

# Participate for Profit: *Bilateral-Multilateral Nexus* in Indonesian Foreign Policy in the Era Joko Widodo (2014-2019)

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## Abstract

This paper seeks to analyze Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy under President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) during his first term of presidency (2014-2019). Specifically, this research will be focusing on three multilateral forums; G20, APEC, and East Asia Summit. This paper departs from the puzzle of why Jokowi's foreign policy seems to be paradoxical; on one hand, the bilateral approach looks very prominent but on the other, Jokowi does not seem to be very keen in engaging in multilateral forums. Using bilateral-multilateral nexus, this paper argues that Indonesia's participation in multilateral forums is only intended as a means of pursuing short-term interests rather than to contributing to global norms. Jokowi uses multilateralism just as a venue to arrange further bilateral cooperation with potential partners.

## Keywords:

Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy; Jokowi; Bilateral-multilateral nexus; G20; APEC; East Asia Summit

## INTRODUCTION

This article explains why Indonesia's foreign policy strategy in the Jokowi era seems paradoxical. On the one hand, Indonesia is very keen to take a bilateral approach. On the other hand, Indonesia has not neglected to engage in multilateral forums. In other words, although it seems to prioritize bilateralism, Indonesia does not ignore the multilateralism approach. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi disputed

claims that Jokowi's foreign policy tends to be *inward-looking*, based on narrow nationalism, and does not attach importance to international issues (see e.g. Rosyidin, 2014; Qin, 2015; Situmorang, 2015; Andika, 2016). Similarly, in his speech at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C, President Jokowi told the audience that Indonesia is not *inward-looking* and will always be committed to both national interests and international obligations (Parameswaran, 2015). Despite the fact that Jokowi prefers bilateralism to multilateralism, it seems that his foreign policy still adheres to the principle of actively contributing to various global issues.

There are several studies on Indonesia's bilateral and multilateral

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diplomacy. Arif (2015), for example, gives an explanation of Indonesia's approach to ASEAN. He emphasized that Indonesia's foreign policy under Jokowi emphasized more on practical and realistic considerations to achieve national interests. He also highlighted the importance of bilateralism in Jokowi's foreign policy towards ASEAN. Similarly, Poole (2017) also argues that Jokowi emphasizes bilateralism more than multilateralism in ASEAN. He suggested that Jokowi should not keep Indonesia away from ASEAN, but rather choose a different approach. He rejected the general view that Indonesia was moving towards a 'post-ASEAN foreign policy', a phrase uttered by Jokowi's former presidential adviser, Rizal Sukma. In contrast, Heiduk (2016) argues that contemporary Indonesian foreign policy is not authentic. In contrast, Indonesia's approach to ASEAN has long been characterized by ambiguity. Although Indonesia is fully aware of its traditional role as a regional power, Indonesia under Jokowi "has not yet developed new ideas and gained new policy initiatives for asea's future development" (Heiduk, 2016: 6). Contrary to the author above, Heiduk does not discuss bilateral or multilateral approaches in Jokowi's foreign policy in ASEAN.

Jokowi's multilateral approach to foreign policy has attracted many experts, especially with regard to Indonesia's participation in the IORA. Sebastian and Syailendra (2014), for example, argue that IORA represents

Jokowi's '*look west policy*' in the sense that its strategy is aimed at making Indonesia the 'world's maritime axis. According to them, Indonesia's multilateral approach in IORA reflects strategic policies because many large countries are expanding their spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean due to their strategic location. This argument is supported by Agastia and Perwita (2015) who argue that following the IORA will strengthen Indonesia's ambition to become a maritime power. However, they asserted that apart from active participation in Indo-Pacific cooperation, Indonesia will never leave ASEAN as its cornerstone.

Despite a good analysis of Indonesia's contemporary bilateral and multilateral foreign policy, the existing literature tends to ignore the mixed approach used by the Jokowi administration. All previous studies have focused exclusively on bilateralism or multilateralism, as if there were no linkage between the two approaches. Some scholars are categorized as bilateralists while others are multilateralists. This exclusivism cannot fully understand Jokowi's foreign policy. As this article will show, Jokowi does not use bilateralism or multilateralism in multilateral issues. Instead, he combined the two. Thus, this study will provide a better explanation of Jokowi's approach to Indonesian foreign policy in the early period of his administration.<sup>1</sup>

Using three case studies (G20, APEC, East Asia Summit) the main argument of this article is that Jokowi's

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<sup>1</sup> In his second term in power, Jokowi seemed to have begun to be active in bringing Indonesia's role on the international stage, including a

commitment to multilateralism. This tendency differed quite sharply from the early period of his reign which lacked interest in multilateralism.

multilateral paradox can be understood using a 'bilateral-multilateral' pattern whereBy Indonesia's participation in multilateral forums is only intended as a means to pursue short-term interests rather than contribute to global norms. Jokowi used multilateralism only as a platform to regulate further bilateral cooperation with potential partners. For Jokowi, it is better to carry out bilateralism in the medium of multilateralism than to visit many countries one by one. Thus, although Indonesia has actively participated in multilateral forums, bilateralism remains one of the main characteristics of Jokowi's foreign policy.

This article begins with a discussion of the relationship between bilateralism and multilateralism as a framework for analysis. There are four state strategies for conducting foreign policy; bilateral and multilateral, bilateral-multilateral, multilateral-bilateral, and bilateral or multilateral. In particular, the paper focuses on the second form. The next section discusses a brief history of Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy. This section briefly highlights the extent of the Indonesian government's commitment to multilateral diplomacy from the Soekarno era to Yudhoyono. The third part discusses three case studies (G20, APEC, East Asia Summit) to support the argument that Jokowi's multilateral policies are only intended as a tool to pursue short-term interests rather than contribute to global norms. It then closes with conclusions and implications for further research as well as policy recommendations.

## **Bilateral-Multilateral Nexus: A Conceptual Framework**

In the literature of diplomacy, bilateralism and multilateralism differ not only in quantity, that is, the number of participating states; bilateralism involves two countries while multilateralism involves many countries – usually more than three countries. The difference between the two approaches also revolves around the terms of their respective functions; where bilateralism focuses only on cooperation discussing specific and situational issues whereas multilateralism is characterized by: *indivisibility, generalized organizing principle and diffuse reciprocity* (Ruggie, 1993). Multilateralism is also different from bilateralism in that multilateralism has several functions; representing the inhabitants of the world or the 'parliament of mankind', humanity, the creation of norms, and the negotiation of international treaties (Mahbubani in Cooper, Haine and Takur, 2013). In other words, multilateralism emphasizes on global normative issues. On the contrary, bilateralism emphasizes the strategic issues of two countries. Therefore, politics is a cornerstone in bilateral diplomacy (Rozenal and Buenrostro in Cooper, Haine and Takur, 2013).

Eventhough, bilateralism and multilateralism have an interrelated relationship. Brendan Taylor coined the term '*bilateral-multilateral nexus*' which consists of four different patterns, namely 'bilateral or multilateral', 'bilateral-multilateral', 'multilateral-bilateral' and 'bilateral *and* multilateral' (Taylor in Tow and Taylor, 2013). First, 'bilateral or multilateral' refers to two separate diplomatic options. Each of them works

independently and has its drawbacks and advantages. The multilateral approach has the advantage of addressing issues such as new security threats or 'new security agendas' such as terrorism, climate change, disease pandemics, and weapons of mass destruction. Multilateralism is also more effective because it can rally the support of many parties to deal with certain threats. This is certainly different from the bilateral approach which is limited in both the actors and the scope. But the bilateral approach is advantageous because it is more concrete in producing agreements than multilateralism which is very time-consuming to reach consensus. 'Bilateral or multilateral' is only an option for countries where one approach is considered more appropriate for a particular issue.

Second, 'bilateral-multilateral' refers to the synergy between bilateralism and multilateralism. In this pattern, the state prioritizes bilateralism over multilateralism. The main objective of this policy option is to reach bilateral agreements but in the context of multilateralism. In other words, multilateralism only acts as a facilitator who helps countries to cooperate bilaterally. This option was chosen by most state leaders because multilateralism provided an efficient place to establish direct contact among the delegates. When attending multilateral forums, delegates from one country often hold a series of bilateral meetings with delegates from other countries. This can certainly save time and money compared to conventional bilateralism where a leader has to visit many countries one by one.

Third, 'multilateral-bilateral' is the opposite of 'bilateral-multilateral' where the synergy between bilateralism and multilateralism is aimed at reaching a multilateral agreement. The function of bilateralism is as a 'stepping stone' to achieve a greater goal. In the literature on regional cooperation, this is known as '*regional-convergent bilateralism*' or '*lattice bilateralism*', where intensive bilateralism is expected to make a positive contribution to regionalism. Bilateralism provides a 'lattice' structure or basis for the development of regional cooperation (Dent, 2006; Kim, 2015). In addition, bilateralism can also strengthen multilateralism by exerting pressure on certain countries that tend to be reluctant to comply with multilateral institutions (Verdier, 2008).

Fourth, 'bilateral and multilateral' refers to a combination of the two to deal with complex international problems that cannot be solved with a single approach. In international security, this combination is widely known as 'convergent security' which seeks to combine realist (which places emphasis on bilateralism) and liberal-institutionalist (which utilizes multilateralism) approaches. The combination of multiple approaches implies that a group of countries do not like selfish (realist) policies and do not choose ideal regional communities (liberal and constructivist). Rather, it is a gradual effort to build communities (*community building*) that incorporates bilateralism into multilateralism to deal with various security issues (Tow, 2001).

This research will specifically use this particular 'bilateral-multilateral' pattern because Jokowi's foreign policy

(in the early period of his administration) showed a strong commitment to bilateralism rather than multilateralism. We believe that the 'bilateral-multilateral' pattern is appropriate to describe Jokowi's foreign policy in a multilateral forum based on the assumption that multilateralism is only used as an instrument to facilitate bilateral cooperation for Indonesia in order to achieve strategic goals.

### **A brief history of Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy: From Sukarno to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono**

Multilateral diplomacy has long been an important instrument of Indonesia's foreign policy. Indonesia's involvement in various multilateral forums is expected to encourage the achievement of domestic needs. From the very beginning of independence, multilateral diplomacy was considered a continuation of domestic demands. However, on some occasions, engaging in multilateral forums is intended for more externally oriented purposes than domestic ones. Given that Indonesia's participation in the international environment requires recognition from other countries, multilateralism is an effective tool for gaining state status.

Indonesian diplomacy in the early phases of independence began with bilateral negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands to find common ground on the status of independence. The first negotiations between the two countries were the Linggarjati Agreement (November 15-March 25, 1947). On the sidelines of the meeting, the Indonesian government also conducted multilateral diplomacy for the first time.

On March 23-April 2, 1947, Indonesia attended the Multilateral Asian Relations Conference held in India by *the Indian Council of World Affairs* (ICWA). The meeting was attended by 25 Asian countries. Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir in his speech stated that the unity of Asian countries can only be realized by peaceful coexistence and maintaining peace by strengthening relations without being separated by differences. This first Indonesian foreign policy speech - even before the principle of 'free and active' was put forward by Hatta later - summarized the principle of non-alignedness and a strong commitment to world peace (Agung, 1973: 25).

Although a commitment to global interests had emerged at the beginning of independence, the focus of Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy was to seek political support for Indonesian independence. This effort was proven by Indonesia's participation in the UN Security Council Session on August 14, 1947 in Lake Success, New York. Five Indonesian diplomats – Sutan Sjahrir, Agus Salim, Soedjatmoko, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, and Charles Thambu – argued with the Dutch delegation led by Eelco R. van Kleffens. Sjahrir stressed that the Netherlands had violated the Linggarjati Treaty - which was recognized by the Netherlands itself - and urged the UN to mediate the conflict and issue a decision to force Dutch troops to withdraw from the territory of the republic. The request was unsuccessful. But the diplomacy had a major impact on the nascent country's struggle for international support for independence. Many countries have provided support as well as recognition to Indonesia such

as India, the Philippines, Australia, Syria, Russia and Poland (Zulkifli, 2010: 95-96).

Six years after the status of independence was officially recognized by the Netherlands in 1959, Indonesia organized the Asian-African Conference which had become a milestone in the history of multilateralism in the 20th century. Conditioned by the Cold War that divided the world into two blocs, the Asian-African Conference or the Bandung Conference became a political stage for the former colonies to voice their aspirations about an alternative vision of the world order. The conference has contributed to the emergence of norms of international relations, in particular the principle of non-intervention (Tan and Acharya, 2008). This principle is definitely an expression of the former colony during the rule of the colonists. The Bandung Conference built a collective identity among the former colonies widely known as '*Third Worldism*'. This idea is built on principles such as decolonization, anti-racism, nuclear disarmament, economic development, and the protection of local culture (Main, 2017: 171). The Bandung Declaration or Dadasila Bandung became one of the most important contributions of third world countries to the normative order of international relations of the 20th century. The conference paved the way for the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (GNB).

The change in the direction of Indonesia's foreign policy occurred after the enactment of the Decree of July 5, 1959 which marked the transformation of Indonesia's political system from a parliamentary democracy to a Guided Democracy. Foreign policy became the

personification of Sukarno as a central figure. Sukarno's firm foreign policy towards the West brought about a radical change in Indonesia's involvement in multilateral forums. Multilateral diplomacy became a political platform for Sukarno to fight the West or 'neocolonialism and imperialism' (nekolim) and 'old established forces' (oldefos). Sukarno used the UN primarily to express his resistance to the West. In a speech at the UN General Assembly on September 30, 1960 entitled "*To Build A World Anew*" Sukarno strongly condemned the West. Sukarno also used the UN to fight for West Irian. When Subandrio, the then foreign minister, attended the UN General Assembly in November 1961, he stated that if the UN accepted the Dutch proposal to occupy West Irian by force, then there was no other way for Indonesia except to defend itself by force (Agung, 1973: 301).

Unlike Soekarno, Suharto was not interested in an ideological foreign policy. He is a pragmatic and humble leader. Suharto's first multilateral diplomacy was the establishment of ASEAN. The organization was born in a Cold War atmosphere and a strong suspicion based on the ideological roots of communism. According to Suryadinata (1998: 86), "ASEAN is seen as a collective political defense in the face of threatening states, namely communist neighbors in the north". However, the fundamental purpose of the establishment of ASEAN from an Indonesian perspective is the desire to maintain regional stability so as to encourage economic progress. In other words, there is a strong link between politics and economics. Economic growth

requires political stability. Thus, ASEAN was formed to reduce conflicts between countries in the region so that in turn an atmosphere conducive to economic activities will be created.

In the early days of his leadership, Suharto seemed less interested in multilateralism outside ASEAN. Indonesia's participation in the 1970 GNB Summit in Lusaka did not impress Suharto. For Suharto, the nature of the GNB was highly ideological by expressing strong opposition to Western powers and leaning towards the communist bloc. Many GNB members disliked Suharto because of his anti-communist stance. This unpleasant experience made Suharto reluctant to travel abroad and even if he had to make an international visit he had to ensure that the visit could open up opportunities to increase economic cooperation (Elson, 2005: 344). After the Cold War, the GNB gradually became the platform of Suharto's foreign policy. Indonesia is beginning to appear to have a prominent role on the world stage, trying to direct the GNB to economic issues. While hosting the 1992 GNB, Suharto said that "economic cooperation and development should be their top choice if this organization is to play a major role in shaping the new world order" (Suryadinata, 1998: 228) According to Dewi Fortuna Anwar, the GNB was Indonesia's most important multilateral Forum after the Cold War (Anwar, 1994: 155).

In addition to the GNB, another important multilateral forum is APEC. Although Suharto initially seemed cautious about APEC because of his concerns about the free market, Indonesia

later changed drastically by becoming a strong supporter of APEC. The moment of change in Indonesia's policy towards APEC occurred in 1993 when the APEC meeting was held in Seattle. The following year, Indonesia was even willing to host. Indonesia's enthusiasm for participating in APEC is at least influenced by two things. First, Indonesia is worried about lagging behind neighboring countries in terms of the economy. According to Leo Suryadinata, when foreign investment became the driving force of economic development after the Cold War, Indonesia inevitably had to catch up with the free market system (Suryadinata, 1998: 232). Second, the ambition factor of becoming a world leader. In the 1980s after the Indonesian economy began to improve and even entered a new industrialized country (*Newly Industrialized Economies*), Indonesia's confidence to appear as a global player increased.

Regarding the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Suharto initially refused to sign the OIC charter in 1972 because he did not want Indonesia to be considered an Islamic state. But in 1991, Indonesia decided to become a full member of the OIC. Then, in 1993 Indonesia became the chairman of the OIC. However, this does not mean making Islam the basis of Suharto's foreign policy. For the New Order government, Islam occupies a secondary position in foreign policy discourse. The reason is that foreign policy is an elite authority that views that the national interest should be the cornerstone of foreign policy, not Islam.

After the collapse of the New Order, Indonesia's foreign policy during

the reform period was marked by efforts to restore the image of post-authoritarianism. Multilateral diplomacy received little attention from the government. Megawati Soekarnoputri sought to restore ASEAN's role as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy. To prove her sincerity, Megawati paid a visit to all ASEAN member states on August 20-29, 2001. This state visit can be interpreted as a sign of improved relations between Indonesia and neighboring countries as well as efforts to strengthen ASEAN centrality (Anwar, 2005: 103). Megawati said ASEAN was the 'main vehicle' of Indonesia's foreign policy and promised to return to playing a leadership role in ASEAN after resolving various domestic crises. In addition, by refocusing ASEAN as a traditional concentric circle, Indonesia can use the organization to establish cooperation against terrorism because at that time Indonesia was shaken by several bombings (Batabyal, 2002: 41).

Megawati's biggest breakthrough in ASEAN was the achievement of the Bali Concord II agreement which marked the vision of the ASEAN Community which stands on three pillars (political-security, economic, and socio-cultural). At that time, Indonesia happened to be in the position of asean chairman. The concept of the ASEAN Community is the idea of Indonesia. The ASEAN Summit in Bali in 2003 marked a revival of Indonesia's role in ASEAN as *primus inter pares*, something that was once initiated during the New Order period (Smith, 2004: 423). One of the pillars of the ASEAN Community, the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) opens up opportunities for Indonesia to again

occupy its central position in ASEAN which will ultimately increase ASEAN's bargaining power at the global level (Weatherbee, 2005: 151). This shows that in the Megawati era, Indonesia's multilateral commitment, especially in the regions, began to strengthen after the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian government.

Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy has reached its peak during the era of President Yudhoyono's administration. In this period, Indonesia's international involvement was quite high, at least compared to the previous era. In fact, Indonesia not only participated but also actively initiated multilateral and institutional forums to demonstrate Indonesia's global role. Shekhar (2014) calls Indonesia's activeness in various international forums as a '*global multilateralist*'. At the ASEAN level, Yudhoyono's foreign policy aims to strengthen ASEAN's centrality, especially on the South China Sea issue. The South China Sea issue is a 'litmus paper' for ASEAN, which shows the agency's capacity to manage potential conflicts, manage relations with China based on mutual trust and mutual benefit, and maintain ASEAN's integrity and cohesiveness (Natalegawa, 2018: 134).

Indonesia is committed to strengthening ASEAN by instituting its role as a conflict resolution instrument and human rights driver. Two institutions resulting from Indonesia's initiative are the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). It was formed at the 18th Summit in Jakarta and was ratified at the 21st Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2012. Previously,

Indonesia also initiated the establishment of asean human rights body, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission for Human Rights (AICHR) at the 15th summit in Thailand 2009. This makes Indonesia an 'agent of institutional and normative change' at the regional level (Roberts and Widyaningsih in Roberts, Habir and Sebastian, 2015). The figure behind the AICHR is Hassan Wirajuda, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the period 2001-2009. Wirajuda said, AICHR is an Indonesian idea even though the concept can be traced back to the 1990s. When other regional organizations discussed human rights issues, ASEAN was tight-lipped. Hassan criticised what became known as 'Asian Values'. For him, if ASEAN wants to move forward, there must be no resistance to human rights (Acharya, 2014: 58).

As the third largest democracy in the world, Indonesia seeks to project that identity into foreign policy. The Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) was held for the first time in 2008. The BDF is not a place for Indonesia to dictate to other countries about ideal democracy. Nor is the BDF a place to judge the political systems of other countries. The BDF is a forum for exchanging ideas about each country's experiences regarding democracy. This is certainly different from the approach of Western countries in promoting democracy, which often uses forced instruments such as sanctions, wars, and reward instruments such as the provision of financial assistance. Through the BDF, Indonesia promotes democracy by implementing Asian principles such as tolerance and non-intervention (Rosyidin, 2020).

At the global level, Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy can be seen from Indonesia's membership in the G20. The G20 is an informal forum for developed countries (G8) plus developing countries. As the only representative from Southeast Asia, Indonesia's entry into the G20 forum has also boosted Indonesia's prestige in the eyes of the world. Natalegawa (quoted in Acharya, 2014: 101) argues that Indonesia's involvement in the G20 opens up opportunities to improve its status as an influential global player. Another multilateral forum that is the focus of attention of the Yudhoyono administration is an international forum to address the impacts of climate change or UNFCCC. Indonesia's environmental diplomacy at the global level is quite active as seen at the 2009 Climate Change Summit in Denmark. In his speech, Yudhoyono affirmed Indonesia's commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 26 percent by 2020 at its own expense and 41 percent if assisted internationally. The main objective of Indonesia's participation is actually the need for a global solution to the problem of climate change. Indonesia has a strong underlying capital to play a leadership role in global efforts to reduce the impact of climate change (Jotzo in Reid, 2012).

In conclusion, Indonesia's involvement in multilateral forums is motivated by diverse interests. Each government has its own perspective on the multilateral forums they participate in. In the era of independence until the end of the Guided Democracy system, multilateral diplomacy was used by Indonesia to fight for the status of independence and resist colonialism. On the contrary, Suharto was committed to

strengthening the structure of the Indonesian economy by utilizing multilateral institutions. However, after the Cold War Indonesia's foreign policy began to pay attention to Indonesia's efforts to become a recognized global power. Post-reform, foreign policy tends to lose focus because transitional governments are busy solving domestic problems, especially the consolidation of democracy and the restructuring of the economy ravaged by the 1997 crisis. Megawati restored ASEAN's status as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy and strengthened ASEAN centrality with the agreement of the Bali Concord II in 2003 which underlies the vision of the ASEAN Community. Megawati's successor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono went so far as to expand the concentric circle of Indonesia's national interests. ASEAN is still seen as important, but Yudhoyono is more concerned with Indonesia's global involvement.

#### **Forum: Jokowi's Bilateralism in Multilateralism**

Before discussing the principle of pragmatism in Jokowi's foreign policy, we must first define what is meant by pragmatic foreign policy. In the discourse on the principle of foreign policy, there are two spectrums of thought that underlie how a country carries out its foreign policy, namely idealism vs. pragmatism. Both of these spectrums of thought tend to be associated with the individual character of a leader rather than the direction of foreign policy in general. That is, whether a country will adopt the principle of idealism or

pragmatism depends on the personal character of the leader. Idealistic leaders tend to carry out idealistic foreign policy, while pragmatic leaders will tend to choose a pragmatic approach. Rarely does an idealistic leader choose a pragmatic approach and vice versa. This is because foreign policy is largely the fief of the leader of the country. No matter the authoritarian or democratic state, the elite factor largely determines the complexion as well as the characteristics of the country's foreign policy. As a result, the personality of the elite determines foreign policy preferences.

Harold Nicholson, in his book *Diplomacy* divides the style of diplomacy into two; the style of shopkeeper and warrior. Shopkeeper diplomacy is characterized by a practical, open way of thinking, and focusing on reaching an agreement that benefits both parties. Meanwhile, warrior diplomacy puts forward coercion, is aggressive, willing to win on its own, and disrespects the opposing side (Nicholson 1950). Jokowi's diplomacy can thus be categorized as a shopkeeper's style of diplomacy because it is oriented towards the agreement of the two parties. The goal of shopkeeper diplomacy is mutually beneficial cooperation. Jokowi's doctrine of 'pro-people diplomacy' clearly reflects this. Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said according to president Jokowi's direction, Indonesian diplomacy should not be distanced from the interests of the people (CNN Indonesia, 2014). Darmansjah Djumala argues that it is rather difficult to define diplomacy that gives "direct benefits to the people." Compared to other areas of diplomacy, the economic-social field is more benefited by society

(Djumala, 2014). This is in line with president Jokowi's instructions to the Indonesian ambassadors. Jokowi called on them to prioritize economic diplomacy and demanded that ambassadors have a keen instinct in seeing the economic potential of their country of placement (Cabinet Secretariat, 2015a). Jokowi even said that the diplomat profession is a state salesman. Speaking before becoming president, Jokowi said, "The 80-90 percent taken care of by the ambassador should be business. They *take care of* the politics if there are problems only" (Kompas, 2014).

Foreign policy pragmatism is not something bad. On the contrary, this principle is considered more effective in pursuing national interests than merely promoting rhetoric full of ideas but lacking real action. Jokowi is a pragmatic leader who is less interested in the world of ideas and rhetoric. In carrying out foreign policy Jokowi always thinks profit and loss typical of a result-oriented trader. In line with the doctrine of 'pro-people diplomacy' Indonesia's foreign policy should focus on pursuing profits because it is seen as directly beneficial to the people. In the next section we will take a deeper look at the implementation of Jokowi's principle of pragmatism in Indonesia's involvement in multilateral forums. This is important for how committed Jokowi's foreign policy is in multilateral diplomacy.

#### *Bilateralism in the G20 forum*

The first multilateral forum that Jokowi attended was the G20 summit in Brisbane, Australia on November 15, 2014. At the meeting, Jokowi held

bilateral meetings with a number of countries, including Australia as the host, France, and Germany. With Australia, Jokowi discussed topics around government priority programs such as infrastructure, subsidies, and investment-related permits (Medcom, 2014). In addition, Jokowi also held bilateral meetings with German Prime Minister Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande, and Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. With Merkel, Jokowi discussed the issue of defense where Indonesia plans to buy Leopard tanks from Germany as well as cooperation in the transfer of defense technology. With Hollande, Jokowi discussed maritime infrastructure development and handling the ISIS threat. While with Turkey, Jokowi talked about trade issues (The Jakarta Post, 2014).

At the 2015 G20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey, Jokowi also held bilateral meetings with a number of delegates, among which the most prominent ones were with China and Canada. Jokowi held bilateral talks with Xi Jinping with a focus on increasing Chinese investment in Indonesia, especially in the real and financial sectors. At the meeting, China committed to increase liquidity support to increase foreign exchange reserves, from US\$ 15 billion to US\$ 20 billion. In addition, China also agreed to increase loans for infrastructure projects in Indonesia (Detik, 2015). Meanwhile, with Justin Trudeau, Jokowi discussed trade and investment issues in addition to strengthening cooperation in the fields of human rights, democracy, and interfaith dialogue (The Jakarta Post, 2015).

The following year, the G20 summit was held in Hangzhou, China. One of Jokowi's most important agendas at the event was to hold a bilateral meeting with President Xi Jinping. As the most important partner, the bilateral meeting will greatly affect Indonesia's domestic interests. The topics of conversation also very broadly include economic, political, social, and cultural issues agreed in *the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Partnership 2016-2020* between the two countries. Jokowi also held business meetings with 600 to 700 entrepreneurs as well as major Chinese SOEs (Tempo, 2016). This meeting with business circles can be interpreted as a policy priority of the Jokowi administration in the economic sector. This clearly reflects Jokowi's principle of foreign policy pragmatism.

At the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, Jokowi's bilateralism was also quite prominent. Jokowi specifically held bilateral meetings with US President Donald Trump, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phucey, and Korean President Moon Jae In. With Norway, Jokowi alluded to the Norwegian parliament's resolution on palm oil. According to him, the resolution is not in line with the spirit of REDD+ cooperation between the two countries. Another issue discussed was trade cooperation, investment, and IUU Fishing countermeasures (Tempo, 2017). With Donald Trump, Jokowi discussed countering the issue of terrorism,

especially in dealing with ISIS with increased cooperation in the exchange of intelligence information, stopping the flow of funds, empowering moderate communities and spreading counter-narratives (VOA Indonesia, 2017a). With Mark Rutte, Jokowi persuaded the Netherlands to impose a fair palm oil import policy. This is because in Europe there has been a black campaign that links Indonesia's palm oil exports to deforestation. In addition, in the field of security, the two countries talked about handling terrorism (Industry, 2017). With Nguyen Xuan Phucey, Jokowi called for the EEZ negotiations between the two countries to be completed immediately to prevent acts of violations of territorial boundaries, especially IUU fishing (Republika, 2017). With Malcolm Turnbull, Jokowi discussed two main topics, namely eradicating terrorism and encouraging negotiations *on the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA)* and *the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership* (VOA Indonesia, 2017b).

At the 2018 G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Indonesia was represented by Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Unlike the previous G20 Summit where Indonesia was very intensive in conducting bilateral meetings, the G20 Summit in 2018 Indonesia did not hold many bilateral meetings. Bilateral meetings were held with Turkey and Saudi Arabia where the two countries wanted to meet the Indonesian delegation. This contrasts with the 2019 G20 summit where Jokowi held meetings with many parties including the World Bank, Indian Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. With Narendra Modi, Jokowi discussed the issue of economic and maritime cooperation, as well as appreciation for India's support for the *ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific* concept initiated by Indonesia. With Saudi Arabia, Jokowi focused on cooperation in the energy sector, namely cooperation between Pertamina and Aramco. Meanwhile, with Australia, Jokowi discussed the issue of vocational education because the focus of the Indonesian government is on increasing human resources. With Turkey, Indonesia discussed the issue of increasing trade cooperation between the two countries and Indonesia's desire to become a member of the UN Human Rights Council for the 2020-2022 period (Deutsche Welle, 2019).

#### *Bilateralism in the APEC forum*

The APEC multilateral forum is also an instrument of Indonesian bilateralism. At the 2014 APEC Summit in Beijing, China, Jokowi held bilateral meetings with several key partners such as the US, China, Russia, South Korea, Japan and Vietnam. The issue of bilateral meetings between Indonesia and the US is dominated by security, namely terrorism and maritime security, especially in the South China Sea. Jokowi seems to be less interested in the issue by stating, "Yes, indeed, if America had indeed directed more, for example, to terrorism and radicalism" (Kabar24, 2014a). Meanwhile, with China, economic issues are more prominent.

Infrastructure cooperation, Indonesia's desire to enter the Asian Infrastructure Financing Bank (AIIB), in addition to cooperation in other fields is the main topic of discussion. A press release from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that cooperation with China includes security issues, law enforcement (anti-corruption and anti-terrorism), culture, especially plans to establish cultural centers and intercity and interprovincial cooperation (Kontan, 2014). With Russia, Jokowi discussed investment issues in energy, power generation, railways, irrigation, food and manufacturing (Tribun News, 2014). With Japan, a commitment was agreed to increase investment in industry and human resources. But Jokowi hopes that investment can be expanded to manufacturing (Detik, 2014). Meanwhile, with other countries, the topic of conversation is still not far from the issue of investment and trade.

The 2015 APEC Summit in the Philippines was not attended by Jokowi because it participated in the G20 summit in Turkey. Instead, Vice President Jusuf Kalla assumed the role of '*foreign policy marketer*' at the forum. Indonesia held at least bilateral meetings with two countries, namely Papua New Guinea and Colombia. With Papua New Guinea, Indonesia is pushing for trade cooperation between the two countries to be improved, especially in the border areas of the two countries. It is important to improve the development and welfare of border communities. Kalla also encouraged Papua New Guinean business delegations to continue participating in trade expo Indonesia activities and other trade fairs in Indonesia (Tempo, 2015).

Meanwhile, with Colombia, the two countries are exploring agribusiness cooperation in the field of palm oil. The Indonesia-Colombia bilateral meeting also paved the way for business expansion for Indonesian companies. Beyond economic issues, Colombia wants to learn from Indonesia about conflict resolution (CNN Indonesia, 2015).

At the 2016 APEC Summit in Peru, Indonesia was again represented by Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Unlike the previous year's APEC Summit which was recorded as holding only two bilateral meetings, at the 2016 APEC Summit Indonesia held a fairly intensive bilateral meeting. After conducting 12 ministerial bilateral meetings, Vice President Kalla also held meetings with a number of parties including Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, Peru, Chile, and the US Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin). Among these meetings, the Indonesia-Vietnam bilateral forum was the most prominent. In the forum, Indonesia invited Vietnam to equalize the minimum wage for industrial workers. If the wages of workers in Vietnam are lower than in Indonesia, then investors will prefer Vietnam. In addition, the two parties also discussed the development of *the world value chain (global value chain)* in the automotive, chemical, and digital industry sectors (Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016).

Bilateral meetings between Jokowi and the delegation leadership were somewhat reduced at the 2017 APEC summit in Vietnam. Jokowi was recorded as meeting only two representatives of the country, namely Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Papua

New Guinean Prime Minister Peter O'Neill. The meeting with Turnbull discussed trade issues between the two countries in particular accelerating the IA-CEPA agreement. While with O'Neill, Jokowi did not discuss substantive issues and only gave support to Papua New Guinea which in 2018 will host the APEC summit. A fairly intensive bilateral meeting was actually held by the Ministry of Trade with five member countries of the delegation, namely New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, and Papua New Guinea. With New Zealand, it discussed the ASEAN-New Zealand trade agreement (AANZFTA) and Indonesia's tropical fruit export opportunities. With Japan, it was discussed about the *ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP)* regarding investment disputes. With Hong Kong, it was discussed about the finalization of free trade agreements, financial services, and export opportunities for Indonesian products. With Australia, the focus of the talks is in line with the issue discussed by Jokowi and Turnbull, namely IA-CEPA. With Papua New Guinea only discussed Indonesia's support for the implementation of the APEC summit the following year. The Ministry of Commerce also held meetings with a number of large companies such as Nike, Johnson & Johnson, and General Electric (Kontan, 2017).

The frequency of bilateral meetings between Jokowi and a number of countries was also reduced at the 2018 APEC Summit in Papua New Guinea. This is because the schedule is almost at the same time as the ASEAN Summit in Singapore. The president is known to

have only met with Solomon Islands Prime Minister Rick Houenipwela and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Talks with Solomon were focused on improving economic cooperation between the two countries. Indonesia hopes that there will be an increase in Indonesia's investment in the Solomon Islands, especially the palm oil, fisheries, tourism, and maritime industries. In addition, Indonesia also mentioned politics, namely the issue of West Papua. This issue is a sensitive issue where Solomon often criticizes Indonesia's policies in Papua at UN forums. Jokowi said diplomatically that "I appreciate the Solomon Islands' position that supports Indonesia's territorial integrity. I appreciate His Majesty's views on developments in Papua" (Business, 2018a). Meanwhile, with Xi Jinping, Jokowi asked China to facilitate Indonesia's exports due to the deficit trade balance and increase the number of Chinese tourists to Indonesia (CNBC Indonesia, 2018).

#### *Bilateralism at the East Asia Summit forum*

The multilateral forum of the East Asia Summit is a meeting organized by ASEAN plus partner countries namely Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan, South Korea, and China. The first East Asia Summit that Jokowi participated in was the 9th East Asia Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The summit became famous after Jokowi introduced the concept of the World Maritime Axis to the international world. Perhaps because he was still early participating in multilateral forums, Jokowi did not hold many bilateral meetings at this summit. On the sidelines of the forum, Jokowi held bilateral meetings with a number of

countries including Myanmar, New Zealand, and India. With Myanmar, Jokowi met President Thein Sein and did not discuss substantive issues except only diplomatic statements regarding Indonesia's support for Myanmar in the regional and international region. In contrast, Jokowi's meetings with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister John Key discussed specific issues. With Modi, Jokowi offered India investment in coal mining and defence (Antara News, 2014). Meanwhile, with John Key, Jokowi offers investment in the geothermal sector (Kabar24, 2014b).

At the 10th East Asia Summit in 2015, which was in series with the 27th ASEAN Summit, Jokowi held bilateral meetings with several representatives of countries, namely New Zealand, Vietnam, and the UN Secretary-General. With New Zealand, Jokowi asked the country to open its market for Indonesian products, especially tropical fruits. In addition, cooperation in the geothermal field that had been discussed at the East Asia Summit the previous year was also mentioned by Jokowi (Infobank News, 2015). With Vietnam, Indonesia is pushing for increased trade and investment cooperation. The two parties agreed to increase the trade value by US\$ 10 billion in 2018. Another issue is the matter of resolving EEZ negotiations so that there is clarity on the status of jurisdiction in the border areas of the two countries (Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015b). Jokowi also held a meeting with the UN Secretary-General and raised issues on the UN sustainable development program (SDGs) and efforts to deal with

forest fires. On the other hand, the UN Secretary-General appreciated Indonesia's role in dealing with *irregular migrant* and terrorism issues (Presidential Staff Office, 2015).

The intensity of bilateral meetings was somewhat reduced at the 11th East Asia Summit in 2016 in Vientiane, Laos. At the summit, Jokowi was recorded as only meeting bilaterally with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. The agenda of the talks revolved around cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, maritime, and beef imports. Counter-terrorism cooperation is carried out by increasing the role of *the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation* (JCLEC). Maritime cooperation focuses on handling *IUU fishing* and *blue conomy*. Cooperation in beef imports involves *cattle breeding* as an effort to realize food security in Indonesia (VOA Indonesia, 2016).

At the 2017 East Asia Summit in the Philippines, Jokowi also held only bilateral meetings with one country, Japan. The meeting between Jokowi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe discussed regional security issues in addition to economic cooperation between the two countries. Abe urged Indonesia to play a more active role in suppressing North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The two countries also agreed to cooperate on the South China Sea issue even if it is not *claimant states*. In the economic sector, the two parties agreed to continue investment cooperation in the field of infrastructure such as the construction of the Patimban port, the Jakarta-Surabaya high-speed train, the MRT, the construction of the Sumatra toll road, the development of remote islands, and

energy cooperation (CNN Indonesia, 2017).

The intensity of holding bilateral meetings on the sidelines of multilateral forums increased again at the East Asia Summit in Singapore in 2018. Jokowi held bilateral meetings with at least five countries, namely Australia, Japan, Russia, Chile, and the US. Jokowi met Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and talked about counter-terrorism, *interfaith dialogue*, the Palestinian issue, and the Indo-Pacific concept (Business, 2018b). With Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Jokowi discussed Japan's investment cooperation, namely the MRT project. Jokowi also called on Japan to support The certification of Indonesian palm oil. In addition, Jokowi wants Japan to provide flexibility in the Indonesia-Japan economic cooperation negotiations (IJEPA) and regional comprehensive economic cooperation (RCEP). Increased cooperation in various fields was also discussed considering the momentum of the 60th anniversary of relations between the two countries (Kompas, 2018). Jokowi also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed trade cooperation between the two countries. The two parties agreed to increase the trade value by US\$ 5 billion by 2020. Jokowi also persuaded Russia to support a positive campaign for Indonesian palm oil products (CPO). In addition, Indonesia wants Russia to open up markets for fishery products and tropical fruits. Another topic discussed was about cooperation in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EAEU) region where Indonesia has an interest in opening free trade cooperation with the region (Business, 2018c). Meanwhile, with

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, Jokowi discussed trade and maritime cooperation. Indonesia and Chile have agreed on the *Indonesia-Chile Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IC-CEPA)* so that an increase in the value of trade between the two countries needs to be carried out. In addition, the two parties also discussed maritime cooperation, especially the issue of plastic waste in the sea and sustainable marine management (Kontan, 2018). Finally, a bilateral meeting between Jokowi and US Vice President Mike Pence discussed three issues, namely pluralism, economy, and security in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, Indonesia also requested U.S. support for asean humanitarian aid agencies or the AHA Center (Business, 2018d).

Bilateralism continued at the 2019 East Asia Summit in Thailand. Jokowi held at least bilateral meetings with four delegations, namely the UN Secretary-General and leaders of countries such as Australia, Japan, and India. A meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres discussed the Palestinian issue and the conflict in Rakhine, Myanmar. The core of the conversation centered on Indonesia's commitment to be part of solving problems on both issues (Detik, 2019). Although not a strategic issue, the delivery of commitments in front of the UN Secretary-General is important to gain the trust and recognition of the international organization regarding world peace. Meanwhile, the meeting with the leaders of the summit delegation countries was more directed at the topics of cooperation. With Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Jokowi discussed the Papua issue and the IA-

CEPA agreement. Regarding the Papua issue, Jokowi explained Indonesia's efforts to advance the economy and ensure security in the region. Morrison called Indonesia's commitment to building Papua "very beneficial" (Liputan6, 2019). The topic of conversation with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe continued the previous year's agreement, namely cooperation in the fields of infrastructure and human resources. In addition, Japan will also hold a capacity building program with BAKAMLA and provide loans for natural disaster management. Japan will also be the operator of the construction of the Masela Block Abadi Field which will be carried out by the Japanese company INPEX Corporation (Investor, 2019). With Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jokowi conducted palm oil diplomacy. In the meeting, Modi promised to implement a fair policy on palm oil exports from Indonesia (Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

At this point, it can be concluded that Indonesia's bilateral diplomacy on the sidelines of the multilateral forum is a strategic step to achieve national interests. Indonesia's foreign policy agenda in the multilateral forums outlined above demonstrates the Jokowi administration's priorities for sectors that are seen as providing concrete benefits for Indonesia. This foreign policy pragmatism, while not new, was one of the most prominent characters in Jokowi's foreign policy during his reign.

## CONCLUSION

In his speech at the 75th SESSION of the UN General Assembly in 2020,

Jokowi stated, "Indonesia has unwavering confidence in the UN and multilateralism" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). Retno Marsudi, while attending the *Alliance for Multilateralism* forum, said that "Multilateralism is the best and only way to face today's global challenges" (Kompas, 2020). These two statements demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to multilateralism, which in the second period of Jokowi's administration, began to stand out when compared to the first period. This article has shown that in the first period of Jokowi's administration, Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy was dominated by bilateralism. This does not mean that the Jokowi administration is turning away from multilateral forums and leaning towards bilateral forums. However, Jokowi's multilateral diplomacy acts as a 'facilitator' for bilateral diplomacy. In accordance with the concept of '*bilateral-multilateral nexus*' from Tow and Taylor (2013), state involvement in multilateral forums is driven more by national interests that prioritize bilateral forums where substantive issues directly related to the interests of the country concerned are more visible than normative issues discussed at the multilateral level. This commitment is in line with the slogan "pro-people diplomacy" coined by Retno Marsudi where "the implementation of foreign policy must not be distanced from the interests of the people" (CNN Indonesia, 2014).

There are at least two implications of this article's conclusions for the study of diplomacy. First, multilateralism is not suitable for the pursuit of national interests. Acharya (2005) argues that

multilateralism serves as an agent of changing international norms. This implies that the existence of multilateral forums is intended to create norms or standards of conduct for countries in responding to international issues. Simply put, multilateral forums provide a space for countries to discuss major solutions to major problems. As a result, this forum is not suitable for countries whose foreign policy orientation tends to be pragmatic. Second, multilateralism is nothing more than a forum for interstate friendship. Too extensive bilateralism can reduce the country's commitment to multilateralism. In fact, the multilateralism forum is important not to fulfill the wishes of individual countries but to solve major problems at the global level. If the state concentrates solely on pursuing its own national interests and ignores global interests, then what happens is a waiver of multilateralism. Multilateral forums in the end only became a '*talk shop*' event without commitment to follow up on the agreements that had been made. Multilateralism is just an internationally friendly event.

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