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# Articles





## The Visit of Rabindranath Tagore and Dynamics of Nationalism in Colonial Vietnam



Chi P. Pham\*

### [ *Abstract* ]

Numerous journalistic and literary writings about the Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian awardee of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1913), appeared in newspapers of colonial Vietnam. His stop-over in Saigon (Cochin China) in 1929 created political discussions in contemporary journalism and other publications. Tagore and his visit to Saigon inspired Vietnamese intellectuals and stirred diverse anti-colonial thought. This paper examines writings and images about Tagore in colonial Vietnamese journals and newspapers, reconstructing how intellectuals recalled and imagined him as they also engaged with anti-colonial thought, particularly anti-colonial modernity and anti-capitalism. Contextualizing the reception of Tagore in colonial projects of modernizing the Vietnamese colony, the paper argues that discussions inspired by Tagore's visit embody contemporary nationalist ideology.

**Keywords:** Rabindranath Tagore, anti-colonial modernity, anti-capitalism, colonial Vietnamese intellectuals, Vietnamese anti-colonialism

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## I . Introduction

In the 1920s, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), appeared extensively in Vietnamese periodicals. Local intellectuals, many of them western-educated and largely gathering in Saigon, included Tagore's life and works became the subject of exchanges on nationalist thought, especially after his visit to Saigon in 1929. Studying periodicals about Tagore, this study delineates looks at how the writer and thinker was perceived and inspired contemporary nationalist thought of Vietnamese intellectuals. In contextualizing writings about Tagore in the French government's projects of colonizing the Vietnamese people, the paper argues that the reception of Tagore in colonial Vietnam embodies anti-colonial sentiments, particularly on anti-colonial modernity and anti-capitalism.

## II . Tagore's Visit

The news that Tagore would make a stop-over in Saigon on his way back to India from China in 1924 first reached *La Cloche Fêlée*, a newspaper that was "ideologically revolutionary" (Peycam 2015: 183) and founded by Nguyễn An Ninh (1900-1943), "one of best known anti-French activists" (Truong Buu Lam 200: 190). In the April 7, 1924 issue of the paper, there was an announcement by Hindu societies in Saigon that Tagore had left Calcutta and would visit Saigon. And on April 21, 1924, *La Cloche Fêlée* announced the change of Tagore's itinerary: although the reception for Tagore in Saigon was already organized, he would not visit Saigon due to his health problems after giving a speech in Hong Kong. The French version of the essay "Mon École" [My School] by Tagore occupied pages of *La Cloche Fêlée* published on May 19 and June 2, 1924. Nguyễn An Ninh quoted Tagore many times in *La Cloche Fêlée* in an attempt to present his engagement with "anarchist ideas" (Ho Tam Hue Tai 1996: 82). In "L'ideál de la Jeunesse Annamite" [Aspiration of Vietnamese Youth], delivered on October 15, 1923 for the Association for the Encouragement of Study, Ninh mentioned Tagore and other "great Indians" as inspiring Vietnamese people to be more aware of their participation in the revolution. The most

striking evidence for Ninh's appreciation of Tagore is that in the first volume of *La Cloche Fêlée*, issued on January 7, 1924, an epigraph by Tagore was placed at the top right corner of the first page in big and bold letters: "Those who love to dominate foreign races leave their true liberty and humanism for the support of mechanics, which is necessary to keep other people in slavery. On the other hand, the degradation of personal pride and individual interest damages true humanism. Consequently, there would be terrible consequences in the aftermath."<sup>1</sup> Another article by Ninh, "A un Confrère du Nord," issued on March 17, 1924, dwelt on Tagore's ideas of race, nationalism and internationalism. Also in 1924, Ninh wrote "Patriotisme chez Tagore" under the pen name "Nguyễn Tịnh"; the article filled five columns of the June 16, 1924 issue. And, in a long article, entitled "La Sagesse du cochon" [Wisdom of the Animal] published on November 26, 1925, Ninh praised Tagore for his thoughts about Brahma and human harmony.

Another contemporary Vietnamese intellectual who admired Tagore as much as Nguyễn An Ninh was Phạm Quỳnh and other contributors of *Nam Phong tạp chí*. They expressed their belief in the colonial policy of Franco-Vietnamese harmony (Ho Tam Hue Tai 82; McHale 84). In 1924, a series of articles about Tagore was published in *Nam Phong tạp chí*, in celebration of his planned visit to Saigon. Volumes 83 and 84 (1924) contained the article "Một nhà đại thi sĩ Ấn Độ: ông R.Tagore" [The Great Indian Poet: Mr. Rabindranath Tagore] and the *quốc ngữ* version of Tagore's speech, "Declaration of the East," as well a response by Maurice Croiset, a medical doctor and a professor at the Sorbonne University. Moreover, volumes 93 and 94 in 1924 include the article "Đất châu Á mới - hai nhân vật - hai sự nghiệp" [The New Asian Land - Two Characters - Two Careers] by Sylvain Lévi, who was the first foreign lecturer at Visva - Bharata University of Tagore and who had an "intimate [relationship] with Tagore and his circle" (Tagore 1997: 353).

Tagore's visit to Saigon in June 1929 caused a considerable

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes in Vietnamese and French in this paper are translated to English by the author.

uproar in colonial Vietnam among colonial officials, journalists, politicians, and the common people. A large amount of news and articles about Tagore and his visit found a dominant place in contemporary legal “political opposition newspapers” (Peycam 2015: 262). These newspaper are *L’Écho annamite*, *La Tribune Indchinoise*, *Đông Pháp thời báo (Indochina Times)*, *La Cloche Fêlée*, and other non-communist progress newspapers such as *Thần Chung* (successor of *Đông Pháp Thời Báo*), *Công giáo đồng thịnh* (the new Catholic daily), *Đuốc Nhà Nam*, and *Phụ nữ tân văn* (Ho Tai Hue-Tam 1996: 206; Peycam 2015: 171-4). Among these newspapers, *Tribune Indochinoise* and *Đuốc Nhà Nam*, founded by the two constitutionalists Bùi Quang Chiêu (1873-1944) and Dương Văn Giáo (1892-1945) respectively, were the official mouthpieces of the event. Bùi Quang Chiêu and Dương Văn Giáo were also leading members of the official Welcome Committee. Articles and photos published in *La Tribune Indchinoise*, *Đuốc Nhà Nam*, *L’echo annamite* and *Thần Chung* captured Tagore’s visit in colonial Vietnam.

In late June 1929, Tagore did indeed stopover in Saigon on the way back from Canada where he had attended the Conference of the National Council of Education in Vancouver as a representative of India. In fact, after his stay in Canada, Tagore had spent a month in Japan giving lectures and interviews. When he prepared for his return to India, representatives of the French Embassy invited him to come to Indo-China and to make a tour through the colony. His reaction was positive; he thought he would be able to visit Angkor Wat. However, doctors in Japan strongly and secretly advised Chanda, Tagore’s secretary, to prevent him to visit Angkor. The French Embassy in Japan also instructed Saigon officials to keep the visit to Angkor Wat out of the program (Roy 2011: 2011). Tagore sailed for India in a French postal boat, *S.S. Angers*, and reached Saigon at 11:30 am on June 21, 1929.

The cabinet chef of the Cochin China government, Noueilhetas, and M. Samy, a Hindu, arrived at Nhà Bè Harbor to make sure everything was set up for the ship’s arrival. Bùi Quang Chiêu and M. Béziat (1894-?), president of the Council of Cochinchina (Clauzel 494), came later and warmly greeted Tagore in French in the first lounge of the ship, where Tagore had lunch (*Le*

*Tribune Inchinoise* 21/6/1929). Tagore responded in English through Mme. Palard (?),<sup>2</sup> who was invited by Chiêu to be the interpreter. “Common people” (thiên hạ) eagerly climbed up the ship to see Tagore; a white cloth banner reading “Welcome Rabindranath Tagore-Youth and Labor” was hung in the harbor. Tagore was dressed in black; he had worn a velvet cap, and his hair was white. A group of young people offered him a bouquet of flowers (*L’echo annamite* 17/6/1929; *L’echo annamite* 20/6/1929).

Tagore’s activities during his time in Saigon were strictly organized in a tightly-organized program by the Welcome Committee. The first day of Tagore’s visit was June 21, 1929. First, “To welcome Tagore, a Champagne party has been organized” at Hôtel de Ville at 6 pm (*Đuốc Nhà Nam* 18/6/1929). The party was attended by representatives of the Annamite, the Hindu and the French communities as well as by representatives of journals and of governmental officials. Béziat bowed his head while welcoming Tagore on behalf of his city and gave a speech appreciating Tagore as the poet of a nation and the world and praising his poems as having provided human beings a means to express their sorrows (*Le Tribune Inchinoise* 21/6/1929). Béziat’s speech was in French; Kerjean translated it into English. A second reception was organized at the Theatre Principal at 9 pm. Seats in the Theater were filled with Indians, French and Annamese; tickets for entry and “back seats” (trên chót) were respectively \$1.00 (piastre) and \$0.50. Three public speeches were delivered, including “Présentation du Rabindra Nath Tagore,” “Address A. Ranbindra Nath Tagore,” and “Traduction de l’ allocution de Rabindra Nath Tagore,” by constitutionalists Bùi Quang Chiêu, Dương Văn Giáo and Trần Văn Trí (chief editor of *La Tribune Indochina*), respectively. The English speech of Tagore had been translated into French before the meeting. The French translation was read by Jacques Đức (?),<sup>3</sup> and the *quốc ngữ* translation was read by Hồ Văn Nguơn, chief editor of *Đuốc Nhà Nam*. According to reports, “As soon as Tagore entered the theater, the audience stood up with bated breath… listening to Tagore’s speech, the audience was so quiet that the buzz of mosquitoes were

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<sup>2</sup> There is no record about this people.

<sup>3</sup> No data about this person has been found yet.

audible" (*Thần Chung* 23-24/6/1929). Both journalists of French and *quốc ngữ* were invited. At this party, journalists including Lê Thành Lư (1898), Huỳnh Phúc Yên (penname: Focyan; editor of *Công giáo đồng thịnh*) and Trường Gia Kỳ Sanh (Trúc Viên), members of the Indochinese Labour Party (founded in 1926 in Saigon), invited Tagore to give a speech to Vietnamese peasants and workers. Tagore agreed tentatively.

On the second day, Tagore met the governor of Cochin China in the early morning. Tagore again mentioned his desire to visit Angkor Wat and he asked for some books about Indochina for his university. Thirty minutes later, Tagore was taken by car to visit L' Ecole de poteric [College of Fine Art] in Biên Hòa. On this visit, he was accompanied by Jean Kerjean (secretary of Court de' Appel and interpreter), Trần Văn Kha (colonial counselor), Trần Khắc Nương (delegate of the Municipal Council), Tamby (cadastral commissioner), Hồ Văn Ngun (representative of Annamite journalists), Chanda (secretary of the Poet) and several Hindu members. The chief of Biên Hòa province and the director of the college welcomed Tagore, guiding him through classes and showrooms to see artistic works in ceramic and bronze. Tagore bought a ceramic vase and two lampshades for his students in his university named Santiniketan. He was particularly impressed with the white stone vases painted with yellow flowers. At the end of the visit, Tagore signed the visitors' book of the College. Tagore's third activity was to visit the tomb of Lê Văn Duyệt, a 19th-century mandarin who rescued Christian missionaries. On his arrival, Annamite music was played at the gate to welcome him. Tagore did not join the tea party that had been organized by administrators of the tomb; the journey to Biên Hòa over bad roads had tired him (*Đuốc nhà nam* 27/6/1929).

Also on the second day, Tagore was given a big champagne party in the Union Printing House, owned by the district chief, Nguyễn Văn Cửa. The owner, his employees and the members of the Welcome Committee, stood in queue to welcome Tagore. Tagore talked with two Bengali workers. Then, he asked for a cup of coconut juice, and showed great curiosity in Cửa's collection of ancient artistic items. The district chief offered Tagore a model of an Annamite battleship, red lacquered and trimmed with gold, as a gift

(*Đuốc nhà nam* 27/6/1929). The photographer Khánh Kì took two photos of Tagore in Cúa's company. At 9 pm that evening, Tagore went to the Eden Cinema in Saigon.

On the third day, Tagore took a visit to Catinat Street, accompanied by Bùi Quang Chiêu, Nguyễn Đức Nhuận (1900-1968, chief editor of the newspaper *Phụ nữ tân văn* [Women's News]) and Lê Trung Nghĩa (1904-1947, a political cartoonist of *La Tribune Indochinoise*, *Đông Pháp thời báo*, and *Đuốc nhà Nam*); he visited to several Bombay shops and one Annam textile shop. Wastamull, owner of a Bombay textile store, guided Tagore to see the Bombay shops on Catinat Street. Tagore bought the "essential objects" of Annam, a piece of brocade; and together with Nguyễn Đức Nhuận, he watched how a piece of satin was woven and dyed by local people. At Espagne Street, Tagore asked a tailor, named Trần Thái Nguyên, to make an Annamite tunic for him. The Annamite costume, a bright brocade shirt, white silk trousers, Gia Định shoes, and crepe hat made Tagore look like an old Annamite man. In "Rabindranth Tagore ghé viếng tòa báo Phụ nữ tân văn" [Tagore visits the editorial office of *Phụ nữ tân văn* newspaper], Nguyễn Đức Nhuận told his readers that he had expected that Tagore was as dark as other Indians he met, but as it turned out, he had "a white and smooth skin, high nose, broad forehead... his hands are elegant and noble, his fingers are white and round; he was born in a high-class family; every day he composes poetry and plays music" (*Phụ nữ tân văn* 4/7/1929). Later, at a reception hosted by the Chinese Chamber at the "Pagoda Cantonese,"<sup>4</sup> located Cây Mai Street, Chợ Lớn (Saigon), Tagore conversed with some members about the importance of Chinese knowledge for Asia and India.

Then, Tagore participated in a religious ceremony of the Hindu community at the Chetty Pagoda.<sup>5</sup> A group of Indians came to the Chamber's reception and brought Tagore and his companions to a car decorated with flowers to the Pagoda for Lễ nhất châu diên Viện tàng thơ Murugananda Vasagasala [The Opening Ceremony of the Institute of Poetry Murugananda Vasagasala]. Tagore was invited

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<sup>4</sup> This is called Chùa Bà Thiên Hậu or Chùa Bà Chợ Lớn in Vietnamese.

<sup>5</sup> Read more about this Indian community in Paireudeau (2010): 1-71.

to lead the ceremony along with Bùi Quang Chiêu and Lefebvre, Vice-President of Saigon. Garlands were offered to Tagore, Chiêu, and Lefebvre; other members of the Welcome Committee were offered with flower garlands. A girl named Kathéappa Thévarvin chanted a song by Passecarane, an Indian poet, to honor Tagore. The Indians gave Tagore a gift of 2101 piasure, which was placed in the middle of a tray of betel leaves. It was explained to him that the odd number was for good luck. Xavier, Vice - President of the Pagoda's Welcome Committee, gave a talk. At the end of the day, Tagore met with the Governor General, Pierre Pasquie; they discussed relations between East and West. The Governor General promised to send books about Indochina to Santiniketan, a school in India founded by Tagore.

When Tagore returned to his guest residence, representatives of the Indochinese Labor Party came and accused Tagore of not giving a speech to workers as he had promised. The Labor Party's leader gave a warning that he would organize his people for a demonstration to disturb Tagore and Chiêu at the harbor and to insult them in public. However, the interpreter did not translate the hostile reactions of Lê Thành Tư. Tagore enjoyed dinner that evening and left Saigon at 9:30 pm.

Not only news about Tagore's visit but also writings by Tagore and articles by Vietnamese about Tagore were published on the occasion of his visit. Bùi Quang Chiêu recalled his trip to Tagore's university during mid-January 1929 and how he was attracted by Tagore's high and bold figure in 21 volumes of *La Tribune Indochinoise* issued from March to June 1929 and in the three-column article "Rabin Dranath Tagore" [Rabindranath Tagore] published on June 17, 1929. The literary and political journal *Phụ nữ tân văn*, on June 27, 1929, published the article "Ông Rabindranth Tagore" by Thạch Lan; it was written in poetic verse, praising Tagore's self-education and love of nature. This article analyzes poems of Tagore in comparison with the ones by Nguyễn Du and Nguyễn Bình Khiêm. On October 30, 1930, *Phụ nữ tân văn* published an article about Santiniketan University of Tagore. The article was embellished with two photos: one of Tagore teaching his students, the other of female students.

Writings by Tagore were also reprinted or translated in Vietnamese language. *La Tribune Indinoise* on June 3 and 7, 1929 re-printed the long report by Tagore about his “Souvenirs de l’ He de Bali” [Memories of Bali] that had been published in *École française d’Extrême-Orient*. Tagore’s message about peace, unity between Asian and Western countries, and humanism in “la Religion du Poète” [Religion of the Poet] was also quoted and analyzed in a three-column article, entitled “Rabin Dranath Tagore” [Rabindranath Tagore] on June 17, 1929. *Đuốc nhà Nam* translated Tagore’s letter, “The Spirit of Freedom.” The Vietnamese version of “Một vài tư tưởng của ông Tagore” [Some Thoughts of Tagore] in *Phụ nữ tân văn* dated July 4, 1929 was published concurrently with the French version.

## II . Portrayal of Tagore and Anti-Modernity in Colonial Vietnam

The discussions of Tagore’s visit to colonial Vietnam has been interpreted as the embodiment of pan-Asianism in the early twentieth century. Chi P. Pham (2021) argued that Vietnamese intellectuals in colonial Vietnam tended to embellish Tagore’s visit with the imaginings of Annam’s intrinsic cultural connection to the greater world called “Asia.” In presenting Tagore as a savior, a prophet, or a politician, Vietnamese intellectuals looked up to Indian politicians as nationalist models for inspiration and trust. Pham asserted that India was “a benign and uncoercive world civilizer and font of global enlightenment” and the common perspective of the expansion of Greater India as “a process of religious and spiritual tutelage” (Bayly 2014: 736). According to Pham, this national perspective is a particularly important context, as Vietnamese opposition to French colonialism pushed anticolonialists more deeply into the Asian region, making a series of new intellectual, cultural, and revolutionary connections with other Asians in the world outside (Goscha 2004).

However, this paper does not emphasize Vietnamese nationalism, derived from the reception of Tagore, as an extended version of pan-Asianism as such. Instead, it argues that the talk of

Tagore and his visit reflect public anti-modernity sentiments, which embodied contemporary anti-colonial thought. In order to do so, this paper contextualizes creative and journalistic presentations of Tagore in literary and journalistic expressions of anti-modernity that critically merged colonial Vietnam in the 1920s.

The photo of Tagore by Khánh Kỳ, published in *Le Tribune Indochinoise* (June 24, 1929) and *Phụ nữ tân văn* (July 4, 1929), presented Tagore as a symbol of spiritual and serene easternness. The photo does not capture Tagore from the front but from one side to make Tagore's long and thick hair and beard stand out. Those visual signs apparently encoded visual perceptions of Tagore as a representative of the Orient. In Vietnamese expression, Tagore in the photos looks like "ông tiên"—a virtual god-man in folktales. In addition, the gaze of Tagore forms the focal point of the photo. The visualization of Tagore, who looks neither downward nor upward but forward and into the distance, shows the spiritual fantasy of a serene state and the love for thinking and foresight. And the painting of Tagore by Lê Trung Nghĩa, published in *La Tribune Indochinoise* on June 26, 1929, also revealed insights into the spiritual nature of the envisioned indigenous culture. The painting with the note "the signature on the photo is of the poet" offered additional significance to the traditional model of intensive contemplation of Eastern-ness embodied in the mental image of Tagore. Lê Trung Nghĩa portrayed Tagore sitting at a table with a book (or a notebook) and holding a pen. Tagore was depicted looking at the book, but his eyes, which are looking at some infinite point, do not show that he was reading but implies that he is in meditation. Again, the portrait does not capture Tagore from the front but from the side. Such portraits suggest Vietnamese intellectuals' attempts to accentuate the fundamental spirituality of the indigenes.

Tagore also figured in writing as a symbol of local cultural values. *Phụ nữ tân văn* (1929-1934), a literary and political newspaper, in the issue of July 4, 1929 published a description of Tagore in traditional Vietnamese dress:

He wanted to take a walk on Saigon streets in an Annamese dress... Immediately the next morning, on the crowded streets of Saigon, there was a big Indian man with white hair and beard; he was dressed in a Vietnamese bright brocade tunic, white silk trousers, Gia Dinh shoes, and crepe hat and walked peacefully; he looked as if he was a real Saigonese (*Quân đội nhân dân*)

Mme. Nguyễn Đức Nhuận, the author, compared and connected the figure and appearance of Tagore with those of so-called “real” Saigonese people and “real” “Gia đình” people. The detail of “Annamese dress” and “Vietnamese tunic” suggests the idea of “Vietnam as a whole,” an idea for which the activist, journalist Diệp Văn Kỳ (1895-1945) founded *Phụ nữ tân văn*. That is, the idealized Vietnamese nation must include cultural traditions of “the whole of Vietnam” including Saigon, Northern Vietnam and Central Vietnam (Peycam 2015: 266-267).

Through writing about Tagore, Vietnamese intellectuals addressed the unfortunate disappearance of cultural connections between India and Annam. In the welcome reception, Dương Văn Giáo suggested that religion and morality were two factors that helped to maintain the cultural uniqueness in Annam. He grieved that it was unfortunate that the valuable ancientness of India in Annam was erased from these historical records. The intellectual traffic between India and Vietnam stopped. Giáo believed that with religious beliefs and moral customs, India could still survive and develop regardless colonial presence: “Today [Tagore] comes here and we have a chance to see [him] in person; that makes us more confident that India is still alive” (*Thần Chung* 25/6/1929) Vietnamese intellectuals’ beliefs in local moral and spirituality are more obvious in their emphasis on Tagore’s nostalgia for the disappearance of Indian culture from Annam, which also meant the collapse of traditional cultures of Vietnamese people. This tradition is presented in intensively emotional Vietnamese expressions: during his visit, Tagore brought to Annamite people evidence of the time when Annamite and Indian cultures met together in the aim of awakening Vietnamese spiritual traditions; the Indian soul was once vibrant across the sunny beaches of Annam land and the ancient Indian remains there; India brought many thinkers to convey

beautiful ideas to this land; [despite modernization,] the soul of India is still in his mind; he walked on Annam land as though he was walking around the countryside of his hometown (*Thần Chung* 23-24/6/1929). The use of rhetorical figures and poetic speeches aimed to touch upon Annamite sensitivity about the loss of beautiful cultures. Those cultures as provoked in these speeches must be restored by recovering ancient connections between Annam and India.

The characteristic of the Indian origins of Annamese culture was supposed to be tranquil and peaceful. The ambiguity and serenity of an idealized Vietnamese tradition were embedded into appreciations of Tagore as the reminder to Vietnamese audiences of their uttermost indigenoussness. Phạm Đình Khương in his paper “Thuyết bác ái và chủ nghĩa hòa bình” [The Theory of Humanity and Pacification] in *Công giáo đồng thịnh* (25 June, 1929) described in solemn tone a peaceful and serene atmosphere pervading over the indigenous land and implied that such atmosphere was nurtured by Tagore’s visit:

These days, after a peaceful sleep, our mind and our body become more vital... These days, on the roads, all of our people including French, Indians (chà), and thousands of Annamites, and our relatives, friends and visitors have happy smiles on their lips. Are we too optimistic? Is a magical power helping us to find new humanity in our area? No, it is not. People and things are the same. It is just because our minds change. We are walking on the same road, but we are gasping for new air and voice into our lungs. The new air and sounds were brought to us by the winds from India. With the new air and sounds, we are no longer mentally tired; instead, we have more energy. In this tranquil environment, hundreds of trees are flowering, people are peaceful.

This paragraph is full of images referring to open space such as winds, air and trees and full of adjectives referring to peaceful states such as “peaceful,” “harmonious,” and “flowering.” All these suggest Vietnamese intellectuals’ endeavors to uphold the idea of a unique cultural tradition of the imagined Vietnamese nation. They attempted to promote in local public minds idealized cultural

traditions through the way of appreciating Tagore as an embodiment of Asian essence. This idealized traditional culture, as characterized, must include morality and spirituality as its essential, original aspects.

A question that must be addressed is why there was such an imagining of Vietnamese culture among local intellectuals. This imagining might have echoed contemporary colonial knowledge of an Indian civilizing mission in Southeast Asia. In British and French anthropological writings in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the presence of archetype Indian polity and religion is seen as the presence of “healthy race” and “nation-hood”. During this time, French intellectuals and prominent Hindu cultural nationalists had numerous “discoveries” of Indian heritages and other cultural values of the local people (Bayly 2000: 518-622; Edwards 2008: 40-1). Vietnamese intellectuals’ emphasis on the figure of Vietnamese culture as solely moral and spiritual must have received European and Asian leading intellectuals’ idea of such “nationhood” and “healthy race.”

However, more importantly, the spiritual orientations in presenting Tagore in colonial Vietnam were engaged with increasingly anti-modernity sentiments. In the late 1920s, these sentiments were once materialized in attempts of reviving Buddhism. 1929 was the time when Buddhist revival gained the most adherence and development (McHale 2008: 159-162). In the article “Chấn hưng Phật học” [Making Buddhism Prosperous] (*Đuốc Nhà Nam* 4/7/1929), Lê Trung Nghĩa, a French-educated prominent journalist and politician in Cochin China, recalled the Buddhism-related conversations between the Governor-General Pierre Pasquier (1928-34) and Tagore. At 6 pm on June 24, Tagore went to visit Governor General Pierre. During the meeting, Tagore expressed his special interest in the connections between poetry and religion and his love for the peaceful environment of Buddhist pagodas (*Đuốc Nhà Nam* 4/7/1929). In response, the Governor of Indochina shared with Tagore and members of the Indochina Constitutionalist Party that he had signed the decree to set up an institute for teaching and studying Buddhism and moral lessons in Cochin China (*L’ echo annamite* 18/7/1929). Noticeably, Vietnamese

intellectuals believed that the revival of Buddhism would counter growing modernization by protecting morals and spiritual values of Vietnamese people. Phạm Quỳnh (1892-1945), a noted essayist and public intellectual, editor of the *Nam Phong Journal*, guided his readers in traditional rituals, oral expressions and ideological philosophies. In other words, Phạm Quỳnh insisted on cultural nationalism (Tran, Ben Vu 2008: 68; Phạm Quỳnh 2007: 117-149; Brocheux and Hémerly: 2009: 228-229). While appreciating traditional values, Quỳnh criticized Western machines and technology. Quoting R. Tagore, Phạm Quỳnh insisted that scientific inventions were destroying social stability and tranquility (Phạm Quỳnh 1929: 160).

The representations of Tagore echoed earlier and continuing public criticism against colonial modernity, identifying it as the cause of moral degradation and economic bankruptcy of local peoples. Since the early twentieth century, the French colonizer speeded up modernizing processes to facilitate the exploitation of local natural resources and cheap labor. It conducted a colonial program of physical study, medication, and hygiene education that aimed at reformulating the colonized bodies in a way that was able to fulfill the labor needs of growing colonial industrialization (Cooper 2001: 145-9; Kelly 2000: 4-22). The colonial policy of modernizing the colony resulted in economic improvement (Cooper 2001: 29-30), raw-material production, and craft and farming-oriented nourishment (Kelly 2000: 14-16). Consequently, since the early twentieth century, Vietnamese intellectuals had seriously dealt with the very “strange, momentous question of modernization and Westernization” (Marr 2013: 5). Many Vietnamese intellectuals were aware of the moral, social destruction of Vietnam in the face of colonial modernization (Henchy 2005: 121-138). Profiting from colonization and appreciating the values of progress and democracy did not stop native intellectuals from developing the quest for “serious modernization,” a kind of modernization that help to eliminate colonial exploration and to overturn French domination for national independence (Marr 2013: 80-81; Duiker 1976: 104-105; Brocheux and Hémerly 2009: 292-298).

Specifically, in the 1910s, Vietnamese intellectuals nervously presented the moral, social destruction of traditional Vietnam in the

face of colonial modernization.<sup>6</sup> Radical anti-colonial movements in the mid-1910s arose as results of the French government's policies of intensifying colonial exploitation to financially and materially prepare for World War I (Trần Huy Liệu 1957 Volume 3: 78-130; Cooper 2001: 29-40). Images of wealthy foreigners associated with silk coins during this time formed a literary device for intellectuals to express their concerns about the moral destruction caused by colonial modernization. Pervasive stories and poems about interracial marriages between wealthy foreigners and native women in the mid-1910s indicate anti-colonialism in the form of anti-modernity. These literary works emphasize the political inappropriateness and physical unpleasantness of marrying rich foreigners, aiming to highlight the risk of losing the community's sovereignty caused by materialism and colonial modernization. This risk is presented in detail: driven by the rising greed for money brought about by modernity, Annamese women got married to foreigners at any price, thus, colonial modernization is dangerous in the way that it destroys the racial and ethnic uniqueness of the Annamese nation. The most telling example for Vietnamese intellectuals' anxiety about destructible power of colonial modernization is the Đặng Văn Chiêu (?-?)'s "singing rhyme" (vè) "Vè giải oan cho vợ chệt, vợ chà." (*Vè giải oan cho vợ chệt, vợ chà. Phía sau có thêm vè bão lụt năm Thìn* (Saigon: Imprimerie De L' Union, October 1915):

Cochinchina our area  
 Since the establishment  
*Displaying aspects of civilization*  
*Many words for criticism and suggestion*  
 ...  
 Being born in Annam  
 Why love "different country people" (ngoại quốc)  
 Dare to lose virginity  
 Just because of money (1-4; emphasis added)

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<sup>6</sup> The term "colonial modernization" refers to projects of modernizing colonies for the benefit of colonizers. Such understanding is borrowed from the theory of colonial modernization developed by Korean historians in the late 1980s (Read Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 2014)

Or, Nguyễn Trung Tín's long Sino-Nom poem "Chuyện đồng tiền" ("Story of Money", 1918) criticizes contemporary money-driven Vietnamese society, in which humans' bodies and souls are sacrificed for business exchanges and money accumulation. The presence of modernity is seen to have contaminated Vietnamese blood:

Nào người cháu đời con dòng  
Tây đen lắm chị đem lòng thân yêu  
Chỉ yêu vì nổi tiền nhiều  
Thấy đồng bạc trắng quyết liều môi son  
[Many of those who were born to noble families  
Become friendly with black Westerners  
Just because they love having excessive money  
Seeing white silver coins, they were determined  
To [sacrifice] their red lips (Đoàn Thị Mai Hương 2002)

These poems definitely express Vietnamese intellectuals' awareness about the economic exploitation of French colonizers in its modernizing mission; the civilizing force is seen to have broken social norms, national and family unity, and racial purity. Therefore, since the first two decades of the twentieth century, Vietnamese intellectuals, being aware of the danger of "unserious" concepts of colonial modernization, attempted to hold onto sorts of traditional morals and cultures to maintain the sovereignty of their supposedly cohesive community of locals (Phạm Cao Dương 1966: 169-170; Murray 1980: 101; Kelly 2000: 11-13). The way of presenting Tagore as a savior of religious, cultural, and moral values ostensibly reflects such anti-modernity sentiments, which embody Vietnamese nationalism. The vision of national cohesion and autonomy, as recorded by many scholars, is an endless demand of the local population (Roberts 1963: 475-6; Marr 1983: 119-120; Brocheux and Hemery 2009: 293).

### III. Presentation of Tagore and Anti-Capitalism

The presentation of Tagore also embodies a swift to radical nationalism in colonial Vietnam in the 1920s. Vietnamese

intellectuals interpreted Tagore's talks about pacifism and humanism as presenting his bourgeois ideology, a stance that kept him away from sympathizing with the poor. Vietnamese intellectuals criticized it as an ideology exclusively for rich people, whose lives were filled with material sufficiency. In an article "Rabindranath Tagore à Saigon" published in the liberal newspaper *L'echo annamite* (June 22, 1929), Nguyễn Phan Long undermined Tagore's ideas of pacifism; Tagore's character and career appeared in sarcasm and irony:

We burned with the desire to see a great hero... Alas! Our hope was disappointed... You [Tagore] are a pacifist. You must have had more than the courage of heroism, as [you] dare to be pacifist even in the context that you are a citizen of a conquered country!... <sup>7</sup>

This article attacks Tagore in the detail that his speeches of optimistic pacifism were too immature and that the illusion and enthusiasm in Tagore's words would lead to the edge of collapse. The author saw these ideologies suitable only to the rich and powerful, those who did not have to be concerned with the daily needs for money and food; the voice of Tagore about pacifism and universalism was seen to be too foreign to material conditions and the minds of contemporary Vietnamese peasants.

Journalists of *Thần Chung* expressed such class-oriented views about Tagore's ideology in more vivid expressions: Tagore's thought of "peace" and "charity" was not feasible for the people of Vietnam who were living in fields of war; and the reception of Tagore was exclusively for "the first class, the second class." The article "Cái ý nghĩa cuộc tiếp rước ông Tagore mới rồi" [The Meaning of the Current Reception of Tagore], June 26, 1929) noted that Vietnamese compatriots, especially peasants, who were miserable and dying for a great hero to come to provide them with tools to fulfill their hunger. The article develops in a warning tone that such hope was vague and utopian because Tagore was not Jesus Christ; and that Tagore loved concepts about human beings, peace, and charity; he did not care about the specific material conditions of the poor

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<sup>7</sup> This is my translation from French to English.

human beings in Vietnamese land: “He just loves our rivers, our mountains, our winds and our moon; his words have nothing to do with the bitter injustice of life.” For the local peasants, universal objects and poems were not their urgent concern; instead, the way of solving their material insufficiency mattered to the Vietnamese peasants and workers the most. Another article, “Nói về Tagore” [About Tagore] in *Thần Chung* (June 27, 1929) contended that the most critical issue for the Vietnamese mass was neither religion nor spirituality, but hunger and slavery; meanwhile, Tagore completely ignored the mass’ needs because his stomach was full. It stated, while the local Vietnamese people were living a turbulent time that brought them constant trouble, hopelessness, and discontentedness, ridiculously Tagore led a religious life and “brought his Ganga to our land to teach us to love world peace.” The article concluded with a critique that the way Tagore kept appreciating spiritual and universal values was his ignorance and indifference towards “our people” – the lower class; he laughed at “our crying” (*Thần Chung* June 25, 1929)

According to the third article, “Chung quanh cuộc tiếp rước ông Tagore: Tấm lòng bác ái và hòa bình của tiên sinh” (Nguyễn Văn Bá), published in *Thần Chung* (28 June 1929), only high-class people like Tagore had enough leisure time to think of tradition and poetry; Tagore was excellent in speaking of peace rather than offering a practical tool for the mass to reach it. Tagore was described as “talented in phrasing his thoughts in a beautiful way” but “his philosophy of ‘peace and charity’ was so luxurious that it was for few elite people.” The article provokes a regret that the Vietnamese audience should have not welcomed Tagore as a revolutionist or a nationalist because his ideology is filled with abstract and unrealistic objects such as clouds and sounds of music and song. It is possible to see in all these appreciations of Tagore an urgent call for a care of the common people’s material needs and their status of being colonized. It is possible to find a similar critique of Tagore in contemporary international newspapers. Take George Lukács’s criticism published in 1922 as one example. Lukacs called Tagore a “petty bourgeois,” someone who “assess[es] wisdom ‘in itself’ in the vacuum of pure theory (and within the walls of an

elegant salon)” and who did not/cannot speak “about the most burning contemporary questions” (Lukács 1922: 3).

Those who had a class struggle-oriented nationalist perspective critiqued Tagore’s bourgeois lifestyle. In “Rabindranath Tagore ghé viếng tòa báo Phụ nữ tân văn” [Tagore visits the editorial office of *Phụ nữ tân văn* newspaper], Nguyễn Đức Nhuận told readers that he had expected Tagore to be as dark as other Indians he met, but as it turned out, he had “a white and smooth skin, high nose, broad forehead… his hands are elegant and noble, his fingers are white and round; *he was born from a high-class family*; every day he composes poetry and plays music” (emphasis added).<sup>8</sup> Descriptions about Tagore’s stay in Saigon also highlighted his way of living above common people’s standard. For example, the article “Nhà thi sĩ Tagore đã đến Saigon” [Poet Tagore Reached Saigon] in *Thần Chung* (June 22) detailed Tagore’s lunch in the first-class lounge on the ship before landing in Saigon. In the June 25 piece “Ba ngày thi sĩ R. Tagore ở Saigon” [Tagore’s three days in Saigon], *Đuốc Nhà Nam* provided its readers with information about accommodations, transportation and food for Tagore while in Saigon. Tagore lived in a big villa; he was provided two seven-seat cars; and he attended the Champaign party organized in his staying place. The second part of “Ba ngày thi sĩ R. Tagore ở Saigon” (June 27, 1929), which was about Tagore’s second day in Saigon, named the party in Nguyễn Văn Cù’s printing company as a Champagne party.

Particularly, the detail about Champaign appeared concurrently in descriptions about Tagore, which suggests Vietnamese intellectuals’ anxiety in identifying the social class of Tagore. Patriotic Vietnamese intellectuals had a tradition of associating luxurious French products with the colonial regime; for example, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (1822-1888) attacked French colonialism in the name of boycotting French products such as “xà phòng” (soap) and “rượu ngọt” (champagne) (Đoàn Lê Giang 2001: 87; Vũ Tiến Quỳnh 2000: 312). This traditional association was still in place in 1929 when Vietnamese nationalists fervently criticized Rabindranath Tagore’s consumption of champagne during his visit to Saigon.

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<sup>8</sup> 21 *Phụ nữ tân văn*, July 4, 1929.

Images of Tagore with champagne parties formed the main cause of public disappointment and even hatred among local people, particularly among leaders of the Indochinese Labor Party (1926-1929), the party which attempted to “work for the general well-being of the workers, for the improvement of labor techniques and for the moral and material uplifting of the country” (quoted by Peycam 2015: 204). These negative sentiments were echoed in last words of Tagore at the port before he left Saigon:

The people of the Labor Party blamed me that I was favor of luxuries and ignorant of poverty and that I stayed in the house of a capitalist (Của) and did not come to those of poor people. It is an unfair judgment. I came to Cúa’s house drinking a glass of champagne; they [Indochinese Labor Party’s representatives] also came there drinking champagne. While they could come there, so why could I not? (*Đuốc nhà nam* July 2, 1929)

These sentences in fact repeated the Labor Party leaders’ accusations of Tagore as belonging to the bourgeoisie class, enemy of the working class. This assumed identity was more obvious, as from Labor Party members’ perspectives, in the fact that Tagore attempted to stay away from the mass people while consciously embracing himself with the comfort of luxurious conditions. As narrated, Huỳnh Phúc Yên, leader of the Indochinese Labor Party, loudly blamed Tagore for not having given a speech to the “Annamite peasants” at the Theatre Thành Xương as he had promised. Tagore reacted that, as highlighted, he did not want to go to the theater; if people wanted to listen to him, then they should have come to his hotel. These details highlight the public belief that Tagore was a bourgeoisie, target of rising class struggle-nationalist sentiments. Obviously, resentments about Tagore’s supposed ignorance of the low-class people reflect the Labor Party’s advocacy of the welfare of the Vietnamese proletariat - an attempt that made it be the first necessary step in “the foundation of a real democracy in Vietnam” (Peycam 2015: 205).

The public resentment towards Tagore as the presence of foreign capitalists is the most explicit in sentences by Lê Thành Lư, another leader of the Labor Party, who “found himself as member

of the working class” and who “emerged himself in the ideas of international Marxism” (Paycam 2015: 206) when he reacted to Tagore’s presumably ignorance to the mass: “You should have looked at the people who came to this land to suck the blood [of annamites] … you should have shown gratitude to Annamite [labor], who offered you a great reception” (*Đuốc Nhà Nam*, July 2, 1929) Here, Tagore was identified as a blood sucking being, metaphor of capitalists as widely used by contemporary Marxist writers (Pham 2021: 20-50). The use of metaphors of bloodsucking beings in Vietnamese literature likely echoed the widespread view about the “vampiric nature” of capitalists and particularly colonial capitalists who crossed national borders for economic exploitation in Western literature since the early eighteenth century as Aimé Césaire (1955) once described. Particularly, the image of vampire is common in writings of Marxist theoreticians such as Frederick Engels and Karl Marx; particularly Karl Marx compares that French bourgeoisie who exploits labor of peasants and workers is like vampires whose living depends on blood of other beings (Neocleous 2003: 669-684; Melton 1999: 543; Robinson 107-108). Ho Chi Minh, in his Marxist analysis of French colonization, *Le Procès de la colonisation française*, published serially in France from 1921 to 1925, also describes that the French capitalists gain their wealth through blood and sweat of the colonized population. In this essay, he compares colonialism with a leech with two suctions: one sucks blood of workers in metropolises and the other sucks blood of workers in colonies. Copies of this pamphlet, as Charles B. McLane (1966) predicted, might have reached colonial Vietnam simultaneously, become an authoritative text of Vietnamese nationalists and stimulated public interest in Marxism (109). Although other bloodsucking creatures appeared previously - e.g. the image of lice in the reformist Phan Chau Trinh’s writings (Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism* 169-170) -- in local scholar’s subtle critiques on French colonization, the association of bloodsucking creatures with colonial capitalism is apparently the most obvious in Vietnamese writing since 1920s during which materials of Marxism were increasingly circulated (Duiker 1976: 191-194; Marr 1981: 358-360; Nguyễn Công Khanh 2006 : 53-110).

The presentation of Tagore in colonial Vietnam potentially might have displayed what Ho Tam Hue Tai defined in her book *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution* (1996), as the emergence of radicalism, a current of reaction to colonial rule among Vietnamese intellectuals that was not based on one specific political ideology, but rather a “political mood” (1) or “a form of cultural politics” (6) or the yearning for a new form of political expressions during the years of 1920s. But undeniably, the presentation of Tagore, as seen in the uses of the “bloodsucking” creature metaphor and class-struggle-related terms and expressions, also indicates the dynamic of anti-colonial thoughts in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. That representation of Tagore demonstrated a strong Marxism based-nationalism in the late 1920s of Vietnam, given that the presentation largely provoked in public minds a form of anti-colonialism that were based on cultural debates (bourgeois lifestyle or proletarian lifestyle; spiritualism or materialism; thinking or physical action). During this time radical Vietnamese youth were passionate about Tagore and Gandhi as well as about Lenin and Sun Yat-sen; they were also attracted by Western and Russian revolutionaries (Brocheux and Hemery 2009: 307). The radical reaction to Tagore in colonial Vietnam was also somehow similar to that in Chinese presentations of Tagore during his visit to China in 1924. When he visited China in April 1924, he encouraged young Chinese to steer clear of modern technology, material comforts, money, and the capitalist ethos in general; instead, they should preserve the so-called Eastern spiritual civilization, the combined heritage of India and China, which is essential for “healing a world despoiled by the bombs, commodity culture and predatory conduct of Western nation-states” (Tsui 2013). Tagore was fervently criticized for such a spirituality-favored view, given that Chinese youth were attracted to militant revolutionary politics in the context that in early 1924, Sun Yat-sen’s National Party allied with the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese intellectuals were at the time in favor of ideas about the emancipation of workers and peasants from economic oppression and about some revolution that could national and class struggle against Western imperialism and capitalism. Thus, Tagore’s call for Oriental wisdom was seen as detrimental to the national cause (Tsui 2013; Chatterjee 2014: 28-35; Chattopadhyay

1991: 78-83; Chatterjee 2011: 271-283). And as mentioned above, not long before the visit of Tagore, in 1927, Bùi Quang Chiêu and Dương Văn Giáo attempted to establish connections with the Chinese Communist Party-allied National Party.

In the late 1920s and the early 1930s, during the time of Depression and "the period of a high-level fight" (thời kì cao trào tranh đấu) with farmers' red Soviet upheaval, with workers' protests, and with the foundation of the Indochina Communist Party (Trần Huy Liệu 40, 56), the idea of class struggle in Marxist-Leninist doctrine had a deeper impact on Vietnamese intellectuals' ideology. And as detailed by Brocheux and Hemery and Peycam, young Vietnamese intelligentsia's interest in Marxism became apparent when radical periodicals reprinted many articles from Europe's revolutionary press during the 1920s. *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels was published in an installment series in 1926 in *La cloche fêlée*, a radical newspaper that the French colonial administration had to work hard to prevent its dissemination. Many articles in this journal presented a Marxist perspective of the political situation (Peycam 2014: 188-190; Brocheux and Hemery 2009: 311-314). Thus, the presence of Tagore in Vietnam must have been also taken by Vietnamese intellectuals to comment on the social situation of colonial Vietnam from Marxist terms. The existence of different political perspectives imbued in the representations of Tagore in colonial Vietnam indicates the dynamic of anti-colonialism in the years of 1920s, during which Vietnamese intellectuals appear to have examined and experimented on different political thoughts in prolonging attempts of reacting against the French colonial rule.

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## Attitudes toward Physical Education of Adolescent Students in the Philippines and South Korea

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### [ *Abstract* ]

This study examined adolescent male and female students' attitudes toward physical education (PE) from the Philippines and South Korea. Participants were 451 middle school students from the Philippines and South Korea. The Physical Education Attitude Scale (PEAS) was used to measure students' PE attitudes. Overall, students had moderately positive attitudes toward PE. PE attitudes of Korean boys were more positive compared with Filipino boys, while the reverse was found for Korean females and their Filipino counterparts. Based on the different aspects of PE, Filipino girls were more motivated to participate in PE activities and more satisfied with their PE class than Korean girls. Korean boys were highly satisfied, more comfortable, and less anxious during PE compared with Filipino boys. Finally, Filipino boys had less positive view towards their PE teacher than Korean boys. This study shows adolescent students' attitudes toward PE were generally positive,

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complex, and affected by sex and nationality. It also provides additional knowledge on comparative international research on cross-cultural PE attitudes.

**Keywords:** cross-culture, South-east Asia, Physical Education Attitude Scale, MODE theory

## **I . Introduction**

More than 80% of school-aged adolescents worldwide are physically inactive, and girls (84.7%) are generally less active than boys (77.6%) (Guthold, Stevens, Riley and Bull 2020). Among WHO-member countries, school-aged adolescents in Korea have the highest prevalence of insufficient physical activity (94.2%) for both sexes followed by the Philippines (93.4%). Adolescent boys from the Philippines (92.8%) and Korea (91.4%) have the highest level of physical inactivity. Similarly, school-aged adolescent girls from Korea (97.2) and the Philippines (94.1%) have not achieved World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendation of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity daily (Guthold et al. 2020), making them the top two countries with the least physically active youths worldwide. With more than three-quarters of the global youth population aged 11–17 years being substantially sedentary, these school-aged adolescents are not only neglecting the benefits of physical activity but also compromising their health by increasing their risk of developing non-communicable diseases such as diabetes (International Diabetes Federation 2019; Tan 2015) and obesity (WHO 2020). For instance, prevalence rates of overweight and obesity among youths aged 10–19 years are 17.3% and 5.6%, respectively, with a higher rate in boys than girls (WHO 2020). Thus, efforts to treat and prevent these health risks should be implemented, and various health, medical, and educational organizations have identified the importance of schools as a potential environment for youths to increase their physical activity (Centers for Disease Control [CDC] 2004; Department of Health [DOH] 2010; Institute of Medicine 2005; Pate, Davis, Robinson, Stone, McKenzie and Young 2006).

Health organizations such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH-Philippines) and researchers in the fields of education and health have highlighted the potential role of schools as conducive environments for promoting physical activity among adolescents (CDC 2004; DOH 2010; Wechsler, Devereaux, Davis and Collins 2000), as schools provide different venues for physical activity. Aside from recess, lunch breaks, sports clubs, and intramural games, physical education (PE) class is a feasible setting to promote physical activity participation among youths. First, PE provides an opportunity for adolescents to participate in various physical activities, understand the importance of physical activity participation, and learn knowledge and appropriate strategies in achieving health and fitness via game, sport and exercise-related movements during class periods. In the Physical Education curriculum of the Philippines for instance, students are taught indigenous games, dual or team sports (i.e. badminton, basketball), and dances (i.e. folk dances, street dance) that can be played or performed in both competitive and recreational settings as well as knowledge related to exercise program development and physical fitness assessment (Department of Education 2016). Second, PE and its related programs can develop students' movement and motor skills as prerequisites for performing various physical activities (Department of Education, 2016). Third, as PE is a subject taught in almost all schools, its program goals related to fitness and health can reach most children and adolescents, regardless of demographic factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Robertson-Wilson, Dargavel, Bryden and Giles-Corti 2007). Given these conditions, PE as a part of the basic educational program of many schools with learning content that emphasizes fitness and movement acquisition and development (Department of Education 2016, SHAPE America 2015), can therefore be an important school period and setting to promote students' physical activity. However, despite these aforementioned advantages, students' lack of participation or less involvement in physical activities during PE class is prevalent, especially in girls and in older students (Johnston, Delva and O'Malley 2007; Lagestad, Welde, Ranes and Myhre 2017). The decline in participation has been attributed to various factors such as change of PE status in schools,

insufficient time allocation, large class, and inadequate facilities and equipment (CDC 2014; Hardman 2008). Further, studies have shown that students' attitudes toward PE is one of the reasons for their non-participation (Lineham 2003; Luke and Sinclair 1991).

Attitude is a topic of interest among psychological researchers, as it can provide valuable information for understanding individual motivational and behavioral predisposition regarding people or things toward future behavior (Rikard and Banville 2006). Attitude is defined as the degree that a person likes or dislikes something, and it has the ability to strongly influence a person's behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). This concept—that attitude guides behavior—is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action, which states that a person's personal belief systems influence a person's attitude, which ultimately determines a person's behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). In contrast, from a contemporary approach—such as the Motivation and Opportunity as Determinants (MODE)—attitude is defined as an overall assessment of a target object based on beliefs, feelings, knowledge, or previous experiences stored in memory that could be either positive or negative. The negative or positive assessment of the target object in memory can also vary in strength (Fazio 2007). Moreover, the basis for evaluating a target attitude object could come from several possible combinations of affective, behavioral, and cognitive components (Fazio 2007; Olson and Fazio, 2008). The model postulates that the influence of attitudes on judgment and behavior operates via spontaneous and/or controlled processing. If one's attitude toward a target object is strong (whether negative or positive), this strong attitude tends to guide his/her behavior in a spontaneous manner (without any conscious deliberation). However, the model also considers motivation and opportunity as major determinants in the attitude-behavior association. That is, for a behavior not to be affected by the strong attitude, particularly the ones that are processed automatically, the target object is consciously processed and scrutinized and provided with the right amount of time and resources to do so (Fazio 1990; Fazio and Olson 2014).

Applying the MODE perspective to PE, students' attitudes toward PE class are therefore evaluated based on their degree of

emotional reactions, levels of knowledge, and positive and negative experiences related to PE. Thus, if students perceive PE to be fun and meaningful, and they have positive memories of PE, they are more likely to hold favorable attitudes toward PE. However, if students think PE is boring and worthless, and they recall a strict PE teacher or dilapidated gymnasiums and equipment, they will most likely have negative attitudes toward PE. Hence, students' positive or negative attitudes toward PE can originate from various sources, such as their level of enjoyment, beliefs about the subject and its curriculum, perception about a teacher's instruction or motivational style, and participation in various physical activities during class. Given that attitude is associated with one's disposition and future behavior, examining students' attitudes toward PE class is therefore a noteworthy undertaking, as it can indicate not only their current motivation in PE class but also their intention to participate in PE programs (El-Sherif 2014) and future involvement in physical activities outside of school (Chung and Phillips 2002; Dismore, Bailey and Izaki 2006; McKenzie 2003).

The formation of students' positive or negative attitudes toward PE can be influenced by various personal and situational factors, including sex, ethnicity, PE teacher, and curriculum. For example, Constantinides (2010) found that, while students' overall attitudes toward PE were less than positive, males had higher PE attitude scores in relation to their PE teacher and curriculum than did females. Contrastingly, Subramaniam and Silverman (2007) found no differences in attitudes toward PE curriculum and teachers between boys and girls. Fügedi, Capel, Dancs, and Bognár (2016) reported sex differences in how middle school students perceived PE as an important subject, and found that a higher percentage of girls than boys perceived PE as important, whereas a higher percentage of boys than girls viewed PE as unimportant. Girls also reported to like gymnastics and playing fun games more than boys did, whereas boys preferred to play soccer and "everything" (physical activities) in PE class more so than girls. However, both boys and girls disliked running more than other physical activities performed during PE.

Chung and Phillips (2002) reported significant differences in PE attitudes based on sex and nationality. They found attitude of

boys towards PE was more positive than girls whereas overall attitude of Taiwanese students towards PE was more positive compared to their American counterparts. Dismore et al. (2006) found that older Japanese students had strong positive feelings toward PE compared with their English student counterparts, whereas more students in England held stronger negative feelings about PE than did students in Japan.

However, despite comparative international research on cross-cultural PE attitudes is available, research to date has conducted west-east (Chung and Phillips 2002; Dismore et al. 2006), and west-west (Carcamo-Oyarzun, Wydra, Hernandez-Mosqueira and Martinez-Salazar 2017) country comparisons to examine PE attitudes of students but has yet to investigate and compare attitudes of students toward PE from both Asian nations, a shortcoming we addressed in the current study. Understanding cross-cultural differences in PE is a valuable endeavor for it can provide insights about students' psychosocial and cultural concerns when it comes to learning (Chung and Phillips 2002), especially that countries are recently becoming multicultural. For instance, according to the Ministry of Education in Korea (2017), the number of students with various cultural backgrounds in Korean public schools has increased from 8,176 to 12,281 in 2015 and 2017, respectively. In addition, Filipinos (12%) make up a proportion of multicultural families with school-aged children in the country. A lack of knowledge about cross-cultural issue could lead to PE teachers creating lessons and physical activities that might be culturally inappropriate for some students, thereby resulting in negative attitudes and eventual disengagement in class. For example, Korean education is deeply rooted in Confucian philosophy wherein the teacher is the principal authority in the classroom and the main provider of knowledge (Levent and Pehlivan 2017) whereas the Philippines follows a western style education. This kind of education commonly follows a student-centered approach to learning in which students are active learners while the teacher serves as facilitator (Harden and Crosby 2000; Lea et al. 2003). In this case, when a multicultural student with a western education background (ie. Filipino) attends PE class in Korea and

asks direct questions and openly expresses his/her thoughts to the Korean teacher, these behaviors may be perceived by the teacher as rude and may show negative responses toward the student. Consequently, the student is likely to feel demoralized and may consider never to participate in PE resulting from the teacher's unpleasant responses. Hence, given that PE is an important school setting for promoting youths' participation in physical activity and preventing further increase of childhood health problems, and since attitude is associated with one's overall assessment of a target object based on beliefs, feelings, knowledge, or previous experiences stored in memory and future behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fazio 2007), a pleasant, adequate, well-designed PE environment could therefore cultivate positive attitudes in students that could influence not only their participation in PE class but also their future physical activity engagement.

This study examined adolescent male and female students' attitudes toward PE from the Philippines and South Korea by comparing students' overall attitude toward PE and different aspects of PE based on students' sex and country of residence. The findings could offer PE teachers, practitioners, and policy makers useful evidenced-based information on how to provide better, more interesting, and culturally relevant PE programs such as physical activity offerings (traditional and new sports, games, dances being played from each country), that may facilitate students' positive attitudes toward PE, influence their active engagement in PE, and promote their involvement in life-long physical activities. The outcomes of this study could extend theoretical knowledge regarding attitudes toward PE, particularly the impact of sex and country of residence on middle school students' attitudes toward PE.

## II. Method

### 2.1 Participants

A convenience sample of 451 middle school (8th and 9th grade) students aged between 13 and 19 years participated. Participants were students from Korea ( $n = 221$ ; male = 110, female = 111) and

Philippines ( $n = 230$ ; male = 109, female = 121). All participants were students from national public high schools located in a metropolitan area in each country.

## 2.2 Data Collection

Prior to data collection, permission was sought from the school principal of each school. Next, PE teachers were contacted and received explanations regarding the objectives and other details of the study. They were also asked for their permission to administer the survey to their students. Informed consent to participate or permission for students to participate was obtained from the pupils and their authorized representatives, guardians, or parents.

Data collection was performed inside the classrooms during normally scheduled PE classes. The study objectives were explained to the students. Students were encouraged to answer each item as honestly as possible and informed that all information would be kept strictly confidential and data would be used only for research purposes. The questionnaire took approximately 20–30 minutes to complete. This study obtained approval from the school ethics committee and complied with the Declaration of Helsinki ethical standards for human treatment as well as the ethical guidelines of the countries in which the study was performed.

## 2.3 Questionnaire

The Physical Education Attitude Scale (PEAS; Orlić, Gromović, Lazarević, Čolić, Milanović and Janić 2017) was used to measure participants' PE attitudes. It consists of 43 statements and is rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The PEAS has four subscales: satisfaction (12 items), activity (11 items), comfort (12 items), and teacher (8 items). The satisfaction subscale corresponds to one's general emotional experience with PE ("I like to attend PE"). The comfort subscale comprises more specific emotions toward PE, such as relaxation and anxiety ("I think that PE is a waste of time"). The activity subscale relates to the motivational processes for participating in PE classes ("I do my best in PE classes"). The teacher subscale denotes

students' views of their PE teacher ("The PE teacher is friendly toward all of us"). This instrument was utilized to explore other indicators of attitude as well as other factors related to experiences in PE. The questionnaire was translated from English into Korean language and back translated by bilingual educators to check for accuracy. The PEAS has shown good psychometric properties, confirmed construct validity (CFI=.090, TLI=.89), and demonstrated excellent internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha=.92) for the target population and setting (Cruz et al. 2021; Orlic et al. 2017; Thomason and Feng 2016). Cronbach's alpha for the current sample was .791, while each subscale yielded internal consistency coefficients of .883, .826, .845, and .753 for satisfaction, comfort, activity, and teacher, respectively.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

A 2 (sex) × 2 (country) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine differences in mean PE attitude scores for all dependent variables. Subsequent univariate analyses and pairwise comparisons were performed, when needed. The significance level was set at  $p < .05$  for inferential statistics.

## III. Results

Overall attitude and subscales of PE means and standard deviations for sex and country of residence are shown in Table 1. Male and female students from both countries had moderately positive attitudes toward PE overall. Among the dimensions of PE, both Filipino boys and girls had similar scores in all four PE dimensions. Mean scores for satisfaction and comfort dimensions of PE were high for Korean boys. Mean score for activity dimension of PE was the lowest for Korean girls.

Table 1. Physical Education Attitudes Based on Sex and Country

Variable	Philippines				South Korea			
	Boys n=109		Girls n=121		Boys n=110		Girls n=111	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall PE Attitude** <sup>a,c</sup>	3.65	0.48	3.70	0.43	3.95	0.60	3.46	0.45
Subscale:								
Satisfaction** <sup>a,c</sup>	3.76	0.62	3.83	0.49	4.13	0.70	3.44	0.62
Comfort** <sup>a,b,c</sup>	3.58	0.57	3.57	0.53	4.07	0.59	3.63	0.53
Activity** <sup>a,b,c</sup>	3.81	0.59	3.85	0.54	3.71	0.70	3.22	0.49
Teacher** <sup>b,c</sup>	3.40	0.61	3.47	0.59	3.83	0.68	3.59	0.45

Note. PE = physical education. SD = standard deviations. <sup>a</sup>sex effect; <sup>b</sup>country effect; <sup>c</sup>sex and country of residence effect) \*\* $p < .01$

MANOVA results showed significant differences in PE attitudes based on sex (Pillai’s trace = 0.070,  $F(5, 443) = 6.688, p < .001; \eta_p^2 = .070$ ). Post hoc test results revealed sex had significant effects on attitudes toward PE ( $F(1,447) = 23.052, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .049$ ), satisfaction ( $F(1,447) = 29.888, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .063$ ), comfort ( $F(1,447) = 17.947, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .039$ ), and activity ( $F(1,447) = 17.302, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .037$ ). Mean scores for boys were significantly higher compared to girls in terms of attitudes toward PE, satisfaction, comfort, and activity. No significant sex differences were found for the teacher dimension.

Results also showed significant main effect of country of residence on students’ PE attitudes (Pillai’s trace = 0.315,  $F(5, 443) = 48.814, p < .001; \eta_p^2 = .355$ ). Post hoc test results revealed country of residence had a significant effect on comfort ( $F(1,447) = 26.940, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .057$ ), activity ( $F(1,447) = 44.014, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .090$ ), and teacher ( $F(1,447) = 25.010, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .053$ ).

Mean comfort and teacher scores of Korean students were significantly higher than Filipino students. Mean activity score of Filipino students was significantly higher than Korean students. No significant difference was found for overall attitudes toward PE and satisfaction dimension of PE based on country of residence.

Significant interaction effect of sex and country on students’

PE attitudes (Pillai's trace = 0.091,  $F(5, 443) = 8.869$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\eta_p^2 = .091$ ) was observed. Post hoc test results revealed overall attitude towards PE ( $F(1,447) = 32.398$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .068$ ) and all dimensions of PE—satisfaction ( $F(1,447) = 43.114$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .088$ ), comfort ( $F(1,447) = 17.761$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .038$ ), activity ( $F(1,447) = 23.710$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .050$ ), and teacher ( $F(1,447) = 8.100$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .018$ )—were significantly different for sex by country.

The mean overall PE attitude score for Korean males was significantly higher compared with Filipino male students, while the mean PE attitude mean score of Korean females was significantly lower than that of Filipino female students. Among the specific subscales for PE attitudes, the mean satisfaction score for male students in the Philippines was significantly lower than for males in Korea, while the mean satisfaction score for female students in Korea was significantly lower compared with females in the Philippines. The mean comfort score of Korean males was significantly higher than that of Filipino males. The mean activity score of female students in the Philippines was significantly higher compared with females in Korea. The mean teacher score of Korean male students was significantly higher than that of Filipino males.

#### IV. Discussion

The objective of the current study was to determine adolescent students' attitudes toward PE. Particularly, we compared students' overall attitude towards PE and different aspects of PE based on sex and country of residence. Overall, students had moderately positive attitudes toward PE. Among the total students, only less than 10% of the students' responses were below 3.00 (overall PE attitude) score indicating that most students had positive attitudes toward PE. Previous research found similar results from the students in those studies (Carcamo-Oyarzun et al. 2017; Chung and Phillips 2002; Cruz 2021; Cruz, Kim and Kim 2021; Dismore et al. 2006; Stelzer, Ernest, Fenster and Langford 2004).

#### **4.1 Sex and PE Attitudes**

Previous studies showed sex differences in students' attitudes toward PE, with male students tending to have more positive attitudes toward PE than female students (Carcamo-Oyarzun et al. 2017; Chung and Phillips 2002; Cruz 2021; Orlić et al. 2017; Stelzer et al. 2004). The current study found male students reported higher positive attitudes toward PE than females, which supports previous findings.

Additionally, specific factors of PE were also significantly different between males and females. Scores for the satisfaction, comfort, and activity subscales were higher for males than females. However, scores for the teacher subscale were similar between male and female students. Orlić and colleagues (2017) found significant sex differences for all four factors of PE (satisfaction, comfort, activity, and teacher) with male students having higher scores than females. The lack of variance in the teacher subscale might be attributed to the diverse sample of participants from the two countries compared with participants from a single country in the previous study.

Nonetheless, the outcomes suggest that sex has an impact on students' overall attitudes toward PE, as well as specific aspects of PE. Teachers and school administrators should therefore provide better PE experiences to students by making classes less stressful, creating fun and enjoyable activities, and showing more enthusiasm when teaching PE to further enhance the attitudes of adolescent students toward PE, particularly girls.

#### **4.2. Country of Residence and PE Attitudes**

International comparative studies related to students' PE attitudes are still scarce. Previous studies showed that culture/ethnicity plays an important role in influencing students' PE attitudes (Carcamo-Oyarzun et al. 2017; Chung and Phillips 2002; Dismore et al. 2006). Interestingly, the results of the present investigation did not show significant differences in attitudes toward PE between Filipino and Korean students. This implies that both Filipino and Korean students had favorable attitude towards PE and that their

demographic location/culture did not affect their positive views toward PE. The questionnaire used may be the reasons for the disparity in results. Dismore et al. (2006) for instance assessed students' PE attitudes using a single-component view that emphasized only students' affective perceptions about PE. Whereas the current study utilized the PEAS instrument (PEAS) which measures not only the affective aspect of PE attitude but also the cognitive and motivational/behavioral aspects of PE attitudes.

As for the dimensions of PE, Filipino students were more awkward and anxious during PE class as compared to Korean students. Korean students felt the activities they performed in class were less motivating and fun than Filipino students did; however, they reported more a favorable view about their teachers than did Filipino students. While findings suggest that country of residence may not be linked with overall PE attitudes in students, more studies are needed to further understand this factor in affecting attitudes of students toward PE since differences in students' perceptions were evident in terms of specific areas of PE.

#### **4.3. Sex, Country of Residence, and PE Attitudes**

The findings also revealed that students' attitudes toward PE were influenced by both sex and country of residence. Specifically, Korean male students' general PE attitudes were more positive than those of Filipino males, whereas Korean female students' attitudes toward PE were less positive compared with Filipino females.

Concerning specific PE dimensions, Filipino males were less satisfied with PE than Korean males. Similarly, Korean females were also less satisfied with PE than their female counterparts in the Philippines. Korean male students felt more comfortable in PE compared with Filipino males. Filipino female students had the highest positive attitudes toward activities, compared with Korean females. Finally, Korean male students reported higher positive views about their teachers than Filipino males.

This interaction effect of sex and country of residence on students' PE attitudes, as well as the specific areas of PE, is difficult to substantiate since no research has been published that

investigated students' PE attitudes from these countries. However, several reasons could possibly explain these significant findings. The higher PE attitudes of Korean males paired with a reverse result in Korean females could be attributed to the physical activities included in their PE curriculum and their PE teachers. In the Korean PE curriculum, students are taught individual and team sports such as taekwondo, badminton, Korean wrestling (i.e., *ssirum*), basketball, and soccer. These activities mostly connote a masculine- and competitive-oriented atmosphere (Van Wersch et al. 1992) that seems to be liked by Korean males but disliked by Korean females. The less favorable PE attitudes of Korean females is further corroborated by the activity subscale showing the least favored factor in PE. Upon reviewing the item statements, Korean female students generally reported they did not like difficult exercises. These difficult exercises could be the previously mentioned sports and other physical activities taught in Korean schools, such as gymnastics and track and field, which generally require repetitive jumping, throwing, and running, thereby prompting less positive PE attitudes. Luke and Sinclair (1991) also found that running is a determinant of negative PE attitudes among females. Furthermore, PE teachers' outdated teaching and assessment approach (Yoo and Kim 2005) might have contributed to Korean female students less favorable attitude in PE. Their teaching style could have focused on the technical aspects of the activities, which demand high level of physical abilities to perform. This can be frustrating for females with low physical abilities and consequently led to their lower attitude toward PE. Therefore, to enhance Korean students' positive attitudes, especially those of females, PE teachers in Korea should adjust the intensity of activities during PE classes that is comfortable for both sexes, thus preventing students, particularly females, from being discouraged from participating if the activity is too difficult.

The satisfaction subscale reflects students' general emotional experience regarding PE. Results showed Filipino males and Korean females were less satisfied with their experiences in PE compared with their counterparts. Again, the lessons or activities they perform in PE might explain these findings. In the Philippines, for example,

curriculum content for grades 8–11 is about fitness (Department of Education, 2016). Students in each grade are taught activities that will enhance their physical fitness, such as games, sports, and rhythm and dance (e.g., folk/indigenous, festival, ballroom, and street dances). These dance activities might not have been popular with male students, therefore lowering their satisfaction levels. However, PE curriculum in Korea that focuses on traditional activities may have led to Korean female students feeling less enjoyment with their PE experiences.

The comfort subscale reflects students' levels of anxiety or relaxation during PE classes. Previous studies showed that the physical demands (Dickenson and Sparkes, 1988) and clothing requirements (Luke & Sinclair, 1991) of an activity were the reasons students did not like PE. These reasons might explain differences in comfort levels between male students in Korea and Philippines. Tracing the item statements within the comfort subscale, Filipino male students had the highest scores for statements related to feeling uncomfortable about wearing and changing into PE gear, being anxious about too much competition, and feeling exhausted in PE class. Conversely, Korean male students had the lowest scores for statements related to feeling uncomfortable as soon they entered the school gym, fear in PE class, and fear while exercising in PE class, which further indicates how clothing and overly strenuous PE activities can lead to negative attitudes toward PE.

According to the MODE model, attitude is the overall assessment of a target object coming from combinations of positive or negative beliefs, feelings and experiences stored in memory that may vary in strength (Fazio 2007). It is plausible that during the period of data collection, Filipino male students' perceived discomfort and negative emotions about PE class resulted from the dance lessons they needed to master and subsequently perform in an interclass dance competition, which was included in the curriculum for that academic quarter. This competition required them to wear costumes to complement the dance theme that potentially magnified their frustrations and anxieties during class. Meanwhile, with the revisions to the Korean National Curriculum for Physical Education (KNCPE), teachers are given more freedom with

regard to teaching contents which deemed appropriate to the needs of the students and their learning environment (Lee and Cho 2014). In this case, Korean male students' higher perceived comfort in PE maybe due to the pre-selected activities chosen by the teachers that they think students' mostly favor and very much comfortable to play (ie. soccer/futsal) that brought positive feelings from the experiences.

The activity subscale reflects students' motivation to participate in PE. Korean females were less positive about participating in PE; however, the reverse was found for Filipino female students. The status of PE as a major school subject might explain why these differences in scores existed. The educational system in Korea is highly competitive, especially when students start to prepare for their Korean college scholastic ability test to determine what universities they can enter (Mani and Trines 2018). Normally, students in Korea are encouraged by their teachers and parents to focus on important academic subjects, such as Math, English, and Science, to the point of giving up PE classes to allow students more study time (Lee and Cho 2014). PE teachers cancelling their classes to provide their students more time to study other subjects could have conveyed the message that it is a lower-status subject (Lee and Cho 2014), thus contributing to Korean students' less positive attitudes. This notion is somewhat supported by the reductions in time allotment and required teaching content in PE at the middle and high school levels under the 7<sup>th</sup> KNCPE (Lee and Cho 2014). Another reason could be that the physical activities offered to students in a particular grade level are ones they either prefer or hate. As mentioned earlier, dance-oriented activities are provided to adolescent students in the Philippines, while traditional individual and team sports with masculine connotations are taught to Korean students. These activities are perhaps preferred by female students in the Philippines but disliked by Koreans.

The teacher subscale reflects students' views of their teachers. Korean males had more favorable attitudes toward their teachers compared with male students in the Philippines. Based on the item statements, Korean male students reported that their PE teachers were very friendly, enthusiastic about teaching new exercises, and not too strict as compared to their counterparts. Therefore, these

positive traits and behaviors of Korean teachers may have contributed to Korean male students' more positive attitudes toward their teachers, whereas the strict and dull teaching behaviors of Filipino teachers may have led to their male students' less positive attitudes toward them.

From a practical viewpoint, these findings suggest that, to promote students' positive attitudes toward PE and subsequently lead to their increased motivation to participate in PE class and even physical activity off school premises, PE teachers and school administrators should consider students' sex and culture when creating lessons, supporting PE programs, and teaching and managing physical activities during PE sessions. These suggestions imply creating a learning environment that promotes diversity, inclusion, and cooperation. For instance, soccer and basketball are highly valued sports in Korea and in the Philippines respectively and are included within the team sport or ball games component of the PE curriculum of the two countries (Department of Education 2016; Yoo and Kim 2005). However, the status of these sports is mostly acknowledged by the male population. In fact, soccer has been the most played sport by Korean adolescent males (39.6%) but only 3.1% of young females participate (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2021). On the other hand, basketball was found to be the preferred sport by male middle school students in the Philippines compared to their female counterparts (Cruz, 2021). With such high popularity of soccer and basketball in males than females in each country, participation is unlikely for the female students. Hence, to ensure inclusion, diversity and cooperation, PE teachers should try to modify the rules of the games such that teams are comprised of both boys and girls. The scoring system can also be changed in a manner that extra points be given to a team when all members performed the ball pass/receive before shooting the ball rather than only skilled players dominate the game. A learning environment that prioritizes safety for students is another recommendation. Since PE teachers in Korea have the autonomy to select activities for their students, careful selection of activities that are safe for all students should be prioritized. On the other hand, since PE teachers in the Philippines follow the government-mandated curriculum, the

compulsory activities should be adjusted based on different skill levels of students while the facilities and equipment are regularly checked for wear and tear.

Investing in professional development training with an emphasis on motivating and promoting the leadership styles of both Filipino and Korean teachers can facilitate a positive, comfortable, and supportive learning environment for students because PE teachers who undergo professional training programs have students reporting greater satisfaction, motivation, classroom engagement, higher perceived skill development, and higher intention toward future physical activity participation (Cheon and Reeve 2013; Cheon et al. 2012; teacher subscale). Teachers, particularly PE teachers in Korea, may also benefit from additional training in developing their instructional strategies and knowledge in new fitness assessment and procedures since it was found that Korean PE teachers were adamant in changing their accustomed routines in relation to teaching and implementing PE programs (Lee and Cho 2014). Investing in multi-functional, modern, and sustainable equipment and facilities (e.g., dressing rooms for students in the Philippines to address their uneasiness when changing PE uniforms) to support PE programs is another recommendation that may promote favorable attitude of students toward PE.

Finally, when teaching sports, games, exercises, and other activities, teachers should not only focus on the technical and strategic aspects of the activities but also highlight their value to one's health and well-being. Fun and enjoyment factors should be considered when designing and preparing class activities because these aspects of PE experiences are major determinants of students' positive attitudes toward PE (Luke and Sinclair 1991; Silverman 2017). Innovating existing activities or traditional sports/games to be more holistic, relevant, and enjoyable to students may be a good starting point; for example, incorporating traditional martial arts movements in arnis (Philippines), or taekwondo (Korea) in modern dance lessons may be perceived as fun and useful, leading to students' positive attitude and consequently more active participation in class (satisfaction, comfort, and activity subscales).

From a theoretical viewpoint, this study highlighted that various affective, cognitive, and motivational information is processed and evaluated in the development of PE attitudes. Results showed that PE attitudes can be assessed using different information from one's general perception about PE and specific personal experiences in PE such as curriculum/activity, teacher, facilities, and environment. The degree of each student's positive or negative PE attitude can come from different sources of information that are evaluated based on his/her feelings, beliefs, and experiences stored in memory. Furthermore, sex and country of residence not only separately influence students' PE attitudes, they also affect students' attitudes toward PE through the interaction of sex and culture. Hence, this study clarifies students' PE attitudes and the factors that can affect the positive or negative development of these attitudes from a cross-cultural viewpoint.

This study has some limitations. Similar to studies using self-reported questionnaires, participants' interpretation of each statement or subconscious responses may have influenced them to respond differently. To minimize this concern, we ensured that statements and their meanings were clearly explained, and any questions were answered appropriately. Students were also informed to avoid skipping any items in the questionnaire and assured that their personal identification would be kept strictly confidential to ensure honest and reliable data. Further research is suggested to elucidate adolescent students' PE attitudes. Since attitudes can lead to behavioral changes, it might be worthwhile to examine students' behavioral outcomes, such as physical activity participation in and outside of school and achievement in PE, in relation to the independent factors (sex and country of residence) we examined. Moreover, further analyzing specific aspects of PE attitudes by adding qualitative research could provide answers to questions such as, "What physical activities in PE can make students feel anxious and how can their anxiety be relieved?" and "What particular behaviors do students prefer from their teachers that would motivate them to be physically active during PE class?" Lastly, although there is a body of knowledge investigating multicultural education in the context of teaching PE (Flory and McCaughtry 2011; Harrison et al.

2010), information about comparative international research on cross-cultural PE attitudes is still scarce. This current study contributes to this existing body of knowledge and more studies are encouraged in the future to shed more light on this topic.

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## The Rise and Fall of Sultanate Authorities in Post-Colonial Indonesia



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### [ *Abstract* ]

This research explores the fall of pre-independence Sultanates and its continued political, economic, and cultural influence in post-colonial Indonesia. By using qualitative and historical methods, this paper compares the Sultanates of Mataram in Yogyakarta and Al-Kadrie in Pontianak, which represent different historical paths supporting the struggle for independence during the mid-20th century. Sultan Hamid II of the Al-Kadrie was a supporter of federalism whereas Sultan Hamengkubowono IX of Yogyakarta was an advocate of the republican system. Eventually, Indonesia became a Republic, and the idea of federalism was sidelined, which led to the abolition of sultanates in the rise of the = Indonesian nation-state, except for the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. After the 1998 Reform, the current development of democracy created political opportunities for the Al-Kadrie to reclaim its authority through engagement with various civic organizations. Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta faces

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internal friction because of succession concerns.

**Keywords:** Sultanate, Nation-State, Identity, Democracy, Indonesia

## I . Introduction

There were about 300 Local Sultanates and Kingdoms across Indonesia before independence in the mid-1940s. However, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta in Java remains the only existing region with political authority and legitimacy over its territory.

This research attempts to understand the reason for this occurrence by performing historical and sociological observation of the Sultanates of Mataram in Yogyakarta and the Al-Kadrie in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. Mataram is the only surviving Sultanate-owned political authority as the Governor, with cultural legitimacy as the Sultan in the post-colonial Indonesian nation-state. Meanwhile, the Sultanate of Pontianak and hundreds of others lost authority and legitimacy in post-independence Indonesia until the *Reformasi* in 1998, which ended the Suharto regime. The *Reformasi* enabled many Sultanates to attempt reclaiming authority through the establishment of the national Sultanate forum, but the goals were not achieved.

Based on historical observations, this research argues that the continuity or discontinuity of the authority and legitimacy of a Sultanate after Indonesia's independence is rooted in agency and power relations with the colonial regime. For instance, Sultans Hamengkubowono IX of Mataram and Hamid II of Al-Kadrie were aristocrats and had maintained close relationships and partnerships with the colonial Dutch. However, the Sultan of Yogyakarta successfully formulated a firm engagement with the Republicans, i.e., Soekarno and Hatta, during the very crucial struggle for independence. Sultan Hamid II conversely joined the elite circle of the Republicans for various reasons ranging from personal barriers, ethnic sentiments, and political disagreements.

The 1998 *Reformasi* triggered the Pontianak Sultanate and others to reclaim their authority and legitimacy over the local areas

(Klinken 2007). This brought a dramatic change from centralization to decentralization in the social and political structure of the country. The *Reformasi* also reshaped the actors' formation, reflected by the previously suppressed figures under the New Order Regime, particularly the Islamists and socialists, who gained the political opportunity to influence state politics as well as parliament and executive office seats. For instance, the Islamists pushed hundreds of sharia laws in not less than 52 districts between 1999 to 2009 (Ikhwan 2018). In the District of Cianjur, West Java, the Islamists-supported candidate for Executive Head successfully won the local election and thus allowed the enforcement of sharia regulations from 2001 to 2006 (Ikhwan 2015).

Therefore, this research elaborates the structural and agency factors leading to a difference in the degree of Sultanate authority in the Indonesian nation-state era. It begins with a historical observation of the Mataram and Al-Kadrie Sultanates, and is followed by a discussion on the structure and capacity of the agency. Finally, a sociological view of the Sultanate movement is provided to reclaim authority and legitimacy amidst the opening opportunity within the democratizing social and political system in Indonesia.

## II . Literature Review

The formation of most Southeast Asian countries comprised three consecutive phases, namely chiefdom (or local principality), an ancient kingdom, and an imperial kingdom (Kulke 1986; 1990; 1991; 1993). Heine-Geldern (1956) described the process of state-building in Southeast Asia as a new cycle of state development, where the formulation of nation and modern-state would be parallel with the cosmology of religion. The end of the colonial era in Southeast Asia was marked by the transition, adoption, and acculturation of traditional kingship cultures into modern forms of statehood. Demographically, the kingdom and monarchy in this region are divided into two major religious spectrums, namely Buddhism and Islam. Buddhist Kingdoms flourished in Thailand, Cambodia,

Myanmar, and Laos, while Islamic Kingdoms or Sultanates thrived in Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Southern Thailand, and Southern Philippines. These Sultanates were formed by blending the traditions of Islam, local cultures, and ancient religions with modern forms of constitutional rules (Benda 1958; Reid 1984; Hefner 1997; Woodward 2011). According to Hefner (1997: 12), the endogenous “custom” and exogenous “Islam” in Southeast Asia imposed an artificial polarity on a dynamic relationship. For example, Benda (1958: 13) showed that the local culture in Java, specifically the central area, which is the heartland of the Mataram Sultanate, is the real victor and virtue of the people, rather than Islam. Javanese custom is more believed in the region compared to the Qur’an. Federspiel (2007: 86), stated that the emergence and expansion of Islam as well as the transformation of the ancient Kingdom to the Sultanate types in Southeast Asia since 1,300 A.D was driven by recognizing and hybridizing custom and locality to maintain and strengthen the loyalty during the transition. Based on these realities, Geertz (1971: 11) showed that the type of Islam in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, appropriates local culture rather than infiltrates religious civilization. Laffan (2003) also asserted that the process of expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia should be considered a process of negotiation between rulers, local culture, and Islamic scholars or the *ulamā’*.

Meanwhile, Sultanates in Southeast Asia are understudied. Hefner (1997: 8) stated that these realities occurred because Islam and the Southeast Asian Sultanates have long been “marginalized” by related research. Although the population of Muslims in Southeast Asian regions is more than 200,000,000 populations, with Indonesia having the highest number, most scholars discuss or only briefly mention other Muslim nations at the periphery of the Islamic world.

Most of the research on the Sultanates and their relationship focuses on Malaysia and Brunei, while Indonesia and the Philippines are largely ignored. Investigations of Sultanates in Indonesia mostly explore Aceh and Yogyakarta through historical and historiographical perspectives.

There are several reasons for this limited research in Indonesia. First, the majority of the country's sultanates, which are above 200, failed to maintain the power and authority after Indonesia's independence. Kershaw (2001) affirmed that this failure or total "discontinuity" was caused by the success of nationalists in framing the Sultanates as part of colonial puppets and the consequence of their status as the agency of the Dutch's colonial rule. According to Reid (1979) and Chauvel (2008), the revolutionary war insisting on Indonesia's independence challenged the Dutch colony as well as the local aristocracy.

Benda (1958) also reported that most Indonesian Sultanates were depicted as traditional symbols rather than religious authorities, despite being inspired by the Islamic cosmology. Ali (2016) also described the "bottleneck" relationship between the Sultanate, Muslim intellectuals, and colonialism in creating dependency and independency factors for promoting modernity in the country. He stated that the colonial bureaucracies in Indonesia, and even Malaysia, were willing to accommodate Sultanate authorities that were compatible with Islamic norms and values. Laffan (2003: 88) noted that the relationship between colonialism and the Sultanates should be viewed as the process of "Islamic pacification" created by the Dutch Colony as a way to maintain power. Locher-Scholten (2003: 26) defined the infiltration and incorporation of the Dutch colony into the Sultanate as a process of "preemption" and "contiguity" of the colony to the local society.

Ali (2016) indicated that Indonesian Muslim intellectuals inherently accepted the Sultanate authorities and simultaneously developed critical thinking in disseminating Islam and modernity. This led to the confrontation of discriminatory colonial policies as well as demands for 'the right' of the people. This led to the *ulamā'* connection between the Middle East and the *Jawi* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Azra 2013; Noer 1982). Most of the traditional and modern Islamic movements or organizations in the East Indies concurrently emerged and became one of the epicentral agencies in dynamizing the social-political realities of society, thereby reducing the Sultanate's image as the representation of the religious symbol.

Unfortunately, majority of existing literature failed to analyze the disappearance of the Indonesian Sultanates' triumph, albeit the extensive connection and inspiration of the political bureaucracy of the modern Indonesian state by Javanese political culture. Sutherland (1979) described the success of the young Javanese *priyayi* in harnessing the *Ethische Politiek* of the Dutch to become a part of the "educated elite," "bureaucratic elite," and "political elite." These figures subsequently assumed roles in promoting the idea of decolonization as well as modern state and nationalism. Latif (2005: 115) named this type of Javanese as *Bangsawan Pikiran*, compared to the Old Javanese *priyayi*, who supported the colonialization and were called *Bangsawan Oesoel*. Reid (2011) viewed the Indonesian revolution, which is also constructed by *Bangsawan Pikiran*, was motivated by the purpose of new unity under the umbrella of a modern state rather than insisting on the "freedom" and "equality" in society.

Sutherland (1979) and Reid (2011) were solely concerned with the process of "Javanization bureaucracy." Their investigations were oblivious to the struggle of Sultanate institutions in other regions and the effect on determining the idea of the nation-state and the type of the modern state. The research on Sultanates in the Indonesian contemporary era by Klinken (2007) only examined the creation of opportunity for the Sultanate institution to engage in the local political contest in the implementation of regional autonomy. It failed to evaluate the impact of the Sultanate in redefining and reconstructing the history of the nation as a part of socio-political sources in returning power. Faucher (2005: 134) assumed that most of the Sultanate institutions were unsuccessful in regaining their authority in the regions. The reasons identified were ethnic sentiment and their "*rapport au passé*" mindset, which signifies how the people were forced to "identify themselves with the past rather than the past identifying them." However, the research disregarded the complexity of re-framing and re-narrating the socio-history created by the Sultanate itself.

Most of the literature above neglected to examine the Sultanate institution through a combination framework of historical and sociological perspectives. They only aimed to describe the

impact of the Sultanates' history on the sociological realities in the present times. Therefore, this research attempts to analyze the historical context to determine the position, power, and authority of the Sultanates in the independence and contemporary era by comparing the Sultanates of Yogyakarta and Pontianak.

### III. Historical Roots of Sultanates' Authority

#### 3.1. The formation of the Sultanate in Yogyakarta

A historical observation is necessary to understand the roots of the political authority and legitimacy possessed by the Sultanates of Yogyakarta and Pontianak in the era of the Indonesian nation-state. Although the Yogyakarta Sultanate originated from the Mataram Kingdom established in 1582, the current rule was a "political product" of the Giyanti agreement in 1755 between the Dutch and the conflicting Royal family (Ricklefs 2001). This caused the Sultanate to be divided into Surakarta and Ngayogyakarta respectively in Solo City, Central Java, and Yogyakarta Province. Since the Giyanti became effective, the Mataram rulers lost their substantial authority (Soemardjan 2009: 13-14, Carey 1986c: 8; Boomgaard 2004: 22-23). The agreement transformed the confrontational relationship with the Dutch into patronage, where the life and status of both Sultanates were determined (Ricklefs 2001; Brown 2003: 64). The Sultanate's lack of armament made the new relationship the right choice to maintain power (Woodward 2011). As a result, colonialism was mostly built through collaboration with the local elites (Benda 1965a; Boomgaard 2004; Reid 2011).

Despite being the Dutch's accomplice for centuries, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta still held a significant role in resisting the colonialists compared to the other Sultanates in Nusantara, which fell into their hands. For instance, Sultan Hamengkubuwono II fought against the Dutch rule (1729-1828) led by H.W. Deandels. The resistance was due to the Dutch policy that forced the Javanese into labor as well as the attempt to abolish the traditional ceremony and strip the elites of their authority. In 1810, 3200 troops were

deployed to assault the Yogyakarta Sultanate (Ricklefs 2001: 147; Carey 2008: 188). The Java War from 1825 to 1830, led by Prince Diponegoro, was also proof of the fight against colonialism, though the War was triggered by corruption amongst the Sultanate elites as well as injustice towards the local farmers and merchants (Carey 2014: 3). The critical historical event was the decision by Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX to terminate the political contract with the Dutch in 1940. The Sultanate of Yogyakarta became the primary supporter of Indonesian independence henceforth, and the most important part in modernizing the concept of economy and politics (Sutherland 1979; Lombard 1996a; Woodward 2011).

The description above shows the rampant cooptation phase by the Dutch toward Yogyakarta Sultanate. However, there is a historical artifact in each phase, illustrating a strong “social attachment” between the Keraton institution and the people, symbolized by the Sultan and his descendants. While reaching the era of independence, Keraton led the people’s struggle against the tormenting colonialism. The Sultan of Yogyakarta’s title, as described in *“Sampeyan Dalem Ingkang Sinuwun Kanjeng Sultan Hamengku Buwana Senapati ing Alaga Abdur Rahman Sayidin Panatagama Kalifatullah,”* has also become the heart of Javanese culture. This means that the Sultan served as the main source that perpetuated the social, political, theological, and cultural values in Yogyakarta. This socio-historical context of “social attachment” and the “heart of the Javanese culture” has consolidated the legitimacy of cultural and political authority obtained by the Yogyakarta Sultan, who is also the Governor. The institution has become the “main actor” in formalizing the political or cultural symbol and managing diversity in order to avoid a destructive conflict between social groups.

Comparatively, this situation was the total opposite of Surakarta’s Sultanate. Both sultanates became the heart of Javanese culture and created space for members of various social groups, religions, ethnicity, ideology, etc., to emerge and concentrate in their respective regions. However, Surakarta’s Sultanate failed to manage local diversity due to the lack of cultural symbol legitimation and power. This led to a traumatic experience in Surakarta society, as the previous Sultanates tended to become colonialist accomplices. In

the 1910s, the proponents of various movements who echoed the idea of “justice” and “liberation,” such as Hadji Samanhoedi (1868-1956), Mas Marco Kartodikromo (1890-1935), and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo (1886-1943), were not closely related to the Sultanate. Although Hadji Mohammad Misbah (1876-1926) was born in the Kauman neighborhood and was a descendant of Keraton’s religious official, these became the reasons for his resistant spirit. In 1919, Hadji Misbah was arrested by Dutch East Indies Government for his criticism of Pakubuwono X, who constantly defended the colonialist’s policies (Kartodirdjo 1982; Siraishi 1997). This signifies that the leaders of the resistance in Surakarta were nationalists who confronted colonialism. The role of the Sultanate at the beginning of the nation-state era was weakened by the Anti-Swapraja incident initiated by Tan Malaka in 1946. This movement successfully gathered various paramilitary groups and political organizations to eradicate the feudalism government as well as demand the annulment of the “Special Region” status given by the central government to Surakarta (Kartodirdjo 1982; Anderson 2006).

### **3.2. The Formation of the Sultanate in Pontianak**

The Al-Kadrie Sultanate was situated in Pontianak City, West Kalimantan. It was the youngest Islamic Sultanate in the world and was established in year 1771 by Syarif Abdurrahman Al-Kadrie, a descendant of South Yemen Hadhramaut. The Sultanate successfully transformed the area from swamps and rivers into a more prominent and populous city with various ethnic backgrounds, such as Malayan, Bugis, Arabic, and Chinese (Heidhues 1998: 276; Chambert-Loir 2011; Minza 2012: 65).

On July 5, 1779, the Al-Kadrie Sultanate signed an agreement of *Acte van Investure* with the VOC of Netherlands, which transformed Pontianak into the center of governance and economy of West Borneo (Gin 2011: 7). Unfortunately, it also strengthened the position of the colonial Dutch in the area through the establishment of the VOC headquarters representative and a military fortress (Listiana 2009).

One of the essences of *Acte van Investure*, dated July 5, 1779,

was as a starting point for the Dutch colonialists to strengthen their position in Pontianak. After the agreement, the colonialists easily reinforced their power by legalizing advanced contracts such as the agreements of January 28, 1819, August 16, 1819, December 16, 1819, December 16, 1822, October 14, 1823, September 14, 1856, August 22, 1872, June 23, 1911, and April 8, 1912 (Listiana 2009). The content of these agreements affirmed the status of special rights of the VOC colony to establish various colonial institutions, such as a headquarters representative and military fort fortress, alongside converting Pontianak into the capital city of West Borneo Sultanate. The VOC hegemony of power and legitimacy was followed by the loss of the Pontianak Sultanate's power over its territory and a restriction of access. As the result, it became an institution that only served public affairs and solely relied on the colonialist financial aid after losing its authority to levy taxes and other income (Heidhues 1998; Listiana 2009: 2; Enthoven 2013: 265).

The Pontianak Sultanate only had 8 Sultans, spanning 179 years, two months, and 13 days, from October 23, 1771 to January 5, 1950, with the end of the Sultan Hamid II's reign. Until Indonesia's independence, the region was strongly under the control of the Dutch East Indies (Firmanto 2010: 261).

The close relationship of the Sultanate with the Dutch resulted in frequent clashes with the locals, such as the Dayak, Chinese, and the Malaysians, whose economic-political interests were harmed (Enthoven 2013: 267). For instance, the conquest of the previously Chinese-controlled gold fields by the Sultanate was resisted by a Chinese alliance (Heidhues 1998: 288-289). The Dayak people also fought against their placement as second-class citizens and imposed targeted taxes (Tanasaldy 2007; Enthoven 2013: 272; Helliwell 2014: 193). This marginalization led to their exclusion from education and government positions, as compared to their fellow Malaysians (Tanasaldy 2012: 32).

The Sultanate of Pontianak also experienced a separation following an internal conflict, resulting in the establishment of new settlements, such as Kampung Banjar Serasan, Kampung Kapur, Kampung Tanjung Saleh, Jungkat, Kubu, and Kampung Tuan-Tuan.

Also, Syarif Abdullah as well as his Bugisnese and Malayan followers left Pontianak and went to Loloan area (Bali) (Al-Qadrie 2005b: 1-2; Usman 2010: 102).

Regardless of these events, the Sultanate maintained a very close relationship with the Dutch for several reasons. First, it was a strategy to avoid conflict with the colonialists that could potentially ruin the Sultanate institution. Second, there was a lack of military forces, soldiers, and armament. The Sultanate became more indirect and less confrontational towards the Dutch compared to the reign in Yogyakarta. Although Sultan Syarif Usman Al-Kadrie (1819-1855) tried to fight against their control, the resistance failed due to the lack of military power (Al-Qadrie 2005b: 18).

The alliance with the Dutch marginalized the Sultanate's territory and authority, indirectly turns the regime into a mere symbol of governance. Nevertheless, the Sultanate gained at least two advantages. First, it obtained an appropriation that significantly legitimized the symbolic status of the Sultan. Second, it enjoyed economic profits through the tax sharing system and allowances provided for serving as an accomplice to the Dutch. Finally, the Sultan and his family attained access to better education in Dutch schools and foreign Universities, particularly in the Netherlands.

The above account shows that the *Ngayogyakarta* Sultanate had a long history of resistance as well as compliance with the Dutch, which substantially strengthened its legitimacy to the people. However, the Al-Kadrie Sultanate maintained a close relationship with the colonialists, which undermined its legitimacy, particularly in the post-colonial period.

#### **IV. The Agency Factor: Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX and Sultan Hamid II**

It is important to examine the role of agency that led to the different paths of the Yogyakarta and Pontianak Sultanates. Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX of Yogyakarta was known as a reformist. He had successfully initiated open recruitment for Pamong Praja

(bureaucracy), abolished the Patih and Kawedanan positions, and cut off the budget for the Royal ceremony and ritual. Under Japanese colonialism, he negotiated to replace *Romusha* or forced labor with a popular program to develop the Selokan Mataram (Mataram Canal). This succeeded in saving the lives of the people from *Romusha* and assisted in irrigating thousands of rice-fields in the area (Soemardjan 2009: 47-67; Monfries 2007: 166-167).

Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX played a strategic and central role in the revolutionary movement for independence in the mid-20th century. He became a symbol of the traditional Javanese leadership as well as a prominent national proponent of the nation's freedom (Woodward 2010: 1). The Mandate of September 5<sup>th</sup> was also declared as an affirmation of the Sultanate's support for Indonesia. At that time, declarations of support were not common, as they maintained to have a close relationship with the colonialists. He also offered Yogyakarta to act as a temporary capital of the Republic following the Dutch military aggression on Jakarta. Therefore, the Sultanate was also responsible for paying the salaries of government officers and other financial expenditures (Carey 1986b; Darban et al. 1998: 49-50). This shows that the Sultanate of Yogyakarta continuously associated with Indonesia during the period of struggle for independence.

The situation of Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak (1913-1978) was different. The Sultan had a very close relationship with the Dutch as a graduate of their educational system. Also, the Sultan was raised by Miss Fox and Miss E.M. Curties despite being of Hadhramaut descent. He married Marie (Dina) van Delden, the daughter of Captain van Delden, a Dutch KNIL officer (Winardi 2012: 61). He graduated from the *Koninklijke Militaire Academie* (KMA) in Breda, Netherlands and was a secretary to the Queen of Wilhelmina. He held the military rank of Major-General (*Generaal-Majoor*) after being released from the Japanese Military Prison in 1945 for his involvement in the civilian-military movement of the *Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger* (KNIL).

His appoint as sultan on October 29, 1945 was due to the support from the *Nederland Indische Civil Administration* (NICA).

He achieved the position after returning to Pontianak from the Netherlands when the regime was in crisis following the murder of sultanate family members, including Sultan Syarif Muhammad Al-Kadrie in Mandor in 1943-1944 (Soedarto 1989: 264; Gin 2011: 103; Tanasaldy 2012: 18). Syarif Thaha Al-Kadrie served as the Sultan for two-three weeks before being replaced by Sultan Hamid II, who gained support from the NICA.

However, the close association of Sultan Hamid II with the Dutch, particularly the NICA, triggered antipathy among Indonesian independence fighters. This was worsened by the fact that Sultan Syarif Thaha Al-Kadrie had a good relationship with the Republicans and the indigenous Dayak people. The use of the NICA currency also provoked massive rallies at Zwall Resident Office (Davidson 2009: 37; Soedarto 1989: 206-208).

Sultan Hamid II served as a State Representative of West Borneo. However, his position had very little implication in refining the relationship with the Republican figures because of the support from the NICA. He also confronted members of PPRI (Youth Movement to Support the Republic of Indonesia) after rejecting the proposal to fill his position since PPRI intended to maintain the independence of Indonesia. NICA responded to Sultan Hamid II's failure in cooperating with PPRI by forming the committee to change West Borneo governance and revitalize the existent local kingdom, provided they agreed to serve NICA (Soedarto 1989: 207-209). In May 1947, West Borneo was transformed into the Special District of West Borneo (DIKB), which was strongly under Dutch influence. This contradicted the position of the Yogyakarta Sultanate, which was fully committed to supporting the Republic (Soedarto 1989: 250; Poeze 2008). However, the DIKB was short-lived, as it was submitted to the Indonesian Republic and became the Office of the Resident under decree numbers 234/R and 235 R on 7 May 1950 (Riwut 1979: 35; Winardi 2012).

Both were schoolmates in KMA Breda and Rijkuniversiteit Leiden, and therefore had similar schooling. However, they possessed different mindsets regarding the independence of Indonesia (Persadja 1953: 98; Winardi 2012: 61). Sultan Hamid II was a very

Federalist-Pro-Colonialist, while Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX was a Unitarian-Republican.

The contestation between the two figures was sharpened by their ministerial positions. Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX served as the Minister of Defense, while Hamid II was merely a Minister of State *Zonder Portefeuille* (Without Portfolio) in charge of matters related to the state. Sultan Hamid II concerned the position of State Minister as less strategic and was entitled to serve as the Minister of Defense due to his military training and the former position of KNIL Colonel Office (Kahin 1959: 448-456; Monfries 2015: 213-214; Winardi 2012: 66-67). Meanwhile, Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX had no military background, causing Sultan Hamid II to view his appointment as the Minister of Defense as a political maneuver by the Republicans.

The disappointment with the Republican circle led to the perpetration of the Westerling incident by Sultan Hamid II, eventually deteriorating his relationship with other Republicans as well as the Al-Kadrie Sultanate and the newly created Indonesian State. Consequently, Sultan Hamid II was sentenced to jail, and Al-Kadrie was marginalized and excluded from the social and political system of Indonesia.

## V. State Formation and Its Implication on Sultanate Authority

The different networks and power relations between the Yogyakarta and Pontianak Sultanates during pre-independence Indonesia had a substantial impact on the rise and fall of the Sultanate authority. The idea of giving a Special status to Yogyakarta was proposed by Committee of Preparation of Indonesia's Independence (PPKI—*Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia*). The central figure of the Sultanate was a member of PPKI. However, the inauguration of Special Status to Yogyakarta was met with hindrances, as there were objections and heated debates due to a traumatic memory of the possible '*despotisch*' and '*feodalisch*' political structure (Bahar et al. 1998; Kusuma (ed) 2009: 206-238). PPKI finally decided to award a special district to Yogyakarta and some other Sultanates in Java after

several debates and negotiations (Kusuma (ed) 2009: 506; Monfries 2007:167-168). This was manifested in Law Number 22 of 1948 and Law Number 3 of 1950 or Law Number 1 of 1957.

In addition, Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX served in top political positions during the early independence as the Minister of State (1946-1949), Ministry of Defense (1948-1950), Minister of Economic Coordinator, Finance and Industry (1966-1973), and the Vice President (1973-1978) (Carey 1986b; Lutfi et al. 2009). This indicates the definition of “Special District of Yogyakarta” contained in Law Number 22 of 1948 and Law Number 13 of 2012 refers to long before the birth of the Indonesian State.

Yogyakarta is presently the only Sultanate with the Special Status in the post-independence Indonesia, which enjoys the privilege of political authority, cultural symbol, and religious leadership, with a governorship, Sultan, and *Sayyidin Panatagama* positions, respectively. Meanwhile, more than 300 other Sultanates were systematically and forcefully subsumed within the State system, including those who actively fought against NICA and fully supported Indonesia’s independence, i.e., Luwu Sultanate (Agung 1996; ICG 2003; Roth 2007) and the Landak Sultanate (Soedarto 1989).

The State regime systematically undermined and delegitimized Sultanate institutions across archipelagic Indonesia. This was symbolized by several legal approaches through the issuance of Law Number 19 of 1965 and Law Number 5 of 1979, which imposed the modern bureaucratic system over the traditional one. The implementation of Law Number 5 of 1960 about the Basic Regulation of Agrarian Principles (UUPA) also privatized lands owned by the Sultanates and the people (Klinken 2007). Consequently, various Sultanate regulations became ineffective and were simply converted into cultural heritage and tourism objects (Kershaw 2001).

The Sultanate in West Borneo also began to lose its influence as the Dayak people gained electoral dominance during the regional election. Proof of this was the Regional Regulation about the Recognition and Protection of the Traditional Law (PPMHA—

*Peraturan Daerah tentang Pengakuan dan Perlindungan Masyarakat Hukum Adat*) that allowed the Dayak ethnicity to reclaim their land or *Tanah Ulayat*. Moreover, Landak Sultanate officially conferred an honorary title to Cornelis as the Governor of West Borneo and a prominent figure as a strategy to minimize the threat of Dayak legitimacy to the Sultanate. In this regard, Buchari A. Rahman, a former Mayor of Pontianak City and a prominent figure of Malay group commented that:

“...Nowadays they (Dayak community) are pushing in legalizing the PPMHA in order to recognize the customary right (*hak ulayat*) of the *Pribumi* (local society) which it just referred to Dayak peoples. However, the PPMHA draft would be a threat for the people who were labelling as “*pendatang*” (migrant), whereas the land owned by *Pendatang* could be easier in claiming by Dayak community as their customary land or the land of their ancestors. Currently, especially in the Provincial level, Dayak groups have succeeded in hegemonizing and dominating their powers in the executive and legislative levels. While the PPMHA draft approved, it would be a threat for Malay or other ethnic groups. In this case, even Malays (or even the Sultanate) also live and grow in this land (since tens of centuries ago), however in this situation, Malays also were categorized as *Pendatang*” (Interviewed with Buchari A. Rahman, Pontianak, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

## VI. Reclaiming the Sultanate Authority in the Reformation Era

The *Reformasi* created new opportunities and challenges for the Sultanates across Indonesia to reclaim political, social, economic, and cultural authority. The transformation of governance from the authoritarian-centralistic system to democratization-decentralization allowed local elites to synergize the customs with modern governance. It also facilitated the emergence of new aspirations to strengthen the local identity. As a result, about 70 Sultanates were revived after the reformation (Klinken 2007). The *Reformasi* provided a political momentum for the Sultanate to advocate for the traditional community, revive the previously marginalized

symbolism, and reinvent its authority, which was suppressed by the State regime for over seven decades (Klinken 2007: 151).

Meanwhile, the Yogyakarta and Pontianak Sultanates followed different paths to reclaim their authority amidst the changing political system of the *Reformasi* era. During the 2010s, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta opposed the proposal of the central government concerning a direct governorship election. This position has been held by the Sultans for decades since the independence of Indonesia after the conferment of the Special Status. In the *Reformasi* era, the central government viewed the privilege as obsolete following the amendment of the National Constitution (detik.com 26/11/2010).

It is important to note that the proposal was rejected by the Sultanate and a large number of the Yogyakarta people, as reflected by the mass gathering to support the Special Status. A referendum was also under threat if the proposal was passed (tempo.co 30/11/2010). The sultanate was considered at the heart of Javanese culture that it united people even during the massive social unrest of early independence following the Dutch aggression in 1947, as well as during the initial *Reformasi* era. Since independence, it has served as a symbol to unify the people. The Sultanate was a form of submission to the Republic and the national constitution of Indonesia, but it also generated self-identification among the people of Yogyakarta that they were somehow historically and culturally connected.

Pontianak took a different route to reclaim authority during the *Reformasi* era. First, the Sultanate attempted to rehabilitate the history of Sultan Hamid II by establishing the Foundation of Sultan Hamid II. This establishment collaborated with scholars, mainly historians, to prepare a proposal requesting a National Hero Award for the Sultan from the central government. The main reason was that Hamid II was framed for contributing to designing the Garuda Pancasila, the symbol of the nation (Davidson 2009: 152; Dimiyati et al. 2013).

Second, the Sultanate joined the Malayan Traditional Institution and Kinship (Lembayu). This was a strategic agenda as the networks with other Malayan Sultanates strengthened its

political relationship with the national government as well as the local Dayak ethnic group. In West Kalimantan, Malayan is the second largest ethnic group after Dayak (Davidson 2009: 152).

The above attempts to rejuvenate the authority of the Pontianak Sultanate were hindered by the local and central government. The Malayan Assembly of Culture and Tradition (MABM—*Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu*) was reluctant in welcoming the Sultanate as a part of its assembly. This was because of its history as a descendant of Hadhramaut, which is considered less or separate from the Malayan culture. The *Sayyid* or *Syarif* title attached to the Sultan and his family indicated a Hadhramis, rather than Malayan, origin. As discussed above, the Ulama discovered that Sultan Al-Kadrie originated from the Ḥaḍramawt of Yemen. The Hadhramis-related title situated the Sultanate and his family as an exclusive social group as they only married those who shared the *Syarif* (for a man) or *Syarifah* (for a woman) title (Riddell 1997; Freitag 2009; Smith 2009). The MABM also believed that the Pontianak Sultanate distanced and prevented Malaysians from partaking in its activities (Interviewed with Chairil Effendy, Pontianak, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016). Therefore, the appointment of a representative in the MABM committee by Sultan Abu Bakar Al-Kadrie has not generated any significant contributions to MABM or the Malayan culture. This became more apparent when the Sultanate was unable to mediate and resolve the ethnic conflicts between the Dayak and Malayan people in November and December 1999, as well as between the Malaysians and Maduranese in October 2000 (Salim 2005). Other incidents occurred at the Abdurrahman Sports Centre in June 2001, the conflict between the Islamic Defender Front (FPI) and Dayak in March 2012, alongside the disagreement among 205 Dayak and Aksi Bela Ulama citizens on 20 May 2017.

The description above shows the reason local elites in the country have been striving to gain “approval” and legitimacy from the Yogyakarta Sultanate upon the regional elections in the Special District. This is because they believed the Sultan’s blessing might help boost their votes. Meanwhile, the political elites from the Pontianak Sultanate descendant, such as Syarif Abdullah Al-Kadrie

(member of the regional representative council, 2014-2024) and Syarif Umar Al-Kadrie (Regent of Kayong, 2007-2008), tended to ignore their Sultanate symbol while campaigning. In fact, the internal conflict previously maintained in the Pontianak was affected, leading to the reduction of public sympathy for the Sultanate institution.

However, in the last decade the Sultanate of Yogyakarta has evolved an internal friction regarding its succession. According to the Article 18 of Law 13/2012 on Special Status of Yogyakarta, “the candidate of governor and vice are the citizen of Indonesia who fulfils the required document of CV that consists of educational background, working experience, siblings, wife, and children.” The term ‘wife’ has become a contentious issue as it implies that the candidate should be a male-only and thus discriminated against a female candidate. It is indeed politically contentious as the Sultan has daughters only. As a response to the Article 18, the Sultan gave a Speech on March 6, 2015 that proclaiming the supreme authority of the Sultan regarding the Sultanate succession, regardless of the gender issue (Dardias 2016). Then, on April 30, 2015, the Sultan amended his title and abolished the title of *Khalifatullah* (the Vicegerent of God on earth). In the following week, on May 5, 2015, the Sultan of Yogyakarta inaugurated his daughter with the new title of Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Hayuning Bawono Langgeng in Mataram, which replaced the previous title of Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Pembayun. According to the tradition of the Keraton, the title of *Mangkubumi* is a sign of the next crown inheritor. The orders were perceived by the sultan’s brothers as having violated the *Paugeran*—the traditional law of the Sultanate. There is no precedent for women to become sultan. The sultan’s brothers were of the belief that according to the *Paugeran* the crown should be inherited to the sultan’s oldest brother.

## VII. Conclusion

Based on the data above, the different degrees of convergence between various forms of political, economic, social, and cultural

authorities bestowed varying capacities to the Yogyakarta and the Pontianak Sultanates in creating local and national identity amongst the people. The difference is rooted in the historical positioning of the Sultanate elites regarding the actor circles in the mid-20th century or the era of the Indonesian nation-state. Although the Sultanate of Pontianak had an opportunity to reclaim its traditional authority in the local society in the Reformation era, this attempt is likely to fail. The failure was promoted by its historical contradiction, ethnic sentiments, and marginalization.

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## Examining Indonesia-Qatar Relations through the Five-Dimensional Framework\*

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### [ *Abstract* ]

In recent decades, Indonesia and the Middle Eastern countries have increased and expanded their political, security, economic, and socio-cultural ties. Qatar is one of the Middle Eastern countries which have fortified ties with Indonesia. This article aims to analyze the nature and scope of Indonesia-Qatar relations through the five-dimensional framework developed by George Eberling, which consists of political-diplomatic, economic-trade, military-security, cultural, and petroleum-energy relations (Eberling 2017). Despite being significantly distinct in history, demography, geographic size, and location, Jakarta and Doha have been provided opportunities to expand their cooperation on multifaceted dimensions by way of common economic, geopolitical, and cultural interests. Throughout the paper, the primary drivers of the cooperation are also discussed, alongside its future prospects.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Qatar, Asia and the Middle East, the Gulf, GCC

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## **I . Introduction**

Relations between Indonesia and the Middle East have been going on for centuries. Indian Ocean maritime routes between Southeast Asia and the Arab world devised one of the most extensive maritime trade links in the world during the period 1000 to 1500 (Al Qurtuby 2019). Through it, Indonesia and the Middle East have maintained and expanded linkages via numerous platforms such as the hajj pilgrimage, migrant labor, and academic exchange (Lucking 2021). While subsequent years witnessed shifts in the geopolitical dynamics, cooperation saw a downturn as both Indonesia and the Middle East preferred to cooperate with major Western powers and neighboring countries; in the recent years the two have tried to rectify their cooperation (Rakhmat 2022a). Growing regional instability and potential economic downturn in the US and Europe have prompted the countries of the Middle East to initiate a “Look East” policy, deepening ties with Asian nations such China, Japan, South Korea, and the ASEAN countries (Al-Adwani 2020). Indonesia, as the largest economy in Southeast Asia, has enticed Middle Eastern countries to strengthen their footholds. Apart from being enticing destination for investments, the archipelago’s 250-million population makes it a promising market for Arab exports. Its strategic geographic location makes it a gateway to expand Middle Eastern footprint in the wider Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, the Middle East offers Indonesia not only access to untapped consumer markets, but also investment prospects. Despite being the largest Southeast Asian economy, Indonesia still needs to attract massive amounts of investments to develop its economy, accelerate growth, and slash unemployment. Geopolitical rivalry between China and the US, which poses challenges to the Southeast Asian region, also prompted Indonesia to fortify cooperation with other Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East (Rakhmat et al. 2022).

As a result, in recent decades, Indonesia and the Middle Eastern countries increased and expanded political, security, economic, and socio-cultural ties. Indonesia and Qatar present an interesting case study. In line with the above trajectory, the ties between Jakarta and Doha have been developing not only in the

political and diplomatic realms, but also in the economic, security, and cultural sectors. This paper aims to demonstrate the nature and scope of Indonesia-Qatar relations through the five-dimensional framework developed by Eberling (2017), which consists of political-diplomatic relations, economic-trade relations, military-security relations, cultural relations, and petroleum-energy relations. The framework enables this paper to provide a comprehensive understanding of Qatar-Indonesia relations. To date, there are limited studies on Indonesia-Middle East relations. In general, existing literature focus on the influence of the Middle East on Islam in Indonesia (Azra 2004; Eliraz 2004; Hadiz 2015). Works on this topic extend to writings on the rise of Islamic extremism in Indonesia (Hasan 2005; Chaplin 2014; and Kovacs 2014). There is a growing number of works focusing on the bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and the Middle Eastern countries, such as Al Qurtuby and Aldamer (2018) and Rakhmat (2022c) on Indonesia-Saudi Arabia relations, Jensen (2017) and Mason (2022) on Indonesia-UAE relations, and Rakhmat et al. (2021) on Indonesia-Oman relations. This paper thus aims to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the relations between Indonesia and the Middle East by focusing on Indonesia's ties with Qatar.

## **II . Methods and Framework**

This research is based on existing literature and field research that includes interviews as well as conversations from both Indonesia and Qatar, apart from analysis and interpretation of multiple political, economic, security, and socio-cultural events and facts in the two countries. The contemporary nature of the relationship between Indonesia and Qatar and the limited academic studies available indicate that many of the developments and events have only taken place very recently; as such journalism is an important source of information for this research. Therefore, this study, in addition to official documents, books, peer-reviewed articles, and policy reports, relies on media articles published by reputable news agencies. To ensure reliability, the information in these media sources is not taken for granted. Aside from obtaining information

from reputable media, cross-checking is carried out by comparing with other sources.

As to the framework of analysis, the paper employs the five-dimensional framework introduced by Eberling (2017), which consists of five dimensions, namely political-diplomatic relations, economic-trade relations, military-security, cultural relations, and petroleum-energy relations. The framework is a comprehensive analytical tool which gives a complete comprehension of complex international cooperation instead of examining solely on orthodox approaches such as bilateral trade, politics, and security cooperation. The majority approaches in international cooperation focus on one or more elements of a country's bilateral partnership, which is unable to provide a comprehensive picture of the complex character of interstate cooperation. This research adopts the framework to understand the ties between Qatar and Indonesia. While the framework has mainly been adopted to understand China's ties with the Middle Eastern countries, the framework is relevant for this paper given that Qatar-Indonesia relations have, to some degree, encompassed the five realms of the approach.

### **III. Political-Diplomatic**

The diplomatic relations between Qatar and Indonesia began in 1976. In the beginning, however, there were not many diplomatic engagements between the two countries, mainly because of Doha's inward-looking policy. However, in early 1990s, Qatar started to improve its relations with many countries, encouraged by the then Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's vigorous promotion of Qatar's foreign policy in the time of his father's leadership. It was only in March 1995 that the then Qatar Minister of Foreign Affairs made his official visit to Indonesia, followed by the opening of the Qatari Embassy in Jakarta in 1996 (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d). Given Doha's growing attention, the government in Jakarta also reciprocated by way of the visit of the then Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas in March 1997 (ibid). Two years later, Indonesian President Abdulrahman Wahid visited to Doha to inaugurate the

Indonesian Embassy in Doha, which prompted further diplomatic exchanges among officials (ibid). These high-level exchanges resulted in the signing of several agreements, including Joint Minutes and MOUs between the two countries in 1997 and 2002 respectively, and a bilateral agreement on the cancellation of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, service, and private passports (ibid). These advances were further enhanced by other organizational bases, including the regularization of annual side meetings at the UN, the Organization of Islamic Countries, as well as the cooperation between the Indonesian Parliament and the Shura Council, Qatar's legislative body, on capacity building and gender issues (Rakhmat 2017; Piri 2022).

Although over the years diplomatic activities between Indonesia and Qatar were limited to exchange visits among officials, there has been a consistent comradery between the two on each other's national interests and priorities. In May 2000, Qatar National Committee visited Indonesia to obtain Jakarta's support for the holding of the 2006 Asian Games in Qatar, which Indonesia supported (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d). In the same year, based on the meeting between Indonesia and several Arab countries on June 7, 2000 on Jakarta's rejection of the declaration issued by the West Papua Region Conference on the succession of the territory from Indonesia, Qatar's Permanent Envoy in New York voted for Indonesia in the event any draft resolution aimed at Indonesia's unity and integrity was introduced (ibid). Political relations between Jakarta and Doha have also been focused on the issue of anti-corruption. The Indonesian Parliament and the Qatar Shura Council have been actively involved in the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), a platform for inter-parliamentary cooperation to overcome corruption and promote good governance (Piri 2022). From 2016 to 2020, the Indonesian Parliament served as the GOPAC Secretariat in Jakarta, during Indonesia's chairmanship for two terms. Afterwards, GOPAC has been under the chairmanship of the Qatar Shura Council (ibid). The two countries' parliaments have cooperated on exchange of technical assistance and capacity building related to anti-corruption efforts. The robustness of the relations between Indonesia and Qatar

on the issue of anti-corruption was demonstrated in December 2022, when the former vice chairperson of Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Erry Riyana Hardjapamekas received the Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award in recognition of his contributions to corruption eradication endeavors (Suharto 2022).

Such comradery was also demonstrated during the Gulf crisis in 2017. On July 7, 2017, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt decided to end their diplomatic relations with Qatar over allegations that the government in Doha supported the "radical" Muslim brotherhood movement and provided funding to opposition groups in Syria. This was followed by a blockade of air, land, and sea routes (Naheem 2017). Despite reeling from the blockade early on, Qatar's resilience and measures allowed it to ride out the dispute. In January 2021, a reconciliation of sorts occurred. In addition to the fact that the crisis did not affect Qatar's relations with Indonesia, the government in Jakarta took an initiative to become a mediator by contacting the Foreign Ministers of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, emphasizing that dialogue and reconciliation efforts must be carried out immediately (Vebriyanto 2017). These shared interests have provided an opportunity for Jakarta and Doha to capitalize on the potential for bilateral ties.

The most important breakthrough in the diplomatic engagement between Indonesia and Qatar took place in March 2022. The governments in Jakarta and Doha signed a Letter of Intent on humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan after the Taliban took over in August 2021 (Wardah 2022). The initiative, which was signed by Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi and Qatar's Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, involves long-term aid, including scholarship and vocational training programs for Afghans, and plans to organize public dialogues on the role of women in Afghanistan. In the same month, official representatives from Qatar, Afghanistan, and Indonesia also held a meeting in Doha to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, during which they touched upon the dire economic, education, and humanitarian conditions in the country (Khaliq 2022). Besides offering humanitarian aid, both Doha and Jakarta

actively advocated to the Taliban women's rights, committed to oversee the transition period, and brought up the issue of humanitarian crises in multilateral avenues. A more concrete endeavor took place in December 2022 when the two countries convened the International Conference on Afghan Women's Education (ICAWE), which aimed to gather support for Afghan women's education and to call on Afghanistan to exert efforts towards protecting women's rights (Aqil 2022). The conference, which was attended by 38 countries and several international organizations, NGOs, and businesses, was the first global conference to discuss the issue (ibid).

The cooperation between Qatar and Indonesia on the Afghanistan issue is not without reasons. Doha's endeavors to pursue relations with the Taliban are based on the country's ambition to fortify its position as a global mediator (Hodali 2021). This parallels Indonesia's foreign policy priorities under President Joko Widodo's administration. Upon entering office in 2014, Widodo unveiled his initiatives that aimed to strengthen Indonesia's position on the international stage. The most crucial of these was the "4+1" foreign policy outline which consists of "strengthening economic diplomacy; protection diplomacy; sovereignty and national diplomacy; and Indonesia's role in the region and globally" (Wicaksana and Wardhana 2021). Meanwhile, the "+1" refers to the strengthening of the infrastructure of diplomacy (ibid). These shared interests between Indonesia and Qatar seem to have prompted the two to work together to mediate in the crisis in Afghanistan. The Qatari government's invitation of Indonesia to the March meeting appeared to have been influenced by Jakarta's ability in establishing trust with the Taliban regime. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, is viewed as being able to mediate conflicts in the Muslim world, including the Afghanistan issue. This Islamic identity is also augmented by its neutral position, prompting Afghanistan's Taliban regime to have more confidence in dealing with Indonesia than with other countries. Indonesia's neutrality is based on its constitution, which says that Indonesia's goal is to foster global peace within the nature of its "free and active" foreign policy, which does not take sides in global affairs.

Qatar's invitation to Indonesia in mediating together the Afghanistan issue is also rooted in the long history of cooperation between Indonesia and Afghanistan (Saadah and Latif 2022). The latter was one of the first nations to recognize Indonesia's independence. Since then, the two countries have maintained cooperation in various fields. Indonesia is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest destination for Afghan export, while Afghanistan is one of Indonesia's largest export destinations in Central Asia (Rakhmat and Purnama 2022). Finally, Jakarta-Doha cooperation on the Afghanistan issue is also associated with the overall cooperation between the two countries. As mentioned earlier and will be explained further later, Indonesia and Qatar often meet at numerous multilateral avenues to discuss regional and global issues. This occurs alongside economic, cultural, and defense cooperation that have been increasingly pursued by the two countries.

#### **IV. Economic-Trade**

Aside from focusing on political and diplomatic realms, Indonesia and Qatar maintained a steady economic cooperation. Most recent reports showed that trade volume between the two countries is at a 29% year-on-year growth, reaching US\$758 million in the first seven months of 2022, from US\$587 million (Alagos 2022b). Qatar Chamber also noted that bilateral trade between Qatar and Indonesia increased by 78% from QR1.8 billion in 2016 to QR3.22 billion in 2021 (ibid). The trade primarily includes steel, medical equipment, paper and toilet paper, tableware, food and beverage, plywood, and automotive (ibid). Nonetheless, trade balance between Qatar and Indonesia is quite imbalanced, with Qatar's export to Indonesia reaching US\$947 million (UN International Trade Statistics Database 2020). This is not surprising given that Qatar, with one of the world's largest LNG reserves, is a major LNG exporter to Indonesia (Rakhmat and Pashya 2022). It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a significant impact on Qatar-Indonesia economic-trade relations. Throughout 2020, the trade volume between the two countries increased to US\$1 billion (Zufrizal 2021). To maintain the robustness of the economic

cooperation, Indonesia Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met with Qatar Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in early 2021 to discuss ways to sustain the cooperation amidst an unstable global economy caused by the pandemic (Prihatin 2021).

Beyond export and import activities, two-way investments have also taken place. On the one hand, Indonesian construction firms PT. Adhi Karya and PT. Asia Building Products have succeeded in securing construction contracts in Qatar (MEED 2011). On the other hand, Qatari capital also made its way to Indonesia. The most important investment was the widely reported US\$1 billion joint investment fund by Qatar Holding, the subsidiary company of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) (Latul 2010). Initially, the joint venture was announced in 2007 to fund major energy and infrastructure projects in Indonesia. Under the deal, the Qatari side would own 85% of the stake while the Indonesian government, through Its Ministry of Finance, would have the rest of the 15% (ibid). The fund was part of Qatar's US\$50 billion sovereign wealth fund aimed to increase its assets in Asia in response to the increasingly weakening dollar to capture higher returns. As a country with the world's largest gas fields, Qatar has been channeling surpluses from energy sales to the QIA. The joint investment fund, however, took several years to be realized. This was partly due to Qatar's insistence to own the entire project; Indonesia however was determined to maintain its 15% of the stake although it did not have the capital ready. It was only in 2010 that the local investment vehicle, PT Qatar Holding Indonesia, was established and the funds were finalized in 2016 (Alagos 2016).

In addition, Qatar has also invested in Indonesia's banking sector, with Qatar National Bank (QNB)'s US\$80.8 million investment to acquire a 65.59% stake in Bank Kesawan in 2010, becoming the controlling shareholder (Asian Banking & Finance 2011). The bank which operates across Indonesia was rebranded as QNB Kesawan. Nonetheless, after QNB increased its shares in 2014, the name was changed again to Bank QNB Indonesia (Almawadi 2014). In 2020, it was reported that Qatar owned 92.48% of the bank's shares (Saleh 2020). Aside from the banking sector, Indonesia

has also witnessed the growing flow of Qatari investments in its tourism sector. In 2018, Qatar Investment Authority signed an agreement with the government in Jakarta to develop the tourism potentials of Lombok Island, particularly in the Mandalika region, with Qatar investing US\$500 million (Sheany 2018). Qatar is also currently constructing new luxurious hotels and resorts in Indonesia, set to open in 2024; these are in Labuan Bajo, the westernmost point of the island of Flores, and in the Nusa Tenggara region of eastern Indonesia (Ibrahim 2022). This project is significant considering that the areas are part of Jakarta's new initiatives called the "10 New Balis," incorporating 10 sites in Indonesia that are being prepared to be the country's new tourist destinations. Involving Qatar in one of the country's vital projects demonstrates Doha's position in Jakarta's strategic calculations.

Furthermore, Qatar has also evolved strong interests in Indonesia's digital sector. The earliest was in 2007, when Qatar Telecommunications, now known as Ooredoo, bought the majority stakes of Indosat, one of Indonesia's largest telecommunication firms, owning 65% stakes (Aglionby 2008). As Indonesia accelerates its digital transformation, Qatar has presented itself as a partner. In 2021, Indosat, which has been rebranded as "Indosat Ooredoo" launched its first commercial 5G services in Solo, Central Java (Mingas 2021). The new 5G services aimed to provide Indonesian consumers with access to enhanced mobile broadband Internet, and to meet the increasing demand for digital content and services via mobile networks (*ibid*). Although it was launched in Solo, Ooredoo planned to extend the roll-out to major cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar (*ibid*). In the same year, however, the company approved a US\$6 billion merger of telco units of Qatar's Ooredoo and Hong Kong's CK Hutchinson and aimed to finish the merger by 2025 (Evans 2021). The deal for the merger would create Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison, Indonesia's second biggest telecommunication firm after the government-backed Telkomsel (*ibid*). In addition, Indosat Ooredoo has also partnered with the UAE's Thuraya Telecommunications Company to develop services for Indonesian businesses (Gulf Times 2017). These include services using Indosat SIM cards roaming on the Thuraya network

along with bundling satellite devices with Indosat Ooredoo digital applications (ibid).

In addition to Indosat's story, businesses in Qatar have also participated in various digital expos in Indonesia. In October 2021, a number of businesses from Qatar took part in the 36th Trade Expo Indonesia Digital Edition 2021, hoping to expedite their entry into the Indonesian market (Alagos 2021). A similar effort was also made during a 2020 meeting between the Qatari Ambassador to Indonesia Fawziya Edrees Salman Al Sulaiti and the then Indonesian Minister of Communication and Information Johnny G. Plate. In the meeting, Al Sulaiti proposed that Qatari telecommunication companies be involved in the construction of middle mile and last mile infrastructure in Indonesia (Muslim 2020). While Indonesia offered Qatari digital companies a market to expand their businesses, the latter's move was expected to contribute to Indonesia's effort in accelerating the digital transformation. In recent years, the Indonesian government has been exerting effort to improve access to technology and communications, especially in poor regions and in the eastern part of the country, which still lack technological and digital connectivity. Qatar's interest in Indonesia's ICT sector were seen as responds to these needs. China has also been one of Indonesia's prominent partners in this regard, but concerns have indeed arisen (Priyandita et al. 2022). These include the possibility of espionage and surveillance, as well as making the country more dependent on China. Against this backdrop, Qatar could offer Indonesia a means to move beyond its traditional technological partners.

The economic cooperation between Indonesia and Qatar has been made possible by various diplomatic meetings and legal frameworks. In 2016, for instance, the government in Jakarta sent Alwi Shihab as the country's special envoy to the Middle East and OIC to invite the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry to attend the Trade Expo Indonesia (TEI) (Saeid 2016). During the meeting, Qatari businesses were presented with investment opportunities in Indonesia and were invited to discuss potential economic collaborations with Indonesia (ibid). Other important meetings include the participation of Qatar Ministry of Finance at

the Conference of Supporting Investment in Indonesia in 2000; the presence of the Qatar Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 2000 Ministerial Meeting in Bali to complement the Ministerial Meeting on Investment Promotion in Indonesia; the attendance of Qatar Central Bank in a meeting of Central Banks and Governors of the Monetary Authorities of the OIC Member Countries in Surabaya in 2014; the meeting between CEO of Qatar National Bank and the then Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla in 2014; Qatar's participation in the World Islamic Economic Forum in Jakarta in 2016; meetings with Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah (ABHA) International Foundation for Energy & Sustainable Development; and the visits of Indonesian Minister of National Development and Planning in 2015 (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d). The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the number of these diplomatic exchanges, reflecting how the two countries view one another in the efforts towards post-COVID-19 economic recovery. These include Jokowi's visit to Qatar in 2020 (Qatar News Agency 2020), as well as the visits of Indonesian Deputy Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State-Owned Enterprises in October and November 2021 respectively (Kumala 2021; Kementerian BUMN 2021). These meetings have provided avenues for relevant explorations and discussions of opportunities between the two countries.

Buttressing this were regulatory frameworks attempting to support economic ties. In 2000, the two countries inked an agreement on the Encouraging and Protection of Mutual investments (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d). This was followed by the signing of the Convention on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Financial Evasion with Regard to Income Tax in 2006 and an agreement on economic and technical cooperation, as well as an MoU between the Indonesian government and the Qatar Investment Authority on Investment (ibid). Since 2017, Qatar-Indonesia Business Forums have been regularly organized to serve as an avenue to identify opportunities and provide mutual access for businesses from the two countries (Ribka 2017). These frameworks have served as a crucial platform to fortify economic cooperation and increase understanding. Various meetings, summits, and agreements have been utilized by Jakarta and Doha to raise

awareness about each other and to universalize each other's interests. Furthermore, to facilitate the growing cooperation, in 2013 Qatar's Civil Aviation Authority inked an MoU with Indonesia's Ministry of Transportation to multiply the number of flights by Qatar Airways to Indonesia (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d). The move appears to have contributed to deepening contacts among investors and businesspersons.

The growing Jakarta-Doha economic relations have mainly been influenced by common economic diversification efforts. While Indonesia aimed to expand from its traditional economic partners such as the neighboring ASEAN, Australia, and the West, Qatar has looked to diversify its strategic options in Asia. This started in the 1980s and 1990s when the Western world was struggling with inflation and economic growth, while Asian countries were experiencing high growth (Jensen 2017: 108). As many companies from the US and Europe moved their manufacturing bases to Asia, many GCC countries followed through. This trend was strengthened after the 9/11 attacks and the growing US involvement in Middle Eastern affairs (ibid). With the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the continuing instabilities in the Middle East, and the American pivot to Asia, the GCC countries have become more aware that it should pursue stronger ties with Asia. Like other GCC countries, with its "Look East" policy, Doha has expanded its relations with India, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea. As the largest Southeast Asian country with massive development programs, Indonesia offered Qatar not only access to large markets and investment opportunities, but also a hub to strengthen Doha's footholds in the wider Asia-Pacific region. It is, nonetheless, not only the GCC that was interested in looking East. Asian countries were also increasingly looking towards the Middle East and Africa. With China's Belt and Road Initiatives, many Asian countries capitalized global interests in Asia's growth, Indonesia included. It is not only attracted to Qatari petrodollars to assist its goal to revamp its economy, but also considers the tiny Gulf state as a bridge that connects Indonesia with the broader Middle East and North African region.

The economic cooperation between Indonesia and Qatar also revolved around the issue of workers. Since the early 1990s, there

has been a flow of migrant workers from Indonesia to Qatar. By October 2022, there were 16,690 Indonesian workers in Qatar, comprising of domestic workers and professionals at Qatari or multinational firms (Budilaksono 2022). While cases of human rights abuses towards these workers were relatively minimal compared to other Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, the government in Doha and Jakarta signed a cooperation agreement to protect migrant workers in Qatar on 20 January 2008 (Rochmaedah et al. 2022: 185-195). The two countries appear to have learned from Indonesia-Saudi Arabia relations, whereby cases of mistreatment of migrant workers often act as a source of tension in bilateral ties. One clear case was that of Tuti Tursilawati, a domestic worker executed in 2018 after being convicted of murdering her employer. The Saudi government did not warn either Tuti's family or the Indonesian consulate. In response, the government in Jakarta filed a strong protest Saudi Arabia and summoned the Saudi Ambassador to Indonesia. Other cases have also affected the cooperation between Jakarta and Riyadh (Rakhmat 2022c).

Ties between Qatar and Indonesia have been bolstered by aid and assistance. In 2010, for example, Ooredoo, through its operating company Indosat, helped people in Yogyakarta following Mount Merapi's eruption that forced the evacuation of nearly 350,000 people (The Peninsula 2014). The assistance included the construction of 100 houses and a water supply facility. It was also reported that the company, in collaboration with the Leo Messi Foundation, launched mobile clinics in Indonesia in 2014 to provide free medical services (ibid). The company also donated provisions to victims of severe flooding across Indonesia in 2013 and 2014 (ibid). Meanwhile, in 2015, the Qatari government offered US\$50 million financial assistance for Rohingya refugees in Aceh and North Sumatra (Middle East Eye 2016). Three years later, when massive earthquakes hit the Indonesian region of Palu, Donggala, and Lombok, the Red Crescent Qatar dispatched personnel and provided US\$ 5 million (Nathalia 2018). The latest of these aids were provided in December 2021 when the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) inked an agreement with Indonesia Credit Impact Solutions Pte Ltd to provide rapid response impact seed funding to SMEs in the

healthcare and food distribution sectors affected by the pandemic (Qatar News Agency 2021). It is also important to note that under the agreement with Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, Qatar Charity has been operating in Indonesia, assisting in the construction of schools and orphanages, as well as provision of business capital for underprivileged Indonesians (Reliefweb 2020). The most recent development took place in December 2022 when an earthquake hit Indonesia's West Java province. Qatar Charity provided urgent relief aid including food items, drinking water, hygiene kits, and other items (Gulf Times 2022). The organization additionally distributed aid to 1,000 families in four villages completely affected by the earthquake which damaged buildings and displaced people (ibid). It is difficult to deny that, although fostering cooperation is not an easy process, the linkage between Indonesia and Qatar has been maintained through humanitarian aid.

## V. Military-Security

Jakarta's military-security relations with Doha have also been going on despite being modest, in contrast to its relations with other Gulf countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain (Rakhmat 2022b). This is primarily influenced by the fact that Qatar is not a global security player and at the same time has maintained military-security ties with its traditional partners such as the US and the UK. Most military-security engagements between Indonesia and Qatar focused on visits and exchanges. In 2014, for instance, the General Command of the Qatari Armed Forces participated in the hosting of the 13th UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Criminal Justice, as well as attended the Endo Defense Forum in Jakarta, where the two countries discussed ways to expand military-security cooperation (Qatar Embassy in Jakarta n.d).

Beyond military-security-related visits, Indonesia has been interested in expanding its military product exports to Qatar. Although data is not available, Indonesian-made light tanks and military weapons were reportedly popular in Qatar (Yosephine 2016). The only transaction that was widely reported was Qatar's

planned 2009 purchase of the military aircraft CN-235 manufactured by the Indonesian company PT Dirgantara Indonesia (MEED 2009). In addition, Qatar has been importing military outfits for its military forces from Indonesia's leading textile and garment manufacturer PT. Sritex (Purwanto 2016). As Qatar has been working to upgrade its defense capability, Indonesia serves as a competitive option. Moreover, these transactions have been driven by Indonesian efforts to promote its military products in the Middle East as a whole. In 2016, Indonesian Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu invited Qatar's Minister of Defence Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah to the 2016 Indonesian Defence Expo in Jakarta, where they discussed the possibility of cooperation on military production (ibid). Thereafter, the Indonesian government also invited Qatari delegations to attend Trade Expo Indonesia 2016, where they promoted Indonesian military equipment (ibid). These invitations have led Qatari policy makers to begin purchasing military products from Indonesia. Indeed, following the events, the government in Doha expressed its interest in considering military equipment manufactured by Indonesian state-owned firms specializing in military and commercial products, PT. Pindad; the Indonesian aerospace company, PT. Dirgantara Indonesia; and the Indonesian shipbuilding company, PT. PAL. These companies have been supplying military products to other Gulf countries (ibid).

This, nonetheless, is not a one-way process. In 2022, the Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU) reportedly purchased Qatar's fleet of Dassault Mirage 2000-5 fighter aircraft, which have been retired from service after the government in Doha bought replacements (Asia Pacific Defense Journal 2022). Qatar decided to choose Indonesia to buy its used Mirage 2000-5 fighters, despite fillers earlier sent by France and Bulgaria. Reports reveal that Indonesia would use these as a training and transition platform. Even though the deal is yet to be confirmed, Naser Al Tamimi, a UK-based analyst on Asia and Middle East relations, reported that Doha's move was based on Jakarta's higher offer exceeding US\$700 million.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Mehran Kemrava, a professor at Georgetown University in Qatar, argued that the decision made by the Qatari

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, November 2022.

government is connected to Qatar's policy of hedging, where it attempts to diversify relations with as many actors as possible. With Qatar's extensive security cooperation with France and Bulgaria, forging ties with Indonesia is proving to be strategic.<sup>2</sup>

Doha's hedging strategy appears to have been welcomed by Indonesia. Although Qatar is not a global security player, certain circumstances have also pressured Indonesia to diversify its military-security cooperation. In Jakarta's view, the declining US role in Southeast Asia and China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea signify the need to find non-traditional security partners. Qatar seems to be an alternative. Between 2015 and 2020, the Indonesian government appointed Muhammad Basri Sidehabi, former Air Marshall, as the Indonesian Ambassador to Qatar (Raja 2017). During Sidehabi's term, Indonesia attempted to fortify its military-security ties with Qatar. On one occasion, in 2017, he invited Head of Strategic Studies Center of Qatar Armed Force Hamad Mohammed Al Marri to visit Indonesia to learn more about the Indonesian military industry as well as to attend the Indo-Defense 2017 in Jakarta (ibid). In his meetings with Qatari officials, Sidehabi frequently gave presentations on the development of Indonesia's defense equipment. There was also plan of cooperation between Indonesian National Police and Qatar Police, known as Al Fazaa, on juvenile crime, human trafficking, and capacity building among security officers (Purwanto 2016). In 2020 and 2022 respectively, Indonesian Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto separately met with the Qatari Ambassador to Indonesia and Qatar's Defense Attache to discuss ways to foster Indonesia-Qatar cooperation on the military-security field and the possible purchase of Indonesian-made weaponry (The Peninsula 2020). These meetings bore fruit a year later, when Barzan Holding, the strategic investment and procurement arm of Qatar's Ministry of Defense, declared its commitment to cooperate with Pindad on weapon procurement, technology transfer, and human resource development (Arief 2021). In that same year, a representative and consultant of Barzan, Christopher Ott, was also hired by Jakarta to facilitate Indonesia's defense sales with the U.S (Intelligence Online

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<sup>2</sup> Personal interview, November 2022.

2021). Engaging with Qatar helped secure markets for the Indonesian defense industry and at the same time contributed to efforts to search for new partners outside its traditional security circles.

## **VI. Cultural**

Beyond the traditional realms of political-diplomatic, economic-trade, and military-security, the ties between Jakarta and Doha have expanded into the cultural sphere. One of the ways this was fortified is through cultural events. In 2016, the Indonesian Embassy in Qatar organized a cultural arts performance with the theme “Wonderful Indonesia” attended by, among others, the Qatari royal family. The events exhibited a variety of culinary delights, dance performances, traditional music performances, and art (Gibbons 2016a). In December 2022, the Indonesian Embassy in Qatar also organized “The Exotic Indonesian Batik Heritage” in the “Katara Celebrations During the World Cup 2022” (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI 2022). The exhibition, officially opened by the Indonesian Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, displayed 42 pieces of batik cloth, from all around Indonesia (ibid). Appreciating the growing relations between the two countries, Indonesia was chosen by Qatar as a partner country for a key annual event organized by the Qatari government, the Qatar Year of Culture in 2023 (Diah 2021). The agreement was signed in 2021 by the representatives of each state. Indonesia is to be the first Southeast Asian country to participate as a partner. The Qatar Year of Culture has been organized annually since 2012. The year-long initiative will include various cultural exhibitions, seminars, and events organized in both Indonesia and Qatar. Qatar’s close partners like France, Japan, Turkey, and India, have also been selected to join. Selecting Indonesia as partner signifies the position of Jakarta in Qatar’s foreign policy (Marpaung 2021).

As Indonesia and Qatar share similar Islamic backgrounds, religious-related activities have also contributed to the cultural cooperation between Jakarta and Doha. Under the program named

“Muazin (an Islamic term for callers for prayer) Diplomacy,” the two countries agreed in 2021 to hold exchange programs among imams and muazzins to learn and to teach Islam in Qatar (Murtado 2021). Based on the researcher’s interviews with several organizations involved in these initiatives, imams and muazzins from Indonesia, many of whom have worked in Qatar, have had positive impressions from the people of Qatar. This is not only due to their friendly characters, but their deep religious knowledge. Moreover, Indonesian imams and muazzins have moderate religious understanding and tolerances to the different sects and religions that exist in Qatar (ibid). This positive impression has an indirect impact on Qataris’ view of Indonesia, which could contribute to the strengthening of relations between the two countries. Although more detailed information is yet available, it was also reported that Qatar National Mosque intended to cooperate with Indonesian National Mosque (Istiqlal Mosque) (Masjid Istiqlal 2021).

Indonesian Muslim organizations have also played a vital role in maintaining religious ties between Jakarta and Doha. In 2016, Indonesian Islamic Da’wah Council (DDII) inked an agreement with Qatar Center for the Presentation of Islam (QPCI) on the propagation of Islam (RMOL.ID 2016). The agreement stipulates the cooperation on producing Islam-related publication materials in Indonesian, including the translation of contents of Islamweb.net, an online portal on Islamic knowledge owned by Qatar’s Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. A few years later, in December 2021, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of Indonesia’s largest Muslim organisations, also cooperated with one of Qatar’s donor agencies, Qilaa Group, in building 100 mosques and 10 hospitals in the remote areas of Indonesia (Triono 2022). Some of these will be carried out in Indonesia’s new capital city in Kalimantan (ibid). To complement the agreement, in early 2022, the Qatari Ambassador to Indonesia made a special visit to the NU headquarter to discuss further engagement in education and religious moderation (Michella 2022). This move is crucial as it can be considered as part of Qatar’s ongoing effort to project itself as a global Muslim actor that is moderate, tolerant, pluralistic, and forward-looking. Indonesia, as the world’s largest Muslim nation, is a source of interests for Doha

to present itself as an important actor in the global Muslim community. Doha's moderation movement tends to be in line with the vision espoused by the Indonesian government through the concept of "Islam Nusantara" – an interpretation of Islam that takes into account the value of moderation and tolerance as tools to boost its standing in the Muslim world. Over the years, the Indonesian government effectively outsourced its religious soft-power to NU (Dorsey 2020). Aside from being one of the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, its members also include some of the most prominent Indonesian figures such as Indonesian Vice President Ma'ruf Amin and Minister of Religious Affairs Yaquut Cholil Qoumas. The shared goal to promote the notion of 'moderate' Islam has become Doha's and Jakarta's collective flagship vision and will shape Qatar-Indonesia future engagement.

At the educational level, both countries have also developed nascent relations, which had been formalized with an MOU on education and culture signed during the visit of the Emir of Qatar to Indonesia in 2017. For several years, the Qatari government has offered scholarships for Indonesians to study at the high school and university levels in Qatar. The most important example is the annual scholarship provided by Qatar University to learn Arabic at its one-year Arabic for Non-Native Speakers (ANNS) program. According to the fieldwork carried out by the researcher, almost every year a minimum of two Indonesians are enrolled in the program. Based on the data from Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education in 2021, there are approximately 2000 students from Indonesia pursuing education in Qatar at various levels of education (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI 2021a). This number may increase soon, given that during the meeting between the Indonesian Ambassador to Qatar Ridwan Hassan and the Qatari Minister of Education and Higher Education in 2021, the Qatari government expressed its intent to increase the number of scholarships for Indonesians to study in Qatar (ibid). Apart from agreeing to expand academic partnership to include exchange programs for teachers and students, the Indonesian Ambassador promoted the recently established Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII) to

collaborate with its Qatari counterparts (ibid), seemingly in an effort to follow up the 2019 plan between the two countries to build a twin university between academic institutions (Santosa 2019).

In a meeting with the Indonesian Ambassador in August 2021, the President of Qatar University announced that the university would open a branch in Indonesia (Sinaga 2021) Given that the university is ranked among the best universities in the Arab world, this initiative was welcomed by the Indonesian people. Over the years, several Indonesian universities have collaborated with Qatar University, including Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, and Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah (UNIDA n.d; UIN Walisongo Semarang 2014; UIN News Online 2022). In addition to joint community service activities, the partnerships include curriculum exchange, organizing joint conferences, as well as joint research on religious moderation in the Islamic world, which signifies the emergence of religious moderation as a new strategic synthesis between the two (ibid). It is important to note that cooperation on Islamic studies and religious moderation have also been signed between Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo with the Forum for Arab and International Relations, a think tank based in Doha, as well as with Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies (UIN Walisongo Semarang 2014).

People-to-people exchanges between Indonesia and Qatar have also been maintained in the tourism sector. Although precise data are difficult to find, there has been an increasing flow of tourists between the two countries. The latest data from Indonesia's Central Agency on Statistics (BPS) showed that there were 1989 Qatari tourists visiting Indonesia in 2019 (Kementerian Luar Negeri RI 2021b). This increase was a result of the signing of the Air Transport Agreement which aimed to multiply the number of Qatari tourists visiting Indonesia and vice-versa. Additionally, Doha and Jakarta also signed an MOU on tourism investments and planned to sign an MOU on tourism cooperation (ibid). Over the years, Indonesia has exerted efforts to attract Qatari tourists. One important initiative resulting from the agreement was the *Wonderful Indonesia* ads broadcast over Al Jazeera in 2016; it had 7,884 views (Gibbons

2016b). Recently, during the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, Indonesia also made a tourism campaign through digital out-of-home advertising at three points near to the World Cup stadiums and through bus advertising (Idrus and Ihsan 2022). Tourist flows between Indonesia and Qatar are expected to grow given that the two countries have been working on a Travel Corridor Arrangement (TCA) (VNA 2021).

Sports is another aspect of Indonesia-Qatar cultural relations, especially after the signing of a MoU in 2021 on promoting exchanges between coaches, athletes, and sport specialists (Agonia 2021). The agreement was signed between Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) and Indonesian Olympic Committee (KOI). The collaboration is aimed to increase athletes' participation in sports events and to promote exchange of knowledge on sports- and physical activity-related issues, as well as mutual investments in sport facilities (ibid). The agreement was a result of a meeting between QOC and KOI in December 2020. Over the years, the two countries have also maintained mutual visits and support among sports actors such as the visit of Indonesian Minister of Youth and Sports to Doha in 2020 (Daelpos 2020). When Indonesia hosted the Asian Games in 2018, Qatar was among the countries which helped in hosting the events (ibid). Indonesia also played a role in the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Despite not qualifying for the tournament, the official souvenir match ball was manufactured in Madiun, East Java by Indonesian company PT Global Way (Llewellyn 2022). Apart from the fact that sports diplomacy has been part of Qatar's foreign policy after being selected as the host of 2022 FIFA World Cup, the sport cooperation between Indonesia and Qatar have also been maintained as the two countries share the same interests. For example, both countries will host several major sporting events in the next coming years; Qatar will host the Asian Games in 2030 while Indonesia will be the host of the FIBA World Cup 2023. It is therefore possible that sport will be another realm that will bind the two countries in the next coming years.

Historically, promoting dialogue between people of different nations has been a way to build bridges of understanding between countries. Similarly, as the partnership between Indonesia and Qatar

has grown significantly in recent years, both governments have come to recognize the importance of overcoming linguistic-cultural barriers. They have therefore worked cooperatively to increase the number of Qatari and Indonesian professionals who are acquainted with each other's societal norms and customs, methods of performing business, and national and institutional interests.

## **VII. Petroleum-Energy**

Energy is undoubtedly an important element in Indonesia's relations with Qatar. This is primarily due to the latter's position in the global energy industry. Currently, Qatar has the world's third largest LNG reserves. In the meantime, Indonesia needs considerable amounts of energy to sustain economic development. Its energy needs predominantly come from oil (50.04%) and natural gas (21.94%) (Siregar and Zulkarnain 2021). Indonesia currently imports oil of 400,000 barrels per day, with most of imports coming from the Middle East (Gueraiche and Alexander 2022). While most of its energy sources come from Saudi Arabia, Indonesia has also fostered energy cooperation with smaller regional countries. In 2020, energy exports from Qatar to Indonesia were recorded at US\$375 million for LNG and \$140 million for refined petroleum (UN International Trade Statistics Database 2020).

In addition to energy trade, investments have also been pursued by the two countries. As for Indonesian energy investment in Qatar, the only one reported was Indonesian state oil and gas company Pertamina winning a bid for a 25% share in the onshore oil block III in Qatar worth US\$11 million in 2007 (O'Neill 2007). Meanwhile, over the years, Indonesia has been exerting efforts to invite Qatari energy firms such as Qatar Petroleum and RasGas for oil and gas explorations (Sen 2015). In 2015, private Indonesian firm PT Medco Power Generation Indonesia also made a similar proposal in the "CEO Plenary Session" at the 9th International Petroleum Technology Conference (IPTC) in Qatar for explorations in hard-to-read regions in eastern part of Indonesia, which requires significant capital and technology (ibid). Indonesia's efforts have

been met with some failures and successes. In 2011, Qatar Petroleum planned to develop a US\$8 billion refinery in Balongan (Rini 2011). It was reported that the company had completed the feasibility study for the project. No progress has been made as of this writing. Earlier in 2009, Qatar was also interested in buying an 85% stake in a planned US\$1 billion power plant in Bali, but again no progress has been reached (Trade Arabia 2009). One possible explanation is that currently Indonesia has small margins in its downstream oil sector, and the price difference between the finished products and raw materials is very slim (Otele et al 2022). As a result, crude oil processing has become less attractive for investors and this condition has made many companies to back out from the agreements (ibid).

These stories, however, do not imply that Qatari investments do not make their way to Indonesia. Billions of dollars of capital have been flowing from Qatar to Indonesia's energy sector. Aside from the well-known US\$1 billion Joint Investment Fund which, among others, was aimed to enhance Indonesia's energy sector, the widely reported development took place in 2016 when Qatar-based energy firm Nebras Power bought a 35.5% stake in Paiton Energy, an Indonesian power producer which owns a 2,0245 MW thermal power station in East Java (Finn 2016). Although in March 2019 *Bloomberg* reported that Nebras Power was considering selling its stake in Paiton Energy, the company denied the report and declared that "it is committed to a long-lasting economic cooperation between Qatar and Indonesia" (Reuters 2019). It is crucial to note that in 2017 the company also poured US\$1 billion investment in the development of an 800MW natural gas-fired power project in North Sumatra (NS Energy 2017). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, the company allotted US\$800 million for the power station, while the remaining US\$200 million would be allocated on a floating storage and regasification unit (ibid). The head of agreement was signed between Nebras Power, Indonesia's State Electricity Company (PLN), and state-owned power producer Pembangkitan Jawa-Bali (PJB). According to a report by *The Peninsula*, the agreement consisted of the development of a power plant, the regasification unit, and the

sourcing of LNG in Medan. Nebras Power was responsible for the development, financing, construction, as well as the operation and maintenance of the plant (The Peninsula 2017).

These energy-related investments between Indonesia and Qatar are relatively limited in comparison to other GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Rakhmat and Pashya 2022). Nonetheless, considering Indonesia's needs to secure its energy resources and Qatar's interests to invest its petrodollars, it is likely that Jakarta-Doha energy investment cooperation would intensify in the future. One of Qatar's energy firms, Qatar Petrochemical Company, for example, has opened a representative office in Jakarta to explore potential opportunities in the country (Embassy of Malaysia in Doha 2010). In July 2022, Indonesia's Korina Refinery Aceh also visited Doha to invite Qatari investors to invest in its refinery and to forge joint projects for numerous downstream products such as diesel, jet fuel, and lube oil (Alagos 2022a). These demonstrate that energy cooperation between Indonesia and Qatar would intensify in the next coming years. There is also a possibility that Qatar may follow its neighboring countries such as the UAE and Saudi which have garnered renewable energy cooperation with Indonesia.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

This research has examined the relationship between Indonesia and Qatar through Eberling's five-dimensional framework. The majority analysis of Indonesia-Middle East relations focuses on either energy and trade or cultural and religious ties as the primary driver of the cooperation. Nonetheless, this article has demonstrated that there is more to the story. Economic and cultural relations are important, but not sufficient to offer a comprehensive overview of the cooperation. It was demonstrated that the cooperation has been maintained in various fields, including political-diplomatic, economic-trade, military-security, cultural, and petroleum-energy relations. From Qatar's perspective, Indonesia fits well in its "Look East" foreign policy orientation. As described by the Vice Chairman

of Qatar Chamber in October 2022, Indonesia, given its strategic location and large population, is “an important gateway to the Southeast Asian region and a promising market” for Qatari exports and investors (Alagos 2022b). Meanwhile, in Indonesia’s point of view, Qatar not only offers an untapped export market and investment prospects, but it also serves as a hub to expand economically in the wider Middle East and North African region. Despite being Southeast Asia’s largest economy, Indonesia still needs to attract considerable investments to improve its weakening economy and to secure its energy sources. At the same time, the continuing regional instability in the region has also pressured Qatar to apply hedging strategy to establish political and security with as many countries as possible, including Indonesia, a country that shares similar views on many global and regional issues. This has been welcomed by Indonesia, which not only possesses an ambition to strengthen its position in the international stage but has also sought alternative partners in light of the China-US tensions in the region.

As Qatar looks East for economic and geopolitical opportunities to expand their strategic options away from the West, and as Indonesia is beginning to move away from its traditional partners, the Indonesia-Qatar relations will grow and expand in the coming future. While the ties will primarily be economic in nature, which could be underpinned by the finalization of GCC-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the signing of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement, which Indonesia has signed with the UAE, there will be other sectors to follow. These include enhanced cooperation on promoting narrative of moderate Islam, renewable energy sectors, tourism, as well as military security.

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## The Symbol of Hùng Kings: From a Founding Myth to Modern National Belief

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### [ *Abstract* ]

Using sociohistorical approaches, the paper shows that before the 15th century, myths of Hùng Kings, considered to be the descendants of the Dragon race and ancestors of the Vietnamese people, may have existed locally. Vietnamese rulers and people strongly supported the integration of these myths into indigenous culture to form a new belief: the worship of Hùng Kings. By way of discovering the transformation process from the founding myths to the modern national beliefs of the Vietnamese, this paper attempts to demonstrate that both myths and worship of Hùng Kings were politically created and encouraged. The article also focuses on the reasons why these myths and worship reached a broad public as these were integrated into Vietnamese culture.

**Keywords:** Hùng Kings' symbol, Dragon race, Vietnamese myths, worship, transformation.

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## I . Introduction

In the area that is now northern Vietnam, there were people living in the Paleolithic period, and their leaders were called Hùng (or Lạc) Kings. This is proven by the different types of scientific evidence. Archaeological evidence, for example, demonstrates that the ancient Vietnamese have been living in the Red River delta since the late Paleolithic and have created unique indigenous cultures (Truong 2007; Taylor 1991: 312). Historical evidence also shows that Jiaozhou Waiyu Ji (交州外域记, the Record of the Outer Territory of Jiao Region), written around the 4<sup>th</sup> century, was the earliest to use the term “Lạc Kings” (雒王), the other name of “Hùng Kings,” referring to the early rulers in the Red River Delta (Taylor 1991, Kelley 2012, and T. Đ. Nguyễn 2013). Consider this:

In the past, before Jiaozhi (this is present-day Red River Delta, Vietnam) had commanderies and districts, there were “Lạc fields”. [...] The people who cultivated these fields were called “Lạc people”. The leader who governed these fields was called the “Lạc king”. (Li 2013)

Other books also mention Hùng Kings, such as Guangzhou Ji (廣州記, Guangzhou Records) written by Pei Yuan (裴淵) in the 4th century and Nanyue Zhi (南越志, History of Nanyue) compiled by Chen Huaiyuan (沉怀远) around the 5th century. However, there is no scientific evidence to confirm that the related myths and the worship of Hùng Kings appeared at the same time.

Stories about Hùng Kings may have existed locally in the Red River Delta and were recorded briefly in the history books of the Chinese. However, they were not noticed by the medieval Vietnamese elite. Until 1435, by order of King Lê Thái Tông, Nguyễn Trãi, a prominent Confucian, compiled *Dư Địa Chí* (輿地志, Treatise on Geography; henceforth DDC). Noticeably, he began the history of Vietnam with the rule of King Kinh Dương, who was considered Hùng King I: “Hùng Kings succeeded each other and founded a realm called Văn Lang, with its capital at Phong Châu” (Nguyễn T. 2001: 742). *Ta Chí Đại Trường*, a Vietnamese eminent historian, attributed this to Nguyễn Trãi’s belief that the Hùng Kings mythologem should become an indispensable part of the Lê’s

monarchical nation-reconstruction process in the post-Ming occupation period (Tạ 2011: 76; Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013). From that, the Vietnamese euhemeristic transformation of an ancient myth of unclear origins into a historicized tale about the founding of the Việt realm had now been officially sanctioned by the court (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013). In 1479, by order of King Lê Thái Tông, Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư (大越史记全书, The Complete Historical Records of Đại Việt; henceforth ĐVSKTT) was compiled. This was the first official history book of the Vietnamese mentioning Hùng Kings, who came to be venerated as ancestral founders of them (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013) in a three-part story:

[Part 1, Lord Kinh Dương (涇陽王)] Originally, Di Ming (帝明), a descendent of the Divine Farmer Shen Nong (神农), sired Di Yi (帝伋) and Kinh Dương. Di Ming treated Kinh Dương specially and wanted to pass the throne on to him. Kinh Dương dared not accept this order and conceded the throne to his older brother. After that, Di Ming appointed Di Yi as heir apparent to rule the North region and Kinh Dương as the king to rule the South area.

[In Part 2, Lord Lạc Long (貉龍君)] Lạc Long, a descendent of the Divine Farmer Shen Nong (神农), was of dragon and he married Âu Cơ (嫫姆), who gave birth to a sac containing 100 eggs which hatched into a hundred sons. These are the ancestors of the Bách Việt (百越 Hundred Việt) people. [...] The eldest son, Hùng, ascended the throne.

[Part 3, Hùng King (雄王)] When Hùng was crowned king, he named his kingdom Văn Lang (this is present-day northern Vietnam) and Phong Châu region was the nation's capital (this is present-day Bạch Hạc district, Phú Thọ province). [He] established ministers called Lạc marquises, and generals called Lạc generals. The ruler of each generation was called "Hùng King", in total there are 18 generations of Hùng Kings. (Ngô et al 2017: 3)

According to this book, Hùng Kings dynasty (also known as Hồng Bàng period spanning from Hùng King I in 2879 BC to Hùng King XVIII in 258 BC) is regarded as the founding period of Vietnam. This left an enduring legacy for later Vietnamese rulers. They used different methods to make these myths become part of

national consciousness to serve their political purposes. Gradually, stories about Hùng Kings are implicitly considered an inseparable part of Vietnamese history and culture, which facilitated the creation of the worship of Hùng Kings recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Vietnam in 2012.

Within the scientific community, there are controversies related to the historical intention and reliability of Hùng Kings'/Hồng Bàng's myths. Liam Kelley pointed out that the Biography of the Hồng Bàng Clan (a famous story in the collection of myths about Hùng Kings) passed down orally through the centuries among the "people" or the "folk" (dân gian) is problematic, viewed from the perspective of Chinese sources (Kelley 2012). Nguyễn Thị Điều questioned the authenticity of Hùng Kings dynasty. She analyzed the textual-mythographical transformation of Vietnamese origin myths from their transcription in the distant past through their exploitation for political purposes in the 1950s by the scholarly elite; she asserted that "the Hùng Kings Epic would become the lightning rod of ensuing debates" (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013: 335).

While Liam Kelley viewed the stories of Hùng Kings as an emerging from the medieval invented tradition (Kelley 2012), Nguyễn Thị Điều studied these stories from the perspective of Euhemerism, a Hellenistically-influenced approach inspired by and derived from the work of the fourth century BCE Greek scholar Euhemerus of Messene who rationalized the question of myth and history (T. Đ. Nguyễn 2013). This study examines both myths and worship of Hùng Kings from the perspective of fakelore in cultural and social contexts.

## **II. The Myths and Worship of Hùng Kings as Fakelore**

"Fakelore" is a term coined in 1950 by American folklorist Richard M. Dorson (1916–1981) to describe anthologies and commercial materials presented as authentic oral folklore, but are actually fabricated or heavily edited. This label has been used to describe wholly new creations originating from a single author, those that put

characters from folklore into nontraditional situations, those that have undergone serious editorial revisions, and those that use these characters and legends for commercial or ideological purposes (Christopher and Jeffrey 2016: 360). This research aims to indicate that the myths and worship of Hùng Kings were deliberately created centuries later for “social coordination and ideological and cultural hegemony” (Susan 2013). This is substantiated by the following pieces of evidence.

As per historical evidence, an examination of historical documents written before the 14th century, including Vietnamese official history books and royal decrees, revealed that no piece of information about the Hùng Kings was mentioned. Nevertheless, the Hồng Bàng myths and Hùng-Kings characters have appeared suddenly and widely in these forms of documentation since the Lê dynasty.

As far as official history books are concerned, *Đại Việt Sử Ký* (大越史記, Annals of Đại Việt; 1272) written under the order of King Trần and *An Nam Chí Lược* (安南志略, Abbreviated Records of An Nam; 1335) did not mention Hùng Kings, whereas, *ĐVSKTT*, which was composed under the order of King Lê in 1479, mentioned the Hùng Kings as the founding kings of the Vietnamese.

Regarding royal decrees, official records named “*thần tích*” (神迹), “*thần sách*” (神册), and “*thần phả*” (神譜) in the Trần dynasty revealed that in 1285, the Trần dynasty began to promulgate the widespread village practice of Thần (spirit) worship by issuing decrees confirming the spirits’ ranks and titles (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013: 328). Meanwhile, they did not recognize the worship of Hùng Kings (Ta 2011). *Việt Điện U Linh Tập* (越甸幽灵集, Collection of Stories on the Shady and Spiritual World of the Việt Realm; henceforth *VĐULT*; 1329), a work recording Vietnamese beliefs, mentioned the name of Hùng Kings but did not consider Hùng Kings as Thần to worship, despite sanctifying some characters related to Hùng Kings such as Sơn Tinh and Lý Ông Trọng, Hùng King XVIII’s son-in-law and servant respectively. This proves that, before the 14th century, the Hùng Kings and the worship of Hùng Kings were not exactly popular in Vietnam.

Regarding fieldwork data, there is a widespread misunderstanding that Hùng Kings' Temples, the holy sanctuary of Hùng Kings in Phú Thọ province, were built a long time ago. Some Vietnamese folklorists even suppose that they were built in the King An Dương period (r. 208 BC - 179 BC) based on The Legend of Oath Stone. This story narrates that when King An Dương was given the throne by Hùng King XVIII, he built temples to worship Hùng Kings, and then erected a stone to carve the oath of respecting the lineage of Hùng Kings and protecting the country. In fact, the period when these Temples were built was unknown, but verbal descriptions of Phú Thọ villagers and handwritten records of the Hùng Kings' Temples support the hypothesis that these were originally constructed to worship Mountain Spirits and the Solar Deity before being converted to worship Saint Gióng, a mythical hero of Vietnam. Finally, after a long period, they were renovated to worship the Hùng Kings (Vũ 1999: 48). The collected fieldwork data also showed that these Temples were turned into a place to worship Hùng Kings around the 13th-15th century. Some scientists such as Maspéro also affirmed that the Hùng Kings' Temples "could not be very ancient... at the most it dated back to the Trần dynasty (1226 -1400)" (Maspéro 1918: 2-4).

Given one possibility that the worship of Hùng Kings may have existed before the 14th century, it may have been conducted in too few local places to be mentioned in historical documents officially. When the Lê dynasty was established, Lê Kings focused on embellishing and circulating the founding myths, in which the Hùng Kings were considered the Vietnamese founding kings. Gradually, these myths took root in minds of the Vietnamese people, and this facilitated the efforts of the Vietnamese rulers to turn the Hùng Kings' myths into a national belief to serve their political purposes.

### **III. The Efforts of the Vietnamese Government to Turn the Hùng Kings' Myths into National Beliefs**

Since the Lê dynasty, the Vietnamese government has made sustained efforts to turn mythical stories into national beliefs by

means of:

### **3.1. Guaranteeing the legitimacy of the existence of Hùng Kings**

Under the Lê dynasty, in 1470, King Lê Thánh Tông ordered government officials to publish *Hùng Vương Ngọc Phả Thập Bát Thế Truyền* (雄王玉谱十八世传, Precious Genealogy of the Eighteen Reigns of Hùng Kings) (X. K. Nguyễn 1995: 461 - 467) to honor Hùng Kings as "the Kings of a Thousand Generations." After that, in 1479, resting on a variety of sources, including history, ancient stories, manuscripts, and folklore songs, *ĐVSKTT* was completed (by order of King Lê Thánh Tông) (Ngô et al 2017: 108). This book is considered the first historical document to mention the Hùng Kings as the first rulers of the Vietnamese. Under the Tây Sơn dynasty, "Hùng Kings" was mentioned in *Đại Việt Sử Ký Tiền Biên* (大越史记前编, Annotations on the History of Đại Việt, 1800), compiled by Quốc Sử Quán (国史馆, National Institute of History). Under the Nguyễn dynasty, national historiographers mentioned and honored Hùng Kings as "Quốc Tổ" (National Founder) in *Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục* (钦定越史通鉴纲目, The Imperially Ordered Annotated Text Completely Reflecting the History of Việt; 1871). In 1917, King Khải Định issued a decree declaring that Giỗ Tổ (Hùng Kings' Anniversary; on the tenth day of the third lunar month annually) was a national ritual. Throughout these successive dynasties, Vietnamese kings always ordered contemporary historians to write about Hùng Kings as the first kings of Vietnam in historical documents, which holds the key to the historicization of Hùng Kings' myths. In other words, this is the process of turning Hùng Kings' myths into a historical part of Vietnam."

In the early modern period, when the Republic was founded, both the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (see Decree No. 22c /NV/CC was issued on February 18, 1946) and the Republic of Vietnam approved that Hùng Kings' Anniversary was a national holiday (Sales 1974: 36). Later, the unified-government (Socialist Republic of Vietnam) upheld this holiday (see Law No. 84/2007/QH11 of April 02, 2007, amending, and supplementing article 73 of Law on Labor). In 2012, with the constant efforts of the Vietnamese government, the worship of Hùng Kings was proclaimed

by UNESCO as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. In 2018, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc supported the Global Vietnam National Ancestor's Day publicly, a non-government organization founded in 2015 specializing in honoring Hùng Kings (see Official Dispatch No. 12017/VPCP-QHQT of December 11, 2018). Later, some members of the Theoretical Council of Vietnam's Communist Party were required to participate in this organization to expand the influence of Hùng Kings globally.

These events not only highlighted the Vietnamese governments' recognition and respect for Hùng Kings but also helped reinforce the belief of the Vietnamese people in the existence of such Kings, who were considered their first rulers.

### **3.2. Encouraging the creation of cultural works praising the Hùng Kings**

**Folk music:** At first, people from Phú Thọ province used Xoan singing, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, to pay homage to gods or “thành hoàng” (城隍, village guardian spirits). Then, Hùng Kings were transformed into “thành hoàng” consecrated by imperial orders and by popular fervor stemming from long traditions of ancestor worship (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013: 329). Gradually, Xoan singing was used to pay homage to Hùng Kings instead of thành hoàng, and more lyrics were also created to honor Hùng Kings and their generals. At present, we still preserve 31 songs, including 19 songs with contents related to Hùng Kings' rituals (Nguyễn Đ. B. 2017).

**Folk narratives:** Some folk tales of Hùng Kings were listed as inconsistent as they could be changed and set in the Hùng Kings period. For example, in *VĐULT* (1329), *The Legend of Saint Phù Đổng* (Lý 2012: 91) did not mention Hùng King XVIII, while in another version of the same story in *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái* (*The Arrayed Tales of Selected Oddities from South of the Passes*; 15th century) (Trần P. T. 2017: 44), Hùng King XVIII took a supporting character. Another example named *The Tale of Princess Thiệu Hoa*, a story that began with the phrase “in the reign of Hùng King VI,” stated that Thiệu Hoa was the first person to teach the Vietnamese

people about silk weaving. Meanwhile, in official history books, the Vietnamese weavers did not produce silk until 1040 (Ngô et al 2017: 97), aside from the fact that silk weaving techniques were too complex for the ancient Vietnamese in Hùng Kings dynasty. This proves that the Thiệu Hoa story was composed after the 11th century, with the writer trying to emphasize that the story was composed in Hùng Kings period. The Myths of Areca Tree and Betel Nuts and The Story of Đào Chín Phẩm are also similar cases. It is possible that long after the Hùng Kings period, the "once upon a time" phrases in the ancient stories were replaced by "in the reign of Hùng King [I, III, VIII, XVII, etc.] period" and then the "new version stories" were encouraged to spread. Given that the majority of people in feudal Vietnam were illiterate, and that these new versions of stories were versions of folk tales, these stories were easily passed on orally. Clearly, the more popular stories about Hùng Kings are, the more orthodox the belief in the existence of Hùng Kings in the Vietnamese mind is.

**Literature:** After the Lê dynasty, the governments asked writers to mention Hùng Kings in their works. For example, in 1428, when the Lê dynasty was newly established, Nguyễn Trãi, a skilled politician and principal advisor of King Lê, wrote Bình Ngô Đại Cáo (平吳大誥, Great Proclamation upon the Pacification of the Wu) and did not even mention Hùng Kings. Seven years later, when Lê kings succeeded in exercising their power in ruling the country and used many political measures to force writers to mention Hùng Kings in their historical works, Nguyễn Trãi composed DDC where he referred to Hùng Kings as the earliest leaders of the Vietnamese. Since then, Hùng Kings has continuously appeared in later works. For example, around 1682-1709, under the order of Lord Trịnh Căn, Thiên Nam Ngữ Lục (Annals of the Heavenly Việt, henceforth TNNL), the first national-popular poem composed mentioned the Hùng Kings. In 1870, under the order of King Tự Đức, Đại Nam Quốc Sử Diễn Ca (The National History of Đại Nam in Verse) was created. It stated that Vietnam's history dates back to the Hùng Kings era (2879-256 BC). In 1941, President Hồ Chí Minh composed Lịch Sử Nước Ta (The History of Our Country). In this work, Hùng Kings were recognized as the ancestral founders of Vietnam.

It should be noted that all popular works recognizing Hùng Kings were written in “Nôm” [also called “Quốc Âm” (国音), a traditional logographic writing system used to write the Vietnamese language] and used the freer “lục bát” (六八, lit. six-eight, a traditional Vietnamese folk verse form, referring to the alternating lines of six and eight syllables). Unlike Chinese characters (汉字) and Sino-Vietnamese Tang verse (唐诗) embraced by the higher class Vietnamese, Nôm and lục bát cut across classes, from the lowly peasants to the noble princes. This shows that these works were compiled to reach a broad public. Furthermore, besides supporting the works mentioning Hùng Kings, the rulers considered all books which did not mention Hùng Kings as "unorthodox books" and ordered soldiers to destroy them. For example, in the reign of Trịnh Tạc (r. 1657-1682) and Trịnh Cương (r. 1709-1729), while TNNL was encouraged to spread, other Nôm-characters works were burned because Lord Trịnh considered them “tà thuyết” (heterodoxy) (Huỳnh 1986: 79).

### **3.3. Supporting the Integration of the Hùng Kings’ Myths into Indigenous Culture to Form a New Belief: the Worship of Hùng Kings**

**At the local level,** Lê kings took advantage of their coercive power to sanctify Hùng Kings and consequently urged villagers to worship them. For example, under the reign of Lê Anh Tông (r. 1556–1573), Nguyễn Bính, an academician working at the Ministry of Rites, compiled Ngọc Phả Thần Tích, a collection of myths about Supernatural Beings and national heroes, including Hùng Kings. In 1741, under Lê Ý Tông (r. 1735–1740), Nguyễn Hiền, another academician, began recopying these sources. Numerous versions “embroidered” earlier versions and continued until the reign of Khải Định (r. 1916 - 1925), according to Nguyễn Thị Điều (2013). In all documents collected after the Lê dynasty, Hùng Kings were referred to as the first kings of the Vietnamese and were at par with gods/magical spirits worshipped in village temples. Hùng King II (Hùng Hiền Vương), for example, has been worshiped in Bình Đăng village, Bạch Hạc district (Tạ 2011). Hùng Kings were accepted by the villages which had originated them, reinforcing and perpetuating

the Hùng Kings' materiality and potency through village worship (Nguyễn T. Đ. 2013). Clearly, Lê kings capitalized on the influence of the village culture, a fundamental dimension of Vietnamese culture to popularise the worship of Hùng Kings. The village structure has not changed from Hùng Kings period to modern times (Vũ 1999: 59), so tapping into village culture and the belief of villagers to prepare the ground for founding a new belief in the worship of Hùng Kings was definitely a wise decision, and created long-lasting values.

**At the national level,** Vietnamese rulers facilitated the establishment and maintenance of Hùng Kings (and their relative) temples. For instance, in 1465, the Lê court published decrees to recognize the titles of Âu Cơ (mother of Hùng Kings) and ordered people to build Âu Cơ Temple (Trần N. 2005). Since the Lê dynasty, Vietnamese kings have delegated officials to perform rituals in these temples and exempted local people from taxes if they took care of the temples carefully. Gradually, the worship of Hùng Kings received the support of people all over the country.

## IV. The Reasons the Myths and Worship of Hùng Kings have won Public Acceptance

### 4.1. Support from the Vietnamese Rulers

While the earliest records of the Hùng Kings were written around the 4th century, in *Jiaozhou Waiyu Ji* (交州外域记, *Record of the Outer Territory of Jiao Region*), the Hùng Kings' myths were officially recognized since the Lê court (1428-1789). This raises a question: why the Lê dynasty but not the earlier courts approved them? The answer, I believe, lies in the foreign and domestic problems of the Lê dynasty that the previous dynasties did not have.

**In terms of foreign relations:** The Lê dynasty had to use the Hùng Kings' myths as a cultural weapon to enhance their position. It should be noted that most of the Vietnamese feudal dynasties implemented "the vassal status" policy in relation to China. This means that the Chinese emperor officially recognized and titled the

kings of Vietnam, and Vietnamese kings promised to provide military support or pay tribute to China when needed in return. While the previous dynasties were transferred peacefully (Đinh-Tiền Lê, Tiền Lê-Lý, Lý-Trần), the Lê dynasty was established after the war against the Chinese army, which was perceived to be a manifestation of disloyalty by the Chinese rulers. This explains why the Ming court refused to confer “An Nam Quốc Vương” (安南国王, King of An Nam) title on Lê Lợi, the founder of Lê dynasty, when he was crowned king. After that, the Chinese emperor ordered to find descendants of the Trần dynasty thrice to bestow on them the title King of the Vietnamese realm, based on the imperial decrees of Ming Chengzu (明成祖) in 1407, and of Ming Xuanzong (明宣宗) in 1427 and 1429 (see Ngô et al 2017: 435). When no one was found, Ming Xuanzong Emperor bestowed Lê Lợi “Quyền thụ An Nam Quốc sự” (权署安南国事, Acting Ruler of An Nam), a nominal role. Not being in agreement with the Chinese emperor on the given title, the Lê dynasty strived to regain the right to determine their own position. Therefore, the Lê dynasty intended the Vietnamese people to believe that it was reasonable for the Lê to proclaim themselves kings of Vietnam without approval from the Chinese emperor.

Spreading the Hùng Kings’ myths was one of many political measures which the Lê court used to realize their aspirations. By popularizing a myth which claimed that the Vietnamese ancestor (King Kinh Dương, also known as Hùng King I) gave up the throne to Di Yi, an ancestral king of the Chinese, and then established a new country in the south (this is present-day Vietnam), the Lê kings intended to convey the idea of “being not inferior to China” (无逊中华) among the Vietnamese people: the Chinese rule the North and the Vietnamese rule the South. With this, it has been made reasonable to put Vietnamese leaders and Chinese rulers on equal footing. Also, the Vietnamese have the right to choose their kings without waiting for approval from the Chinese emperors:

By creating King Kinh Dương’s part, the Vietnamese would like to imply that they had a brotherhood relationship with the Han Chinese, helping to raise the status of Vietnamese rulers and even make them the equals of Chinese emperors. [...] Therefore, to the Vietnamese, King Kinh Dương’s part was deemed a cultural weapon

(Hoàng 2020: 39).

***In terms of domestic problems:*** Calling for national unity is the main purpose of the Lê court when they intentionally promoted the dissemination of Hùng Kings' myths. While the Vietnamese have always made up the majority of the population in Vietnam, Lê Lợi, the founding king of the Lê dynasty, is from the Mường, an ethnic minority residing in the mountainous north of Vietnam. Trần Quốc Vượng affirmed:

Either Lê Lợi is 100% Mường or he is also 60% Mường. His mother is a Mường person from Thanh Hóa province. He was born in his motherland, and very fluent in the Mường language. He had many Mường comrades in the Lam Sơn uprising such as Lê Lai and Phạm Cương. (Trần V. Q. 1998: 279)

Gaspardone and Whitmore also agreed that Lê Lợi is from a Mường (Whitmore 1968: 4). Historical documents such as Lam Sơn Thực Lục (蓝山实录, Lam Sơn Records), Hoàng Lê Ngọc Phả (皇黎玉谱, Precious Genealogy of Lê's Royal Family), Lê Gia Phả Ký (黎家谱记, Genealogy of the Lê) all indicate that Lê Lợi was a phụ đạo Khả Lam (chief of the Mường in Lam Sơn region).

As chief of the Mường, Lê Lợi entered the political arena with both advantages and disadvantages. He easily enticed ethnic minorities such as the Mường to participate in the uprising he led against the Ming army. It should be noted that in the 15th century, "census showed that there were 5,120,000 people, including 2,087,500 ethnic minorities in Vietnam" (Maspéro 1910). This means that, unlike the current disparity of power, the influence of ethnic groups at that time was significant, especially when compared with the force of the Vietnamese. As a leader with a good relationship between the two forces, Lê Lợi really defeated the Ming invaders and became a king. However, when he ascended the throne and ruled the country, Lê Lợi was caught in a bind. He could easily gather forces to defeat the Ming army, but it was very difficult for him to equitably distribute the benefits gained from the war to participating forces. The conflict and power struggle between the dominant group of ethnic minorities originating from the

mountainous land and those ruled in the Red River Delta emerged (Whitmore 1968; Taylor 1991: 192). Because majority of the population in Lê Lợi's reign were Vietnamese, Lê Lợi did not receive widespread support. His origins created a complicated situation that he and his descendants had to deal with for centuries.

Therefore, the Lê kings had to constantly look for ways to reconcile the contradictions among the heterogeneous ethnic ideological views, in order to create unity among them. Lê Thánh Tông, one of the most enlightened medieval rulers in Vietnam, reconciled these by acknowledging the myth of Hùng Kings and as well as accepting that it was written in ĐVSKTT. More specifically, in part 3 of the Hồng Bàng myth, the Hùng Kings Part, the book stated that Lord Lạc Long and Âu Cơ were the parents of the Hundred Việt (a term to collectively refer to various ethnic groups who lived south of the Yangzi River, including the Việt and the Mường). This myth implies that the Việt, the Mường, or other ethnic communities in Hundred Việt groups shared the same ancestors and were of the same race, so any of them had the right to become king. This was an appropriate measure to reduce conflicts and call for unity.

In addition, worshipping Hùng Kings was also a way to prove that Lê kings were Confucian followers. While the previous dynasties (Lý and Trần) showed great devotion to Buddhism, the Lê kings also had to support Confucianism for political stability. The Lê enforced royal decrees to limit Buddhism and attempted to make Confucianism the dominant ideology. To achieve this, Lê kings pioneered "apply(ing the) principles (of Confucian philosophy) to make people believe" (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences 2007: 348). "King Lê Thánh Tông vigorously upheld Xiao (孝, being good to parents and ancestors)" (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences 2007: 347), a fundamental principle of Confucianism. All religions referred to the notions of filial respect, but Confucianism paid special attention to honoring ancestors. Confucius remarked: "Establishing oneself, practicing The Way, spreading the fame of one's name to posterity, so that one's parents become renowned-that is the end of Xiao" (立身行道, 扬名于后世, 以显父母, 孝之终也) (Xing Bing 1980: 2539). Therefore, Lê kings believed that

when they achieved success, they must honor their ancestors. They focused on the notion of “Đương Danh Hiển Gia” (揚名显家, make a glorious name for oneself, bring glory to one's parent and ancestor). From this perspective, the Lê dynasty stressed raising the status of Vietnamese ancestors, especially the national founders/first kings. This could be the main motivation for the Lê dynasty to focus on honoring and then worshipping Hùng Kings.

Finally, the myths and worship of Hùng Kings helped to extend the influence of Lê kings on people's consciousness. Believing that Vietnamese people were devout, Lê kings concentrated on controlling people's perceptions by taking advantage of the image of the gods: “If we believe that religion is a belief and practice affects the right behavior to life and to a supernatural world, we have to realize that Vietnamese people have such a high level of virtue” (Cadière: 2015). They understood that controlling people's minds is the best way to reduce subversive potential. To achieve this purpose, King Lê Lợi proclaimed that “I am a Lord of all Gods” (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences 2007: 341). He also named his reign “Thuận Thiên” (順天), which literally means “In Heaven's favor”. By doing this, he expressed very clearly the view that he transcended common people and was in a higher position than the gods. In other words, he was of opinion that only the king had the right to issue decrees to decide the ranks and titles of gods/spirits. The successive kings of Lê dynasty followed king Lê Lợi in deciding which gods could be beneficial to worship. For example, in 1437, king Lê Thánh Tông claimed that Hùng Kings were village guardian spirits, transforming Hùng Kings from mythical characters into supernatural beings (Vũ 1999; T. Đ. Nguyễn 2013; Tạ 2011). Clearly, the Lê kings wanted to rely on the prestige of gods to increase their power. This made “the deity became more royalized, so the king became more divinized” (Thomas 2015: 63).

#### **4.2. Support from the Vietnamese Commoners**

The Vietnamese people played a decisive role in the development of Hùng Kings worship. When worshipping Hùng Kings, they also have reaped significant benefits, explaining why the policies to popularize the worship of Hùng Kings have received widespread support.

Firstly, "since antiquity, the Han Chinese forced vassal countries to follow Han culture (also known as Sinocentrism, 中国中心主义)" (Hoàng 2020: 38), so worshiping Hùng Kings was a way for the Vietnamese to use to fashion a local identity and sense of place when they faced forced assimilation by China. Sources of information obtained from ethnographic fieldwork in Phú Thọ province showed that in 650, when Vietnam was under Chinese dynastic rule, an official of the Tang dynasty (唐朝) named Li Changming (李常明) ordered local people to build the Tongsheng (通圣) temple in Phú Thọ with the aim of turning this area into "a Taoism propagation center". To counter this threat, the Vietnamese established temples to worship indigenous gods such as Tản Viên Sơn Thánh (the God of Tản Viên Mountain) and Generals who defeated Chinese invaders (Saint Phù Đổng, Trưng sisters, etc.). Later, these temples were used to worship Hùng Kings as the Vietnamese perceived Hùng Kings to be the representative of Vietnamese indigenous culture. In other words, worshiping Hùng Kings is not only deemed an effective weapon against cultural assimilation but also a way to protect local identity.

Secondly, like their kings, the Vietnamese also needed to raise their status. In feudal times, the Chinese called the Vietnamese "Man Yi" (蛮夷) or "Nan Man" (南蛮), translated as a barbarian ethnic (Hoàng 2020). Positioned as inferior, the Vietnamese evolved a burning desire to transcend and consequently supported the spread of Hùng Kings' myths. It is not uncommon for some ethnic minorities to make up myths that they were blood-related to the Chinese in order to raise their status. Take the Buyei people (布依族) living in Guizhou (贵州), China for example. Although they were of Austronesian descent (not related to the Chinese), their founding myth stated that their ancestor is Pangu (盘古, a creator deity of the Han Chinese), a means to form an alliance with the Han Chinese.

Thirdly, Vietnamese culture has flexible acculturation and has graciously accepted customs that are different from its traditions. Thanks to this, the worship of Hùng Kings, a new belief created around the 15th century, easily entered Vietnamese culture without encountering too many obstacles.

## **V. Conclusion**

The above points and evidence lead to the conclusion that the Hùng Kings' myths may have existed locally before the 15th century, and that Vietnamese rulers implemented policies to facilitate the worship of Hùng Kings.

Firstly, the Vietnamese rulers issued decrees which recognized Hùng Kings as the first kings of Vietnam and encouraged the spread of Hùng Kings' myths. Secondly, the Vietnamese rulers ordered historians to include the Hùng Kings' myths in historical documentation as well as in folktales, songs, and verses. This way, the Hùng Kings were gradually recognized as first kings in official histories and folk culture. As a result, they were respected as founding national heroes. Lastly, when the Hùng Kings' myths were spread successfully, the rulers cleverly combined these myths with indigenous beliefs (ancestor worship and "thành hoàng" worship) to establish a new belief: the worship of Hùng Kings.

The following regimes after the Lê also realized the benefits of spreading the myths and worshiping Hùng Kings, so they drove the Vietnamese people to believe in the existence of Hùng Kings and convinced them of the importance of worshiping them. Thanks to this, the worship of Hùng Kings gained in popularity and gradually played an important role in Vietnamese culture. Undoubtedly, the myths and worship of Hùng Kings will continue to be embraced by the Vietnamese rulers and people.

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## A Spiritual War: Religious Responses to Marketization in Rural North Vietnam

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### [ *Abstract* ]

This article explores religious responses to significant cultural and social change in a northern Vietnamese delta village from 1996 to 2008—the second decade after de-collectivization. Drawing upon extensive fieldwork in both the village and surrounding religious networks, the article teases out the meanings of the new religious movements for northern rural people in the new era of market economy; the symbols, language, and metaphoric resources people used in response to their uncertainty and mistrust of the new social landscape; and the unintended consequences of rapid societal development such as marginalization, tensions, and social disintegration. The article argues that as in milleniarism elsewhere, new religious movements in northern rural Vietnam embody unorthodox syncretism between world religious and local traditions, thus linking past, present, and

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future. However, when drawing upon a common reservoir of memories and experiences to cope with risks and challenges of the new market world, local people not only drew on the power and imperial metaphor of deities in their traditional religion and belief, but became more creative to recuperate meanings, standards, and symbols from revolutionary discourse to reorient themselves, and overcome alienation and marginalization.

**Keywords:** new religious movement, millenarianism, religious responses, marketization, rural north delta Vietnam

## I . Introduction

Born in Bac Dong<sup>1</sup> village right after the 1945 Revolution, Mrs. Đức spent some years in her youth as a worker at a socialist workplace in Hoa Binh province during early 1960s. After she returned home, she became a member of the local agricultural co-operative and later a staff member at the co-operative store. Ten years after the Renovation, when most villagers started to increase their involvement in the market economy to improve their life, she was a poor widow in the village. Her income derived mainly from cultivating her 360m<sup>2</sup> plot of allocated rice land and selling vegetables at the village market. Her only daughter married and lived in the same village but could not afford to help her because she was poor as well. In 1996, when she turned 50 years old, Đức suddenly became ill. She seemed unable to function normally and what she said made no sense. Đức would often walk around the house, clapping her hands and saying, “I am an immortal being living in this human world.” She tried several things to return to normal. When nothing else helped, one of her friends suggested her to consider contracting a ritual at the temple of an 80-year-old woman in the nearby district of Ha Tay province<sup>2</sup> at a cost of only two hundred thousand đồng (about 16 USD). The name of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bac Dong is not the official name of the village; it is one version of the revolutionary name of the village during the collectivization period. Names of people and places in this article have been changed for purposes of confidentiality.

<sup>2</sup> Now a part of the City of Hanoi.

temple was “The Gate of Heaven” [Cổng Trời]. When Đức arrived, she failed to see any Heaven’s Gate that matched the picture in her imagination. Nevertheless, she was quickly convinced by what she found at the temple and decided to hold a ritual. The very next day, Đức was able to go to work in the rice fields. When I met her in 2008, everything was still going well with her. Every year, she visited the temple once or twice to pray or perform rituals.

Đức said what helped her overcome doubts and prejudice about the simplicity of the ritual was the nature of the master at the Gate of Heaven temple. She was first impressed by the fact that the master was a former senior communist party member who had participated in the revolutionary cause since its beginnings in the 1940s. Beside practicing the Mother Goddess religion in the simplest and most austere way, the master believed that she was given magical powers by the heavens to fight a spiritual war caused by a gang of spirits of Yin enemies<sup>3</sup> in the contemporary society. If people follow her call, follow the guidelines of Uncle Hồ and revolution, she would be able to defeat the enemy and establish new life.

Đức’s story is one of several examples in Bac Dong that helps to explain how the re-enchantment with religion has occurred in this community. It is also reflective of a wider phenomenon in contemporary Vietnam that many researchers have already investigated (Fjelstad and Nguyen 2006; Pham 2007; Taylor 2007). More importantly, the network of mediums that Đức chose to join is one among a few new religious movements in the region that emerged during the course of this research in a village of the southern Red River Delta. However, her story still poses some questions: What were the problems she faced? What is the link between the emergence of new social relations and cultural standards in Vietnam’s increasingly marketized society following the decade-long shift from collectivization to market economy and her response of following that religious worshipping group? Is it valid to

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<sup>3</sup> In the Vietnamese perspective, the universe is divided between the world of human beings and the world of spirit entities. In the world of spirit entities, the heavenly realm (cõi Thiên) covers and governs Buddha’s realm (cõi Phật), the Yin realm (cõi Âm) and the earthly realm (cõi Trần) (Hoang 2017: 94).

use millenarianism to understand the new religious phenomena that Đúc practices or are those phenomena more closely related to creativity in religious ideology and practice during this period of Vietnamese economic reform?

Researchers have noted religious responses of people to marketization elsewhere in the world. Studies of post-socialism have illustrated that as a result of market reform, people in socialist bloc countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia had to face the issues of privatization of land, engagement in market activity, consumption, and ideas about property and ownership (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Ruth and Humphrey 2002; Verdery 1996). As a sense of anxiety, fear and panic mounted, fuelled by events that did not necessarily make sense to people, shamanic practices seemed to offer an explanation for poverty and other misfortunes in these societies (Buyandelgeriyin 2007: 130). The ways that people in the former socialist countries responded to social change accords with findings elsewhere that religion, shamanism, and spirit possession are ways for people to find meaning and identity and to overcome the uncertainties resulting from the expansion of the market economy (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, 1999; Kendall 1996; Stengs 2009; Weller 2000; Salemink 2003).

In the case of Vietnam, many studies have described the social instability after the liberal market economy was introduced and the country embarked on an era of development and modernization. Problems ranged from a widening gender gap placing heavier burdens on women (Luong 2003a; Nguyen Vo 2008; Werner 2002) to the problem of social inequality between different groups, regions, and ethnicities (Kerkvliet 1995; Luong 2003b; Taylor 2004b).

What makes the case of Vietnam compelling is that economic reform has coincided with a gradual but profound return to traditional rituals and various cults. Researchers have explored the revival of family, patrilineage, and village rituals against a backdrop of increasing wealth, as well as attempts by local villagers to regain autonomy, together with efforts of the state to mitigate the undesirable side effects of the transformation (Luong 1993; Malarney 1993; Kleinen 1999; Endres 1999). Alongside the intensification of

the market economy, the re-emergence of religious activities has recently transitioned from village-based rituals to Mother Goddess and heroic cults as symbolic expressions of the new social relations within the market economy. Research on the increase in mediumship describes religion as a response to existential concerns such as illness, death, fear, emotional distress, and misfortune (Endres 2006; Nguyen 2007; Salemink 2003) or as a way of articulating differences of status, gender, generation, or ethnicity which persist despite, or perhaps because of, the state's policies (Norton 2006; Pham 2007; Taylor 2004a, 2007). However, very few have examined the responses of rural people to the emergence of new social relations and cultural standards in Vietnam's increasingly marketized, globalized society, and the meanings of the new religious movements to northern rural people in the new era of market economy.

In a recent study of new religious movements in northern Vietnam after Renovation, Hoang (2017) explores the rise of new religious groups through the experience of modernity, by which "post-1986 new religious groups" are seen as having emerged in a context of social differentiation, representing conflict with socialist modernity and secularity. Some groups, such as the School of Teaching Goodness, reimagine past knowledge and indigenous folk belief for the purpose of accommodating the present situation. Other movements based on the belief that the Jade Buddha would bring salvation to the nation, demonstrate the ongoing millenarian dream of social transformation in the context of challenges brought about by Vietnam's growing integration into the world economy. Despite the author's analysis of the emergence, organization, doctrines, rituals, and practices of these groups, actual social context or the detailed disagreements of the new movement's followers have not been described clearly.

This research applies the ideas of religious response to social change to explore the meanings of new religious movements to north delta Vietnam's rural people in the new era of market economy. By considering examples of religious networks in which people participated, such as "Universal Central School" temple and the Gate of Heaven temple, the article aims to understand the

symbols, language, and metaphoric resources people use in response to their situation of uncertainty, anxiety, and mistrust. It also tries to explore the dynamics of transformative dialogue between the state and local people in the recent emergence of the spiritual life. This will be accomplished by applying the concept of millenarianism to explore new religious phenomena in the study.

Millenarianism is a variant of millennialism, a term which “originally referred to the Christian belief that after Christ’s second coming a messianic kingdom will be created on earth in which he would reign with the help of a group of “chosen” for a thousand years until the final judgment” (Villa-Flores 2007: 242). This concept has been extended by anthropologists, sociologists, and historians to include religious movements that expect a total, imminent, collective, and this-worldly redemption (Lindstrom 1996: 561; Villa-Flores 2007: 242-243). According to Lee (1996), while millennialism is used to refer to the biblical idea of the millennium, with its ancient hopes and beliefs, millenarianism’s emphasis is more on how society influences a person’s millennial view, or social aspects of what have become known as millenarian movements.

Millenarians often await the destruction of the existing social order, and believe in, expect, and/or prepare for the coming of a new utopian world (Hobsbawn 1965). The movement is usually led by a charismatic savior or prophet who has a connection with divine beings and possesses supernatural power. Millennial beliefs have arisen in many parts of the world, taking in a variety of contents and forms in accordance with the aspirations and specific cultural backgrounds of their seekers (Villa-Flores 2007: 243). These can be grouped into three main types, depending on the nature of their activities. The first is the so-called cargo cults, which have occurred in Melanesia and elsewhere in the world. In this kind of cult, millenarians follow their prophetic leaders in conducting sophisticated rituals to hasten the arrival of an abundance of material goods by ship. The second type is peasant millenarianism where farmers organize themselves around a prophetic/charismatic leader and engage in armed struggle or revolt against political authorities. And the third type is less militant and more religious than the mix between Christianity and traditional religion or

Buddhism and traditional religion (Mile 2010: 646).

Most millenarian movements share the common origin of being reactions to situations of accelerated change, deprivation, and social unrest. The cults tend to arise in moments of crisis, when societies are undergoing periods of accelerated cultural, political, and economic change (Villa-Flores 2007: 243). Before World War II, many of these movements emerged from the profound transformations brought about by colonialism. Post-war, they typically responded to an expanding global economic system that promised development and modernization (Lindstrom 1996: 562). Given that modernity produces disparity, exclusion, and marginalization, millenarian movements are defined as attempts by marginalized or excluded people to create a unifying identity and exclusive space against the invasion of modern institutions and authorities (Mile 2010: 647).

Millenarian cults that emerged in Vietnam share the common characteristics of millenarianism elsewhere. Hoa Hao Buddhism in Southern Vietnam was a typical peasant millenarianism, which can be seen as a response to ecological and social crisis; an attempt to overcome social disintegration and a cultural crisis in a frontier society, by positing the restoration of a golden age and imagining a messiah returning from the colonial period (Ho Tai 1983). The 1986 economic reform in northern Vietnam spawned around a hundred new religious movements, many of which have millennial ideas and share common origins with the third type of millenarianism: the mix between the world religions and traditional religion. Followers of those movements are described as members of highly vulnerable social groups who have failed in the market economy and struggle to cope with the challenges of modernity (Đỗ Quang Hưng 2001; Hoang 2017).

This article, however, will argue that beside sharing common characteristics of millenarianism in other regions, new religious movements with millenarian attributes that emerged in northern rural Vietnam after the 1986 Renovation have distinctive characteristics. These movements represent an unorthodox syncretism between Buddhism and local traditions like Mother

Goddess and ancestral worship, linking past, present, and future. Local people have drawn upon memories and experiences from the past to cope with risks and challenges of the new market world. Nevertheless, in many cases, northern rural Vietnamese people not only draw on the power and imperial metaphor of deities in their traditional religion and beliefs, but also try to recuperate meanings, standards, and symbols from revolutionary discourse to reorient themselves and overcome their alienation and marginalization.

The article draws upon long-term ethnographic research in a village in the Red River Delta from July 2007 to May 2008, which aimed to explore the proliferation of new forms of religiously imagined community in rural Vietnam linked to the transition to the market economy. By employing the typical anthropological methods of interviewing and participant observation, the researcher not only participated in the daily activities and social networks of villagers, but also went on pilgrimages with people to different Northern provinces, participated in their social networks in surrounding locations, and talked to some outsiders who might influence village life.

## II . Background

By 2008, Bac Dong is a rice-growing village of 1036 households and 4297 people in Ha Nam province. Located in a marshy area of the delta where the soil is poor, and water flooded the rice fields for half of each year, the Bac Dong people struggled for long to make a living there. Before the 1945 Revolution, besides cultivating one rice crop each year, local people had to develop specialized skills in order to survive, such as digging under water to build house foundations in muddy soil, building dikes and other hydraulic constructions, weaving tussore silk, engaging in aquaculture in order to earn a meager income. Working day and night, people barely maintained basic subsistence.

Amidst such difficult circumstances, villagers very early on constructed a temple and a communal house, or *đình*, for worship of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, one of the famous kings in the feudal dynasties of

Vietnam. He functions as the village guardian spirit who provides moral support for families in the community. The *đình* was also considered a male-centric site in which the power of traditional village authorities was concentrated. Like other communities in the delta, Bac Dong also has a pagoda (*chùa*) with a main building dedicated to Buddha and a Mother Goddess shrine (*nhà Mẫu*) in behind it dedicated to the deities of the Cult of Four Palaces. This site mainly serves as a place for elderly women to conduct bimonthly prayer sessions and various ceremonies to pray for the wellbeing of their families and the souls of the deceased villagers. Women gathering in this space are provided the opportunity for socialization and companionship. Additionally, two small shrines (*miếu*) at the edges of the village commemorate the two Ladies of Dinh Tien Hoang King.<sup>4</sup> Here, female villagers can interact with deities to deal with the difficulties of life. Villagers believe that, together with Buddha, village gods and other spiritual beings, family and kinship ancestors are primary key forces protecting and supporting them in daily life. Most families in the village have their own lineage halls to honor the cult of ancestors. These types of religious sites have served the institutional needs of the whole village of Bac Dong, as well as those in other northern Vietnamese villages since the old days (Luong 1992; Kleinen 1999).

During the past century, the village of Bac Dong has experienced successive significant changes. In 1954, after a century of colonial rule and nine years of war against the French, villagers were mobilized in land reforms which overturned the landlord class and former authorities and placed those formerly dispossessed at the top (Malarney 2002). Only two years after that turbulent reform period, together with other villages in the delta, Bac Dong entered

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<sup>4</sup> These were two Mường ethnic women who supported the Đinh King to gain independence. The legend about them says that these two ladies had magical power and some Bac Dong people believed that they were spirits who came to help the king. Thanks to their meritorious service to the king, these two ladies underwent a transformation in the perspective of villagers from being outsiders and strangers to being given a title and being worshipped in the village. However, long before they were simply worshiped at two small stone outdoor shrines at two edges of the village. Recently, villagers contributed money and labor to build them larger indoor shrines.

a process of agricultural collectivisation that lasted from 1960 to 1986. By contributing the means of agricultural production—land and draft animals—and becoming cooperative members, villagers became liable for obligations of selling surplus agricultural products for the state and labor recruitment, but also eligible for income and social welfare benefits (Luong 2010; Kleinen 1999). The villagers remember collectivization as a time of chronic hunger, but one that was rich in social solidarity. People were discontented with the poor governance and the problems with the centrally-planned economy which caused a continual decrease in their income from the cooperative, as well as the policy of household book and migration management that restricted them from moving out of the community. However, except for some level of disparity between “policy families” (mostly families of war-martyrs and wounded soldiers), local cadres and ordinary people on rice and food priority, there was a shared situation of need among villagers. Family members and villagers worked and stuck together through thick and thin. In these conditions where access to popular media and entertainment equipment was lacking, the creation and performance of popular artistic culture flourished. Social organizations like women’s associations, youth unions and children’s unions played an active role in the community and helped to keep all members connected.

De-collectivization was implemented in 1981 through the Land Law and Resolution 10 in 1988, which allocated agricultural land to households for the long term. Agricultural production in Bac Dong increased significantly and people were provided the chance to enter a real market economy. The dynamics, opportunities, and challenges associated with marketization and globalization transformed the village. Since the early 1990s, migration of villagers has intensified. Hundreds of Bac Dong residents moved to Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces to work as hired laborers in factories, on construction sites, at woodcraft enterprises, or as petty traders and street vendors. In the 2000s, approximately 50 young villagers migrated to Malaysia, Korea, and some European countries to work as export laborers. Villagers who stayed at home based their living on cultivating their allocated rice land, combined with trading or

finding wage labor in the region. Through migration and doing business in the outside world, the residents of Bac Dong developed various new enterprises ranging from weaving scarves and brocade bags to producing and selling picture frames to the people in their village which created a dizzying pace of change for this community. By 1995, all villagers had enough rice for home consumption and they were able to start saving for building houses and growing their assets. Along with that economic improvement, however, villagers began to witness dramatic social changes in their community.

After de-collectivization, each household was given back its autonomy to promote its own economic interests, but villagers were faced with an unsettling feeling that no one cared for them anymore. Where previously they had been subsidized by the state for different levels of school, healthcare, food, and household necessities, people now needed to pay for all these. As local cadres were no longer responsible for the life of villagers, everyone now was responsible for themselves and their families first. Moreover, many Bac Dong people felt that their education and skills were not enough to get them jobs or earn social status in modern society. 60-year-old Mr. Xuan described the new conditions: “The only thing we can have nowadays is a paper from the local government which certifies that we are normal citizens, eligible to register for a temporary stay when going out of the village to find work.” “Being peasants today means we have to work hard. Due to the lack of jobs, we have to go far away, work in bad conditions and accept risks to earn a living”, Mr. Phong, a 55-year-old villager lamented.

In general, most villagers felt that in the modernized society, their material life had improved but at the cost of greater physical and spiritual hardship. In the market economy, only healthy active people can earn good money by being employed or by doing business. Women often stay at home to work and care for their families. Young females (under 35 years old) can take on cleaner forms of light work, like making brocade bags or sewing clothes for workshops in the village. However, these jobs can be quite challenging as they require the worker to be handy and quick-witted. Some women feel pressured by their husbands and families as income from their jobs is lower than that of others.

Women in the village who are 40 or 50 years old are more willing to do more basic and dirty work such as collecting, sorting, and trading recycled materials like duck feathers or scrap iron to cover daily expenses. Elderly people feel they are the most marginalized when they must rely on their children to help them cultivate their 360m<sup>2</sup> plot of allocated paddy land<sup>5</sup> to grow rice for consumption and generate some money for daily expenditures. As not all villagers have enough income to support their aging parents, in many cases the old people still have to produce items for craft workshops in the village for little payment or limit their expenses to the lowest level.

The other serious problem people faced after Reform is social differentiation and disorientation. From the situation of “equally poor” during the collectivization period, since 1996, social differentiation in the village has been increasing. In 2008, 30% of households had become well-off while most villagers lived at subsistence levels and about 10% of households were categorized as poor. There had been a significant rise in individualistic economic competition in the village. At that time, while some rich families could accumulate about 20 billion VND [1 million USD], one hired laborer or petty trader could earn only 50-100 thousand VND a day [2-5 USD] – essentially, subsistence living. Such income inequality left most villagers feeling nervous and more focused on earning a livelihood than caring for each other. Many tried their luck in business but not everyone could be successful, and those who were not might be looked down upon by their neighbors for their failure. To be poor become a shameful thing for people, and it was hard for those who with low self-esteem to gain acceptance in the village. Moreover, many villagers were surprised when rich people, lucky but living immoral lives, were praised while honest people were ignored because of the new value placed on “how much money you have.” The phenomena of families breaking apart, children engaging in social evils and men having affairs also increased as people chased money and consumed more. Many people, especially

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<sup>5</sup> In 1993, each household member in the village was allocated 360m<sup>2</sup> of rice land. Most of the elderly in Bac Dong, after dividing residential and agricultural land among their children, live separately and only keep their own allocated 360m<sup>2</sup> of paddy land.

women, felt lonely because their husbands and children moved away from home for work. Some say that there is no other way but for the family to gather only once a year, during the New Year celebration. Village residents no longer felt togetherness as it was hard to organize a shared activity when everyone focused on taking care of their families. Furthermore, people complained a lot about various fees and duties they were required to pay, along with widespread corruption in land management, and administration among local authorities. All these issues have left many villagers confused about cultural and moral standards in contemporary society. In talking about modern social life, villagers often spoke nostalgically about the “Uncle Ho time” (*thời Bác Hồ*) in the 1960s in words such as: “In Uncle Ho times, it was fair and serious. At that time, we received kilograms of sugar or a whole fish each; now we do not get anything. We need to spend money if we want to do things.”

In this context, the spiritual life in the village became more meaningful than ever. After 2000, the people of Bac Dong embraced the ritual revival movement which has been widely popular in the delta after Doi Moi (Luong 1992; Kleinen 1999; Malarney 1993). As part of the village spirit cult, the communal house was renovated and the festival was revived in 2006. At the pagoda, about half of the women in the village joined the Association of the Elderly Women (*Hội các già/các vãi*) and the team of “incense followers<sup>6</sup> (*con hương/con nhang*) to conduct monthly rituals to pray for the wellbeing of their families. At home, many families invited priests or mediums to hold a “bad luck relief” ritual (*lễ giải hạn*) at the beginning or the end of the year. Beside those traditional village

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<sup>6</sup> This relates to the practice of “carrying an incense holder on one’s head” (*đội bát nhang*). The Vietnamese believe that spirits of the Three Palace (*Tam Phủ*) or Four Palace religion often choose followers for themselves. Thus, each person’s fate is related to one or several deities. When the spirit feels unhappy about his/her followers, he/she can make them sick or conjure up troubles. Thus when villagers learn from fortunetellers or other divine sources that the spirits are upset with them, they will hold a *đội bát nhang* ritual to ensure everything will go well. After the ritual, those involved become the children of the god and have an obligation to follow the religion’s important annual rituals, although these obligations are less stringent than those of a medium.

religious ceremonies, after 2000, many Bac Dong villagers also sought spiritual sites beyond their village and religious specialists who had emerged in the surrounding villages after Renovation. Most of these spiritual experts are mediums of the Mother Goddess religion, priests, and fortunetellers. Depending on their personal preference and situation, Bac Dong villagers contacted or followed different masters. Those doing business or having family members migrating far away often join the translocal spirit mediumship networks to access the power of the Mother Goddess deities who were supposed to support people in coping with the risks and uncertainties of the modern economy (Pham 2009: 144). Middle-age and older women tend to follow master mediums of new religious groups who care more about health issues and the wellbeing of their families. These groups often conduct monthly rituals at their private temples and make pilgrimages to famous Mother Goddess temples and pagodas in northern Vietnam.

Given that, as some villagers described, performing rituals have become a new social movement as the dynamics of the spiritual life also created conflict, tension and heated discussion among villagers about the qualifications and material benefits of various religious specialists. In the village, there was a conflict at the pagoda when it was felt that the former nun there was too old and her successor did not have sufficient qualifications. Some mediums in the village also sought to be leaders of incense followers to take over the power and benefit at the pagoda. Some of the master mediums in surrounding villages were criticized for seeking benefits, while others were evaluated as lacking qualifications. Together with the economic tension and confused moral standards in the community, this frustrated people, and thus searched for alternative forms of religion.

### **III. Bac Dong People and the Practice of New Religious Movements in the Region**

#### **3.1. The Universal Central School**

Like the new medium movement in Hanoi during the late 2000s, the number of Bac Dong villagers following this religious practice has

also increased. By 2008, almost ten villagers had become mediums. Once, when I attended a performance of a medium at Bac Dong pagoda, a woman sitting beside me named Dinh whispered to me: “I think this form of the Mother Goddess ritual is very luxurious and wasteful. I followed a new way of rituals in a temple in the region which are much simpler and more economical. It is like a cult of Uncle Hồ.”

The temple Dinh referred to was five kilometers away from Bac Dong. It was built on a range of limestone mountains surrounded by a lake and was tended by a 72-year-old lady, Mrs. Sợi, who was from the village of Ha Tay province (now part of Hanoi) about ten kilometers away. As the local village had several temples and pagodas, Sợi and other religious specialists from outside were invited to take care of them. Sợi used to be a poor illiterate woman who had to sell crabs caught in the rice fields to raise her eight children. In the mid 1980s, there was gossip all over the Red River Delta about people finding images of human beings on many crab shells. At that time, Sợi suddenly emerged as a representative of spirits. She was supposed to have been given a spiritual flag. As her profile grew, many elderly people in the village began to listen to her teachings. At that time, her actions were considered superstitious and reactionary and she was questioned by the local government. At the end of the 1980s, Sợi came to the temple near Bac Dong to establish her religious practice. Even though the temple was dedicated to Mother Goddess Âu Cơ, Sợi renamed the temple *Trường thi vũ trụ cột cờ* (“the Universal Central School for Competition where the Spirit pitches the Flag”). She envisioned that this temple would be a school of heaven where people from the surrounding area could gather to grow in morality (*đức*), meritorious work (*công*), and reputation/dignity (*danh giá, nhân phẩm*). Sợi called her religion millennialism (*thiên niên kỷ luận*). Her followers called her mother (*mẹ*) while ordinary people just called her Lady. The main concept of this religion was that after 2001 the world would no longer be led by Sakyamuni Buddha (*phật Thích Ca*). Instead, Mitreya Buddha (*phật Di Lặc*) would take over this role, and the Jade Buddha Ho Chi Minh would now rule the universe. Uncle Hồ had been endowed with the title Jade Buddha

because he was a person of great merit when alive and after his death entered the Heavenly Palace (Hoang 2016: 242). The religious concept was that the universe—the world of life and human life—is located between heaven and earth. According to this religion, in the final millennium, the King of Demons (*quỷ vương*) will have to serve Saints (*thánh vương*) and build a road to please the God. During this present time, the Demon King would harass the people and possess many people, causing them to do bad things.

Sợi practiced her religion by making vows, treating illnesses with magical power, and fortunetelling using eggs. At the temple, several old women who were deemed to have been given magical power by the spirits helped Sợi to treat her sick followers by using incense-steam and special massages. Followers often collected water at the temple and brought it home to drink. They believed it to be the water of an immortal (*nước Tiên*). Sợi often traveled around the region to hold rituals and treat the illnesses of her followers in their homes. Prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month in the lunar calendar, dates most valued in the Buddhist calendar, she held rituals in the temples. On those days, followers from surrounding villages gathered to worship the spirit and share a very simple meal. Normally, less than a hundred people visited the temples on those days. On important annual occasions, several hundred followers might attend the ceremonies. Visitors often brought simple offerings like fruits, cakes, and flowers to the temple. As the religion criticized superstition, the overuse of votive paper and the wastage of offerings,<sup>7</sup> Sợi recommended that her followers spend actual money (*tiền đen*) more on building the temple and less on practical donations. As most of her followers were poor laborers, they were willing to contribute their time to work on all the affairs of the temple. They were taught to be kind and attentive to one another. Thus, during rituals, or when donating labor and sharing meals, the atmosphere was warm and close-knit.

Sợi's rituals focused on sharing teachings with the followers

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<sup>7</sup> This is a similar attitude to what is found in other new religious phenomenon such as the Peace Society of Heavenly Mediums (*Đoàn Đồng thiên Hoà Bình*) in Hai Duong province, which is the deification of Ho Chi Minh. One of critiques of this new religion is the overuse of paper and votive objects (Hoang 2017: 94).

rather than worshipping. After food trays were offered to the spirits, Sợi conducted several *kowtow* and then provided teachings. Her followers reported that each time the topics were different, depending on what the spirits wanted her to talk about. Sợi often emphasized that the world was in troubled times. There were too many deceitful people (about 70%) according to her. Thus, she begged the heavenly spirits to judge and implement justice like the revolutionaries had done before, to help those who were poor and honest to have a better life. According to her, the dishonest, superstitious, and imperious who have a contemptuous attitude should be suppressed. She affirmed that her religion calls on heaven's magical power but follows the revolutionary policy, that is, its spiritual basis is secular belief rather than superstition.

Her teaching was quite abstract and hard to understand for many participants at the ritual. Most adherents recognized that their practice was part of a new religion comprising of a cult of Buddha, the Holy, and the ancestors, but in a modest way. Their master was a good poor woman who taught them to live honest and moral lives. Many followers reported that they changed their lives after following the rituals at the temple. They gave away any surplus money to needy people, did not lie to others and tried to be kind to everyone. Only some could understand the deeper meanings of the religion.

Followers of Sợi's spiritual practice often met with opposition from their families. Many husbands considered it an indecent religion and forbade their wives to follow it. In Bac Dong, more than 10 women who went to the temple were poor. Even though their neighbors did not comment about their religion, some villagers showed an unsympathetic attitude to it; they considered it unorthodox (*không chính thống*). This meant that the master had to rely on the ancient Mother Goddess temple and the local people's belief in its efficacy to practice her religion—millenarianism. In her religious practice, she tried to raise the voice of the poor, make a claim for their equality, and oppose negative social factors that might cause them harm. However, in the current climate, it is difficult for the master and her poor followers to compete with the more popular sense that “wealth gives birth to rituals,” as well as to challenge the large proportion of the population which has benefited

greatly from social transition. Her ideology and practice were also considered a negative view<sup>8</sup> that some local people were hesitant to follow. However, this ritual practice gave Dinh and her fellow believers a moral standard from which to deal with the issues of marginalization, social tensions, and atomization in the new social landscape.

### 3.2. The Gate of Heaven Temple

In 2006, when the author was carrying out research on mediumship in Hanoi, a rumor circulated that there was an elderly woman in Ha Tay province who would hold an initiation ceremony for mediums which cost only five hundred thousand *đồng*. Many masters and mediums in the city laughed at this, given the fact that they often spent at least eight million *đồng*, at that time, to hold such a ritual (Endres and Nguyễn 2006).

After some months in Bac Dong, in 2008, through the story of Mrs. Đức, the author came to visit the Gate of Heaven where, as it turned out, the master was the rumored old woman. She was still active and healthy at the age of 90. After joining the revolution in the 1940s, she went on to live an ordinary life in the village and took no interest in local government. In the mid-1980s, she became ill and confined herself to a room on the second floor of her home without eating anything. Her children were worried that she might die. She would open the window several times daily to inform people that she was still alive. After one month, she threw pieces of paper which carried statements and predictions from Heaven out of the window. They related how she used to be a daughter of the Heaven King who had once dropped a valuable glass and was punished by being sent to this world. In the 1980s, Heavenly Jade Emperor gave her the task of watching over the heavenly gate and saving the people. At first, the neighbors did not believe her story, but she convinced people by demonstrating strange phenomena. For instance, an incense-bowl that could not be lit caught fire by itself when the spirit responded to her prayer.

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<sup>8</sup> On the view of political security of the state, many new religions reveal their negative view of politics by venerating uncle Hồ as a Buddha in order to critique contemporary society (Đỗ Quang Hưng 2001: 12)

Some elderly women in her village were the first followers to listen to her prophetic words and wrote down her poems, songs, and prayers. They even took Heaven's prophetic words on the country's prosperity, as interpreted by Đức, to the state leaders in Hanoi. Since then, people have called her the incarnation of the Immortal (*Tiên Hóa*). She no longer eats solid food; instead, she drinks only coconut milk and orange juice. In the 1990s, after some years of offering prayers for local elderly women, Tiên Hóa began to practice her religion. She affirmed that she followed Buddhism, a world religion, and the cult of the Mother Goddess, a traditional belief of the country. However, influenced by millennial ideology, Tiên Hóa believed that Heaven has now taken over the role of ruling the world. Therefore, according to her, people should believe and follow Heaven to be given protection and support. She recommended that all her followers register to become children of the Vương<sup>9</sup> family in Heaven. Only in that way could people and their ancestors be protected from any upset in the world and be happy all their lives. In the temple's records and in written petitions to the gods, all the followers' family names were changed to Vương. Instead of using the standard form of petitions widely used in Buddhism and the Cult of the Mother Goddess, Tiên Hóa used her own type of petition for rituals; this allowed her to perform the whole process since she claimed to have magical power and could recite prayers and plead for the spirit to give blessed gifts and support to her followers.

There was no statue of Buddha or the spirits of the Mother Goddess at the temple. Tiên Hóa just set up a large altar right in front of a red curtain as a place to celebrate the ceremony. Followers could easily imagine that the red curtain represented a border line between heaven and earth. Most visitors came to the temple to take part in an initiation ceremony that would establish them as mediums able to perform annual rituals. Some of them combined these rites with other popular rituals of the Mother Goddess religion like relieving bad luck (*lễ giải hạn*), repaying debts

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<sup>9</sup> In Vietnamese, 'Vương' has the same meaning as 'Vua' (the King). In this context, Mrs. Tiên Hóa might have meant that all of her followers should become children of the Heaven King.

to spirits (*trả nợ tào quan*), or breaking off relationships with people in the other world (*cắt người âm theo*). In 2009, about thirty people per day performed Lên Đồng rituals at the temple. Each month approximately one hundred new followers held an initiation ceremony. In comparison, on average, a famous master in Hanoi could hold this kind of ritual for about twenty to fifty new followers a year. Thus, Tiên Hóa might be considered the master medium in northern Vietnam “giving birth” to the most children of the Cult of Four Palaces, despite the lack of recognition of her and her followers as mediums by many of her peers.



<Photo 1> The altar table of the Gate of Heaven Temple, and a Lên Đồng ritual of Tiên Hóa (the old lady in the red costume) in February 8th 2020  
(Source:[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB3LZ\\_v7slM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB3LZ_v7slM); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2PgSN9hqnu>, Accessed November 15, 2022)

Fundamentally, Tiên Hóa organized rituals according to the etiquette of the Mother Goddess religion but in a very simplified form. After her assistants addressed spirits with a petition of her own, Tiên Hóa uncovered two bowls of water<sup>10</sup> and quickly performed some important sequences of mandarins, ladies, and princes. She wore the same clothes throughout the sequences and all her movements took place in less than thirty minutes. Then Tiên

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<sup>10</sup> In the initiation ritual of mediums in Hanoi, the master often uncovers four bowls of water which represent four palaces: Heaven, Earth, Water and Mountain. In this case, the author had no chance to ask Tiên Hóa what her two bowls signified, given that it is difficult to access her. Her assistants did not want anyone to disturb her. Moreover, Tiên Hóa prefers to talk about what she wants to rather than letting people question her, or doing something like an interview.

Hóa covered her followers with a red veil<sup>11</sup> and invited them to start performing. While an ordinary medium had to spend up to ten million *đồng* for clothes, headscarf, and jewelry, at the Heaven's Gate temple people just needed one red dress and one red veil to perform their whole ritual. The temple lent followers any small and necessary equipment they needed. It was a collective performance, as normally 15 people took part at the same time. 15 elderly women from the village acted as assistants for each medium. Mediums performed the same movements following live music. Offerings were prepared for each sequence to give blessed gifts from the spirits to the surrounding people in a manner like other contemporary mediumship rituals. However, the quality and quantity of gifts were much smaller and simpler. Organizing the ritual in this way was more economical in terms of time and money.



<Photo 2> A collective initiation ceremony at the Gate of Heaven Temple in 2020  
 (Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB3LZ\\_v7sLM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB3LZ_v7sLM), Accessed November 15, 2022)

After the initiation ceremony at the temple, followers of Heaven's Gate could practice as mediums and perform Lên Đồng rituals in any temple of the Mother Goddess religion. However, most

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<sup>11</sup> The red veil (*khăn phủ diện*) is used to mark the spirits' descent and ascent during a Lên Đồng ritual.

of them confined themselves to conducting rituals at the Gate of Heaven temple. Very few followed the fashion of contemporary mediumship in buying costumes for each sequence of a performance, performing at famous temples or giving a lot of money and expensive offerings during rituals. At a time when mediumship was flourishing, a person's difficulties or even success was explained in terms of fate and destined aptitude. Followers of Tiên Hóa came to her to solve their problems through Lên Đồng, a treatment that seems to have become popular nowadays. However, Tiên Hóa could meet their demand without the negative aspects of the new social and religious movement (Endres and Nguyễn 2006). Many of her followers found it hard to understand why she was not very interested in performing or talking about rituals. Most of her ritual affairs were carried out by assistants. Tiên Hóa only joined people at the beginning and the end of the ritual when they sang her songs. In her interactions with people, she liked to talk about herself and her ideology. The simplified mediumship that she practiced can be considered as her tool to help people resolve their concerns and to attract followers. Beyond that, Tiên Hóa wanted to transmit her new religion and ideology to the whole society.

Unlike Mrs. Sợi, Tiên Hóa did not emphasize the role of Jade Buddha Ho Chi Minh in Heaven, but she liked to follow Uncle Hồ's modest lifestyle and guidelines. She often wore a white shirt similar to the clothes of former revolutionary cadres. Only when performing rituals would Tiên Hóa wear a yellow long dress over it. In keeping with revolutionary austerity guidelines, Tiên Hóa tried to reduce as much as possible the cost for rituals and contributions. The donations followers gave for rituals were mostly spent on food and offerings, and helped support 20 of the elderly women in the village who served as assistants every day. She discouraged contributions from poor followers for the temple. Moreover, she used money donated to the temple to build a part of the village road. Tiên Hóa seemed more compassionate toward poor followers than rich ones. Every day, the temple assistants prepared about 10 trays of food to offer to the spirits. At noon time, all the visitors and followers would share this simple food in a unified and harmonious atmosphere. Everyone served themselves during the meal and washed their

dishes afterwards; all were treated equally.

In her petition sheets for spirits, poems, songs and talks, Tiên Hóa stated that 13 years previously Heaven had given her magical power to control wind and rain (*úp gió thu mưa*). This enabled her to save some of the surrounding provinces from disasters. The Council of Heaven had held four meetings in recent years to issue resolutions giving her power. She had even been given a spiritual sword. When the country or the region was in danger, she used this sword to work miracles to protect them. For example, in 2007, when northern Vietnam suffered the coldest winter in decades, Tiên Hóa lit a fire on her rooftop altar and used her magic sword to dispel the cold. She believed that there was a gang of evil spirits or Yin enemies (*yêu quái, giặc âm*) who wanted to occupy this world. They had no compassion for the world's people; instead, they wanted to have full power to upset this world. Tiên Hóa had fought two battles against them on one night. She won both, but the spirits still attempted to come back. Therefore, Tiên Hóa called everybody in the society to support her by singing four songs that she had composed to make the spirits frightened of the strength of the world's people and withdraw. According to the content and ideology of these songs, there had recently been a spiritual war (*chiến tranh tâm linh*).<sup>12</sup> With its traditional spirit of fortitude, originating from Hùng King, Trần Hưng Đạo to the Hồ Chí Minh period, Vietnam had shown its talent and ability. Tiên Hóa felt that people should unite in unison with her to suppress the fiendish gang of spirits. In order to do so, it was necessary to stick together, love, and honor each other. Tiên Hóa encouraged people to live honestly, do only good things and resist killing each other. The songs also described

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<sup>12</sup> The idea of a “spiritual revolution” (*cách mạng tâm linh*) can be found in the Way of Ho Chi Minh Jade Buddha at the Peace Temple. Through its self-published booklet “Following the Uncle’s Way to Save the Nation from Now On,” the master medium of the group reveals the spirits of Ho Chi Minh and his plan for a “spiritual revolution” to save the nation from all past and present “foreign enemies” (Hoang 2017: 94). I found the ideas of Tiên Hóa about problems and a crisis of this world of human beings similar to the Ho Chi Minh Jade Buddha group’s explanation on the inappropriate attitude and behavior of people in this earthly realm and the interrelation among different realms (heavenly realm, Buddha’s realm, Yin realm and earthly realm) (Hoang 2017: 94-95).

this campaign as a new task and ordeal of Tiên Hóa and the delegation of her followers. Thus, they must adopt the mindset of the revolutionaries of the past and maintain their optimism.

Tiên Hóa believed that if people followed her call, she would defeat the enemy. At that time, Heaven would let her establish a New Life (*ra Đời Mới*). Then people would no longer have miserable lives; instead, everyone would live equitably and be happy with a leisurely life full of music. In 2008, her songs were sung at the beginning and end of every ritual. Tiên Hóa often sat next to the altar and appeared pleased to hear the songs; indeed, these seemed to be her happiest moments. Most of the people who knew these songs by heart were the musicians who sang *Chầu Văn* for the *Lên Đồng* rituals and the 20 female assistants at the temple. Apart from some adherents who frequented the temple, most of Tiên Hóa's followers did not remember and understand the songs very well. The faces of newcomers betrayed astonishment at the inclusion of these songs in the ritual. Tiên Hóa thought that sending a letter to the government to present her ideas, and requesting that the state media broadcast these songs regularly would enable people all over the country to learn and sing them. She believed that by doing that, she and all the country would defeat the Yin enemy.

Tiên Hóa cùng đất nước Việt Nam [The Immortal and Vietnam country]

Đẹp kẻ bạo tàn [Eliminate the evils]

Là loài yêu quái... [They are Yin enemies]

Tiên Hóa ra đời [The Immortal comes out]

Cứu khắp các nơi... [To save everyone]

Mà chẳng phải khổ [No one will be miserable]

Muôn đời sung sướng... [Will be forever happy]

To identify herself, Tiên Hóa only said that she was an immortal whose *curriculum vitae* included resisting French and Japanese invaders. From a pioneer in a revolutionary cause who had dug underground hideouts to defend cadres, she had seen major transitions in society and the world at the end of the twentieth

century. Mindful of climate change and the current social transition, this woman wanted to warn people and convince them to live better lives and promote the nation's beautiful traditions to help overcome all the challenges and difficulties of the era.

Đã đội lệnh trời [After becoming children of the Heavenly Jade Emperor]

Là phải nghe lời [Must listen to the teachings]

Làm điều nhân đức [Should do virtuous deeds]

Mọi người ở thực [Everyone should be honest]

Đừng cậy chức quyền [Do not abuse authority]

Làm phúc trời thương [Do good deeds, Heaven be with you]

Khắp hết bốn phương [People everywhere]

Đều đi một đường... [All go in one way]

Tiên Hóa was readily accorded the respect and trust of followers through her revolutionary-style virtue. After the revolution succeeded, she did not declare her merits to gain position or power. When she practiced religion, she did not dwell on its benefits, which is rare among religious masters nowadays. Her imagination helped many solve their everyday problems at minimal cost. Her followers believed that their concerns were presented to and approved by spirits at the “central level” (*trung ương*) as the temple was considered as the center of Heaven's Gate. Other temples to deities of the Mother Goddess religion were felt to operate at a “local administrative level” (*địa phương*). If followers took their problems to plead at other temples, they might be disregarded.

Although Tiên Hóa mainly wanted to instill confidence in her own power, by showing the magical power given by spirits, and to spread her ideology widely, she still had to rely on the cult of Buddhism and the Mother Goddess religion. These two fundamental and widespread cults helped her to attract followers by meeting the high demands of contemporary Vietnamese for initiation rituals to become mediums. Many followers came from the surrounding provinces of Ha Tay (before), Hanoi, Hoa Binh, Bac Ninh, and Bac Giang, and some from even further away. This geographic range was

coterminous with the area that she could influence by using magical powers to protect it from disasters. Tiên Hóa suggested that the limits of her magical power determined her sphere of influence. If Heaven gave her more, she might have wider influence. In the meantime, Tiên Hóa had to rely on her network to spread her influence. She led a group of spontaneous fortune-tellers, geomancers, and sorcerers in the region who travelled around surrounding provinces to offer professional advice to people to help solve their problems. These specialists often did the work of fortunetelling, finding lost graves or catching harmful spirits to protect families. If someone had a serious problem, they would advise them to see Tiên Hóa. And, as noted above, she easily won people's hearts by her virtue and morality. One of her followers described her in his poem as:

…Disdaining reputation and richness

Be the patriot when young, love the people when old…

Not only women and rural residents, but also some urban dwellers were convinced by her ideas. People welcomed her mostly because they acknowledged her great moral strength and understood that what she developed was very helpful for people at the time. Her work even won the sympathy of local cadres. Tiên Hóa's aim was to form a new religion of her own by creating new ritual practices and gathering followers by singing and experiencing rituals to become members of her family. Her story is gentle and meaningful, but it is hard to predict what will happen as Tiên Hóa is very old now. In 2008, she narrowly escaped death. She continued to organize an annual ritual on the 17th of August to receive more power from heaven. She and her followers are waiting for the spirits' decisions about her power and the chance to have a new life.

Compared to Sợi, the religious practice and ideology of Tiên Hóa felt lighter and more joyful. Her followers were primarily poor rural women who were sensitive to the transformation of the country. They felt confused and disoriented with the new social landscape, policy environment, and problems of exclusion from the

society of some of the rural population surrounding them. Those two religious innovators had experienced a difficult but fruitful time when the whole society joined in the mobilization during the war and the period of collectivization. Then during the post-war period, the centralized state took responsibility for everyone. Revolution had brought them belongings and sustenance. But when the social and cultural transformation took place in the mid-1980s, people understood that they had to take more individual responsibility for themselves and their families. They could no longer expect as much care from the state as before. Moreover, they experienced new problems caused by the economic transformation, such as conflicts and tensions, lies and mistrust among villagers. Therefore, these spiritual leaders had reoriented themselves by selecting prominent symbols from the state discourse to make sense of the new and unfamiliar social landscape of post-revolutionary society. They imagined that all the new problems of society were enemies (*quân thù*) and people should recover the ideology of revolution (*người cách mạng*) to struggle (*đấu tranh*) with this new war. By appropriating the meaning and standards of revolution, these rural women tried to find meaning in life and reintegrate themselves in the society. As it was a problem for the entire country, they imagined that only “central level” spirits in heaven and the universe could address their issue.

#### IV. Conclusion

The examples of new religious ideas and practice discussed herein have shown the religious creativity of people in rural northern Vietnam two decades after the 1986 reform. The motivations of the local people taking part in these religious networks and the way religious masters lead their followers in practicing the rituals reveal a range of problems that people have been experiencing in the marketized and globalized society such as uncertainty, anxiety and a lack of trust. The new policy framework has inadvertently created these issues of confusion and disorientation among rural people, most especially among poor women. These accounts have also proven that rural people showed creativity and innovation to

respond to their problems.

In response to the uncertainty of the market economy, like their urban counterparts, people in Bac Dong and the surrounding areas have come to rely upon the familiar spirits of the Mother Goddess religion who embody market relations and market power in the history of the country. By relating themselves to symbols of the Mother Goddess cult which has become a regional and even transnational religious network, they searched for a common reference point, language, and standard to cope with the risks and challenges of the new market world. People imagined that the spiritual relatedness they develop by surrounding themselves with these imperial metaphors enable them to overcome their anxiety and accommodate to the modern industrial world outside.

In a society marked by atomization and cultural and moral confusion, some women in the village found that recently emerging religious leaders in the Delta offered special support to the poor and marginalized like themselves. These people felt that their poverty, abandonment and exclusion were ameliorated by their participation in new religious movements. Their problems were addressed by new imaginary spiritual patrons, and by a revolutionary moral order, rather than by the practices of mutual material exchange that informed most Mother Goddess community networks. People have tried to recover meanings, standards, and symbols from revolutionary discourse to reorient themselves, overcome their alienation and make sense of the unfamiliar social landscape of the post-revolutionary society. They believed that only the imperial metaphor (Feuchtwang 2001) of Heaven, together with revolutionary morality, can solve their problems and change the society. In this sense, as distinguished from the dynamic of dialogic relation that Luong (2007) and Malarney (1996) describe, instead of resisting the state's ideas on reforming rituals, local people in these accounts have inserted the ideologies of the revolutionary socialist state into their religious practices.

These examples, together with findings of research on new religious groups in the north Delta Vietnam (Hoang 2017), confirm that most of the new religious movements in the region after the

1986 economic reform have the ideology of millenarian movements. However, these movements and their contexts are quite different from other manifestations of millenarianism in the world. The complex problems people face and the diversity of solutions they have adopted enrich our sense of recent religious phenomena in Vietnam.

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## Examining Hegemony, Ideology, and Class in Mani Ratnam's *Raavanan* (2010)

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### [ *Abstract* ]

Cultures often adopt the good versus evil dichotomy within their narratives of religious texts, aural anecdotes, and cultural mythologies. The *Ramayana* narrates a divine story that transcends time of the battle between the forces of good and evil, between Prince Rama and Ravana. Numerously adapted through time, the *Ramayana* is today told through moving visuals and has been adapted by Mani Ratnam through *Raavanan* (2010). *Raavanan* is adapted to the premise of hero versus villain using the good versus evil premise as Dev Prakash (Rama) searches to rescue his wife Raagini (Sita), who is abducted by Veeraiya (Ravana). The film, however, departs from the *Ramayana* as *Raavanan* is told through the perspective of Veeraiya. In the film, Veeraiya is portrayed as a flawed anti-hero who battles against injustice instead of being the antagonist. He seeks revenge for his sister and stands up against the oppression of his tribe. In this battle, he questions ideological understandings of justice and morality that have been conventionally interpellated within society. This paper discusses how Mani Ratnam, through the film *Raavanan*,

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contests hegemony, ideology, and class differences within modern cinema and society alongside the more significant question surrounding India's sociocultural conditions.

**Keywords:** Ravanaan, Class, Hegemony, Ideology, Mani Ratnam.

## I . Introduction

In 2010, the release of the film *Ravanaan* was met with critical success. Mani Ratnam's film featuring Vikram, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, and Prithviraj Sukumaran was simultaneously released in Tamil, Hindi, and Telegu. *Raavanan* met with critical acclaim and was a box-office success. It made more than US\$8 million at the box office. The film was also screened at the 67<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival, 15<sup>th</sup> Busan International Film Festival, and 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Mahindra Indo-American Arts Council. This film's success in India and internationally is a testament to the Tamil film industry's development, which has flourished over the past 100 years.

*Raavanan* borrows heavily from the plot of *Ramayana*. Filmmakers from the Tamil film industry commonly do this act. These films revolve around the plot of good versus evil and a quest for justice and vengeance using mythologies. The film begins with the abduction of Raagini by Veeraiya. As he fails to kill her, they slowly develop a mutual affection as they both discover the pasts of one another. Only Veeraiya seems to have a deep secret: his sister's death was caused by the police force. Raagini seems to empathize with him, hence the affection. Veeraiya was most probably affected by her beauty, bravery, and ability to adapt quickly to their tribal lifestyle. Dev, Raagini's husband, a Superintendent of Police, then leads a search to rescue his abducted wife. He also harbors a deeper intention of killing Veeraiya, a leader of a tribal-bandit-resistance movement.

As the plot of the film heavily borrows from *Ramayana*, Rama (Dev) attempts to rescue Sita (Raagini), who was abducted by Raavana (Veeraiya). *Raavanan* presents an alternative reading of the *Ramayana* as Dev is portrayed as the anti-hero. In *Ramayana*, Raavana is the antagonist, but Veeraiya is portrayed otherwise in

the film. He is humanized. This character stands up against injustice. Nonetheless, Raavanan remains the hero who seeks revenge against certain police force members who detained his sister Venilla (Surpanakha) and shot Veeraiya in a botched arrest and assassination attempt made during her wedding. This is in line with the understanding of a hero who reflects the highest goals of a culture embodied in the life and image of a specific individual.

Venilla was raped in police custody and committed suicide upon her release. This incident led to Veeraiya's emergence as a vigilante as he launched his vendetta against Dev and his police force members as he hid within the deep trenches of the jungle. The film questions the age-old dichotomy of those in positions of authority being portrayed as "good characters" versus outlaws who defy the law and positions in authority as "evil." In *Ravaanan*, the lines and notions that separate between good and evil is constantly blurred as Dev, in his role as protector and defender of justice, exploits his position of power in his search to kill Veeraiya, who is an outlaw who defends the weak, poor, and oppressed and is very much loved by his people. This dichotomy of good versus evil is further blurred. It becomes a contest of class when Dev, the police superintendent from the upper class, is supposed to represent goodness or Rama. On the other hand, Veeraiya, the embodiment of evil of Ravana and the lawbreaker, comes from the lower class.

Like Rama, who leads an army of monkeys and bears to search for Sita in *Ramayana*, Dev leads an army of police officers into the jungle searching for Raagini. As the forces led by Dev and Veeraiya engage in a "game of cat-and-mouse," the film's plot also discusses the Naxalite-Maoist conflict with state forces in Central India. Director Mani Ratnam, known for his critical views about Indian politics, formed a parallel discussion about the armed struggles of the Indian Maoists or the Naxalites from the Adivasis tribe against the forces of the State in the film, in which the former had experienced numerous human rights violations, including forceful eviction, displacement, and custodial misdemeanours. As an act of self-defence and preservation of their generational habitat from state-backed capitalist appropriation, the Adivasis armed themselves in defiance of the idea of authority. *Raavanan's* (2010)

cross-parallelism of Ramayana mythology and the Naxal insurgency is an intellectually and ideologically sound viewpoint depicting an alternative perspective to the entire State versus the Naxal debacle. Though the timeline of the conflict between the two parties (state forces are seen as an extension/organ of the capitalist classes) was intense in the late 1960s, the new-age setting in Raavanan (2010) is a revised method of the Fifth Generation Filmmakers of the Chinese in the 1980s to circumvent strict censorship and scrutiny of the State (Havis 2019). For example, *Yellow Earth* (1984) by Chen Kaige structured a pre-Communist era in which a Communist cadre, representing the party’s vision for a national liberation, entered the rural landscape with vigorous ideas and promises entailed in the Communist party. Nonetheless, the film contained abstract and metaphorical criticisms of the current Communist leadership, whose promises remained unfulfilled and largely rhetorical. Unlike *Yellow Earth*, Raavanan took the underlying spirit of the Naxal-State to allude the battle between the powerful and the powerless; to expose the polemics, ego, and power imbalance found both in the mythology as well as the current society.

Mani Ratnam also demystifies the idea of democracy due to the oppression of the indigenous tribe Adivasis. They are considered an uncivilized society, ethnic group, and caste. Thus, this paper examines how Mani Ratnam discusses ideas about power and class differences within the context of modern cinema.

Table I: Character parallels in Ramayana and Maniratnam’s *Raavanan*.

<b>Characters in the Mythology</b>	<b>Parallel Characters in the Movie</b>
Raavan (King of Lanka)	Veera (The rebel, tribal leader)
Rama (King of Ayothya)	Dev (Police Officer)
Sita (Wife of Rama)	Raghini (Dev’s wife)
Surpanakha (Sister of Raavan)	Vennila (Veera’s sister)
Vibeeshanan (Younger brother of Raavan)	Sakkarai (Veera’s younger brother)
Hanuman (Disciple of Lord Rama, Commander of the Monkey Army)	Gyanaprakasam (Forest Officer)
Lakshaman (Younger brother of Rama)	Hemanth (Dev’s trusted police aide)

## II . Literature Review

### 1.1. Ravana and the Ramayana

The *Ramayana* is attributed to a bandit-turned-sage written by Valmiki, considered the first poet or "adi-kavi." Hence, the *Ramayana* is the "adi-kavya," or the first poem to be written (Vanamali 2014). Although Valmiki is the initial author of *Ramayana*, the most cited or referred version of *Ramayana* was written by Kamban.

Historical analysis however finds the *Ramayana* to be a work of oral compositions that do not have a single original text or accurate version (Balakrishnan et al. 2020). Scholars have however interpreted the symbolic significance of the *Ramayana* as a representation of human weaknesses and susceptibility leading towards a conflict between the forces of good and evil (Maheshwari and Maheswari 2020). *Ramayana* imbibes the essence of "ethics, responsibility, and obligations of an ideal man in ancient Indian social relations" that constructs a "relationship between Indian art and Hindu ethics" (Diamond 2013; Wedhowerti 2014; Bich Thuy 2019).

The *Ramayana* follows the tale of Rama, a "Maryada Purushottam," or a man who closely follows the rules and religion on his quest against Ravana (Pattanaik 2016). According to Valmiki's version (Pattanaik 2016; Vanamali 2014), the *Ramayana* narrative, in brief, talks about the journey of Rama, an Ayuthian prince who goes on a quest to rescue his beloved wife, Sita. Rama, the eldest son of Dasharata, King of Ayodya, and seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, becomes the rightful ruler of the Kingdom of Koshala when Dasharata abdicates the throne. While Rama marries Sita, Dasharata, upon abdicating the throne, is tricked by his youngest wife into handing the kingdom to her son Bharata and banishes Rama.

This incident results in Rama, his brother Lakshman, and Sita going into a 14-year exile in the forest. There, a demoness, Surpanakha, tries to seduce Rama. He, however, rejects her advances, and in retaliation, she attacks Sita. This retaliation causes Lakshman to mutilate her to punish her for her lustful desire. Her

brother, Ravana, then abducts Sita to avenge the death of his sister. However, after defeating Ravana, Rama only receives Sita back into his arms after undergoing a trial by fire to prove her chastity, for she was held captive in another man's house. In the sacred Hindu epic of the Ramayana, Sita, Rama's wife, is upheld as the model of an honorable and ideal woman in Indian culture (Ahmed 2015).

The goodness of Rama and the evilness of Ravana are minutely differentiated to the readers. Rama is the "perfect" ideal hero: talented, brave, joyful, honest, and obedient to his father. Meanwhile Ravana is associated with being a "whimsical, lustful demon, defiant and despised morality and Dharma" (justice). The war on Lanka Island is thus depicted as a conflict between Dharma and Adharma (injustice)" (Bich Thuy 2019).

## **2.2. Mani Ratnam and Raavanan**

Since directing his debut Tamil film *Pagal Nilayu* in 1985, Mani Ratnam has been described as one of the new and young talents to reinvigorate Tamil cinema (Velayutham 2008). In 1986, Mani Ratnam directed *Mouna Ragam*, which enjoyed critical box-office success. The common themes discussed within his films are sociocultural and political issues affecting ordinary people at present. His films such as *Roja* (1992) discussed Indian nationalism and complex contemporary issues related to the Kashmir separatist movements.

While discussions about issues deemed "sensitive" are not uncommon in Mani Ratnam's films, neither is his making films based on mythological adaptations. In *Thalapathy* (1991), Mani Ratnam questioned the dichotomy of good and evil in the *Mahabharatha* by developing a theme discussing male friendships and emphasizing the anti-hero character. *Thalapathy* was thus seen as a Mani Ratnam's way of focusing on audience empathy to better understand the roles of misled and misunderstood characters. In other words, the antagonist does not seem to be driven by evil forces but is a victim of circumstances that forces motivates behavior in such a way. Additionally, the antagonist is also standing up for the weak against the protagonist, who is also seemingly

misunderstood and is driven to protect the interests of those in positions of power.

In *Raavanan*, Mani Ratnam revisits the cinematic formula of reassessing the relationship between what constitutes good and evil. Mani Ratnam then adapts mythology into this film by using the *Ramayana*. Based on these structures, *Raavanan* presents a different reading of the *Ramayana* as Mani Ratnam presents the mythological epic from the anti-hero's perspective, Veeraiya. *Raavanan*, like *Thalapathy*, deals with employing the notion of both the protagonist and antagonist believing that the ends justify the means and will do whatever it takes to uphold their sense of justice. Discussion of ideology is significant and cannot be separated from both films. While the film does present its efforts at criticizing social and political injustice as a form of popular cinema, *Raavanan*, like the epic *Ramayana*, preserves existing social order and valorizes the axiological authority, which is the moral and ethical viewpoints within the narrative of the film (Golkusing and Dissanayake 2012). As in the *Ramayana*, at the end of *Raavanan*, the "purity" of Raagini remains unscathed, and order and status quo are restored when Veeraiya is killed for his transgressions. This incident was shown to imply the difficulties and challenges ordinary people face when they confront those in positions of power and authority. On the other hand, Mani Ratnam's films, as a form of popular culture and being a form of commercial enterprise (Lause 1996; Lee 2022), are renowned for their interweaving discussions of socio-political and economic issues. These forms of discussions are also present in *Raavanan*.

### **2.3. The 1967 Uprising Between Peasants, Landowners and the State**

In locating the film's context as a discussion about the Naxalite uprising, the incident in 1967 can be traced to the attempts by Maoist groups to revolt against the peasants due to oppressive working conditions. Small farmers were forced to surrender at least half of their harvest to their landlords or Jotedars (Harnetiaux 2018). Disassociation from new technologies and moneylending at inflated rates forced small farmers into greater poverty. Since the late 1800s, the farmers have been paying taxes to the Zamindars, while the

peasants or subalterns worked the lands owned by the Jotedar in return for a share of crops (Gupta 2007; Pain 2017).

Inspired by Mao Tse Tung's "people's war" in the mid-1900s, the Indian Maoist movement led by the Communist Party of India (CPI) started an armed struggle to free peasants from feudal control (Ramachandran 2011). The eventual removal of the Zamindari rights and the West Bengal communist-led government decree that the peasants and landless be the rightful owners of the land (Gough 1976; Biswas 2020). The peasant unions distributed the land among the peasants, but the Jotedar refused to surrender their lands. This eventually erupted into the armed uprising in Naxalbari in West Bengal when supporters of local landlords assaulted a tribal sharecropper. In retaliation, the members of the tribe attacked the landlords and claimed their lands. The uprising spread to other parts of India.

The Naxalites continue to be regarded as terrorists by the Indian government. With more than 100,000 members located throughout 190 of the 626 districts in India, they are labelled as a security threat (Shah and Jain 2017).

#### **2.4. Class Antagonism**

To Marx and Engels, an individual's relationship to wealth determines social class (Bell and Cleaver 2002). The identification of social class and the subsequent expansion of the capitalist system caused both thinkers to define social class dichotomously (Ismail and Mohd Zuhaili 2012). Anyone exchanging their labour for wages was classified as the proletariat. At the same time, the capitalists or landlords were described as the bourgeois (Ismail and Mohd Zuhaili 2012).

The bourgeoisie class owns and controls the means of production (technology, organizational resources, and equipment needed to produce commodities). At the same time, the proletariats are the labor force exploited to create wealth for the former. The desire to amass wealth by generating profit amongst capitalists with minimal production cost was converse to the interest of the working class [Marx and Engels articulated the constant conflict between the

social classes (bourgeois and proletariat), resulting in societal and economic transition (Ismail and Mohd Zuhaili 2012)].

The labor's role in modern society has undergone a significant transformation due to the nature of employment not being restricted within the confinements of factories versus owners or peasants versus landowners. The layers within the social class have massively evolved into a more diverse and complicated system of society due to the expanding capitalist economy. Simultaneously, the class struggle persists because profit is only achievable through the continuous exploitation of the working class (Marx and Engels 2019).

Hence, the essence of social classes as a product of exploitation brings us to the question posed by Marxists themselves – why the working class is not aware of these exploitations or not driven to participate in overhauling the exploitative capitalist economic system? Neo-Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci critically sought answers to the question.

### III. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1. Hegemony

The concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci is one of the essential radical departures from economic determinism expounded in traditional Marxism (Manojan 2019). Gramsci's trajectory involves the critical introspection on "culture, ideology, social class, and oppression" to comprehend the polemics churned out by capitalism and the society where it is practised (Manojan 2019). His critical view on economism which he termed "vulgar" while working in the Marxist tradition, carved a new path to assess and comprehend the "creative role of the politician and political leadership" in sustaining their political power (Schwarzmantel 2015). Hayward (2018) asserts that hegemony exposes the dominant group's constant striving to coalesce the support of the subordinate groups in society, either by consent or coercion.

Gramsci argued that power could be effectively retained if the ruling group or those who intend to achieve power are mischievous

to capitalize on both tangible and intangible methods that affect the minds and hearts of the masses (Schwarzmantel 2015). Therefore, subordination to the ruling class is achieved and co-opted by feeding fear or a sense of loyalty. In line with Gramsci's Hegemony, Althusser sought answers to a grappling question of people's obedience to the state or a revolt against capitalism fails to take place as envisaged by Marxist theorists (Schwarzmantel 2015; Mambrol 2016).

Seeking answers, Althusser developed the concept of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). These apparatuses analysed by Althusser illustrate the institutions' role in promoting fear and conformity among the masses. At the same time, repressive apparatuses work primarily by coercion tactics that translate into punitive consequences. The ideological apparatuses operate on the premise of morality and conscience by co-opting the masses to acknowledge the power to be rightful and needful for themselves. Thus, the ruling class's power is safely retained in society. The ideologies created by ISAs are attributed to work in subtlety, Althusser opines (Mambrol 2016).

In cinema, Hayward (2018) denotes that the “mainstream or dominant cinema,” under the control of the dominating class, strives to advance a specific set of ideology, rhetoric, or politics to ensure the dominated class would be hesitant to resist the existing structure of governance or hegemony in other words.

### **3.2 Ideology**

Pearson and Simpson (2014) remark that ideology is a system of ideas, opinions or viewpoints. Ideology, by Marx and Engels, is abstract in its context. Marx and Engels discuss how ideologies are helpful to maintain class “divisions” through a faculty of ideas attempting to create meanings of the society but according to the wills and wants of the ruling classes or bourgeois class (Hayward 2018).

Althusser, however, argues that ideology is a real lived experience (Leonardo 2005). Affirming Althusser, Zizek says, "ideology has nothing to do with 'illusion,' with a mistaken, distorted

view of socio-political and cultural life" (Laclau 1997). According to Ahmad (2002) and Ahmad and Lee (2015), ideology contents are real social and cultural situations in a society that imply a thorough understanding of the social world, sometimes as common sense or natural. For instance, the existence of the rich and poor is structured as a given thing that needs no further critical evaluation over the exploitation and distribution of wealth.

Thus, a primary question about ideology is whether it fits into the cinematic terrain and its representation. As cinema does not operate in a vacuum (Hayward 2018) but in a larger political context, cinema is perceived as an ideological apparatus that disseminates ideas, opinions, and messages—just like any other medium. Cinema serves the purpose of bridging the gap between those who want to speak (express) with the masses (targeted audiences) (Hayward 2018). The ideologies can certainly not be limited to a patriarchal, feminist, socialist, capitalist, ethnic supremacist, and minority rights perspectives.

#### IV. Methodology

This paper employs textual analysis to examine power and class differences by discussing the roles of the hero and villain. To achieve this, analysis and discussion of the roles of Dev as Superintendent of Police and Veeraiya as the hunted outlaw need to be analyzed from the perspective of social class. While this paper acknowledges that caste and class are status groups based on Weber's phraseology, castes are perceived as hereditary groups with a fixed ritual status. Social classes are defined in terms of the relations of production. A social class is a category of people with a similar socioeconomic status to other social classes (Ahuja 1999). As such, this paper will not examine caste as it only examines the politics of class in the film.

As a critical methodology of Cultural Studies, textual analysis exhibits qualities of asking the right questions in dissecting the views and ideologies presented and discussed in the film (McKee 2003). Using textual analysis, the researchers will also examine the society

and context in which this film is produced by reading it and providing an educated guess of its textual content.

Since the film is an adaptation of the classic mythology of *Ramayana* (perceived as religious guidance) and happens between the two-opposing group of people (also socially belonging to opposing social classes), the textual analysis makes a necessary parallel analysis with the characterization of the *Ramayana* characters, contradictory to the portrayal of *Raavanan* the filmmaker tries to achieve.

This method essentially draws parallel identification with the epic mythology *Ramayana* and applies the “good vs. evil” dichotomy in the context of the powerful (state apparatus) versus the powerless (tribal people). To achieve this, the researchers would observe and question the elements in the film that create meaning based on the context in which the film is based. This is done so that a better understanding of how *Ravanaan* and the discussion of Dev and Veera and the depiction of good versus evil fit within the larger contexts of the film's social, historical, and cultural settings. When watching the film, the researchers would identify scenes according to the concepts of ideology, hegemony, and class. These scenes would then be analyzed and discussed based on the above concepts to determine how Mani Ratnam discusses ideas about power and class differences within the context of modern cinema through the film *Raavanan*.

## V. Analysis and Discussion

At the film's beginning, Dev arrives in the town as the champion of justice and is tasked with arresting Veeraiya. Veeraiya, who is blamed for causing the ongoing violence, is a beloved figure supported by the villagers. This support can be seen through the many songs and dance routines in which the villagers willingly participate with Veeraiya. Despite knowing that Veeraiya has also committed a crime by kidnapping Raagini, the villagers themselves willingly participate in this kidnapping by aiding Raagini with food, shelter, and company. They openly display their fondness towards

Veeraiya and see him as a hero. They endearingly describe him as humorous, brave, and kind-hearted warrior. These naturally displeases Dev, who places himself on the side of the right and of the law as a police officer and is not recognized in such a positive manner. He has a personal vendetta against Dev, who has wronged him by kidnapping his wife.

Dev and Veeraiya are characters at the complete ends of the spectrum, coming from different backgrounds and social classes. Dev, who holds the Superintendent of Police or SP's rank, not only belongs to the upper classes that occupy a position of power and authority. He is also seen as an educated, cultured individual who has risen so high up the echelons of society that he seems out of touch with the common folk's sufferings and distresses. As the police force functions as a repressive state apparatus, Dev, as the SP, can be understood as a leading member of the bourgeoisie class, suppressing, and controlling the lower classes' ideological and mental output. He also represents the figure of power and authority. He has the police force's might under his command and is highly respected and feared by the officers under his command.

One such example occurs when the forest ranger (the character representing Hanuman) makes a complete fool of the police officers, who initially question his duties and responsibilities when they arrive at the forest entrance. Presumably drunk and under the influence of alcohol, he refuses to cooperate with them, does not answer their questions, and makes them chase him around foolishly. However, he immediately behaves himself upon meeting Dev (or Rama) and respectfully addresses him as superior, according to his rank, and is obliged to his request.

Veeraiya, on the other hand, is seen as the people's hero who lives, eats, and socializes with the masses. He originates from a rural village of native Adivasis tribes located on the outskirts of the town. In this village, he is seen as their protector or the working-class hero, as he is also the leader of this tribe. Veeraiya is also a well-respected figure who commands the respect of the villagers. However, he is a member of the working class or proletariat, loved and endeared but is not feared.

This film's conflict arises when Veeraiya and his brothers question the ruling class's legitimacy and authority. In an act of defiance, they decide to claim their right to their land and run their village according to their administrative system without adhering to the central State's law. This defiance was seen as an attempt to challenge the ruling class's hegemony and an anarchical act to overthrow a legitimate government's power in power. This defiance reflects the 1967 struggle of the Naxalites, who possessed a different ideological viewpoint from the central Indian government. The Naxalites, who supported communism and the working classes, eventually challenged their land ownership rights and called for their governance rights. In both instances of the film and actual events, the denial of the government's legitimate rule is a form of social emancipation termed by Marx as the proletariat's dictatorship. This is when political power ceases to the bourgeoisie but is in the hands of the proletariat.

To reclaim their sense of authority and restore power, the state utilizes the repressive state apparatuses through the rule of law and police force. In the Naxalite uprising, the police force was mobilized to quell the uprising and restore order. This situation of regaining power and legitimacy by force is also present in the film through the excessive usage of police resources in the search for Raagini and to rescue her from her captors. This search and rescue operation and the excessive use of police resources could be read as an overt attempt at rescuing a prominent member of the police force's wife. It could also be read as an act of oppression and intimidation of the elite classes over the working classes. In this case, they were deploying the repressive state apparatus to quash the uprising led by Veeraiya and the leaders of his village tribe under the guise of rescuing the kidnapped Raagini. These acts were carried out to legitimize the central government's rule and uphold its ideological values.

To further discuss class differences in *Raavanan*, it would be necessary to discuss the characters' portrayal and the color of costumes for Dev and Veeraiya. Veeraiya is seen standing over a cliff in the opening scene as he contemplates jumping into the water below. As the camera circles around him from a low angle, Veeraiya

is dressed in white and placed in authority. This incident would be the only time he dresses in white before transitioning into darker or black clothing. This moment could be seen as a transitional moment as Veeraiya goes on his quest to murder the presumably corrupt police officers, kidnaps Raagini, and leaves behind his old life. He dives and submerges into the water to carry out an act of cleansing of his past deeds. However, he emerges in black clothing, reinforcing that black or dark clothing does not necessarily symbolize negativity or evil. Veeraiya then emerges shortly before the opening credits and stands at the bow of a boat. He remains unshaven and is now dressed entirely in black to symbolize that he has turned over to the dark side and has transitioned into a shadowy figure. Raagini, too fixates her attention upon him and is transfixed by his presence, even though the boat she is currently on would be colliding head-on with the boat that Veeraiya is standing in. Here, Veeraiya is introduced as a monstrous figure. This rabble-rouser has broken the law and is on the run from the authorities.

After the opening credits, Dev is introduced to the audience. He is shown fully dressed in his police attire. He is overseeing an investigation of the police officers who were burnt alive. His uniform is of bright colour, is clean and well-pressed. He also keeps a clean appearance; his face is cleanly shaved. He is also shown in an authoritative position as the shot is constantly at a low angle. In another scene during the film's opening, he is again shown as an authoritative figure. As the police convoy's journey to rescue Raagini is halted at a barrier upon entering the forest, they are greeted by the forest guard, who lies on the barrier. He refuses to allow them entry and is presumably intoxicated. An open bottle of clear liquid is seen beside him. He mocks the police officers by makes them chase him around. He, however, comes to a complete stop as he realizes that Dev has been standing behind him. After allowing Dev to confiscate his weapon, the forest guard respectfully greets Dev with, "...Good morning, sir, SP sir...". This introduction of Dev portrays him as the hero. This authoritative and chivalrous figure is on the righteous side of the law and on the mission of rescuing his kidnapped wife and bringing justice to her kidnappers.

As the film continues, questions about the morality of both Dev and Veeraiya begin to emerge. Who is the real protagonist: Dev, the superintendent of police or Veeraiya, the outlaw on the run? Who is Rama and who is Ravana? Veeraiya constantly eludes capture. Dev begins to feel a sense of frustration not for his failure to rescue Raagini but for his inability to capture Veeraiya. He begins to be morally conflicted, questions his motives, and descends into a confusion. In his search for Veeraiya, he ignores fellow police officers' pleas to send the brother-in-law of Veeraiya to the hospital after Veeraiya had amputated his arm for failing to protect his sister when the police ambushed the wedding scene. Instead, Dev tortures him to extract information about where Veeraiya and his fellow members are hiding.

The groom, who belongs to the upper caste and a high-class society, is Vennila's love. Veeraiya gifted a watch to the groom as a respectful gesture that welcomes a new family member. Nevertheless, during the wedding ceremony, the police force led by Dev ambushed and fired a shot at Veeraiya, who was severely injured. Due to his injury, he was brought to safety by his compatriots. Instead of protecting Vennila, the groom ran from the wedding, fearing his safety and upon his parents' insistence. Vennila was thus left unprotected and subjected to harassment and detention by the police. Disappointed with the groom's dishonesty that caused his sister to kill herself after being raped by some police officers, Veeraiya would later amputate his brother-in-law's arm. As he does that, Veeraiya says, "the watch I gifted is here, but my sister is not." This act symbolizes the display of material possessions valued by certain upper classes and castes who value material possessions over love, humanity, and care. The fact that the watch was still being worn affirms this. The amputation of the arm wearing the watch could be interpreted as a punitive act on the higher class and upper caste community whose promises are insincere and how Veeraiya disconnects himself entirely from the class system.

In another instance, when Veeraiya's brother seeks for Dev to send a message of peace, Dev hunts him down in the jungle and shoots him in cold blood despite guaranteeing Veeraiya's brother that they were to meet peacefully. He is ultimately portrayed as a

frustrated individual who began as someone who was respected and ended up as someone highly feared. He appears to be a man belonging to the upper classes and detached from the rest. This act of “backstabbing” (as Veeraiya's brother was shot from behind) was indicated earlier with Dev poking the faces of Veeraiya and his confidantes with a cigarette butt from the back of the picture published in a newspaper. This was yet another visual hint communicating the mischievous acts Dev would employ to terminate the rebels.

Despite his questionable morality as an outlaw and rebel, Veeraiya is often shown as a misunderstood character. The audience eventually sympathizes with his cause as he could not bring himself to murder Raagini on numerous occasions. Instead, he is often shown easily blend in with his fellow villagers and is not seen as a villain. In one such instance, he playfully teases and flirts with Raagini as he proposes to stay behind with him in the village. He is seen playing with the children in the water as they cheerfully sing along while spinning around on floats. This scene depicts to the audience the human side of Veeraiya, as he eventually starts to open to Raagini about his painful past and why he chose to exact revenge upon Dev and the police officers involved in his sister's death. Eventually, it is revealed that Dev was a silent bystander who chose not to do anything to prevent Veeraiya's sister from being raped at the police station. Towards the film's end, Veeraiya is revealed as a feared villain into an individual looking for a sense of justice. It was denied to him because of his social standing. He is a man that the peers of his class embrace.

As the leader of the Adivasis tribe Veeraiya, leads his people to take up arms and stand up against any form of oppression and threats. Their resistance against the ruling elite causes them to go underground to fight a guerrilla war against the police force. In retaliation, the police force, as the State's apparatus, is mobilized to suppress this rebellion. This situation faced by the Adivasis reflects the Naxalite uprising as a class exploited and oppressed for many years by the upper classes.

In leading the police force, Dev mentions in the early part of

the film that "for half of the people, Veeraiya is a God, the other half are merely afraid to stand against him, but in the eyes of the law, he is a terrorist, lawbreaker, and extremist." However, the hunt for Veeraiya becomes a form of persecution of the upper class onto the lower classes. The line between right and wrong and personal and professional becomes further blurred when Dev exclaims that he was brought to the town with the unique mission of destroying Veeraiya. At the same time, efforts at rescuing Raagini are pushed to the side.

Another example of class difference occurs when Veeraiya and Raagini appears in a Lord Vishnu deity's backdrop in the sea. Veeraiya describes himself and his community as an "oppressed" class in this scene. Later in the film, he makes the statement, "is this the first time they are trying to scare us? They raised their hand, we raised too, took the stick, we did too, but today, they are using guns, so we shall crush their head." This statement appeared later in the film when the confrontation between Veeraiya and Dev reaches its climax. Dev's police force is closing down Veeraiya's trails. Veeraiya had to abide by his younger brother's request to negotiate with Dev. Nevertheless, the Veeraiya's dialogue states his oppression and his desire to stand up against oppressors.

In the same scene, Veeraiya makes Raagini admit that she sees him as flawless and handsome, almost god-like. However, at this point, she no longer sees him as her captor, has developed feelings for him, and refuses to acknowledge his request. However, she rejects his advances. This rejection is likely due to the need to remain loyal to her husband and, faithful to the plot of *Ramayana*. The rejection is probably due to their caste and class differences. His appearances were not compatible with the ideals of a Brahmin caste but the lower castes. The black-colored Vishnu statue in the film is probably an attempt to negotiate the false consciousness among believers. Though Vishnu is always described as naturally dark in mythologies, his statues are often portrayed in the dark blue, whereas demons (asuras) are either conveniently brown or black (Pattanaik 2009). This is believed to have developed from the North-South divide of India, where fair-skinned Indians are commonly associated with the Northernmost region. At the same

time, darker skin tone people are considered Southern Indians (Mishra 2015).

The statue of Vishnu is also black and seemingly is portrayed as the god not belonging to the upper classes. In Hinduism, white is often seen as representing purity, helpful, goodness and "communicating help from any obstruction" and described as an attribute to the caste of priests (Brahmins). On the other hand, a dark tone is consistent with "shades of refusal" or the outright opposite of white (Kudrya-Marais & Olalere 2022).

This meaning of colors associated with what is represented by white and black is once again questioned in the scene where Dev battles with Veeraiya. As they find themselves fighting on a collapsing suspension bridge that is also on fire, Dev is seen dressed in white and Veeraiya in black. During the fight, Dev does his best to make Veeraiya fall under the bridge and into the valley below. In one such instance, Dev slips, but Veeraiya allows him to hang on to his shirt collar and allows Dev to bring himself back to safety. However, when Veeraiya slips, he is not offered the same help by Dev, who stares and taunts him. Veeraiya instead swings himself back safely onto the bridge and runs to safety when the bridge eventually collapses. Both men's actions inspire questions: Does Dev, dressed in white, still represent goodness and purity? Moreover, how does Veeraiya, dressed in black, represent the opposite of goodness when his actions show otherwise?

## VI. Conclusion

The film has placed forth questions about the notion of righteousness in its discussion about ideology, hegemony, and class. In borrowing from the *Ramayana*, the filmmaker demystifies the notions of good and evil according to its continuous shifts in meaning based on contexts. The methods of Dev, the police superintendent, as protector of the weak and upholder of the law, was portrayed instead as an oppressor in his mission of protecting the needs of the upper classes. On the other hand, Veeraiya, the proletariat outlaw wanted by the police for his cause against

injustice, was the misunderstood fugitive who stood by his people in championing the rights of the natives. In this displacement, the filmmaker also questioned ongoing class differences, equal rights, and injustice that continue to divide societies in contemporary India. His questions about the rule of law that champions the needs of the few over the many remain relevant in contemporary cinema and today's society.

Despite taking bold steps in reversing the conventional understandings of what represents goodness and evil and highlighting the oppression of the Adivasis in *Ravaanan*, Mani Ratnam's killing of Veeraiya at the end of the film puts forth new dilemmas. Firstly, the killing of Veeraiya could be seen as the filmmaker supporting the conventional understanding of good triumphing over evil, despite the good using questionable methods to achieve its motives. Secondly, the death of Veeraiya in the hands of Dev could be read as a means of supporting and justifying police actions. In other words, the Adivasis, as the proletariat, must be punished for their transgressions against the bourgeoisie. Ultimately, for a state of new equilibrium and hegemony to be restored, any form of uprising by the lower classes must be destroyed. Thirdly, despite the film attempting to be critical of the sociocultural and political situation caused by class differences, the triumph of Dev in not only winning back his wife but in killing off his opponent shows that the film itself is a commercial enterprise aimed at profit gaining and not produced as a means of creating social change.

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## **Counter-Productive Countering-Violent-Extremism Initiatives: The Case of Malaysia**

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### **[ Abstract ]**

This study seeks to examine how the West, particularly United States (US), influences the narratives about terrorism, radicalism, and combating violent extremism (CVE) in Muslim majority nations such as Malaysia. We contend that some local institutions and researchers in Malaysia may have assumed the Faustian bargain by agreeing with the Western narrative that Islam's teachings promote violence and extremism in order to meet the demands of survival, whether it be funding for everyday operations or meeting the demands of universities or research institutions to sustain themselves and meet their performance indicators. We conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) from 2001 to 2021 and used Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand the role of the US in purposefully supporting workshops and research activities of particular institutions with the intent to influence national discourse on securitization and prospective policy implications. More importantly, we wish to alert Malaysian policymakers to pay particular attention and scrutinize ongoing programs such as

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the "Building Community Resilience" as these may inadvertently foster Islamophobia.

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Radicalisation, politics of terrorism studies

## I . Introduction

Since the 1970s, there has been debate on the role of foreign and state-financed institutions in defining and constructing the "scientific paradigm" (Useem 1976). A "scientific paradigm" is a set of assumptions broadly shared by members of a scientific field that specifies the discipline's state of knowledge, research methods, and priority areas for future theoretical and empirical investigation (Useem 1976). Useem (1976) says that federal funding affects (1) the content and methodology of social scientists' research; (2) how open social scientists are to government influence; and (3) is a by-product of federal investment in social research.

We argue that the demands of achieving the expectations of key performance indicators (KPIs) among Malaysian academicians can be overbearing and in meeting the capitalistic demands of attracting foreign funding, it has direct implications on research outputs with regard to terrorism, radicalism, and extremism heavily concentrated on the Muslim community and the "Jihadist opponent." Indicators from the West prove that Islamic terrorism has been misguided with myths and misinformation. Terrorism, for example, has been portrayed in the Netherlands as a problem originating from Islam that must be tackled by the "Muslim community," and that this community must clearly adhere to Western principles by distancing themselves from the "Jihadist enemy" (van Meeteren, & van Oostendorp 2019). Contradictorily, according to a study, post-9/11 terrorism has been dropping; frequently includes no deaths or injuries; and more commonly committed by domestic, far-right extremists of non-Arab heritage operating alone (Silva, et al. 2020).

Researchers on terrorism studies agree that "[t]here should be more study of ideological ecosystems that promote White

supremacist worldviews within Western government, law enforcement and military; ditto for Islamist, Buddhist, and Hindu extremist cases” (Schmid, Forest, & Lowe 2021: 157). With the number of monies being spent on researching and understanding Islamic terrorism and the media attention it receives, fear of jihadist-inspired extremism also adds to the perception of an overestimated international terrorism threat. According to Jackson (2007), the discourse surrounding jihadist-inspired terrorism is highly politicized, often leading to counterproductive security measures. This is especially relevant considering the findings that far-right extremism is damaging to nation states, at least in the case of the US (Silva, Duran, Freilich, & Chermak 2020). This supports the idea that terrorist activity has historically been characterized by "waves" of diverse typologies (Rapoport 2002). Nevertheless, the disparity in the rise of far-right terrorist incidences versus the decline in jihadist-inspired and far-left terrorist activities could be indicative of a new wave of terrorism that transcends religion and focuses on national identity.

This study attempts to do a systematic literature review of highly cited articles on terrorism and radicalisation in Malaysia. Then, we try to connect these data to the institutions that gave the money and the researchers who wrote the academic research papers. It seeks to contextualize the assumption that the research and frameworks established and financed by major worldwide financing agencies and have inevitably produced data and influenced subsequent studies that have somewhat synonymized Islam with radicalization and terrorism. This study also contextualizes research conducted on Malaysia and terrorism since the 9/11 attacks and the emergence of the Islamic State (IS), as well as the desire to relate Islam, radicalization, and extremism in the context of Malaysia. According to the authors, this is one of the few studies that attempted to examine terrorism, radicalization, and Islam in the framework of political economy, with an emphasis on Malaysia.

## II . The Context of Terrorism Research in Malaysia

The greater question is whether free market principles can truly claim triumph against socialism when governments that supported capitalism and claimed it works are bailing out and nationalizing banks. The literature on the impact of research funding and its influence on the natural sciences are voluminous, and pharmaceutical firms and other funding organizations have been called out for creating results with vested interests. Contradictorily, literature on funding and its consequences for social sciences is quite deafeningly silent. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US has undoubtedly affected worldwide research and knowledge of radicalization, violent extremism, and terrorism, particularly on global concerns such as the soft and harsh measures of the US in its War on Terror (Silva 2018).

According to the Frankfurt School's critical theory, there are three dimensions of power (Gill & Law 1988: 73 - 74): "open power" refers to active power publicly used to influence the attitude of another state comprehensively; "covert power," more passive but structured, vaguely used to further a strong side's objective by narrowing political lines and keeping particular matters off of an agenda; and "structural power," which defines attraction and restriction systems with physical and normative components that affect party relationships. Power according to the Weberian school of thought has a variety and variances, including:

Modernization was accompanied by an increasingly rationalized organizational environment that was dynamic (versus stable), legalized (versus traditional), deliberately constructed (versus emulated, inherited), differentiated (versus uniform), professional (versus amateur), complex (versus simple) and efficient (versus wasteful) (Pakulski 2012: 44).

Lenin (1999) attempted to explain in "Imperialism: the highest stage of capitalism" that World War I broke out due to rivalry among monopoly capitals for colonial possession. Klein (2008) provides interesting insights, particularly concerning the privatization of military affairs, which he refers to as "disaster capitalism." The US's

strategic meddling in the Middle East stems from two sources: hegemonic interests in stable and secure oil markets, and an underlying ideological commitment to the Israeli state, which is supported by major domestic pressures (Kitchen 2012). In keeping with this, the US has used counterinsurgency tactics to interfere in the domestic affairs of sovereign governments, notably in the Muslim world. Counterinsurgency is a type of low-intensity warfare centred on a set of unconventional military tactics and procedures employed against armed non-state actors. The United Kingdom originally used low-level "hit and run" military tactics to oppress and socially control indigenous tribes struggling to liberate their motherland from imperialism and colonialism in colonial India around the mid-1800s. These measures would not only be extended to other British colonies such as Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland, but would also set the tone for contemporary counterinsurgency theory and practice. The premise for deploying extraordinary and highly militarized techniques of social control and discipline in the colonies was founded on an Orientalist rhetoric that portrayed the non-European world as inferior and prone to barbarism, and hence in need of "civilization" (Said 1978).

Following the terrorist events of 9/11, Islamic militancy rose to the top of the worldwide security agenda. Terrorism experts warned that, in the wake of the American global offensive against the al-Qaeda international terrorist network, Southeast Asia, with its porous borders and historical receptivity to foreign Islamic ideologies and movements, could well become international terrorism's "Second Front" and "Crucible of Terror," respectively (Gunaratna 2000). The discovery of a plot to detonate the American and other Western embassies in Singapore in December 2001, as well as the Bali bombings on October 12, 2002, and the J. W. Marriott attack on August 5, 2003, revealed that terrorism undertaken in the name of Islam has found fertile ground in the region (Liow 2004).

Malaysia was committed to the worldwide war on terror under Mahathir and subsequent prime ministers including Abdullah Badawi and Najib Tun Razah under the National Front (Barisan Nasional, BN) and Muhyiddin Yassin under Nasional Alliance

(Perikatan Nasional, PN). Although the Mahathir government has unambiguously committed itself to the cause, some have criticized Malaysia's participation in the global war on terror, based on allegations that the government was taking action against low-level terrorists while harboring those allegedly engaged in high-level planning and execution of terrorist activity globally (Liow 2004). Another charge is that the Malaysian government is exploiting the dystopian world created by the rise of Islamic militant groups by establishing strong links between political opponents and terrorist organizations and mobilizing state instruments to detain and imprison "suspected terrorists" without charge or trial (Liow 2004). At the expense of Parti Se-Islam (Pan Islamic Party, PAS), BN could enhance its position as Malaysia's vanguard of Malay Muslims in the process. To capitalize on the new-middle-income liberal Malay and non-Muslim voters, BN branded PAS as an Islamic extreme party, to portray them as a threat. The US presence in Malaysia is not new, and its encroachment into Malaysian internal affairs is still debated, but red flags continue to surface. We do take note that in contemporary times the political landscape of Malaysia has changed since, with the Alliance of Hope (Pakatan Harapan, PH), under Anwar Ibrahim alongside the Democratic Action Party (DAP), now branding PAS as a medieval right-wing extremist party (Fernandez 2022).

The president of the International Republican Institute (IRI), a think tank linked with the Republican Party in the United States, has claimed that his organization has been seeking to "strengthen" Malaysian opposition parties since 2002 (Malaysiakini 2018). It was created as one of four pro-democracy organizations supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is supported by the US Congress. The IRI has been accused of training opposition and coup leaders in Honduras, Haiti, Cuba, Egypt, and Tunisia, among other nations, recently.

A significant amount of training through the active use of several ministerial agencies including the establishment of new ones like the Southeast Asian Center for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) thanks to US's soft diplomacy strategies in the region. These trainings have also been provided for journalists to influence

discursive formations and portrayals of incidents of violent extremism (Powell 2018). Considering the current development of populism and right-wing extremism in Europe and the US, we contend that there is an urgent need to reassess the concepts of "open" radical and "closed" extremist which have long been focused on Islam and Muslims. This is significant since the Western approach to creating social cohesion has failed. Instead, it has increased people's fear of Islam, inevitably fuelling right-wing extremism in certain parts of Europe and the US.

Prevent counter-terrorism measures (Combat) and the United States' Struggle Against Terrorism (SAVE) counterproductively endorsed Islamophobic notions. Some scholars have warned researchers and policymakers who use this lopsided ontological view in researching radicalism, by stating that "using such perspectives presents problems for those groups that are represented as dangerous, particularly cultural and ethnic minorities that are already subjected to myriad post-9/11 counter-terrorism practises of surveillance, (in) security, and risk" (Silva 2018: 38).

This endeavour is significant because it attempts to capture the implications of funding in influencing research orientation since 9/11, and the rise of the IS terrorist organization. We also contend that research on terrorism and Islam in Malaysia has generally echoed concepts put out by the Western world. Examples of such studies include the vulnerability of undergraduates in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines to Islamic radicalism (Samuel 2018), youth vulnerability to violent extremism and "self-sacrificial tendencies" in those countries (Ainaa 2018), and Daesh's use of the internet for radicalization (Jawhar 2016). In the following section, we offer an overview of our methodological approach to data collection and analysis to provide nuance to our research.

### **III. Methodology**

As with all Marxist studies, the main goal of this research is to find out what capital essentially is, not just how it looks. This study tries

to understand the complementary and contradictory (dialectical) relationship between wage labor and capital in the context of studies of terrorism and radicalization that have mostly focused on Islam and left out other forms of extremism. According to classical Marxism, capitalism introduces a complimentary and contradictory (that is, dialectical) relationship between wage labor and capital. This relationship is established through linking the means of production, that is, labor and technology. This research is epistemologically informed by Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Broadly speaking, Foucault defines discourse as the history of knowledge and practice, as well as the process through which knowledge and activity become cemented and normalized (Stahl, 2008). From a Foucauldian perspective, CDA investigates the historical roots of beliefs and practices, as well as the structures and major actors that influenced the adoption and continuance of those beliefs and practises.

The linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss both claimed that language and culture are governed by the same structural relationship between subject and object, which they called the subject-object connection (Khan 2018). According to this scientific understanding of language and culture, a "central" or underlying system is responsible for organizing and maintaining an entire framework of language and culture (Khan 2018). We define discourse analysis as the study of single phrases and sentences as standalone propositions, where we also observe linguistic effects—semantic, stylistic, syntactic—in sentence sequences and structure (Bullock & Stallybrass 1977: 175).

Using Malaysia as a case study, we will attempt to comprehend the significance of funding in shaping research and knowledge outputs, particularly those concerning domestic policies and securitization. We assert that to maintain narratives of Western hegemony and the invasion of the Middle East, the US, in collaboration with other Western states, constructed narratives that supported the discourse that Islam and Muslims inherited anti-democratic ideas and would not hesitate to use violence to disrupt order.

Hegemony is a structure of values and understandings about order that permeates a whole system of states and non-state entities. In a hegemonic order these values and understandings are relatively stable and unquestioned. They appear to most actors as the natural order. Such a structure of meanings is underpinned by a structure of power, in which most probably one state is dominant, but that state's dominance is not sufficient to create hegemony. (Gill 1993: 42)

We acknowledge the need to use a emancipatory method by way of CDA. The emancipation of those who are marginalized and oppressed is a significant value in critical inquiry (Myers & Klein 2011). We shall be conscious of the way we construct relationships between the entities under investigation. For the sake of this study, we locate three variables that may influence research outputs: (1) funding for studies on combating violent extremism (CVE); (2) narratives that backed the Global War on Terror and subsequently SAVE; and (3) CVE research outputs by Malaysian researchers.

#### **IV. Conceptual Framework**

The following are the fundamental components of the propaganda model, which consists of a series of news "filters": (1) ownership of the medium; (2) financing as the most important alternative source of revenue; (3) the media's reliance on information given by government, business, and "experts" supported by these major sources and agents of power; and (4) "flak" as a technique of disciplining the media.

The size and profit-seeking motivation of the leading media corporations produce bias. To say the least, US and European media outlets have extensive global domination in shaping narratives. The Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and Agence France-Presse (AFP) are newswires with global offices and the potential to shape global news narratives. Multinational news networks such as Cable News Network (CNN), Fox News, Bloomberg, and others are becoming more widely available across the world via satellite and internet television. Financing and manipulation of economic elitists to

influence narratives through these media sources have cast the West's foes in a negative light. This exercise focuses on the West and its capacity to co-opt local "experts" who occasionally get into the Faustian bargain of agreeing with the West that Islam is synonymous with extremism and terrorism.

## **V. Research Design**

We performed a detailed systematic assessment of all material on radicalism and Malaysia since the 1990s (the release of Clash of Civilisation) until 2019 (the fall of Islamic State). The following steps were taken as recommended by Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen & Antes (2003). We first extrapolated research articles by using the Publish or Perish tool. Based on the search results, we then sorted the data into tables according to the following recommendations.

In step two, which is to identify relevant work, we used terms such as "terrorism Malaysia," "violent extremism Malaysia," and "radicalization Malaysia" in title words and keywords to generate articles. All articles that achieved a minimum of ten citations were considered, using the criteria to evaluate the quality of studies as suggested in step 3 (Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen & Antes 2003). Step four which is data synthesis entailed tabulating study characteristics, quality, and effects, as well as employing statistical methods to investigate variations between studies and combining their impacts (meta-analysis). As part five suggests, it was necessary to investigate the possibility of publication bias and related biases. The investigation of heterogeneity should aid in determining whether the overall summary was reliable, and if not, the effects observed in high-quality research should be used to generate inferences in the absence of reliable data.

## VI. Findings

Table 1. Searches with Titles ‘Radicalism and Terrorism in Malaysia

Cites	Authors	Title	Year	Publisher	Cites Per Year	Author Count	Age
20	MZ Mubarak, AFA Hamid	The rise of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia and Malaysia	2018	journal.uinjkt.ac.id	5	2	4
13	K Yusof, I Herman, BM Nasir	Islamic radicalism in Malaysia: Gender perspective	2010	Elsevier	1.08	3	12
11	K Bustamam-Ahmad	From Islamic Revivalism to Islamic Radicalism in Southeast Asia: A Study of Jamā'ah Tabligh in Malaysia and Indonesia	2015	books.google.com	1.57	1	7
10	K Yusoff	Islamic Radicalism in Malaysia: overview	2010	Elsevier	0.83	1	12

Source: Publish or Perish

The most cited article incorporating radicalism and terrorism in Malaysia was published by the Center for Human Resources Development (PPSDM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta (Mubarak & Hamid 2018). The second most cited paper in Malaysia focused on gender perspectives of terrorism, specifically on women and radicalism (Yusof, Herman & Nasir 2010). Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad’s book, which included the terms, "Terrorism," "Radicalism," and "Malaysia" in the title, a 2015 study on Jema'ah Tabligh published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, was the third most cited work on Malaysia (Bustamam-Ahmad 2015). Except for the paper from the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, all articles and books were published in periodicals supported by Western-led publishers.

Table 2. Searches with titles "Terrorism" and "Malaysia"

Cites	Authors	Title	Year	Publisher	Cites Per Year	Author Count	Age
56	TM Sittnick	State responsibility and maritime terrorism in the Strait of Malacca: Persuading Indonesia and Malaysia to take additional steps to secure the Strait	2005	HeinOnline	3.29	1	17
39	J Stark	Beyond 'Terrorism' and 'State Hegemony': Assessing the Islamist Mainstream in Egypt and Malaysia	2005	Taylor and Francis	2.29	1	17
32	K Ramakrishna	" The Southeast Asian Approach" to Counter-Terrorism:: Learning from Indonesia and Malaysia	2005	erudit.org	1.88	1	17
20	MZ Mubarak, AFA Hamid	The rise of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia and Malaysia	2018	journal.uinjkt.ac.id	5	2	4
16	G Dhillon, R Ahmad, A Rahman...	The viability of enforcement mechanisms under money laundering and anti terrorism in Malaysia: overview	2013	emerald.com	1.78	4	9
15	Z Yunos, R, Ahmad, NA Mohd Sabri	A qualitative analysis for evaluating a cyber terrorism framework in Malaysia	2015	Taylor and Francis	2.14	3	7
13	WC Pok, N Omar, M Sathye	An evaluation of the effectiveness of anti money laundering and anti terrorism financing legislation: perceptions of bank compliance officers in Malaysia	2014	Wiley Online Library	1.63	3	8
10	E Noor	Terrorism in Malaysia: Situation and response	2003		0.53	1	19

One of the most highly cited articles with the words “terrorism” and “Malaysia” in its title was published on security issues on the coast of Malaysia (Sittnick 2005). In 2004, there were reports of ship attacks in 325 countries, and 93 of these occurred off the coast of Southeast Asia; 37 occurred in the Malacca Strait. “Beyond 'Terrorism' and 'State Hegemony': assessing the Islamist mainstream in Egypt and Malaysia,” by Stark (2005) provides an analysis of grassroots movements and political parties for political mobilization purposes and its impact on radicalization and terrorism. Similar to the other search, all articles were published by Western-led journal publishers.

## VII. Discussion: Repression through Narratives of Islamic Extremism

One of the key considerations that prompted this analysis was the desire to discover the impact of Western-led conceptual frameworks on Malaysian research on terrorism and extremism in Malaysia. Scholars have in the past called out Washington by advocating a “bottom-up” Southeast Asian indirect strategy to battle Islamist terror within the area, in contrast to Washington's “top-down,” abstract, one-size-fits-all counter-terrorist policies (Ramakrishna 2005). The US National Plan for Counter-Terrorism’s direct, short-term, and operationally focused approach was accepted as effectively disrupting global terrorism operatives that subscribed to a “grand narrative” of establishing an Islamic based “new order.” It was more concerned with an indirect strategy where longer-term, ideologically, and politically sensitive counter-terrorism plays a more dominant role, and is more likely to achieve the most important aim of denying Islamist terror networks the capacity to regenerate (Ramakrishna 2005).

In Malaysian Islamic revivalism, the *dakwah* (the “call to Islam”) of the 1970s is sometimes referred to as the “backbone” of the movement. *Dakwah* emerged from Malaysian universities as an attempt by the young urbanized middle class to gain access to the state's political and economic domains. It was fuelled by an

ummah-wide reassertion of Islamic lifestyles and an attempt to return to the Islamic "roots," free of the alleged deviations of localized folk Islam inspired by the Hindu-Buddhist tradition (*adat*) (Stark 2015). Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) has made significant success in recent decades in efforts to gain greater currency among young voters and the urbanized voters. The former's previous stance on an "Islamic state" and the unchallenged control of the Islamic clergy over the party has been questioned in the past by the Muslim middle class, whose growing influence has dramatically transformed the membership of parties such as PAS (Stark 2015).

Several foreign policy considerations may contribute to the radicalization of Malaysian Muslims. First is the capacity of Islamic international organizations, particularly those from the Middle East, to create cordial connections with Islamic groups in Southeast Asian nations (Yusoff 2010b). This was further exacerbated by Malaysia's educational policy of sending scholars to Islamic states such as the Middle East and Pakistan for higher education purposes. PAS, a political party comprising of many graduates from the Middle East and Pakistan, tend to preserve and benefit from this relationship. This was used against them by BN under Mahathir to acquire credibility among the rising middle class Malays, non-Muslims, and most significantly, Malaysians residing in the more industrialized West Coast of West Malaysia.

Second is growth in the number of students, particularly postgraduate students and tourists from the Middle East to Malaysia (Yusoff 2010b). These swiftly rose from the ranks to become *imams* (prayer leaders in mosques) and religious instructors. In 2019, the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) detained nine alleged foreign extremists (8 from Egypt and 1 from Tunisia) staying in Malaysia as students and religious teachers in Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak. Most Egyptian detainees belonged to the *Ikhwān al Muslimīn* (Muslim Brotherhood).

The third is obtaining foreign direct investment (FDI) at the expense of state democratization in accordance with Western frameworks of the liberal state. According to some scholars, CVE initiatives are a multibillion-dollar industry with many connections

to some of the world's most powerful countries, which might make it hard to demand that they be decolonized (Ilyas 2022).

### **VIII. Misplaced Secularization and the Fallacy of Hegemonies and Academic Colonization**

The digital era magnifies the opportunities and vulnerability of people to become radicalized over the internet. In the digital age, infrastructural imperialism refers to social networks that employ default settings to support the user or customer behavior intended to be reinforced, thus expanding influence and worldview (Olmstead, & Atkinson 2015; Akil 2022). Malaysian CVE analysts argue that because individuals, particularly the youth, spend an inordinate amount of time online, they are more vulnerable to radicalization (Akil 2022). There was observed an increase of social media hate speech targeting foreign workers and refugees like the Rohingyas during the early days of the lockdown in Malaysia in 2020 (Akil 2022).

Concomitantly, the threat of Afghanistan being a new recruitment ground is another narrative that the West propagates and that which is being echoed by academicians in Malaysia. For instance, a scholar claimed that PAS's public backing of the Taliban could draw undesired attention from Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) (Mohd 2022). In truth, PAS emulates a government endorsed by the US, following the signing of a "contract for bringing peace" to Afghanistan by the US and Taliban in February 2020. Most troubling is the assertion of Mizan (2022) that Malaysia may soon become terrorism finance base for the Taliban in Afghanistan, citing such occurrences between 2001 and 2002. He also states that "according to intelligence sources, several Malaysians have served as ISKP commanders and combatants; they were part of the coterie of FTFs tracked from Iraq and Syria to Afghanistan, having travelled through Iran to join ISKP following IS' demise in Syria in 2019', but there has been no evidence that Malaysians have served as ISKP commanders to date (p.24). Such posturing can raise red flags when it comes to proving that a minority of jihadi Malaysian Muslim

sympathizers are vulnerable to recruitment. There is no basis for this.

Malaysia must also pay attention to the radicalization of the other ethnic minorities. A 16-year-old was recently detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) reportedly inspired by the terror incidents in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 and in France in 2020 (Hedges 2021). He is Singapore's first detained far-right Christian extremist. The planned attack on a mosque and a Christian's self-radicalization is not altogether unexpected. In media portrayals even in Malaysia, Muslims are frequently and unthinkingly represented as individuals implicated in terrorism. In reality, many innocent Muslims have been targeted by both militant *jihadis* and far-right violent extremist groups from other religious communities, whether Buddhists (as seen in Myanmar and Sri Lanka), Hindus (as seen in India), or Christians (as seen in Europe, the United States, and New Zealand).

Through funding and other avenues, the West has been able to sustain counter-terrorism programs in ASEAN member states. In October 2015, Malaysia hosted a special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism. Building on the meeting was another event, "International Conference on Deradicalisation and Countering Violent Extremism," organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) Malaysia and attended by 17 ministers and 500 representatives and participants from different countries (Hamidi 2016).

These initiations by Malaysia was not happening as coincidence. With the assistance of the US the Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communication Center (RDC3) similar to the one established in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sawab, in July 2014, while the Royal Malaysian Police had its own Counter-Messaging Center (CMC) to counter IS's social media's strength and sophistication and to present a more positive alternative to the vision the group has outlined (Prashanth 2015; Prashanth 2018). Initially, there were disagreements about exactly where the US funded facility would be located and which government agencies would be involved,

including the Home Ministry, the Foreign Ministry, and the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism (SEARCCT), which was established in 2003 during the administration of George W. Bush, though there were disagreements about the extent of United States participation (Prashanth 2015).

Additionally, institutions like the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) received funding for Islamic counter-terrorism studies worth USD 500,000 from the University of Maryland (Erdemandi 2018). SEARCCT continues to be a recipient of funding for counter-messaging programs shared through social media and radio as well as onsite workshops targeting youth, in view of “Building Community Resilience” at local universities and schools throughout Malaysia (Riviniu 2019). IMAN Research is a local think tank that works on protecting security, peacebuilding, and sustainable development; its various projects are funded by the Canadian Embassy and Microsoft among others (ICAN 2020).

Through the resources channelled by the West, these institutions can support research and programs that reinforce the narrative that terrorists and Islam are inextricably linked, further isolating most peaceful Muslims, who also negatively affected by extremist minorities, both in terms of security threats and through international media coverage.

According to Ganeson Sivagurunathan, Director-General of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT):

The Technology and Innovation in Building and Enhancing Resilience workshop engaged students from local higher education institutions to produce counter-narratives on Digital Resilience and disseminate videos on platforms such as TikTok, indicating that there newer PVE programs that are targeting youths at higher education universities, mainly targeting Muslims. The building and enhancing resilience workshops like #senjatasaya (my weapon), Hebat Youth Positive Expressions (HYPE) organized by SEARCCT have neutral themes but are addressing Islamic violent extremism at its core under the overarching SAVE initiative.

## IX. Conclusion

The study's purpose was founded on the notion that social scientists' efforts to reach their yearly university and organizational funding targets have an influence on existing knowledge, particularly outputs related to terrorism and radicalization. Using the Foucauldian viewpoint, CDA, this study could develop an analysis of the historical foundations or the structures that impact institutions of higher education and CVE monitoring centres like SEARCCT. A review of highly referenced scholarly publications with title keywords like "Terrorism" and "Malaysia," "Radicalism" and "Malaysia," and "Radicalism" and "Malaysia" revealed that they were all about Islam. More importantly, it was discovered that the United States, through various institutions such as the Department of State, the University of Washington, and others, had collaborated with institutions within key ministries in Malaysia to create, disseminate, and propagate narratives in support of the GWOT. By bringing this issue to light, we encourage Malaysia's government to reconsider its "Building Community Resilience" initiatives, which should be centred on addressing extremism and radicalism in a more comprehensive manner. We also acknowledge that this study has limitations and that a more thorough assessment of the materials and discourses employed would be tremendously valuable. A closer examination on the programs and their consequences on Malay Muslims' sense of alienation from non-Muslims because of the promotion of Islamophobia will give greater context and corrective strategies.

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## Language Attitude Among the Border Community at Telok Melano, Malaysia and Temajuk, Indonesia: A Preliminary Study

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### [ *Abstract* ]

This study observes the language attitude and maintenance of the border community in Telok Melano, Lundu (Sarawak, Malaysia) and Desa Temajuk, Sambas (West Kalimantan, Indonesia). The main objective of this study is to study the language attitudes of two cross-border community who shares the socio-cultural, language, and economic realms. The research data is collected qualitatively through conversation recordings, face-to-face interviews, and participant observations. In this preliminary study, twelve informants (six from Telok Melano and six from Desa Temajuk) were chosen based on the quota sampling method. The questions for the interview were set according to three characteristics of language choice proposed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), namely language loyalty, language pride, and the awareness of norms. The result of this study indicates that language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the norms towards the speakers' mother tongue and national language are relatively high. In terms of identity maintenance issues, this study found that the community in Telok Melano (Sarawak), originally identify themselves as "Sambas Malays," shifted to

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“Sarawak Malays” after the formation of Malaysia in 1963. This preliminary study serves as a basis for further research particularly on the complexity of issues concerned with the border communities in the Southwest of Sarawak.

**Keywords:** language attitude, border community, sociolinguistics, Telok Melano, Temajuk

## I . Introduction

Language attitude is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that examines an individual's behavior in response to a different language. Crystal (1992) defines language attitude as an individual's emotion and perception of their language or other languages. According to Dragojevic (2022), language attitude is divided into two evaluative dimensions: (i) status (intelligent, educated, etc.) and (ii) solidarity (friendly, pleasant and etc.). Furthermore, linguistic attitudes are sensitive to social and political change. This is due to the availability of speakers using a language with a role or function in certain contexts (Holmes 2008). According to the findings of this paper, social and political transformation in Telok Melano (Malaysia) and Temajuk (Indonesia) following the formation of Malaysia in 1963 has led to the phenomenon of language shift. Language attitude in both nations were impacted by the evaluative elements of status and solidarity. In terms of status, both groups have a national language and a distinct educational system that have contributed to the establishment of a national identity. However, the two border communities' close proximity has contributed to the solidarity dimension, particularly through their daily interactions.

Western Borneo's demarcation began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the island was governed by two colonial powers, the Dutch and the British. As a result, the Western Borneo area was separated into two colonial realms, with the Dutch dominating Kalimantan Borneo and the British controlling Sarawak. Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, Kalimantan was designated as a sovereign province, whereas the British colony of Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. Although the international border between

Kalimantan and Sarawak was formed by boundary delimitation, the communities on both sides of the border have cultural, linguistic, societal, and economic commonalities (Ramli, et al 2015).

The border community settlements were formed before the boundary delimitation, and people had interactions in terms of economics and sociocultural activities long before the international borders were delineated (Mohd Yusof, et al 2016). The language ecology of border communities, which is part of their sociocultural identity is worth studying. According to Christoffersen (2019), "borderland identity and language" are defined by elements of a boundary's society, ethics, and culture. According to Hageman, et al (2004), as cited in Sofield (2006: 108), "borders and boundaries constitute a mental device for distinguishing between "them" and "us," for exclusion and inclusion. They draw the lines of "different" and are thus a crucial ingredient of any imagined community and its collective identity." In other words, geopolitical borders will be frequently utilized to reinforce ethnic and identity (Sofield 2006). As a result, it is envisaged that the dynamic interaction of cross-border residents may spark specific sociolinguistic issues in terms of language attitude and language choice.

The borderland communities studied in this paper, Telok Melano (Sarawak, Malaysia) and Desa Temajuk (West Kalimantan, Indonesia), are multilingual and multidialectal. The complexities of linguistic variants, as well as disparities in national origin, can raise issues of language attitude and identity. The purpose of this study is to discuss their attitudes toward a language variety by using language attitude framework developed by Garvin and Mathiot (1968). This conceptual framework is described in Section IV. It concentrates on the characteristics of positive and negative language attitudes in the domains of language loyalty, language pride, and language norm awareness.

## II . Background

Telok Melano (Sarawak, Malaysia) is a small rural village located about two hours by road west of Kuching, Sarawak's capital city; see

Map 1. This village has existed for nearly a century and was previously a modest Malay fishing village. There are two versions dealing with the descendants of Malays in Telok Melano, namely Melanau from Rajang Delta and Sambas, Indonesia. Harrisson (1970) claims that the Malay in Telok Melano were descended from Melanau. According to this report, Malay speakers in the surrounding area (especially in Santubong and Bako) are familiar with specific Melanau fishing terms. The Melanau are an indigenous people of the coast who are neither "Dayak" (Iban, Bidayuh, or others) nor Malay. In terms of relationships, Morris (1989) claims that the Melanau people have cultural, linguistic, and social ties to the Kajang tribes in the Rajang and Balui rivers, as well as other groups along the coast to the Baram River and in the upland highlands. Based on earlier analogous statements by researchers like Morrison (1957) and Babcock (1974), Chong (2020) depicted the Melanau's migration route from the upriver region to the coastal area in the Rajang Delta (1974). From here, they moved southwest of Sarawak and intermarried with the Malay. According to these sources, the so-called "Malay" population in Sarawak's western region was the Melanau from Rajang's Delta. The second version claimed that the Malays in Telok Melano were descended from Sambas and Mempawah (West Kalimantan, Indonesia). Telok Melano now has a total population of 234 people or 55 households. The villagers' economy is based on fishing, palm oil cultivation, and pepper (*Piperaceae*) planting. Telok Melano's Malays are multilingual, with Kuching Malay as their first language. These locals are also fluent in Bahasa Melayu (the Malaysian national language), the Sambas Malay variation, and other Austronesian languages (Iban and Selako).

Desa Temajuk is just a short distance away, around 4 kilometers, from Telok Melano. This hamlet was founded in the early 1980s as a temporary logging camp for lumberjacks from Sambas. After logging activity in the Sematan-Lundu area declined in the late 1980s, some loggers opted to stay and settle down. This group of settlers, along with other immigrants, have contributed to the current population landscape of Desa Temajuk. The Malays are the predominant ethnic group in this hamlet, which has a total

population of about 2500 people. In terms of socioeconomic status, the majority of the villagers are farmers, fisherman, and others are skilled and unskilled employees in the private sector. The Sambas Malay dialect is the intra-group communication language and the villagers' first language. Aside from the Sambas dialect, the villagers are also fluent in Indonesian (the National Language of Indonesia) and Kuching Malay. Table 1 illustrates some of these language variations:

Table 1. Examples of vocabularies spoken in Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk

Gloss	Indonesian	Standard Malay	Telok	
			Melano Variety	Desa Temajuk Variety
Neck	leher	leher	gəʔu?	tige?
Mother	ibu	ibu	ma?	um:a?
Crocodile	buaya	buaya	bəja?	jal:u
Crab	kepitiŋ	kətam	kətam	kəpitiŋ
Butterfly	kupu-kupu	rama-rama	kələba	rami
Coconut	kəlapa	kəlapa	Nior	kəlapa?
Pumpkin	labu	labu kuniŋ	labu?	pəraŋgi
k.o. fruit (Baccaurea morleyana)	rambai	rambai	ɣambe	ul:ap

Given that the dialects of Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk are classified as "Malay dialects," it is obvious that these regional dialects have some similar vocabularies. For example, [dada] (Telok Melano) vs [dadɛ] (Desa Temajuk) "chest," [lidah] (Telok Melano) vs [lida:h] (Desa Temajuk) "tongue," [kuku] (Telok Melano) vs [kuku] (Desa Temajuk) "fingernail," [ati:] (Telok Melano) vs [ati] (Desa Temajuk) "heart," etc. The vocabularies shown in Table 1 are the chosen lexicals that show the distinctions between these two Malay dialects. This selection aims to explain the distinction between the Telok Melano Malay and the Desa Temajuk Malay dialects. In actuality, each variety has a distinctive pronunciation in terms of phonology. For example, in the word final open position, the /a/ realised as [ɛ] in Desa Temajuk (for example, [matɛ] "eye"), whereas as [a] in Telok Melano (example: [mata]). According to Austronesian historical linguistics, the Malay variety of Desa Temajuk is Sambas Malay, a Coastal Borneo Malay language

sub-branch that is related to the Brunei, Kedayan, Berau, Banjar, and Kutai Malay dialects (Jaludin 2003). Telok Melano dialect, commonly known as Sarawak Malay dialect (see Collins 1987), belongs to the Western Borneo Malay sub-branch dialect (Nothofer 1997). Other Malay dialects included in this sub-branch are Bangka Malay, Sekadau Malay, Sintang Malay, and others.



<Map 1> The location of Telok Melano and Desa Temajak.

### III. Literature Review

Language attitude investigations in a community are indeed an important topic in the discipline of sociolinguistics. The most popular language attitude studies were largely on language learning. For example, Nikitina, et al (2020) examined the relationship of language attitude with student motivation in studying Korean as a foreign language at a Malaysian public university. Huwari (2021) focuses on the language attitudes of Jordanian students who studied English as a foreign language (EFL). Aside from the above mentioned research, Vennela and Kandharaja (2021), San Isidro and Lasagabaster (2022), Smith (2022), Kharismawan (2018), and many more examined the same issue of rhetoric on language attitude in

learning. What about the study of the sociolinguistics (in terms of language attitudes) outside the classroom context or even more further, the communities in the borderland? This paper attempts to investigate the language attitude by focusing on the borderland community in Sarawak, in general and in Telok Melano, in particular.

Numerous studies on linguistic attitudes have been conducted in Sarawak (Malaysia), particularly in the second decade of the twenty-first century. As a multi-ethnic state with numerous minority indigenous languages on the verge of extinction, this sort of research is necessary to determine the sustainability of these endangered languages and to develop practical ideas for language revitalization. Many previous studies have depicted the essential problems of language loss in depth. For example, Sa'adiah (2011) observed that the Narum community in Baram valley (Sarawak) react positively toward their language, but only in an imaginary form. Coluzzi, et al (2013) discovered that the Bidayuh language has a high level of vitality among the elder generation in western Sarawak. The younger generation, on the other hand, demonstrated a trend of moderate but persistent ongoing linguistic shift emerging, and the Bidayuh in urban areas are more endangered. The Penan community in Niah, Sarawak, is experiencing even further language loss. Reverted Penan or Muslim Penans were reported to have entirely switched from Penan to Bintulu. According to Chong, et al (2018), the Catholic Penans maintain their use of the Penan language, but the Muslim Penans have adopted the Bintulu language as their mother tongue. As a result, today's younger generations have abandoned the Penan language in favor of the Bintulu or Kuching Malay dialect. The three scenarios outlined above are instances of negative language attitudes that occurred within Sarawak's multilingual language ecology.

Based on the study of Yuniarti, et al (2019) on the language attitude toward Indonesian language of border communities in West Kalimantan, especially in the settings of international commerce. Her linguistics research into the border community is undoubtedly noteworthy. Their investigation discovered two different usages of national language in two townships on the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. In Entikong, transactions in Indonesian territory prefer to

employ Indonesian language if different races or ethnicities are involved. In the town of Serikin, the merchants and customers tend to employ Malaysian language mixed with local languages in carrying out commercial activities. Mukhamdanah and Handayani (2020) carried out a similar research on the Indonesia-Timor Leste border. According to the survey, the language attitude of border communities toward Indonesian remains relatively positive if compared to local, foreign, or the neighboring country's language. The findings imply that despite Timor Leste's independence in 2002, the Indonesian language persisted to play a significant role at the border.

According to the selected literatures examined above, sociolinguistics research at the border can provide new insights in sociolinguistics and "can help to understand the "hegemonic language ideologies that delegitimize border identities and language varieties" (Christoffersen 2019: 24). If we look at the extent of sociolinguistics studies in Sarawak, the focus is predominantly on problem statements of language extinctions, and linguistics study in borderland in Sarawak is severely lacking or overlooked. Chong's (2016) research on the Kedayan community on the Sarawak-Brunei border was the most recent on this topic. Nevertheless, his research focuses on dialectology rather than the Kedayan community's sociolinguistics. Because Sarawak (Malaysia) and Kalimantan (Indonesia) share a border that of around 1,100 kms in length. Various border settlements were discovered notably Lubok Antu, Tebedu, Biawak, Serikin, and Telok Melano. These border communities are overlooked in sociolinguistic studies. Although Yuniarti, et al (2019) and Mukhamdanah and Handayani (2020) are two excellent examples, their research focuses on the sociolinguistics of the border community on the Indonesian side. As a result, there is no understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena in Sarawak, Malaysia especially at the border. This is definitely a gap about the language attitude of the border communities Sarawak. Thus, the study targeted Telok Melano as a point of reference to investigate the sociolinguistic occurrences in the southernmost part of Sarawak, two Malay communities separated by a border but share the same ancestry.

#### IV. Theoretical Framework

Crystal (2000) stated that different communities would have diverse attitudes and aspirations related to their language. These different attitudes are performed by people towards their language or with the other language are called positive and negative attitudes towards the language (Desy 2019). These differences are observed to be more obvious in the border communities that are strictly bound by a country’s national policies, such as the national language vs mother tongue, education system, cross-border interrelationships, and personal loyalty towards his/her country. Garvin and Mathiot (1968) outlined three characteristics of positive and negative language attitudes. The characteristics of positive language attitude are (1) language loyalty, (2) language pride, and (3) awareness of the norms; meanwhile, negative language attitude can be formulated as (1) language disloyalty, (2) language lack of pride, (3) unawareness of the norms. This study utilizes this framework to depict the language attitude of the border communities in Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk. This framework has been slightly modified according to the scope and rationale of this study, as below. The authors focus on positive language attitude, i.e. (1) language loyalty, (2) language pride, and (3) awareness of the norms of the languages:

Language Attitude	Rational
Language loyalty	To identify the loyalty of the border community towards their mother tongue
Language pride	To observe the border community pride towards their national language as a symbol of identity and unit
Awareness of the norms	To identify the border community awareness towards the use of language accurately and correctly

#### V. Research Methodology

This study employs both library research and field study methods. The secondary written resources relating to this topic were acquired through library research. From October 1 to 15, 2019, a field

research was conducted in Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk. The descriptive approach was chosen by the researcher to determine the informants' language attitude. The data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire and participant observation. The scope of the questions were related to the language attitude characteristics indicated by Garvin and Mathiot (1968), namely language loyalty, language pride, and norm awareness. In terms of data collection, questions were asked to the informants, and their verbal responses were recorded. For a preliminary study, quota sampling is regarded as the most effective method for gathering representative initial data. According to Lavrakas (2008):

quota sampling falls under the category of non-probability sampling. Sampling involves the selection of a portion of the population being studied. In non-probability sampling, it does not involve known nonzero probabilities of selection. Rather, subjective methods are used to decide which elements should be included in the sample. (p. 669)

The quota sampling approach was used to interview 12 informants (6 from Telok Melano and 6 from Temajuk). A voice recorder was utilized to record the researcher's and informants' conversations. In addition to face-to-face interviews, the researcher observed the community's daily activities to understand their language attitudes and usage. This participant observation approach helped acquire extra data and validated self-reported language attitudes. Following the fieldwork, the data was sorted and categorized according to the categories of language attitude—language loyalty, language pride, and norm awareness.

## **VI. Analysis and Discussion**

This section determines the language attitudes of the border communities in Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk based on the aforementioned framework. It was learned that these two border communities speak different Malay language varieties but share some basic Malay cultural practices. Each of the languages and attitudes of these two border communities will be described

simultaneously before a conclusion is reached. There are three language varieties used by the Malay community in Telok Melano. Standard Malay (or Bahasa Melayu/Malaysia) is the national language and is used in formal domains, for example, in schools, television and radio broadcasting, newspapers, etc. The Kuching Malay variety, on the other hand, is observed to be used broadly in daily informal interactions. There is a slight difference in vocabulary between the Malay dialect spoken in Telok Melano and other places in Sarawak; see Collins (1987). For example, “yesterday” and “desire” are pronounced as [səmaɣi], [cuɣat] in Telok Melano and [maɣek], [maoʔ] in Kuching Malay dialect, respectively.

### 6.1. Language Loyalty

As reported in Sarawak Gazette (1908: 136), “all the new residents of Lundu had Sambas origin.” Telok Melano which is located near Lundu, does have villagers who claim to be descended from Sambas Regency, Indonesia, and use Sambas Malay as their first language (particularly the older generation). This scenario has yielded complexity in terms of language loyalty. In the present day, the younger generation speaks the Kuching Malay dialect rather than Sambas Malay. The Sambas Malay variety is perceived as an out-group communication language. Since this Malay variety is not an inherited language, some of the speakers in Telok Melano learn Sambas Malay through cross-border social and business interactions. Before the border was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the social interactions between these two countries were very active.

Kuching Malay, the predominant first language in Telok Melano is the variety spoken and the villagers there are loyal to their mother tongue. This variety is used broadly in households, among their neighbors, and with the tourists who flock to the beach for vacation. The sociolinguistics issue of language shift and loss in this village is a pre-existing situation in Telok Melano. The main reason for this claim is the role of Kuching Malay as the lingua franca of Sarawak. As a lingua franca, the Kuching dialect is spoken throughout the state and has become the first and second language of Sarawak's multi-ethnic society (see Mohammed Azlan 2020).

Since this Malay variety is neither a marginal nor an endangered indigenous language, it has many speakers, which include other non-Malay speakers (for example, the Melanau, Iban, Chinese, and other minority ethnic groups). In terms of its social position, the Kuching Malay variety is recognized as a high (H) local dialect and used verbally in formal domains.

For the Desa Temajuk community in Indonesia, its Sambas originated villagers speak Sambas Malay as their first language. The Sambas Malay variety is neither the lingua franca of the Sambas regency nor the province of West Kalimantan. This variety is an enclave language and is surrounded by two Austronesian language branches—the Malayic Kanayan [pronounce as [kanayatn] and the Bidayuhic Jagoi. Beyond this territory, the entire West Kalimantan province is diversified in language varieties. Collins (1997) postulated the linguistic situation in Western Borneo into four main categories, (1) coastal Malay dialects; (2) inland Malay dialects; (3) inland Malayic-but-not-canonical Malay varieties; and (4) interior non-Malayic dialects. The Sambas variety is in category (1), the coastal Malay variety. The movement of Sambas Malays into the interior border (as lumberjacks) has aided in the spread of coastal Malay variety to inland areas. As descendants of Sambas Malay, the villagers are loyal to their mother tongue. However, as a minority ethnic group who live within a linguistic diversity ecosystem where "the political dynamics, education, and social media encourage bilingualism in languages of wider communication and growth of wider, more diffuse relational networks, which in turn influence local languages [in West Kalimantan]" (Anderbeck 2018: 118), the main issue confronted by the Desa Temajuk community is the impact of the expansion of Bahasa Indonesia. According to Lauder (2007), as cited by Martina (2013: 3), "the use of Indonesian as the media or instruction in schools unwittingly is a trigger of the destruction or death of many local languages through the education sector." The informants in Desa Temajuk confessed that they are aware of this impact and have the enthusiasm to ensure that the younger generations inherit the Sambas Malay variety. In general, both the older and younger generations are loyal to the Sambas Malay variety.

In terms of maintaining the local dialect, the Malay Sambas dialect in Telok Melano has been identified as having shifted to the Kuching Malay dialect. The Malay Sambas dialect, on the other hand is still the native language of locals of Desa Temajuk, Indonesia. The impact of Kuching Malay dialect which is dominant in the domains of friendship, employment, and religion in Sarawak is one of the reasons why the Sambas Malay dialect was less spoken in Telok Melano, particularly by the younger generation. Desa Temajuk, on the other hand, retained the Sambas Malay dialect as the native tongue because of the continual practice of Sambas Malay customs such as *adat pakatan* (an obligatory gift for a relative for a neighbour's wedding), *bepapas* (a prayer to express gratitude to the Creator), *tolak bala* (ward off misfortune), and so on. Furthermore, the location of Desa Temajuk in the hinterland, remote from major towns such as Sambas and Pontianak, has contributed to the survival of Sambas Malay dialect as a mother tongue in Temajuk until today.

## 6.2. Language Pride

Pride as a language attitude may be seen through the assignment of special attributes to the language or its status as a means of promoting a language's literary-cultural heritage (Rubin 1968), as cited in Escobar (2019). These cultural factors include the political, historical, economic, and linguistic realities that exert a large influence over the process of language attitude formation (Cargile, et al 1994). These factors establish a set of norms that provide a framework for judging a language (Escobar 2019). This section focuses on the informants' pride in the national languages, Malay language (Malaysia) and Indonesian language (Indonesia). Both are two standardized registers of Malay and are used in official domains as well as the high (H) language. Linguistically, both languages exhibit significant differences in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. The two standardized languages underwent different development backgrounds, language policies, geopolitical proximity, and language planning, which later resulted in the divergence that is visible today; see Beng and Poedjosoedarmo (2016).

In Telok Melano, Malay language is used in very limited

domains. This language is used in formal education. In daily life, they are in contact with it through television broadcasts, newspapers, and online media. Although standardized Malay is the national language, the villagers seldom use it for verbal communication. One related reason is the speaker's misperception of the use of standard Malay. In the context of Malaysia, standard Malay is associated with high social status. According to Nik Safiah et al (2004), a Malay speaker never uses standard Malay in informal communication. They prefer to use colloquial Malay rather than standard Malay because they feel embarrassed about using a high-prestige language in an informal domain. In other words, a person who uses standard Malay in communication will be perceived as trying to magnify his or her social status. In Telok Melano, this language is the national identity marker, and they pride themselves on their Malaysian identity.

As the Kuching Malay variety of Telok Melano is the *lingua franca* throughout the state, it has affected the villagers' attitude toward language pride. According to Mufwene (2003: 27), "in the vast majority of cases, language shift is not typically a conscious decision, either at the level of individual speakers or the community level." The Sambas Malay formerly used in this village had lost its pride, but the older generation does possess knowledge and can speak the dialect. On the other hand, the youths can only speak Kuching Malay as their first language. They were reported to be incompetent in Sambas Malay, Bahasa Indonesia, or other dialects spoken at the other side of the border.

In Desa Temajuk, the situation appears to be dire. First, Indonesian language is found to shift alternately with Sambas Malay in daily interactions. Code-switching is commonly found in their utterances especially the variety of colloquial and the standard informal style of Indonesian, is used in all domains, including informal domains. In some households, young parents speak it with their kids. This community is proud to use the national language. A similar case has been revealed by Chong (2012) in Sekadau, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Chinese parents in Sekadau tend to use Bahasa Indonesia with their kids, making their children equipped with basic Indonesian before attending kindergarten. At Sepa village,

in Central Maluku, Indonesia, the parents are reported to have shifted their mother tongue to Bahasa Indonesia. Now, the entire village is confronted by severe language loss; see Ajas (2020).

The multilingual situation in Desa Temajuk and Telok Melano includes two types of bilingualism: societal and individual. As stated by Apel and Muysken (1987), "societal bilingualism" means a situation where two or more languages are spoken in a given society and almost all the people are bilingual. The only difference is in the degree or form of bilingualism. Meanwhile, individual bilingualism refers to someone's ability to use more than one language. During interaction with the Malays in Telok Melano, Desa Temajuk villagers use the Sambas dialect and Indonesian. Many "Malaysian" terms (Standard Malay) have deeply penetrated the varieties of Sambas and Indonesian. For example, the use of *sempadan* "border," *antena*, "antenna," *setakat*, "so far," and *tan* "tonne," instead of *batas*, *anten*, *saat ini*, and *ton* (in Indonesian), respectively (see Yusriadi and Ismail 2015).

The facts shown above clearly demonstrate how linguistic pride has promoted a society's language to spread and be utilized as a symbol of its identity. The Sambas dialect, the original dialect before the formation of Malaysia is still spoken by the elder generation in Telok Melano and Temajuk border villages. The younger generation of Telok Melano, on the other hand, had lost pride in their Sambas native language, due to the extensive usage of the Kuching Malay variety. It is obvious that the formation of a national identity affects a person's language preference towards the mother tongue.

### **6.3. Awareness of the norm**

A community that has a positive attitude toward its language makes efforts to use accurate and appropriate language according to the situation. This section presents two examples of language used by the speakers of Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk. These dialogues are among the pieces of evidence concerned with the awareness of using accurate and correct language without switching to other language varieties.

*Dialog 1: Conversation in Telok Melano*

This dialog is a casual conversation between two family members of a household, in Kuching Malay variety, about missing cats.

A: Abə pulan Semera? liat kucingna ilan. alu nanjisa:  
 Abe return Semera' see cat+3s loss then weep+3s

(When did Abe return to Semerak, He noticed that the cats are missing. He wept over the loss.)

B: bila ilan  
 When loss  
 (When was it missing?)

A: dah dua?-dua? eko? ja ilan, ao? bah.  
 COMPL two+RED tail that loss Yes PART

kame? pulan Semera? alu si? ada:  
 Is return Semerak then NEG EXIST  
 (Both cats were missing. Yes, when I return to Semerak, they have gone missing.)

B: mun ada kela? dapat namba? pulan  
 If EXIST after this can AF+bring return  
 (If we later we find them, can we bring them back home?)

A: na? tiga eko? di yumah nun gi? ada:  
 WH three tail at house there again EXIST

ada gi? ankatanja ya, tapi si? ada phutch lagi?  
 EXIST again batch+3s that but NEG EXIST white again

itam dua? eko? dejan klabu:  
 black two tail with grey

(I do have three cats at my house. One of them is the same color as the missing cat. Nevertheless, I don't have a white colored cat. I only have a grey and a black cat.)

B:        yalah                siʔ        kacakna  
              Yes+PART        NEG    beautiful+3s  
              (Yeah, they are not beautiful.)

In the conversation above, the informants are using the Kuching Malay variety. The following linguistic characteristics are shared by the Kuching Malay dialect (see Collins, 1987):

- i. The velar fricative phoneme /ɣ/ is correspondent with r, for example /●umah/ "house."
- ii. The elision of /h/ in the word initial position, for example /ilaŋ/ "loss" and /itam/ "black" (compare with hilang and hitam in Standard Malay).
- iii. Proto Malayic (PM) phoneme \*ɣ is shifted as /ʔ/ in the word-final position, for example, \*ikur > ekoʔ (see Adelaar, 1992).
- iv. Other lexical items, for example, /mun/ 'if', /siʔ/ 'Negation', /kacak/ 'beautiful', etc.

### *Dialog 2: Conversation in Desa Temajuk*

This intergenerational communication is between a group of family members and a guest of the Sambas Malay variety. When a guest (A) visited this family, she was served with refreshments. The topic of the conversation is the number of drinks served to the attendants in the living room.

A:        aoʔ        dah        dihadərkan        ε        kameʔ min:um  
              Yes        already    PS+serve+AF PART    1s        drink  
              (Yes, I have served the refreshments.)

B:        taŋ,        cukup    indaʔ aŋ        galas    eŋ ε        uraŋ  
              Why        enough    or not 3s        glass    3s PART        human

bərape kit:ε tə? ramai to?  
 how many we this many this  
 (Why? Are there not enough cups? How many people are there (in this living room)?)

C: cuk:up, ampat lim:a?  
 enough four five  
 (It's enough, four..five)

D: min:um ye gəye  
 drink PART like that  
 (Please have a drink.)

B: ha, kuraŋ maseh ye, ne? uwan mu ye,  
 PART less still PART grandmother+2s PART

at:on, aloŋ, mu, rusdi  
 Aton Elder brother 2s Rusdi  
 (Still not enough (counting) for grandmother, Aton, Along, Rusdi and you.)

C: cuk:up ye bəh, angap yaŋ ade sie  
 Enough PART PART consider REL. EXIST only  
 (I think it's enough.)

B: ha, kala? kita? dudi ambə? age?  
 PART When 2s later take again

nambahə??. cuk:up tah anda? əə?eŋ ya  
 add again enough or not water+3s that  
 (If you refill the drink regularly, I'm worried the drink may not be enough.)

- C:      cuk:up. lab:ɛh    ya      rase ɛŋ      ya  
          Enough more    that    feeling+3s    that  
          (I think it's enough.)
- B:      dah..    dah    buʔ,      ton  
          COMPL COMPL mother (madam)    Aton
- min:um      ton,    loŋ    aloŋ      min:um loŋ  
          drink      Aton    elder brother+RED    drink    elder brother
- (Mrs., Aton, elder brother, let's drink.)

The dialog above demonstrates the positive attitude toward language. It was noticed that the interlocutors of three different generations were using the Sambas Malay variety. Phonologically, the remarkable linguistic features of Sambas Malay are (see Jaludin 2003):

- i. Consonant lengthening—the feature of consonant lengthening can be found in the words for example, [cuk:up] “enough,” [min:um] “drink,” [lim:aʔ] “five,” and [lab:ɛh] “more.”
- ii. PM \*ə > a, for example \*ləbih > lab:ɛh “more” and \*əmpat > empat “four.”
- iii. [ɛ] as the allophone of /i/ in syllable-final position. This feature is prominent in Sambas Malay and functioned as an ethnicity marker. For example, [labɛh] “more,” [rase] “feel,” [ambɛʔ] “take.”

According to Locher (2013):

Language is not just a means to pass factual content from one person to another, it is also a tool to shape relationships and thus to negotiate interpersonal meaning. When we use language, we therefore also reveal something about ourselves and our relationships with others. For example, when requesting, asking, or apologizing, people adapt their language use depending on the nature of their relationship with their addressee (p. 1).

We can see in this conversation that an informant is using accurate and correct Sambas Malay on language politeness. The

phrase /bu<sup>2</sup>, ton min:um, ton, loŋ, aloŋ, min:um loŋ/ (Mrs., Aton, Along, let's drink) indicates the speaker has chosen the appropriate terms according to the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the listeners. In this case, the guest is an adult woman who is younger than the speaker. The speaker uses the term bu<sup>2</sup> to indicate respect and politeness when speaking to an older individual (i.e., when he invites her to have a drink). In Indonesia, adult men are addressed by Bapak or Pak and adult women by the terms ibu' (bu') or ibuk (buk). This phrase also exhibits the use of terms of endearment to sustain Sambas Malay's sociocultural language. In Malay, a sociocultural language, an older speaker addressing a younger speaker does so either by avoiding a term to address them, using the addressee's name, or using a term of endearment. In this phrase, Aton is an example of using the addressee's name. To address an eldest son or brother, the informant uses the address term Along. This is a clear example of using a term of endearment in a Malay family.

## VII. Conclusion

By concentrating on the positive characteristics of three components of Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) language attitude framework, it is understood that there are two distinct kinds of language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of the language's norms on both sides of the border. The age of the speakers determine language loyalty in Telok Melano (Sarawak), i.e. the older generation is loyal to Sambas Malay, while the younger generation adopted a new dialect—Kuching Malay dialect—as their first language and are now loyal to their first language. Locals of Desa Temajuk (Indonesia) are proud of their mother tongue, Sambas Malay dialect, although they commonly engage in conversation in Kuching Malay dialect with speakers in Telok Melano. By emphasizing national language pride, speakers in Telok Melano (Sarawak) are proud of their Bahasa Melayu, yet it is only utilized in a restricted social context. In contrast, Desa Temajuk speakers employ their national language, Indonesian, alongside their mother tongue in daily life. The pattern of language use in daily conversations is as followed: Sambas Malay

dialect is the matrix language, whereas Indonesian is the embedded language. The investigation of the awareness of the norms of language usage discovered that speakers on both sides of the border intend to retain their mother tongue through the use of accurate and proper language variations in communication.

According to the data acquired from the field, language attitudes are principally fixed to the components of language loyalty and language pride. In other words, all data on language attitudes (loyalty and pride) are associated to the socio-psychological aspects of language choice and are unrelated to the assessment of linguistic criteria. As a result, it is important to note the assertion that language attitude is a "sociolinguistic" study is actually a socio-psychological study of language. As noted in Ladegaard (2000:215), "in the socio-psychology of language, researchers often analysed affective components of language attitude, however, the incorporation of behavioural aspect is scarce. Those studies which have tried to incorporate the behavioural aspect often used an indirect means of eliciting behaviour such as requests given in a particular variety of speech, arguing that if people incorporate, this is seen as indicative of positive attitudes." This argument also supported by Noels (2008:1) with the following statement: "the social psychology of language has also welcomed contributions from other disciplines, including communication studies, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and other disciplines". Overall, this study discovered that only the "awareness of linguistic norms" portion of Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) framework deals with linguistic input. Indeed, linguistic evidence (for example, daily conversations) is essential to support the discussion in order to illustrate the awareness of the use of a proper or accurate language variety.

In reality, regardless of whether language attitudes are socio-psychology or sociolinguistics, the study in Telok Melano and Desa Temajuk is crucial. Social transformation is happening in this rural area, but the impact of a new highway has transformed it into a more accessible and ecotourism destination. This may have a negative impact on the survival of local languages, and a comprehensive investigation is necessary to document the fundamental data needed for future research. The study in Telok

Melano and Desa Temajuk may be regarded as a preliminary and a benchmarking investigation into the initial sociolinguistic patterns of language shift and maintenance at Sarawak's border region.

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## Economic Impacts of a Possible South Korea-Malaysia FTA on Trade

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### [ *Abstract* ]

Trade between South Korea and Malaysia has been steadily increasing since the conclusion of the multilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and South Korea. Bilateral FTAs such as Singapore-South Korea, Vietnam-South Korea, and Indonesia-South Korea came into effect to enhance the economic cooperation between South Korea and major ASEAN countries. However, the bilateral FTA between South Korea and Malaysia, known as Republic of Korea-Malaysia FTA, is still under negotiation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the economic impact of a possible FTA between these two countries. To examine the economic effects of bilateral FTAs, this study analyzes the trade structure and change in the value of trade between Malaysia and South Korea using panel data analysis. Two significant findings were identified by the analysis. First, the Republic of Korea-Malaysia FTA is expected to promote trade and have a positive effect on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of South Korea. Second, the result of the calculated price elasticity based on substituting figures such as tariff, demand

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elasticity, and export value is that the value of manufacturing exports is expected to considerably get an increase. Therefore, an early FTA between South Korea and Malaysia would be beneficial for both national economies.

**Keywords:** FTA, Korea, Malaysia, Economic Impact

## I . Introduction

Malaysia's economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) was estimated at \$999.397 billion in 2020, the third largest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN; World Bank 2021). Malaysia is an upper-middle-income country in ASEAN (World Bank 2021). The country's population was projected to increase from 31.1 million in 2017 to 41.4 million by 2050, a 32.9% increase (Department of Statistics Malaysia 2020). In 2021, its share of exports in total GDP was the second highest (37.4%) and the manufacturing sector's contribution to the economy, that is, the GDP stood at 14.9% (Ministry of Finance Malaysia 2021). With 15.9%, Malaysia shows a high proportion of the total trade volume of member countries (ASEAN Stats Data Portal 2022). Considering Malaysia's economic position in the ASEAN, an FTA with Malaysia can serve as an important cooperation mechanism that can enhance relations with southern countries. Malaysia not only has multiple advantages such as consumer markets and manufacturing bases, but also has a high value as a base country for advancing to southern countries as a key country that leads various economic integrations in Southeast Asia. In other words, it is important to understand what an FTA with Malaysia means. However, the larger function and role is the connection that enables the expansion of the ASEAN and neighboring countries, resulting in their economic integration into the Southeast Asian market.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) and Malaysia have made efforts to strengthen economic relations since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1960. The two countries have agreed to cooperate in a variety of sectors, including green industries such as biofuels and nuclear energy, IT, communication, transportation, and

energy, including the joint development of oil and gas exploration and production (MOFA Korea 2020). After the ASEAN-Korea FTA (AKFTA) was concluded in 2007, the trade volume between Malaysia and South Korea has increased. Malaysia has consistently maintained its position among South Korea's top 10 trading partners. As of 2019, bilateral trade reached USD 18.1 billion, and Malaysia is South Korea's 10<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner (exports \$8.8 billion, imports \$9.3 billion) (Korea Customs Service 2021). This shows that South Korea's trade dependence on Malaysia has increased (Shin, Jung, Lee, & Shin 2019). While South Korea has signed bilateral FTAs with major ASEAN countries such as Singapore (2006), Vietnam (2015), and Indonesia (2020), no bilateral FTA has yet been concluded between South Korea and Malaysia. The South Korean and Malaysian governments have been in a situation where bilateral FTA negotiations have been suspended since 2019, despite the growing economic interdependence between them.

This study discusses the economic impact of a possible FTA on the trade between South Korea and Malaysia. The hypothesis of this study is that a bilateral FTA between South Korea and Malaysia would have a significant impact on both economies. This is based on the fact that increased trade between the two countries has assisted in the GDP growth of both economies. Section II is a brief review of relevant literature, followed by a description of the Methodology used in Section III, an Analysis of the model in Section IV and a Conclusion in Section V. A study on the possibility of FTAs between Malaysia and ROK, which are non-FTA countries, has many significant implications, one of which is a further suggestion of the points to be noted as policy implications when developing an FTA between the two countries. Both the Korean and Malaysian governments need to review the high-level bilateral FTA that can reflect the economic characteristics and interests of the two countries in order to develop the trade and investment relationship between the two countries.

## **II . Literature Review**

Whether a country's economic development progresses faster as the degree of trade openness increases is still a matter of debate. However, literature has proven that the degree of trade openness in the long run affects economic growth through various channels. The World Bank (1993) categorized the growth factors of Asian countries as macroeconomic stability; promotion of export promotion policies; and the establishment of an institutional foundation for growth, efficient resource allocation, and productivity increase. A FTA is one of the export promotion policies and institutional foundations for growth. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the economic effects of bilateral FTAs to examine the economic implications for Malaysia and the ROK.

Many existing theories on FTAs indicate that trade volumes are expected to rise when two countries break down trade barriers by signing an FTA, leading to improvements in their bilateral transactions and trade productivity. (Scollay 2001; Schott & Goodrich 2001). FTAs have been discussed since the early 2000s. More than 370 FTAs have been signed worldwide, which contribute to 50% of all trade. Over the last ten years, the ROK and Malaysia have concluded several bilateral and multilateral FTAs. Successful FTA networks have been established over a short period of time through the promotion of FTAs. However, the share of preferential trade is still small compared to that of trade between major FTA partners such as the European Union, Japan, and the United States. (Kim 2014). To ensure sustainable economic growth, an FTA between the ROK and Malaysia is necessary.

Many economists have studied cases involving FTA using a gravity model (Anderson 1979; Anderson & Wincoop 2003). However, when applying the gravity model, the FTA dummy variable is analyzed by adding it to the equation to measure the FTA effect. Baier and Bergstrand (2007) raised the question of bias in the gravity model when considering exogenous FTA dummy variables. The researchers found that the existing estimates of FTA effects through gravity models were underestimated by 75–85%. To overcome the limitations of existing research, this study analyzed the

economic impact of the increase in exports by the ROK and Malaysia using a panel data analysis.

Kim and Kim (2012) analyzed South Korea's exports to 98 partner countries from 2000 to 2011 using panel data to estimate the impact of the country's FTAs on total export growth. They showed that the AKFTA increased both the intensive and extensive margins of exports in South Korea and suggested a research method. Sohn and Kim (2013) studied the trade effect of the AKFTA by conducting a panel data analysis. This trade effect analysis of the AKFTA has implications for focusing on ASEAN and suggests the aggressive attitude of the government in South Korea. Cho, Jang, and Kim (2013) analyzed the export performance of the AKFTA using product-level trade data at Harmonized System (HS) 10 digits. This empirical analysis (2013) found that the AKFTA has a positive impact on both the total export value and profit of export firms. Although numerous analyses have been conducted on the economic effects of the formation of regional economic blocs on regional countries [regardless of the Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) or gravity model], no study has analyzed the economic effects of the FTA on the ROK and Malaysia. Therefore, in this study, the effect of tariff reduction, focusing on trade goods between the ROK and Malaysia, is analyzed using panel data analysis.

### III. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research model

Panel data analysis was used to examine the economic effects of bilateral FTAs to understand the economic implications for Malaysia and the ROK. This study evaluated the statistical properties of the estimated price and income elasticity of commodities. The equation was derived from the analysis of Senhadji and Montenegro (1999) and applied to the economic strength of the FTA between the ROK and Malaysia. This analysis is cited as a time-series technique of export demand elasticity in developing and industrial countries (Senhadji and Montenegro 1999). FTA negotiations are expected to precede the assurance of economic benefits. Hence, in this study,

assuming a scenario in which the ROK and Malaysia sign an FTA, the value of trade was expected to increase in both countries. Economic growth was developed based on this growth model. It analyzed the export effects of the ROK and Malaysia when the tariff barriers between the two countries are completely removed according to the methodology used by Aitken (1973).

This study used a partial equilibrium analysis to analyze the effects of the elimination of tariffs on the price elasticity of export and import demand. A partial equilibrium analysis is used to calculate the extent to which imports and exports of specific industries and items increase when the country's tariff rate is lowered. The value of export growth in South Korea can be calculated using the price elasticity of imported goods derived from Malaysia's import function by each item and Malaysia's tariff barrier data. The effect of increasing exports in Malaysia can also be estimated using South Korea's tariff barrier data and price elasticity for imported goods derived from South Korea's import function to Malaysia by item. In order to analyze the effect of increasing exports by item upon the conclusion of the Korea-Malaysia FTA, it is first necessary to define the import function and estimate price elasticity. According to Senhadji and Montenegro(1999) and Senhadji(1998), the import function is assumed to be a function of relative import prices and real national income.

South Korea's import function from Malaysia is defined as in Equation 1. The relative import price was defined as the value obtained by the import price of goods  $i$  from Malaysia by the price level in Korea, and real national income was set as Korea's real GDP.

The import function is as follows (equation 1):

$$\ln(M_{i,t}) = \alpha + \gamma \ln(P_{i,t}^m / P_{KR,t}) + \delta_i \ln(Y_{KR,t}) + e_{i,t} \tag{1}$$

$$e_{i,t} = \delta_i + \pi_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}, \text{ where } \varepsilon_{i,t} \sim i.i.d$$

where  $M_i$  is the value of income for country  $i$ ,  $t$  stands for year,  $P_{KR}$  is the price level (GDP deflator),  $P_i^m$  is the import price index of  $i$ , and  $Y_{KR}$  is real income;  $\gamma$  indicates price elasticity with

respect to import demand, and is negative (-) because it increases import demand when the price of imported goods decline (economic theory); and  $\delta$  indicates income elasticity with respect to import demand, and has a positive value because the increase in income increases import demand. The empirical analysis estimates a one-way error component model assuming no time-series effect.

Malaysia's import function to Korea is also defined as shown in Equation 3, assuming that the relative import price and real national supply are a function. The estimated value of the import function for Korea in Malaysia is marked with a star (\*) in order to distinguish it from the estimated value for Korea's import function in Malaysia.

The import function is as follows (equation. 2):

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(M_{i,t}^*) &= \alpha^* + \gamma^* \ln(P_{i,t}^m / P_{my,t}) + \delta^* \ln(Y_{my,t}) + e_{i,t}^* \\ e_{i,t}^* &= \delta_i^* + \pi_t^* + \varepsilon_{i,t}^*, \text{ where } \varepsilon_{i,t}^* \sim i.i.d \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where  $M_i^*$  is the value of income for country  $i$ ,  $t$  stands for year,  $P_{my}$  is the price level (GDP deflator),  $P_i^{*m}$  is the import price index of  $i$ , and  $Y_{my}$  is real income;  $\gamma^*$  indicates price elasticity with respect to import demand, and is negative (-) because it increases import demand when the price of imported goods decline (economic theory); and  $\delta^*$  indicates income elasticity with respect to import demand, and has a positive value because the increase in income increases import demand. The empirical analysis estimates a one-way error component model assuming no time-series effect.

If the price elasticity of import demand is large, the effect of the FTA will be greater than that in the case where the price elasticity of import demand is small. Further, the larger the tariff rate reduction, the greater the FTA impact, causing a ripple effect. The analysis of the price elasticity of import demand and the effect of tariff elimination or reduction on export growth is expressed in equation 2.

$$\Delta M_i = \gamma^* (t_1 - t_0) / (1 + t_0) * M_i \quad (2)$$

where  $\Delta M_i$  is the expected change in the elasticity of import demand and the expected change in the quantity of goods reflecting the reduction and limitation of the tariff. Further,  $\gamma'$  is the price elasticity of the import demand of both countries and is calculated by the import function,  $M$  represents the current size of imports for  $i$  goods, and  $t_0$  and  $t_1$  refer to the current tariff rate of each country and the new tariff rate estimated when the FTA is concluded, respectively.

### **3.2. Data collection**

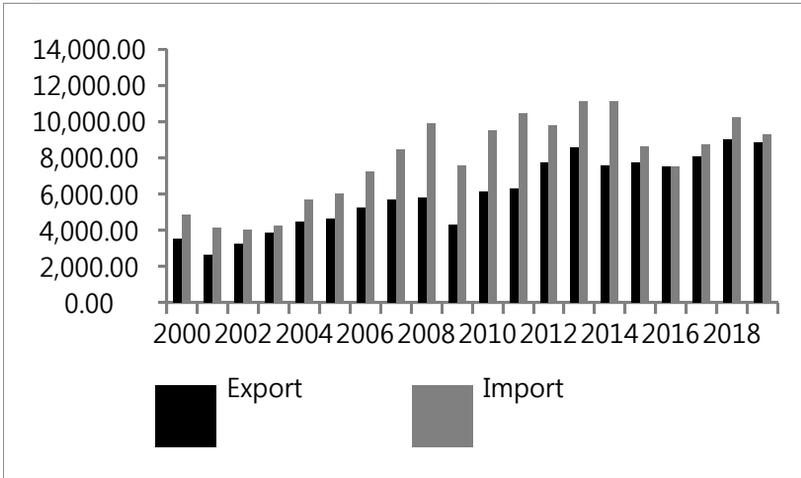
The export and import data of the ROK with respect to Malaysia from 2009 to 2019 were sourced from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA) trade statistics. The data before COVID-19 and after the conclusion of the AKFTA were employed to estimate the economic impact of FTA and to exclude the impact of the economic downturn due to COVID-19. The import and export price index and GDP deflator were obtained from the World Bank. For real income in the ROK and Malaysia, International Monetary Fund (IMF) International Finance Statistics data were used. The data range was selected to estimate recent trade trends after the conclusion of the AKFTA and includes cross-sectional data from the HS-code provided by the IMF.

## **IV. Analysis**

### **4.1. Trade between South Korea-Malaysia**

The trade trend between South Korea and Malaysia shows an increasing slope (Figure 1). After South Korea concluded a multilateral FTA with ASEAN in 2007, its trade with Malaysia has consistently surged, except during the 2009 global economic downturn caused by the US financial crisis in 2008. Trade declined between 2015 and 2017 due to a drop in international raw material prices including oil, but the trade volume significantly increased to \$18.1 billion in 2019 compared to \$8.3 billion in 2000 (Korea International Trade Association 2020).

<Figure 1> Trade between South Korea and Malaysia (US\$ million)



Source: Korea International Trade Association (2020)

South Korea's top 10 export products to Malaysia (about 80% of total exports) are all industrial products (Table 1), and the majority of the top 10 import products from Malaysia (about 50% of total imports) are primary mining products (Table 1). Both the export and import proportions of intermediate goods between South Korea and Malaysia have been overwhelmingly high. However, manufactured import items from Malaysia are not included as value-added sectors, in contrast to South Korean export items such as ships and inorganic chemicals. It is evident that the two countries have complementary economic structures, and trade is likely to increase based on deeper bilateral cooperation.

Table 1. Trade between South Korea and Malaysia by sector in 2019

No	Export			Import		
	Commodity	Value (US\$ million)	Share (%)	Commodity	Value (US\$ million)	Share (%)
1	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television	1,986.7	22.5	Mineral fuels, mineral oils, and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	2,875.1	31.0

No	Export			Import		
	Commodity	Value (US\$ million)	Share (%)	Commodity	Value (US\$ million)	Share (%)
	image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles					
2	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes	1,791.0	20.3	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, and parts and accessories of such articles	2,612.8	28.2
3	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, and parts thereof.	791.3	9.0	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, and parts thereof	628.4	6.8
4	Iron and steel	712.7	8.1	Optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical, or surgical instruments and apparatus; and parts and accessories thereof	401.5	4.3
5	Rubber and articles thereof	591.2	6.7	Aluminum and articles thereof	326.8	3.5
6	Plastics and articles thereof	432.5	4.9	Iron and steel	281.5	3.0
7	Copper and articles thereof	394.3	4.5	Plastics and articles thereof	242.8	2.6
8	Ships, boats, and floating structures	279.1	3.2	Miscellaneous chemical products	219.6	2.4
9	Inorganic chemicals	271.1	3.1	Wood and articles of wood; wood charcoal	202.7	2.2
10	Organic chemicals	196.9	2.2	Organic chemicals	200.4	2.2
	Others	1,393.2	15.8	Others	1,288.2	13.9
	Total	8,839.9	100.0	Total	9,279.9	100.0

Source: Korea International Trade Association (2020)

In terms of the nature of trade, ROK-Malaysia trade follows a typical pattern of South-North trade therefore, the mutually complementary effect of the FTA can be expected. Although the FTA with Malaysia would not generate very high economic benefits in the short term, its greater significance would be to expand the South east Asian market based on the Malaysian market.

#### 4.2. Analysis on trade tariff in South Korea and Malaysia

Malaysia's overall average tariff rate is 5%, which is lower than that of the ROK (Table 2). Additionally, Malaysia's tariff rate is higher than that of developed countries, but lower than that of developing countries and Mexico, Uruguay, Thailand, and Turkey. This implies that Malaysia is more open than other developing countries. The overall tariff rate of the ROK is higher than that of Malaysia because the average tax rate of agricultural products is high in the ROK. The simple average tax rate of agricultural products in the ROK is 49.3%, which is 46.7 percentage points higher than that in Malaysia (2.6%). However, the simple average tariff rate of industrial products is 6.6%, which is close to Malaysia's 5.4%. Based on the duty-free TL (Tariff Limits), Malaysia's tariff-free portion is 66.1%, which is higher than that of the ROK (15.2%).

Table 2. Comparison of tariff rates in the ROK and Malaysia

MFN	Products	ROK	Malaysia
Average of Assessable Value (AV) Duties	All	12.7	5.0
	AG	49.3	2.6
	NAMA	6.6	5.4
Duty Free TL (%)	All	15.2	66.1
	AG	5.4	73.9
	NAMA	16.9	64.7
Maximum AV Duty	All	16.8	6.4
	AG	75.1	4.1
	NAMA	6.9	6.8

Source: Calculated by the authors based on data from the WTO, IDB, and IMF (n.d.)

The table above shows the tariff rate of goods in each country with a high market share. The average tariff rate of industrial products is similar for both countries, but the Malaysian government imposes relatively high tariffs on plastic products, rubber products, aluminum products, and automobile by-products. Trade between the ROK and Malaysia follows the typical North-South trade pattern, which can be complemented by the conclusion of an FTA. In other words, while Malaysia is a typical commodity-exporting country, the ROK exports raw materials and finished goods. These two countries have mutually complementary economic structures.

Malaysia's non-tariff barriers are primarily related to import licensing. Approximately 17% of all tariff items can be imported only after obtaining an import license. Goods that are prohibited or permitted to be imported into Malaysia are subject to the Customs Act 1967 and the Customs Act 1998. It is listed in Customs Order

Table 3. Comparison of tariff rates on major goods traded between the ROK and Malaysia

No	HS-Code	Commodity	ROK	Malaysia
1	15	Animal or vegetable fats	6.3	2.8
2	27	Mineral fuels	4.1	0.7
3	28	Inorganic chemicals	5.1	2.0
4	29	Organic chemicals	5.3	0.1
5	31	Fertilizers	5.9	0.1
6	38	Miscellaneous chemical products	6.3	1.1
7	39	Plastics and articles thereof	6.5	10.6
8	40	Rubber and articles thereof	7.0	18.8
9	44	Wood and articles of wood	5.2	11.4
10	72	Iron and steel	0.4	5.8
11	73	Articles of iron or steel	4.6	9.4
12	74	Copper and articles thereof	6.3	2.3
13	76	Aluminum and articles thereof	7.4	19.8
14	80	Tin and articles thereof	4.2	1.6
15	84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, and machinery	5.9	3.0
16	85	Electrical and electronic equipment	5.8	3.7
17	87	Vehicles other than railway	7.6	17.6
18	89	Ships	3.4	1.2
19	90	Optical, photographic	5.2	0.5

Source: Korea International Trade Association, WTO, IDB, and IMF (n.d.)

1988, which prohibits imports due to religious or environmental reasons (First Schedule). This includes products that are prohibited for import due to security or environmental reasons, but are permitted to be imported with an import license from the relevant authorities. It is classified into products that are temporarily restricted for industrial protection (Third Schedule) and products that can be imported only after obtaining approval or inspection according to the import guidelines set by the relevant agency for public hygiene and safety (Fourth Schedule).

#### **4.3. Result of analysis**

In the case of relatively small item-wise exports and imports and wild fluctuations in each year, such as in the case of ROK-Malaysia trade, the inefficiency of the coefficient estimation may be higher due to the increase in dispersion by item. When analyzing the hetero-elasticity of each item, the regression analysis of each item may be limited. In contrast, panel data analysis is expected to analyze the estimated effects better than simple regression analysis because it considers the variance-covariance matrix of the error term.

The ROK's export growth effect can be estimated using the price elasticity of imported goods derived from the function indicating Malaysia's imports from the ROK and the tariff barrier data (Table 3). Export growth in Malaysia can also be estimated using data on the price elasticity of imported goods derived from the ROK's import function and tariff barriers. In general, the import function is a function of relative import prices and real gross national income. The relative import price for the ROK is defined as the price of items imported from Malaysia divided by the GDP deflator in the ROK, while real GDP is sourced from the real GDP data of the ROK. Malaysia's relative import price is the price of goods imported from the ROK divided by the GDP deflator of Malaysia; real GDP is sourced from the central bank in Malaysia. This analysis is based on Senhadji and Montenegro (1999).

To understand the possible economic effect of the FTA between the ROK and Malaysia, an analysis of correlation relations

is preemptive. Table 4 presents the results of the panel data regression.

Table 4. Results of the panel data regression

Classification		Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic
Control variables	GDP deflator	163.4209	53.37757	3.06
	Import price	31.62261	23.96657	1.32
Independent variable	Export	.0005103	.0017868	0.29
Cons		3566.322	6857.431	0.52
R2		0.0102		
F		3.19**		
Number of observations		941		
Number of groups		95		

Note: Dependent variable: GDP per person in the ROK

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

The results of the panel regression analysis (Table 4) on the import function show significance, and that correlation exists between exports from the ROK to Malaysia and the total value of the ROK's imports. It also indicates that increased exports from the ROK to Malaysia leads to an increase in the ROK's income from trade. Therefore, the ROK-Malaysia FTA is expected to promote trade and have a positive effect on the ROK's GDP.

Table 5. The result of the panel data from Import function (equation 2)

Classification		Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic
Control variables	GDP deflator	132.5753	24.48734	5.41
	Import price	11.54268	14.03984	0.82
Independent variable	Export	0.0004396	0.0001858	2,37
Cons		-8121.363	2213.328	-3.67
R2		0.9141		
F		36.46**		
N of observations		941		
N of groups		95		

Note: Dependent variable: GDP per person in the Malaysia

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

The result of panel regression analysis (Table 5) on import function shows significance and that correlation exists between exports from Malaysia to Korea. It also indicates that an increased export from Malaysia to Korea leads to an increase in the income from trade in Malaysia. Therefore, it is considered that the ROK-Malaysia FTA promotes trade and is expected to have a positive effect on Malaysia's GDP per capita.

The panel data analysis confirms that an economic effect will be achieved if the two countries conclude an FTA. The change in price elasticity among actual export items is needed to measure this effect. Price elasticity is calculated based on substituting figures such as tariffs, elasticity of demand, and value of exports (see Figure 1). Table 6 and Table 7 show the expected change in price elasticity in the ROK and Malaysia, respectively, after concluding a feasible FTA between the two countries.

Table 6. Expected South Korean exports after concluding the ROK-Malaysia FTA

HS-code	$\Delta m_i$	Product name
04	12.6	Dairy produce; birds' eggs; natural honey
06	1,237.9	Live trees and other plants
08	137,470.6	Edible fruit and nuts
09	831.1	Coffee and tea
10	48.9	Cereals
11	94,271.0	Products of the milling industry
13	2,484.2	Lac
17	1,746.5	Sugars and sugar confectionery
20	1,452.2	Preparations of vegetables and fruits
21	96.5	Miscellaneous edible preparations
23	22,069.9	Residues and waste from the food industries
24	9,089.8	Tobacco
29	99,994.1	Organic chemicals
30	8,928.5	Pharmaceutical products
31	80.0	Fertilizers
64	13.1	Footwear
65	102.0	Headgear
66	80.5	Umbrellas, sun umbrellas, walking-sticks, seat-sticks, and whips

HS-code	$\Delta$ mi	Product name
71	710,248.1	Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal, and articles thereof
73	46,372.8	Articles of iron or steel
74	1,409.8	Copper and articles thereof
79	227.4	Zinc and articles thereof
83	1,238,046.7	Miscellaneous articles of base metal
86	42,786.1	Railway or tramway locomotives, rolling stock, and parts thereof
87	1,796.1	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof
88	1,565,429.8	Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof
91	36.2	Clocks and watches, and parts thereof
92	1,799,364.0	Musical instruments; parts and accessories of such articles
95	52,727.8	Toys, games, and sports requisites; parts and accessories
96	1,714.7	Miscellaneous manufactured articles

Assuming that the FTA between the two countries enters into effect, the change in price elasticity among the ROK's exports is expected to diversify. It is also significant in that most of the items are protected domestic products in each country, or the items are not easy to export due to high tariffs or non-tariff barriers. Considering that there is no change in the negative direction, the abolition of tariffs between the two countries is expected to provide considerable economic benefits to the ROK.

Table 7. Expected exports in Malaysia after concluding the ROK-Malaysia FTA

HS-code	Product name	$\Delta$ mi
25~27	Mineral products	48,313
41~43, 50~67	Textile/clothes/leather	9,206
87	Vehicles and accessories	2,983
44~49, 68~70, 92~97	Other manufacturing products	-40,845
85	Electronics and telecommunications	25,163
84	Machinery	51,881

If the ROK and Malaysia sign the FTA, it is expected that, among Malaysian exports, mineral products will show the largest increase, while the other manufacturing industries will show a rather decreasing trend, showing a typical cooperation system between the developed and developing countries. However, the export of Malaysia's home appliances, communication equipment, and machinery are also expected to increase, resulting in a complementary trade relationship. The results show that increases in the exports of both the ROK and Malaysia will differ depending on the items when eliminating the tariff rate.

This section assumes a scenario in which the ROK and Malaysia enter into an FTA, and examines the effects of the ROK's and Malaysia's export increase, focusing on trade goods. The analysis of the extent to which the trade between the two countries will be affected if they conclude an FTA is meaningful as a preliminary study for the feasibility analysis of the FTA between the two countries. The elasticity of the import function for each item was analyzed, and the export increase was estimated using the elasticity and tariff rate. Table 8 present the elasticity of each item and the effects of increasing exports. To estimate the economic effect of the FTA in detail, the most widely used analysis scenario is the complete elimination of tariffs in all fields. Therefore, the effects of the FTA between the two countries were estimated by item to presume specific export values. The effect of the ROK's export increase was estimated using the price elasticity of imported goods derived from Malaysia's import function and tariff barrier data. The effect of Malaysia's increase in exports was also estimated using the price elasticity of imported goods derived from the Malaysian import function for each item in the ROK. This scenario is based on the expected economic effects of the FTA. The results of the presumed model are as follows:

Table 7. ROK-Malaysia FTA effect by sectors (unit: US-\$ million)

Sectors	ROK	Malaysia
Agriculture	49.88	97.53
Forestry	-0.03	0.18
Fisheries	0.24	-1.04

Sectors	ROK	Malaysia
Energy	-22.01	68.08
Processed food	13.84	22.27
Fabrics	72.23	2.46
Clothing	24.33	-4.77
Wooden furniture	1.13	68.08
Chemical industry	25.74	56.09
Metal, Steel	17.72	0.72
Automobiles	139.69	-36.13
Transport equipment	-22.63	7.11
Electrical and electronics	-45.05	18.24
Machinery	-6.41	0.009
Others	7.34	7.08
Services	-1.73	0.061

Table 7 presents the expected impact of the ROK's industrial sector after the ROK and Malaysia sign the FTA. This is a recalculation of the effect of the FTA on the economic efficiency of the economy as a whole, not the effect on production by industry, and is often analyzed using a technique called efficiency composition analysis. In the ROK's case, the manufacturing industry generally showed positive results. It was analyzed that if the tariff rate was completely eliminated, the effect of increasing Korea-Malaysia exports would occur in both countries. Relatively, Korea has a large export increase effect in the manufacturing sector, and Malaysia has a large effect in the primary industry sector. When the Korea-Malaysia FTA is signed, Korea can expect an export increase effect of more than US\$ 200 million in the manufacturing sector, and Malaysia can expect an export increase effect of more than USD 100 million in the primary industry sector. In addition, Korea can expect an export increase of 28 million dollars in the primary industry, and Malaysia can expect an export increase of 141 million dollars in the manufacturing sector.

**V. Conclusion**

To confirm the economic impact of the ROK-Malaysia FTA requires a panel data analysis using the import function and scenario for the

presumed value of price elasticity. This is because the FTA has not yet been concluded. The results indicate that the value of manufacturing exports is expected to increase considerably. In particular, the ROK is expected to benefit from the increased volume of exports in various sectors after the conclusion of the FTA. In particular, the exports of fabrics and clothing, chemicals, and automobiles are expected to grow positively.

Although the results of the panel data analysis on the import function show that bilateral trade has accelerated, the total value of trade income and the expected value of exports in both countries differ by sector and scenario. In this model, the economic impact of the FTA on the agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, electronics, machinery, and service sectors is negative when only trade liberalization is taken into account. In contrast, fisheries, processed food, fabrics, clothing, wooden products, chemical industry, metals, automobiles, and other commodities are expected to show a positive economic impact if the ROK-Malaysia FTA is concluded. Furthermore, in terms of trade liberalization and capital accumulation, the results show chances of a more positive economic impact on the ROK's income from trade after concluding the FTA. A few sectors, such as forestry, energy, transport, electronics, and machinery, have a negative economic impact on the value of trade. These results indicate that the exports of both countries will increase overall, even if a few industries reflect negative economic effects. The negative economic impact in a few industries can be minimized through measures such as indirect technological transfer through investments and negotiations, including the gradual abolition of tariffs between the ROK and Malaysia. Due to the negative economic impact, the study hypothesis is partly confirmed.

In recent years, East Asian countries have undergone significant changes in the market environment due to rapid economic growth, advancement of industrial structures, and integration of regional markets through ASEAN Free trade Area (AFTA). Therefore, a study on the possibility of FTAs and the interrelationships by industry between Malaysia and the ROK, which are non-FTA countries, has significant implications, one of which is a further suggestion of the points to be noted as policy implications

when developing an FTA between the two countries. Both the ROK and Malaysian governments need to review the high-level bilateral FTA that can reflect the economic characteristics and interests of the two countries to develop a trade and investment relationship.

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# ***SUVANNABHUMI***

Multi-disciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies

## **Text and Manuscript Guideline**

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The manuscript should be written in English.

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The manuscript should be between 5,000 to 10,000 words in length, including references, appendices, tables and figures. Book Review or Research Report submissions must be between 1,000 to 2,000 words.

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All pieces must be encoded in a Microsoft Word file, 1.5-spaced, in Times New Roman, Font Size 12.

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The Journal uses US spelling, and the author should therefore follow the latest edition of the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

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Sections and sub-sections should be divided by "I, 1.1., 1.1.1." And tables and figures should be numbered by <Table 1>, <Figure 1>. The Journal prints papers in black and white but upload PDF files in full color at the journal homepage.

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References should be in Roman script and placed at the end of the manuscript in alphabetical order.

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James (1979: 56)
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Detailed information on all literature mentioned in the text and footnote shall be shown in <References> at the end of the text. Literature that was not mentioned in the text and footnote shall not be included.

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Jessup, Helen I. 2004. *Art & Architecture of Cambodia*. London: Thames & Hudson.

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Freeman, Michael and Claude Jacques. 1999. *Ancient Ankor*. Bangkok: Asia Books.

- In case of an edited book, it shall be written in ed.

Steinberg, David Joel, ed. 1987. *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

- In case of translated books, it shall be in the order of original author, year of publication of translated books, name of translated book, author and publisher.

Coedes, George. 1968. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Susan B. Cowing, trans. Honolulu: An East-West Center Book. The University Press of Hawaii.

## **2) Journal Articles/ Monthly Magazine**

- In case of papers such as journals, monthly magazine, etc, volume and number shall be in volume (number), and the relevant pages shall be definitely indicated.

Egreteau, Renaud. 2008. India's Ambitions in Burma. *Asian Survey*, 48(6): 936-957.

## **3) Chapter in a Book**

- In case of the text in a compilation, it shall be in the order of author, year of publication, compilation name, compiler, related page and publisher. If there is no compiler, then it can be omitted.

King, Victor T. 2006. Southeast Asia: Personal Reflections on a Region. *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and New Directions*. Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben, eds. 23-44. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

## **4) Thesis and Dissertation**

- In case of a thesis or dissertation, the following form shall be followed.

Parker, John. 1988. The Representation of Southeast Asian Art. PhD Dissertation. Harvard University.

## **5) Newspaper Articles**

- In case of a daily newspaper, by-line story of weekly magazine and column, the following form shall be followed.

Peterson, Thomas. 1993. The Economic Development of ASEAN. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 22: 23.

## **6) Internet Sources**

- In case of the internet searching, it shall be in order of author, year of production, subject and web address (Accessed Month DD, YYYY).

Hadar, Leon. 1998. U.S. Sanctions against Burma. *Trade Policy Analysis* no. 1. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/trade/tpa-001.html>. (Accessed May 07, 2008).



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