

International relations in Indonesia: historical legacy, political intrusion, and commercialization¹

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Abstract

This paper is about the development of international relations (IR) as a field of study in Indonesian universities. It argues that IR as a discipline has been encountering a paradox. On the one hand, while the discipline has been increasingly held in high esteem by students, marked by an increasing number of applicants to IR departments across the country; on the other hand, IR scholars show too little commitment to research and publication for the development of the discipline; and if they do publish, the quality of writing is generally poor. This article indicates that the paradox of teaching IR in Indonesia has much to do with historical legacies and political intrusion, as well as an economic environment in which universities are increasingly driven toward commercial activities. All these factors shape the current development of social science in general, and IR in particular.

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1 Introduction

This paper will elaborate the history and development of international relations (IR) as a discipline in Indonesia. It argues that despite the increasing popularity of IR as a field of study in Indonesian universities, Indonesian IR scholars and academics make too little effort in academic activities both domestically and internationally, as they rarely produce academic papers, participate in international conferences, and write journal articles or books that develop the discipline. The discussion will be divided into four parts. The first part (Section 2) deals with the historical legacy of ‘pragmatism’ and nationalism embedded in social science in Indonesia, which means that IR scholars are expected to follow the state’s foreign policy orientation which was strongly pro-American, especially during the cold war era. The second part (Section 3) discusses how the political context of the Southeast Asian region and Indonesia’s foreign policy orientation have shaped the way in which IR and the Southeast Asia region is perceived by Indonesian scholars, academics, and students. The third part (Section 4) discusses the linkage of IR as a field of study to the government. Linkages to circuits of political power bind Indonesian scholars to pragmatism, as government intervention in designing the university curriculum as well as state intervention in lecturer promotion seem to have driven scholars to limit their activities to teaching and student supervision rather than finding truth or research for the development of the discipline. The fourth part (Section 5) focuses on the increasing pressures on Indonesian universities for commercialization due the privatization of state universities adopted by the government in the early 2000s. The commercialization of higher education has required university lecturers to take on heavy teaching loads and leaves almost no time for academics to concentrate on research and publication. While research funding is still lacking, lecturers have too little incentive to engage in serious research in their field of specialization. Even if they do, they tend to carry out project-oriented research for practical use by the funding institutions.

In the past decade, there has been growing attention to IR as a field of study in Indonesia. Applicants to a number of IR departments across the country have shown a substantial increase. Despite the steady increase in university tuition and entry fees (including those of state universities), the number of applicants to many undergraduate courses in IR

grew significantly, especially since the mid-1990s.² Many universities opened new IR departments to take in the growing number of students. For example, if in the late 1980s, there were only 12 IR departments, in 2007 there are 41 IR departments across the country. Events in the post-cold war period have contributed to the growing attention to IR as a field of study in Indonesia.

Students were enthused with the changing dynamics in global politics after the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the subsequent collapse of the USSR. The post-cold war expansion of the field of study to include conflict resolution, non-traditional security, global civil society, and non-governmental organizations as global actors tended to attract those who previously regarded IR as a subject focusing only on security and foreign policy issues (Hadiwinata, 2007, pp. 8–9). At the same time, in many universities, IR as a subject has received a growing appreciation. Thanks to the scarcity of IR textbooks written in Indonesian in the market, universities require a high standard of English for IR students. This has made IR students well respected among their peers.

Despite this encouraging development, however, academics and researchers in IR are still lacking quality research and publications that meet international standards. It is not surprising if, compared with other countries in Southeast Asia, Indonesian IR scholars contributed very little to the international academic literature. Some serious works and international publications are produced by a handful of scholars, but this is exceptional, since the majority of academics are preoccupied with teaching activities, and consequently, they pay very little attention to serious research and publication. These circumstances reflect the general situation of almost all branches of social science in Indonesia. In his article, Hans Dieter Evers argues that in the area of social science, Indonesian scholars have contributed much less to the international academic literature than scholars of the neighboring countries of Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore (Evers, 2000, p. 13). At the domestic level, among the small number of journals published by IR departments in

2 Indonesian universities apply tuition and entry fees to enrolling students. In private universities, students are obliged to pay an extra charge named *biaya satuan kredit semester* (credit fees) in which the students have to pay every credit points taken every semester. The amount of those fees varies depending on the university's policy.

several universities, none of them secures accreditation from the accreditation committee set up by the Ministry of Education, due to the poor quality of the articles and lack of continuity of the publication.

Moreover, with strong ties to power holders, social scientists in Indonesia – especially during the New Order government³ – showed no interest in conducting research or other activities that contribute to the advancement of the discipline. In a situation where linkage to power holders is important, credibility and reputation for academics are sadly based on their personal associations with the ruling elite, either simply serving as advisor to a certain ministry or as part of the state bureaucracy. This seems to contradict Ariel Heryanto's category of 'intellectuals'. Heryanto maintains that intellectuals must keep some distance from the most powerful and wealthy social groups in their societies. Their credibility and authority, he argues further, depend on some meaningful detachment from activities that appear primarily to generate material and non-material rewards (Heryanto, 2003, p. 29). This position underlines the point that intellectuals must remain independent and concentrate on their dutiful task, i.e. conducting research, writing conference papers, attending conferences and workshops, and producing published works for the advancement of the discipline.

2 Historical legacy: intellectuals and American influence

Compared with other branches of social science, which can be traced back to the colonial era, IR in Indonesia is relatively new. It has its origin in the mid-1960s when several universities offered IR courses to meet the need of the Foreign Ministry for trained diplomats to serve diplomatic services in different countries.⁴ The cold war period had contributed much to the

3 The New Order government was a military-supported regime led by General Suharto, an army general, who ruled Indonesia for more than three decades (1966–98). This anti-communist government took power after the political turmoil in 1965 which killed hundreds of thousands of the Indonesian Communist Party members and its followers throughout the country. The tragedy was a culmination of the rivalry between the Indonesian Communist Party and the Army during the presidency of Soekarno (1945–66), Indonesia's first president.

4 There were at least three universities – University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, and University of Padjadjaran, Bandung – that offered IR courses at that time to serve the demand from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for trained diplomats.

development of IR, in a period when textbooks written by American scholars such as George F. Kennan, H.J. Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, Ernst B. Haas, and many others became the standard texts. Among such scholars, those writing within the Realist tradition were particularly influential in shaping the content of IR courses in Indonesia. In many respects, Realist concepts such as national power, national interests, balance of power, deterrence, and so on were for a long time the main topics in core IR taught courses such as foreign policy, international politics, international relation theories, and international organizations. American influence was not only notable in the field of IR, other branches of social science (economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and history) were also under strong American influence. Indeed in the early years of the cold war, the United States showed a great geopolitical interest in Indonesia as one of the emerging forces in the Southeast Asian region. Dean Rusk, a former top State Department official, for example, noted that at the height of the Vietnam War, communist aggression in Asia needed to be confronted not only by the training of American combatants, but also by opening up US training facilities for America's Asian allies (Ransom, 1970, p. 40).

Since the 1950s, a troop of Indonesian social scientists – most of them lecturers from top universities – was sent under American scholarship programs to pursue graduate studies at various universities in the United States, such as the University of California at Berkeley, Cornell University, Ohio State University, among many others. Many of these social scientists returned and kept their positions in their respective universities, whereas some became cabinet ministers or served as the state's top bureaucrats. American foundations such as Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation were also involved in nurturing Indonesian academics by sending them to pursue graduate studies in American universities. It should be noted that American academic interest in Indonesia was also growing amid the rise of Area Studies in the country. Publications related to Indonesian history and politics were made by American Area Studies scholars such as George McT. Kahin, Benedict Anderson, Daniel Lev, Ruth McVey, Dwight Y. King, R. William Liddle, and some others.

Substantial groups of Indonesian political scientists – including IR specialists – began to pursue their graduate studies at American universities during the 1970s. Area Studies has influenced the teaching of IR in many Indonesian universities. For example, academics from Indonesia's

oldest IR department at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, who studied in the United States were attached to Area Studies. Upon their return, they introduced Area Studies courses – such as Politics and Economics of Developing Societies, Government and Politics in Southeast Asia, Government and Politics in the Middle East, and Government and Politics in Latin America – at the department. Within this group of scholars there are prominent academics such as Ichlasul Amal (graduate of University of Northern Illinois), Amien Rais (graduate of University of Chicago), Yahya Muhaimin (graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology), and Mohtar Mas'oeed (graduate of Ohio State University).

IR scholars were among the second generation of American-bred academics who studied in various American universities during the 1960s and 1970s. One prominent scholar in this area is Suwardi Wiriaatmadja (an academic at the University of Padjadjaran, Bandung, and graduate from The Johns Hopkins University). In 1981, he wrote the first textbook in Indonesian to serve as an *Introduction to International Relations*. This book reflects the strong influence of American Realist approach, in that many chapters were dedicated to explore Realist concepts such as national power, national interest, national instruments, and the like (Wiriaatmadja, 1981). This book was based heavily on the published works of American IR scholars, especially H.J. Morgenthau, and George F. Kennan. This path-breaking textbook soon became a key reference in all IR departments in Indonesia until today. From then on, Realism was taken seriously by most Indonesian IR scholars. Unfortunately, the updated version of this book has never been published since the author passed away in 1990.

3 Foreign policy, political influence, and the place of Southeast Asia in IR teaching

As far as the Southeast Asia region is concerned, the Indonesian government under President Suharto (1966–98) seriously endorsed the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) together with Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore in 1967, in a new policy initiative explicitly based on the lessons drawn from Indonesia's previous 'confrontation' (*Konfrontasi*) of Malaysia under President Soekarno. This initiative was based on the fear among

Indonesian military leaders of a possible threat of communism to the internal stability of the region that might in turn threaten national integrity. In order to turn ASEAN into a regional ally to fight against the spread of communism in the region, Indonesia attempted to impose its nationalist doctrine onto ASEAN. One example was the inclusion of concepts of ‘national resilience’ (*ketahanan nasional*), deliberation-and-consensus (*musyawarah-mufakat*), and non-interference (*anti-intervensi asing*) as the main principles of ASEAN.⁵ As Jusuf Wanandi, a leading IR scholar in the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) put it: ‘if each member nation can accomplish an overall national development and overcome internal threats, regional resilience will automatically result much in the same way as a chain derives its overall strength from the strength of its constituent parts’ (Wanandi, 1984, p. 305). Despite the controversies surrounding these concepts among Indonesian academics and students, the idea of ‘national resilience’, deliberation to achieve consensus, and non-interference were well received among leaders and scholars of ASEAN members, who subsequently adopted and promoted those concepts as parts of ASEAN values (Acharya, 2001, pp. 58–62).

The reservation of Indonesian scholars and students toward the above-mentioned nationalist doctrines was due mainly to the way in which Indonesian government treated them. In university campuses, for example, students were obliged to take up a course called ‘military leadership’ (*kewiraan*) which put emphasis on those concepts, together with other military doctrines such as the ‘archipelagic outlook’ (*wawasan nusantara*)⁶ and national defense system (*sistem pertahanan rakyat semesta*/SISHANKAMRATA).⁷ Lecturers for this course were normally

5 Indonesia’s concept of ‘national resilience’ is defined as ‘an inward-looking concept, based on the proposition that the national security lie not in military alliances or under military umbrella of any great power, but in self-reliance deriving from domestic factors such as economic and social development, political stability, and a sense of nationalism’ (Irvine, 1982, p. 40).

6 This concept was on the past glory when the old kingdom of Majapahit was able to unify the so-called *Nusantara* (the Indonesian archipelago) in one single power, which later on dubbed by military leaders as *negara kesatuan republik Indonesia* (NKRI or the united republic of Indonesia).

7 The term SISHANKAMRATA (the national defense) is phrase introduced by Indonesian military leaders which aimed combining military personnel and civilians in defending the country from both external threats and internal subversion of insurgency that may threaten the NKRI.

recruited from retired military officers. The reservation was not only due to the antipathy toward the presence of retired military officers as lecturers in university campuses, but also due to the fear of military indoctrination of campus life among Indonesian students. This subject was subsequently abandoned – together with the suspension of students' para-military organizations known as students' regiment (*resimen mahasiswa/Menwa*) – following the demise of the New Order government in 1998, which marked the end of 'militarization' of campus life.

During the cold war, American influence on the teaching of IR coincided with post-independence Indonesian foreign policy toward the United States. At the beginning of its independence, the country opted to build a strong relationship with the Western world – especially the United States – in order to retain its sovereignty against a possible return of the Dutch. As Prime Minister and concurrently Foreign Minister Sutan Sjahrir argued in November 1945:

Indonesia is geographically situated within the sphere of influence of Anglo Saxon capitalism and imperialism. Accordingly, Indonesia's fate ultimately depends on the fate of Anglo Saxon capitalism and imperialism It is clear that till now Dutch power has simply been a pawn in a political chess game that the British have been playing. But we must recognize that Dutch power here has by no means the same significance for American as it does for British foreign policy. In this fact lie possibilities for us to win a new position for ourselves in harmony with the political ambitions of the Giant of the Pacific, the United States (Leifer, 1983, p. 8).

This statement underlined the strong intention on the part of the Indonesian government to build a friendly relationship with the United States. Although in the following years Indonesia opted for a more or less 'neutral' position by introducing the concept of *Politik Luar Negeri Bebas Aktif* (independent and active foreign policy), the country continued to establish close relationship with the United States at least until the early 1960s, when President Sukarno began to develop a hostile relationship against countries spearheading what he termed NEKOLIM (neo-colonialism and imperialism) by establishing the so-called NEFOS (new emerging forces) which caused a decline in relations with the West.

When General Suharto took power in 1966, the relationship with the Western world returned to normalcy. Moving away from the communist

bloc, the New Order government developed a more pragmatic policy by re-establishing the relationship with the Western world, and also ended confrontation with Malaysia. The Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, lobbied donor countries such as the United States, Japan, Great Britain, and the Netherlands to revoke their ban on foreign aid to Indonesia. Relationships with neighboring countries, especially Malaysia, were substantially improved. As mentioned earlier, Suharto's government endorsed the establishment of ASEAN.

It was during this period that a number of Indonesian political scientists and IR scholars pursued their study in the United States under American scholarships. A minority of them went to the UK. One prominent figure was Juwono Sudarsono, who took his Master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley and doctoral degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Upon his return, he continued teaching IR and strategic studies at the University of Indonesia before he became a state bureaucrat serving in various positions, such as the Head of the National Defense Council (*Lemhannas*), Ambassador to the UK, and then as Minister of Defense in the current cabinet of President Yudhoyono.

Realism became inevitably strong in the Indonesian IR tradition as many younger academics continued to inherit the tradition built by their predecessors, who mostly obtained their graduate degrees from American universities. It is important to note that the widely used textbook among IR students throughout the country for Indonesian foreign policy courses has been Michael Leifer's *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, published in 1983, which provided a detailed account of the changes of Indonesian foreign policy since its formation during the revolution in the 1940s to the early decade of Suharto's government. A noticeable aspect of the book is its presentation of Soeharto-era foreign policy as nationalist but 'rational' in comparison with what are painted as the excesses of the Soekarno period. This book was taken seriously by most IR departments in Indonesia and treated as a compulsory reading for foreign policy courses.

In the 1980s and 1990s, younger IR scholars began to diversify their choice of study destination to include Australia, the UK, Germany, and even Japan. Carrying out their respective studies in the post-cold war era, scholars such as Dewi Fortuna Anwar (senior researcher at the government-run Indonesian Institute of Sciences/LIPI), Rizal Sukma

(senior researcher at the influential Jakarta think tank, CSIS, a center known for its cold war era close links to Suharto), for example, continued to adopt a Realist perspective in their analysis of Indonesia's foreign relations. Other scholars in this generation engaged in different aspects of IR. Gadjah Mada University, for example, introduced conflict resolution and peace studies which became increasingly popular nationwide. Quality research outputs were indeed produced by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (*Pusat Studi Konflik dan Perdamaian*) established in 1995 and staffed with young lecturers from IR departments. Other universities followed different paths. University of Parahyangan, Bandung, for example, moved away from Realism by adding non-traditional security issues in its courses. Publications made by scholars from this university, for example, brought up non-traditional security issues such as feminism, terrorism, environmental security, the role of non-state actors, and the media (Pareira, 1999; Hadiwinata, 2002; Hermawan, 2007).

Indeed it was through the involvement of young IR scholars graduating from various universities all over the world that the teaching of IR in Indonesian universities has moved away from Realism. The influence of American Area Studies has also been somewhat reduced. It can be said, however, that generally speaking the teaching of IR in the majority of Indonesian universities remains strongly characterized by American Realism and Area Studies that had been inspired by events in the cold war era. The limited access of most lecturers to new textbooks containing approaches and issues beyond Realism has made the teaching of IR keep the Realist tradition inherited from American-trained lecturers.

Until recently, despite the rare publications on IR made by Indonesian scholars, IR departments in some universities – University of Indonesia, University of Gadjah Mada, University of Parahyangan, University of Padjadjaran, and University of Airlangga – have increasingly used writings by Indonesian scholars such as those of Dewi Fortuna Anwar (LIPI), Rizal Sukma (CSIS-Jakarta), Makmur Keliat (University of Indonesia), and Banyu Perwita (University of Parahyangan). These writings covered a wide range of issues, especially Indonesian foreign relations, Indonesian foreign policy making, and inter-state conflicts; all of which more or less represent the Realist tradition.

It is rather surprising that a special focus on Southeast Asia as a region or attention to other Southeast Asian countries has been relatively absent

in the teaching of IR in most IR departments in Indonesia. An example of the lack of interest among Indonesian students toward the region can be taken from the experience of Gadjah Mada University. In the late 1980s, when an elective course called Government and Politics in Southeast Asia (*Politik Pemerintahan di Asia Tenggara*) was offered, only a handful of students signed up, others preferred to take up other regions such as Latin America or the Middle East. One former student argued that Latin America and the Middle East were more interesting because those two regions offered more dynamic circumstances, such as the debate between modernization and dependency theories in Latin America, and the Israel-Arab conflicts in the Middle East.⁸ Until now, however, students' interest in the Southeast Asian region at the university remains low, as very few students opt for the two elective courses on Southeast Asia, namely Government and Politics in Southeast Asia and IR in Southeast Asia.⁹ Ariel Heryanto argues that the lack of interest among Southeast Asian students can be associated with four factors: (i) the nationalist orientation of education in Southeast Asian nations; (ii) the proclivity of Southeast Asian students who pursue their studies overseas to focus their intellectual energy on their own nations; (iii) language barriers; and (iv) mechanisms within established centers of Southeast Asian studies which have kept Southeast Asians at bay (Heryanto, 2007, p. 81).

These factors are applicable to the Indonesian context, where academics and scholars have been dependent on either government support or foreign donors, both of which preferred scholarship recipients to focus their graduate studies on their own country, in order to contribute to the nation's development in a wide range of sectors such as national economy, social welfare, bureaucracy, development administration, and so forth. As a result, many Indonesian graduates of foreign universities who teach or conduct research in different institutions had tended to focus on Indonesia as their subject of analysis. Language is another problem, as students are more interested in studying other Asian languages such as Japanese, Chinese, and Korean, than Southeast Asian languages. At the University of Indonesia, for example, Japanese and

8 Interview with Mangadar Situmorang, former student at Gadjah Mada University, who is currently a lecturer at the Department of International Relations, University of Parahyangan, Bandung, 11 September 2008.

9 Interview with M. Dafri, the Head of International Relations Department at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 13 September 2008.

Chinese are the only Asian languages offered to IR students. At the Jakarta-based National University, IR students are allowed to take Korean as an elective course, while at the University of Parahyangan, Bandung, IR students are asked to choose Japanese, Chinese, or French as their language requirement course besides English. Thus far, no other Southeast Asian language has been offered in any university. This has contributed to the lack of interest among IR students in the Southeast Asian region. They are simply not curious about particular countries within the region, apart from their own nation. The relative absence of institutes focusing on Southeast Asia in the country has also contributed to the lack of demand for Southeast Asia specialists.

The interest in the Southeast Asian region, however, grew outside university campuses. The Jakarta-based CSIS, for example, began to engage actively in research on the Southeast Asian region. However, their works have mostly been directed toward providing policy inputs to the Indonesian government in dealing with ASEAN. The CSIS – especially through its board chairman, Jusuf Wanandi – played an active role in forming the ‘track two’ forum of the Association in 1988. Known as the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), this new forum had attempted to serve as policy recommenders to their respective countries for the advancement of ASEAN (Caballero-Anthony, 2005, p. 161). Its initial members came from the five original members of ASEAN: the CSIS in Jakarta, the ISIS in Kuala Lumpur, the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies in Manila, the Singapore Institute of International Affairs in Singapore, and the Institute for Security and International Studies in Bangkok. Between 1995 and 2000, three other members joined in: the Institute of International Relations in Hanoi, the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane, and the Brunei Darussalam Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies in Bandar Sri Begawan.

Despite their success in contributing toward various discourses on security in ASEAN, especially the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum as the association’s security arrangement, this track two forum has done almost nothing in terms of generating Indonesian students’ interests in the Southeast Asian region, or even in ASEAN and its institutional instruments.¹⁰ Indonesian representatives to the forum’s

10 Interview with Aleksius Jemadu, professor in International Politics at the University of Parahyangan, Bandung, 12 September 2008.

meetings have been exclusively limited to staff of the CSIS and have never involved representatives from academic institutions. ASEAN-ISIS was also criticized for being exclusive by involving only the elite communities such as government officials, a limited number of academics, business people, and the media, and rarely did representatives from the 'people' sector such as civic organizations, NGOs, and people's organizations participate in ASEAN-ISIS meetings (Morada, 2007, p. 3). The ASEAN-ISIS has tried to incorporate NGOs and civil society organizations by setting up a new forum called the ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) in 2000. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of the forum because of financial constraints, the ability to attract participation from the 'people' sector, and doubts about the effectiveness of the forum in making any policy impact due to the lack of institutional linkage between APA and ASEAN summits (p. 6). The already low level of interest among Indonesian scholars and students to ASEAN was exacerbated by the exclusiveness of this track two forum which limits its information on ASEAN affairs and their respective members to their own circles (Tjhin, 2005, pp. 5–8).

4 Power linkage and government intervention

The history of social science in Indonesia has been closely associated with power relations of the ruling elite. Social scientists are always expected to conduct research or other activities (publications, seminars, workshops, and so forth) to serve the needs of the ruling elite for specific knowledge or skills. In their compiled work on the relationship between social science and power in Indonesia, Hadiz and Dhakidae argue that Indonesian social science in its very nature and character is inextricably linked to the shifting requirements of power over time (Hadiz and Dhakidae, 2005, p. 2).

Since the early 1970s, attempts by the New Order government to establish a strong bureaucracy had opened up opportunities for academics and researchers to enter into the state bureaucracy and serve in various top positions, from directors of state enterprises to cabinet ministers. One example was of course lecturers at the University of Indonesia such as Emil Salim, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Ali Wardhana, Radius Prawiro, and some others who were recruited to serve as cabinet ministers. Another example was Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, a senior lecturer in

international law at the University of Padjadjaran who served as Foreign Minister for many years. The motivation for their involvement was prestige gained as public figures, and certainly material benefits as top state officials, combined with very low incentives to keep their academic positions (Heryanto, 2003, p. 29; Nugroho, 2005, p. 154).

General Suharto had come to power in 1966, following the dramatic political turmoil in which thousands of members and followers of the Indonesian Communist Party were either massacred or detained as political prisoners. During the New Order government, President Suharto's crackdown on the Communist party and the persistent ban on Marxist ideology generated fear among Indonesian scholars of possible association with the banned Communist ideology, an association which might result in death, torture, denial of access to public positions, or isolation from community. In the mid-1970s, the government introduced the so-called 'campus normalization' (*normalisasi kampus*) policy, under which political content in scholarship, writing, and curriculum was eliminated in favor of teaching and research that promoted national development, national stability, and economic growth. For most Indonesian political scientists, as Celia Lowe puts it, 'incarceration, disappearance, exile, terror, and death were all possible outcomes for oppositional speech, and the state deliberately associated political discourse with the imagery specter of communism' (Lowe, 2007, p. 117).

The government's persistent threat to critical political discourses had its impact on university teaching and activities, and social scientists developed a phobia toward using Karl Marx's method of class analysis. Universities must adhere to the state's anti-communist ideology in which the use of Marxist texts was strictly prohibited in teaching activities. Some scholars challenged the government ban on Marxism by using class analysis in their attempt to explain poverty in Indonesia. Borrowing the concept used in dependency theory developed in Latin America in the late 1950s and early 1960s, scholars such as Arief Budiman, Sritua Arief, and Adi Sasono used class analysis in assessing rampant poverty in Indonesia. In various writings and speeches, they fervently attacked the Indonesian 'capitalist middle-class' – who were nurtured by the New Order government – for causing poverty and dependence on foreign assistance in Indonesia. Despite receiving a good reception among a minority of students who were taken with the radical tenets of dependency theory in major university campuses, such as University of

Indonesia and University of Gadjah Mada, Marxism both as an ideology and a method was not widely accepted among the majority of academics and students, due to the fear of terror from the security apparatus and also due to the New Order's tireless attempt to entrench the 'communist treason' as the grand narrative of post-colonial Indonesian history (Hadiz, 2006, p. 554). One incident which led to the imprisonment of some students took place in 1988, when three students of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta were sentenced to between 6 and 8 years behind bars after they were accused of spreading Marxism by distributing the banned novel written by the ex-Communist Party member, Pramudya Ananta Toer (Uhlin, 1997, p. 107). The absence of Leftist ideology in IR teaching continued in the post-New Order era.¹¹ Anti-communist views remained dominant because many officials and members of social and political organizations who had been involved in the violent elimination and demonization of the left under the New Order continued to hold positions of influence after 1998, as parliamentarians, officials, and leaders of educational and social organizations (Hadiz, 2006, pp. 564–565).

In order to suppress opposition, the New Order government also controlled societal organizations. As a result, professional associations on the basis of a particular academic discipline often served as purveyor of government concepts regarding the nurturing of development policies, and as the supplier of technical experts for the state bureaucracy. One prominent association was, of course, the Indonesian Association of Economists (*Ikatan Sarjana Ekonomi Indonesia*), which played a major part in advancing economics as the provider of all the major reference points or signs of 'development' (*pembangunan*), especially during the New Order government. Other social science associations were subsequently pressed to adhere to the already set development concepts stressing economic growth, stability, and non-disruption of the social

11 The post-New Order government was initiated in 1998 at the aftermath of economic crisis which generated a massive anti-government demonstrations led by students which culminated in the occupation of parliament building in Jakarta. The plenary session of the parliament forced President Suharto to resign and appointed B.J. Habibie, the vice president, as Suharto's successor. In responding students and opposition leaders demand for political reform, Habibie agreed to bring democracy to the country by making laws which guarantee political freedom, allow new political parties to be formed, removing press control, and devising free and fair election in the following year. This period ended the three decades of the authoritarian rule during the New Order regime.

order (Laksono, 2005, pp. 225–226). There were also government-sanctioned institutions staffed with prominent scholars covering different branches of social science. As already mentioned, one prominent institution in the area of development policy and IR was the Jakarta-based CSIS. This institution was established in 1971 by military officers such as Sudjono Humardani, Ali Moertopo, and Benny Moerdani, with Suharto's blessings. Receiving funding from businessmen closely linked to the New Order government, CSIS continued to serve as advisor to the president on economic matters and Indonesian foreign relations (Irwan, 2005, pp. 43–44).

Without doubt, during the New Order government, social science had been used by the government as an instrument to maintain its power. In line with this argument, Ignas Kleden argued that Indonesian social science during the New Order government served the function of 'engineering' in various areas – political, educational, cultural, legal, and moral. In such a capacity, social science, according to Kleden, tends to produce unreflective, a theoretical and bureaucratically oriented works rather than focusing on conceptual work, logical clarity and precision. In order to survive in an authoritarian regime, social scientists must adopt 'linguistic euphemisms' that pleased the government (Kleden, 1986, pp. 6–22). One can therefore argue that the New Order government had been successful in implanting the culture of 'pragmatism' and 'compromise' among Indonesian social scientists. Their 'academic' activities were dedicated to those that can please the government. Although there was a minority of scholars who tried to avoid the power linkage by developing a critical view toward the government, they had to face continuous intimidation and pressure which often resulted in their resignation, as was the case with prominent academics from Satya Wacana Christian University such as Arief Budiman, Ariel Heryanto, George Aditjondro, and many others (Heryanto, 2003, pp. 33–41).

In the post-New Order era, despite the fall of Suharto's government and the subsequent democratization in the country, linkage to power remains significant among social scientists. Many academics became interested in joining the political parties whose number grew significantly, especially prior to the 1999 general election. Some academics even formed political parties. For example, Amien Rais (a prominent academic and IR scholar at Gadjah Mada University) formed the National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*), which allowed him to serve as

the head of parliament or the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*) during 1999–2004. Others became party functionaries and serve as members of parliament. As part of social science, Indonesian IR scholars cannot escape from this power linkage. Nowadays, pride in being 'intellectuals' and credibility for IR scholars are based on linkage with various government institutions, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. Appointments for diplomatic positions, albeit rare, are still considered as prestigious jobs by IR scholars that should not be missed.¹²

The state's role in shaping academic and teaching activities at tertiary education institutes is also reflected in its role in guiding the university curriculum. Through the activity of the Directorate General of Higher Education (*Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi/Dirjen Dikti*) in the Ministry of Education, the university curriculum is subject to strict government control and regulation. The *Dirjen Dikti* divided courses into four categories: (i) general basic subjects (*Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum* (MKDU)); (ii) specialist basic subjects (*Mata Kuliah Dasar Keahlian* (MKDK)); (iii) specialist subjects (*Mata Kuliah Keahlian* (MKK)); and (iv) supporting subjects (*Mata Kuliah Penunjang* (MKP)) (Nugroho, 2005, p.151). This rule applies to both state and private universities; and the Ministry of Education carries out regular checks on whether or not Indonesian universities comply with this rule.

In a typical IR department, for example, MKDU covers a number of courses such as Religion, *Pancasila* (state's ideology), Basic Culture, Indonesian language, Science of Logic, and the like; MKDK includes Introduction to Politics, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Economics, Statistical Methods, Politics in Indonesia, and the like; MKK covers specialist courses in the department such as International Politics, International Political Economy, IR Theories, International Organizations, and so forth; MKP consists of courses that may support the expertise such as foreign languages (English, Chinese, French, and Japanese). Every student must complete 140 credit points of which 30% are courses belong to MKDU and MKDK categories (University of Parahyangan, 2006). Every university must adhere to this regulation, so

12 In the post-New Order era, appointments for diplomatic positions must be approved by the parliament. In this situation, candidates for those positions (if they include academics) must build links with strong political parties whose support is extremely necessary.

that any change of courses should only be made without disturbing the composition of the four different categories.

Despite this regulation, some universities – especially major state universities with a strong bargaining position vis-à-vis the government – managed to design their own curriculum by introducing courses of their own choice. For example, in 2007, the IR department of the University of Indonesia devised a new curriculum which allows students to choose their specialization in four clusters, the first three of which were depicted by a faculty member of the IR department as corresponding with Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, respectively: (i) Strategic and Security Studies consisting of courses such as War and Peace, Strategic Thinking, Indonesian Defense Strategy, and Conflict Resolution; (ii) International Political Economy composed of courses such as International Political Economy of Development, Political Economy of East Asia, International Monetary Political Economy, and Global and Regional Political Economic Integration; (iii) Transnational Society which comprises courses such as Gender and IR, Global Environmental Politics, Global Migration, and Human Rights, Democracy, and IR; and (iv) Regional Studies which includes courses such as US Global Politics, China's Global Politics, Regional Dynamics of Africa and the Middle East, Regional Dynamics in America, Regional Dynamics of Europe, Regional Dynamics of South and Central Asia, and Regional Dynamics of South Pacific (Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia, 2007, pp. 96–101).¹³ This new design, however, can only be made within the range of 70% of the total 140 credit points for an undergraduate student, which is equal to around 30 subjects (assuming that each subject weights three credit points). In the meantime, the university is obliged to include 30% of MKDU and MKDK as regulated under the national education policy.

The state has also secured a crucial role in the promotion of academics, especially from the rank of Associate Professor (*Lektor Kepala*) to full Professor (*Guru Besar*). Every academic must collect certain credit points from his or her teaching activities, thesis supervision, publication, presentation of papers at seminars or conferences, and community services (*pengabdian pada masyarakat*). A position of Associate Professor is

13 For further detail of the content of the courses see Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia (2007, pp. 88–101).

divided into three categories (A = 400 credit points; B = 500; and C = 700). Professorship is given to those who are able to collect at least 850 credit points. Lecturers are assessed on three basic points (*Tridharma*) which includes: (i) teaching and supervision; (ii) research, conference participation, and publication; and (iii) community services. Teaching and supervision is the most important component, since they must comprise the majority of the credit points. Assessment starts from the peer group then to the university (through their senates or representative body of professors). From the university, another assessment has to be made by a special committee in the Ministry of Education, which decides whether or not an academic deserves the promotion. A successful candidate will receive a letter of decision (*surat keputusan (SK)*) signed by the Minister of Education. In the New Order government, promotion for a professorship also involved the president whose signature appeared in the SK for the appointment of a university professor.

The state's control of the university curriculum, especially in establishing the categories – not the content – of IR courses and in deciding university lecturer promotion has left little room for most universities to creatively design their own curriculum. Any change must be made within limits set in the regulation, which put emphasis on a fixed composition of courses consisting of MKDU, MKDK, MKK, and MKP. Any move beyond this rule will risk a lower grade of accreditation status, which was made available every 5 years by the National Accreditation Body (*Badan Akreditasi Nasional*) of the Ministry of Education. In order to secure the promotion of their teaching staff to professorships, Indonesian universities have no other choice but to observe all state regulations. Moreover, academics (who are not absorbed by the state bureaucracy) tend to spend more time on teaching and student supervision rather than on research, conference presentations, and publication, because teaching and supervision constitute a major proportion in the assessment for promotion. This situation has contributed to the lack of motivation of Indonesian IR scholars to pursue research and other activities that relate to the advancement of the discipline.

In 2005, the government made another step to control teaching activities in both schools and universities. It introduced a new law (No. 14/2005) on 'school teachers and lecturers' (*undang undang guru dan dosen*). Despite the noble purpose to increase the professionalism and welfare of teachers and lecturers in the country, the law raised controversies since

both school teachers and lecturers are required to obtain a teaching certificate through attending some weeks of certification courses provided by the government-appointed teachers colleges (for school teachers) and state universities (for lecturers below the rank of full professor). Some critics argued that this certification is simply a national project to tap government funding without clearly defined purposes (*Pikiran Rakyat*, 2008). Until now, this law has not been fully implemented in the case of university lecturers due to the lack of government budget and the lack of clarity as to who should bear the costs for the courses to obtain the certificate. Nevertheless, lecturers are worried about this new regulation, especially when they have to spend more time and energy in attending the obliged courses for a certificate.

5 Commercialization of higher education

In the past few years, Indonesian universities have been increasingly sucked into commercial activism. The 1997 economic crisis which was followed by the declining value of the local currency, *rupiah*, against foreign currencies substantially reduced the number of Indonesian students pursuing their studies overseas, especially in Australia, the United States, and European countries (the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany). As a result, they turned to various local universities. This explains the phenomenal increase of applicants to many Indonesian universities in the past few years. In the meantime, as part of the government's attempt to 'privatize' higher education, state universities are encouraged to generate their own financial resources.

Under the status of State-Owned Legal Bodies (*Badan Hukum Milik Negara*), state universities began to open various non-regular classes (mostly held in the afternoon or even evening), such as undergraduate extension courses, diplomas, and executive Master's degree evening courses for those who work full-time (Nugroho, 2005, p. 144). Some universities such as Gadjah Mada University, University of Indonesia, and University of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, and some other universities, opened so-called 'international classes' where courses are taught in English and students have to pay extra money (sometimes double the normal tuition) for extra services such as full access to personal computer and air conditioned classrooms. When lecturing in those non-regular courses, academics are generally paid on a cash-and-carry basis. With

these extra courses, we can imagine that academics spend much more time in teaching different classes, sometime until late at night for material benefits. Fewer and fewer academics spend their time on research, writing papers, or participating in academic conferences or workshops which are poorly funded by the government.

The story is a little bit different for private universities. From the beginning, private universities received no funding from government. They instead had to generate their own income, mainly from students' entrance fees, tuition fees, credit fees, and enrollment fees. Many universities saw the growing number of applicants in the post-1997 economic crisis as an opportunity to generate more income by increasing the number of students enrolled. For example, at the IR department of the University of Parahyangan, Bandung, with 14 teaching staff, prior to 1997 the number of enrolling students was capped at 100 annually, in 2008, however, the number was increased to 250, despite complaints from the teaching staff in the department.¹⁴ As a result courses have to be divided into three to four parallel classes with 50–60 students in each class. This has caused a dramatic increase in the teaching burden for lecturers. In order to ensure that lecturers commit to their teaching obligations, the university adopted a policy of requiring each to teach a minimum 12 credits per week (each class is considered as equal to two or three credits depending on the credit value of each course).

Against all the odds, however, some universities managed to produce research works. But these works are basically project-oriented and carried out for practical purposes to fulfill orders from various international donors (international NGOs, international development agencies, and foreign government institutions) and Indonesian government agencies or ministries. To obtain such kind of projects, research institutes need to have personal connection with international donors and state agencies, and some degree of technical competence. As Hadiz and Dhakidae have argued: 'an army of social scientists came to be well trained in the technique of developing research programs, project evaluations, and the like, that essentially helped to legitimize state development policy' (Hadiz and Dhakidae, 2005, p. 8).

14 Interview with Y.P. Hermawan, the Head of International Relations Department at the University of Parahyangan, 3 September 2008.

Academic involvement in project-based research was not without reason. One obvious reason was the fact that, in general, an academic job is not a lucrative occupation with which individuals can enjoy material benefits. Thus, involvement in project activities will give academics extra income. Moreover, as discussed earlier, power linkage has changed the image of ‘intellectuals’ in Indonesia, as credibility and reputation are built upon close connections with the source of power and the source of money. In his article, Heru Nugroho wrote:

There is little incentive to become a lecturer producing serious work and distancing oneself from material things, termed ‘asceticism’ by Weber. Academics are more interested in teaching and research activities that generate profit, or in securing bureaucratic positions on-campus, such as those of university vice-chancellor or president, dean, heads of centers, or assistants to the heads. If the academic has strong ‘social-political’ networks, he can seek positions within the government apparatus, for example, as expert adviser to ministers, the main aim being to increase one’s access to power in order to increase one’s income (Nugroho, 2005, p. 144).

This image constitutes the general picture of academic life in Indonesia. Much of such an ‘un-intellectual’ character has been inherited from the New Order government, under which academics were pressed to produce works with practical use to support state development policy. Failure to deliver such works would isolate academics from the luxury of linkage to power holders. Although power linkage was particularly strong during the New Order government, nowadays academics are not entirely successful in detaching themselves from power. As discussed earlier, the opening of political avenues through political parties has driven several IR scholars to enter the political arena by becoming parliament members representing different political parties.

Project-based research tends to taint academic writings with nationalist sentiment. The experience of the Parahyangan Centre for International Studies (PACIS) at the University of Parahyangan, Bandung, may illustrate this argument. During 2002–03, PACIS conducted a research project under a contract with the Research and Development Body (*Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan/Balitbang*) of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. The topic given by *Balitbang* was ‘humanitarian intervention’, with special emphasis on how Indonesia

should position itself in humanitarian intervention debates. When the report suggested that the country should argue for humanitarian intervention on the basis of the ‘responsibility to protect’ argument, it was heavily criticized for being ‘anti-nationalistic’ by staff of the *Balitbang* and by academics from other universities who participated in the workshop. Representatives from the Indonesia Foreign Ministry argued that intervention by foreign forces (for whatever reason) should not be tolerated since it will endanger the state’s sovereignty, while PACIS argued for possible intervention in the name of human solidarity and the prevention of gross violation of human rights.¹⁵ The Indonesian Foreign Ministry subsequently suggested the revision and PACIS had no other choice but to accept the suggestion.

It is clear that commercialization of higher education, especially after the 1997 economic crisis, has driven academia more to money-making activities rather than non-profit research, publication, workshops, and conferences. Ironically, however, some academics (especially those who only think about material benefit and have no interest in research) see that an increase of teaching burden is a win–win solution, as they earn extra income from teaching classes beyond their minimal obligation. For those who have interest in research, universities encouraged them to tap more project-based money from various external institutions by setting up new research centers. During the democratic reform and the growing internal conflicts in Indonesia, research on topics such as democratization and conflicts become increasingly popular among donors (both domestic and foreign) who provided financial support for work on such topics. As a result, academics are forced to produce more project-oriented research with more practical implications and direct material benefits, rather than more theorized academic papers or publications (Nugroho, 2005, p. 144).

6 Conclusion

This paper has discussed the historical legacies, political linkages, and commercialization of higher education that have created a paradox in IR as a field of study in Indonesia. While IR (as a relatively new field of

15 Interview with Mangadar Situmorang, the former Director of PACIS and the project coordinator of the research, 11 September 2008.

study) has gained more recognition, signaled by the growing number of applicants to IR departments across the country, contributions by Indonesian IR scholars both at home and abroad remain very limited. The historical legacy which ties Indonesian IR into a Realist tradition gives little room for IR scholars in the country to take up new post-cold war global issues which require a fresh and more broadened outlook to include other perspectives, such as the role of non-state actors in investing in global morality, the new theoretical construction in IR, and an increasing attention on human security which put the state and non-state actors in complementary roles. Unfortunately, long after the cold war had ended, this situation still lingers even today, especially in small universities whose access to up-to-date IR literatures is very limited. Most academics in these universities still use the old literatures imbued with the Realist tradition.

The Indonesian academic tradition which considers links with power holders as an important condition for respect and credibility seems to have directed most academics in social science – including IR – to concentrate on unreflective and a theoretical exercise which do not contribute to the advancement of the discipline. Oppositional views and Marxist discourses were strictly prohibited by the military government for fear of possible communist subversion. Any attempt to apply independent analysis might have resulted in disappearance, torture, and other kinds of terror by the security apparatus. This explains the blatant absence of Marxist theories in the study of IR in Indonesia. Spending much time in maintaining relationships with the powerful and in conducting income-generating activities, IR scholars tend to have little interest in conducting research or other exercises that contribute to the advancement of the discipline. For those with no political connections, teaching and student supervision (the two most important components in assessment for promotion) are more interesting than research and participation in seminars/workshops or publication, because they generate more material and non-material benefits. Even if there is research on certain topics, this is basically project-based research for practical use of the funding institutions with no reflective and theoretical implications.

At the same time, the development of the university curriculum appears to be sluggish. State control of the university curriculum has made course adjustment to new issues almost impossible. The government's National Accreditation Body is responsible for curriculum

supervision, and any move beyond the rules will damage university's accreditation status. Meanwhile, the commercialization of higher education in the past few years has also contributed to the 'unintellectual' character of Indonesian IR scholars. Pressures for income-generation have encouraged universities to open non-regular classes such as extended undergraduate courses, evening executive Master's classes, international classes, and so on. As a result, academics are faced with mounting teaching burdens, although some benefit through cash payments for teaching non-regular courses. In such a situation, we cannot expect good quality research or work, especially from those who spend most of their time in teaching. A further consequence is that, in the absence of scholarly engagement in new research areas and independent research that might critique state policy and priorities, old perspectives continue to dominate in the classroom.

All of those problems stated above are not exclusive to the discipline of IR, which is a comparatively young field of study in Indonesia. Older branches of social science such as economics, politics, sociology, anthropology, history and some others face similar problems. This may explain why the contribution of Indonesian social science scholars to regional and international academic literature in their respective specialized field of study remains low, as argued by Hans Dieter Evers (Evers, 2000, p. 13). In IR, despite a handful of scholars who wrote books, book chapters, or journal articles published internationally, the general trend of academic activities among Indonesian IR scholars remains teaching and student supervision in one or more universities. The increasing number of Indonesians graduating from overseas universities and returning to teach IR in many universities does not automatically change the attitude toward research and publication. On the contrary, young overseas graduates often follow the path of their predecessors in linking themselves with power holders, in spending a huge amount of time in teaching, and in carrying out project-oriented research for material benefits. One cannot see an immediate change unless there is a revolution in the management of higher education in general.

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