



How Does the Indonesian Newspaper Portray Indonesia's Diaspora in Malaysia?

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Abstract. This article examines how the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia has changed over the last 50 years, from bias symptoms to the importance of social cohesiveness. The dynamic and distinctive pattern of social ties between the Indonesian diaspora and Malaysian indigenous peoples, who have a close racial, cultural, and historical relationship, is created. This essay reads news structure maps on the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia produced by Kompas and Republika newspapers using mixed techniques and the NVIVO12 program. This essay concludes that the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia has improved the image of both the Indonesian and Malaysian governments. However, the Indonesian diaspora still has the potential to generate a variety of issues. To enhance access to protection and maximize its role in Indonesia's development, a more visionary diaspora government is required.

Keywords: Indonesian's Diaspora · NVIVO12 · Indonesian Newspaper

1 Introduction

The Indonesian diaspora is the 3rd largest diaspora in the world after China and India, which reaches 8 million people [13]. The number of Indonesian diasporas is even more than the population of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. The large number of Indonesian diasporas cannot be separated from Indonesia's large population, which ranks fifth largest in the world [11]. This pattern is linear with the Chinese and Indian diaspora, which also occupy the country with the largest population in the world.

The Indonesian diaspora is spread across various continents such as America, Europe, Asia, Australia, with the largest population in Malaysia [11]. In each continent, the Indonesian diaspora has the same characteristics as an eastern nation that emphasizes etiquette and manners. Diaspora also tend to build special communities for communication and friendship facilities to strengthen brotherhood. In the context of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia, formed the Association of Indonesian Community (PERMAI) in 2007. PERMAI has become a social organization that interacts well with the Indonesian



Fig. 1. Indonesia Diaspora

government, Malaysia, and also other Indonesian organizations such as the Indonesian Student Association (PPI).

The existence of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia has been around for a very long time, this is related to the migration of a number of ethnic groups in Indonesia to Malaysia before the formation of the state of Malaysia [7]. A number of Bugis, Javanese, Dayak, Malay tribes are found in Malaysia, even street and village names use Indonesian terms. Many of the Indonesian diaspora are already Malaysian citizens and hold high social-political positions, for example a number of Malaysian politicians such as Abdullah Badawi, Muhyiddin Yassin, and Ahmad Zahid Zamidi. Academics at a number of leading universities, such as the Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin are Indonesian diaspora [2].

In various economic sectors, Indonesian diaspora work in large companies in Malaysia such as Malayan Banking Berhad, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, Public Bank Berhad. World Rank, CIMB Group Holdings Berhad. IHH Healthcare Berhad, MISC Berhad, Genting Berhad, Genting Malaysia Berhad, Petronas. In fact, there are 10,989 Indonesian citizens who hold directorship positions in various companies [15].

However, it is undeniable that of the 2.5 million Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia, most of them work in the employment sector that is included in the 3D cluster (dirty, dangerous, difficult) with a low salary structure. The Indonesia’s 3D workers fills jobs in the household, industrial sector which require low skills, plantations, fisheries. In addition, there were still a number of diaspora who work in this sector illegally [4]. This diaspora cluster contributes to social, legal, educational and cultural problems, which creates a stereotype to Indonesia with a negative meaning, such as the “Indon” diction (Fig. 1).

Migrant workers are largely acknowledged as important contributors to the economy of the country (Meyer and Shera, 2017). Furthermore, the flood of migrant workers is required by host industrial countries in order to run national economies that require low-cost labor. Their presence is extremely beneficial to the country’s economic prosperity [14]. Nevertheless, migrant workers experienced various issues including bad framing from local media [12]. Securitization is the common thing faced migrant workers which frequently perceived as national threats that led to the limited access to basic services

[3]. In the context of Indonesian migrant workers, some scholars have studies on the negative framing of migrant workers whether in the host countries such as in Malaysia [12], and Saudi Arabia [9] and home country [16].

Unfortunately, the diaspora issue is an issue that does not always appear in the news structure in newspapers [5]. Reporting on issues about diaspora often appears at accidental moments where bad news is usually dominated by the fate of a number of migrant workers in Indonesia in a number of countries, both in the Middle East, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Good news about the success of migrant workers is usually more expressed individually from the migrant workers themselves in the form of creating a YouTube channel, which contains information about ups and downs, experiences living and working abroad, which usually gets a lot of responses and subscribers from Indonesian netizens. Newspapers that report information about the success of the Indonesian diaspora tend to make special reports, after receiving broadcasts from international media, and then national newspapers follow up with in-depth interviews with the diaspora.

In the context of the Indonesian diaspora, Malaysia has a complex relationship that involves many sides, both in terms of government-government relations, government-community relations, and community-community relations. The ups and downs of Indonesia's political relations are often caused by a number of policies and actions related to discriminatory policies against a number of migrant workers, where the Indonesian government had issued a moratorium policy on sending migrant workers to Malaysia. The problem of borders between two countries that have overlapping spaces, contestation in regional sports competitions also often results in the escalation of negative sentiments among members of the public.

This article will examine the construction of Indonesian newspapers in reporting the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia. Is the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia an uncompetitive diaspora so that it will be a burden both for Malaysia as a recipient country, and in the end will also be a burden for the Indonesian government and the Indonesian people. And what policies are appropriate to put forward in managing the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia so that they are productive for the protection of the Indonesian diaspora, and productive for the development of Indonesia.

2 Literatur Study

Newspaper media is a critical mass media element in reporting something that is not good, such as the expression bad news is a good news [10]. Reporting information on sadness, war, disaster, riots is able to mobilize people to read and pay attention more seriously than when newspapers report information that is nuanced with joy such as the achievements of a person, group or respect for something. Newspapers have the ability to carry out a more in-depth portrait than the reports carried out by government agencies when reporting on government performance.

In international relations (IR), media discourse became a prominent topic for research. Since the early, media has significantly influenced state behaviors since the news coverage would determine the policy outcome. In some cases, media became "game changer" that led to the regime changes [6]. In addition, in a democratic country, media bridging the political communication between policy makers and the people

[17]. Not only the elite who have authority to interpret political situation. Instead, at the current open society along with rich of media platform, people also could force the government for specific demand. Thus, massive propaganda of the media eventually would produce so called “political mobilization” that escalate national politics [1]. Nevertheless, without elite endorsement and response political mobilization may not work [8].

To some extent, the media’s role in society is biased. This is because the media was controlled by the owners. All news coverage represents the views of the owners of funding institutes. The phenomena in Indonesia in the last three decades after political transformation following the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998, demonstrated that businessmen and tycoons were behind media companies. They allegedly linked with the political groups including big names such as Kompas and Republika which became the anchor of this analysis. As result, news broadcasts were not independent due to the involvement of businessmen and political activists (Maksum, Surwandono, & Azizah, 2019). Nevertheless, Kompas and Republika are the most influential newspapers compared to other companies.

In this context, the research on the media discourse and Indonesian migrant workers especially in Malaysia is rarely produced. There is three research on Indonesian migrant workers. First, [12] examine the prejudiced behavior of Malaysian media towards Indonesia. Second, [16] attempts to explore how Indonesian media framing Indonesia’s “remittance hero” and coverage the bad treatment especially in Saudi Arabia. The third paper is [9] who pays specific attention to the media analysis on migrant workers from Saudi Arabia’s perspective. Nevertheless, these studies focus on the negative angle of the media towards Indonesian migrant workers. Although, [16] using similar media companies namely Kompas and Republika, his research focus on gender perspective which is slightly different with this analysis.

Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to scrutinize Indonesian media particularly Kompas and Republika perceive the Indonesian diaspora in general. It means, authors, not only explore how the framing against Indonesian migrant workers. Instead, all Indonesian diaspora who reside in Malaysia whether migrant workers, professionals, students, etc., are considered in the analysis. Thus this article has two main arguments. First, Indonesian media portrays positively the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia under various headline news. Second, although media in Indonesia discovered positive behaviors of the Indonesian diaspora, in the context of state-based policy, the Indonesian diaspora was perceived as a burden for the Indonesian government. Therefore, the next section will highlight the methodology of this research.

3 Research Methods

To obtain the structure of reporting on the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia, it was obtained through analysis on the two national newspapers in Indonesia, namely Kompas and Republika. These newspapers were selected in relation to the number of reports on the diaspora in Indonesia, which was sufficient to obtain an adequate sampling of 50 news articles in the specified time period. In addition, these two newspapers have the same platforms whether offline and online versions. The authors collected the data from 2015 to 2020.

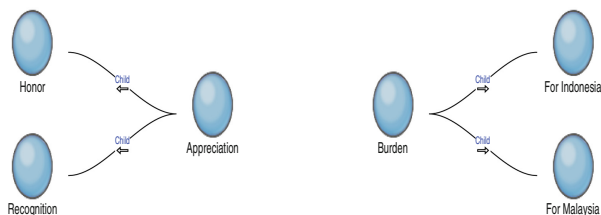


Fig. 2. NVIVO Mind Map for Indonesian Diaspora

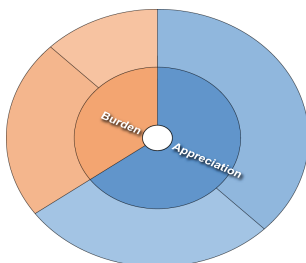


Fig. 3. Indonesian's Diaspora News in Kompas and Republika. Source: Data generated from NVIVO-12 by authors.

Online data from newspapers is processed using the NVIVO 12 application, using an appreciation coding structure with children coding honor and recognition, and burden with children coding for Indonesia and for Malaysia. The coding structure is as follows: (Fig. 2)

Meanwhile, data from the Scopus library is exported into a.RIS file, and then processed using the Vos Viewer application. The results of the extraction in Vos viewer then tracked a number of central variables in the treatment of the diaspora, whether the Indonesian diaspora became a burden for the Indonesian government, or even contributed to Indonesia. In what context does the Diaspora contribute, and in what context does the Diaspora become a burden. So that the process of interpreting social phenomena in this article will use a mixed approach, in order to be able to get a complete picture of the dynamics of the Indonesian diaspora, and in what context these dynamics are formed.

4 Results and Discussion

From the data processing about diaspora in the news structure in Kompas and Republika newspapers, the data display is as follows:

100 news that were collected, it represent 65% of the news reported more good news compared than sad ones. Appreciation news related to the achievements and contributions of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia, both in the fields of education, research, innovation work, as well as contributions to Indonesia's national income as well as contributions to Malaysia. The Indonesian Diaspora built a number of facilities for places of worship and education to support the needs of religious and school information.

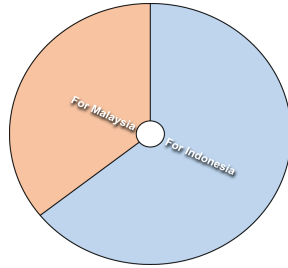


Fig. 4. Burden for Whom?. Source: Data generated from NVIVO-12 by authors.

Burden news represent violations of the law committed by the Indonesian diaspora, as well as the Indonesian diaspora who have experienced discrimination so that they must get protection. The news that caught quite a bit of attention was related to Siti Aisyah who was accused of participating in the murder of the half-brother of the North Korean president in 2019. The Indonesian government must be involved systematically to provide assistance to her in order to be free from the possibility of severe punishments such as the death penalty.

In 2020, the issue of the suffering of the Indonesian diaspora is related to the large number of Indonesian diaspora who have lost their jobs due to the strict lockdown policy of the Malaysian government. In addition, a number of Indonesian diaspora do not have access to adequate health assistance, thus becoming a group that is vulnerable to being infected by the Covid-19 virus. The Malaysian government has implemented a policy to repatriate a number of Indonesian diaspora who have finished their work, or who have been displaced for health or social and economic reasons, and even deported Indonesian diaspora who have violated the law. The Malaysian government then coordinated with the Indonesian government to facilitate the return route (Fig. 4).

Figure 3 shows that in the context of the burden, the existence of the Indonesian diaspora gives more burden to Indonesia than Malaysia. There is a 72% burden on the Indonesian government, where the Indonesian government must be actively involved in providing protection. This includes carrying out evacuations related to the Covid19 Pandemic, where a number of countries pay special attention to this issue. This means that the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia actually gets a lot of acceptance compared to the rejection of its existence.

The 28% burden occurred in 2020 when a global pandemic occurred which caused a number of countries to implement very strict migration securitization policies in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The number of Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia is the largest number, both entering Malaysia through legal and illegal channels. The Malaysian government conducted strict screening in a number of illegal immigrant settlements, and found a number of illegal immigrants, which was then carried out with a deportation policy.

There are still many Indonesian diaspora who have a number of legal problems as well as the unavailability of a reliable diaspora information system. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a diaspora card, but the participation of the diaspora to register is still very low. It is estimated that of the 8 million documented

diaspora, only thousands have registered for a diaspora card. The diaspora views the card as very administrative, the use and function for the diaspora is not too significant. Comparing to The Philippines policy has built a good diaspora information system that will actually be able to document the potential, opportunities, challenges and problems faced by the diaspora, and how to make decisions about the diaspora efficiently.

The management of the Indonesian diaspora must be more systematic, utilizing modern information technology. The management of an 8-million-strong diaspora cannot be undertaken through a manual, haphazard way. A new approach is required that can collect data on a continuous basis while also being participative.

The diaspora information system will be able to collect all of the benefits of a successful diaspora and use them to promote Indonesia's development. The tagline "Brain Gain" was created by the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia as a kind of duty from the Indonesian diaspora to contribute to welfare development. A successful diaspora will be a key pillar in demonstrating that Indonesian human resources are highly competitive in international interactions. At the same time, it will be a significant component in increasing Indonesia's development speed.

On the other side, the potential concerns of the Indonesian diaspora, who enter another country with less potential and low competitiveness, must be addressed. The concept of a diaspora gathering, based on the conference format, demonstrates a greater understanding of the professional sector diaspora. In fact, it covers migrant workers as well. Furthermore, the underachieving diaspora, which has also made important contributions to the Indonesian nation, has been unable to express their need for protection from the Indonesian government.

The Indonesian diaspora's vulnerability is exacerbated by Indonesia's refusal to ratify the convention on refugees and migratory workers. So far, diaspora gatherings have tended to be in the diaspora group; nevertheless, if not effectively managed, they will just become potential, and Indonesia's regulation of diaspora protection has tended to be reactive rather than proactive. After the Indonesian diaspora had a number of issues with the government or the community in which they lived, more security was provided. Protection is still simply informative, with notifications and greetings notifying a number of services that can be accessed in order to acquire protection delivered to every Indonesian citizen who enters the territory of a nation where Indonesia has a representative.

The Indonesian Diaspora has shown a good performance so that it has earned the respect of the parties who have interacted with it. Respect is given both by the government or the international community as well as by the Indonesian government. Honors are usually administrative and temporary, when a diaspora makes a proud contribution and achievement. While recognition is respect that is permanent and inherent in it. The issue of recognition is related to the desire for Indonesian diaspora to have the opportunity to become Indonesian citizens without having to give up citizens who have been owned by other countries (Fig. 5).

In the above figure, illustrates that appreciation for the achievements and production of the Indonesian diaspora is largely carried out objectively by stakeholders of the Indonesian diaspora. The Indonesian diaspora's contribution to improving Malaysia's quality of life. The Indonesian diaspora is undeniably capable of meeting the needs of

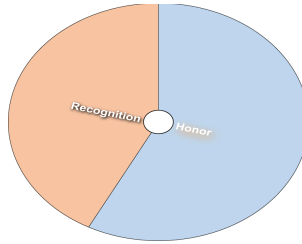


Fig. 5. Indonesian diaspora honoured and recognised. Source: Data generated from NVIVO-12 by authors.

Malaysia's informal sector, both in the private sector, such as home assistants, and in the informal sector, such as construction and plantation services. The Indonesian diaspora, on the other hand, is recognized for its contribution to the country's foreign exchange, particularly Indonesian workers in Malaysia.

Domestic assistants from Indonesia have distinct advantages compared to domestic assistants from several other Southeast Asian countries related to the tendency of similarity in language, culture, especially in religious affiliation. In the construction services sector, there are advantages related to the relatively similar structure and infrastructure of Indonesia and Malaysia, thus facilitating the process of adaptation to work. Likewise in the plantation sector, which also has the same plantation characteristics, namely oil palm plantations. And most importantly, Indonesian migrant workers are willing to accept lower wages than workers from Malaysia for the same type and quality of work.

The Indonesian diaspora has contributed greatly to the professional service sector, such as the oil industry, banking, halal tourism, and technological innovation. A number of awards have been received by the Indonesian diaspora, so that the professional position of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia is very productive. Even these professional diaspora build associations with the tagline "Brain Gain", a concept that shows that they have the advantage of "brain" that can be utilized for Indonesia's development. Indonesian Brain Gain Association is a community of Indonesian professionals in Malaysia that aims to provide a platform for diaspora -individuals who have emotional ties or ancestry with Indonesia- to contribute professional experiences, ideas or inspirational things while living abroad to the Indonesian people.

In fact, the Indonesian government has also paid tribute to these achievements through policies to facilitate the naturalization process for a number of productive Indonesian diaspora. Even a number of bureaucratic positions are given specifically to accommodate a number of Indonesian diaspora so that they can work and become Indonesian citizens. However, the real need of the diaspora is not the availability of job opportunities for them in Indonesia. Indonesian professional diaspora have been found in job positions with better remuneration and facilities compared to those offered by the government.

The aspiration of the Indonesian diaspora is to gain recognition in the form of dual citizenship. Indonesian diaspora who already have non-Indonesian citizenship, and wish to become Indonesian citizens, must renounce the citizenship they already have. This is related to the policy of the Indonesian government which still uses the principle

of one citizenship. This aspiration was strengthened at the third Indonesian Diaspora Conference in 2015. This issue was strengthened again at the 4th Indonesian diaspora conference in 2019, using the big theme “Embrace and treat us who are scattered abroad as children of the nation”. To continue fighting for the issue of two citizens, the Indonesian diaspora formed the IDN-Global Immigration and Citizenship Working Group (WG-IK IDN-G) consisting of 15 volunteers, representing the Indonesian diaspora from America, Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Kuwait, Malaysia, Japan and Australia.

4.1 Diaspora Information System: Protection Management.

In terms of citizenship, this WG will, for example, track and record issues that happen when the Diaspora submits the Indonesian Community Card Abroad (KMILN) and issues that arise when it is used in Indonesia, as well as other citizenship-related issues. The continuation of the fight for Dual Citizenship (DK), which became one of the stipulations of the 2nd Indonesian Diaspora Congress in 2013, is one of the most critical citizenship concerns handled by WG-IK IDN-G.

The WG will create guidebooks for applying for ITAS, ITAP, KMILN, and other programs as part of their voluntary work, if the Indonesian diaspora requires them. Volunteers for WG-IK IDN-G can contact Chair Herman Syah at mansyah_60@hotmail.com to register.

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The Indonesian government has actually paid tribute to these achievements through policies to facilitate the naturalization process for a number of productive Indonesian diaspora. Even a number of bureaucratic positions were given specifically to accommodate a number of Indonesian diaspora in order to work and become Indonesian citizens. However, the real need of the diaspora is not the availability of job opportunities for them in Indonesia. The Indonesian professional diaspora has been awarded a job position with a salary remuneration and facilities that are better than those offered by the government.

5 Conclusion

The dynamics of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia shows high productivity, both for the country where the diaspora is located, and for development developments in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the Indonesian diaspora still has two problems that the Indonesian government must take seriously. First, there is still a high possibility of the Indonesian diaspora getting legal discrimination in a number of countries where they work due to the Indonesian government not yet ratifying the convention on the protection of migrant workers. Second, the appreciation of the Indonesian diaspora that already has a non-Indonesian nationality has not been opened, related to the fact that the dual citizenship policy has not been legalized, as has been taken by a number of countries to increase the participation of the diaspora in national development.

Policy's breakthroughs are needed to manage the size of the Indonesian diaspora in Malaysia through substantive policies through the preparation of legal policy instruments in favor of the diaspora, and administrative policies through the preparation of a diaspora information system as a development of the initial policies that have been taken by Indonesia through digitally making diaspora cards. The digital diaspora card can be a baseline for building a more comprehensive diaspora information system to improve the legal, social and economic protection of the Indonesian diaspora, both in the country where they work, and when they live and work in Indonesia.

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