

PLUGGING THE BRAIN DRAIN: THE ROLE OF INDONESIA DIASPORA NETWORK TOWARDS INDONESIAN CITIZENS IN OVERSEAS POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This paper will start from the shifting of brain drain as phenomena and terminology, from traditional (nasionalist) to comprehensive (globalist) thought. The nationalist tends to envisage brain drain as negative impact to source countries while the globalist assumes the 'brain' is not drained but circulated and their roots will be embeded as part of their identities. By choosing Indonesia as the case study, this paper will try to analyse about how the brain drain issue related to Indonesia Diaspora Network (IDN) and how the network of IDN works to influence the homeland government with the globalist thought. The Indonesian President Decree No. 76 on 2017 regarding Facilities for Indonesian Citizens in Overseas (Masyarakat Indonesia di Luar Negeri – MILN) designated, on this paper, as new milestone of attainment to Indonesian Diaspora official recognition, which enclosed to mission of Indonesia Diaspora Network Global (IDN Global) since its established on 2012. Using the theory of Transnational Advocacy Network by Keck and Sikkink, combined with argument of Sara Kalm on Diaspora Strategies as Technology of Citizenship, this paper argues that the launching of the policy shows that: (i) the role of diaspora network as principal actor who spreads and infused the globalist thought to the government, Indonesia citizens in home countries, and collecting international support, (ii) involving Diasporas in policy making process could be a good strategy for Indonesian Government to instill and strengthen diaspora's emotions of national obligations, which will also plug the 'drain' and maintain to circulate the 'brain'. To enrich and emphasize these arguments, some literatures of state-diaspora relations will also be applied.

Key concepts: brain drain, diaspora, transnational advocacy network, citizenship, state-diaspora relations

THE SIFTING OF PERSPECTIVE : THE 'BRAIN' NAMED DIASPORA

High-skilled people migration -hereinafter acknowledged as brain drain- is not a new term for both academic and governmental policy studies. Brain drain, as a concept, was born in the 1950s following the massive migration of scholars to United States who was being a prominent global actor after Word War II, attracting to many foreigners, especially professionals from the global North (and later the South) to its shores (Ansah, 2002, hal. 21). Being part as debatable issue developed by globalization; affected to national, international, and global levels; brain drain literatures and studies acknowledged a new shift from traditional to comprehensive thought.

The traditional sponsored by nasionalist perspective who literally see the migration of high skilled personnels as the 'drain' and loss of homeland country, an exploitation of intellectual resources as the impact of Western colonialism and new world power of capitalism, leaves the poor home country facing the opportunity less developed. On the contrary, the

comprehensive thought, so called globalist perspectives, views highly-skilled people migration as the effect of globalization, and it is a normal action when people with highly potential competency decide to move and challenge themselves seeking more promising opportunity for the better life. It is not always economical reason, as brain drain related to many other complexities issues, suitable to what Philip Abelson contends, “brains go where there is challenge. Brains go where brains are valued for intellectual as well as practical achievements” (Ansah, 2002, hal. 21). For globalist, globalization is a valuable tool that can be employed in circulating intellectual resources in the interest of all those involved in the network, so it is more appropriate to use terminology of brain circulation rather than brain drain.

Substantively, years passed, those ‘brain’, which recognized as ‘drained’, grow and build their own success story in their new country, but interestingly, their roots still connected to home as part of embedded identity. Regular visits, better income which related to money flows (remittance) to the family at home country, in fact, contributes good records to development of the homeland, creating links among home-host countries. Many of those “brain” unofficially be the ambassadors on promoting culture, foods, customs, helping people outside recognized the home country, make the homeland well-known abroad. At the end, they leave benefit vestiges instead of noxiousness, which precisely disproved nationalist perspective, and allows the globalist perspective to shift the nationalist at odds.

The brains, mostly prefer to be admitted as diaspora rather than get the ‘drained’ label at their back¹, create link on each other, began to build prodigious network connecting them to home country, host country, and the global/world. Nowadays, globalist thought had possessed many countries, endorsing homeland to be more concern of their diaspora, then adding diaspora matters as one of their priority policy making agenda, including Indonesia.

The 1st Congress of Indonesian Diaspora (CID 1), held on 6-8 July 2012 in Los Angeles, California, initiated by the Former Ambassador of Indonesia for the United States, Dino Patti Djalal. The congress was attended by more than 2000 Indonesian diasporas and resulting Declaration of Indonesian Diaspora as formal letter of the establishment of Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN)², now is known as IDN Global. Hitherto, IDN successfully conducted

¹ As affirmed by Mr. Dino Patti Djalal, Former Ambassador of Indonesia for United States, about Indonesian Diaspora to Tempo in Jakarta on July 2017 (Suhada, 2017).

² Indonesian Diaspora Network is a network that facilitates and empowers the voice of diaspora communities through its 60 national and local chapters and the number is progressively expanding. IDN-Global also functions

three congress after 2012 which all were held in Jakarta on 2013, 2015 and 2017, with larger enthusiasm of participants. Topics regarding dual citizenship and diaspora cards including visas for ex-citizens of Indonesia were discussed in CID 3 which themed ‘The Diasporas National Dedication’ (IDNGlobal, 2013). On 2017, Indonesian Government launched President Decree No. 76 on August 2017 regarding Facilities for Indonesian Citizens in Overseas (Masyarakat Indonesia di Luar Negeri – MILN), including Diaspora (MILN) Card provision.

MILN status is given to Indonesian and foreign citizen (ex-citizens of Indonesia, child of ex-citizens of Indonesia, foreign citizen whose biological parent is Indonesian citizen who lived and/or work aboard) who lives and/or works in overseas. The regulation allows MILN to (i) opening bank account in public banks; (ii) own the property in Indonesia, and/or (iii) established business/corporate in Indonesia, in accordance with statutory provisions. In order to claim those facilitation, MILN Card generally has the same function as Identity Card. In other words, MILN card might be categorized as formal recognition for Indonesian diaspora by national regulations.³

The 4th Congress of Indonesian Diaspora, at the same year, initiated a taskforce to lobby for a new dual citizenship law, includes the possibility of allowing former Indonesian citizens in the diaspora to reclaim their home country’s nationality (Setianto, 2017): new achievement may obtains, yet the championed still going on.

Hereafter, theoretical framework from Keck and Sikkink about Transnational Advocacy Network and article of Sarah Kalms subject to Diaspora Strategies as Technologies of Citizenship, will be developed as tools of analysis to show the role of IDN Global on influencing government’s perspective and how diaspora strategy might be valuable option as technology of citizenship. A short recommendation will be provided as conclusion of the paper.

FROM ADVOCACY TO TECHNOLOGY

as interlocutor, enabler, the voice of its members in collaboration with the Indonesian government and non-government sectors as well as contributes to development in Indonesia (IDNGlobal, 2013).

³ As stated on Article 1 and Article 2 of the President Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 76 regarding Facilities for Indonesian Citizens in Overseas (MILN).

Globalization delivers us to new order of world politics, state no longer be the one and only actor, many nonstate actors occurs, interact with each other, with states, and with international organizations. These interactions are structured in terms of networks which characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange. The network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas. (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).

Those details of classification suitable to IDN Global profiles, most of the members categorised as epistemic entities and communities (Iskandar, 2016). Some involved as economic actors and firms, some are networks of scientists and experts whose professional ties and shared causal ideas underpin their efforts to influence policy⁴. Mostly, they came from up-middle class of intellectual, which for some other diaspora network looks exclusive. In the other hand, the facts instead affirmed their strong leverage in both national and international scopes.

Keck and Sikkink used terminology of advocacy networks because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition. Advocacy captures what is unique about these transnational networks: they are organized to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms, and they often involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot be easily linked to a rationalist understanding of their “interests.” (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).

Advocacy enables communication flows smoothly, easy to accept, related to empathy, and much possible to manage continuously. Members of IDN Global practicing their advocacy to government on such situation when President, Ministers, Senior Officials or bureaucrats conducted working visit to their resident, usually they will ask (or being asked) by the Embassy to participate on the meeting or hearing session with the said President/Ministers/officials/bureaucrats. The occasions, normally used as good momentum to role their advocacy function. If the target of advocacy at the grassroot level, such as Indonesian citizens in home country or Indonesian labors in overseas, advocacy methods in social-culture events, such as charity, education seminars, labors subject, philanthropy, promotion to traditional cultural, will get more effective and large anthusiasms.

To describe how transnational advocacy network works, Keck and Sikkink develop 4 typology of tactics that networks use in their efforts at persuasion, socialization, and pressure,

⁴ Peter Haas classified these as ‘knowledge-based’ or ‘epistemic communities’. See (Haas, 1992).

which includes (1) information politics, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it will have the most impact; (2) symbolic politics, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently faraway; (3) leverage politics, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and (4) accountability politics, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies or principles.

Based on Keck and Sikkink typology of tactics above, this paper argues that IDN Global should be proud of its working result which succeeded to comply on persuasion, socialization, and pressuring of information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability process. Having Dino Patti Djalal as the founder, which also holds the position as senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Indonesia (Ambassador in 2012 and Vice Minister in 2014), successfully delivers IDN Global to have official access to the high level. No wonder if the presence of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia for 2010-2014, attending CID 1 and CID 2 then delivered his remark which invites diaspora to play a role on Indonesia development, successfully enhancing the images of IDN Global as an institution for its accomplishment. The establishment of Indonesia Diaspora Desk in MoFA, also incurs great enthusiasm from diaspora Indonesia all over the world. Moreover, the presence of Diaspora Desk at the ministerial level proves that Indonesian diaspora attained national authority recognition as a part of national political and independent entity.

What makes IDN Global, as an advocacy network, get higher achievement on tactics and changing the image of diaspora because this network creates and builds by epistemic community, some literatures called this community as scientific diaspora (Tejada G., 2012)⁵. This community has intellectual capability, settled economic ability, maintaining good link and network with homeland, well-known profile and popularity both in home and host country, and also got support from the national authority.

Furthermore, to assess the influence of advocacy networks, Keck and Sikkink identify the following types or stages of network influence: (1) issue creation and agenda setting; (2) influence on discursive positions of states and international organizations; (3) influence on

⁵See also the role of scientific diaspora as agent of development for their homeland in (Tejada, Varzari, & Porcescu, 2013).

institutional procedures; (4) influence on policy change in “target actors” which may be states, international organizations; and (5) influence on state behavior (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).

By using Keck and Sikkink stage of network influence, this paper argues that the presence of the President on supporting Diaspora Congress, the establishment of Diaspora Desk in MoFA, the government concern and support throughout diaspora activities, and last (but not least) the official launched of Presidential Decree No. 76 on 2017 regarding Facilities for MILN has strongly indicated that IDN Global, as transnational advocacy networks, has already accomplished 5 stages of network influence.

Keck and Sikkink’s points of thought had contribute to identify IDN Global play its role as transnational advocacy networks. Particularly, back to the first issue that risen in this paper about terminology of brain drain. IDN Global has succed as principal actor to change the mind set of national stakeholders (government, Indonesia citizen at the homeland and global diaspora network) to no longer assume highly-skilled migrants in overseas as ‘brain drain’ but as part of Indonesian entities whose circulating their ‘brains’ to contribute national development by the comprehensive way of thought.

In compliment, this paper will also use perspective offered by Sarah Kalm who rises the recent phenomenon of a growing number of migrant-sending countries have developed strategies for consciously and proactively engaging with their emigrant citizens. Often encouraged by international organisations and other state and nonstate actors, states employ various instruments for diaspora relations and often set up institutions for this purpose⁶. The background of this policy trend is the realisation that migrant remittances, along with other forms of diaspora financial contributions, constitute major sources of national income for many countries in the south⁷. In this context, Kalm contends, states seek new legal, political, economic and cultural strategies for recreating bonds with their diasporas with a view to enhancing economic developmental gains (Kalm, 2013, hal. 379). Agreed with Kalm opinion, on the case of this paper, I argue that Indonesia took action to formulate diaspora policy with the purpose to seek new strategies in all subjects and strengthen the bonds with Indonesian diaspora to gain their support national development.

⁶ See (Gamlen, 2014).

⁷ See (Patterson, 2006) (Tejada G. , 2012).

While many literature argues diaspora strategies has main intended goal on economic develeponment, Kalm instead concentrates on their effects on the central political institution of citizenship. In Indonesia, brain drain problems no longer economical problems, it is becoming more complex and to date rather than economy, political is being main sight of problems of brain drain and diaspora. Political in this case is refers to citozenship.

Kalm stated that diaspora strategies can be approached as a particular technology of citizenship. Moreover, Kalm combining elements of categorise states diaspora strategies by Chander and Poggi's⁸ categorisation of the various dimensions of the relationship between states and citizens: (1) Legal Strategies—Citizens as Constituents. In this capacity, citizens are approached as the constituents of the state through founding myths and through ongoing collective self-government. Citizens as constituents must apply to whom are included within the collective. In the case of nonresident citizens, I take this dimension to refers the politics of allowing for dual citizenship—the “most literal reconstruction of membership” in origin countries.; (2) Political Strategies—Citizens as Political Participants. This section traces some development as regards voting for non-residents; (3) Economic Strategies—Citizens as Taxpayers. Citizenship involves rights and obligations. We have seen how it is being reconfigured as states extend rights of nationality and political participation. There are good reasons to suspect that states are developing diaspora strategies as a way of extending economic obligations. The idea is to allow sending states to capture a share of migrants' earnings, as compensation for their absence and with a view to counteract the effects of brain drain.⁴⁸ But so far, only a very limited number of countries have carried this out in practice, among them are the USA and Switzerland.; (4) Cultural Strategies—Citizens as Co-nationals. Cultural diaspora strategies appeal to emigrants' loyalties as members of a national collective. Sending states are eager to ensure that their absent citizens continue identifying with the homeland, although they have their permanent residence elsewhere. The challenge for sending states (home country) is to recreate these bonds when the norm of national residence is weakened,

⁸ Chander, *op. cit.*; Gianfranco Poggi, “Citizens and the State: Retrospect and Prospect”, in Quentin Skinner and Bo Stra°th (eds), *States and Citizens: History, Theory, Prospects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 39–50.

that is, when the citizens in question are not resident within state borders. Diaspora strategies are the citizenship technologies for so doing (Kalm, 2013).⁹

By using Kalm combining categorise states-diaspora strategies, I may conclude that on this paper, the government of Indonesia by the MILN regulation has identified its relation with diaspora on category number 4 Cultural Strategies—Citizens as Co-nationals, as Indonesia does not have dual citizenship policy yet.

CONCLUSION

As conclusion of this paper, Indonesian Diaspora Network as transnational advocacy network has shown great effort and hard work to championed their mission on making diaspora Indonesia connected to their homeland not just in socio-economic but also political concerns. Also, to advocate government with globalist thought to see diaspora as part or valuable source for the homeland so they can optimize their role to national development, in paralel, the government sees IDN Global as a great partner to apply Diaspora strategy. An appropriate policy as technology of diaspora strategy will strengthen diaspora's emotions of national obligations. By making continuity affiliation with diaspora network, the brain drain problem will no longer exist as the brain is not will be drained anymore.

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