



Multipolar International System And The Place Of Indonesia: Prospects And Opportunities

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Abstract

In human history, the factor of international relations and what system they will develop has always been present. For the last three hundred years, the dynamics in this aspect have been significant until the 90s, which opened the possibility for the first time that the world would be under the control of a hegemonic idea. However, the political practice of the 21st century shows that globalization is facing problems and some countries are looking for an alternative path. The traditions and values resulting from them unite different peoples, nations, and countries in the idea of civilizational cooperation. This study aims to explain the multipolar international system and how civilizations are divided in Indonesia according to Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilizations and as well as to find out the prospects and opportunities for Indonesia as a country with one of the largest economies in the world. This research uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The results of this study explain Indonesia's position amid various civilizations which can lead to conflicts in the future.

Keywords: International Relations, Multipolarity, The Clash of Civilizations, Geopolitics, Indonesia

1. Introduction

International relations are a set of political, economic, legal, military, and other connections. A system of international relations represents a concrete sustainable form of order between nations and states, which is secured by the force of international law through treaties, agreements, and corresponding balance that is formed on their basis. In its history, humanity has passed through various systems of international relations, and practice shows that not all the past systems could be eternal. The political situation in the world is in a state where individual countries follow different paths, protect their national interests, and take part in different integration processes. It is worth highlighting the significance of national interests in fostering a civic nation. When a widely accepted statement on national interests is established, it unites individuals and enables them to transcend their differences in ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and educational background. This shared objective typically promotes a sense of unity among people (Mikhail A.T., 2015). This type of foreign policy conducted by the major regional and world powers consequently lead to the formation of the multipolar world. Various scholars provide their opinions on the detailed structure of the multipolar system in international relations. The situation in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, may also be the subject of discussions regarding the possibilities and future of the region's countries in multipolarity. Because geopolitically, civilizational, and historically, the country unites several possibilities. Political development in Indonesia has not lost these connections but preserves and develops them.

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country located in Southeast Asia. It is strategically located between two oceans and two continents, making it a hub for international commerce and a vital transit point for shipping lanes. The U.S. Geological Survey (2020) reported that Indonesia is abundant in natural resources such as oil, gas, coal, copper, gold, tin, and nickel, with the largest nickel production in the world. Its vast consumer base

offers enormous potential for economic development and investment opportunities, putting Indonesia in the top three fastest-growing countries among the G20 countries (Soesmanto T., Tjoe Y., 2022). And among the 20 countries with the largest economies in the world, ranked first in the Southeast Asia region. Despite all of it, Indonesia has become a bone of contention for several major countries in the world who want to influence it so that they can fulfill their national interests.

2. Method

This research employs qualitative research methods. Because we believe that this method can provide a rich and good understanding of how Indonesia plays its role in the multipolar system of international relations. It also utilizes qualitative methods and conducts data analysis inductively, intending to find theories from the basics. We use qualitative methods to analyze media and other texts related to the study, such as news articles. The research objectives are descriptive, with studies being limited by focus and a set of criteria for checking data validity. The research design used in this study is descriptive, as explained by Sugiyono (Setiawan, 2017), the purpose of this design is to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and meaning of the subject under study.

The data sources for this study are derived from secondary sources. Secondary sources refer to materials such as literature, archives, articles, documents, and other supporting materials related to the issues being investigated. These data sources are collected through reading, studying, citing, and reviewing the literature, archives, articles, documents, and other existing materials to gather information relevant to the study.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Globalist Crisis And Transition To Multipolarity

In the history of our world, various international systems have existed. In the history of the theory of the system of international relations, the Westphalian in the 17th century is indicated as the first negotiated world order, which was consolidated after the end of the Thirty Years' War and the signing of the Peace of Westphalia. The principles of the given system are - state sovereignty, the balance of power, the priority of national interests, and the equality of rights of states. The second is called Vienna and was established after the Congress of Vienna, which determined the balance of power between the great states at the time. At the beginning of the last century, there was an attempt at a global system that ignored the interests of the countries that lost the First World War, which also led to its instability. The emergence of revanchism opened a new black page in the history of mankind - the Second World War, but at its end, the leaders of the Great Powers set about establishing a bipolar international system. This marks the beginning of a period in which the world is divided in two and rests on the conflict between two ideologies. But on the other hand, the same leaders who started this system also started the United Nations, which still has the opportunity to maintain a peaceful environment in the world, no matter how difficult it may be.

After the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the 1990s were mainly marked by the development and construction of a unipolar system. Authors such as Francis Fukuyama, who see the future world after the collapse of the Soviet Union as one, where globalization and subsequent neoliberalism prevail, also write about this. The beginning of the 1990s marked not only new political transitions in former countries of Eastern Europe but also others such as the People's Republic of China also went through liberal reforms in the economic system. In practice, the 1990s allowed Washington to develop its soft power, which is also linked to the rise of globalization and the idea of unipolarity. Although accepting a united world with one center, it should be attractive. As the dynamics of globalization processes accelerated, it became increasingly obvious that the former indicators of state power, such as economic and military potentials, were gradually losing their former significance, and resources and methods of "soft power" were more effective methods of achieving foreign policy goals (Leonova, 2018). In this case, the term "soft power" is born and was first coined by Joseph Nye. The concept was developed in the late 1980s while the American was still dean at the John Kennedy School of Management, which is one of the faculties of Harvard University. The concept emerged when the ideas of a unipolar and global world were born, which the triumph of neoliberalism was claimed to be. At that time, in 1989, Francis Fukuyama published his article "The End of History?", and later formulated a concept that liberal and democratic institutions have advantages over others that have emerged from different ideologies and have

universal significance (Francis, 1989). The father of the concept of soft power together with Robert Keohane developed the international relations theory of neoliberalism. The concept of "soft power" expresses the ability to establish hegemony through attraction and cooperation. It opposes the so-called "hard power" that uses coercion, physical/material force, or giving money as a means of persuasion. "Soft power" became popular with the use of the term by members of the Clinton administration and then the Obama administration. Nye asserts that there is nothing new about soft power and that it is a process that has been used by states since ancient times.

At the beginning of the new century, including today, the scientific community does not have a unified explanation and opinion about the system of international relations today. And you can even find opinions among analysts that there has been no dynamism and development in this area in recent years. One thing, however, shows the practice of politics for the last ten years. Globalization cannot develop and continue its expansion in the world - the development of Euroscepticism in the European Union is a trend that has enabled the establishment of governments that openly follow illiberal and conservative values such as Viktor Orbán, Georgia Meloni, etc. Britain's exit from the EU has also increased the support of both Eurosceptics and anti-European populists, and the influence of religion and traditional values in countries such as Russia, Turkey, Iran, and India has been increasing over the years. This is a clear sign that the unipolar world, which is based on neoliberalism, no longer exists and its dynamics have stopped.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, scientific works of scientists from the USA and Russia appeared, which described the future of the world in a different way from the views of the globalists. According to the theory of a multipolar world, civilizations, not states, are the main factor in international relations. The principle of a large space corresponds to civilizations. A large space is very conditional and is not rigidly connected with the political territory. A large space is a zone in which the hegemony of a country prevails, but which is wider than this country.

One of the theorists of multipolarity is Alexander Dugin, who claims that before our eyes, the structure of the world is changing: from unipolarity, which prevailed after the end of the USSR, to multipolarity. Multipolarity is becoming more and more obvious, but it is still premature to say that the "point of no return" has been passed and we are already living in a multipolar world. Perhaps we will understand that this "point of no return" was passed at some point, only after the fact, after some time. Often the comprehension of events occurs with a certain delay. But we are clearly inside a phase transition: unipolarity is decaying quite obviously, and the features of a new multipolar world order are emerging more and more clearly from under the remnants of the shrinking hegemony of only one state (Dugin, 2020).

S. Huntington came up with the idea of a "Clash of Civilizations" in the final decade of the 20th century. According to Tsygankov, P.A. (2004), Huntington was among the initial proponents of a new form of realism where civilizations take on the role of primary actors in global politics. However, the core principles of realism remain applicable. In a world without a central authority, relations among civilizations and states (as per classical realism) are marked by conflicts arising from the diversity and contradictions of their values. In the US, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in contrast to Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington believes that ideologies will not be a driving force in international relations, but a new factor appears in this sphere in the face of identity at the civilizational level (Huntington, 1996).

3.2 Indonesia's Prospects and Opportunities in Multipolar World

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world and is located in the Southeast Asian continent. Most experts say that geopolitically Indonesia is located in a strategic location because it is surrounded by two oceans, namely the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and is also located between 2 continents, namely Asia and the Australian continents. It makes this country becoming the crossroads of major maritime trade routes, making it a hub for international commerce and a vital transit point for shipping lanes. In addition, Indonesia has abundant natural wealth, including oil, gas, coal, copper, gold, tin, and also nickel which in this case makes Indonesia the country with the largest nickel production in the world (U.S. Geological Survey, 2022). Besides that, Indonesia

is one of the fastest growing countries among the G20 countries and currently, Indonesia is also included in the 20 countries with the largest economies in the world, 5th in Asia, and ranked first in the Southeast Asia region. The country with the 4th largest population in the world with a population of more than 270 million people as well as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world makes Indonesia have several advantages, one of which is in the economic field. Indonesia's large population presents a significant market for businesses, both domestic and foreign. As the economy continues to grow, the country's vast consumer base offers enormous potential for economic development and investment opportunities.

Taking inspiration from sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991), the term "Juggernaut" originally referred to a large truck, but is also used to describe a great power. This term can be applied to the current state of Indonesia as a Juggernaut, placing this country in the top 20 of the world's largest economies, behind the wheel of this country are three major powers trying to jockey for position to control 'the big truck'. Even though Giddens' term Juggernaut describes uncontrolled globalization, it is suitable to be used to describe Indonesia's current situation (S13, 2016).

Samuel Huntington in his thesis entitled 'The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order' the world is divided into several major civilizations, starting from 'Western' civilization which includes the United States, Canada, Western and Central Europe, as well as Australia and Oceania; then Latin American civilizations; the Orthodox civilization that includes the former Soviet Union; then there are the 'Eastern' civilizations which include Chinese, Buddhist, Japanese, and Hindu; the Greater Middle East Muslim civilization; sub-Saharan civilization in Africa; to the civilization of 'torn countries' or countries with a large majority and minority identities (for example between a Hindu majority and a large Muslim minority in India), then there are countries called 'lone countries' by Huntington, for example, Israel, Ethiopia, and Haiti.

According to Huntington (1996), the occurrence of potential conflicts due to clashes of identity and religion between civilizations means that the world will not end yet. This theory remains relevant when considering the current context of international relations. For instance, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's presence is likely to cause numerous conflicts, providing evidence for Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilizations. Furthermore, the rise of majority political movements in mainland Europe and America also supports Huntington's thesis. Ultimately, the world may one day face a situation where identity and religion may spark wars and conflicts between these civilizations.

Huntington's civilization classified Indonesia as part of the Greater Middle East Muslim civilization, despite being the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. However, this does not necessarily mean that Indonesia is a completely unified Muslim power due to the similarity of its identity. If one reflects more deeply, it becomes clear that Indonesia is a country with clashes between three different civilizations. Firstly, there is the Western civilization (represented by the United States, Western and Central Europe, Singapore, Japan, and Australia) which has been present in Indonesia since colonial times and continues to wield significant influence in the country even after independence. Secondly, there is the Eastern civilization, which through China's economic power, is gradually attempting to dominate Indonesia. And the last one is the transnational Muslim civilization which seems to be starting to enter and spread in Indonesia. These three civilizations or forces certainly have the potential to give rise to conflict in this country. Differences in identity and maybe even religion, one day will have the potential to create friction in society. Western civilization is strongly characterized by Christianity (Catholic-Protestant), eastern civilization is strongly characterized by Eastern culture and Buddhism, while Muslim trans-national civilization is characterized by Islam itself. If you use Huntington's thesis, conflicts between these three civilizations will likely occur anytime in the future.

As the author has previously explained, Indonesia is likened to a driver driving a large truck with several civilizations (major countries) in the back seat and they fight with each other to influence Indonesia in which direction they are going. Of course, this is not a "strange" thing, because Indonesia is a country with the largest economy in the world which is currently in 16th place. Several sources that the authors have found that Indonesia's economy is predicted to continue to rise and by 2050, expected that Indonesia is going to be the

fourth-largest country by GDP based on purchasing power parity, following China, India, and the U.S (Ward, 2018).

Indonesia's profile as a former colony of the Dutch East Indies makes this case study very interesting. The export main partners of Indonesia are China, US, and Japan, while China, Singapore, and Japan are Indonesia's primary import partners (The Observatory for Economic Complexity, 2020). Indonesia's international trade network is a hybrid mix of multipolar and unipolar partners, with China representing the former and the US, Japan, and Singapore representing the latter. However, critical to recognize that Indonesia is almost equally divided between multipolar (China) and unipolar (US-led) forces, making it a contested position for great power countries. As a result, Washington may be tempted to pull Jakarta firmly into the unipolar fold. This cannot be denied when President Joko Widodo (known domestically as "Jokowi") visited the United States in 2015 and said controversially that Indonesia would eventually join the Trans-Pacific Partnership. However, until now Indonesia has not ratified or signed the agreement. As Jokowi said through the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia Sri Mulyani, Indonesia has not seen TPP as an immediate priority for the Indonesian economy. Some experts say that it is possible that Jokowi's decision to align Indonesia's economy with the TPP could be an attempt to appease the United States and deflect pressure from it temporarily. Alternatively, it could reflect Jokowi's genuine desire to align Indonesia's economy with the TPP. However, this development is concerning as it suggests that some members of Indonesia's establishment may be considering moving away from their current contested status and towards a more unipolar world.

Indonesia is one of the founding countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), at that time Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, was one of the pioneers of establishing the forum. Since the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, Indonesia has still faithfully adhered to the NAM policy but after the coup against Soekarno which was carried out in 1965, Indonesia switched to the New Order era led by Suharto at that time. However, during the New Order government, Indonesia's foreign policy was more low profile and instead became more inclined and cooperative with Western countries. At present, it appears that the majority of ordinary citizens are primarily focused on improving their country and meeting their basic needs. Therefore, it is unclear to what extent they are interested in Indonesia's approach to balancing its relationships with the US and China, or how much they would be affected by learning the truth about the events of 1965 - 1966.

Looking at the map, it is clear that Indonesia possesses all the necessary attributes of a quintessential pivot country. In theory, it has the potential to maintain its strategic position indefinitely in the New Cold War, thus reaping the benefits of a carefully balanced approach to its relationships with China, the US, and even India. One of Indonesia's key advantages is its location, which places it at the literal crossroads between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Consequently, its waterways serve as vital arteries for global maritime commerce, as they provide the most direct routes for ships traveling between these two regions. As long as it maintains its current neutral policies, Jakarta can effectively balance its relationships with Beijing and New Delhi. Then with the US, Indonesia's relationship will inevitably endure due to the significant volume of trade between the two countries, not to mention the Pentagon's substantial naval presence in the region, which it has redirected as part of its Pivot to Asia strategy. It is unlikely that Indonesia will ever completely sever ties with the US, nor should it, especially considering the potential for pragmatic win-win cooperation between unipolar and multipolar states. However, this does not mean that Indonesia must acquiesce to Washington's demands.

It is important to note that pragmatic engagement with China does not equate to submitting to it, even though some regional populations may mistakenly conflate these two separate concepts. Indonesia possesses all the necessary attributes to engage in friendly economic competition with China, which ultimately contributes to the creation of a stronger and more diversified multipolar world. However, the success of this approach will depend on the intentions of Jakarta's "deep state" (permanent intelligence-military-diplomatic bureaucracy) decision-makers, who must remain committed to cultivating positive and mutually beneficial relations with China.

4. Conclusion

Currently, Indonesia is being compared to a "Juggernaut", a big truck that is being controlled by several civilizations (major countries) that are trying to gain Indonesian influence to gain their national interests. According to Huntington in his thesis, Indonesia is classified as a Greater Middle East Muslim civilization. However, Indonesia can be categorized into 3 civilizations according to Huntington's civilization theory. The first is that Indonesia entered into Western civilization where this civilization has entered Indonesia since colonialism. Both Indonesia belongs to the eastern civilization which came from China's economic power that tried to dominate the country. And finally, there is the transnational Muslim civilization that started and spread in Indonesia.

In the international world that has entered multipolarity. Indonesia is a good bait for major countries who try to flirt with Indonesia to fulfill their national interests. Indonesia is the country with the largest economy in the world and some sources even say that Indonesia will enter the country with the 5th largest economy in the world before 2050. Of course, in this case, America and China. These two countries are rival countries that want to gain influence from Indonesia. However, despite all of it, Indonesia certainly still adheres to its free and active foreign policy and even today Indonesia is still compliant with the policy of the Non-Align Movement (NAM) international forum in which Indonesia is one of the pioneers in the formation of this forum. But one day, we will never know which side Indonesia will take, whether it will continue to comply with its free and active foreign policy or will instead turn its back on NAM's policy.

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