The Politics of Indonesia’s Environmental Policy, 1990-2015

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Political environmentalism plays a vital role in mainstreaming social mobilisation on environmental issues in the world. The current study examines the dynamic of climate change that addresses the realist tradition which relates to Indonesia’s foreign policy conduct on domestic politics and focuses on dominant political actors’ behaviour. The discussion of this argument illustrates the journey of climate diplomacy from the Suharto government to the reform era administrations. The study draws on constructivism, which theorises a relationship between identity, legitimacy and interest in foreign policy as its theoretical framework. The paper has three main parts, and the first part explains why constructivism is more relevant than realism for studying Indonesia’s environmental foreign policy. The second and third section goes on to look at the origin and development of Jakarta’s climate diplomacy. The argument is that Indonesia’s commitments to embracing global climate change agendas aim to establish an identity as a legitimate environmental actor. This identity constitutes the government’s response to transnational challenges to the state’s developmental interest.

Key words: Indonesia, Foreign policy, Environmental issues, Climate change, Legitimacy, Developmental interest.

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, environmental issues have begun to receive increasingly serious attention from foreign policy analysts. The dialogue of this subject is to discuss the natural changes—extreme weather events associated with global warming, influence decisions to processes, and initiate such parameters to implement the international concerns. Climate change politics in developing countries take place as a different type of international actor interactions in which norms and institutions play significant roles in determining the state’s approach. This article focuses on Indonesia’s foreign policy behaviour. Indonesia is the most vulnerable country to climate change impact in Southeast Asia (Measey, 2010), and the fifth largest emitter of greenhouse gas (GHG) in the world after China, the United States,
the European Union and Brazil. At international fora, the Indonesian government demonstrates active participation within the global climate diplomacy forum, supporting international and regional regimes of environmental protection, as well as the ratification of agreements governing efforts to contain global warming. Domestic governmental agencies and regulations are also adjusted to meet the objectives, principles, and strategies set out by pro-environment movements and institutions (Ardiansyah, Gunningham, & Drahos, 2014; Jotzo, Sari, & Tanujaya, 2003; Morizane et al., 2016; Petrich, 1993).

Environmental dangers have both internal and external consequences. The destruction in one country frequently crosses over the state’s jurisdictional borders. It causes a transnational crisis that requires multinational engagement, such as the provision of financial and technological assistance, to resolve the issue (Harris, 2009b, p. 11). It is evident in the case of environmental disasters, which regularly happen in Indonesia, such as the haze blanketing parts of neighboring countries in Southeast Asia (Springer, 2002; Tacconi, 2003). Other incidents have involved extensive impact, including water disputes in outer areas and marine resource conflicts. These domestic sources of environmental concern raise diplomatic clashes with neighboring countries. These have intensified the region’s vulnerability to challenges of wide ranging transnational insecurity (Jasparro & Taylor, 2008).

This article examines the underlying dynamics of climate change politics in Indonesia’s foreign policy. Moving away from the realist tradition which relates Indonesia’s foreign policy conduct to the dynamics of domestic politics and focuses on dominant political actors’ behaviour, this article draws on constructivism, which theorises a relationship between identity, legitimacy, and interest in foreign policy as its theoretical framework. The discussion of this study is divided into three main parts. The first section explains why constructivism is more relevant than realism for studying Indonesia’s environmental foreign policy. It also introduces how the concepts can deploy in an eclectic way of thinking. The second and third parts go on to look at the origin and development of Jakarta’s climate diplomacy. The argument is that Indonesia’s commitments to embracing global climate change agendas aim to establish an identity as a legitimate environmental actor. This identity constitutes the government’s response to transnational challenges to the state’s developmental interest. The discussion of this argument illustrates the journey of climate diplomacy from the Suharto government to the Reform era administrations. The conclusion reemphasises the essential points put forth in this article.

The current study addressed the existing scholarship on the politics of Indonesia’s environmental policy, which is starting from 1990-2015. The study provides evident support for the phenomena of environmental issues and foreign policy. It also raised the question of old policies that were not fully imposed on environmental policy. The current scholarship
argument examines the commitments to implementing the agenda on global climate change to establish an identity as a legitimate environmental actor.

**From Realism to Constructivism: Approaching Environmental Issues in Indonesia’s Foreign Policy**

The study of Indonesia’s foreign policy has long been concerned with attempts to explain the role of values, interests, and institutions in shaping Jakarta’s international actions. This tendency reflects the dominance of the so called realist theory and methodology, according to which relationships between domestic factors and the state’s participation in world politics have to be managed prudently. The directional foundation of Indonesia’s foreign policy is *prinsipbebasaktif* (the principle of being independent and active), which suggests state-centrism. It is obvious that the national interest, balance of power and the anarchic international system is the principal conceptual framing behind Indonesia’s external conduct. The definition of national interest varies from the level of primary interests such as national unity, prosperity and sovereignty to secondary ones, including cultural, social, humanitarian and environmental interests. Elite leaders have constructed this divide in Indonesia’s international course of action without routine negotiations with elements of the society. The priority in policy making and implementation depends on elite perceptions about the nature of international systems and the position of the country within it.

As a result, it is understandable if Jakarta’s activities in regional and global forums are driven by political processes deficient of ideas concerning the importance of natural changes and their impact on social life. The meaning of the physical world in foreign policy discourses is restricted to particularistic identifications of geographic size, natural resources as well as demographic patterns assembled within the concept of national power. Indonesian security architecture and strategy are directly connected with observation and recognition of the importance of these three elements of tangible power. Although recently a paradigm shift to grasp the roles of Indonesia’s intangible power, or perhaps soft power has been emerging, as seen in democracy development, economic achievement and international diplomatic initiatives (Laksmana, 2011; Pitsuwan, 2014), the space for developing a theoretical framework to analyse environmental influences, the interaction between the human and physical world affected by climate change, in Indonesia’s foreign policy is quite limited. To some extent, this can explain the reluctance of proponents of realism to appreciate environmental politics in Indonesia’s foreign relations. Drawing upon such cross-level environmental intervention, many governments incorporate climate change into the states’ defined interest, linked to both internal and external affairs. As Dent (2018), observes, there has arisen the concept and practice of new development according to which transformative economic strategies are concerned with ecologically driven goals.
Since environmental concerns are considered to be secondary in importance to Indonesia’s national interests, the effects of global warming are addressed by establishing public policies that encompass adjustments and mechanisms operating with a low degree of political visibility. The foreign policy rationale adheres to the traditional distinction between domains of high political and low political issues. High political issues are closely related to the state’s primary national interests, and everything beyond this is considered low political ones. Parallel to this notion, the conception of crisis in Indonesia’s international relations refers to uncertain situations derived from external actor competition and conflict, which destabilises the state and its immediate region. The currently most prominent case in point is the dispute in the South China Sea, which is deemed to be the major source of outside threats to Indonesia’s and Southeast Asia’s security and stability. In this context, however, climate change is not categorised as a real crisis, even though the Earth’s warming effects on the state and human security could be devastating (Campbell ed., 2009; O’Neill, 2017; Price-Smith, 2009).

This article offers the concept of interconnected domestic and international state identity to comprehend environmental foreign policy behaviour. Drawing upon Wendt’s (1999) conceptualisation, identity is a product of human ideas. States have concepts of themselves, and at the same time, give meaning to others. Internally conceived identity originates from extant cultural values, political traditions, and the history of their societies. This identity is projected towards international politics where other states or institutions feed it back. Therefore, identity is constructed through mutually constitutive processes. In the context of environmental policy, arguably, international commitments to following the global climate change regime and carrying out diplomacy for collective action to contain global warming are used by the government to promote a state identity rather than to undertake real political action to protect the environment.

The approach of social constructivism (Kim, 2001; Kukla, 2013; Kalina et al., 2009) focuses on the ideational characteristics in environmental policies. The way suggests expanding the interaction with the world communities to implement and tackle the environmental cases earliest. The arguments identified that the state shapes its identity as a legitimate environmental actor by taking responsibility to endorse global climate change agendas, whereas another approach to foreign policy analysis (Hudson et al., 2019) argues that Indonesia and other partners have different foreign policies and objectives towards current phenomena, which may cause a delay in the implantation of such regulations at the domestic level.

The discussion on state identity is related to the quest for legitimacy. In today’s global politics, the concept of legitimacy has two aspects. The first is the domestic aspect, in which the government must be legitimate in the eyes of the majority of the public so that it is
capable of enforcing rules and control over the country’s essential affairs. In other words, to effectively govern the people, the government has to build and retain its legitimacy consistently. The second aspect of legitimacy is linked to the ways states pursue their objectives in world politics, which is set up by liberal institutions and norms. The state must be perceived as a legitimate actor by others to participate in world affairs. International cooperation and assistance are conducted based on the parties’ legitimate status (Reus-Smit, 2007, pp. 158, 163). Hence, states’ compliance with international regimes becomes the more achievable choice over persistent opposition by its acceptance as common practice.

The following discussion sections try to apply the above theoretical approach to explore the development of Indonesia’s climate change foreign policy. The focus is on looking at the background against which environmental issues have come about as important considerations in Indonesia’s participation within global climate change affairs, and further describing Indonesia’s position on the evolving interactions.

**Development, Environment, and Diplomacy under Suharto Period**

**The Emergence of Environmental Politics**

During the 1970s and 1980s, Indonesia moved towards a developmental state. Although the concept of developmentalism is more commonly associated with East Asian nations, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, who carried out growth-driven economic transformation through efficient bureaucracy, the Suharto government did implement developmental strategies displaying a deep adherence to a state-led economy, and even made pembangunan (development) its economic ideology and primary source of political legitimacy. Democracy and human rights were circumscribed, while at the same time, social order and stability were toughly enforced. The economy was reliant on natural resource extraction in which lucrative businesses were given to a tiny number of local tycoons. This practice gave rise to an oligarchic system of resource management (Robison & Hadiz, 2004). Industrialisation was accelerated as the main instrument to achieve fast development. The government tolerated civil society movements to work on social areas of development so long as they conformed to the ruling regime. To harmonise all these political and economic components, Suharto appointed technocrats for strategic policy planning positions, deploying technologists to run technical ministries and state agencies and placing military officers to hold important political and administrative structures from central to local governments. Feith (1982) identified Suharto’s model of governance as a repressive developmentalist regime.

Over three decades, the New Order government oversaw rapid development and was successful in achieving significant economic growth. By the end of the 1980s, Indonesia’s economy was growing around seven percent annually, and the World Bank (1994) called it
an East Asian miracle along with Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand. The government expanded and intensified the production of agricultural and plantation products. Megacities with their supporting high-tech and non-high-tech infrastructure were built to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of the middle class. The urbanisation rate doubled in the early 1990s.

As a consequence, the ecosystem’s capacity to provide natural capital and facilities decreased (Hardjono ed., 1991). Local and regional environmental advocacy reports indicate that over two decades of Suharto’s developmentalism, there was tremendous environmental degradation resulting from a robust economic transformation, which was devoid of ecological sensibility. The country suffered from rising levels of air, land and water pollution, loss of biodiversity as well as deforestation (Down to Earth, 1991; Rice, 1990; SKEPHI, 1994).

On an international level, Indonesia’s leading trading partners and financial donors, particularly the United States and Western European countries, had started to pay more attention to environmental issues as an important element of the two sides’ relations. This was related to the growing popular concerns about worsening environmental conditions, which during the 1980s encompassed a global scale. What was happening in the developing world, such as uncontrollable deforestation, leading to the warming up of the Earth, was becoming an important subject of campaigns by international ENGOs like Greenpeace and Conservation International. Spurred on by United Nations institutions through environmental summits since 1972, the environment turned out to be a stressing conditional area of economic policy in the relations between First and Third World countries. Economic and technical assistance through both governmental and non-governmental channels were linked to the agenda of improvement of environmental conditions (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 55). Donors conveyed concerns in an organisational meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Indonesia (IGGI). In later summits, these aid-giving countries, reorganised into the Consultative Group of Indonesia (CGI), representatives of the European Union and the United States governments urged Jakarta to pay more serious attention to the quality of the environment (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1997, pp. 17-25). A more persuasive approach was offered by the German government to help redesign and make a balance between Indonesia’s social, economic, and ecological policies in a multitrack partnership (Shahab, 1997, p. 25).

The situation was different on the international front. It was difficult for the Suharto government to deny the rise of environmentalism’s influence on the country’s foreign relations. The Department of Foreign Affairs (1997, pp. 8, 52-53) avowed that the global political impact of environmental politics on Indonesia’s international profile was getting clearer in the post-bipolar system. This was not a threat of foreign aggression against territory and national sovereignty, but the source of a new challenge to Indonesia’s international status.
and reputation. Indeed, Indonesia had, since the era of Sukarno, been sensitive to the problem of legitimacy. This was related to its hard-gained independence, which was unrecognised by Western nations, which then helped to determine the Indonesian elite’s view about the necessity of alternative diplomatic initiatives so that an equal international position was achievable. Jakarta launched various institutional vehicles, three of the most effective of which were the Asian African Conference, Non Aligned Movement (NAM), and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Through these multilateral contributions, Jakarta earned legitimacy as a peace lover, stability maker, and order keeper.

Bearing this in mind, the politically constructed image of being an environmentally recalcitrant actor was obstructive to Suharto’s developmentalism. Therefore, Indonesia had to involve in diplomacy to support international endeavors of tackling the most globally affecting environmental phenomena like climate change. Jakarta had to show its significant participation and contribution to making global climate policy and to create the basis for its legitimised developmentalist interest. Thus, new developmentalists support an initiative that climate governance is given broader space in the government’s development planning and materialisation. Considering this idea in the case of Indonesia, arguably, new developmentalism is internalised and can be implemented to meet interrelated circumstances. The Indonesian government has to adopt policy enabling the synchronisation of economic and climate change related interests. While environmental pressure is increasing, the state’s ability to reconcile and follow up on these two elements is restricted. Indonesia needs a legitimising feature of climate diplomacy so that its responses to environmental upheavals are politically acceptable internationally.

**Engaging the Global Climate Agenda**

Indonesia began to engage with the global climate change regime when it took part in the June 1992 Earth Summit conducted in Rio de Janeiro. The participants signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Indonesian government then ratified the convention in law number 6/1994, which states that the efforts to cope with climate change issues and its impact are not only part of the government’s responsibility, but have to involve stakeholders like the business sector and civil society. In this respect, Indonesia adopts the UNFCCC objective, which is to control activities that can cause an increase in GHG emissions in the atmosphere, thus contributing to the heating up of the planet and destabilisation of the global ecological system (Article 2 of UNFCCC, 1992).

Addressing the Rio Summit, President Suharto stressed the need for collective partnership to manage environmental problems, regardless of the country’s economic capacity and political power (Suharto, 1992a). Suharto’s message was favoured by other participants, especially those of developing nations, which were members of the NAM (KlipingTentang KTT Bumi,
1992). Later Jakarta tried to link its commitment to the Rio Summit with the general principles governing interactions among non-aligned states and non-NAM member states. In his welcome speech to the 10th NAM Summit at Jakarta, in September 1992, Suharto asserted the principle of equality in the responsibility of all nations to face the environmental challenges of global warming and climate change. More specifically, the Indonesian president noted that in article 3 of the UNFCCC, it is mentioned that every party in the convention has equal general obligations, but under particular circumstances, they should be applied in accordance with the party’s ability (Suharto, 1992b). The summiteers agreed to endorse the Rio outcome and enforced it in their declaratory document, The Jakarta Message. What Indonesia wanted from both the Rio and Jakarta Summits was the strengthening of its international identity through environmental diplomacy activities. This was connected to the other feature of Indonesia’s identity projection: after the Cold War era collapsed, Jakarta was caught in a paradox - on the one side as the Third World power which had been non-aligned towards the great powers during the bipolar rivalries, it faced a critical challenge to its strategic relevance. On the other side, foreign policymakers in Jakarta, mainly Suharto and Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, began to think of a bigger role to play in world politics. This was commensurate with Indonesia’s impressive economic performance in the early 1990s. Besides, the international situations since at least the 1970s, precipitated by the West’s policies in the developing world made another reason why climate change and Third Worlds became an important agenda of Jakarta’s roles and purposes in world politics. The world economy was becoming more centered on industrialised countries, and therefore widening the prosperity gap between developed and developing nations. At the Jakarta meeting, NAM states concluded that the post-Cold War world had to be reformed in accordance with the principles of equitable access to resources, technology, and financial institutions (Misra, 1993, p. 4).

The Suharto government never ratified the Kyoto Protocol. However, there was a formal admittance of the linkage between environmental conservation and economic development, expressed in the regulations of Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People’s Consultative Assembly/MPR) issued in March 1998. Under the New Order administration system, regulations of the assembly were the highest political and constitutional guidance for the executive branch of government in making and implementing development policies. It is mentioned in TAP MPR No. II/1998 that the agenda of sustainable development oriented to environmental protection must be carried out in extractive sectors. No further decisions were made by the cabinet members based on this MPR’s regulation since Suharto stepped down from power in June 1998. Perhaps, the regulation was decided as a response to the disastrous forest fires and haze, which had taken place a few months beforehand. Such a normative structure was important to show the realisation of the state’s commitment to fulfilling its responsibility for preventing environmental decline.
Jakarta declarations on Environment and Development (1997)

The Jakarta declarations (1997) are an International agreement into the 21st Century for leading health promotions (Ewles & Simmett, 2003). The declaration was signed in a world health organisation conference held in Jakarta (WHO, 2009). The purpose of this declaration is to consider health as a basic human right, and it is essential for socio-economic development. The declaration reinforced ASEAN’s position in the global framework for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Stating that they endorsed the Berlin Mandate of the first COP to UNFCCC in 1995, ASEAN was firm that solutions to Southeast Asian problems would be employed in consonance with the international environmental regime, but industrialised states had to show their increased commitments to achieving the targeted emission limitation and reduction. ASEAN expresses it in the context of building a regional identity. In its Vision 2020, ASEAN develops mechanisms for “a clean and green ASEAN” (ASEAN Secretariat, 1997). This is the last international environmental commitment made by the Suharto government before the dramatic political change that turned the state to democracy.

New Developmentalism, Environmental Politics, and Climate Diplomacy after Suharto

Environmental Politics in the Transition to Democracy

The successive governments, after Suharto, sustained the developmentalist direction in Indonesia’s economic development policies, even though the repressive political characteristic was gone (Sato, 2017). The economy continues to rely on the extraction of natural resources, and it has become even more extensive following the severe financial crisis of 1997-1998 in which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with its bailout package forced the Indonesian government to boost export commodities to increase foreign revenue. One of the glaring impacts of the turmoil that altered the Indonesian political system was the surge of expansive liberalisation in the country’s resource sectors, including forestry and agriculture (Sunderlin, 1999). Moreover, Indonesia’s involvement within multiple schemes of global and regional free trade agreements, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), opened up larger space and opportunities for foreign mobile capital to exploit domestic natural wealth.

In parallel, the process of democratisation does not appear to have brought the expected advantages to the improvement of environmental conditions. Civil society’s hope for the regime’s stronger political will to preserve nature has only partially been achieved. In the structural context, Indonesia’s democratic transition, which was the result of the ousting of the New Order leader Suharto from the state’s top decision making hierarchy, was soon
corrupted. This is because the operating organisational power of oligarchy persists (Mietzner, 2010), and its political behaviour impacts environmental policies. The oligarchs maintain the mutualistic patron-client patterns of state-business relations, and they can continue to affect political processes in this liberal democracy. Oligarchy perpetuates the environmentally exploitative economic system. Most of these are those of old established conglomerates connected to Suharto’s political Party known as GolonganKarya/Golkar. Worse still, the practice of oligarchic economy broadens and deepens into local government management facilitated by the mode of governance known as desentralisasidanotononomidaerah (decentralisation and local autonomy) (Hadiz, 2005). Moreover, under the democratic and stratified administrative system, the oligarchs have become even more influential than political parties. This has come about because of the high cost of political contests, which require huge amounts of capital support from business owners.

As such, the construction of environmental discourse is dependent on how the oligarchs view its significance to electoral politics. In the 1999 general elections, of the 48 participating political parties, only three small and newly founded parties took up environmentalist content in their platform and campaign program. They were not popular and could not attain parliamentary seats. Parties dominated the election with broad sociopolitical constituencies and strong capital bases. Public attention was directed to issues such as economic recovery from the prolonged financial crisis, national integration, and territorial integrity against foreign intervention following the separation of East Timor. President Megawati Sukarnoputri and her party, who in the 1990s were depicted as the symbol of anti-authoritarian resistance, did not do much to lift a pro-environment agenda in the government’s policies. She kept on concentrating on increasing economic growth and expanding sectors, which could provide jobs for millions of unemployed people (Soesastro, 2003), to which environmental interests were secondary.

The focus of the post-Suharto environmental advocacy has been on saving biodiversity and forest resources from illegal logging practices. This has received wide and significant support from international ENGOs and USAID. A big tent coalition against timber trade related to illegal logging activities in Indonesia was built and international policies were designed to certify timber and control its black market. Environmentalists believe that the high demand for Indonesian timber has a positive relationship with illegal logging and expansive deforestation (Tacconi, Obidzinski, & Agung, 2004). The impact is on increased carbon emissions. Indeed, since 2000, around two-thirds of Indonesia’s total national emissions are produced by land use change and incineration of peat lands and rainforests, while the burning of fossil fuels and energy industries is relatively small in comparison (Butt, Lyster, & Stephens, 2015, p. 46).
The Yudhoyono government introduced its economic policies as pro-growth, pro-jobs, pro-poor, and pro-green (Hill, 2015, p. 281), which gave a clear sign that there was a mixed narrative. It wished to synergise the developmentalist and environmentalist trajectories in the context of economic development. To this end, a strategic plan called Masterplan Percepatan dan Perluasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Indonesia (Master Plan of the Acceleration and Augmentation of Indonesia’s Economic Development/MP3EI) was launched in 2011 to become the comprehensive source of ideas and the operationalisation of the new developmentalist projection. This also plays an important role in foreign policy, which is to show the world the government’s attentive attitude towards global and national environmental issues. Therefore, under Yudhoyono, Indonesia’s climate diplomacy was enhanced and the president declared his aspiration for the country to take a global leadership role in climate change affairs.

However, these ambitious commitments were never accompanied by a strong and effective domestic implementation. Yudhoyono and his administration were unable to curtail environmentally destructive business activities. The oligarchs were able to take an even stronger hold on the state’s economic course of action. It is renowned that powerful figures in Yudhoyono’s cabinet ministers were businessmen with poor environmental records. Hence, it is unsurprising that over the Yudhoyono decade (2004-2014), the deforestation rate sharply increased, and a major regional haze was repeated in 2013, forcing the president to convey apologies to Indonesia’s affected neighbors. While the country enjoyed a relatively more prosperous economy and a stable political atmosphere, the environmental improvement agenda was in fact, unaccomplished. Hence enhanced international diplomacy for legitimacy within the global climate change multilateralism finds the most relevant context. Similar situations are ongoing under the current government under President Joko Widodo.

**Enhanced Climate Diplomacy**

During the Yudhoyono presidency, Indonesia’s environmental identity and foreign policy featured linkage and synergy between global and regional regimes. These provided political modalities to implement effective coordinated actions. Yet, conflicting material expectations among parties affected the international climate change agreements. For example, the United States’ withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol and other major GHG emitters’ hesitance to fulfill their promises exemplify how incompatibilities about individual national interest have undermined confidence in global climate policy.

To some extent, the North-South disagreements on who should take action, when, and how much, prompted contentious responses within the non-Annex I parties. On the one side, the skeptics question the feasibility of climate governance. On the other side, those optimistic,
including Indonesia, still believe in the legitimising power of liberal institutionalism. As a result, negotiations should be pushed to strengthen the Kyoto Protocol.

Besides technical mechanisms on four issues, namely mitigation, adaptation, technology, and financing, agreed in 28 decision points, perhaps the most visible result of the Nusa Dua negotiation was that it altered the realpolitik constellation in climate change politics. Non-Annex I parties, as well as some emerging economies, appear to be stronger players to make deals with the conservative Annex I countries, especially the US. Although, at the negotiating table, the latter remained able to exert its influence on the weakening of climate policy. First, the Bali Action Plan was approved to shape an ad hoc working group for long-term cooperative action, which would embrace the US and developing nations. The aim was to collaborate with existing working groups responsible for implementing strategies to accomplish emissions targets.

Nevertheless, the reduction commitment was relegated from obligatory to voluntary in response to resistance by the great powers. Second, another step forward in political terms was the recognition of parties of the regime in which the division between Annex I and non-Annex I was abolished, and replaced with developed country parties and developing country parties. This acknowledgement renders a space for the more consequent application of responsibilities based on distinctive economic capacities (Ott, Sterk, & Watanabe, 2008, p. 92).

Indonesia moved further. At the Copenhagen COP in 2009, it declared readiness to obtain individual emissions reductions of 26 percent in 2020. This target would be increased to 41 percent if Indonesia received larger support from the international donors (Hilman, 2010, p. xviii). For this commitment, Indonesia earned the appreciation of the parties at the 2011 Cancun COP. The agreement states that the participants accept the international climate goal of limiting the planet’s temperature below 2 degrees Celsius before industrialisation times. However, it remained unable to produce a general agreement on how such a limit would be achieved. At the final days of the Yudhoyono government, after 12 years, Indonesia finally ratified the ASEAN’s haze treaty, which allows firmer collective actions to cope with the smog troubles. Through all these agreements, Yudhoyono wanted to leave a significant environmental legacy for Indonesia’s international profile.

Conclusions

The article constructed the major discussion on the Indonesian environmental issues in 1990 – 2015. The number of findings illustrated in various sections; the first section stated that the relationship between environmental issues and the conduct of Indonesia’s foreign policy, constructivism in its eclectic form, is evident to be more salient than the dominant theoretical
framework of realism. This case also emerges the state identity conception can be well combined with the concept of legitimacy. Thus the resulting conceptual links make it possible for understanding the domestic and international circumstances which create a feature of environmental politics.

The theoretical section concludes that the agenda on climate change addressed the important indicator of the development of Indonesia’s international relations. It deploys the new order of the Suharto period, where the state developmentalism brought about unfavourable environmental consequences, the most affecting of which was deforestation that engendered haze and emissions, thus contributing to the primary cause of global warming. However, Suharto’s administration disobeyed domestic demand for policy change. The findings stated that it indicated that international reputation is a significant factor in Indonesia’s international interactions. Hence, Jakarta took on a multilateral climate change mitigation agenda to maintain its identity as a responsible environmental actor.

Last, the successive democratic governments have been unable to cope with Suharto’s political and economic legacies. The environment received insignificant attention from the Megawati government. Although the Yudhoyono leadership aspiration encompassed climate change prioritisation, the sustaining real domestic situations were unconducive to an agenda of strengthened environmental protection. Therefore, like the Suharto era’s external conduct, President Yudhoyono used foreign policy to help legitimise his newfound green economic policy.

Indonesia’s climate diplomacy is continually advancing; however it is aimed at underpinning a developmentalist interest. Additionally, the President Jokowi government extended a moratorium set by President Yudhoyono, which halts the issuance of forests and peat-lands (Jakarta Post, 2015) to add the substantial recourses to domestic environmental conditions.

**Implication of Research**

The environmental issues are important in any country. Indonesia is growing to discuss the environmental issues at foreign policy level. The current study highlighted the importance of environmental issues and urged the government for more steps. The article also aims to open a debate and discussion on environmental issues in a flexible and participatory political system.
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