formulate puzzles about specific sets of cases that exhibit sufficient similarity to be meaningfully compared with one another. Historical sequences will be investigated, focusing the unfolding of processes over time. It considers a temporal structure of events that may intersect with one another, and the relative timing of that intersection can be of decisive importance (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003).

This research will investigate the different pattern and socio-political structures of Chinese-Indonesian student mobility following three main sequences: nationalist, communist, and capitalist. The sequences are defined by not only different periods but also the dominant political regime of each time. In every sequence, the particular mobility pattern of Chinese-Indonesian students will be analyzed and problematized.

This research explores how a specific political sequence incurs specific student mobility between Indonesia and China. The analysis goes further to investigate the change

and continuity between sequences, whether it connects the past mobility to the next ones. Building on these analyses, this research argues that student mobility issues, such as who could move and who could not move, what knowledge is being transferred and with what impact, who stays and who returns, largely depend on the historical simultaneity and interaction between global, national, and local dynamics overtime.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Historical Trajectory of Indonesian Students Mobility**

It should be noted that higher education system in Asian countries has been shaped by its historical legacy. Asian countries adopted Western model either voluntarily adopted in the past or was enforced by colonial powers. The colonial dependency continued to exist after the end of the colonial era, of which Kell and Vogl (2012) explained it to be synonymous with part of foreign aid and overseas programs to alleviate poverty. The major powers acted as donors to fund the movement of students from developing country in Asia and Africa, with a purpose to use education as a form of soft diplomacy to secure loyalty from their alumni. This aid and donor pattern still exists but no longer dominant in Asia as it shifts to the latest global mobility pattern characterized by the emergence of Asia as an alternative education destination and its increasing role in the global knowledge system.

This explains why the major destinations of Indonesian students are still countries of the North, Anglophone countries such as the United States and Australia, also the Netherlands. The centers of knowledge in the West have been the major destinations for Indonesian students for decades. There was a pattern of change but each mobility has different impact and influence, particularly towards Indonesian politics. The first mobility happened during the period of Dutch colonialism when Indonesian young intellectuals sent to the Netherlands to study. This group

of Dutch-educated intellectuals brought home the concept of pro-independence movement and the very concept of Indonesia nation (Altbach and Umekoshi, 2004).

The colonial-linked mobility changed in the post-Independent Indonesia into the mobility that was supported by development aid. To fill the gaps of university members, students sent abroad with a scholarship from foreign countries and funding agencies, while foreign lecturers imported to teach in Indonesian universities. The United States was the initial major destination for upgrading student skills and continued until recently. The numbers were steady and significantly growing except for some years after 9/11 tragedy, when it declined because of the stricter immigration regulation of the U.S. The U.S-educated intellectuals in Indonesia played center role in Suharto's regime, by orchestrating to wipe out the 'revolutionary economy' ala Sukarno and conducting a series of liberal economic policies to help the sinking Indonesian economy after 1965. These intellectuals that dubbed as Berkeley Mafia were mainly earned an economics degree from Berkeley with the support of Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.

Many other prominent intellectuals, public figures, and government officials in Indonesia are those trained in the centers of global knowledge under scholarship scheme from development aid. The aid is not solely from a particular country, but also from the international body such as UNESCO, ADB, WHO and so on. The disbursement of development aid to send students abroad to earn knowledge and professional skills reflected a neocolonial dependency of Indonesia as a periphery country to the centers. The aid-donor relation that affects the student mobility from Indonesia to the North does not become the modality of Indonesian student mobility to China. Understanding the student mobility to China should be started by exploring the historical background of the ethnic Chinese Indonesian as Chinese diaspora. It should be analyzed by juxtaposing the socio-political context of Chinese Indonesians as the main actors of the

mobility that nested within the state politics in Indonesia and China as well as the trans-state relation that ties them together.

### **China, Communism, and Chinese Indonesians**

China, Communism, and Chinese Indonesians were preserved as triangle threat during the rule of Indonesian authoritarian government of President Suharto known as New Order regime. The portrayal was implemented through the suspension of diplomatic ties with the People Republic of China and series of policies that discriminated the ethnic Chinese Indonesians minority.

The culmination event that caused this happened in September 1965, through an attempted coup of which the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) has been charged as a perpetrator. In an anti-communist crackdown that followed the coup, hundreds of thousands of people, many of them ethnic Chinese Indonesians who were portrayed as the members of PKI, were slaughtered. The intermittent violence against Indonesia's ethnic Chinese community had caused a brittle friendship between Indonesia and China. The coup itself resulted in a regime change that brought a military general, Suharto, into power to rule the New Order regime for the next 32 years. For a regime whose legitimacy derived from saving the country from communism, the ideology of communism and the country that has it were considered as a threat (Sukma, 2009). Jakarta froze diplomatic ties with China in 1967. While China at that time, were in the middle of Cultural Revolution that swung the country more to the left, causing Peking spent little effort in maintaining relation with Indonesia (Williams, 2002). Other than PKI and People Republic of China, ethnic Chinese Indonesia was also considered a threat to the regime. The government manifested it in the form of assimilation policy such as curbing the expression of Chinese culture, banning ethnic Chinese schools, forbidding Chinese scripts in public including obligating ethnic Chinese Indonesians to change their Chinese name into

Indonesian name and closing Chinese press, and most importantly, depoliticizing Chinese Indonesians then segregating them solely in the economic sectors.

These discriminatory policies strengthened the negative discourse that politically and socially constructed towards Chinese Indonesians. The label 'non-pribumi' (non-indigenous) and 'Cina' which has derogatory meaning has been created and commonly used for all Chinese Indonesians, separating Chinese Indonesians further away from Indonesian society. For 32 years, Chinese Indonesians were viewed as outsiders or as an exclusive community. Having been segregated in the economic sector by the New Order regime, many Chinese Indonesians then were generally portrayed as economic animals who controlled the wealth in the country. This stereotype has made them fragile objects to be scapegoats and violence targets once the anti-Chinese sentiment rose to serve certain political interest. In May 1998, for instance, almost Jakarta's entire Chinatown was set ablaze, as tension raised following the economic crisis and protests mounted against the rule of President Suharto (New York Times, 2005).

It should be understood that the stigmatization on Chinese Indonesians did not suddenly appear from what happened in 1965, but dated back to Dutch colonial times (1596-1942) in Indonesia. The Dutch colonizer implemented the politics known as "divide et impera" or divide-and-rule policy. One of them is by segregating the people into three different social classes; the European as the top class, the Foreign Eastern including the Chinese Indonesians as the middle class and the indigenous Indonesians people as the third class (Suryadinata, 1998). The socio-economic difference was created and contributed to constructing the identity of Chinese Indonesians through a long troubled history.

However, though the Chinese Indonesians was constructed as a single entity, they are everything but a homogenous entity. Most of them are Chinese descents that migrated from the Southern part of China in several waves

since before the colonial power came to Indonesia until the 20th century. They primarily comprised of four kinds of ethnic tribes from China, therefore they have different subcultures, and some cultures hybridized with the local cultures as a result of long interaction with the locals and the place they live. This caused a division among themselves in the colonial era until the 1960s, as they were divided into two groups. First, 'Peranakan' who are Indonesia-born from generations after their Chinese ancestors landed in Indonesia. They generally had indigenous blood from the female line, could not speak Chinese, and partly assimilated into the local society. A Peranakan Chinese writer, Kwee Tek Hoay, explained that the Peranakans inherited Chinese practices from their China-born fathers and native customs through their mothers. Another leading Peranakan Chinese journalist, Kwee Kek Beng, expressed that Peranakan Chinese were too Chinese to be Indonesian and too Indonesian to be Chinese (Suryadinata, 1972). In the other side, there was Totok who are Chinese born and culturally Chinese. Obviously, Totok Chinese Indonesians were more oriented towards China and therefore had the most interest in mainland Chinese politics. The two groups had different interest, hence different preferences such as their education preference. The Peranakans chose the locally oriented education, while the Totoks attracted to Chinese-medium schools that were flourished in the 20th century. Through this school, they were connected to Chinese values and even Chinese politics because many Chinese medium schools later have been influenced by the political struggle in China and had a direct connection to Beijing for Chinese Communist Party or to Taipei for Chinese Nationalist Party. Some students or the graduates of these Chinese medium schools were sent to mainland China. It was the earliest mobility of students from Indonesia to China, which will be discussed in the following part of this paper.

### **Revisiting the Historical Trajectory of Indonesian Student Mobility to China**

The mobility of Chinese-Indonesian students to China comprises of several waves with particular characteristics that change over time. This research divides the waves in accordance with the period of correlated political change in Indonesia and China which affects the policy towards ethnic Chinese Indonesia. The impact of the policy altogether with the socio-cultural context play a central role to determine the flow of Chinese-Indonesian students to China.

*Colonial Resistance and Nationalist Movement (1900 to 1949)*

In the period of growing resistance towards Dutch colonialism in Indonesia (then Dutch East Indies), the initial wave of transnational student mobility between Indonesia and China rooted in the growing Chinese medium schools in Indonesia. Born as a response of no education institutions available for the Chinese in Indonesia provided by the Dutch colonial, a Chinese Peranakan ((Indonesian-born, some mixed blood) social group established the first school for Chinese Indonesians Peranakan in 1901. The school, *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (the same name with The Chinese Association, hereafter THHK) emerged out of the resentment towards Dutch government's indifference and discriminatory policy towards Chinese in Indonesia. Its initiation was part of the early development of modern Chinese education in South East Asia during 1900-1910, on the brink of changing imperial China to modern revolution (Murray, 1964).

Chinese medium school becomes the powerful tools of resinification for Peranakan students who spoke no Mandarin and generally unfamiliar to Chinese culture. THHK who promoted Confucianism and Chinese cultures introduced Peranakan students to reinforce their interest in Chinese language, values, and cultures. Through the modern teaching method in Chinese and English, the school helped to recover the Chinese identity while building Chinese nationalism and patriotism of the students (Govaars, 2005). Having grown fast in numbers, THHK established a connection with

the Chinese Imperial Government who looked for the Overseas Chinese in South East Asia to secure their political and financial interest. Chinese officials and teachers were sent to supervise the schools and scholarship provided for the students. By the support of this scholarship, the early Chinese-Indonesian student mobility began (Suryadinata, 1972). In 1907, 21 graduates THHK graduates sent to China at the expense of Chinese government (Govaars, 2005:175). Before the Republic of China was proclaimed in 1911, THHK sent in total 200 students from many parts of the Dutch Indies to Kai Lam Hak Tong school in Nanking. The students sent to pursue secondary and tertiary education since THHK schools were still primary schools even after 20 years established. In 1908, the indifference Dutch government who previously had never provided education for the Chinese-Indonesians saw the risk of growing numbers of THHK and its closer ties to China. To counter it, the Dutch-Chinese schools with Dutch language as the medium language were established. The pragmatist Peranakan who needed to learn the Dutch language for their future work or employment in the Dutch Indies was largely attracted to these schools. The Dutch-Chinese school did not teach any Chinese language or history, but they assured the students of job prospect and continuation of study in the Dutch Indies. Many of Dutch-Chinese schools' graduates went to the Netherlands to pursue their advanced study. Another way to curb the potential of Chinese youth movement built by Chinese medium school was under the strict supervision and regulation. One of which was a stricter regulation to control the flow of teachers from China to the Dutch Indies and Peranakan students who wished to study in China. This colonial education policy had divided Chinese Peranakans into the Chinese-oriented group and the Dutch-Oriented group.

Meanwhile, the Totok Chinese group (China-born, culturally Chinese and China-oriented) who migrated to the Dutch Indies in 19th centuries from various parts of China considered THHK could not cater their

demand. The Totok community established their own schools, based on their sub-ethnic origins such as Hakka, Hokkien and Cantonese schools (Suryadinata, 1972). In the 1920s, the role of Peranakan and the decline of THHK was replaced by the rapid growth of Totok Chinese Medium schools. According to Suryadinata (1972), the rapid growth was engendered by the increasing Totok population, and at the same time the support of the Nationalist Kuomintang Party in China. The sending of students to China continued though the numbers are not available. Sin Po newspaper claimed that about 800 students from the Dutch Indies went to China every year in the 1930s. Many returned to become teachers in the Dutch Indies in Java and promote Chinese nationalism. According to Fitzgerald (1969), preserving the Chinese education for Chinese Overseas was the central task of Overseas Affairs policy of Kuomintang Party in China during that period, which was reflected in the saying, "Without Chinese education, there is no Overseas Chinese." Kuomintang considered the Chinese abroad as nationals of the Republic of China who should be loyal to China and actively serve the interest of the Chinese government. One measurement of the loyalty and link to the motherland was the sending of remittance from the Overseas Chinese. The huge remittance from South East Asia was the significant source of foreign exchange for KMT in the first years of its rules; hence, it was its possible interest to prevent the weakening attachment of the Overseas Chinese to China (Fitzgerald, 1970; Cheung, 2005). In this case, the returned Chinese-Indonesian students in China were the living bridges between China and the Chinese abroad and the ones who played a role in preserving the Chinese nationalism through education.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the student mobility in the colonial period played an indirect yet important role in the socio-political division among Chinese Indonesians, both Totok and Peranakan, which in turn influenced their political movements. Suryadinata (1972) classified the Peranakan movements into three

kinds. First, Sin Po Group, the Chinese-oriented people who desired the Chinese to remain aliens in the Dutch colonial system. This group was named after their famous newspaper Sin Po in Batavia (now Jakarta) whose journalists dominantly were THHK-educated. Second, Chung Hwa Hui movement, born in Semarang in 1928, comprised of Dutch-educated intellectual Peranakans that had Dutch orientation and active in the Dutch Indies' politics. Third, the Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (PTI), a supporter of Indonesia's independence movement, who associated itself with Indonesian national interest. In contrast, the Totok movements politically orient themselves with the political movement in mainland China. Therefore, after China was divided into the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communist Party, the Totoks in Indonesia were divided following that dual orientations.

#### *Post-colonial re-adjustment (1950-1956)*

After Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945 and the People Republic of China established by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, the mobility of Indonesian students to China continued for the purpose to attain Chinese advanced education that was not possible to acquire in Indonesia. They flocked China together with Overseas Chinese from another part of South East Asia who returned in the hope of opportunity in China's new regime. Among these returned Chinese overseas, Chinese Indonesian was the biggest group. Their decision to return was not solely their rational choice to have better education and job opportunity or their romanticism of Chinese nationalism, but also because of the shifting of national politics in Indonesia and China. The gradual changing of education policy in Indonesia influenced the wave of student mobility to China in the early 1950s. The newly established Indonesian government started to close Dutch medium schools, including those of Dutch-Chinese schools. Chinese Peranakan children who were in the Dutch schools continued their study in either Indonesia-medium schools or Chinese-medium

schools.

Following the political division in China between Communist Party in Beijing and Nationalist Party in Taipei, Chinese-medium schools in Indonesia were also divided into Pro-Peking and Pro-Taipei schools. Both catered in total 254,730 students during 1952-1953 (Suryadinata, 1972). Some of the graduates of Pro-Peking Chinese-medium secondary schools went to China to pursue tertiary study, often with the assistance of the schools, teachers, or alumni. For these students, the Communist government in China established the preparatory schools in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shantou, and Xiamen. The returnee students were given more privilege than their domestic classmates were such as extra rations of basic commodity and became a privileged class in socialist Chinese community (Fitzgerald, 1970). Subsequently, Beijing still enjoyed a great flow of remittances that were sent from Indonesia to and through these students.

This was because CCP's policy on Overseas Chinese during the first 5 years of its rules was still mainly similar to the policies of KMT. Yet CCP had a principle that the Overseas Chinese policy should serve its foreign policy in South East Asia, even though it did deploy a uniform Overseas Chinese policy for all the countries in South East Asia. Overseas Chinese in China, including the students, were considered as a means of communicating with and influencing the Overseas Chinese abroad (Fitzgerald, 1970). Only in 1954, CCP for the first time admitted and discussed Overseas Chinese problem, one of which was the ending of Chinese dual nationality which was based on *jus sanguinis*.

The first attempt was made during the 1955 Non-Alignment Movement meeting in Indonesia, a Third World cooperation alternative in response to the binary opposition of world political blocs. In the sidelines of the meeting, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai at that time signed a treaty with Indonesia to allow Chinese-Indonesians choose freely between the two nationalities, without expressing which nationality it preferred. The end of

dual nationality for the Chinese Indonesians, however, this did not eliminate the suspicion towards the Overseas Chinese as a revolutionary agent of China whose allegiance has always been questioned.

In contrast, Indonesia's tie with PRC improved in the global cooperation of the Non-Alliance Movement, the strengthening of Indonesian Communist Party, and then gradually a closer swing to the Eastern bloc. Many Indonesian elites such as politicians, artists, writers paid a temporary short visit to China and most brought back and propagated positive narratives about the new China as a modern alternative to the West, i.e. the site of a cultural and intellectual renaissance as well as a successful economy and a populist regime (Liu, 2006). In this research, Liu concluded that Indonesian President Sukarno viewed China as an Asian model to justify his decision in changing Indonesia's Western-style democracy with his "Guided Democracy". Two weeks after his return from China, Sukarno pronounced that Indonesia needed a democracy that was guided, by mentioning China as an example.

#### *Communist Turbulences (1957-1965)*

Even though Indonesia and China forged the tie, domestic circumstances in Indonesia against the Chinese-Indonesians continued to deteriorate. Racial violence increased, in particular after a presidential regulation revoked the trading license for Chinese-Indonesians to do any business activities in the rural area. Previously in 1957, there was a regulation that banned Indonesian citizens from enrolling in alien schools. Foreign teachers and schools were obliged to renew their permit, Chinese books should be approved by the Ministry of Education, and in fact, no more new Chinese-medium schools could be set up. The numbers of Chinese medium schools drastically declined, from 2,000 in November 1957 to 850 in July 1958. This worsening political and social situation enforced more students to return to China, not for study but for permanent settlement. Students went to Chi-

na along with the traders and laborers in the mass repatriation from Indonesia to China. Therefore in China, the numbers of overseas-Chinese students increased, with half of them came from Indonesia. The New China News Agency reported the number of overseas Chinese students reached 56,000 in the decade to 1960 (Godley and Coppel, 1990) in 1960. Around the same time in the late 1950s, Chinese government reassessed the Overseas Chinese policy, by detaching them from China. The returnees were segregated into separate quarters mostly in the Southern part of China; the privileges for Overseas Chinese were withdrawn, and students were 'reeducated' in the specialized Chinese Overseas universities such as Xiamen University and Jinan University.

According to the report of Hong Kong's *Da Gong Bao* on 21 December 1960, among 94,000 Indonesian Chinese repatriated since the beginning of the crisis, 18,800 were students (Godley and Coppel, 1990). Another report from *Nanfang Ribao* newspaper stated that 13,000 students passed through Guangdong ports in the first eleven months of 1961. These students were placed in several preparatory schools from Shanghai to Quanzhou. Later they had to participate in China's Big Leap Forward policy by working in the labor camps in the countryside (Godley, 1989).

In parallel, there was indeed an increasing flow of Indonesians going to China with the study purpose, most came under the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and China. The numbers were not as many as those sent to the Soviet Union, but among all were several PKI high-level officials, cultural activists, government officials, selected students, and university academics (Akmaliah, 2015).

The student mobility that was created under political cooperation were unprecedentedly discontinued after the failed coup in Indonesia that was charged to the Indonesia Communist Party in September 1965. Following that situation, hostility towards Chinese-Indonesians spread in many places, as they were judged as communist agents, and the closing of all Chinese schools was pushing a fur-

ther mass repatriation of Chinese-Indonesians to China. Unfortunately, they faced an equally bad political situation in China. As the political pendulum swung more to the left, the instability period of Cultural Revolution plunged them into the similarly hard situation. Many have been sent to the Overseas Farm in the countryside to be re-educated. The anti-rightist campaign ensured by the Red Guards often targeted the overseas Chinese because they have been labeled as spies, imperialists, or foreign devils. Godley (1989) summarized the rejection towards the Overseas Chinese:

As one refugee remembered the predicament: Indonesian Chinese were capitalists to be overthrown; Malaysian Chinese were renegades and traitors; Japanese Chinese were spies, and those from Thailand obviously Kuomintang agents. Chen Boda reportedly labeled Overseas Chinese farms and villages "The United Nations of enemy agents." A letter to the editor of a Hong Kong magazine in 1977 came closer to the mark: the Overseas Chinese were treated as the "Jews of China."

Facing this rejection and resentment, many Chinese Indonesians escaped to Hong Kong or Macao. Those who could not escape should adapt to survive a political and social change in China. They created an imagined community as they mostly liked to be together with fellow returnees and maintained their sense of Indonesian-ness. Meanwhile, the Indonesian students who studied in China under the communist cooperation had a similarly tough situation. Many of them could not return to Indonesia during the authoritarian regime and some chose to live as political exiles in European countries.

This was the last student mobility from Indonesia to China before the changing regime in 1998. During the next 32 years, some Chinese-Indonesian students might go to China, especially in the early 1990s but it was likely done with the help of their relatives in China. Other Chinese-Indonesian students went to Singapore and Taiwan to have education in

Chinese language education to reconnect to their ancestor's culture.

*The Contemporary Student Mobility: Moving by Choice*

The contemporary student mobility from Indonesia and China has been affected by a combination of multiple factors, paved by the gradual changing in Indonesia after the country passed another historical juncture that caused a regime change in 1998. Under the pluralist and first democratically elected President Abdurrahman Wahid, the reconciliation with Chinese-Indonesians and the improvement of China and Indonesia's bilateral ties became the new democratic government's priorities. He lifted many discriminatory policies on Chinese Indonesians and in parallel forging closer relation with China. China was his first official presidential visit to a foreign country (Antara, 2015). Cooperation in another sector such as cultural sector began in this era. The efforts were not only aiming to recover the social problem in the 1998 post-riot Indonesia, but also to anticipate the importance of the rising China.

The discourse that both Indonesia and China are major developing countries and important emerging market economies with regional and global influence frequently stated as the major reason to strengthen the pragmatic cooperation in every changing Indonesian president afterward. Both Indonesia and China identified their cooperation as mutually beneficial (Xinhua, 2015). In 2005, they elevated the bilateral relation by signing a strategic partnership and later Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in October 2013, to open the way for more trade, investment, and maritime cooperation. It is important to note that bilateral economic cooperation is always at the core of Indonesia-China's relation since they fully restored the diplomatic ties in 1990, 23 years after it had been suspended. In fact, it was a Joint Committee on Economic Trade and Technical Cooperation that was first established since the restoration, a different focal point compares to the agreement of friendship

and cultural cooperation signed in 1961 when both agreed to strengthen ties for the first time (Antara News Agency, 2015). They have limited their cooperation to merely trade and investment in the initial years after the official restoration until 1998 (Sukma, 2009). For almost a decade, Indonesia-China relationship did not expand to other sectors like politic-security or even cultural, unlike the other ASEAN countries that have intensified the relation with China during Asia's economic boom in the early 1990s. This relatively passive and cautious relation, which focused on economic cooperation, was rooted in the complex and tumultuous relationship between China and Indonesia. Sukma (2009) characterized their relationship by a history of a difficult beginning, close friendship, turbulence, then mutual hostility and suspicion.

Yet more than a decade later, the economic cooperation gained more momentum to get deepened. The two countries admittedly had a similar vision that fit one another in developing their future economy. China has announced her strategy of Century Maritime Silk Road (One Belt, One Road), meanwhile Indonesia under the newly elected president established her vision to be a Global Maritime Fulcrum. "China and Indonesia are strategically interdependent on, and economically complementary to, each other and there is immense potential for reciprocal cooperation between the two countries," Xi said during his visit to Jakarta in May 2015 in a bilateral meeting to mark the 65th year of Indonesia-China diplomatic relation. At the same time, China's remarkable economy forged a better image of the country in Indonesia and some have seen it as a great potential for business cooperation. Bilateral relation with China improved as there is lesser fear of China and communism. In line with the process of democratization in Indonesia, Chinese-Indonesians also gained more freedom in cultural expression, though the racial stereotype remained.

This provided the initial push factors of student mobility from Indonesia to China. It coincidentally entangled with the heighte-

ning promotion of China's higher education for international students. In fact, China has undergone reform to open up its higher education system. Previously, in the post-Cultural Revolution in the mid-1970s, China experienced the shortage of teaching staff, resources, and facilities, that it decided to open up the education system to the West. China imported teachers from overseas universities, together with the new knowledge, techniques, and technologies. Chinese teachers, staffs, and students were encouraged to study abroad by given access and government funding.

In the other side, policy and efforts to open up education for international students proliferated. China has initiated the internationalization of the curriculum with three main features: introducing English-language products into Chinese campuses; implementing instruction in English or bilingually (Chinese and English); and integrating an international dimension into university teaching and learning. These features were implemented into practice such as translating the original English-language textbooks into Chinese; the rule issued by Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2001 that 5% to 10% of all curricula in the leading universities be taught in English within the following three years, especially in such areas as biology, information science, material sciences, international trade and law; increasing programs for foreign languages/cross-cultural studies, mostly taught in English at undergraduate level and leading to international professional qualifications at graduate level (Huang, 2008).

The new China with remarkable economy, growing global political influence, an international education system with relatively low cost has attracted the international students, in particular, those of the new middle class in Asia who share similar values. However, for Chinese-Indonesian middle class, the main attraction that drives them to study in the contemporary China is not a merely economic factor or its world class university, but also the cultural connection with what they considered as their ancestor's land and with the people of

China. This is best understood by the notion of imagined community coined by Benedict Anderson (1983). The Chinese diaspora in Indonesia created a bond with their imagined motherland that they know from second-hand knowledge, stories, and myth that have been told to them from generation to generation.

Education, therefore, could be considered as a bridge to deepen the people-to-people connection between Indonesia-China. However, in implementation term, the education cooperation between both countries went sluggish compared to the fast growing student mobility. The first memorandum of understanding (MoU) on higher education cooperation was signed in 2010, but only five years later, they signed the Letter of Intent on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees and Qualifications in Higher Education. It was signed at the first bilateral meeting of High-Level People to People Exchange Mechanism that discussed the cooperation to enhance people-to-people connectivity, including student mobility between two countries. In 2015, the Chinese government for the first time committed to adding 100 government scholarships for Indonesian students each year in the next three years and donate education equipment worth 500,000 RMB (about \$ 80,600) to the University of Indonesia.

The cooperation based on the consensus to implement Strategic Comprehensive Partnership reached between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Joko Widodo in March 2015, after it was agreed two years before. This implementation taken at the same time with the 65th commemoration of Indonesia-China diplomatic ties appeared to be a kick-start in taking the cooperation to the next level. In the education sector, the two sides agreed to enhance practical cooperation in student exchange, language education, higher education, and vocational training. Several practical cooperation that will be implemented stated in the MoU are as followed:

The Indonesian side commended the important role of Confucius Institutes in pro-

moting the Chinese language. The Chinese side welcomed the establishment of Indonesian Studies Centers in Beijing and Guangzhou. The Indonesian side offered the Chinese participants to take part in the Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship program as well as in the Senior-Level Diplomatic Training in Indonesia. The Chinese side will continue to provide scholarships to Indonesia through various channels, and welcome more Indonesian students to study in China.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that even prior to the government-to-government cooperation, the student mobility from Indonesia to China has significantly grown. From 2008 to 2012, there were almost four times increased of Indonesian students in China, from 2.756 to 9.539 students. Based on Project Atlas report that tracks international students mobility, in 2013. Indonesia makes the sixth place of the countries that have the largest numbers of international students in China. Whereas, among other ASEAN countries, Indonesian students is on the second largest numbers in China after Thailand.

**Table 1.** Numbers of Indonesian students in China

Year	Scholarship		Self Support	Total
	Ind Gov	CNA Gov		
2008	6	44	2706	2756
2009	-	77	2933	3010
2010	4	100	6728	6832
2011	8	136	9385	9532
2012	16	150	9473	9539

Source: Indonesia Ministry of Education (2017)

The table above showed that most of the Indonesian students studying in China are self-funded students without any financial as-

sistance. Another unique characteristic is that short-term language program students who learn the Chinese language for a year or less dominate the students. According to data from Indonesian Embassy in Beijing, 67% of the total the students enrolled in short-term language program, while only 37% enrolled in the degree program. As of July 2013, the numbers increased to 13.144 Indonesian students enrolled in 188 universities and secondary schools in 38 cities in China. "Most of them are self-funded students from ethnic Chinese Indonesians. There are small numbers of non-Chinese Indonesians who study in China usually under scholarship scheme," said Prijanto, the Education Attaché of Indonesian Embassy in Beijing (Personal Interview, May 5th, 2015). However, the number of scholarship is stagnant and considered low compared to what Chinese government gives to other countries in ASEAN. "In the ASEAN-China cooperation, for instance, China gives scholarships to ASEAN countries, and the number for Indonesians is the smallest among all," said Santo Darmosumato, Head of Socio-Cultural Affair of the Indonesian Embassy in Beijing (Personal Interview, May 5th, 2015). He analyzed that Chinese government overly relied on the self-funded Chinese-Indonesian students who came to China by their own funding. "Without realizing that it could be backfired as it places them to be suspected as Chinese spies or less nationalist. It will place them in a very difficult position for they could be branded as Chinese compatriot." His analyses reflect that the racial sensitivity and the fear of resinification of the Chinese Indonesians in the society still play a major role in affecting the education cooperation between Indonesia-China.

An interview with a Chinese-Indonesian woman who works as a political think tank in Indonesia and continued her doctoral study in China showed that the student herself realizes this problem. In deciding to study in China, she has passed a job opportunity with high salary. She stated that she was fully aware of her purpose on studying in China and its possible outcomes.

I was easily fixed to choose to study in China. Deep down I knew my decision. For me, it's my patriotic duty to take up this study because I know Indonesia-China relationship can affect the life pathway of Chinese Indonesians and because so little has been done in terms of understanding what the bilateral relation of Indonesia and China is about. Our information about China is secondary even tertiary, we need more people to fill this information gap. Still, some of my colleagues called me panda-hugger or Chinese spokesperson. It's sort of insulting for me, that I take it personally. Because my choice to come here is a patriotic duty, I am proud of it, and I work hard for it.

The informant was one of a few postgraduate students who studied in China, 40 years old, has experienced the turbulence in 1998, and the discriminatory policies of New Order regime. Her points of view reflected her understanding of the political situation and racial sensitivity of being Chinese Indonesians that affected her mobility to China. Whereas, the characteristics of most Chinese-Indonesian students in China are in the age of 20s, just finished high school or fresh university graduates, who are from a younger generation who have limited knowledge or even ahistorical about the events that changed the life of Chinese Indonesians.

From the conducted interviews of students of this group, their parents mostly influenced their decision of coming to China. The parents of these students are the generations that have been silenced by Suharto regime. It created the desire to reconnect their children to the ancestor land and culture, by having their children access the education in China that they have never had a chance to do so themselves. An informant explained how his parents influenced his decision to learn Mandarin as follows:

Actually, learning Mandarin Literature for my bachelor degree was not my first choice, it was my second choice that was sugge-

sted by my parents. They want one of their children to be able to speak Mandarin. We do not have anyone at home who can speak Mandarin, except my father. Even he could speak it his accent is Javanese. He never taught Mandarin to his children, so I started from zero. And okay, I had in my mind that I may work for Chinese company one day.

This informant shows that apart from his parents' influence, his purpose in studying in China is based on pragmatic reason to capitalize the expansion of Chinese economy to Indonesia. He was aware that there are numbers of Chinese companies operating in Indonesia that is an obvious opportunity for his future career once he finishes his study in China.

## CONCLUSION

The comparative historical analysis of Indonesian student mobility in every political sequence above has explained the historical trajectory of who are the students that are moving, why, in what political circumstances (comprised of state politics and trans-state relation) that structure the mobility. These altogether created a particular pattern or -borrowing Cresswell's term (2009)- a constellation of mobility that resulted from the movements, representations, and practices during the trajectory.

The contemporary Indonesia student mobility to China is not a sudden phenomenon that took place because of the improvement of bilateral relation, expansion of economic cooperation, or resinicization effort of Chinese-Indonesians after three decades of cultural suppression. The historical trajectory explained above showed the correlated flows between the sequences, the Chinese-Indonesians as the main subjects who move, and how their mobility has been driven, pushed, and enforced by the complex socio-political circumstances. Linking the historical trajectory to the contemporary situation, Indonesian student mobility to China has been highly determined by the state politics and trans-state relation.

The student mobility flows, for instance, has simply been discontinued by a 23 years pause in a diplomatic tie. The increasing mobility to China could only restart in the post-1998 reform, in particular after Indonesian government aborted many discriminatory policies on the Chinese-Indonesians and after the improvement of the relation between China and Indonesia.

The state policy towards the Chinese-Indonesians by both Indonesia and China is another defining factor for the mobility. Since the early student mobility in the colonial era until the current mobility, the political developments in both countries specifically in shaping the politics of identity of the Chinese-Indonesians have affected the student mobility to China directly and indirectly. The changing events in both Indonesia and China that related to the policy towards Chinese Indonesians always affect the mobility of Chinese Indonesians students. The decision to move or to not move, to return or to stay, was influenced by the domestic politics that affects the social treatment towards Chinese Indonesians.

That said, the case of student mobility between China and Indonesia shows the important role of nation-states and the influence of national identity in shaping the mobility even in the globalization era (Glick-Schiller, 2012) when places and borders were assumed to be deterritorialized and more fluid. In this case, the mobility of the Chinese-Indonesians and the Chinese-Indonesian students themselves when they were mobile to China could become the subjects of sensitive and stereotyped racial issues, although this has not been explored that much in this research and subject to further research.

Adding to Glick-Schiller (2012) argument on the important role of the nation-states in the formation of mobility regimes, this paper shows that it is not only the stateactors but also the trans-state relation, comprises of bilateral tie to transnational connection, that works as a macrostructure factor which affects

student mobility. Both factors, state-actors and trans-state relation, are correlated to the geopolitical shifts.

There are differences, however, between the historical and contemporary mobility of Indonesian students to China. The mobility prior to 1998 was dominantly characterized by an imposed political circumstance that in several times forced the students to permanently leave. The contemporary mobility, in contrast, is a voluntary mobility and dominated by the economic and cultural motives. However, the future development of Indonesia-China student mobility depends on the future political economy of China and Indonesia's relation. It is potential to develop education cooperation to attain maximal benefit from it, but it vastly depends on the internal politics in Indonesia, in particular, the efforts to overcome racial prejudice towards Chinese Indonesians. In addition, serious efforts needed to fill the knowledge gap between both countries that resulted from 32 years of vacuum relation. Currently, China and Indonesia's diplomatic ties have reached the highest level with the expansion of bilateral relation beyond economic cooperation. However, this relationship is still full of uncertainties, as both are cautious towards each other. For Indonesia, the fear of China's communist ideology that has long been constructed as a threat may be lesser nowadays, but it is replaced by the fear of China will economically exploit Indonesia. For China, the traumatic experience of several hostile attacks towards Chinese Indonesians still lingers. The so-called people-to-people connectivity, a possible solution to building trust and friendship between both countries, is still along way to attain. Many works should be done to improve the 32 years of knowledge gap that resulted in socio-political prejudice on each other. In this effort, students could become social agents who play an important role whether during their stay in the destination country and after their return to the home country.

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