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International Relations and Its Current Debates in Indonesia

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In the past decades, we have witnessed the evolution and development of the study of international Relations (IR). Historically, the study of IR has been dominated by the western theoretical approaches and experiences in looking at the relations among countries. Research on war and peace, global security, global institutions, and international political-economy became the traditional themes of international relations study with the domination from western actors and perspectives. These approaches and perspectives have shaped the IR epistemological positions within the social sciences. Nonetheless, the study of IR has developed with the engagement of new actors and international phenomenon within the globalized world shaped the debates further (Anderl & Witt, 2020). Critics identified the need for further approaches and engagement with current realities and experiences that derived expansion of the IR debates.

The rise of Global South countries and the effect of globalisation have stimulated debates on the need to look at wider approaches and perspectives on the studies of international relations (Wernli, et.al., 2023). This debate fosters the need to look at wider theoretical perspectives of IR and Southern school of thought in International Relations. The western influence in the study of IR has manifested in the debates that often were not suitable and relevant in identifying the current debates that emerged in the global south. Therefore, contemporary theoretical debates need to continue being revitalized within more localized perspectives and experiences in international relations. Non-western perspectives or school of thought in international relations need to be stimulated to acquire wider and new perspectives and relevances on the study of IR. As many postcolonialism studies have started the debates.

The global situations signified the wider debates in the study of IR. As major events occurred in the past decades including global financial crisis, terrorism, social media, energy crisis, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Covid-19 and the rise of Artificial Technology (AI), have influenced how the world and countries interact with each other. The study of IR expanded to the debates that interlink international relations with technology, new security approach, political economy, cultural aspects of IR, and anthro-sociological perspectives in global issues. These have significant implications to the themes and approaches covered for including on how contemporary global situations should be approached within the study of IR. The study on global health issues, the effect of trade war on relations among countries, the influence of social media to global communities, the importance of SDGs debates to global development narratives, and comparative studies on the implication of globalisation to countries or regions,

has prevailed. It identifies that IR studies are expanding, from traditional IR discourse to contemporary issues in the relations among countries within the globalised world.

With the current debates in IR in regards to theoretical debates and global situations, there is a need to continue nurturing these discussions, especially in deriving Indonesia's perspective of International Relations and how global situations affected the discourse in Indonesia's IR. Indonesia's IR cannot be separated from Indonesia's regional interaction within ASEAN as well as the political-economy-social-cultural relations with neighbouring regions such as Pacific and Australia, as well as East Asia such as China and Japan. Furthermore, Indonesia's foreign policy also cannot be separated from the historical narratives that shaped Indonesia's ideological positions in global situations. The principle of *'bebas-aktif'* (free and active) shaped the perception of Indonesia within the globalised world despite many interpretations and analysis that emerged. This philosophical stand also influences how Indonesia's International Relations school of thought will be evolved, which differs from how western perspectives of IR analysed the relations among countries.

The discussion on expanding IR school of thought or extending the issues in international relations stimulate further discussion on the institutions, actors, systematic approaches, interactions, related phenomenon, or structures of the relations. Therefore, the discussion shall stimulate wider discussion within academic and policy perspectives that contribute to the epistemological and empirical discourses. In that regard, more forums and fora to support the discussion need to be encouraged and nourished within the study of IR.

References

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