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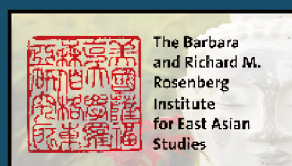
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The Asian Political and International Studies Association Annual Congress 2023

Official Conference Proceedings

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i

Table of Contents

Youth in Bangladesh

Nazia Azim, Jagiellonian University, Poland

The Asian Political & International Studies Association Annual Congress 2023
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The youth population is the backbone of any country. Youth in a country is a viable and potential human resource not only in population structure but also in social structure. May the countries in Asia be on the list of developing countries, but the countries of the region have an increasing demographic share of the youth in the general population. In Bangladesh, the youth population occupies almost 40% of the total population. However, they cannot play significant roles in the country's socioeconomic development and change due to the many problems it faces and the lack of support from the government. Even though the government has established plans and programs for youth welfare, they face many economic and cultural obstacles that stop them from moving forward. This research will not only present the problems that the young generation face in Bangladesh but also make suggestions to improve their future.

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Introduction

Youth around the world is always unpredictable, both in their thoughts and even more in their actions. Nowadays, the political situation around the world is so complicated that all parts of society must be included in trying to solve the various issues of the community. The critical question is how the youth can help rebuild the social structure and how they can create novel values that all would respect. Western societies give the young population more opportunities to engage in political life. However, a large percentage of this population seems indifferent to engaging in politics and often even ignores the problems of their societies.

On the other hand, in the developing parts of the world, even though youth do not have as many opportunities as the youth in the developed world to involve themselves in political life, they are trying hard to change the political, societal, and economic norms of their lives. They are more eager to engage in politics and try helping to solve issues than decades before. Although there is a need for proper education, scientists notice this contradiction between the developed and the developing countries. Thus we cannot attribute this phenomenon to the lack or not of educational form but only to the lack of interest from their side.

This article will discuss the engagement of the young population and specifically of the students, in political life in Bangladesh. However, this situation only applies to the case study of Bangladesh. In all developing countries, scientists or researchers can observe that young people get involved in politics only when they think it is necessary, even though there is enormous corruption and clientelism among the students. However, when they see that there is something that they can do, they are involved and try their best to change the situation. Thus, to make a difference in the longer term, young people must be engaged in formal political processes and have a say in formulating present and future politics. Bangladesh is yet a country that has not a proper education system and lacks the financial means to help its citizens escape their everyday problems, but in which the young population, especially the students, are doing their best to achieve a stable and democratic country.

Anti-Ershad Movement

Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world, and half its population comprises young people. It is essential to say that according to Bangladesh's law, a person is categorized as a youth when he/she is between the 15-35 age gap. Currently, almost half of Bangladesh's population consists of young people who can provide for and improve the situation of their country. However, after the Anti-Ershad Movement and his removal of him from the government and the establishment of democracy in the country, the youth became more and more distant from the political life of the country.

After the de-colonization of India from the British Empire, Bangladesh united with Pakistan, called East Bengal, with Dhaka as its capital city.[1] However, the people were not satisfied with this union with Pakistan and, in 1971, started a war for independence and the creation of Bangladesh as an autonomous state. After gaining independence in 1972, the country established its first constitution and adopted a secular, multiparty parliamentary democracy.

At the same time, the country joined the Commonwealth of Nations, the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Non-Aligned Movement. The President of the

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[1] S. M. Shamsul Alam (1995).Democratic politics and the fall of the military regime in Bangladesh. Critical Asian Studies https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.1995.10413048

Awami League, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the first President and then the country's Prime Minister. However, after the country faced many economic problems, a breakdown in the food supply chain, poor health services, and many other problems, he lost his popularity among the citizens; he denied the multiparty character of the constitution and established a one-party state in 1975.[2]

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried different ways to increase his power and concentrate all the power in his hands. However, during the 1970s, after a coup d'etat against him and his assassination, political turmoil seized the country, which led Bangladesh to be governed by a military junta led by the Chief Martial Law Administrator for three years. In 1982 another coup d'etat took place by chief justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury who was installed as the President of the country. However, the actual power was at the hand of the army chief Hussain Muhammad Ershad assuming the presidency in 1983.

According to the general history, the Anti-Ershad movement started at the beginning of 1990. However, students started their movement against the government of Ershad in April 1982. Ershad was quite unpopular with the citizens of Bangladesh.

As the students are always at the forefront of change, and their opposition movement against the government took an even greater degree on 17 September 1982, one day before Education Day in Bangladesh. Students' agitation and unity increased when the regime announced a national educational reform policy widely regarded as highly reactionary and against the rights and freedom of the educational sector.

These protests against the educational reform continued throughout the remaining year of 1982. Precisely, on 8 November 1982, during one of these protests, the police and different paramilitary groups that were under the orders of Ershad invaded the campus of Dhaka University, attacking and beating students.

At the same time, many of the university's facilities were damaged. This fact drove the students to create an organization, the Charta Samgram Parisad (Organization for Student Struggle), on 21 November, demanding first the realization of full democracy and respect for fundamental human rights, secondly the abandonment of the proposed reform education policy and third not least the release of all political prisoners and the end of the political repression. Thus, as was expected, none of these demands were met, and the suppression of the citizens, especially the students, became even harsher.

However, the following year, in January, the oppositional parties took the side of the students. They released a joint statement condemning the police forces for their actions against the student at Dhaka University. Various political and non-political organizations joined the movement, which was the starting point of a unified political protest against the dictatorship of General Ershad. At the same time, General Ershad was losing the popularity that he still had among the Muslim community due to some jokes he made about the 1952 Movement language.

These events helped the opposition move to a new level of unity, with the leading political organization forming a fifteen-party alliance. From 14 February 1983, this fifteen-party alliance, including a unified student body, adopted many joint political agendas that increased

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[2] S. M. Shamsul Alam (1995).Democratic politics and the fall of the military regime in Bangladesh. Critical Asian Studies https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.1995.10413048

the feeling of the anti-Ershad movement. Over time, more than one anti-Ershad political alliance was formed, but the primary demand from all of them was the complete restoration of democracy.

Nevertheless, with the formation of these pro-democracy alliances, the military rule in the country did not lose its power and position. However, this period was when the citizens of Bangladesh decided which party/alliance would follow and, to some extent, formed their political beliefs up until now.

For a long time, the opposition was fighting with each other and decided to unite to overthrow General Ershad. The students engaged heavily in overthrowing General Ershad and the end of his dictatorship. Quite a few times, students cut off all communication between Dhaka and the rest of the country. However, with the establishment of the Awami League under the rule of the Khaleda Zia, students started to distance themselves from the political sphere, and we can say they became indifferent to the political future of the country, as they had overthrown General Ershad's regime and establishment the democratic rule of the country.

Student Violence-Clientelism

After General Ershad's fall, students started to distance themselves from the country's political life. They started to develop clientelism relations with the political parties, not for the sake of the educational or societal system but only for the sake of themselves. Violence and student clientelism[3] tend to downplay how violent it was in the past. The current role of violence in student politics, while serving different goals usually inside the university, which took place during previous national movements, should not be completely disconnected from the historical role of violence. In the past, before the anti-Ershad movement, student violence was an essential part of its usefulness in national movements. Like then, as now students use the political parties to justify the use of youth violence tendency inside the universities as a way to control the young population and their political beliefs. Most major political parties have student wings in tertiary and secondary educational institutions. The ruling party's student wing wields control everywhere. The intra-party violence spreads to educational institutions. That fact, it is an observable high level of power that politics and especially the parties have inside the universities and among the students, and how are trying to manipulate this power to gain more influence on the young population.

Student leaders draw upon the history of their movement to free the country from the dictatorship of the Ershad era to legitimize the important place student politics and parties play in universities in Bangladesh and to validate their role as public authorities. However, as many facts have shown, students still have not lost their political and societal consciousness, and when it comes to serious matters that disturb society are willing to take the initiative to protest and even change a new society.

Road Safety Movement

In August 2018, a crash occurred between two buses operated by unlicensed drivers racing to collect passengers. The outcome of the crash was the death of two high-school students in Dhaka and the injured of many more people.

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[3] Suykens, B. (2018). A Hundred Per Cent Good Man Cannot do Politics': Violent self-sacrifice, student authority, and party-state integration in Bangladesh 10.1017/S0026749X16001050

This fact provoked a series of protests led mainly by students in Bangladesh advocating road safety improvement, which were held from July 29 till August 8 of, 2018. The fact showed that even though students were under political influence and clientelism was a big problem among the students at the universities, mainly in Dhaka, the students still were united and willing to oppose the government when something tragic as the road accident, happened.

The protests were peaceful until August 2, when police attempted to disperse the demonstrators with tear gas, and people believed to be members of a pro-government youth league attacked protesters and journalists. The police arrested several protesters and a photographer for giving an interview about the protests to international media. From how the government handled the protests, we can conclude that democracy is in danger in Bangladesh, and there is no clear way how the international community or the local population can solve this problem.

The road accident impelled students to demand safer roads and stricter traffic laws. The demonstrations began in Dhaka in May but gradually spread to many big cities around Bangladesh. Many international organizations and high-profile figures expressed solidarity with the demonstrators. As a result, the third Sheikh Hasina Cabinet approved on August 6 a draft traffic act stipulating capital punishment for intentional killing and a maximum five-year prison sentence for accidental killing but only with a motor vehicle. In the draft, the other kinds of vehicles were omitted. Although the protesters thought the maximum 5-year jail sentence was too light for accidental deaths due to unintentional driving deaths, the protests were over by August 8. On August 8, the situation in the city was back to normal.

Although the parliament passed many traffic laws and regulations, it had yet to be implemented.

Bangladesh's Public or Road Transport Sector is one of the most corrupt sectors of the country. The state of toad governance is, and the types of impunity and misgovernance tolerated. The killing of two students on July 29 was a tragic finale to a chain of impunity and misgovernance blighting the roads and road transportation.

They asserted their right to fix the all-encompassing rot set in the country's transport sector. The insensitive and offensive comment by the president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation (BRTWF), who is also the Shipping Minister of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, and the low public confidence in the administration to dispense justice and address the concerns of the protesters resulted in the quick spread of the protest like wildfire in other town and cities. School and College going boys and girls, in dozens, hundreds, and thousands, took to the streets demanding justice and effective measures to curb death and maiming on the roads. They also demanded enforcement of existing laws to ensure that only licensed persons become eligible to drive registered and roadworthy vehicles. The student's frustration over the inefficiency and corruption of the traffic police and the latter's collusion with transport syndicates and their godfathers led them to take control of the traffic management in Dhaka City. These students, mostly teenagers, in school uniforms with bags on their backs, braving.

Hunger and thirst in summer heat and rains, have successfully brought about a semblance of order that this country had never experienced in the past. These young people ensure only licensed persons are in the driving seat of duly registered roadworthy vehicles, advise car passengers to put on seat belts, motorcyclists to wear helmets, and pedestrians to use

footpaths and zebra crossing intersections. For the first time since Independence, one lane in key arterial roads was made accessible for Emergency vehicles. The self-appointed teenage enforcers of the law were polite but firm. With due respect, they made a senior minister change direction and drove on the right side of the road, and another minister left his vehicle as it did not carry proper registration of papers. Imbibed with the spirit of upholding the law, they stopped vehicles; they even stopped a Navy vehicle for not carrying proper documentation. Spontaneous demonstrations by protesters at some intersections adversely affected the traffic flow and caused substantive hardships for commuters. Despite this, the student protesters commander warm understanding from the city dwellers at large. Social media has witnessed an outpouring of compliments. People reassured them that they were prepared to handle the inconvenience of traffic delays and detours as those were for the greater good. Some suggested that if citizens can withstand the agony of congestion and closures imposed by political party programs that are of little interest to them, then why not endure this temporary discomfort for a worthy cause? For many days the students took the role of the police and controlled the traffic on the roads.

Prospects for the Youth

The development of the youth and their participation in community life is a significant priority in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals recognize that the young population is a crucial target for creating a better future and reducing the world's different problems. In the developed world, the government and development actors have realized that opportunity, and they support the enforcement of the youth to a significant degree. However, on the other hand, in developing countries, the authorities still need to give more attention to youth development, and many times, they hold them back from their self-evolution, which leads them to migrate to another country in search of better prospects.

The government of Bangladesh, with its 2017 Youth Policy, wants to ensure the maximum utilization of the youth's potential, empowerment, and development morale; thus, it has been the leading investor in the youth. Nevertheless, 3 in the 2017 Youth Policy, Bangladesh's government still needs to achieve all these goals. With the current situation in the country, it is difficult in the future we will be able to achieve them. Nowadays, there are limited opportunities for the country's youth population in Bangladesh; however, there are still many chances for the government to change its policy and try to empower the youth and, with that, develop the country itself.

In the digitization era and rise of globalization, many opportunities in the international community could help the Bangladesh government implement measures to enhance and empower youth participation in the country's growth and development. First of all, the government must reduce the illiteracy of the youth, either in urban or rural areas. Although the citizens in urban areas do not have so big a problem with the lack of education in rural vicinities, the citizens and especially the young population, do not have the same opportunities in the education sectors, and that is becoming increasingly in the gender equality problem. Women in rural areas are not engaged with the community due to the perseverance of old beliefs about gender inequality. For the limitation of this issue, the government should create and support local organizations devoted to the limitation of education and organize training and vocational programs for the youth population who wants to broaden its horizons. The government and the organizations must be ready to transform the problems that they will face into opportunities if they are genuinely determined to pursue their goals. Focusing on preparing the young population for a better future and creating work

opportunities is essential. The youth must be equipped with skills to meet the fourth industrial revolution. Otherwise, Bangladesh has to pay a heavy price and maintain or lower its position in the international community.

The youth must see that the government trusts their capabilities and gives them many opportunities to excel. In this case, the government could establish various programs that would financially support the innovation sector, like the opening of start-up programs, investment in automation, and digitization programs developed by the youth population. For the youth, it is vital to have the support and the trust of the government to create a start-up or any other program they want, of course, if they have the vital knowledge and skills about them. Also, they need to have a communication channel with the governmental authorities to discuss their problems and ideas to improve the society in which they live and a significant part of it.

The unemployment and, consequently, the migration of the youth is harming the country's development and reducing its tax income. So the government should create more job opportunities for the young population with or without education.

Conclusion

The young population is the only force that can change the world fundamentally. In Bangladesh, students fought in the anti-Ershad period to bring democracy and change people's lives. Students often escape their country's political, societal, and economic life. However, there is only the need for Sparkle to start again to struggle for their rights and the rights of the whole society. Like the Road Movement of 2018 awakened the youth to struggle against the government that will always be happening, whatever the cause may be. The protest of 2018 is unique in many ways. It is not to put the government on the dock but to draw its attention to the urgent need to make the roads safe. It is not to claim political power but to demonstrate how state agencies should function efficiently. The protesters have that with good intentions and commitment, the tasks that public-funded professional forces could not perform for decades were indeed doable. The students presented a 9-point charter of demands to the government. Their massive mobilization, and the support it garnered from the masses, forced the government to concede within days.

Nevertheless, it remains to be seen if or how the government embodies those verbal commitments into reality. The prospects for the youth in Bangladesh are very bright if the government handles the issue correctly. There is already JAAGO Foundation, which supports youth empowerment in the country, but the government needs to do something too.

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Housing Insecurity and Economic Development:
A Case Study of Informal Settlements in Manila, Philippines

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Abstract
The city of Manila, Philippines faces a severe housing crisis. Due to the Philippines' unusual combination of rapid economic growth, uneven regional economic development, lack of affordable housing, and low per capita incomes, it is estimated that Manila has the most number of homeless people of any city in the world. Consequently, the government must address the housing situation to ensure the long-term viability of the city. This paper argues that two mechanisms work in tandem to generate the informal settlement issue: the lack of economic opportunity outside Manila, which has become a driving force behind rural to urban migration, and the lack of affordable housing within the city to support new inhabitants. In order to address this, the government must adopt a two-pronged strategy of both increasing access to affordable housing in the city and simultaneously creating economic opportunities in the countryside to reduce the need for migration in the first place. Doing so would solve both a humanitarian and economic crisis.

Keywords: Informal Settlements, Housing Insecurity, Economic Development

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Introduction

Manila is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. According to CityMayors Statistics, a global source for urban statistics, there were 27,307 people per square mile living in Manila in 2019, making it the 15th most densely populated city in the world.[1] This figure exceeds that of global population epicenters such as Bangalore and Jakarta, while approaching the levels of New Delhi and Beijing.[2] As one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, the Philippines sees legions of migrants from across the country flock to Manila each year in search of better opportunities, leading to overcrowding in the city. However, the city lacks the affordable housing and physical infrastructure necessary to handle this inflow of migration. As a result, Manila carries more than 1.6 million informal settlers, comprising almost a third of the city's population.[3] Unsurprisingly then, informal settlements or "slums" have become a pervasive feature of the city's landscape, populated mostly by low-income migrants from rural areas or their descendants.

This is problematic for two reasons. First, the lack of affordable housing means that informal settlers, almost by definition, live in squalid conditions, either in ramshackle tin homes built on public land, or in exotic locations such as below bridges, along waterways, or even in public cemeteries, alongside the graves of long-dead people.[4] These poor living conditions prevent informal settlers from actualizing their human potential. Because they do not have proper homes, they live in a constant state of insecurity, fearful of being evicted from their residences, which discourages them from making investments in businesses or in the education of their children. As a result, their lack of integration into formal city life makes it difficult for them to become economically productive and contributing members of society. Second, the presence of informal settlements across the city has provoked tension among the city's residents. Many residents complain that informal settlers often engage in crimes such as theft and substance abuse, making Manila an unsafe place to live. Others say that their presence "dirties" the city because these settlements, which tend to be located in highly visible areas, are disorganized and unsightly to look at. Still others say that Manila is already overpopulated and operating beyond capacity and that the city would be better off if informal settlers were to leave and return to where they came from. This combination of housing insecurity as well as hostility and ostracism from the city's existing residents further compounds the already multitudinous challenges informal settlers face, especially those moving for the first time to Manila.

Consequently, there is a need to address the housing crisis in the city. In this paper, I argue that two mechanisms work in tandem to generate the informal settler problem: the lack of economic opportunities outside Manila which motivates rural to urban migration and the lack of affordable housing within the city to support its inhabitants. In order to address this issue, I propose a two-pronged strategy in which the government both increases access to affordable housing in the city while simultaneously creating economic opportunities in the countryside to reduce the need for migration in the first place. This would help to stabilize the precarious situation of existing informal settlers in Manila as well as tackle the underlying cause of rural migration into the city. In order to develop these ideas, this paper will proceed in three parts. First, I will discuss the uneven development of the Philippines that has led to the overdevelopment of Manila and the subsequent underdevelopment of rural areas. Second, I will talk about the housing situation in Manila, paying particular attention to housing affordability in the formal housing market. Finally, I will discuss a policy intervention that I believe will provide both short-term relief as well a long-term solution to the informal settler problem in Manila.

Lack of Economic Opportunity Outside Manila

The first major reason for the proliferation of informal settlements in the city is the lack of economic opportunity outside Manila. The Philippines suffers from a highly uneven pattern of economic development in which almost all of the country's economic centers are located in Manila. In particular, the central business districts of Makati, Ortigas, and Bonifacio Global City, where most companies and multinational corporations can be found, are all located in metropolitan Manila. Moreover, virtually all national government agencies, shopping malls, theaters, and major universities are also found in the capital city, leading it to become the country's economic, political, and cultural center of gravity. As a result, Manila has become significantly wealthier than the rest of the country.

According to the most recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the National Capital Region, which is another name for metropolitan Manila, had a GDP of PHP 6.8T in 2022, accounting for 31.2% of national GDP; this is more than double that of the second ranked region, Calabarzon, which is immediately adjacent to Manila, and had a GDP of PHP 3.1T, as well as triple that of the third ranked region, Central Luzon, which is also immediately adjacent to Manila, and had a GDP of PHP 2.3T.[5] It is also more than twenty times that of Bangsamoro, the poorest region in the country, whose GDP stood at a comparatively paltry PHP 326B, and is located at the southern tip of the country, far away from Manila in the north.[6] In fact, looking at the numbers, it is evident that, in general, as a region gets farther away from Manila geographically, it also becomes economically less productive.

|	GDP at Current Prices, in thousands of Philippine Pesos
	2022
National Capital Region (NCR)	6,888,962,938
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	365,945,436
Region I (Ilocos Region)	729,474,685
Region II (Cagayan Valley)	455,743,088
Region III (Central Luzon)	2,367,265,679
Region IV-A (CALABARZON)	3,140,807,481
MIMAROPA Region	453,006,892
Region V (Bicol Region)	645,753,789
Region VI (Western Visayas)	1,133,925,246
Region VII (Central Visayas)	1,406,272,534
Region VIII (Eastern Visayas)	512,903,347
Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula)	490,297,996
Region X (Northern Mindanao)	1,070,688,541
Region XI (Davao Region)	1,095,713,673
Region XII (SOCCSKSARGEN)	564,216,855
Region XIII (Caraga)	376,765,344
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)	326,771,477
Philippines	22,024,515,001

Figure 1. Regional GDP in the Philippines, 2022
(taken from the Philippine Statistics Authority)

This inequality is borne out not just in total output, but also in income per capita. In 2022, metropolitan Manila had a GDP per capita of PHP 487,933.[7] This accounted for almost

250% of the national average. By comparison, the next closest region, Northern Mindanao, had a per capita income of just PHP 208,753, less than half that of Manila; the equivalent figure for the poorest region, Bangsamoro, was PHP 66,423, more than seven times less than that of Manila.[8] To put these numbers into perspective, the per capita income (PPP) of Manila is similar to that of Chile, one of the wealthiest countries in Latin America, whereas the per capita income of Bangsamoro is similar to that of Rwanda, a war-torn country in sub-saharan Africa.

Given the disproportionate share of the country's wealth being located in Manila, it is unsurprising that the city has become a magnet for migrants from across the country in search of a better life. According to a survey from the PSA, more than four million people had migrated to Manila from other regions in 2018, the largest inter-regional migration flow for the year; this represented almost one-third of the city's population in the same year.[9] The same survey also found that there were seven times more rural to urban migrants in the country than there were urban to rural migrants, providing further evidence that much of domestic migration in the country is from the countryside to the urban economic centers.[10]

Compounding the situation is a lack of investment from both local and foreign investors in the countryside. Data from the PSA showed that, in 2021, investments in metropolitan Manila and the adjacent regions of Central Luzon and Calabarzon accounted for almost half of total investments in the country; by comparison, Bangsamoro received a paltry 0.4% of all investments in the same period.[11] This inequality in regional investment leads to a self-perpetuating cycle of rural neglect, urban migration, and urban investment, in which underdeveloped regions are ignored, people migrate away from these regions to the booming cities, and the cities receive more attention and economic resources as a result.
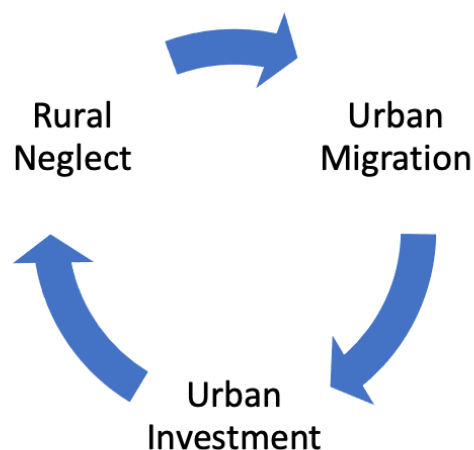
Figure 2. Vicious Cycle of Uneven Development

Lack of Affordable Housing in Manila

The second major reason for the pervasiveness of informal settlements in Manila is the lack of affordable housing in the city. According to the most recent data from Expatistan, a global source of cost of living statistics, as of July 2023, the monthly rent for a furnished studio apartment in a "normal"–meaning not expensive–part of Manila is around USD 316.[12] By comparison, the monthly per capita income in the Philippines is around USD 302.[13] This disparity between housing costs and monthly wages virtually ensures that a large share of the

city's population will be priced out of the formal housing market. This will be especially true for many rural to urban migrants, particularly those who are unskilled and lack formal education.

Because many migrants from the countryside are undereducated, they generally hold jobs that pay poverty-level wages, if they are fortunate enough to find a job at all. At the time of this writing, the non-agricultural minimum wage in Manila was around USD 11.22 per day or USD 243.18 per month, much less than what is needed to afford the monthly rent in the formal housing market.[14] And many migrants do not even receive that much; a substantial share of migrant workers find employment outside the formal sector, whose wages are often far below that of the minimum. The most recent labor force survey from the PSA showed that 37.2% of the population currently works in occupations that can be classified as "vulnerable"–meaning less likely to be part of a formal work arrangement.[15] Taken together, these facts imply that not only is working a formal sector minimum wage job not enough to afford the monthly rent in Manila, but that more than a third of workers do not even have a formal sector job in the first place, making the formal housing market all the more out of reach.

It is no wonder then that many workers, including many migrant workers, have little choice but to live in informal settlements. These slums or "squatters areas" as they are colloquially known are ubiquitous throughout the city and can be found adjacent to many of the city's premiere economic zones, where employment opportunities are abundant. Although they are widely regarded as substandard and synonymous with poor living conditions, they are often the only type of housing that is within the budget constraint of a large share of Manila residents, and they are often located in areas where people can get jobs and earn a living, leading to their proliferation throughout the city. Until the housing affordability issue is addressed in Manila, and until Manila continues to become a magnet for migrants from across the country, informal settlements will continue to pervade the landscape of the city.

Policy Intervention

In order to address the informal settlement problem in the city, I propose a two-pronged policy intervention. This approach recognizes that there are both short-term and long-term dimensions to this issue, and that the only way to truly solve the problem is to tackle both its immediate and underlying mechanisms. The first intervention will seek to address the immediate cause of the issue, which is the lack of housing affordability in Manila, and the second intervention will seek to address the underlying cause of the issue, which is the lack of economic opportunity outside the capital.

First, the government should provide subsidies to low-income workers to rent unoccupied apartments. Due to the unique structure of Manila's economic development, there is actually a relative abundance of unoccupied housing scattered throughout the city. A large number of Filipinos are working overseas (more than two million in 2019, according to the PSA)[16] and the country is heavily reliant on their remittances (almost 10% of GDP, according to the World Bank).[17] Many of these overseas workers, who earn in foreign currencies and have stronger purchasing power than local workers, engage in real estate speculation in the local housing market by investing in condominium units built by major real estate developers. This drives up the prices of these units but often leaves them unused, leading to a large supply of unoccupied housing throughout the city.

Due to this mismatch between market supply and demand, there is a natural avenue for the government to step in and correct this market failure. By providing subsidies to help low-income workers afford the rent, the government is able to provide affordable housing to city dwellers without having to construct new housing of its own. Under this proposal, informal settlers will receive housing vouchers from the government to offset the price of the monthly rent. The exact peso amount of this voucher will be determined by the government, taking into account rental prices, incomes of informal settler households, the number of available unoccupied units, and the budgetary amount Congress will be willing to provide towards this project. This amount will be adjusted annually via a series of follow-up studies, taking into account the aforementioned factors as well as inflation. If done properly, this intervention will provide real estate companies and speculators with revenue for their properties, reduce the number of slum dwellers and informal settlers throughout the city, and help people who suffer from housing insecurity find a proper home.

Second, the government should play a leading role in developing the countryside, with the goal of creating economic opportunity outside Manila and addressing the uneven development of the country. In particular, it should reallocate public investments in future infrastructure projects away from Manila and towards neglected rural areas. It should invest in special economic zones in major population centers outside Manila and create incentives for local and foreign investors to reallocate their investments towards these areas. It should increase investment in tourism outside Manila in order to create viable career opportunities in the local tourism industry for workers outside the capital. Finally, and perhaps most drastically, it should consider moving major government offices and public universities outside Manila in order to incentivize out migration from the city. Taken together, these steps will go a long way towards rebalancing development throughout the country, decongesting Manila, and reducing the need to create informal settlements in the city.

Conclusion

The informal settlement problem is not unique to Manila, but it is felt more acutely there than in many other cities in the world. Due to its unusual combination of rapid economic growth, uneven regional economic development, local real estate speculation, lack of affordable housing, and low per capita incomes, some charities estimate that Manila has the most number of homeless people of any city in the world.[18] Consequently, there is a pressing need to address this problem in order to ensure the long-term viability of the city. By adopting the two-pronged policy approach offered in this paper, the government will be able to solve both a humanitarian crisis, in the form of mass homelessness and housing insecurity, and an economic crisis, in the form of uneven regional development and lack of economic opportunity. Doing so will be a victory not only for slum residents, who will now be able to find a proper home, but also for existing city residents, who will enjoy less congestion, less taxed public infrastructure, and an overall higher quality of life.

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Unveiling the Local-Turn in Peacebuilding: Exploring the Roles and Contributions of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organization in Mindanao Peacebuilding

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Abstract

This research addressed the role of Bangsamoro civil society organizations (BMCSOs) and the conditions that allow their participation in Philippine peacebuilding efforts. Using an institutional approach, the researcher collected qualitative data from BMCSO members and other peace actors. Findings reveal that local CSOs contribute to effective and long-term peacebuilding with their knowledge of the conflict context. BMCSOs effectively perform advocacy, socialization, and social cohesion, particularly in steering stakeholders' reactions toward constructive participation, raising awareness of the causes and costs of conflict, and facilitating dialogue. Institutionalizing venues for CSO participation and funding availability promotes robust engagement of BMCSOs in the Bangsamoro region. However, the study also identified challenges such as external co-optation, reliance on external support, and influence of local political agenda. The results emphasized the importance of empowering and assisting BMCSOs, particularly youth CSOs, in overcoming these obstacles and establishing a more inclusive and long-term peace in the region. Collaboration with the state, developing self-reliance, and strategic leadership and management skills were critical strategies for BMCSOs.

Keywords: Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations, Local Turn to Peacebuilding, Women and Youth CSOs

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1. Introduction

The Bangsamoro Region, located in the southwestern part of Mindanao, Philippines, is primarily populated by Muslims. This region has been marked by prolonged and deadly conflicts between the government and numerous Muslim rebel groups seeking self-determination for five decades. The conflict's origins can be traced to anti-Spanish colonial resistance, American colonial integration, and subsequent campaigns for independence and autonomy (Campo & Judd, 2005).

The recurring pattern of armed conflict and negotiations has had devastating consequences, leading to widespread destruction, loss of lives, financial burdens, limited economic opportunities, food scarcity, and health risks for the affected population. Nonetheless, a ray of hope emerged with the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) in July 2018. This legislation gave the local Bangsamoro population significant autonomy and a measure of self-governance. As a result, the protracted conflict was temporarily put on hold.

BOL is an essential step toward 'peacemaking' and 'peacekeeping,' as emphasized by Berkovitch and Kadayifci (2002). These are critical measures but a limited commitment to halt hostilities and promote nonviolence. However, achieving durable peace in the context of Mindanao necessitates a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach known as peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997).

Peacebuilding efforts have predominantly followed a liberal approach, driven by the international community's intention to promote liberal values and governance standards (Richmond & Franks, 2009). However, criticisms have emerged, highlighting the failures that result from highly centralized and outsider-driven processes (Bird, 2007; MacGinty & Richmond, 2013; Verkoren et al., 2013; Leeuwen, 2020). In response to these critiques, the 'local turn' has gained momentum, emphasizing the significance of local ownership, agency, and context-based approaches in peacebuilding (Boege, 2011; Paffenholz, 2010). This shift towards local empowerment can also be observed in the Muslim Mindanao context, where different Bangsamoro civil society organizations have grown and prospered.

The roles of civil society in peacebuilding involving actors such as academic institutions, church-based organizations, think tanks, NGOs, networks, and CBOs in the prolonged conflict in Muslim Mindanao have been studied (Tagorda, 2022). However, there needs to be a more comprehensive examination regarding the specific contributions and challenges of Bangsamoro women and youth civil society. Exploring the participation of these Bangsamoro civil society organizations in ongoing conflict resolution efforts can provide valuable insights into their effectiveness and innovative approaches to fostering enduring peace. Recognizing the unique historical and cultural context of civil society in Mindanao is crucial for developing targeted strategies to achieve sustainable peace.

This study examines the roles and contributions of the local civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Bangsamoro region of Mindanao, with a particular focus on their involvement in peacebuilding. It acknowledges the recent trend toward prioritizing peacebuilding at the local level and the subsequent assistance provided to local CSOs over the past two decades. Additionally, it discerns the tactics groups employ to oppose, question, and undermine the limitations enforced by the existing framework for peacebuilding.

1.1 The Local Turn to Peacebuilding and the Role of Civil Society Organizations

In response to the criticisms of liberal peacebuilding, two critiques stood out: the mainstream and radical critiques/approaches. The mainstream critique acknowledges the limitations of liberal peacebuilding but suggests that it can be improved through increased local participation and capacity building (Öjendal et al., 2017). Peace stability can be enhanced by involving local stakeholders directly affected by the conflict and addressing root causes. As intermediaries, local players play a critical role in facilitating peacebuilding activities at the local level and bridging the gap between national and international efforts (Donais, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2011; Mubashir & Vimalaraj, 2016). On the other hand, the radical critique calls for a paradigm shift, highlighting the negative impacts of international intervention and advocating for a more locally-driven approach (Öjendal et al., 2017).

One key player in this approach is the civil society. The importance of local civil society in peacebuilding is widely recognized, as evidenced by its high utilization as partners by both international and local governments. Studies suggest that local civil society engagements can contribute to peacebuilding by increasing the durability of peace, improving cooperation with peacebuilding policies, and potentially serving as intermediaries between international and national levels., (Gizelis, T. (2011), Nilsson, D. (2012); Hellmüller, S. (2013); Donais, T. (2012); Shepherd, L. (2015), Paffenholz (2015). Moreover, they ensure citizen safety, hold conflict actors accountable, raise public awareness, promote a culture of peace, and reduce inter-group violence. Localized engagements and prioritized civic actions tailored to communities' specific contexts and cultural dynamics are crucial for effective peacebuilding.

Paffenholz and Spurk's (2006) extensive empirical research identified seven functions of civil society in peacebuilding: **protection**- ensures the safeguarding of citizens and communities against state despotism and armed actors, while **monitoring** holds governments accountable and supports the protection and advocacy functions. **Advocacy and public communication** involve promoting relevant social and political themes, influencing the public agenda, and advocating for peaceful conflict resolution. **In-group socialization** aims to foster a culture of peace and constructive conflict resolution within societies. **Social cohesion** builds bridges between adversarial groups and helps rebuild trust and social capital. **Intermediation facilitates dialogue** and negotiation between different societal levels, including armed groups, communities, and development agencies. Lastly**, service delivery**, often provided by NGOs and faith-based organizations, is crucial in assisting war-affected populations. By examining these functions and institutional factors, this research seeks to learn more about the contributions and challenges of Bangsamoro civil society organizations in peacebuilding efforts.

1.2 Institutional Factors Shaping Local Civil Society in Peacebuilding: A Framework of Analysis

However, the success of local civil society engagements may vary depending on several institutional elements; as such, the current research employs an **institutional theory** to investigate the influences that impact the engagement of Bangsamoro civil society organizations in peacebuilding. The study underscores the significant role of institutions in shaping their undertakings within the BARMM's sociocultural, political, and economic milieus.

The fundamental assertion of Institutionalism proponents is that 'institutions matter' (Peters, 2005; Schmidt, 2006), mainly through acting as a mediator in changing the actor's behavior and subsequent political consequences (Hay, 2002). These researchers believe that focusing on institutions rather than people is a powerful analytical technique. Institutionalists have differing views on how to define institutions and why they matter. One that captures a general and comprehensive view of this study is provided by North (1990), who defines institutions as "the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction" or "the rules of the game in a society." This formulation implies several crucial elements. First, institutions are built by humans to control behavior and influence incentives. Second, institutions contain a wide range of de facto and de jure characteristics, including economic, political, and social dimensions. Institutions are essentially political since different sets of institutions result in various resource allocations. North (1990) highlights the role of institutions in molding people's behavior by providing a framework of rules, norms, and expectations that influence people's behaviors and relationships. This perspective emphasizes the importance of institutions in determining diverse societal outcomes, whether social, economic, or political, by affecting individuals' incentives and choices within a specific environment.

This research investigates the impact of sociopolitical, cultural, economic, formal, and informal institutions on the accomplishments and limitations of women and youth BMCSOs in peacebuilding. By evaluating the complex interrelationships across these institutional realms, the study intends to highlight institutions' critical role in shaping and promoting civil society's contributions to peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro region.

The sociopolitical context influences the peacebuilding activities of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). It entails investigating the political structures, power dynamics, governance systems, and policies that determine the role and influence of civil society organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding. This component investigates how CSOs' obligations and possibilities to participate in peacebuilding processes are shaped by legal and regulatory frameworks, political ideologies, and interactions with government institutions.

The cultural environment is another critical institutional factor influencing CSOs' efforts in peacebuilding. Understanding the cultural norms, beliefs, traditions, and identities of the communities with which they work is critical for successful peacebuilding efforts. This section investigates how cultural factors influence CSO' attitudes, behaviors, and relationships with the communities they serve. It investigates how civil society organizations (CSOs) adapt their peacebuilding strategies, messaging, and community involvement approaches to line with cultural values and sensitivity.

Economic context also substantially impacts CSOs' attempts to promote peace in the Bangsamoro region. This component examines the community's economic situation, inequities, resource distribution, and livelihood opportunities. It looks into how economic issues affect CSOs' capacity, resource mobilization, and long-term viability in executing peacebuilding efforts. It also investigates CSOs' economic issues and ideas for addressing economic inequities, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and creating economic possibilities as part of their peacebuilding efforts.

2. Methodology

In this qualitative case study, a comprehensive exploration was conducted to examine the involvement of diverse youth and women civil society organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding within the complex sociocultural and political context of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The primary aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and contributions of these CSOs to peacebuilding and to generate insights that can inform future peacebuilding efforts in the region.

The study utilized a sample that encompassed two categories of CSOs. Firstly, mature CSOs operating for over a decade were selected from the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society groups. These organizations have a long-standing presence and experience in peacebuilding activities. Secondly, newly established CSOs for five years or less were sourced from the Ministry of Peace, Order, and Security list. These organizations represented emerging voices and perspectives in the peacebuilding landscape.

By examining established and newly formed CSOs, the study aimed to capture diverse experiences and practices in peacebuilding. The research delved into the factors that influenced the effectiveness of these CSOs and their contributions to peacebuilding, considering the broader sociocultural and political backdrop in which they operate.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Characterizing Bangsamoro Civil Society: Understanding its Nature and Features

Creating civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Bangsamoro region represents the progress and expansion of citizen participation. Notably, the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society has grown from 29 members in 2002 to 179 active and non-active members now. With 307 youth organizations and 536 young groups from both the region and beyond being recognized, the accreditation of several youth and women CSOs reflects growing engagement and participation in the region. Over half of the mapped CSOs in the BARMM are concerned with women's issues, suggesting a rising emphasis on using CSOs to address a wide range of societal concerns.

Resistance to authoritarian administrations, historical and cultural backdrop, political and governance issues, socioeconomic inequities, human rights, and social justice concerns all affected the formation of these CSOs. Battles and wars in the region have significantly impacted the youth, leading to concerns such as drug addiction and illegal activities. However, as indicated by the work of groups such as UNYPAD and THUMA Inc, which have formed to address these issues and foster shared interests among Bangsamoro youth, civil society provides a crucial platform for tackling these challenges.

Bangsamoro women play an essential part in peacebuilding endeavors by realizing that peacebuilding goes beyond battles and discussions. They actively promote long-term efforts and initiatives in their communities that promote peace and reconciliation. Women CSOs, such as Noorus Salam, use nonviolence, mutual tolerance, and respect to advocate for peace and bridge divides among varied groups. These women-led organizations work to develop local CSOs and encourage grassroots engagement in peacebuilding processes. Organizations such as Noorus-Salam, Ummah Fi Salaam-Women, Al Mujadillah Development Foundation,

and UNYPHIL Women have a long track record of success, demonstrating the development and maturity of Bangsamoro civil society.

The formation of diverse CSOs in the Bangsamoro region demonstrates the Bangsamoro civil society's progress and engagement. Various variables impact these groups and play an essential role in tackling youth-related difficulties, boosting peacebuilding efforts, and empowering women in the region's quest for long-term peace and development.

3.2 Empowering Communities, Fostering Peace: The Contributions of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations to Peacebuilding

The youth civil society organizations in the Bangsamoro region are actively engaged in peacebuilding efforts. UNYPAD focuses on peacebuilding and community development by participating in peace rallies, unity events, and service delivery activities such as skill and livelihood training programs. TheMoropreneur Inc. contributes to peacebuilding through capacity-building activities, cultural preservation, and women's empowerment initiatives. MAYA advocates for women's rights, gender equality, and the abolition of child, early, and forced marriages, raising awareness and organizing workshops and social activities. UNGAYAN promotes youth human rights, provides training in parliamentary governance, and engages in advocacy activities. Patikul Association's Youth Development works on eradicating violence and promoting positive change through a "culture of peace" training, mentorship, and education for adolescents. Aretes Style empowers internally displaced women by manufacturing hand-woven goods, promoting economic growth and cultural preservation. These organizations collectively address core causes of conflict and contribute to peacebuilding through socioeconomic development, gender equality, social cohesion, advocacy, and community engagement, aligning with the peacebuilding functions identified by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) of protection, monitoring, advocacy and public communication, in-group socialization, social cohesion, intermediation, and service delivery.

Women civil society organizations in the Bangsamoro region, including Ummah Fi Salam-Women, Noorus Salam, AMDF, and UNYPHIL-WOMEN, play crucial roles in peacebuilding through various activities. Ummah Fi Salam focuses on interfaith communication and women's empowerment, providing capacity-building programs and microfinance support to enhance economic opportunities. Noorus Salam utilizes radio programs to educate communities on reproductive health, family planning, anti-bullying, and preventing violent extremism. They promote peace and tolerance through interfaith activities and dialogue. AMDF is actively involved in ending child marriage through community dialogues, workshops, and public awareness campaigns. They also address reproductive health issues and provide access to healthcare services. UNYPHIL-WOMEN prioritizes youth participation and implements youth-led service projects to create a conducive environment for reconstruction and development. Their activities encompass advocacy, capacity-building, and youth empowerment. These women's civil society organizations collectively contribute to peacebuilding by promoting interfaith dialogue, women's empowerment, reproductive health education, ending harmful practices, supporting livelihoods, and advocating for youth rights. Through their diverse initiatives, they address root causes of conflict, empower marginalized communities, and foster a more inclusive and peaceful society in the Bangsamoro region.

Despite their distinctions, both youth and women peacebuilders engage in advocacy and socialization activities intending to raise awareness and facilitate dialogue on critical social

issues. They all focus on capacity and skill development, allowing individuals to contribute to peacebuilding initiatives actively. Furthermore, both parties understand the importance of social cohesiveness and inclusivity in developing peaceful societies.

One important distinction is their unique areas of specialization. Youth CSOs focus on conflict resolution, mediation, and skill development for young community actors, whereas women peacebuilders focus on interfaith dialogue, youth inclusion, and women's rights. Furthermore, youth CSOs stress peace rallies and unification activities, whereas female peacebuilders frequently participate in service delivery programs tackling diverse social concerns.

Both youth and women CSOs play essential roles in peacebuilding. While their activities and focus areas differ, they are committed to pushing for social change, empowering individuals, and creating social harmony. Their combined efforts contribute to the overarching goal of establishing peaceful and inclusive societies.

3.3 Unraveling Institutional Factors Shaping Engagement in the Bangsamoro Region: Empowering Youth and Women for Peacebuilding

Institutional factors significantly impact women and youth civil society organizations' (CSOs) performance in peacebuilding efforts. Legal and formal institutional frameworks play a crucial role by providing dedicated policies and programs recognizing and supporting youth and women's participation in peacebuilding. This includes youth-focused initiatives within formal peacebuilding institutions and gender-responsive legal frameworks, policies, and institutions that promote women's involvement, such as gender quotas and dedicated gender office.

The performance of women and youth civil society organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding is also influenced by various political factors and regulatory frameworks. Inclusive political systems that provide opportunities for youth and women's representation and participation in decision-making processes are crucial for empowering these groups and promoting ownership of peacebuilding initiatives. Political environments that support women's political participation and address gender biases and stereotypes enhance the performance of women CSOs. However, implementing specific regulations, such as the Anti-Terrorism Law, raises concerns among CSOs. The labeling of Moro youth as potential terrorists and the fear of being targeted under this law hinders their ability to monitor and report incidents of violence and conflict, limiting their capacity to counter government abuses effectively.

Additionally, the governance institutions and rules within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) can present challenges. While the BARMM leadership has become more receptive to CSOs, some local government units (LGUs) may treat communities as their fiefdom, demanding material support in exchange for cooperation. Collusion between some local governments and CSOs (bogus?)can hinder practical peacebuilding efforts. Political and regulatory institutions significantly impact the performance of women and youth CSOs, emphasizing the need for inclusive political systems, supportive governance structures, and a conducive legal environment to facilitate effective peacebuilding initiatives.

Moreover, performance of women and youth civil society organizations (CSOs) in peacebuilding is influenced by several sociocultural factors. The patriarchal norms prevalent

in the Bangsamoro region often limit women's leadership roles and disempower young CSO members. Limited access to positions of power and privilege creates a hierarchical structure where those in authority have more influence in policy decision-making. Cultural values, such as the concept of honor and the perception of CSOs as family businesses, further hinder civil society practices and the collective action for change. However, Islamic ideals motivate youth CSO members to challenge oppressive practices and seek knowledge for community betterment. Social and ethnic-cultural divides also impact peacebuilding efforts, requiring a delicate balance between respecting sociocultural identities and promoting gender equality. Understanding these sociocultural factors is crucial for effectively integrating youth and women's voices, addressing power imbalances, and challenging detrimental cultural values within peacebuilding. By navigating and negotiating these complex sociocultural dynamics, CSOs can strive for positive change and foster inclusive and sustainable peace in the Bangsamoro region.

The presence of networks and social capital is also instrumental in supporting the performance of women and youth CSOs. Access to networks that facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilization among youth peacebuilders, as well as the development of strong networks and alliances among women peacebuilders, fosters solidarity, support, and collective action for gender equality and peacebuilding.

The internal organizational structure of Bangsamoro youth civil society organizations (CSOs) significantly impacts their engagement in peacebuilding. Challenges include a shallow understanding of peacebuilding, limited coordination and communication among younger organizations, and the influence of careerist NGO leaders. Effective leadership, positive organizational culture, accountability, and knowledge sharing are crucial for peacebuilding. A lack of follow-up methods and adequate financial sources helps sustainability. Funding disparities and organizational capacities further affect the effectiveness of women and youth CSOs. Enhancing capacities for leadership, conflict resolution, advocacy, networking, and organizational management is essential for their peacebuilding efforts.

Institutions, encompassing legal, political, sociocultural, and economic factors, significantly shape the peacebuilding contributions of youth and women CSOs in the Bangsamoro region. These institutional dynamics, including regulatory frameworks, governance structures, cultural norms, and resource distribution, have facilitated and hindered their efforts.

3.4 Navigating the Peacebuilding Landscape in Muslim Mindanao: Unraveling the Rules of Engagement–Exploring the Hybrid Nature of Peacebuilding

The analysis finds a significant disparity between the rhetoric of encouraging local ownership in peacebuilding and its actual execution on the ground. Even with acknowledging the importance of local ownership, some international actors (NGOs) frequently impose their goals and templates, ignoring actual community involvement and agency. This observation aligns with Richmond's (2009), in which he describes how external actors usually bring preconceived peacebuilding models that may not sufficiently reflect local conditions and goals.

Furthermore, the power dynamics between international organizations and local civil society groups (CSOs) have become a primary concern. International organizations wield significant influence and control over local CSOs, particularly those younger and newer. This power

imbalance limits local CSOs' autonomy and decision-making capacity, limiting their ability to own fully and lead the peace-building process.

Due to time and resource constraints, the study underscores the problems that local CSOs have in achieving comprehensive and inclusive local ownership. Donors may have short time frames and withdraw abruptly, challenging prolonged involvement and collaboration with local actors. However, the expanding presence of some international organizations in BARMM is beneficial. As time and resource constraints are addressed, this shift has influenced the problems that local players have in building long-term collaborations with overseas entities.

These findings highlight the need to bridge the rhetorical and practical divides in supporting local ownership in peacebuilding. They emphasize the need to understand and resolve power relations, provide long-term support and autonomy to local CSOs, and enable genuine local participation and decision-making in creating peacebuilding programs.

4. Conclusion

This research emphasizes the essential role of Bangsamoro civil society organizations (BMCSOs) in Bangsamoro peacebuilding initiatives. The study used an institutional approach to investigate several factors influencing the engagement and efficacy of local CSOs in defining and promoting peacebuilding initiatives. Several significant results have emerged, stressing the importance of BMCSOs, the need for institutionalizing their participation, the challenges they confront, and the ways they have developed to overcome these obstacles.

BMCSOs are crucial in orienting stakeholders toward constructive engagement, enhancing understanding of conflict causes and consequences, and facilitating community discussions. Their in-depth knowledge of the conflict context empowers them to advocate for peace, foster socialization, and promote social cohesiveness, thereby contributing significantly to the success of long-term and sustainable peacebuilding initiatives.

The study demonstrates the importance of reshaping power dynamics to achieve genuine local ownership. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating the significant progress made in resolving the historical marginalization of women and youth organizations due to international actors' involvement. However, continued and enhanced support in empowering Bangsamoro women and youth, ensuring their active agency and meaningful participation in setting the peacebuilding agenda, is required. This will result in a more equitable and inclusive peacebuilding process, setting the groundwork for long-term peace and prosperity in the Bangsamoro region.

For a genuine local turn in peacebuilding, fostering horizontal hybridity and relinquishing top-down power dynamics is imperative. This shift requires embracing bottom-up approaches that value local knowledge, practices, and customary dispute-resolution mechanisms and recognize the agency of marginalized groups, especially women and youth. In the context of the Bangsamoro region, powerful local actors need to yield space and allow the active participation of women and youth in decision-making processes. Embracing this horizontal hybridity will enable meaningful intergroup dialogues, facilitating the implementation of mechanisms that cater to diverse stakeholders' specific needs and aspirations.

Given local CSOs' obstacles, such as external co-optation, dependency on external support, and the impact of local political agendas, it is critical to empower and assist BMCSOs, particularly youth CSOs. Collaboration with the state, self-reliance, and developing strategic leadership and management skills are critical measures for overcoming these challenges and ensuring that peacebuilding programs are driven and sustained locally.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the significance of diversity in peacebuilding initiatives. The report advocates for a more inclusive strategy that prioritizes the active engagement of all segments of society through empowering and supporting BMCSOs. This inclusivity includes recognizing and accepting local variety, embracing different points of view, and encouraging cooperation among various groups.

Finally, it is vital to institutionalize venues for CSO engagement, address power disparities, recognize local variety, and adopt bottom-up strategies. These strategies promote inclusivity, empower marginalized groups, and guarantee peacebuilding activities corresponding to the Bangsamoro people's aims and needs. The region can promote long-term peace and establish a revolutionary social climate by implementing these strategies.

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A Study on Interaction Between Mainland ASEAN States and China
After the Cold War—Centered on the GMS Mechanism

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Abstract
The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation (GMS) is a key focus for integrating the regional economy of Southeast Asia and an important clue for studying regional integration in Southeast Asia. This paper aims to explain the causal mechanism behind the development of the GMS, that is, why GMS has been able to withstand the systemic stimuli of different eras and continue to play a role, expand the scope of cooperation, and promote regional integration in Southeast Asia while effectively addressing the development gaps and conflicts of interest among its member countries. This paper traces the development process of the GMS mechanism in different periods and backgrounds, and finds that the degree of economic interdependence, political mutual trust, and the development of ASEAN norms among member countries within the GMS have an impact on their internal cognition and decision-making, thus injecting impetus into the development of the GMS mechanism.

Keywords: GMS, ASEAN Norms, Regional Integration

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Introduction

The Committee for the Coordination of Investments of Lower Mekong Basin (MC), which dates back to 1957, and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), which began with the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s central coordination in 1992 to strengthen the economic ties of countries in the subregion and improve the competitiveness of the subregion, The purpose is to promote the common development of the local economy and society (Song, 2021). The GMS mechanism has always been the focus of integrating the regional economy of Southeast Asia, serving as a touchstone for testing Southeast Asian integration.

It has important geopolitical significance and significance for countries both inside and outside the region, as dominating the market of GMS means dominating the markets of Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and even China and India (Soong, 2016a). Faced with multiple practical issues such as development disparities, conflicts of interest, and financial crises, the "GMS" geoeconomic model still plays a good cooperative role today, injecting impetus into the economic development of Southeast Asia, which has attracted widespread attention from the academic community.

Komchornrit (2021) proposed using a comprehensive approach of AHP and TOPSIS to strengthen domestic logistics in Thailand through the GMS mechanism, using the GMS Economic Corridor as an economic tool to promote cross-border trade and drive Thailand's national development. Gerlak and Mukhtarov (2016), and Williams (2021) focused on water safety and believed that the success of the Mekong River Management Commission (MRC) was due to its human-centered approach, emphasizing a safety framework for water use that meets human needs such as agriculture, energy production, and fisheries.

Although the development prospects of the Mekong River Basin are highly recognized, the future of "GMS" integration still faces many uncertain factors. On the one hand, the relative benefits among GMS member countries still need to be balanced, and the development speed still needs to be coordinated (Weatherbee, 1997). On the other hand, the geopolitical competition between China, the United States, and Japan deeply shapes the development of connectivity in the GMS region. Charoensri (2019; 2022a; 2022b) believes that a new regionalism, known as "Linked Regionalization," will be formed within it.

In addition, China's participation and influence in the GMS mechanism are the focus of scholars' exploration. Su (2012) believes that the Chinese government has effectively promoted the geoeconomic integration of Yunnan Province and the GMS region by binding labor, capital, and political influence, and establishing a regulatory system. Lee (2015) analyzed the changes in the relationship between China and countries in the GMS region in the 1990s. He, along with Tungkeunkuntt and Bunyavejchewin (2022), believed that the GMS mechanism benefited all member countries, and China's investment in resources for the GMS mechanism benefited downstream countries of the Mekong River, driving local infrastructure links and development, thereby driving their willingness to interact with China and enhancing China's influence. However, Biba (2012; 2018) pointed out that although the Chinese government has established extensive trust in the GMS region, there are still significant loopholes in water resource management. Zhang and Li (2020) also examined the Chinese government's policies on cross-border water resource governance in the GMS region. They believe that China's adjustment of GMS policy is a transformation of the overall diplomatic model, and cross-border water resource governance is not a goal, but a means for China to expand its influence in this region.

In summary, we can find that current research on geoeconomics mainly focuses on the interaction between major powers and global trade, with less discussion on the relationship between countries, the international community, and geoeconomics, lacking consideration of how geoeconomics can exert political influence.

Research Method

This paper takes the Neoclassical realism theory as the analytical framework, sets and explains various variables in the process of GMS mechanism expansion, uses the process tracking method to verify its related definitions and assumptions, and explores the interrelationship and causal mechanism between variables. Firstly, this article views the GMS mechanism as an active international organization, mainly studying its process of influencing internal member states' cognition and decision-making, and continuously expanding under systemic stimuli. Neoclassical realism predicts that the increase or decrease of relative material strength corresponds to the expansion or contraction of the ambition and scope of national foreign policy activities, but this process depends not only on the objective material trend but also on the subjective views of political decision-makers (Rose, 1998, p. 72).

In other words, "policy choice" and "policy formulation" are no longer seen as direct results of systemic stimulus. Systematic stimulus needs to be examined through actors such as countries or international organizations and recognized and responded to in specific internal political environments. If international organizations can create political pressure within specific countries, they can also limit the policy options of specific countries, Thus, it affects the policy-making of the country (Rispsman et al., 2016/2017). Therefore, to explain the changes in the external behavior of actors and explain why they respond differently to similar system stimuli compared to other actors, it is necessary to study the unique processes of actors' cognition, decision-making, and policy execution. In the context of this article, it is to study how the GMS mechanism as an international organization affects the cognition, decision-making, and practice of its member states.

Theory & Research Hypothesis

This article combines international and domestic independent variables to set three dependent variables: the degree of political mutual trust, the degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms, and the degree of economic interdependence among GMS member countries. Neoclassical realism believes that the realistic analysis of international change needs to combine the international and domestic levels (Lebow et al., 1995). "The pressure at the international system level has contributed to foreign policy, Grand strategy, and international politics, while domestic intermediary variables will limit whether and how countries respond to the pressure at the system level" (Rispsman et al. 2016/2017, p. 58).

The distinction between "inclusive strategic environment" and "binding strategic environment" is related to the urgency and magnitude of threats or opportunities faced by a country" (Rispsman et al. 2016/2017, p.47), and the assessment of the urgency of threats or opportunities refers to the degree to which the unit adapts to the strategic environment. If the unit adapts to the strategic environment, it indicates that the external structure is relatively stable, and the unit has greater flexibility in external behavior; On the contrary, if the unit does not adapt to the strategic environment, it indicates that the external structure is relatively unstable, and its external behavior is more singular (Rispsman et al., 2016/2017).

The 'Strategic Environment' is mainly related to the degree of economic interdependence among GMS member countries. If GMS member states to adapt to the existing economic interdependence structure, it indicates that the relationship between the GMS mechanism and external structure is relatively stable, and member states have significant similarity and convergence in their external behavior; On the contrary, if member states do not adapt to the existing economic interdependence structure, it indicates that the external structure of the GMS mechanism is relatively unstable, and the external behavior is more flexible and diverse.

The three dependent variables of "political mutual trust," "adaptability to ASEAN norms," and "economic interdependence" all point to the process of integration to varying degrees. In short, these three variables are closely related to the integration process of GMS member countries (China and some ASEAN countries), and we can find the causal mechanism by testing these three variables. As shown in Figure 1, by explaining and setting the dependent variable, the three variables will act on the nodes in the process of "leader cognition," "issue setting," and "practice," ultimately producing corresponding policies and feedback to the system stimulus. Therefore, we can assume the interaction process of specific mechanisms and test it by tracking specific cases during the development of GMS mechanisms. The assumptions of this article are as follows (as shown in Table 1):

1: When GMS member countries have a high degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms and a high degree of political and economic interaction, the result is that the GMS mechanism is strengthened

2: When GMS member countries have a low degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms but a high degree of political and economic interaction, the result is "to find alternative political mutual trust mechanisms while maintaining the GMS mechanism"

3: When GMS member countries have a high degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms but a low degree of political and economic interaction, the result is "to find alternative economic cooperation mechanisms while maintaining the GMS mechanism"

4: When GMS member countries have a low degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms and a low level of political and economic interaction, the result is a weakening of the GMS mechanism

The Concept of Logic
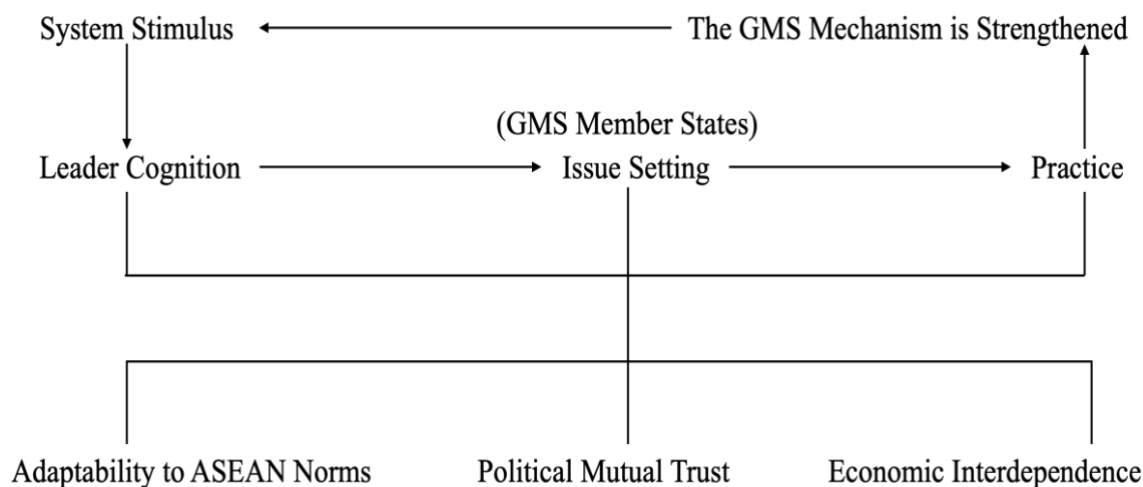
Figure 1: GMS mechanism reinforcement logic diagram
Source: Created by the author

	The high degree of adaptation of ASEAN norms	Low degree of adaptation to ASEAN norms
The high degree of integration (Political mutual trust and economic interdependence)	The GMS mechanism has been strengthened	On the premise of maintaining the GMS mechanism, seek alternative political mutual trust mechanisms.
Low level of integration (Political mutual trust economic interdependence)	While maintaining the GMS mechanism, seek alternative economic cooperation mechanisms.	Weakening of the GMS mechanism

Table 1: The Hypothesis of Interaction between the Political Economy of the GMS Member States and ASEAN Normative Adaptation
Source: Created by the author

Result

1. System Stimulation, Development of Geoeconomy, and Coordination of GMS Mechanism (1992-2005)

In August 1992, the Greater Mekong Subregion was launched under the central coordination of the Asian Development Bank. Under the planning of the Asian Development Bank, GMS mainly involves four goals: (1) to achieve and enhance opportunities for sub-regional economic development; (2) Encourage trade and investment among countries in the Mekong River Basin; (3) Resolve or mitigate cross-border issues within the subregion; (4) Understanding the common resources and policy needs between countries (Song, 2021, p. 37).

From 1992 to 1994, GMS member countries were still in a period of cultivating trust, and almost all of the projects organized were research-oriented. It was only from 1994 to 1996 that GMS established eight priority areas for cooperation, including transportation, energy, and agriculture, and established corresponding management systems, forming a cooperation framework (Cui & Zheng, 2021, p. 80). GMS is committed to building trade infrastructure projects within the region, but its proposed Bangkok Phnom Penh Ho Chi Minh City Vung Tau road has come to a standstill due to a lack of financial support (Ratner, 2003, p. 67).

However, overall, the GMS plan has replaced MRC as the most important forum for providing economic development assistance for projects in the Mekong River region and is also the only regional forum where land-based Southeast Asian countries and China participate on a nominal equal footing (Ratner, 2003, p. 67). The political and economic interaction in the Greater Mekong Subregion has also been enhanced in this context.

The pursuit of Karen people refugees fleeing to Thailand by Myanmar's military has led to military tensions among member countries and exacerbated the cross-border spread of political conflicts within ASEAN (Vatikiotis, 1997, p. 34, as centered in Acharya, 2009, p. 150). This indicates the limited adaptation of Southeast Asian countries to ASEAN norms on land, and once again indicates that the political mutual trust between GMS member countries was still at a relatively low level during this period.

However, ASEAN countries did not seek Power projection Capability. ASEAN's military investment is closer to the insurance policy for general uncertainty than to the arms race or offensive build-up of neighboring countries. The growth of its military expenditure has also declined relative to its GDP (Solingen, 2002, p. 9). Faced with common external threats, ASEAN countries are still unwilling to transform their past economic and political relations into military relations. At the 1992 Regional Security Conference held in Singapore, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Su, then Assistant Chief of Staff of Singapore, expressed this attitude in his speech. He pointed out that due to the lack of clear enemies, military alliance treaties not only cannot bring ASEAN countries together but may also cause them to split (Gallagher, 1994, p. 182).

ASEAN countries have not made efforts to balance or even contain China, but have expanded their economic cooperation with China, attempting to prevent potential aggressive actions by strengthening economic ties with China and incorporating China into regional multilateral structures (Solingen, 2002, p. 9). As a result, a series of new economic cooperation mechanisms have emerged in the Mekong River Basin and even the entire Southeast and East Asian regions.

At the East Asia Summit in 1995, ASEAN leaders encouraged other member countries other than the six GMS countries to participate in the development plan of the Mekong River basin, which showed ASEAN countries' recognition of the achievements of GMS and the recognition that joint development of resources in the Mekong River basin can bring great benefits (Ajibewa, 1998). Subsequently, ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, and Europe further participated in the development plan, indicating the further opening of GMS.

The financial crisis, as a systemic stimulus, has had a significant impact on the adaptability of Southeast Asian countries to ASEAN norms. When ASEAN is accused of failing to effectively respond to the crisis, especially in reminding Thailand of its economic difficulties, the debate about the principle of non-interference in ASEAN norms has intensified. The new

Thai government believes that this principle should be revised to prevent or solve domestic problems that threaten regional stability, and has proposed the concept of "flexible engagement" (Solingen, 2002, p. 176).

After the 1997 financial crisis, the issue of economic development became a priority for various countries. The political and economic relations between ASEAN member countries and China have developed. In the chaos of 1997, China acted like a "responsible stakeholder" (Suehiro, 2017). On the one hand, China firmly maintains currency stability and vigorously assists ASEAN countries, making the ASEAN economy gradually stable; On the other hand, ASEAN countries are in urgent need of China's vast market after experiencing the crisis, so they shelve the Territorial disputes in the South China Sea, suspend the military expansion plan, and make good friends with China one after another, showing a "middle" phenomenon in politics and economy (Song et al., 2013, p. 119).

The 1998 GMS Ministerial Conference discussed the theme of "responding to the Asian crisis, developing strategies and work plans to address economic changes, as well as the social reality of the region, strengthening regional activities and competitiveness," and proposed an important project to establish an "economic corridor." The GMS project expanded to address social issues such as labor, health, education, cross-border issues related to environmental and human and commodity transportation, as well as public needs such as training, Expanded cooperation in drug eradication and agricultural development (Hensengerth, 2009, Table A1).

2. The Rise of Geo-Economy, and the Improvement of GMS Mechanism (2005-2014)

From 1992 to 2006, data shows that all GMS countries have experienced significant economic growth, with their per capita GDP growth rate higher than the entire ASEAN. The changes in the human development index of GMS countries from 1975 to 2005 also indicate improvements in birth expectancy, education level, and income for all GMS countries (Duval, 2008). In 2004, the geographical coverage of GMS was extended to Guangxi in China. In July 2005, the second GMS Summit was held in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China.

From 2005 to 2009, ASEAN countries and China carried out and reached a series of plans, agreements, and declarations. For example, the China ASEAN Ministerial Consultation on Transnational Crime, the Cooperation Agreement on Monitoring the Strait of Malacca, the First China ASEAN Senior Defense Scholars Dialogue, etc. These all indicate that traditional and non-traditional security-related cooperation between China and ASEAN countries has been further developed (Arase, 2010). As a result, criminal cooperation in the GMS region has also been developed. On October 16, 2009, the China Laos Liaison Office for Law Enforcement Cooperation in Combating Transnational Trafficking in Women and Children was established at Mohan Port Police Station in Mengla County, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. In addition, the Ministry of Public Security has dispatched police liaison officers to Thailand and Myanmar, promoting bilateral police cooperation among GMS member countries (Wen, 2012, p. 150).

ASEAN hopes to better respond to the challenges of global competition through closer economic integration. In January 2007, ASEAN leaders decided at the 12th ASEAN Summit to accelerate the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) for five years until 2015 (ASEAN, 2007, P. 18). In November 2007, the 13th ASEAN Summit officially released the Declaration on the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint. In the declaration,

participating countries recognized the increasing interdependence of ASEAN economies within the region and with other regions of the world, emphasized the importance of facing and narrowing development gaps flexibly, and resolved to achieve higher levels of economic vitality, sustained prosperity, inclusive growth, and comprehensive development in the ASEAN region (ASEAN, 2012).

2009 was an important milestone in the development of trade between China, ASEAN, and CLMV countries. This year, China became ASEAN's largest trading partner, Vietnam's largest trading partner, Myanmar's second-largest trading partner, Laos' third-largest trading partner, and Cambodia's fourth-largest trading partner. Compared to Thailand, China was also the largest trading partner (Soong, 2016). In August 2009, China and ASEAN signed the "China ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement Investment Agreement."

In February 2009, ASEAN countries signed the "Roadmap for the Construction of an ASEAN Community 2009-2015," which detailed the construction of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. The part about the ASEAN Political security community is called the "ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint," which emphasizes that the ASEAN community should be normative and stable, specifically reflected in the stability of ASEAN political norms, ASEAN security norms, and ASEAN external norms (ASEAN, 2009).

The construction of the ASEAN Political-Security Community emphasizes respect for the democratic rule of law, human rights, and freedoms of all countries, emphasizes composite security and "altruistic" cooperation, and emphasizes the maintenance of the "ASEAN central position," which reflects the development and changes of ASEAN norms. Since 2010, the Burmese military government has gradually implemented political system reform. In March 2011, Myanmar's democratically elected President Thein Sein came to power, vigorously promoting the process of political democratization, achieving significant breakthroughs in its foreign relations, and opening a new chapter in the development of foreign trade (Zheng, 2014, p. 150).

As a result, the GMS program began its third decade, ushering in a new era of deep-seated, wide-ranging, and all-round open cooperation with a focus on infrastructure construction, resource development as a link, industrial cooperation as a foundation, project development as a platform, and enterprise cooperation as the main body. During this process, China's role in the GMS mechanism and even in ASEAN countries has further improved (Li, 2012, p. 38). At the 17th GMS Ministerial Conference held on August 4, 2011, Cambodian State Minister and Minister of Commerce Cham Prasidh and ADB Vice President Lohani praised China's important role in the construction and development of the subregion and said that China's financial assistance has played a significant role in the construction of the region (Li, 2012, p. 38).

The "ASEAN Political-Security Community Construction Blueprint" indicates that ASEAN's cooperative security is accompanied by the formation of comprehensive security norms, which take comprehensive security as the core and absorb some of the connotations of common security norms, mainly applicable to security interactions with extraterritorial actors. For China, the proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative, along with the overall national security concept and the Asian security concept, has become the main security norm advocated by China.

The former security concept emphasizes the comprehensiveness of security, while the latter security concept emphasizes common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security in the practical path, and advocates China's active participation in multi-level regional security cooperation at the practical level (Li, Y. P. & Li, F., 2023). The coordination between China's security concept and ASEAN's security norms after the "Belt and Road" initiative also shows the mutual adaptation between China and ASEAN's norms, laying the foundation for the expansion of the GMS mechanism from the economic field to the security field.

At the 2014 meeting, China and Thailand jointly signed the Memorandum of Understanding on China-Thailand Railway Cooperation and the Memorandum of Understanding on China-Thailand Agricultural Products Trade Cooperation. This means that the cooperation between the Communist Party of China and Thailand's "rice for high-speed rail" has reopened, marking the willingness of GMS leaders to further strengthen cooperation in land and sea transportation infrastructure and economic corridor construction, customs facilitation, mutual investment, energy, environmental protection, disaster prevention, and mitigation, and promote inclusive growth and sustainable development (Song, 2021, p.48).

3. Competition Between China and the United States, Expansion of Geoeconomy, and Deepening of GMS Mechanism (2014 Present)

With the further integration of China's BRI and ASEAN AEC development strategies, political and economic interactions between GMS countries have become more frequent, and their adaptability to ASEAN norms has further improved. The GMS mechanism has been improved. However, at the same time, the rise of conflicts between China and the United States and the game they are playing in the Indo-Pacific region have a profound impact on the geopolitical and economic landscape of the entire Southeast Asian region, as well as on the cooperation strategies and projects of GMS countries.

In the regional geopolitical and economic situation stimulated by the game between China and the United States, GMS cooperation has continuously achieved impressive results. In 2018, the 6th GMS Leaders' Summit was held under the auspices of Vietnam, emphasizing the cooperation of GMS in 2015, aiming to establish a sustainable, comprehensive, and prosperous GMS, and publishing a series of documents on future investment frameworks and action plans. Regarding the content of the 6th ASEAN Summi.

Faced with new internal and external opportunities and challenges, the GMS mechanism continues to develop. The GMS2030 strategic framework proposes innovative methods for this, including "utilizing digital reform," "enhancing spatial development," "strengthening policy and regulatory dialogue based on knowledge resolution and capacity building," "adopting private sector solutions," "strengthening openness," and "improving results openness" (ADB, 2021).

The political relations between Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and China have a good foundation, and the bilateral relations are relatively stable. Cambodia has always supported China's development, and its leaders have publicly affirmed China's peaceful rise and BRI initiative on multiple official occasions. The signing of the Action Plan for Building a Community with a Shared Future between China and Cambodia in April 2019 marked a new stage of development in bilateral relations; Laos and China share similar political systems

and development concepts, and are also accelerating the strategic integration of the BRI initiative with Laos' strategy of "turning a land-locked country into a land-locked country."

The "Action Plan for Building a Community with a Shared Future between China and Laos" was launched and formulated in May 2018; For Myanmar, after the Myanmar Democratic League government took office in 2016, it adopted a pragmatic and cooperative attitude toward China. Due to the Rohingya issue, the relationship between Myanmar and Western countries has continued to deteriorate since 2017. But this has become an opportunity to strengthen the GMS mechanism.

In March 2021, Atul Keshap, Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, unjustly accused China of undermining the autonomy and stability of the Mekong countries at the 1.5-track policy dialogue of the US Mekong Partnership (The U.S. Department of State, 2021). In June of the same year, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman expressed "serious concern" about China's growing military influence in Cambodia and called on Prime Minister Hun Sen to end political repression, interfere in Cambodia's internal affairs, and intend to undermine China Cambodia relations (Strangio, 2021). The response of relevant countries to the actions of the United States reflects the strategic choices of ASEAN countries in the Sino-US game as a whole.

In 2022, as competition between China and the United States intensifies, the GMS mechanism has gradually expanded its resilience. The GMS countries first reached the Kunming Consensus of the 2022 Greater Mekong Subregional Economic Corridor Governor's Forum (referred to as the "Kunming Consensus") to continue promoting regional security and economic cooperation.

In addition, emphasizing "independent opening" in water governance, the Five Year Action Plan for Mekong Water Resources Cooperation (2018-2022) was reached. It also supports the implementation of initiatives such as the Mekong Strategic Plan (2021-2025), the Basin Development Strategy (2021-2030), and the Resolution on Sustainable and Climate Adaptable Development of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. These initiatives all demonstrate that the GMS mechanism has become an "international public domain" for ASEAN countries and China.

Conclusion

We can observe that since 1992, the GMS mechanism has already possessed the embryonic form mentioned above. The GMS mechanism was initially established as an international mechanism with the goal of economic development, and it withstood more and more international shocks. GMS has started to expand from the scope of economic cooperation to areas such as security governance and non-traditional security governance. The GMS mechanism has thus become a platform for interaction and exchange between ASEAN member countries and China and has cultivated a high degree of political and economic interdependence among member countries.

The "public sphere" attribute of the GMS mechanism can continue to play a role, and the key lies in the four functions that make up the public sphere. Public identity (ASEAN norm adaptors), public interests (economic development), public norms (mutual trust), and public goods (political and economic interdependence). It is precise because GMS has these four

important functions, and these functions promote each other, that the success of the GMS mechanism "public sphere" is formed. The logic is as shown in tables.
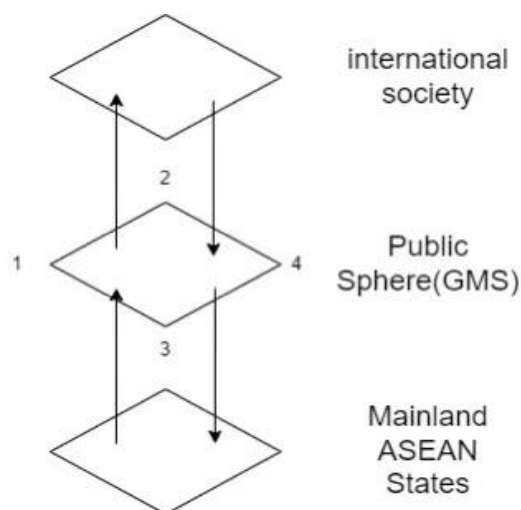
Figure 2: GMS mechanism as the logic of the "international public sphere"
Source: Created by the authors
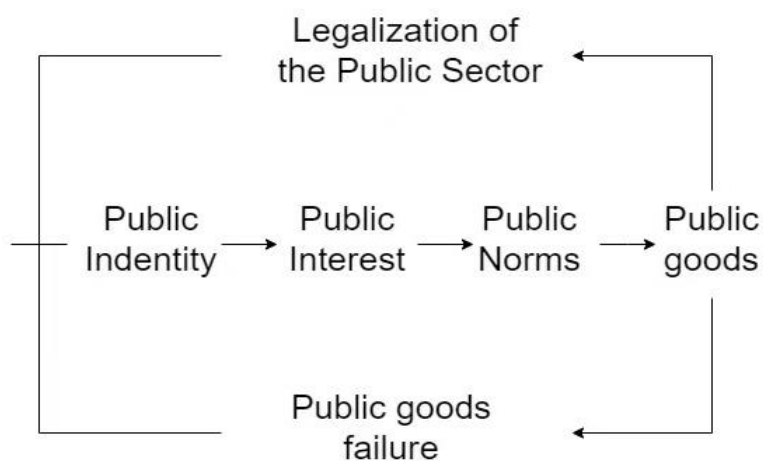
Figure 3: The Logic of GMS Mechanism Member States Forming "international public sphere"
Source: Created by the authors

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Women's Political Participation, Policymaking and Democracy in Indonesia

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Abstract

Issues related to women's political representation, especially in Indonesia, have become an important issue lately. However, what has happened so far is that the patriarchal system is still inherent in some areas. Men are considered as rulers in several parts of the history of human civilization, while women are as if only taking care of the household and belonging to men. This triggers the emergence of issues regarding the issue of gender roles and positions between men and women. In fact, many countries, especially Indonesia, adhere to a democratic political system that must involve all members of society, including women. As regulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia article 28 where everyone has the right to express opinions, where women also have the right to participate in political activities and decision making. This paper will explain how women participate in world politics and explain women's representation in Indonesia.

Keywords: Political Participation, Policymaking, Democracy

Introduction

The development of the government system in Indonesia continues to change. Indonesia has run a democratic system. Democracy was born from the demands of society for equal rights and equal standing before the law (Irawan, 2006). Democracy comes from the words demos and kratos which mean government of, for, by the people. The history of democracy in Indonesia has gone through a long process, until now Indonesia uses the Pancasila Democracy system.

It was during the era of bureaucratic reform that Indonesian democracy was heading for perfection. This means that freedom of the press has been opened so that everyone has the right to express their own opinions and aspirations. As stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in Article 28 and Article 28E paragraph (3) which states "everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly and expression of opinion." Therefore, the existence of community participation, especially in political development is needed.

Political participation is closely related to political awareness. According to Burns et al, 2001 in Munawarah stated that political participation is an activity that aims to influence government action either directly by influencing the making and implementation of public policies or indirectly by influencing the selection of officials who will make these policies (Munawarah & Kristanto, 2022). Political participation is a voluntary activity of the community in participating either directly in the process of electing leaders or formulating policies.

Political participation is a parameter in assessing the level of democracy of a country. Democratic life in Indonesia has progressed as seen from the Indonesian Democracy Index in 2020, Indonesia is in 52nd position. This progress is shown by the increase in the Indonesian Democracy index from 6.30 in 2020 to 6.71 in 2021. This increase has brought Indonesia up 12 levels from 2020 (Indonesia.go.id, 2022). Democracy mandates equal access and full participation for both men and women, although in practice women's participation has not reached 30%. This is inseparable from the low level of regulation relating to the protection of women's rights and historical and cultural aspects, which place women on the side that is subordinated.

In the midst of feminist movements and women's activists who are aggressively voicing and upholding women's rights, there is still a patriarchal cultural patriarchy that continues to this day (Sakina & A., 2017). Since ancient times, the culture of society in the world has placed men at the top of the hierarchy, while women are usually secondary. This can be seen in the Human Development Index (IPM) for women in 2019 which is still below men, namely 69.18, while the HDI for men is 75.96 (Novie Fauziah, 2023).

Based on a report from the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report, Indonesia has a gender inequality index score of 0.697 and is ranked 92nd out of a total of 146 countries. The report looks at four areas, namely political empowerment, educational attainment, economic participation and opportunity as well as health and survival.
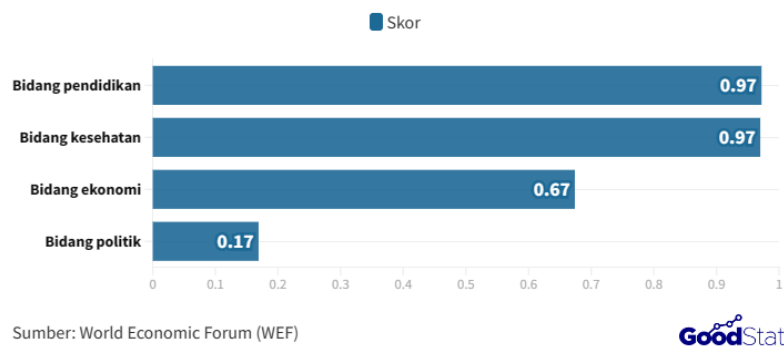
Graphic 1. Gender Inequality Index in Indonesia based on the Field of Assessment

The gender inequality index at the WEF has a scoring system with a scale range of 0 – 1. A score of 0 means that there is a wide gender gap, while a score of 1 indicates a condition of gender equality. If seen from the data above, the score of women's empowerment in the political field in Indonesia is the lowest when broken down by sub-index, the score is 0.169 or below the global average range (Naurah, 2023). Therefore, researchers want to see how women's participation in politics and decision-making in Indonesia today.

Method

This research is a research with literature study. Researchers conducted studies with various sources of literature, namely through journal sources, reports or surveys from the mass media and official documents from institutions. These data sources are then collected and analyzed and then developed into research findings or results (Kusuma, 2022).

Result and Discussion

The issue of women's representation in the political sphere in Indonesia has become a crucial issue recently. Representation of women and men in the political sphere is a form of democratization. So far, Indonesia still has a patriarchal system inherent in society. It is assumed that women still do not have the capacity to lead and make decisions. Krisnalita in (Sari, 2022) states that in an effort to minimize the gap in women's representation in the political sphere, the Government establishes policies to guarantee women's rights in democratic life.

1. Policy

The following are several policies that regulate women's rights:

- The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia stipulates that all citizens, which means "men and women," have the same position and equal opportunities in the political field. This is among others stated in Articles 27 and 28;

- Law Number 15 of 2011 concerning General Election Organizers replaces Law 22 of 2007 concerning General Election Organizing. This description regulates the number of women represented, among others in: Article 6 paragraph (5) The membership composition of KPU, Provincial KPU and Regency/Municipal KPU takes into account women's representation of at least 30% (thirty percent). Article 41 paragraph (3) The

composition of PPK membership takes into account women's representation of at least 30% (thirty percent). Article 72 paragraph (8) The composition of the membership of Bawaslu, Provincial Bawaslu, and Regency/City Panwaslu takes into account the representation of women at least 30% (thirty percent).

- Law Number 2 of 2011 concerning Political Parties replaces Law Number 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties. Temporary special measures in Law Number 2 of 2011 concerning Political Parties are contained in: Article 2 paragraph (2): The formation and establishment of political parties as referred to in paragraph (1) includes 30% (thirty percent) representation of women DPR members, DPD, and DPR DPR and efforts to amend the Election Law.

2. Women's Participation in Politics and Policy Making

Several policies have been made so that women, especially in Indonesia, can be actively involved in politics, but they have not been able to run optimally. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (KPP-PA) considers that women's representation in the political field is very important because the balance of policy formulation must guarantee certainty of welfare with a gender perspective and is non-discriminatory (Lambertha Gundalibra Sari, 2022).

The involvement of women in formal political institutions in Indonesia is still low. This can be caused because from within the woman herself is not interested in getting involved in politics. In addition, women's participation in party activities is also heavily influenced by funds, for example, such as holding a campaign. However, the lack of support from husbands and families will reduce women's self-confidence to advance as leaders.

Table 1. DPR RI Members by Gender 1999-2019
Source: KPP-PA, 2020

Tahun	Laki-Laki		Perempuan	
	Jumlah	Persentase	Jumlah	Persentase
1999	456	91,20%	44	8,80%
2004	485	88,18%	65	11,82%
2009	460	82,14%	100	17,86%
2014	465	82,74%	97	17,26%
2019	575	82,73%	120	17,27%

Table 1 shows that there is still a gap between the involvement of women and men in politics. The significant difference clearly shows that although various efforts to equalize have been made, the significant difference indicates that it is true that there are some things that can be accessed by men but not by women. Women's political representation is quite important if we want to place a gender-friendly democracy (gender democracy).

3. Obstacles to Women in Politics

Although the Government of Indonesia has attempted to formulate policies related to women's representation in politics, there are several factors that cause low women's participation or representation (Muslimat, 2008), namely:

- *Socio-Cultural and Psychological Conditions*
  There are socio-cultural and psychological conditions that still strongly perceive women as housewives with an ideology of dividing public and domestic roles. The practice of patriarchal culture is still very dominant in Indonesia, this patriarchal culture positions men as the most manly group and has the freedom to do anything to women.

- *Family Political Culture*
  The political culture of familism is a very strong political phenomenon in Indonesia. This can influence the birth of dynastic politics, seen from direct blood relations and affection, solidarity and trust. Political institutions in general are fully committed to empowering women. For example, in the case of nominations for legislative and executive candidates by political parties, political parties are often only done for the sake of fulfilling the requirements in elections.

- *Internal Factors of Women Themselves*
  This is related to the quality of human resources, knowledge, organizational skills, education, mental attitude and understanding of political rights which are still low. With regard to political education.

- *Government Policy*
  Government policies are still lacking in paying attention to the aspirations and interests of women. Even if there is, it is still weak in socialization and implementation. As well as the lack of presentation and promotion of women activists in the world of politics.

Conclusion

The issue of women's representation is a crucial issue in Indonesia. There have been several efforts made by the Government of Indonesia to increase the number of women's representation. Starting from policies and programs. However, there are obstacles that occur in the implementation of women's representation such as socio-cultural and psychological conditions, family political culture, internal factors from women themselves and government policies.

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Consolidating People's Voices for Participation in National Elections:
Bridging Gaps Through ICT Initiatives

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Abstract

The study looks at populism as an issue and how it impacts the democratic system of government in the Philippines. It examines how populist organizations and figures appeal to the populace by denouncing the governing class and offering fixes to various sociopolitical problems. It also looks at how the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), which oversees national elections, interacts with and influences citizens. The study proposes a participatory model of consultation and ICT survey at various barangay levels to bridge the gap between public desires and national governance. It aims to establish a platform for assembling public opinions and approving them for political candidates and governing organizations. It also intends to strengthen voter education, lessen vote-buying and corruption, and offer people more power to demand development as their right. The structure and analysis of the study are based on participatory development theory. Additionally, it provides evidence for its statements from reviews, author letters to others, journals, and interviews. The paper concludes with a number of recommendations for further research and action on this topic.

Keywords: Populism, Gap, Elections, E-governance

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Introduction

"Aanhin ba naming 'yang GDP na 'yan? Nakakin ba 'yan?"
         ("What is GDP? Is that useful? Can people eat that?"–Translation in English)

The increasing demand and opinion of the masses has caught the attention of Philippine politics and seemingly emerges as a fundamental criterion of democracy recently. Contesting issues of oligarchy and elitism have been an issue coming from the popular opinion of the masses that wishes to eradicate a seemingly existing political approach in the aid of addressing the people's common needs. It is evident for the last 5 years where a lot of populist leaders and leadership type are on the rise. For instance, the issue of Brexit as based from its referendum in 2016 becomes the reason for the emergence of a populist wave. This is also seen in some parts of Europe like Scandinavia where its parties, emerging as populists, continue to dominate. The United States even was held to be a captivated by such ideology as manifested by the recent 2016 Presidential elections where Donald Trump propagated a platform and agenda that resonates a kind of populism attitude. In Asia, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi awakened the inclination of the people to venture into populist appeals regardless of what kind of human rights measures is at stake (The Editors, 2019). The Philippines is not an exemption to such issue. Even in the country's context, this has been labeled as a major disconnection to national and local democratic governance. The above adage is a manifestation of the current political leadership preference that has something to do on leaning towards people-driven leadership-setting aside the likes of important economic and political agenda and gives more attention to the aspects social security, peace and order to name a few. In view of the foregoing, how then does the concept of populism - captivating the masses – to become a preferred political approach?

Populism, as generally defined, refers to a set of political views that anchors itself to the idea that is "for the people" whether it's general welfare or political advantage that usually places itself against any concept of manifestation of "elitism." This involves populist parties and social movements that are often led by charismatic leaders or dominant figures who are so much leaning to the idea and identifies themselves as the solution to various socio-political problems and label themselves as the "voice of the people" (Michael, n.d.).

Populism in the Philippines

The contextualized account of populism in the country is based on the catering of political claims that give way to people's demands and it is grounded to the analysis of cultural, discursive, and political conditions that makes the power of populist leaders to become legitimate (Webb & Curato, 2018). As an example, Duterte fits the category of a distinctive Asian strongman for the many. He is a tough talking leader with little regard for liberal rights. He disregards foreign interventions and considers criticisms against his regime as a personal attack. Despite widespread condemnation of various global governance institutions and international organizations located overseas, Duterte remains popular in the country. Based on the Pulse Asia Survey of 2018, he registered more than 80% popularity rating in the nearly two years into his presidency. In addition, he also had a 91% trust rating in the year 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic based form the Pulse Asia Survey of 2020.

The politics after EDSA Revolution in 1986 paved the way for the restoration of a democracy that has been dominated by the elite where the oligarchs have "considerable autonomy" to "manipulate formal democratic procedures" to their favor (Kerkvliet, 1995). Benedict

Anderson (1988) described Philippine politics as a "cacique democracy" – the marriage of American electoralism with its own concept of democracy with a Spanish concept of bossism (Tadem & Tadem, 2016; Mendoza, 2012; Simbulan, 2005). Corazon Aquino and her leadership was a clear example to such kind of system that while hailing from political clans and elites in power, she managed to make the supposedly seen inequality obscure by governing based on her "saintly" charisma (Thompson, 2002).

The Pulse Asia 2016 survey reveals that the top terms to describe a president are "*matapang, astig, brusko, at palaban*" (brave, tough, rude and aggressive) when citizens are asked to describe a president. It raises then a question: To whom must the President be brave? Duterte claimed a radical command to remove power from the oligarchy's grip (Curato, 2016).

In a discussion of Demystifying Populism in the Philippines, Teehanki (2020) reiterated that the current country's policies do not gain attraction and not resonating in the public. There is an existing solid based legitimation of populism for the current administration. As such, it is considerable and high time to understand the people's sector and listen to the ground.

The Cory Aquino's Moral politics approach that emphasizes moralistic discourse of the Filipino urban middle class take pride in their self-identification as upright citizens, democratic defenders and anti-corruption and good governance activists. Herewith, the poor sector is labeled as "bobotantes." In contrast to the Populist Public approach of the Duterte administration, where his supporters are labeled as not irrational, dumb nor gullible voters. Rather, they are part of a growing constituency who are frustrated, angered and skeptical of the "typocrisy" of liberal reformism (Arguelles, 2018).

There is a very hyper partisan divided environment. This then places a relevant question as to how would these playouts in 2022 election? It revolves under the issue of continuity or consolidation that either populism in office turns out to be ineffective, in which case it soon forced back to opposition or it proves strong and consolidation in power.

This paper tries to reconcile these demands from the grounds to the higher echelons and intends to provide a platform of consolidating these populist opinions to further manifest a democratic type of government in an aid to withstand a growing issue of oligarchy and elitism – an issue that has been the reason to attack the Philippine government through various divisive propaganda and massive street protests. In addition to this, this paper also aims to emphasize the possibility of utilizing the Information and Communication Tools (ICT) as an opportunity to address the issue.

Objectives and Locale of the Study

Given the above Rationale, this paper specifically aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide an idea of bridging populist demands to national governance.
2. To provide a tangible and considerable report for Commission on Elections (COMELEC) perusal and aspiring political candidates (most especially in national positions) as bases for their platform construction.
3. To explore the potential ICT resources as a tool in consolidating these perceived gaps.

Conclusion

The pursuit of emphasizing the gap between populist demands and national democratic governance has been the underlying issue of this research. This paper tries to reconcile the possibility of bridging these local demands to be acknowledged in the various democratic frameworks most especially in the national level.

In the discussion, a possibility has been shown with the inclusion of ICT resources to empower local citizens in their participation of sharing their piece to national legislations as well as integrating an ICT strategy to accommodate these various demands.

For this research, a lot has still to be realized. This is most especially on the fact that the researcher also intends to further explore ideas and concepts as this paper could be a springboard into coming up with more realistic solutions.

In connection to this, there are a lot of realities to be acknowledged. For one, the reasons for "gaps" really exist, and therefore we conclude that these gaps are real. These roots back from the cry of populist communities or local communities "unheard" or "ignored." We also see that some COMELEC initiatives are one-way approach in nature. But on the other end, such populist demands and opinions are possible opportunities for dialogue, consultation (as complexly proposed in this paper) coordination and collaboration with other agencies, including the non-government organizations (NGOs) and private institutions. But it is also noteworthy that to acknowledge such end is not to the extent of alienating the COMELEC in terms of its decision and integrity.

Lastly, given this situation alongside the aforementioned realities, it is high time to establish and re-build strategies for ICT inclusion even to the rural communities - a springboard to widen the work of e-governance in the country. This would empower LGUs, regardless of level or form, for ICT development.

These various perceived problems and opportunities, advantages and disadvantages should be emphasized to start working on a concept of a holistic participation in democratic governance. This includes the vast populist demands from local communities while we look forward to empowering every citizen not only the institutions and its actors in our pursuit of effective governance and development.

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Changes of German Foreign and Security Policy Since Russian-Ukraine War –For Understanding the German Eurasian Strategy

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Abstract

German security policy under Scholz government changed from prudent to assertive one. "Policy entrepreneur" led to Militarization of German foreign policy. Thereby they broke the taboo norm about weapon provision much more deeply. As the result, Germany mostly abandoned the "culture of restraint." Additionally, they decided to promote militarization and increase the defense expenditure-to-GDP ratio from about 1.5% in 2019 to more than 2% by 2024. Moreover, German energy policy changed since the occurrence of Russian Ukraine war. As China's economy developed and the concurrence in trade and the friction based on the difference in political system increased, German strengthened to recognize China as the villain which do not share the values. There is inconsistency in the Scholz government's China policy. Its background can be explained to some extent by the theory of political party differences. Being different from the Merkel government where there were consensus under "transformation through trade" strategy, there is a conflict under Scholz government between the Green Party, which pursues ideals, and the SPD, which emphasizes economic interests. Germany's overdependence on Russia's energy sources was corrected during the Russian-Ukraine, and the diversification of energy import sources has been promoted. Moreover, overdependency in trade with China has been revised since Russian-Ukraine war. German foreign policy, like the two-faced god Janus, fuses the ideas of civilian power and "normal great power," but possesses a "*Leitbild*" in which the latter is superior. German leadership and foreign policy would become more destable than before from the background of party system.

Keywords: *Leitbild*, German Foreign and Security Policy, Eurasian Strategy, Russian-Ukraine War, China, Scholz-Government

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Introduction

Since Russian invasion to Ukraine, the pillar of security global governance and cooperative international order has been exposed under strain. Mainly Russia and China develop militaristic power politics. Researcher whisper that there would come the military conflict between China and Taiwan, and even the possibility that Japan would be invaded by Russia, as Prof. Hirose Yoko referred.

EU faces with the crises such as Brexit and radical right populist, while USA views Asian and pacific region as a priority and France weakens its economy. Therefore, there appears the hope that Germany plays as the guardian of liberal democracy order in the world. On the other hand, one hears "German problem," that it means the worry about if Germany grasp the hegemony in Europe and develops the power politics or not.

Scholz government in Germany has faced in the crisis through Russian invasion to Ukraine (followingly expressed as Russian-Ukraine War). As soon as Russia invaded to Ukraine, this invasion and the higher price for goods became the most and secondary important issues in German society. As result, since May 2022 until April 2023, German have given the negative evaluation to the German government, because they regarded that German government had tackled with the Russian-Ukraine war in a negative way. Also since then, the Russian-Ukraine war has been regarded as the important issue in German society.

1. Aims and Targets

(1) Research Questions

There are discussions which regard Germany as "reluctant hegemon," civilian power (Maull 2019), geo-economical power (Szabo 2015; Kundnani 2016). Moreover, there are discussions about German leadership (Aggestam and Hyde-Price 2019; Wright 2019).

Although researchers have approached the problem from different angles, after all, they have asserted the (supposed) orientation, role and current situation of German foreign and security policy from the perspective of a *Leitbild*.

Previous studies about the *Leitbild* of German foreign policy have attributed Germany's *Leitbild* to the visions of its policymakers and their politics (Rittberger, 2003: 93, 96; Allers, 2016: 520). However, since the federal constitutional court decision on 12 July 1994, a majority support in the lower chamber (Bundestag) has become the precondition for military dispatches. Parliament is an arena in which the interests and ideas of a nation's society are reflected, and they are coordinated through parliamentary debates in which the interests and ideas of both parliamentarians and policymakers are represented (Wagner, 2001: 194ff). Moreover, Parliamentarians cannot ignore the interests and ideas of voters because of re-election considerations; therefore, their interests and ideas are reflected in the arguments of parliamentarians. Therefore, the author understands that a nation's *Leitbild*, which affects its foreign policy in the middle and long term, are reflected in the views of German parliamentarians.

Ewers-Peters regards German role as "midstream" or "balancer" (Ewers-Peters 2022). As are the same with the debates about "mediator," her discussion shows one of the characters of

German foreign policy, however, it lacks in explanatory power to understand world view and identity of German foreign policy as a whole.

The civilian power and normal great power theses are exemplified in similar ways with only very subtle differences, as reflected in the previous studies that have encountered difficulties in judging the kind of *Leitbild* an actor has. For example, both theses affirm multinationalism. However, the civilian power thesis regards it as a way of seeking the international common good over the long term, whereas the normal great power thesis regards it as a way of maximizing pure national interests in the short term. In addition, both theses embrace national interests. However, whereas the civilian power thesis considers that an actor seeks national interests as an international common good over the long term (Maull, 2006: 62-76), the normal great power thesis insists that a nation seeks its pure national interests in the short term. Patrick Mello's discourse analysis was based on a quantitative analysis; however, he clarified only the change in the frequency of words that belong to the civilian power thesis, not the inductive changes in the contents of the words nor the power-political developments in German foreign policy (Mello, 2019: 295-316).

There are foregoing research which discussed the change of German foreign policy in the Russian-Ukraine War (e.g. Tsuruoka 2022). However, they do not clarify the changes of German foreign policy at the idea level.

(2) Aims, and Method for Analysis

From such background, first, I tackle with the theme of change of German security and energy policy and German Eurasia strategy in the Scholz government through the example of Russian-Ukraine War, and the relationship between Germany and China.

In order to understand the German Eurasian policy, I target Russia and China as an object for analysis. Second, the author analyses *Leitbild* as a collective idea to clarify the role, orientation and changes in German security and energy policy. To overcome the above research limitations, he analyses the parliamentary debates about the above- mentioned issues from 2021 using a discourse analysis and especially a qualitative content analysis. Thereby, he uses an approach from liberal constructivism.

A discourse analysis describes shared ideas, interests and behaviours as they are in society. It enables us to reflect on the subtle differences between the *Leitbild* models. Additionally, this approach allows us to analyze the intersubjectivity among the actors and the reciprocal changes between policies and ideas.

A qualitative content analysis provides high objectivity and trackability (Mayring, 2010: 49). This analysis is composed of deductive and inductive processes. In the deductive process, the author extracts the representative instances of the civilian power and normal great power theses as deductive peculiarities from the existing studies. Next, in the inductive process, the author extracts characteristic words or phrases from the parliamentary debates that relate to German foreign policy and labels them as inductive peculiarities. Thereafter, he analyses the parliamentary debates surrounding these deductive and inductive peculiarities (Mayring, 2002: 83-5).

Leitbild (guiding view) is an idea constituted of socially shared ideas about future goals as normative values that regulate criteria, norm visions and orientations for behaviour as well as

the recognition of the current situation that includes power and material interests (Schneider, 1992: 4f; Giesel, 2007: 74f; cf. Harnisch & Maull, 2001: 3; cf. Nakagawa 2021).

2. Widening of Militaristic Power Politics in Eurasia?

(1) Russian-Ukraine War 2022

(a) Change of Prudent to Assertive Policy

Since the end of cold war, there established the cooperative security order system constituted by EU, NATO and OSCE with the basis of liberal-democratic values in Europe. This system has the hidden potential which develops into the postmodern cosmopolitan community whereby the member states exit from militaristic power politics. Through the occupation of Crimean half island by Russia in 2014, European order since the end of cold war collapsed partly.

In November 2021, Russia repeated the military thrust to Ukraine. From the background of heightening thrust, Ukraine government asked German government to provide the weapons even if they were defensive one. Germany had taboo for provision of the weapons as the foreign policy principle. It had limited the provision of weapons only for the EU and NATO members and it had not provided the weapons to the battle regions and the states which violated the human right since the World War II. Article 26 (2) of basic law regulates that, peculiar weapons whose aim is to perform the war can be produced, conveyed and consigned only with the agreement of the government. Moreover, (1) regulates that the implementation of intention which interrupts the peaceful coexistence among people, especially for the preparations for the aggressive war violate the law. However, in case when the government itself decides to provide the weapons, it does not violate the law (Prantl 2014: 6). In addition, the ruling parties agreed with the content of coalition agreement which performed the restrained weapon export politics. Furthermore, German government found the provision of weapons with lethal potential would stimulate Russia and it led the worsening of affairs. After all, there were consensus between German society, and ruling and opposition parties that they would send no any offensive weapons to Ukraine and it has continued until the occurrence of Russian invasion to Ukraine.

However, the Russian invasion to Ukraine gave the German society the "invasion shock". Germany abandoned this taboo norm about the provision of weapons and Scholz decided to begin providing weapons to Ukraine on 26. 2. 2022. They sent not only small arms but also heavy firearms.

It was not the first time for Germany to break the taboo norm about providing weapons. In 2014, German government decided to send the weapons to Kurdish people in Iraq who fight with ISIS. However, it was regarded for the policymakers as the exception, and limited to small arms. Being deferent from the timepoint of 2014, German government decided also to provide the heavy firearms to Ukraine this time. Scholz decided to provide self-propelled anti-aircraft guns "Gepard" on 26. 4.2022. At that time, Scholz refused to provide the tanks of Leopard2 to Ukraine.

Moreover, German government changed the existing defense policy. Defense expenditure had been calculated about 1.5% of GDP of the budget until then, however, German government decided this time to assign over 2% of the budget to the defense expenditure.

(b) Change of Energy Policy

From the background of the adhesion between the politicians and energy firms and joint venture among firms, both of Germany and Russia has been linked around the import and export of energy resources and the construction that Germany were dependent on the Russian energy resources overwhelmingly had been continuously frozen since 2014 until recently. 55% of natural gas, 35% of mineral oil and 55% of coal were from Russia.

After Russian invasion to Ukraine, Germany changed its energy policy. It abandoned to resist against economic sanction over SWIFT and the request of stopping the approval procedure of Nordstream2, after Scholz met with USA President Biden.

Germany boosted the speed of introducing Renewable Energy Sources (RES) so that it would be able to provide 100% of energy by RES as soon as possible. Moreover, Germany promoted the diversification of energy import and export destinations, while importing substitute energy other than Russia. Thereby it decided to import LNG as urgent substitute energy Further, Germany reoperated the nuclear and coal power plants with due date which Germany had once stopped to operate.

(2) German China Strategy

The national security strategy which Scholz government submitted on June 2023 regards China as "partner, competitor and rival in the system" (Auswäriges Amt, 6. 2023:4). The survey performed in 2023 by Allensbach Institute et al. showed that 60% of German regarded China as threat for peace in the world.

The relationship between Germany and China is a complicated one. German China policy was traditionally based on the "Transformation through Trade"-strategy. Germany is a major exporting country, and China is its biggest trading partner. Germany's trade dependence on China is higher than that of other EU countries, and it has the largest trade surplus with China in the region. Germany has relied on the phantasy that seek for the economy relationship with China would bring not only the reciprocal interest between Germany and China, but also the change of China for stressing democracy, governance in law, liberalization and human right. In the past, relations between Germany and China were mutually complementary from the background of the disparities in industrialization. However, as China's economy developed and the concurrence in trade and the friction based on the difference in political system increased, German strengthened to regard China as the villain which do not share the values.

The Scholz government referred in its coalition contract, for the first time in Germany's history, that it would develop China strategy that would take account of the changing role and behaviour of China in the world (Rühlig 2023). Moreover, the Scholz government urged China to comply with human rights and loosen controls over Hong Kong, and made a statement that it would encourage Taiwan to participate in international organizations. In its Indo-Pacific strategy, Germany called for maintaining "one country, two systems" over Hong Kong. In addition, it argued that changes to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait could only be resolved peacefully and by mutual agreement. However, Beijing criticized the German government, saying that Taiwan, Hong Kong, the South China Sea, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region were internal affairs (Bloomberg, 25.11. 2021).

In the Scholz government, there exists the differences among the ruling parties in terms of relationship with China and they were difficult to take a unified attitude. The Greens and FDP have shown, being different from SPD, a critical attitude toward the dependency on China. Foreign minister Baerbock stressed that the provision of military materials by China to Russia which are available for both of civil and military sectors violated international law and she checked China. However, the Scholz government began to show a coherent China strategy gradually.

Since the Russian-Ukraine War, Russia and China have been pursuing aggressive policies. China has pursued a trade policy based on the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, and the position of Europe in international politics has declined as the US-China conflict deepened. Germany was forced to respond to it. As such, the German government launched a strategy against China.

Since the Russian-Ukraine War, dependence on China in the supply chain has become a problem. On the other hand, the German economy was in a slump because of EU's economic sanctions against Russia and Germany tried to overcome that slump through deepening economic ties with China. For example, on October 26, 2022, the Scholz government issued a cabinet decision authorizing China Ocean Shipping (COSCO), a major Chinese shipping company, to acquire a stake in one of Hamburg's four port facilities. Germany also visited China for the first time among G7 countries since COVID19. On November 4, 2022, Chancellor Scholz visited Beijing accompanied by a delegation of 12 companies, including BASF and BMW. However, Prime Minister Scholz's visit to China was criticized.

Through the national security strategy on June and China strategy on July 2023, German China policy changed decisively. Firstly, German China strategy changed so that Germany decided to downgrade the dependency on China in the critical fields such as economy, key technology and important raw materials from the aspect of economy security under the word of De-Risking. As such, Germany seeks diverse trade and supply chains. At the same time, the Chinese market remains of great importance for German companies. Secondly, Germany has strengthened to regard China as the villain much more which is trying to reshape the rules-based international order. In the Indo-Pacific, China is increasingly aggressively claiming regional supremacy and questioning principles of international law. China's decision to expand relations with Russia is of immediate security policy significance for Germany. Thirdly, Germany will expand the relations with Taiwan, but it does not change the so-called one-China policy. Fourthly, Germany would review its export control list against the backdrop of new technological developments to ensure German goods did not encourage human rights violations in China or support military rearmament. Fifthly, Germany will take a tougher stance against Chinese espionage than before (ARD Tagesschau, 3. 7. 2023).

3. Leitbild of Foreign and Security Policy Under Scholz-Government

(1) Peculiarities of the Leitbild Models

In the deductive process of a qualitative content analysis, the author extracted the peculiarities of the civilian power and normal great power theses. The results are as follows (Table 2):

TABLE 1 : PECULIARITIES OF THE LEITBILD MODELS

Leitbild I: civilian power	Leitbild II: normal great power
A1) Value orientation as motive for action (Kirste 1998:45)	B1) Strong pursuit of national interest based on cost-and-benefit considerations (Le Gloannec 2004: 28)
A2) Antimilitarism (Duffield 1999: 780) 1. Scepticism about military power 2. Emphasis on non-military means in the crisis settlement /worldwide construction of democracy	B2) Crisis management by military power (Ritberger 2003: 93)

A3) Multilateralism/supranationalism (Maull 2001: 652)	B3) Refusal to restrict sovereignty (von Bredow 2003: 9)
	  a) Autonomy and subjectivity
	  b) Unilateralism

A4) Culture of restraint I (Maull 2001: 259)	B4) End of taboo against specific foreign actions based on historical considerations (Bahr 2003: 137)
A5) Culture of restraint II (Hyde Price 2000: 220)	B5) Maximization of national interest using international institutions (von Bredow 2003: 10)
A6) Promotion of global rule of law	B6) Disregard of international law/UN
A7) Self-confidence I (Kirste 1998: 54)	B7) Self-confidence II (von Bredow 2003: 12)
A8) Promotion of human rights (Rittberger 2003: 89)	B8) *No existence*
A9) Exclusion of social and economic imbalances (Ibid: 93)	B9) Development assistance depending on security
A10) *Does not exist*	B10) Sense of equal rights (Hacke 2002: 99f)
A11) *Does not exist*	B11) Balancing

(Based on the aforementioned literature, the author forms)(Nakagawa 2021)

A1. means a norm orientation along which actors behave, even if they sacrifice their own interests.

A2a. means strict self-constraint against military usage.

A2b. means emphasising crisis resolution through non-military and diplomatic means.

A3. means multilateralism and the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions.

A4. means a self-controlled use of military power and policy behaviours based on historical contexts such as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) atrocities.

A5. means giving priority to a European identity, international public goods and EU interests over the long term, even if the actor sacrifices national identity and interests. It means also reflexive leadership avoidance behaviour.

A6. means promoting global governance in law and a monopoly of military force by the UN and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A7. means actively engaging in civilising international relations along a civilian power thesis.

A8. means supporting individual and collective rights.

A9. means correcting global social and economic inequalities.

B1. means neglecting norms and maximising short-term national interests and power based on cost-benefit considerations.

B2. means the crisis resolution idea of using military power positively and as a resource for maximising an actor's power.

B3a. means avoiding the restriction of actions by not belonging to multinational organisations and not taking on a burden.

B3b. means to seek subjective and autonomous behaviour.

B4. means to abolish the taboo consciousness based on the historical context.

B5. means maximising national interests by joining international institutions because of the ability to acquire relative independence and institutionalise national interests.

B6. means disregarding global governance in law and avoiding an overestimation of the UN.

B7. means taking greater responsibility for the formation and maintenance of an international order along the normal great power orientation.

B9. means promoting development assistance by an actor to acquire their own security.

B10. means a sense of equality with allied partners and the USA, based on which the actor requests equal status and rights.

B11. means correcting power imbalances and acquiring international influence by forming a countervailing power with others against the Hegemon.

In setting the categories of the *Leitbild* I and II, the author adds the theoretical features of liberalism and idealism to the former and those of (neo)realism to the latter as their peculiarities because of theoretical affinities. These features are common in the rational theories. Peculiarities that have the same number under the different *Leitbild* -models (e.g., A1 and B1) are essentially in opposing relationships with each other. There are no counterparts to A8, B10 and B11 (Nakagawa 2021).

(2) Axis of Coordinates

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF ELECTION VOTES & SHARE OF PARLIAMENTARY SEATS HELD BY THE MAIN PARTIES IN 2021

Election Year (Period of the Parliament)	2021 (20)
CDU/CSU	24.1 (26.7)
SPD	25.7 (28)
FDP	11.5 (12.5)
Coalition 90/The Greens	14.8 (16.1)
The leftist party	4.9 (5.3)
AfD (Alternative for Germany)	10.3 (11.3)

(Created by the author; the values are percentages. The percentages of election votes are the results from second votes. The numbers in parentheses are the percentages of the share of parliamentary members)

Above is the data of 20. period of the Parliament. When a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of the two large parties, or one large and one small parties, then the majority of the electorate might share an idea and the author gives a score of ○.

When a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of the two large parties and minimum one small party, then over two-thirds of electorate might share that idea, the author gives a score of ◎. When a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of the two large parties and the leftist party, in case additional one more party would share that idea, the author gives a score of ◎.

When a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of one large party and one small party, 38-43% of electorate might share that idea, the author gives a score of △○, when a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of one large party and the leftist party, or two or three small parties, about 27-33% of electorate might share that idea, the author gives a score of △, and when a peculiarity is shared by the parliamentarians of one small party, the author gives a score of △×.

The author shows the results of inductive process of Qualitative content analysis as follows. Thereby, the above-mentioned consensus ratio to each peculiarities.

A1) Value Orientation as Motive for Action （×）
B1) Strong Pursuit of National Interest Based on Cost-and-Benefit Considerations （○）

The ruling parties of Scholz government especially for the Greens, appeal the "value oriented foreign policy." The main parties except for AfD also stress the value. However, their groundings for action do not separate from interest.

Gerold Otten (AfD) criticized the establishment of democracy and governance in law as the false behavior which "misread fantasy as national interest"(Deutcher Bundestag (DBT), Stenographische Berichte [StenBer], 20. 5.2022: 3740). Thomas Erndl (CDU/CSU) insisted that the promotion of stability at Sahel region became our own interest, because chaos in Sahel region would finally threatens security in Europe (ibid: 3746). With the results about C4, we can see the idea of B1 in the ideas of politicians.

A2a）Scepticism About Military Power/"Never Again"（△×）

A2b）Emphasis on Non-military Means in the Crisis Settlement/ Worldwide Construction of Democracy（◎）

B2）Crisis Management by Military Power（◎）

Rüdiger Vogler (Leftist Party) called on the German government to engage in non-military diplomacy (Ibid, p. 3742). However, existing political parties, with the exception of the Left Party, have a view of crisis management that uses military force. In February 2022, the Scholz government decided to increase defense spending exceeding 2% of GDP every year until 2024 and to expand the military for nuclear sharing. On the other hand, as Agnieszka Brugger (Greens) said, Germany is implementing peacebuilding in the Sahel, including the transition to democracy, the establishment of a law-abiding state, and the SSR (Ibid, pp. 3727, 36.)。Nils Schmid (SPD) calls for democratization and building democratic institutions, holding elections and overcoming economic and social conflicts in Mali (Ibid, p. 3730). Knut Abraham (CDU/CSU) also supported the deployment of EUFOR Althea troops to defend Bosnian democracy (Ibid, 8. 7. 2022, p. 5151). From their point of view, A2b is found.

A3) Multilateralism/Supranationalism（◎）

B3b) Unilateralism（△×）

Abraham (CDU/CSU) and Adis Ahmetovic (SPD) called for EU enlargement and progress in EU accession negotiations among the Western Balkans and Southeastern European countries, including Bosnia, as the EU guarantees peace and freedom (Ibid, p. 5150; ibid, 22. 6. 2022, p. 4355). Ulrich Lechte (FDP) justified the Malian troop deployment by saying it trusted Germany to work together to secure it (Ibid, 20. 5. 2022, p. 3732).

Meanwhile, Harald Weyel (AfD) opposed the EU's eastward expansion, arguing that the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU would lead them to socio-economic losses (Ibid, 22. 6. 2022, p. 4356.). Joachim Wundrak (AfD) also criticizes Operation EUNAVFOR Illini as an operation merely to further the ambition to establish the CSDP and PESCO (Ibid, 7. 4. 2022, p. 2434). From their remarks, we can find B3.

A4）Culture of restraint I（△×）

B4) End of Taboo Against Specific Foreign Actions Based on Historical Considerations（◎）

Boris Mijatović (Greens) spoke of a sense of confrontation with responsibility for the crimes of the Wehrmacht in World War II (Ibid, 24. 6.2022, p. 4704). However, during Russia's invasion of Ukraine after February, established parties other than the AfD and the Leftist Party further weakened the NSDAP's past ban on arms supply to combat areas and supplied weapons there (Ibid., 27. 2. 2022, pp. 1350-85). Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Green) justified the arms supply and defense spending increases by saying that "we remain cautious about arms exports and troops" but "abandon inherent prudence in foreign and security policy for the sake of our obligations"(Ibid, p. 1359). In the case of weapons to the Kurds in 2014, Germany only provided light weapons such as rocket launchers (Nakagawa 2020 pp. 186-7), During the invasion of Ukraine in February, Germany provided Ukraine with heavy weapons and demonstrated the idea of the B4. However, a certain degree of restraint in not providing tanks to the country still remains.

A6）Promotion of Global Rule of Law（◎）

B6）Disregard of International Law/UN （△×）

Johann Wadephul (CDU/CSU) and Brugger (Greens) show their willingness to contribute to strengthening the United Nations (Ibid, 20. 5.2022, pp. 3729, 37). C. Schmied (SPD) also praised the UN as "the best means of resolving multilateral disputes (Ibid, p. 3735). The AfD, meanwhile, criticized Operation Irini as an operation to cover up the UN's shame.

A7）Self-Confidence I（○）
B7）Self-Confidence II（○）

Wadephul (CDU/CSU) praised Germany's leadership role in the Berlin Process and its driving force in Europe in the debate over the Bosnian troops (Ibid, 22. 6. 2022, p. 4354). Adis Ahmetovic (SPD) called for Germany to actively promote EU accession of countries in Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans (Ibid, p. 4356).

On the other hand, Chancellor Scholz spoke of the active achievement of peace in Europe and decided to increase defense spending for deterrence（Ibid, 27. 2. 2022, pp. 1350-4). Foreign Minister Baerbock (Green Party) justified the provision of arms and increased defense spending as fulfilling his duty for the international order and peace in Europe (Ibid, p. 1359). Alexander Müller (FDP) spoke of Germany's European and global commitment to military expansion and security gains against the invasion of Ukraine and the destabilization of the Western Balkans (Ibid, 24. 6. 2022, p. 4701) and he showed the sense of B7.

A8）Promotion of Human Rights（◎）

Just as Philip Krämer (The Greens), Serap Güler (CDU/CSU) and others called for the creation of a society that values human rights (Ibid, 7. 4. 2022, p. 2437; ibid, 8. 7. 2022, pp. 5150f), the major political parties attach great importance to human rights norms.

B9）Development Assistance Depending on Security（△）

Erndl (CDU/CSU) argues that stability in the Sahel region is in Germany's very own interests under the slogan "No development without security"(Ibid, 20. 5. 2022, p. 3746).

B10）Sense of Equal Rights（△）

Annette Widmann-Mauz (CDU/CSU) said Germany's engagement in EUTM Mali would be "on the same level" as the participating countries, expressing pride in being on an equal rights with other participants (Ibid, 20. 5.2022, p. 3738).

B11）Balancing（◉）

The Scholz government sought to achieve solidarity in the alliance and to prevent the outbreak of World War III by balancing the military to deter Russia. Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht (SPD) expressed a sense of balancing by saying that the deployment of the EUFOR Althea troops was a contribution to stability against Russia's strengthened influence (Ibid, 24. 6.2022, p. 4699). Wadephul (CDU/CSU) said Germany and NATO needed nuclear deterrence so they would not be at the mercy of Russia (Ibid, 27. 2.2022, p. 1378).

In the debate on the deployment of troops to the EUFOR, Thomas Hacker (FDP) promoted to acquire the influence and security of the democratic camp by enlarging the EU, saying that authoritarian countries such as Russia and China are expanding their influence in Central Europe, threatening the stability of Europe as a whole (Ibid, 22. 6.2022, p. 4359). From their remarks, we can find B11.

C1) Integration of Security and Development (△)

N. Schmid (SPD) positions MINUSMA and EUTM Mali as examples of trial and error of "networked security," stating that "there is no development without security, and there is no guarantee of sustainable security without development." (Ibid, 20. 5.2022, p. 3730). Frank Schwabe (SPD) calls for achieving local stabilization through the integration of development assistance with security and military elements (Ibid, p. 3739). Thus, the fusion of the ideas of A7 and B2 is found.

C2) Comprehensive Security Concept/Networked Security Concept/Integrated Security (○)

Under the concept of "comprehensive security," Wadephul (CDU/CSU) calls for security assurance, the fight against international terrorism, democratization and social development on the grounds where troops are dispatched.

C. Schmid (SPD) calls for the implementation of "networked security" such as development assistance, social distribution and human rights violations, environmental correction, political participation of young people, and implementation of DDR.

Wiedmann Mautz (CDU/CSU) called for the implementation of "networked security" with the goal of security, development and state-building (Ibid, pp. 3729f). Schwabe (SPD) calls for judicial reform in the Sahel, fight corruption, and achieve regional stabilization through the integration of development assistance and military elements under an "integrated approach" (Ibid, p. 3739). On June 12, 23, the Scholz government presented a national security strategy, in which it presented the concept of integrated security. The concept of integrated security is defined as the promotion of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and

peace through civilian, military, and police means under multilateralism (Die Bundesregierung 2023: 6).

C3）Dispatch Troops as a Means of Achieving A2, A3 and A7（◎）

Abraham (CDU/CSU) justifies the deployment of troops on the grounds that security stability is necessary to defend democracy and advance the process of EU accession (Ibid, 8. 7. 2022, pp. 5151). Güller (CDU/CSU) supported an extension to the Illini deployment in view of strengthening the CSDP, but criticized the Libyan Navy's non-participation in training as unilateralism (Ibid, 7. 4. 2022, p. 2437). Thus, politicians of established parties, except for the AfD and the Left Party, embrace the idea of a fusion of A2 and A3, A7 and B2.

C4）Interest（○△）

Merle Spellerberg (Green Party) sees the security of the Malian people as a benefit through the deployment of military troops (Ibid, 20. 5. 2022, p. 3727). Güller (CDU/CSU) sees the stabilization of the Sahel region through military deployments as in Germany's interest.

C5）Responsibility（◎）

Wadephul (CDU/CSU) considers it Germany's responsibility to deal with hunger and terrorism in Mali and the Sahel region, and to support the United Nations. Spellerberg (Green Party) sees filling the void left by the evacuated French troops, airlifting relief supplies and operating airfields as Germany's new responsibilities (Ibid, 20. 5. 2022, p. 3728). Krämer (Green Party) and Abraham (CDU/CSU) see it as Germany's responsibility to prevent wars and ethnic conflicts in Europe and to defend democracy (Ibid, 8. 7. 2022, pp. 5150f). Karamba Diaby (SPD) sees promotion of education, political participation and employment in Libya as its responsibility (Ibid, 29. 4. 2022, p. 2935). Max Lucks (Green Party) sees the creation of peace and stability in Libya as Germany's responsibility (Ibid, 7. 4. 2022, p. 2432). They assume the deployment of federal troops to accomplish these responsibilities. In this respect, their view of responsibility is a fusion of the ideas of A2 and B2.

C6）Coexistence of A7 and B7

In the same speech about the active achievement of peace in Europe and the increase in defense spending to that end, Chancellor Scholz spoke of his intention to achieve climate neutrality by 2045 in terms of energy security (Ibid, 27. 2. 2022, pp. 1350-3).

Conclusion

In the wake of the Russian invasion to Ukraine in February 2022, German security policy changed from prudent to assertive one. "Policy entrepreneur" led to Militarization of German foreign policy. Thereby, they broke the taboo norm about weapon provision much more deeply. As the result, Germany mostly abandoned the "culture of restraint."

In addition, they decided to strongly promote militarization and increase the defense expenditure-to-GDP ratio from about 1.5% in 2019 to more than 2% by 2024. Moreover, German energy policy changed after the occurrence of Russian Ukraine war. Germany boosted the speed of introducing RES. Moreover, Germany promoted the diversification of

energy import and export destinations. Further, Germany reoperated the nuclear and coal power plants with due date.

In the Scholz government's China policy, there has been inconsistency. The background of this policy inconsistency can be explained to some extent by the theory of political party differences. Under the Merkel government under Grand coalition, there existed consensus within the ruling parties over a "transformation through trade" strategy. However, there exists the conflict within the Scholz government about China policy between the Green Party and FDP, which pursues ideals, and the SPD, which emphasizes economic interests, and it has created inconsistency in China policy. German China strategy changed firstly that Germany decided to downgrade the dependency on China in the critical fields such as economy, key technology and important raw materials from the aspect of economy security under the word of De-Risking. As such, Germany seeks diverse trade and supply chains. At the same time, the Chinese market remains of great importance for German companies. Secondly, Germany has strengthened to regard China as the villain much more which is trying to reshape the rules-based international order. Thirdly, Germany will expand the relations with Taiwan, but it does not change the so-called one-China policy.

German foreign policy, like the two-faced god Janus, fuses the ideas of civilian power and "normal great power," but possesses a "*Leitbild*" in which the latter is superior. Politicians justified the deployment of troops under the logic that local stability based on military force was essential as a prerequisite for advancing local development and democratization. They also saw Germany's responsibility as an idea of promoting democratization, political education, and job creation by using military force to stabilize the region. In these we find a fusion of the ideas of A2, A7 and B2.

In addition, a fusion of A7 and B2 ideas, such as C1, was shown. Although B9 and C1 differ in whether development assistance or securities are at the top of the list, they are common that they emphasize on both, creating a discursive fusion while being "on the same floor, dreaming differently." Politicians also justify military deployments under the logic of multilateralism, and a fusion of A3 and B2 can be found. Moreover, A7 and B7 coexist. This discursive fusion logic contributes to the fusion between the ideas that make up these of civilian power and that of "normal great power."

As Germany's party system since 2021 experiences increased fragmentation and polarization, reduced segmentation, and reduced convergence between the top two parties (Nakagawa 2021: p. 100), it has become much more difficult to build a consensus among ruling and opposition parties under such party system, and there is a potential risk that the leadership and foreign policy will become more unstable than during the Merkel government.

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The US-China Rivalry in the Maritime Domain: The Case of South China Sea

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Abstract

The US-China rivalry apart from being at the global sphere is also prevalent in the maritime domain in the South China Sea (SCS). SCS is important for the global trade and commerce that is marred by the unresolved maritime disputes between China and the Southeast Asian states, mainly Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. In the last couple of years, there has been increasing naval presence as China is asserting its position and ignoring that of other claimant states that has led to the US intervention. For the US, China's growing naval presence poses challenge for the global trade by hampering the freedom of navigation, creates security predicaments to its allies in the region and challenges its preeminent maritime power in the Western Pacific. The paper examines the US-China rivalry in SCS that has implication on the region and aggravates the conflict.

Keywords: South China Sea, China, The US, Maritime Disputes, Maritime Power

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Introduction

The US and China the two dominant global powers, the former the dominant power and the latter the rise power largely considered as a challenger in the international politics have defining impact on the global politics. Apart from their competition for increasing influence and rivalry in the international system their rivalry is seen at the regional level in the maritime domain in the South China Sea (SCS). China is mainly a land power but its growing military and economic power has compelled it to expand its naval power and emerge as a dominant maritime power. In the maritime domain, the US sees China's assertive behavior has challenging the established "rules-based maritime order." Though the US has no direct threat to its territory from China but the latter's South China Sea dispute with the former's regional allies has intensified their issue differences which has potential to escalate the conflict in the near future.

The steady rise of China has not only facilitiated the presence and expansion of its naval power in the maritime domain in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea but also challenges the US in the Western Pacific. Since the US is also a key player in the region which plays an important role to maintain the regional order, therefore any attempt on China's part to disturb the existing status quo would compel the former to involve in the regional conflict and intensity the rivalry.

The focus of the paper is mainly on the US and China rivalry in the maritime domain in the South China Sea. The first section introduces the paper as to why the US and China are involved in the rivalry in South China Sea. The article next section gives an outline of maritime dispute in the South China Sea dispute. The subsequent section deals with the importance of South China Sea and the US concerns. The fifth section deals with the growing rivalry between China and the US over the dispute. The last section summarises the article.

The South China Sea Dispute

The South China Sea consists of several small islands, rocks and reefs. The dispute is among the states of the region between China and other claimant states, especially on two major islands of Spratly and Paracel. The Paracels are administered by China but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam. China is controlling the Paracel Islands since 1974 after the clash with Vietnam. The Spratly Islands that consist of small islands, islets, and coral reefs are claimed by China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. China claims almost eighty percent of the disputed South China Sea based on the 'dotted line' also known as 'nine-dash line' on the 1947 Chinese map published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of China (Beukel 2010; McDevitt 2014). Based on this China asserts it "historical rights" uses this to lay its claims in the South China Sea that encompasses vast maritime territory that overlap with the maritime and territorial rights of the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2017).

In the 1990s, the dispute escalated when the National People's Congress promulgated a law on 'Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone' under which it laid claims over many islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters. China in the 1995 occupied the Mischief Reef in the Spratly island that is also claimed by the Philippines and Vietnam. This showed China's expansionist agenda to expand its territory. China has forcibly gained control over the Scarborough Shoal in an armed confrontation with the Philippine maritime vessels in

2012. Over the years, China has been gradually occupying the territories in these islands and expanding its maritime boundaries. In 2002, though China and the Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) agreed on 'the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea' (DOC) but they failed to adhere its provisions. Chinese expansion in South China Sea was also challenged by the Philippines in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague where its ruling of 2016 went against China. Despite of this, China has not being adhering to it and continued with its claims based on its historically rights and has carried on various developmental and military activities in the Islands.

The disputed states of Southeast Asia and China are involved in military buildup and making their presence felt in the disputed area. The Philippines and Vietnam were also involved in activities in the disputed territories violating the Declaration on the Conduct (DoC) of Parties in the South China Sea. In 1999, the Philippines naval ship was present in the disputed Ren'ai Reef (Second Thomas Shoal) stating that it has trouble with the ship and would be moved once repaired but did not do so (Shulong 2014: 15). The Chinese ships appeared in the area of James Shoal. In response to it, Malaysia has announced a new naval base in Sarawak near James Shoal. Vietnam has been exploiting oil and gas resources from the disputed areas with China for 20 years (Shulong 2014: 18). China too has placed oil drill in the contested waters near Vietnam. The states involved in activities in South China Sea—China, Vietnam and the Philippines—have accused each other for violating the DoC.

When the Philippines started to challenge China's expansion in the Hague in 2013 the latter started building artificial islands in the disputed waters. Beijing's growing interest in the South China Sea is facilitated by its expanding presence and involvement in the construction of artificial islands which compromised other states security in the disputed region. Though other stakeholders are also engaged in beefing up their security facilities in islands, but the scale and magnitude by which China is involved has no comparison with the competing state (Dutton 2016). It has constructed seven artificial islands on the top of submerged reef in the Spratly Islands by expanding the existing Cuarteron, Fiery Cross, Gaven, Hughes, Johnson South, Mischief and Subi reefs into islands along with the expansion of the Woody Island (Military Balance 2016: 211). The artificial islands have facilities of military airstrips, radar equipments and boarding for soldiers. China has also build three-kilometre long runway for air operation on the Fiery Cross Reef, another on the Johnson South Reef with the possibility of one more being built on the Subi Reef (Military Balance 2016). The airstrip in Fiery Cross Reef is long enough to accommodate the Chinese military aircraft and provide China greater reach into the heart of maritime Southeast Asia (*ABC News* 2015). These could be gradually converted into a full-fledge military bases which might give rise to tension and risky military activities among the disputants. Through these artificial islands, China is altering the existent regional power balance and showing its dominance to the claimant states.

With China's growing power capabilities and increasing military presence in the disputed waters it often comes in the way of other claimant states interrupting their fishing vessels and their military. These various activities along with the military buildup in the artificially build islands has aggravated the crises.

Importance of South China Sea

South China Sea is rich in hydrocarbons, potential sources of oil and gas reserves, and has crucial sea lanes that are importance for global trade. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates there to be approximately 11 billion barrels of oil and 190

trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the South China Sea (U. S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) (2013). It is difficult to exactly determine the oil and natural gas reserves in the region because of under exploitation and the overlapping claims by the states. Apart from this, it may have additional hydrocarbons in underexplored areas according to the EIA.

 China needs energy resources to support its growing economic growth as it has emerged as a second largest oil consumer next to the US. This has led Beijing to involve in oil exploration by setting up off-shore oil fields which has witnessed increasing conflict with other claimant states over the issue of exploiting energy resources in the disputed waters. China has placed oil drill in the contested waters near Vietnam. Apart from China, Vietnam and the Philippines are involved in oil production to enhance their own domestic energy needs. Vietnam's Petro Vietnam is involved in oil exploration in three fields along with its involvement with various foreign oil companies on oil and gas exploration (Hong 2013). China has strongly opposed Vietnamese exploration agreement with foreign nations. The Philippines has an intension to offer 15 exploration contracts for offshore exploration off Palawan Island that is also claimed by China (Hong 2013). The other major issue for dispute is over fishing as the fishing vessels moving in the disputed overlapping claim zones often come in conflict. China and Vietnam have often witnessed clashes between their fishing vessels or boats were their fishermen have been detained.

South China Sea has some of the world's most important shipping lanes for markets for Asia, Europe, Africa and America. The major concern for the US in the South China Sea is the freedom of navigation as billions of dollars of commerce flow through this region nearing about 50 percent of global maritime commerce passes through it every year that makes it a key artery for sustaining global economy (Dutton 2016: 11). The region is important to the US given its location where to the south, the Strait of Malacca connects the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean; to the north, the Taiwan Strait connects it to the Pacific Ocean (Beukel 2010: 9). The security of sea lanes is important for the US economic growth which has trade with the Asia-Pacific states. In case of any conflict between China and the regional states can disrupt the free flow of goods thus hampering the global trade that can have immense impact on the global economy. During the East Asian Summit at Kuala Lumpur, the US Secretary of State John Kerry had accused China of not allowing freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. The US being a dominant global power is concerned about the freedom of navigation as it has a major role in maintaining rule-based order at sea (Dutton 2016).

In recent years, China and the US are involved in contestation for power and influence in the maritime domain. The sea power is often considered as important aspect for states in their power projection and economic development. In the past, Britain became a powerful state because of its maritime supremacy that helped it to maintain its colonial empire in the world. Keeping the importance of naval supremacy China is involved in the naval modernisation. As a rising power, China in order to overpower the US in the global power hierarchy has to strengthen its naval power and become a maritime power. The US is a maritime power and wants to maintain the status quo in the maritime domain. South China Sea is becoming important in their contestation in the maritime domain. The US has a major presence in the Western Pacific but China's increasing presence and expansion in the South China Sea that is nearing the Western Pacific can challenge the US hegemon in near future. Though China is not posing a challenge to its global maritime power but it is posing a challenge in the nearby waters. China had recently developed anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities that threaten to restrict US forces and power projection in the Asian region. Through the A2/AD

strategy China "could allow it to obstruct the arrival of additional military units and limit the effectiveness of forward deployed forces, specifically by targeting the theatre bases; aircraft carrier strike groups; and command, control, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems that underpin U.S. power projection" (Montgomery 2014: 117). The US strategists view the A2/AD capabilities are to undermine its maritime power and drive the US out of Western Pacific (Steinberg and O'Hanlon 2014).

Given their geographical location in two different regions, China is not posing a direct threat to the US territory but it had indirect threats in Asia because of the involvement of the conflictual issues between China and the US allies and other strategic partners in the region. The US has maintained an alliance system in the region since the Cold War. Within Southeast Asia, the Philippines is the formal ally of the US since 1951, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia are US comprehensive partners and Singapore is the strategic partner. The US is an important power for these states as a security provider that would minimise tensions and deter conflicts in the region (Christensen 2003). China has strengthening its position on South China Sea disputes with building up of artificial islands and increasing its presence that has weakened the position of other disputed states. Washington is concerned about the security of its allies and partners which is threatened due to the rise of China and its growing aggressive behaviour. With its growing assertiveness and activities China has shown that it is willing to use force. In this case any awkward situation will create regional maritime instability and increase the risk of military clashes between China and the Southeast Asian states that would likely involve the US in the conflict. The US has an obligation to defend its allies against the use of force from China. The Philippines Aquino administration had invoked the importance of the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty in case of any conflict in Spratly islands (Hong 2013). In 2014, the Philippines and the United States had signed the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) during President Obama's visit to Manila in April that has enhanced the defence cooperation with the eye on the US intervention and protection against the China's growing assertiveness in the region. The US too wants to counter China as it is posing a challenge to its global dominant power and with its increasing naval modernisation and expanding sea power is challenging its dominant maritime presence. Apart from the Philippines, the US allies that are outside the region but closer to the region like Japan and Australia have concerns on China's aggressive behaviour and the militarisation of the artificial islands. If the US does not defend its allies then its role as the Asian security provider will be questioned not only by its allies but as well as from emerging partners.

The US-China Rivalry in the South China Sea

The US position for long was not to take any position or involve in the territorial disputes between China and the Southeast Asian states. It had often taken a neutral stand and called all the states party to the dispute to resolve the tensions according to the international law. Over the last few years, the US has been blaming China for its actions in South China Sea. The US criticised China for launching the oil rig drilling near its Zhongjian or Triton Island, 150 nautical miles away from Vietnam's coast. During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in November 2015, the US President had urged China to stop military activities in South China Sea and endorsed a process of arbitration to settle the issue (Shear 2015). The regional states are helping the US to counter Chinese assertive behaviour where Singapore had allowed the US to deploy spy planes to patrol the South China Sea from its bases (Hernandez and Whaley 2016). The recent approval by the Philippines highest court to allow US troops in its land would complicate the dispute where the US troops would be few miles from the islands build by China. In 2020, the US has formally rejected the Chinese

claims to South China Sea and clearly stated that 'Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful….' (Pompeo 2020).

With China building artificial islands in the disputed waters and involvement of potential military facilities the US has been involved in freedom of navigation operations since 2015 to contest the excessive claims made by most of the claimants on South China Sea. The freedom of navigation operations "are means to ensure that U.S. naval, coast guard, and civilian ships, and by extension those of all nations, maintain unrestricted access to their rights at sea" (Glaser, Green and Poling 2015). The US has carried a few numbers of freedom of navigation operations in South China Sea starting in October 2015 where USS *Lassen* passed within 12 nautical miles of Subi and Mischief reefs. In the year 2016, USS *Curtis Wilbur* passed within 12 nautical miles of Triton Island in the Paracel Islands chain in January, USS *William Lawrence* sailed within 12 nautical miles of Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratly Islands in May, and USS *Decatur* conducted a freedom of navigation operation near the Paracel Islands in October. In year 2017, USS *Dewey* passed near Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands and conducted man overboard drill in May and USS *Stethem* passed by Triton Island in the Paracel Islands in July. In January 2018, USS *Hopper*, a U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer carried a freedom of navigation operation within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea (Panda 2018).

The freedom of navigation operations has emerged as a contentious issue in the recent years between the US and China over the former's right of its military vessels to operate in China's two-hundred-mile mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Glaser 2012). Regarding the military activities the US argues that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) or state practice does not negate nations from conducting military activities in EEZs without coastal state consent. But China insists that these activities should be conducted with the prior permission of the coastal state and not doing so violates China's domestic law and international law (Glaser 2012). China is not convinced of the US motivation where its surveillance activities are seen to gather intelligence on China's defence and threatening its national security (McDevitt 2014; You 2016: 647). The Chinese usually protest these operations by the US and ask them to leave and cite the violation of its sovereignty. To retaliate the increasing US presence in South China Sea, China had its civilian planes landed in the airstrips in the Spratly islands (Hernandez and Whaley 2016). These military operations by the US is likely to involve in armed conflict in future. In the past there were two major incidents between the US and China that was occurred during the surveillance activities: there was a mid-air collision between a U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft (EP-3) and an intercepting Chinese navy fighter in 2001 and the second was were the Chinese fishermen and paramilitary ships harassed USS *Impeccable* in 2009 while conducting undersea surveillance. In near future incidents like these can occur that could likely lead to armed conflict. According to Ian Storey, a senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, "If China chooses to challenge these operations, tensions will rise. If China merely protests then I don't think [the two sides] will significantly up the ante" (cited in Zhen 2016). Zhu Feng, the executive director of the China Centre for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea at Nanjing University is of the opinion that "the South China Sea will be more crowded, and the risk for a military conflict will continue to rise" (cited in Hernandez and Whaley 2016).

The US is showing its willingness to commit to the regional allies and partners that are challenged by growing Chinese maritime activities in the waters. In light of China's militarisation of its artificial islands the US is defending its allies against China's coercion in

the disputed waters. The US has assured its support to its allies where recently the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that "American stands with our South-east Asian allies and partners in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law" (Pompeo 2020). The US has strengthened its defence partnership with its allies especially with Philippines. Manila has promised to provide Washington military access to four new locations to be used by the US troops, out of which one is near to South China Sea. In April 2023, the US and the Philippines held the largest ever joint military drill in South China Sea called as Balikatan operation where they blow up a mock targeted warship in the waters (Ng and Guinto 2023).

China wants the South China Sea issue to be solved among the effected states where the Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi stated through "direct bilateral negotiation" with the parties involved which mean there is no scope for the interference from outside powers (cited in Tang 2012: 594). The US has raised concerns regard the recent development in the South China Sea. The US Secretary of Defence, Ashton Carter, has urged China to stop building artificial island and other states to stop activities in the disputed areas that would destabilise the region. General Fan Changlong, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, linked the South China Sea issue to "Chinese sovereignty … strongly committed to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and defending territorial integrity" and warning that "no foreign country should intervene in the land reclamation" around islands (cited in Chansoria 2015). China would not give up on its maritime disputes which it has shown in its response to arbitrary court's judgment in 2016.

Conclusion

South China Sea has emerged an important issue in the international politics as it has major waterways and transit route for world trade and an important source of oil and energy resources. The importance of the disputes has increase in recent years with the growing activities in the region. It is not only China but other states like Vietnam and the Philippines are involved actively in the disputes area. The US is no doubt a major player, though for most of time in the past it had maintained a neutral stand and supported the dispute to be resolved in an amicable manner in the light of international law but in recent years its interest and stakes have increased in the South China Sea. With China's growing power which is a major challenger to its dominant status in global politics, China's increasing presence and expansion in the South China Sea has an implication for its maritime power project that has an impact on the overall global power position.

China's actions in the South China Sea undermine the US presence and challenge its interest for regional stability and security of its allies and partners in the region. The US is not directly involved in the conflict but the dispute has affected its allies with whom Washington has security and defence agreement. Chinese growing assertiveness and increasing clashes between China and other claimant states is encouraging the involvement of other great power the US in the region which the regional states believe can counter China's assertive behaviour and act as a security provider. China's recent activities and actions in recent years like the land reclamation, construction activities and militarisation of the artificial islands is likely to get into conflict between China and disputed states where the US would be drawn into the conflict as it would be obligated under the bilateral security treaties with its allies. Moreover, the US freedom of navigation operations are going against China's South China Sea indeed has emerged as a major conflictual flashpoint between the US and China that would likely be involved in major conflict. There is provocation from both the sides where the US is involved

in freedom of navigation operation that goes against the Chinese claim of violating its sovereignty and domestic and international law. The US rebalancing and countering China strategy is making the US to involve more in the dispute and support its allies that makes China to prepare itself by involving in military activities in the artificial build islands.

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What's Role of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming 2024 Elections?

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Abstract

Indonesian millennials are the largest age-group as Indonesia is experiencing a demographic dividend, where the size of the young productive age population is the largest until 2030. Millennials and Gen-Zers hold about 54 percent of the population of 270 million people, according to official statistics. Meanwhile, the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (2022) also stated that 77% of Indonesian citizens or as many as 210 million people have used the internet. With large numbers and high level of technological literacy, Indonesian millennials hold much responsibility for better results in upcoming election. This article will provide what's role from Indonesian millennials especially in terms of political participation, not only about voting rights but also conduct the flow in how to express their opinion or political preference. Which more or less can impact voting behaviour and influencing the direction of the country in various spheres.

Keywords: Millenials, Politics, Participation

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Introduction

Electoral politics in Indonesia is actually quite interesting to observe because it has a phenomenon of authoritarianism that is almost similar to countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines to countries with authoritarian governments such as Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Indonesia itself is currently entering an era of democracy which is quite stagnant, while some Indonesianist scientists call it democratic regression. This can be seen from Indonesia's democracy index score which has not changed, remaining below Colombia and the Philippines according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) version with a score of 6.71 (Permana, 2023). Even though there are indications of a decline in democracy in Indonesia, Indonesia will still carry out simultaneous elections in 2024 to elect members of the legislative, President also Regional and Local Heads in the same year.

For upcoming election in 2024, Indonesia will enter a new era in electoral politics. This new era is marked by the presence of technologies adaptive and rational young voters. Indonesia's young and new voters in Indonesia are those who born from 1997 till 2012 (including Gen Z) are taking part in upcoming simultaneous election in 2024 for first time. Indonesian Millenials are the largest age-group as Indonesia is experiencing a demographic dividend, where the size of the young productive age population is the largest until 2030. Young voters are predicted to reach 60% of Indonesia's total voters in 2024. Meanwhile, the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (2022) also stated the 77% of Indonesian citizens or as many as 210 million people have used the internet.
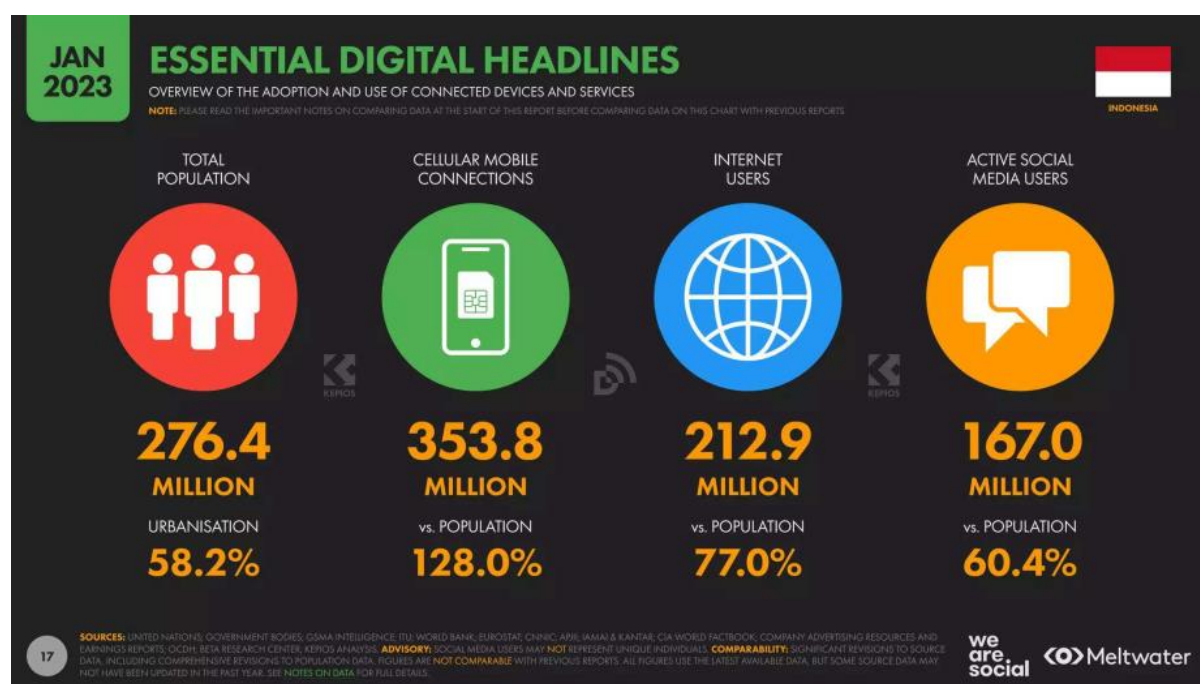
Figure 1. Overview Internet and Social Media User in Indonesia *(Source: Hootsuite)*

Figure 1 illustrates total active social media users in Indonesia around 167.0 million and it means majority of Indonesian citizens are internet users and use social media for socializing. Not only for that, but also for political activism. In this research, political activism referring to political participation and political affrication. A social survey conducted various organization in world and resuming in datareportal.com in 2023 found that social media become a tool for most installed by younger generation(datareportal, 2023). The social media including all mainstream social media such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and for chat-base

like WhatsApp, Line, Kakao Talk, Telegram and others. Indonesia's youth which also Indonesia's young voters with mass amount in upcoming election have important role in Indonesia politic, referring to 'Reformasi 1998' who succeeded in overthrowing the Soeharto government that time. Indonesian young voters now should participating in strengthening governance and political participate with democratic mindset (Ida, Saud, & Mashud, 2020).

'*Young generation or new demographic is arriving in today's workplace that cannot imagine a world without Google or mobile phones.*' (Tapscott & Williams, 2006) This seems to justify that platform like social media and google have too much power in building public opinion and public trust. Most important matters, new technologies and politics should collaborative more for looking the reality about people's demand and needs. Not only governments should collaborate with e-government, but also political party. Collaboration between politics and political party should be matters for increasing democracy, like the rising of digital party from 'Five Star Movement' in Italy, 'Pirate Parties' in Northern Europes countries and many more. The term about 'digital party' referring from Paolo Gerbaodo, for describing 'platform party,' to indicate its adoption of the platform logic of social media, is to the current informational era of ubiquitous networks, social media and smartphone apps – what the mass party was to the industrial era or the cynically professionalised 'television party' was during the post–Cold War era of high neoliberalism (Gerbaudo, 2019).

Charateristic of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming Election

The participation of Indonesian youth in active politics is actually legally supported. Not only as a voter, active participation such as joining a political party and becoming a member of the legislature. The minimum requirement to register as a candidate for legislative member is currently at least 21 years old according to Indonesia law number 7 of 2017. Meanwhile, the minimum age for registering as a candidate for regent is 25 years and to become a candidate for governor is at least 30 years old based on Indonesia law number 10 of 2016. There are several characteristics of young voters in Indonesia in the upcoming general election.

Such as *digital behaviour (with high literacy on technology)* and *negative perceptions about younger generation have capability for running politics matters.*

This can be seen from the number of elected legislators aged over 50 years who have continued to increase from the election results in 2014 and 2019. The proportion of national legislative members over 50 years of age around 40%. However, in 2014, the elected legislative national members over the age of 50 years of age become 45.7%. Furthermore, in the 2019-2024 period, this percentage keeps increasing but not more 55%. The limited quota for young people has been reflected in the candidacy for members of the national legislative. Based on data from the 2014 national level legislative candidates, only 24.8 & were filled by people with a maximum age of 40 years. Furthermore, in the 2019 election, young politicians who will run for the national level legislative election are still around 6%.

Indonesian young voters in upcoming election with digital behavior adhering with social media and google as main source can became the most loyalist supporter but also rabble-rouser. With high literacy on technology and familiar with social media algorithm, Indonesian young voters can be influencing others or just affected with hoax and black campaign which can destroy political systems or even certain politicians image. But, the most

important for upcoming election in 2024, does this two characters affected Indonesian young voters for increasing voter turnout (higher participation than before).

Role of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming 2024 Elections

Mobilization and Distraction: Loyalist Supporter or Rabble-Rouser?

Overall, studies measuring political use of social media constantly found positive to affect political participation(Bachmann & Gil de Zu´n˜iga, 2013). Political participation with low effort pertains to all activities requiring a relative small amount of time and energy (e.g. sharing political information, signing a petition, whereas high effort political participation refers to more time and consuming energies in example protesting, writing a comment in politicians social media account (Krishnan & Netemeyer RG, 2002). This distinction is crucial because political participation as a behavior, is clearly driven by goals and interest. This effort is crucial for the question of whether someone acts or not, rather than the distinction between online and off-line. Indonesia young voters use media social for mobilization their support or refusal regarding policies or political views. Unfortunately, not accompanied by high voter turnout, there is no definite research showing the success of the media for increasing formal participation such as voting and joining political parties. Some scholars called it 'Social Media Political Participation Paradox' which happen in US, New Zealand etc. More importantly, how does social media tools in Indonesian young voters can bring higher voter turnout in upcoming elections? Indonesian young voters are motivated to engage with political activities in social media but also high potentially distracted by entertainment-oriented content on social media. High likely join political online discussion in social media (non institutionalized participation).

Conclusion

With large numbers and high level of technological literacy, Indonesian millennials hold much responsibility for better results in upcoming election. The younger generation of voters is adaptive in changing trends in the digital world. Despite the characteristics and the role of Indonesian young voters, these only my hypothesis for further research. Indonesian party also doesn't have much preparation for utilizing Indonesian young voters to involve in formal participation. There are still major obstacle for Indonesian youth to engage as active political actors. These obstacles are inseparable from the vortex of oligarchs, both at the local and national levels.

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The Trend of Betonamujinron Research in Japan: Implications for Mutual Cultural Understanding and Policy

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Abstract

The increasing number of foreign residents in Japan is a positive factor contributing to the country's sustainability, but it also poses policy and social challenges arising from inadequate mutual cultural understanding. Notably, with the trends of labor migration and international student mobility, the Vietnamese population in Japan has rapidly increased ten-fold from over 44,000 in 2011 to 450,000 in 2021 (MOJ, 2021), becoming the second most populous foreigner group. In Japan, there seems to be an increased interest in researching about Vietnam and Vietnamese people. We conducted a rapid literature review to investigate this trend by searching Google Scholar using relevant keywords for the period from 1965 to 2023. Our results revealed a clear increasing trend in the number of publications conducted in Japan related to "betonamujinron," or the field of study that focuses on the characteristics, culture, customs, and values of Vietnamese people. We found that the trend has been particularly prominent over the last decade. Our research suggests that there is an increasing interest in Japan in understanding foreign characteristics and culture. This trend can help promote mutual cultural understanding and pave the way for more effective policies that can address the challenges associated with the growing diversity of Japan's population.

Keywords: Betonamujinron, Vietnamese, Japan, Cross-Cultural Awareness, Diversity, Publication, Technical Trainee, International Student, Study in Japan

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Introduction

The study of cultural characteristics, customs, and values of Japanese people has a long history in Japan. Nihonjinron, is a theory, writing, or report that discusses Japanese people, refers to the theories that explores the unique qualities of Japanese culture and society (Nomura Research Institute, 1978). The term was first used in the 1970s, and since then, nihonjinron has become an influential field of study in Japan, shaping the way Japanese people understand themselves and how they interact with the rest of the world. Research on nihonjinron has been conducted extensively in Japan for several decades, with various studies exploring different aspects of Japanese culture and society. For example, some studies have focused on the concept of amae (the idea of indulging in a dependent relationship), while others have examined the role of group harmony (wa) in Japanese society.

In contrast, "Gaikokujinron" (foreigner theory) is a term in Japanese that can be translated as "discourse on foreigners" or "theory of foreigners." It refers to a body of literature and intellectual debate in Japan that has been concerned with the role and place of foreigners in Japanese society. The term "gaikokujinron" was first used in the late 19th century, during a period of rapid modernization and opening of Japan to the world. It was a time when Japan was trying to come to terms with the fact that it was no longer a completely isolated island nation, and that it needed to engage with other countries and cultures to modernize and compete in the world. At the time, "gaikokujinron" referred to a debate about whether Japan should embrace foreign ideas and technologies, or whether it should maintain its traditional isolationism and cultural purity. Over time, however, the term has come to encompass a broader range of issues related to foreigners in Japan, including questions of immigration, integration, cultural exchange, and discrimination. Today, "gaikokujinron" remains an active and sometimes contentious topic in Japan. On the one hand, there are those who argue that Japan should be more open to immigration and cultural diversity in order to address its aging population and labor shortages. On the other hand, there are those who believe that Japan's unique culture and traditions must be preserved and protected from the influence of foreign ideas and people. Overall, "gaikokujinron" reflects Japan's ongoing struggle to balance its desire for global engagement and economic competitiveness with its strong sense of cultural identity and national pride. Over the time, there are also fields of study that focus on specific foreign populations in Japan, such as chuugokujinron (the study of Chinese people) (Lee, n.d.; Takahashi, 2010) and zainichichosenjinron (the study of Korean people), as well as the other ethnic groups. These domains have gained attention as the number of foreign residents in Japan has increased. Basically, these studies have focused on the cultural differences between these populations and Japanese people, highlighting the challenges of mutual cultural understanding.

Overall, these fields of study have contributed to a better understanding of Japanese culture and society, as well as the experiences of foreign populations in Japan. However, there have also been criticisms of these fields of study for their tendency to generalize and stereotype cultural groups. As Japan becomes increasingly diverse, there is a need for more nuanced and complex understandings of cultural differences and similarities, and more research that goes beyond simple categorizations of cultural groups (Okano & Sugimoto, 2019).

The increasing diversity of Japan's population presents both opportunities and challenges for the country's sustainability. On the one hand, the influx of foreign residents can contribute to economic growth, cultural exchange, and social innovation. On the other hand, inadequate mutual cultural understanding can lead to tensions and exclusion. Considering these

challenges, there is a growing interest in Japan in understanding the characteristics, culture, customs, and values of foreign populations.

Notably, the Vietnamese population in Japan has rapidly increased ten-fold from over 44,000 in 2011 to 450,000 in 2021, becoming the second most populous foreigner group. In this context, there seems to be an increasing interest about Vietnam and Vietnamese people in Japan (Tran & Matsuura, 2020). There seems to be a need in Japan to understand the Vietnamese traits and to develop effective policies that promote mutual understanding and social inclusion.

Conceptual Framework

We designed a conceptual framework to make clear the goals and purpose of this attempt. In Figure 1, we hypothesize that the upcoming trend of Betonamujinron has come up from the recent flush of Vietnamese workers and students into Japan during the last decade. The cornerstone for this immigration trend was started since 1990s', after the breakdown of the Soviet bloc causing influence on Vietnam. Labor exporting increasing trend in Vietnam is also coinciding with the growing economic development in Vietnam (World Bank, n.d.). We hypothesize that with the economic development in Vietnam, people become more interested in discovering, experiencing and obtaining external values from abroad, as well as become more capable to finance their experience. As a highly developed country, having favorable labor importing policies, and located in proximity, Japan together with Taiwan and South Korea has become a favorite destination for Vietnamese trainees and students. Influx of foreigners may inflict social issues that induces the need in Japan to study about foreign cultures in order to facilitate social adaptation of foreigners in Japan. This research trend will contribute to better cross-cultural understanding and finally contribute to long-term sustainability of both countries (Figure 1).
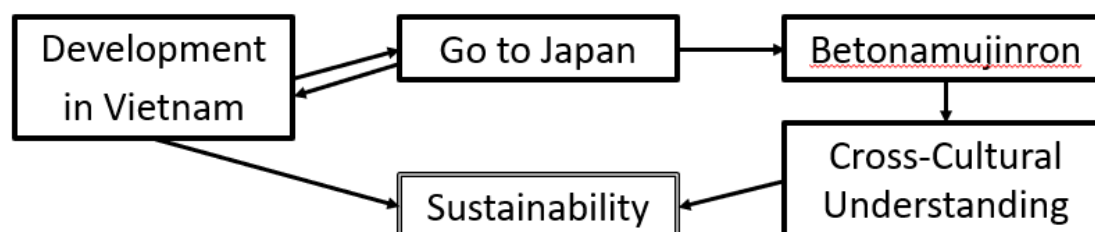
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Our research aimed to investigate: (1) is there a trend of "betonamujinron" - an increased interest in researching about Vietnamese people in Japan; and (2) what are the common topics of "betonamujinron" over time. Our study tries to confirm the existence of "betonamujinron," to explain some common themes of "betonamujinron," as well as to fill the gap in the literature about the common trends of cultural anthropology research in Japan. Our findings can contribute to a better understanding of the factors driving the trend and can inform future research on cultural diversity and social inclusion in Japan.

Method

We conducted both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate this trend of "betonamujinron." For qualitative analysis, we conducted a websearch on Google Scholar for

the keyword "betonamujin" (Vietnamese person in Japanese) for the period 1960~2023 (until 8th May 2023) to record the number of papers published in Japanese language per year. The keyword should appear in the title or in the full text of the paper. We recorded the number of publications based on the year of publication.

For qualitative analysis, we conducted content analysis by record the first title hit by the search for each year, translating the title from Japanese into English by Google translation. We conducted coding the titles and calculating the word frequency and co-occurrence by using KH Coder (KH Coder, n.d.) and word cloud generator. Inclusion criteria: the first title hit from the search on the keyword "betonamujin" in Japanese in a specific year during 1960-2023 period. The process followed the systematic review framework based on PRISMA (Page et al., 2021).
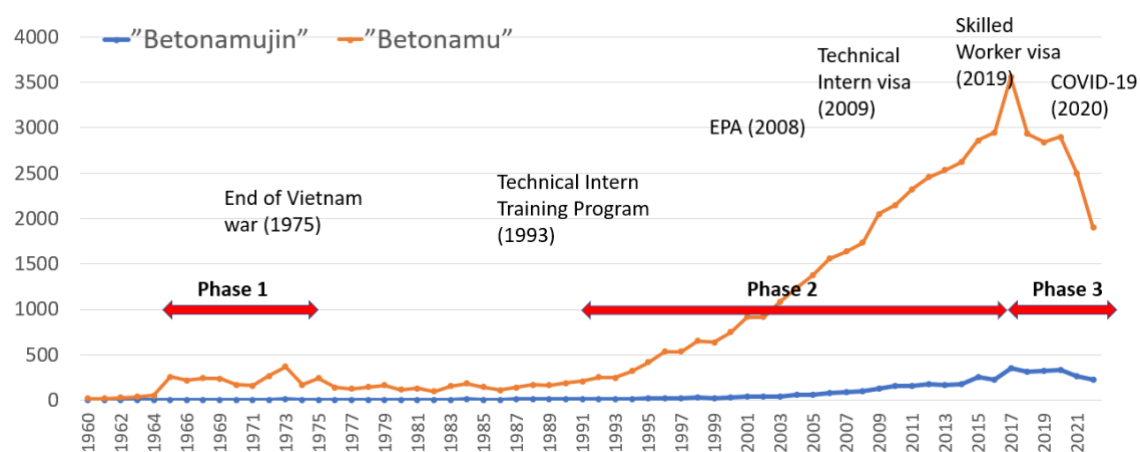
Figure 2. Number of Japanese papers by the keyword "Betonamujin"
(Vietnamese) vs "Betonamu"(Vietnam)

In Figure 2, we observe an increasing trend of publications related to Vietnam, especially Vietnamese people. The marks emphasis the events that may influence human mobility. From Figure 2, we can clearly observe three phases of development. Phase 1 started with rising in the number of papers about Vietnam during the period from 1964 to the end of Vietnam war in 1975. Phase 2 started from around 1991 until the peak in 2017, marking a drastic increase in the number of papers. Phase 3 started from 1998 onwards, marking the decline of the number of papers.

The number of Vietnamese individuals residing in Japan has shown a consistent increase over the years. It started with 4.39 thousand in 1986 and reached a peak of 476.35 thousand in 2022. The decision to migrate to Japan may not be solely driven by economic factors but influenced by other social, cultural, or personal considerations as well. The increase in the Vietnamese residing in Japan appear to be influenced by factors, such as immigration policies, labor market opportunities, or community networks etc.

Table 1 shows the progressive increase of number of "betonamujinron" papers along with number of Vietnamese residing in Japan, and the theme patterns of the papers. We picked up from the search a total of 64 papers, all published in Japanese and written by Japanese authors. Most of the publications were journal articles, but a few were book chapters, conference proceedings, and other types of publications.

Table 1. Number of Vietnamese in Japan, number of "betonamujinron" papers
and the themes of content

	Vietnamese in Japan (1,000)	"Vietna-mese	"Viet-nam"	First title picked. (translated by Google translator)	Theme
1960		1	17	About the Family Law of the Republic of Vietnam	Governance
1961		1	20	About the recent prizhevi	War
1962		0	27		
1963		0	39		
1964	0.099	0	52		
1965		5	255	Vietnamese and Japanese--Letters from the National Front for Liberation	War
1966		5	214	Basic Concept of the Vietnam Problem	War
1967		3	238	Seeing the North Bombed Country--Vietnamese Smiles and Beliefs	War
1969	0.352	3	237	Sino-Vietnamese Relations Historical Overview	Diplomacy
1970		4	164	How to Control the Military by J.K. Galbraith	War
1971		3	155	The Current Situation and Historical Background of the Vietnamese Problem in Cambodia	Diplomacy
1972		3	265	The Tet Offensive as a major turning point in the Vietnam War	War
1973		11	360	What Victory Means for Vietnamese	War
1974	1.087	5	167	The World-Historical Significance of the Korean War: The First Round of the US vs. Sino-Soviet War	War
1975		5	240	Fatherland Liberation Day in Prison--Japan for Vietnamese Students	War
1976		2	137	Japan's policy toward Indochina during the Pacific War: Two peculiarities	Diplomacy
1977		5	122	The Current Situation and Challenges of Vietnam's Domestic and Diplomacy	Diplomacy
1978		3	141	An Unlucky Nation, an Unlucky Citizen--A Reporter's Mistake--Reading "Battlefield Village" with a Vietnamese Student	War
1979		5	161	The same writing & race the same issues	Relation w J
1980		4	110	O-Hayagoe on the Indochina Peninsula - Focusing on local reports -	Diplomacy
1981		6	125	Utility of "reversal" in Vietnamese	Relation w J
1982		6	90	Attempts to Cooperate with Asian & Vietnamese Residents in Japan in the Late Meiji Era: Regarding the "ToA Domei Kai" or the "Asia Peace Friendship Association"	
1983		3	154	Socialist Vietnam's Relations with ASEAN	Diplomacy
1984	3.911	9	178	Today's Vietnamese Law and Vietnamese Legal Awareness	Governance
1985		5	142	Criticism/Introduction> Kenji Tsuchiya and Takashi Shiraishi eds.	Relation w J
1986	4.388	2	108	On the Formation of Modern Vietnamese Literature	Literature
1987		8	132	The End of the Movement for Visiting the East by Vietnamese Residents in Japan -1- Concerning the Deportation of Ban Pezhu	Relation w J
1988	4.763	9	162	Formation of Vietnamese Villages: Villages	Vietnam History
1989		9	156	Responses of Japanese and French Authorities to the Toyu Movement	Relation w J

	Vietnamese in Japan (1,000)	"Vietna -mese	"Viet -nam"	First title picked. (translated by Google translator)	Theme
1990	6.233	9	181	The Imperial Consciousness of the French People in 1945: Newspaper Reports on the Syrian Turmoil and the August Revolution in Vietnam	French era
1991		12	199	Overseas Chinese Policy in French Colonial Vietnam: Focusing on Cochinchina	French era
1992	6.883	10	241	The Impact of the Vietnam War on the South Korean Economy: Forming the Foundation for ``NIEs-like Development" in South Korea	Korea
1993		11	236	The End of the Vietnam War and Southeast Asia: Reorganization of the Regional International System	Diplomacy
1994	8.229	13	309	In memory of Dr. Masahiro Kawahara	
1995	9.099	19	400	The Current State of Cultural Heritage in Vietnam and the Ideals of International Cooperation	Diplomacy
1996	10.228	20	517	A Study on the Composition of Villages and Housing Forms of the White Tai People in Northern Vietnam	Social Awareness
1997	11.897	23	514	Residential situation of Vietnamese residents in Kobe City: Changes before and after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake	Social Awareness
1998	13.505	31	620	Guidance to enhance analogy of Chinese for Vietnamese learners of Japanese	Japanese language
1999	14.898	25	613	Cross-Border Families: Networks and Living Strategies of Vietnamese Residents in Japan	Social Awareness
2000	16.908	27	724	Vietnam Independence Movement and Japan during World War II	War
2001	19.14	44	870	His Helicobacter pylori infection in Vietnamese and Japanese, comparative observation of background gastric mucosa	Health
2002	21.05	45	869	Fact-finding Survey on Employment and Livelihood of Vietnamese Permanent Residents: Summary of Survey Results	Employment
2003	23.853	45	1040	Premodern Korean View of Vietnam	Korea
2004	26.018	57	1180	Life Culture and Communication: Japan and Vietnam	Japan
2005	28.932	60	1320	Awareness survey on work and values of Vietnamese employees	Social Awareness
2006	32.485	81	1480	The adaptation process of Vietnamese living in Japan: Relationship between experience of prejudice and culture of origin	Social Awareness
2007	36.86	89	1550	Practical Report on Pronunciation Class for Vietnamese Learners	Japanese language
2008	41.136	95	1640	Social Awareness of Vietnamese People: Focusing on Surveys on Rural Living Conditions	Social Awareness
2009	41	132	1920	Perceptions and Learning Strategies of Motivation and Foreign Language Anxiety: A Comparison of Vietnamese and Chinese Learners	Japanese language
2010	41.781	161	1990	Japanese Language Education Issues for Vietnamese Nurse Candidates and Care Worker Candidates	Japanese language
2011	44.69	154	2170	Awareness of University Students' Career Environment in Hanoi, Vietnam	Social Awareness
2012	52.367	175	2280	"Settlement" Process of "Vietnamese Refugees"	Refugees
2013	72.256	165	2370	Japanese Interpersonal Communication Schema by Vietnamese Students	Japanese language

	Vietnamese in Japan (1,000)	"Vietna-mese	"Viet-nam"	First title picked. (translated by Google translator)	Theme
2014	99.865	181	2440	About the 6th National Congress of Nursing Science in Vietnam: Background focusing on the education of Vietnamese EPA candidates who came to Japan	Nursing trainee
2015	146.956	253	2610	Career development of Vietnamese government-sponsored science students	International student
2016	199.99	229	2720	40 Years of Conflict: The Transformation of Political Conflict between the Vietnamese Government and Vietnamese in America	Diplomacy
2017	262.405	348	3210	A Study on the Sustainability of Japanese Language Schools in Vietnam: Focusing on the Dong Du Japanese School	Japanese language
2018	330.835	313	2620	Consideration of Technical Intern Trainees' Post-Return Careers: Through Interviews with Returned Vietnamese Technical Intern Trainees	Technical Trainees
2019	411.968	323	2520	Survey on Employment Status of Returned Vietnamese Technical Intern Trainees	Technical Trainees
2020	448.053	338	2560	Coverage of the Comprehensive Insurance System for Foreign Technical Intern Trainees: Two Cases of Underage Vietnamese Women Who Found Out About a Congenital Disease After Entering Japan	Technical Trainees
2021	432.934	266	2230	Thinking by Vietnamese Japanese learners	Japanese language
2022	476.346	222	1680	A case study of the use of Han Yue in reading comprehension of the national exam questions for care workers by Vietnamese caregivers	Nursing trainee
2023		54	381	A Trial of Teaching Kanji for the Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students in Vietnam	Japanese language

These results revealed a clear increasing trend in the number of publications related to "betonamujinron" in Japan, with a marked increase over the last decade. The majority of the publications covered topics related to culture and society, followed by language and education, history and politics, and economics and business. The table provides a column indicating the theme or category of the selected titles, coded by the authors. The themes include governance, war, diplomacy, literature, social awareness, Japanese language, health, employment, Vietnam history, French era, Korea, refugees, nursing trainee, international student, technical intern trainees, and others. It appears that in the Phase I, the papers show the themes of war, diplomacy, and history, while Phase II turns into refugees, social awareness, Japanese language education, healthcare etc.

Figure 3 shows the word cloud generated by the first title for each year picked from the search for "betonamujin," which likely provides a visual representation of the recurring themes or prominent keywords associated with the selected titles. By analyzing the word cloud, we can gain insights into the predominant subjects and concepts discussed in the chosen articles or topics throughout the years. The size and prominence of each word in the word cloud would reflect its frequency or significance in the titles. This visualization would offer a concise summary, allowing us to quickly identify the recurring themes or areas of focus within the context of "betonamujin." It could serve as a useful tool for researchers or individuals interested in exploring the evolving landscape of topics related to "betonamujin" over time.

Figure 3. Word Cloud generated by the first title for each year picked from
the search for "betonamujin"

Discussion

Our findings suggest that there is an increasing interest in Japan in understanding foreign
characteristics and culture, particularly in relation to the Vietnamese population. The increase
in the number of publications related to "betonamujinron" is indicative of a growing awareness
of the importance of mutual cultural understanding in a diverse society. This trend can help
promote policies that address the challenges associated with the growing diversity of Japan's
population. Additionally, the increase in research on Vietnam and Vietnamese people may be
attributed to the trends of labor migration and international student mobility. The findings
suggest that there is a need for more research on the Vietnamese population in Japan to better
understand their experiences and to develop effective policies to address their needs.

The number of betonamujinron publications has grown rapidly over the past decade, reflecting
the significant increase in the Vietnamese population in Japan. This trend is likely to continue
as Japan becomes more diverse and the need for cross-cultural understanding and
communication grows. While research on Vietnamese people in Japan is still relatively new,
our literature review identified several key themes in existing research, including the
experiences of Vietnamese workers and students in Japan, the cultural differences and
similarities between Vietnamese and Japanese people, and the challenges of mutual cultural
understanding and communication. Our findings suggest that there is a need for more nuanced
and complex understandings of cultural differences and similarities between Vietnamese
people and Japanese people, and more research that goes beyond simple categorizations of
cultural groups. This can help promote mutual cultural understanding and social inclusion in
Japan. The increasing interest in Vietnamese people and culture in Japan reflects a broader
trend of interest in cultural diversity and mutual understanding in the country. As Japan
becomes more diverse, there is a growing recognition of the need to understand and respect the
cultural differences and similarities between different populations.

The growing interest in betonamujinron and other fields of study related to cultural diversity
and mutual understanding in Japan can have important implications for policy and social
change. By promoting greater awareness and understanding of cultural diversity, Japan can
develop more effective policies and practices that promote social inclusion and reduce

discrimination and exclusion. The findings of our literature review have important implications for trainee and international student policies in Japan. Specifically:

- Trainee policies: Many Vietnamese people come to Japan as technical trainees, and our review suggests that these trainees face significant challenges related to cultural differences, language barriers, healthcare and social isolation. To promote greater mutual cultural understanding and social inclusion, it is important for trainee policies to provide more support for cultural exchange and language learning. This could include language classes, cultural exchange programs, and opportunities for trainees to interact with Japanese people outside of their work environment.

- International student policies: Vietnamese students are one of the largest groups of international students in Japan, and our review suggests that they face similar challenges related to cultural differences and social isolation. To promote greater mutual cultural understanding and social inclusion, it is important for international student policies to provide more support for cultural exchange and language learning. This could include language classes, cultural exchange programs, and opportunities for students to interact with Japanese people outside of their academic environment.

More broadly, our findings suggest that trainee and international student policies should be developed with a greater awareness of cultural diversity and the challenges of mutual cultural understanding. Policies that focus solely on the technical skills or academic achievements of trainees and students may overlook the importance of cultural exchange and social inclusion, which are critical for promoting greater mutual understanding and creating a more inclusive society.

Conclusion

The increasing number of publications on "betonamujinron" reflects a heightened interest in understanding the Vietnamese population in Japan. This trend signifies a growing recognition of the importance of cultural understanding in a diverse society and can guide policy development. The rise in research on Vietnam and the Vietnamese people can be attributed to labor migration and international student mobility trends. This highlights the need for further research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the Vietnamese population in Japan and to develop tailored policies to meet their specific needs. The findings of this study contribute to promoting diversity and inclusion in Japan and underscore the importance of ongoing research to inform effective policies that address the challenges associated with the country's growing population diversity.

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Between Identity and Peacebuilding: A Case of Women's Participation in Thailand's Deep South Peace Process

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Abstract
This study examines women's participation in the peace process as efforts to resolve the long-standing conflict in Thailand's deep south. Despite the ongoing unrest between the Thai military and Malay resistance groups in the southern border provinces, women's participation at the formal decision-making level within peace processes has been largely overlooked. The study explores the factors contributing to the lack of recognition of women's involvement. It investigates the relationship between women's identity, ethnicity, religion, and their influence on peacebuilding. The research analyzes data from 142 women, comprising Malay-Muslim and Thai-Buddhist participants, and includes in-depth interviews with selected women leaders. The findings indicate that women who collaborate with government agencies and represent both religious and ethnic backgrounds are more likely to impact the peace process significantly. In contrast, those who emphasized exclusive identities had less influence. Thus, representing women's identities is crucial to their engagement and effectiveness in peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords: Women, Peace Negotiation, Identity, Thailand's Deep South

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Introduction

The architecture of conflict resolution in many parts of the world tends to be male-dominated arenas. So does in the context of Thailand's deep south case. Nearly zero women took part in the peace table. To women in the deep south of Thailand, their challenges to influence the peace (decision)making process become considerably more complex when they intersect with poverty, insecurity, and conflict. Like many conflict-affected areas, the deep southern women bear numerous difficulties due to horizontal development imbalances, religious misinterpretation, and conflict circumstances (Burke, 2012; Buranajaroenkij, 2018).

The deep south of Thailand is a predominantly Malay Muslim ethnic population residing in three southernmost border provinces of Thailand, including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Unlike the rest of the majority of Thais in the country, religion and ethnicity have rendered them minorities compared to Thailand's 90% Thai Buddhist population (Jitpiromsri & Shobonvasu, 2007). The deep south of Thailand also has a long history of armed conflict between Malay resistance groups and the Royal Thai government's military and police forces, which began in the 1960s and has remained unresolved to this day (Askew, 2007). Apart from the conflict, the three provinces are regarded as the least developed in Thailand's northeast. Since the escalation of the conflict in 2004, the conflict has been victimizing around 20,985 casualties to this day (Deep South Watch, 2022).

It is essential to recognize that men and women experience conflict differently. Women struggle with double burdens of conflict, direct and indirect impacts. According to Anderlini (2007), despite being prone to conflict victims, women also played a crucial role in promoting peace in conflict zones. Women in the deep south collaborate to establish collective initiatives addressing women's issues in the conflict zone. Thus, their efforts become significantly important. The questions worth asking then, despite women's active roles at the community level in promoting peace, why are women absent from formal peace negotiations? What factors explain the lack of recognition of women's contribution to peacebuilding? Drawing from the lens of Feminism, this study attempt to address those queries by providing analyses based on the primary information from women in the Deep South of Thailand. The result of this study contributes to the debates on the need to enhance the inclusive participation of women in the peace process, particularly in the Southeast Asia context.

This study is grounded on the theoretical approach of Feminism to highlight the gender contestation within the society where patriarchy is rooted, and women have to face multiple layers to foster their participation in public spheres (including peace negotiation in this context).

Feminism

According to Feminism, women's experiences are essential in defining their sense of empowerment (Wylie, 2003; Isike, 2009). The empowerment aspect is crucial to ensure that women enhance their capacity to communicate their voices and needs to be accommodated at the (peace) decision-making level. In the rigidity of the peace negotiation body, institutions are heavily embedded. Thus, Feminist studies contend that including a gender perspective is critical to properly engaging women in the institutional structure (Krook, 2010; Krook & Mackay, 2010; Geha, 2019). Feminism claims that institutions are profoundly entangled with gendered relationships, impacting the development of masculinity and femininity in everyday

life, including political decisions, according to Kenny (1996). The notion that gender norms, regulations, and practices substantially impact political outcomes is substantial, incorporating gender analysis into institutionalism and exposing power dynamics within institutions (Mackay et al., 2010).

In a patriarchal society, male actors are not responsible for women's struggles. Gender equality and women's empowerment face challenges from the patriarchal system, male supremacy, and the prevailing status quo. According to Luyt & Starck (2020), the status quo encompasses a wide range of individual, political, social, and institutional processes that contribute to reproducing gender inequalities. Within this spectrum, various actors hinder efforts to empower women, and surprisingly, there are even groups of women on this spectrum. The status quo reinforces the patriarchal system, which exploits women through a narrow, gender-blind perspective. Consequently, women must exercise caution in identifying their allies and those who may not support their cause.

Feminism emphasizes the importance of women working together as a collective force to change the structures of gender relations. This collaboration is particularly relevant in peace negotiations, where women's involvement can lead to transformative institutional changes. In this sense, power relations are often taken for granted within institutions and become institutionalized due to deeply ingrained gender norms. These norms shape how masculinity and femininity are perceived, leading to unequal power dynamics within the system. Recognizing this, scholars like Cornell (2006) and Mackay & Waylen (2009) have highlighted the need to challenge and deconstruct gender norms to create more equitable and inclusive institutions.

Taking a feminist perspective on institutionalism, feminist scholars argue that empowering women goes beyond just benefiting women themselves. In the context of this study, by involving women in decision-making processes and leadership roles, society as a whole stands to gain. Such inclusion can lead to more holistic and inclusive dimensions, ranging from socio-economic progress to promoting religious and cultural harmony and peace initiatives (Chrames & Wieringa, 2003). In this way, advancing women's empowerment becomes essential for achieving broader societal progress. To achieve positive outcomes is crucial to ensure that women have equal participation and representation within institutions. When women sit at the table, they can address their everyday issues and concerns, advocate for their rights, and work towards achieving positive changes within the system. The active involvement of women in shaping institutional agendas can lead to more responsive and effective policies that cater to the needs of all members of society.

This study indicates that women's organizations are evolving into an institution that performs dual functions in the formal and informal actions towards the agenda for women's empowerment based on the feminist theoretical framework. Women's organizations, particularly feminist ones, can establish goals for women's empowerment, such as emancipation and equality (Lang in Smith, 2000). Women's organizations provide a formal role in facilitating the development of women's capacities as change agents. Having women's organizations, women could access resources to improve their awareness and comprehension of their rights in the informal sphere.

Methods

The research included quantitative and qualitative methods and was mainly carried out in three provinces in Thailand's deep south: Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The quantitative study's respondents were women who lived in the study area. One hundred forty-two women satisfied the study's criteria and answered all questionnaire questions. The quantitative approach collected data via a questionnaire, which each lady completed separately. Because the poll was voluntary and confidential, the respondents' identities were not divulged as part of the research. Respondents can withdraw their participation if they feel uncomfortable while completing the questionnaire. Respondents were given informed consent, an explanation, and information about the research and how to participate before completing the questionnaire. A local translator supported the researcher in easing communication between the researcher (a foreigner) and the respondents, who prefer to communicate in Thai for formal purposes. The questionnaire was back-translated and evaluated for validity and reliability by specialists. This questionnaire was based on Oxfam GB's Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) (Lombardini et al., 2017). The tool was primarily created based on thoughts concerning women's empowerment. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find changes in the three indicators: women's identities, partisanship, and type of participation in the peace process.

The interviewees in this study's qualitative design are women who are primarily involved in and active in women's organizations and women's concerns. The snowball sampling method was used in this study to interview ten women from various organizations. The first point of contact was made through the Civic Women, one of the female CSOs connected to the Prince Songkhla University campus in Pattani, which resulted in the identification of the ten interviewees. Additionally, the qualitative method included open-ended, in-depth interviews to gather data. The interviews, which followed a case study approach, attempted to delve deeply into information to address research concerns about the connection between women's identity, including race and religion, and their impact on peacebuilding. During the data collection process, the researcher was assisted by a local interpreter proficient in English, Thai, and Malay. The data collected during the in-depth interviews were analyzed using process content analysis.

Contextualization: Timelines of the Peace Talks

The following section describes the timelines of different rounds of formal peace talks to bring into perspective how the peace negotiations in attempts to resolve Thailand's deep south conflict have been going on. From 2013 up to today, different negotiating teams or task forces have changed over different administrations. Each round of the formal negotiations consisted of Party A referring to the Government of Thailand, Party B referring to Malay resistance groups (i.e. BRN, MARA Patani, and PULO), and a representative of Malaysia as the facilitator. None of the female negotiators from the deep south has ever been involved in those peace tables.

First Round (2013)

The first formal attempt to resolve the conflict in the deep south of Thailand through negotiation appeared in early 2013 under the administration of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. It was the first official peace talk held in Malaysia, marking the involvement of the neighbouring country as the mediator of the peace negotiation. Scholars have argued that

the negotiation was an implicit political nature recognition and legitimation of the existence of the National Revolution Front or Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) as a Malay resistance group rather than just criminals (Wheelers & Chambers, 2019). The negotiation came up with the "General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process," which was signed by a representative of the Thai Government (Party A) and a representative of BRN (Party B). Nevertheless, the negotiation did not last for long due to the Thai political turmoil the following year and the reluctance of BRN to participate. Experts signalled that the failure was proof of the unpreparedness of the negotiation body, both its structure and substance (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Second Round (2014-2015)

Since the political change occurred in Bangkok after the coup, the new Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha made some adjustments in terms of the deep south peace negotiation structure. In late 2014, a new working committee was established to extend the peace negotiation with Malaysia remaining as a mediating country. A former army chief, General Aksara Kerdpol, chaired the working committee to represent Party A. On the other side, Party B also made a different move when they initiated an umbrella group to strengthen the bargaining position at the peace table. Both parties shed light that they learned from the previous failure of the peace negotiation. In 2015, MARA Patani was established as an umbrella group of BRN, PULO (Patani Liberation Organization), and GMIP (Patani Islamic Mujahidin Movement). Unlike the first round of peace negotiations in 2014, the second round lasted until the following year. In 2015, Party C, civil society and non-conflicted parties were welcomed to participate in the negotiation process. The primary attention in this round was to reduce violent incidents and be more engaging in participation.

Third Round (2019-2020)

In 2019, the replacement of the leader of the negotiating team happened again. It means that the continuation of the negotiation after a few years of stagnation attempted to be renewed. This round was started with the Berlin Initiatives in late 2019, marking the agreement from Party A and Party B to pursue a newly fresh dialogue with basic principles including sincerity, honesty, human dignity, inclusivity and justice (International Crisis Group, 2020). Meanwhile, both parties agreed that the role of Malaysia serves as a facilitator.

Fourth Round (2022-2023)

According to the International Crisis Group (2022, 2023), the fourth negotiation round occurred in the spring of 2022, from March 31 to April 1, 2022. Organized by the Joint Working Group, this round focuses on fresh developments at the negotiating table and events related to the debate. Nevertheless, new nuance came along with the influence of Anwar Ibrahim, a newly elected Malaysian prime minister with connections to southern Thailand, after the Malaysia General Election in November 2022. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim appointed a new chief facilitator, a former Chief-Army of Malaysia's security forces, General Zulkifli Zainal Abidin. His appointment, which actively starts in January 2023, is strategically meant to balance the power between Party A and Party B. Even General Abidin's appointment gave some people hope for progress, but Party B members continued to privately lament pressure from Kuala Lumpur to end the informal talks. Experts signaled that the peace process needs informal discussion opportunities so the parties can test ideas and redlines. Malaysia should cooperate with them to develop adaptable agreements that permit

these to continue. After the General Election in May 2023, the ongoing peace talks are on hold, primarily due to Party B's wish to proceed with the negotiation after the formation of a new government in Bangkok after the election.

Locating Women in Peace Process

This section elaborates on the analyses based on interview data sets with ten women in the deep south. The interviews have generally revealed women's struggle to get into the spotlight of the peace negotiation. They also shared their wish for inclusive participation in the peace process, which they referred to as including women (and/or women's interests) in the peace talks.

From several formal peace negotiations that have been held, the women from the deep south have yet to be included. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that a female staff from Party A side was involved, but mainly only served for logistic and non-essential tasks. As such, it is undeniable proof that peace negotiations lack gender awareness and inclusivity aspects. The gender perspective is becoming more significant in peacebuilding and conflict resolution since the global blueprint UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was launched. The gender perspective emphasizes peace in ordinary life and its foundation from grassroots efforts to elevate the importance of equality, social welfare, and fairness through its emancipatory nature. At the same time, it facilitates changes in prevailing power dynamics and gender relations (Bjorkdahl & Selimovic, 2016).

The absence of women in the deep south peace talks has tended to be associated with several underlying barriers, the structural and partisanship issues. Structurally, the peace negotiating team in Party A formed based on civil servant employment ranks. Such a requirement implies a matter of seniority in each department assigned by the government. A junior and less than five years of civil servant career would not be counted as eligible to serve on the team. Unfortunately, senior Thai bureaucrats are dominating the high-rank positions. Thus, few female officers would have a chance to be appointed to the peace dialogue team. A senior woman leader (Malay-Muslim) based in Pattani province told her thoughts:

> If she (referring a Thai female staff involved in Party B) herself got limited by male negotiators to involve into more essential tasks, then, sorry to say, but it proves women like us in the Deep South participating in the peace table is just becoming more difficult.

Meanwhile, on the Party B side, the domination of Malay-Muslim male leaders of the resistance groups is rigid. To conservative Malay and Islamic interpretations, leadership is seen as a male arena as they often refer to men as imams (leaders) and women as maximum (followers). Besides, women in the Deep South, in general, are concerned about the partisanship issue. It deemed them to be confidently involved in the peace table directly. Women are avoiding being accused of taking sides between Party A and Party B. Similarly to what this Thai-Buddhist female leader from Pattani said in an interview session:

> I guess we (women) do not want the image that we are taking sides, either we support Party A or Party B. Thus, the peace negotiation should create an independent group, like Party C maybe. In that way, we women groups would feel safer to involve in the peace table.

In contrast, women groups in Thailand's deep south are notably active at the grassroots level in promoting peace. Women, both Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslim communities, have led various initiatives. Women work in different fields, from providing mental support to the victims, acting as trust builders and community facilitators and influencing peace negotiation (Marddent, 2017; Buranajaroenkij, 2018). During the second round of peace talks in 2015, women's groups formed an umbrella collaboration of 23 women-led local organizations, namely (Peace Agenda of Women) PAOW. Together, PAOW drafted a policy recommendation sent to the peace table to demand an end to violent incidents in public areas or what they called a "safety zone" (Suwardi, 2023). Women's grassroots organizations and networks, as well as other parts of civil society, play an essential role in giving support and help to victims and survivors of sexual abuse in crisis circumstances (Kanchanalak, 2015). In the past two decades, women's activism and efforts in advocating peace have gradually improved and shifted from victim-solidarity-based groups to become more structural, formal, and institutionalized women's civil society organizations (Suwardi & Chambers, 2023). One of the PAOW leaders said:

> I think PAOW successfully drafted and sent the recommendation to the peace table was a strong message that women groups' interests are demanding peace and justice. We are glad when the safety zone pilot project was implemented.

Subsequently, a notable Muslim female human rights activist in the deep south stated that women's participation in the deep south peace process required extra attention and efforts from many elements. She said, "It is important to have gender justice in the peace negotiations, but women themselves must also improve their capacity and knowledge on how to be capable negotiators." In addition to capacity concerns, the socio-cultural environment of the deep south community, strongly influenced by the strict security maintenance techniques used by Thailand's security forces, has made it more difficult for women to achieve their objectives. The power and resistance of the prevailing state often prevent women's groups from bringing about structural change towards peacebuilding. Overly centralized state power has caused it to dominate the deep South society and marginalize citizens' efforts to raise social consciousness, notably of women's issues. Consider the political motivation behind the government's propensity to maintain its position by ignoring the primary reasons for the deep south conflict—granting people more autonomy and assisting them in improving their lives. Similarly, Jitpiromsri & Mcargo (2010) argued that such circumstances had created frustration among the deep South people and showed a crisis of state legitimacy, which the government has incessantly attempted to deny.

Additionally, majority Malay-Muslim women carry the burdens of the Islamic Family and Inheritance Law. Unfortunately, some of this law's execution favours men and is outdated in modern society, making women's rights even more ambiguous. Lack of legal protection from divorce, widowhood, and polygamy, absence of a minimum marriage age, reduced access to property ownership, and obstructions to leadership are only a few of the discriminations faced by Muslim women (Patani Working Group, 2017). Women's participation in public speeches, such as influencing the peace process, is becoming more challenging considering gender-blind circumstances.

Unravelling Women's Participation in the Peace Process

This section examines related factors to investigate further why women are absent from the Thailand deep south peace negotiations, presenting the quantitative result based on 142 participating women.

First, concerning the diverse identities of the communities, both ethnicity and religion. Although conflict is not exclusively treated as inter-ethnic or inter-religious, scholars have noted that ethnicity and religion are intertwined in adding topics to the debate of the reasons for conflict. For instance, to Anjarwati and Trimble (2013), since the government has gradually imposed more substantial restrictions to force groups to assimilate their identities, this line of action developed a trend that separated the perceived 'otherness' resulting in an undesirable growth in biased attitudes and pervasive stereotypes between the Malay-Muslim and Thai-Buddhist groups. Historically, these two groups maintained opposing faith and cultural viewpoints. Thus, these disparities in religion and culture are essential in prolonging the conflict.

Deep southern women are more vulnerable to gender-based, which is afflicted by developmental issues and conflicts (Yang et al., 2000). This is primarily due to the influence of traditional cultural norms and religious practices, which frequently portray women as meek, weak, and dependent. Gender norms have been substantially affected by Islamic teachings and Malay culture in the ethnic majority of the Malay Muslims community in the deep south. As a result, World Bank (2020) reported that men and women have distinct gender roles, with women obliged to follow Islamic rules and practices while fulfilling their responsibilities through marriage and cultural identities.

Characteristically, women's groups in the deep south differ in their focus areas, the diversity of their members' backgrounds, and their affiliations. Some women's organizations focus on economic empowerment, peace and capacity building, education, culture, etc. Although the majority population is Muslim, there are women's groups that exclusively represent Thai Buddhists, Malay Muslims, and mixed. Thus, the different backgrounds of women's groups could impact how they run their collective agendas. The complexity of identity issues is reflected in how women's groups navigate their efforts and participate in the peace process. The data showed that 15% of women's groups exclusively represent the Thai-Buddhist community, followed by 30% representing the Malay-Muslim community. The percentages are not surprising, considering the demography of the deep south population. Nevertheless, interestingly there is a growing trend of 51% of women's groups becoming more inclusively collaborated in inter-religious and inter-ethnic communities. This half the data shows that women's groups are increasingly becoming aware that religious and ethnic identities should not be highlighted as their main issues but rather to build more vital unions to seek collective interests, which is peace in Thailand's deep south.
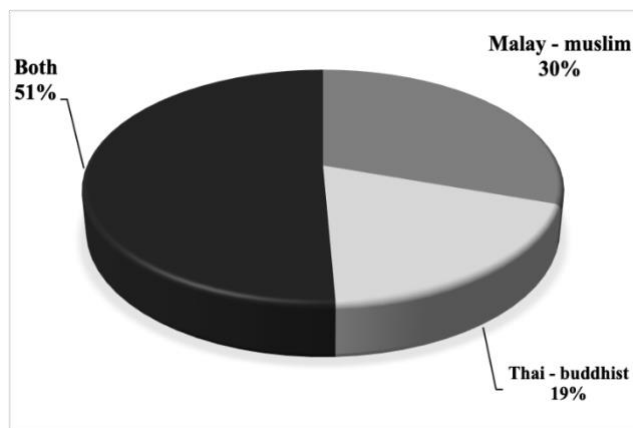
Figure 1: Compositions of Women's Groups based on Religion and Ethnicity

Second, women from the Malay-Muslim community participation in peace dialogues involved dilemmas and considerations around partisanship issues and women's status seen by heavily conservative male Muslim leaders. Specifically, to Malay-Muslim women, their voices and participation in public spheres are often perceived by the general audience as second class (or even less influential). Nevertheless, a remarkable and historic event in Thailand's deep South appeared when the first female Muslim governor was appointed in 2022, 57-year-old Governor Pateemoh Sadeeyamu, shed light on women's leadership in the deep South society (Bangkok Post, 2022).

Although women's organizations are primarily not-for-profit, their activities are financially supported by many different resources. These include government agencies, international non-governmental organizations (international donors), and civil societies. These different forms of affiliation can impact CSOs' agendas for women. The data showed that most women's groups work together (or receive support from) government agencies (49%). While 32% collaborated with government and non-government agencies, only 19% worked with non-governmental agencies.
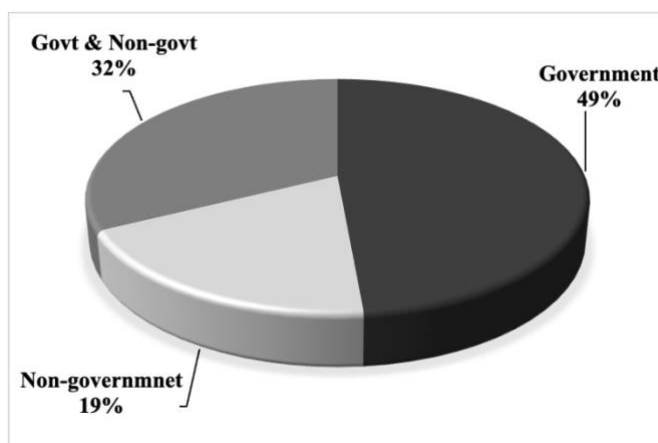

Figure 2: Percentages of Women's Groups Partisanship and Collaboration

Numerous women's organizations work closely with governmental entities created to address concerns in the deep south. The influence of governmental organizations meant that these alliances could not be ignored and increased in significance. These organizations include the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), the Coordination Centre for Children and Women in the Southern Border Province (CCWSBP), and the Southern Border Provinces

Administrative Centre (SBPAC). Although these governmental organizations were primarily created to stabilize the lives of those affected by violence, depending on the program types and organizational structures, they have also had a variety of connections with civil society organizations. However, when there have been bureaucratic changes in these organizations, it has negatively impacted the implementation of policies pertaining to civil society organizations, including women's organizations. As a result, working with government agencies has become more complex. A tendency of state-induced deviation, where state control over the populace burdens women's organizations in developing their capacity to influence change, is experienced by women's organizations as a result of the consequences of inconsistent state policy as a result of the changing of policymakers.

Third, the two indicators above, both women's ethnic and religious identities and their partisanship defined the result of their influence on the peace process. The result showed that 72% participated women fall under the 'indirect' influence on peace negotiation. Meanwhile, only 28% could reach 'direct' influence. The 'indirect' influence is the range of activities, efforts, and initiatives promoting peace in the deep south. It includes women's agendas in strengthening harmonious relations and building trust between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhist communities. While 'direct' influence on the peace process is defined as women's initiatives in interacting with peace negotiating parties. For instance, according to key informants, a few well-known women leaders from the deep south participated in several informal meetings with either Party A or Party B. Even informally, it is crucial that women can communicate their interests to the peace negotiating team (mainly in the second round of peace negotiation). The recommendation letter drafted and sent by PAOW is another categorized effort as a direct influence of women's influence in peace negotiation. Although women were physically absent from the peace table, their voices were being discussed.
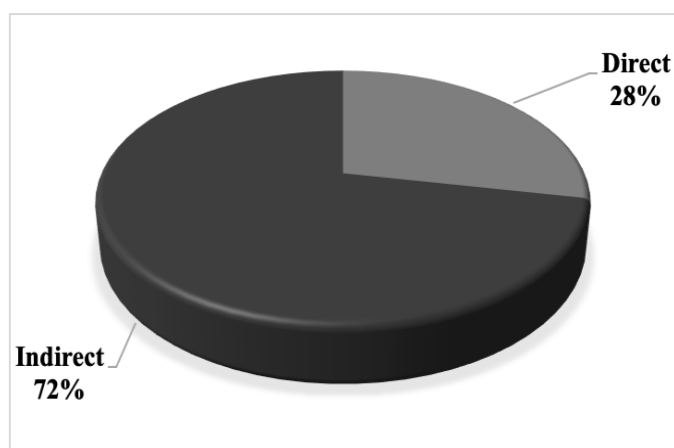

Figure 3: Percentages of Women's Groups Influence on Peace Process

Finally, the study summarizes the result of the relationships between three indicators, partisanship (or collaborating partners), identities (religion and ethnicity), and influence on the peace process. The table below shows that the most 'impactful' women's participation in the peace process is when they collaborate with government agencies, representing both identities of Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists. Nevertheless, the extent of influence of women's participation in the peace process, indirectly and directly, fell into the category of 'moderate'.

Indicators	Women's participation in peace process		
	Less impact	Moderate	Impactful
Partisanship			
Government			▨
Non-Government	▨		
Government & Non-Government		▨	
Identities			
Malay – Muslims	▥	▨	
Thai – Buddhists		▨	
Both		▥	▨
Participation in peace talk			
Direct		▨	
Indirect	▥	▨	

Table 1: Impacts of Women's Participation on Peace Process

Conclusion

Since the escalation of violent conflict in 2004, women in the deep South of Thailand are experiencing obstacles in their daily life. The conflict has victimized women differently than men since women often extensively suffer from both direct and indirect impacts of conflict. Nevertheless, women have been actively promoting peace in the front row; they conducted various initiatives and efforts, both formally and informally. Contrary, women's active participation at the grassroots level was not fully recognized at the formal peace negotiation level. For the past ten years, in 4 rounds of formal peace negotiations, women from the deep South have never been present at the peace tables.

This study argues that underlying factors are associated with women's participation in peace, including partisanship or collaborating partners and identity representations. Living in a heavily dominated patriarchal Malay-Muslim community, women face multilayer obstacles when participating in public, including promoting peace. At the same time, the deep south conflict is associated with identity issues between Malay Muslims and Thai-Buddhist communities. Even though not a sole factor, identity differences contributed to prolonging the conflict to some extent. Therefore, women's groups that inclusively work together and represent Malay-Muslims and Thai-Buddhist identities can create a more impactful influence in promoting peace. Additionally, women's groups that closely collaborate with non-governmental agencies tend to have less impact than those women's organizations that work together with government agencies.

The trend shown in the results deemed the importance of inter-religious harmony in running women's organizations in Thailand's deep south. Being exclusive to a particular religious group would deter possible more significant impacts (such as promoting peace). Similarly, Hicks (2002) argued that in an organization, it was necessary to have organizational leadership that did not endorse a single religious framework but built a structure and culture of religious diversity between leaders and followers of an organization. Especially in a conflict zone like the deep south, religious exclusivism was more likely to be involved in conflict issues. Because religion is often used as a source of mobilization and recruitment to run an organization in conflict zones (Isaacs, 2016). In addition to ethnic diversity in a

conflict setting, like in the deep south, Novta (2016) highlighted her argument that there was a strong association between ethnic diversity and conflict. Although in the context of the deep south, the notion of "ethnic conflicts" could not be generalized (Brown, 1993) since the Malays and the Thais were not exclusively conflicted parties but were more into ethnopolitical struggles of the Malay ethnic groups in the Thai nation (Norsworthy, 2008).

In sum, with the absence of women, formal peace negotiations of Thailand's deep south conflict are still far from adopting gender-wise principles. Either the conflict itself or even the peace process architectures are still very much male-dominated arenas. Thus, women's efforts in establishing more vital allies with interreligious groups, both partnerships with government and non-government agencies, would be needed. When women's groups become more unified, women could build more influence towards their participation in peace negotiations.

Acknowledgments

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