

## Internationalisation of Pancasila: Strengthening the character of the Indonesian diaspora against transnational ideologies

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### Abstract

This study examines conditions in the Indonesia–Malaysia border region and the influence of transnational ideologies on Indonesian citizens (*Warga Negara Indonesia*, WNI) abroad. Adopting an autoethnographic approach supplemented by a multi-site digital questionnaire survey, it analyses how transnational ideologies shape the national identity and citizenship orientation of Indonesian citizens in this border region. The study finds a significant development gap between North Kalimantan and Sabah, which has made border communities economically dependent on Malaysia and fuels high levels of goods smuggling and irregular labour migration. Socially, the Indonesian diaspora in Sabah is divided along ethnic lines, while migrant workers face discrimination. The study highlights the importance of diplomacy in protecting migrant workers' rights and fostering harmonious relations between Indonesia and Malaysia. It also finds that transnational ideologies, notably liberalism and radicalism, influence Indonesian citizens abroad, who can be categorised into three groups: (1) those who understand Pancasila, (2) those influenced by extreme liberalism and (3) those influenced by radicalism. The study concludes that the main challenges to sustaining Pancasila in border regions and among the diaspora are economic inequality, inadequate educational facilities and the influence of transnational ideologies. Strategic policies are needed to strengthen the nationalism of Indonesian citizens abroad and to improve the welfare of border communities.

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## Introduction

In 2012, I was appointed Head of the Sub-Directorate for the Forum for East Asia–Latin America Cooperation within the Directorate of Intra-Regional Cooperation for the Americas and Europe at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, in 2011–2012, I had served as an observer with a combat intelligence unit in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. At that time,



I was one of 15 Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomats deployed jointly with personnel of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) drawn from various Army units (the Army Strategic Reserve Command, the Raider Battalion and the Special Forces Command) and Navy units (the Marine Corps and the Jalamangkara Detachment). Elements of the Air Force were also included (then the Special Forces Command, renamed the Rapid Action Forces Command in 2022). All TNI personnel were classified as commandos, given the high level of risk and sensitivity attached to assignments in the Mindanao conflict area.

We were all assigned to the Indonesian Garuda Contingent XXXIV-A of the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao (Hutabarat, 2018). Before our deployment to the Mindanao operational zone, we underwent a month of training at the Peacekeeping Mission Centre (PMPP) in Sentul, West Java, under qualified and experienced combat intelligence instructors from the Indonesian Army, Navy and Air Force who had themselves served with United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces in conflict zones around the world. The PMPP is recognised by the UN as a training centre for peacekeepers from other countries prior to their deployment to conflict zones. Ordinarily, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs posts a newly appointed diplomat to an Indonesian mission abroad (an embassy, consulate general or consulate) only after at least one year of service at the ministry in Jakarta. My case was different, however, because the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau urgently required a senior diplomat. The consulate had previously operated as the Tawau Immigration and Customs Office and was inaugurated as a consulate in 2011. Although it initially functioned without difficulty, within a few years many diplomats were declining postings there, because several senior diplomats who had served in Tawau had encountered serious problems in delivering consular services to Indonesian citizens, including migrant workers.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff were aware of these problems. In providing services, particularly to Indonesian migrant workers, some senior diplomats had become involved in corruption and extortion targeting Indonesian citizens and migrant workers, instigated by certain immigration technical staff. Several of these diplomats were subsequently convicted, served prison sentences on their return to Indonesia, and were dishonourably discharged from the diplomatic service and from the civil service (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*, ASN) of the ministry. I had also heard unfavourable accounts of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau, Sabah, East Malaysia, from colleagues at the ministry. The Head of the Personnel Bureau then handed me a pink official memorandum, known among ministry staff as the 'Red Slip', which conveys an instruction from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, through the Secretary General, to the Head of the Personnel Bureau (*Karo Kepegawaian*) to post a diplomat to an Indonesian mission abroad, whether an embassy, a consulate general or a consulate. The Head of the Personnel Bureau had spent almost a year searching for a diplomat willing to serve at the consulate in Tawau, but many had declined for various reasons.

Before examining the clash between Pancasila and the transnational ideologies that challenge it among Indonesian citizens in Malaysia, and in order to situate the direction of this study, it is useful to outline the general conditions of Malaysia and, more specifically, of Sabah in East Malaysia. The state of Sabah, particularly Tawau and its surroundings, is the research site. In terms of development, Sabah and Sarawak have received less equitable treatment from the federal government, as their indigenous populations are largely non-Muslim, unlike the Muslim Malays who form the majority in Peninsular Malaysia (Cahyono, 2018; Istania, 2021). Malaysia is a complex case: although, implicitly and through unwritten conventions, it presents itself as a state founded on Islam, historically it remained highly deferential to Britain.

According to this account, Britain deliberately granted independence to the Federation of Malaya on 31 August 1957 by establishing the offices of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the prime minister (Pham, 2010). Britain continued to exert influence over the Malay rulers through the prime minister, through the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) as its political vehicle and through a pro-British parliament. The aim was to shape the granting of

independence and the selection of the Federation's leaders so that British power could continue to hold sway in Southeast Asia through Malay intermediaries. Both the colonial authorities and the post-independence establishment also sought to marginalise Malay religious and nationalist leaders who had opposed British rule. Earlier resistance figures such as Haji Hassan bin Panglima Mat Munas (Tok Janggut), who was killed in the 1915 Kelantan uprising, and Mohammed bin Ibrahim (Mat Kilau), a leader of the Pahang resistance of the 1890s, were long portrayed as rebels. Leftist and Islamic nationalists were detained without trial, first under the Emergency Regulations and later under the Internal Security Act of 1960; Sheikh Haji Abu Bakar Al-Baqir was detained in 1948, and Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, President of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), was detained in 1965 on allegations of collaborating with Indonesia during the Confrontation (A. Arifin, personal communication, 2012), while the Malayan Communist Party under Chin Peng was proscribed and fought as an insurgency.

For this reason, over the past decade, in addition to Azmi Arifin, the former Malaysian Minister of Defence Mohamad Sabu has observed that many historians, politicians and other Malaysians have begun to question whether the National Monument (*Tugu Negara*) is truly a monument to national heroes. Many Malaysians have consequently also questioned the commemoration of Warriors' Day (*Hari Pahlawan*) on 31 July, asking why the National Monument honours those who fell in the Second World War and the Emergency, including British and Commonwealth soldiers who fought the communist insurgents of the Malayan Communist Party (PKM), rather than the Malay religious and nationalist leaders who had resisted colonial rule. The debate intensified in 2011, when Mohamad Sabu questioned the official narrative of the 1950 Bukit Kepong incident, in which Malay police officers and their families were killed by communist insurgents. Critics of the official historiography argue that the colonial authorities labelled anti-colonial Malay nationalists as communists during the Emergency. In Malaysian historiography, the Emergency lasted from 1948 to 1960, while the conflict with the Malayan Communist Party led by Chin Peng formally ended only with the 1989 peace agreement. Malaysian historians have since argued that these religious nationalists' struggle has been vindicated, since Malaya remained within Britain's sphere of influence. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the prime minister, parliament and pro-British UMNO politicians subsequently brought Malaya into the Commonwealth, alongside other former British colonies.

Malaysia's system of government is modelled on Britain's parliamentary constitutional monarchy. This brief historical overview shows how deeply Malaysian history is marked by transnational ideologies that run counter to Pancasila. The strong influence of the former colonial power (Malaysia remains a member of the Commonwealth) also means that liberalism shapes Malaysian life considerably. This helps to explain why the Malaysian government has not required its citizens to internalise its national ideology, the *Rukun Negara* (National Principles). Although this ideology, inspired by Pancasila, was proclaimed on 31 August 1970 by the National Operations Council, local informants whom I encountered (teachers, Ministry of Education officials and others) stated that the *Rukun Negara* has not been incorporated into the school curriculum: it is not taught systematically from primary school to university level, and the government is only now considering doing so. It is therefore unsurprising that many Malaysians are unfamiliar with their own national ideology. Yet ideology guides a country's political, economic, social and cultural policy, and it carries elements of national cultural and linguistic identity (Anderson, 1983/1991; Martono et al., 2022). A similar lack of attention applies to the Malay language. The Malaysian government has long designated Malay as the national language and a compulsory subject in schools and universities; in practice, however, it has not required the correct and standard use of Malay in everyday life.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on citizenship, diaspora and border governance in Southeast Asia, existing studies have largely examined transnational identity, Indonesian diaspora formation and border community dynamics as separate lines of inquiry (e.g., Jackson et al., 2004; Tedeschi et al., 2022). Sulistyarini et al. (2021) and Wahyudi et al. (2020) address citizenship formation among Indonesian border communities, while Carruthers (2017) and

Berenschot and van Klinken (2018) discuss borderland identity and the politics of citizenship more broadly, and Dewantara, Budimansyah, Prasetyo, et al. (2026) examine transnational citizenship identity in the Indonesia–Malaysia border region. However, none of these studies connects the lived, autoethnographic experience of a diplomatic practitioner with the everyday negotiation of Pancasila against competing transnational ideologies among Indonesian citizens along the Indonesia–Malaysia border. This gap underpins the novelty of the present study, which integrates an insider, practitioner-based autoethnographic account with a multi-site digital questionnaire survey to explain how border communities and the diaspora negotiate national ideology under conditions of economic dependency and cross-border ideological exposure – an angle not previously examined in the citizenship studies literature on this region.

## Method

The Indonesian government began to extend Pancasila Ideology Development (*Pembinaan Ideologi Pancasila*, PIP) to all components of the nation only in 2017, when President Joko Widodo established the Presidential Work Unit for Pancasila Ideology Development (UKP PIP). PIP education expanded and deepened in a large-scale, planned, structured and directed manner only after UKP PIP was transformed into the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency (BPIP) in 2018. Through discussions with fellow researchers during this study, we agreed that, to facilitate data collection and reach Indonesian citizens in distant locations abroad, I would develop a digital questionnaire containing the interview items to distribute to and have completed by the target respondents.

Digital questionnaires are now widely used and are recognised in academic research as a practical means of data collection, particularly for reaching informants in remote locations. On 12 June 2024, I visited a senior official of the Directorate of Deradicalisation at the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) to obtain comparable information on Indonesian citizens exposed to radicalism abroad, especially in Malaysia (Abdullah, 2009). The official's account largely mirrored that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the BNPT had not pursued further information following the cases of Dr Azahari and Noordin M. Top, who had entered Indonesia from Malaysia undetected by the Indonesian security forces and carried out terrorist attacks in the country.

I also travelled abroad, including to China and Malaysia, to collect data through face-to-face interviews with informants. On 20 June 2024, I visited the Indonesian Consulate General in Guangzhou, China, to interview the head of mission, three diplomats and local Indonesian staff. On the same occasion, five Indonesian students at South China Normal University in Guangzhou completed the digital questionnaire as target informants. On 25 June 2024, we travelled to Beijing to gather information from the education attaché and a senior communications official at the Indonesian Embassy. Five Indonesian students from Beijing Language and Culture University, the Central University of Finance and Economics and Beijing Foreign Studies University also completed the questionnaire as informants.

On my return to Indonesia, I corresponded with a director responsible for American affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, on 9 October 2024, requested assistance in forwarding a letter seeking support for the PIP research to the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, DC. The Deputy Chief of Mission responded and undertook to forward the digital questionnaire to Indonesian students through PERMIAS (the Indonesian Student Association in the United States). At the same time, students in Milan, Italy, helped to distribute the questionnaire to members of the Indonesian Student Association in Italy. Finally, the questionnaire was distributed to Indonesian citizens within the jurisdiction of the Indonesian Consulate General in Vancouver, Canada, with the consul general's assistance.

The consul general agreed to distribute the questionnaire to the Indonesian community served by the consulate general. Washington (United States), Vancouver (Canada) and Milan (Italy) were selected because these countries represent societies shaped predominantly by

Western liberalism. They therefore provide a point of comparison for the questionnaires distributed in Malaysia, which this study regards as more exposed to radicalism, although liberalism is also influential there owing to the strong legacy of British colonialism. Subsequently, on 12 October 2024, I undertook a field trip to Sabah, Malaysia, together with fellow autoethnographic researchers. The reasons for returning to Tawau require a brief explanation: I had previously been posted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau.

Tawau and its surroundings, including the Indonesian Consulate, were chosen as the research site because I served there as Indonesian Consul from 2012 to 2017. Fieldwork in Tawau was necessary because my two fellow researchers' research also addressed transnational themes and adopted an autoethnographic methodology; we therefore conducted joint research on migrant workers on oil palm plantations around Tawau and Lahad Datu in Sabah, East Malaysia (Dewantara & Budimansyah, 2024). I interviewed around 10 diplomats and local staff of the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau and asked them to complete the digital questionnaire, which I had previously sent to the acting head of the consulate, who also served as consul for manpower. The questionnaire assessed the extent to which Indonesian citizens abroad understand Pancasila and the transnational ideologies that conflict with it, as well as the threats these ideologies pose (Kambo & Yani, 2024). The responses were analysed and used to formulate a PIP internationalisation strategy for Indonesian citizens abroad.

Such a strategy is urgently needed so that the government, through its missions abroad, can help to improve the quality of life of Indonesian citizens working overseas, while also preventing transnational ideologies from spreading within Indonesia. I collected data through face-to-face meetings in the field and by distributing questionnaires to informants, including officials of ministries and agencies and civil servants in Indonesia, as well as officials and local staff at the Indonesian Embassy in Beijing, the Indonesian Consulate General in Guangzhou, the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, the Indonesian Consulate General in Vancouver and the Indonesian Consulate in Tawau.

**Table 1.**

*Demographic profile of respondents*

| No | Criteria  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Gender    | Male 66.7% (n=44); Female 33.3% (n=22)                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2  | Religion  | Muslim 74.1% (n=49); Catholic 9.1% (n=6); Buddhist 7.8% (n=5); Protestant 7.5% (n=5); Other 1.5% (n=1)                                                                                                                  |
| 3  | Age       | 18–30 years 52.6% (n=32); 31–40 years 24.6% (n=15); 41–50 years 16.3% (n=10); 51–60 years 6.5% (n=4)                                                                                                                    |
| 4  | Education | Bachelor's degree 52.9% (n=35); master's degree 23.2% (n=14); Senior high school 12.1% (n=8); Diploma 4.5% (n=3); Junior high school 4.5% (n=3); No formal schooling, elementary and doctoral education 1.5% (n=1) each |

*Source: Primary survey data.*

The questionnaire was also distributed to Indonesian migrant workers on oil palm plantations. I visited three oil palm companies in Tawau and Lahad Datu, Sabah, hereafter referred to as Companies A, B and C. Using a qualitative, autoethnographic approach to process and describe the data, I formulated the initial premise that Indonesian citizens abroad are in a highly vulnerable position (Abu Sulaib, 2021; Alkhayat & Alanezi, 2024). I interviewed 10 migrant workers employed by Company A in Tawau.

I also interviewed 20 migrant workers from Company B in Tawau and 10 from Company C in Lahad Datu, Sabah, and asked them to complete the digital questionnaire, which I had previously sent to the plantation managers. The interviews and questionnaire responses reinforced my initial premise, particularly what I observed while serving in Tawau. These

findings strengthened my conviction that the Indonesian government should urgently implement a strategy to internationalise Pancasila and protect Indonesian citizens abroad from transnational ideologies that conflict with it.

Most respondents were male (66.7%), with women accounting for 33.3%. By religion, most were Muslim (74.1%), followed by Catholic (9.1%), Buddhist (7.8%), Protestant (7.5%) and other (1.5%). By age, 52.6% were aged 18–30, 24.6% were aged 31–40, 16.3% were aged 41–50 and 6.5% were aged 51–60. In terms of education, the majority held a bachelor's degree (52.9%), followed by a master's degree (23.2%), senior high school (12.1%), a three-year diploma and junior high school (4.5% each), and no formal schooling, primary school and doctoral education (1.5% each).

## Results and Discussion

### Overview of the implementation of the Pancasila/PIP internationalisation strategy for Indonesian citizens abroad

In March 1979, the New Order government under President Soeharto established the Agency for the Development of Education on the Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of Pancasila (BP7; Hearman, 2018). The agency was assisted by the Presidential Advisory Team on the Implementation of the Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of Pancasila (P7). Through this non-departmental government agency, the New Order regime pursued its ideological projects freely until they were halted by the reform movement (*Reformasi*) that erupted in 1998. For some 19 years, the government required every civil servant and member of society to undergo training in the Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of Pancasila (P4). P4 education and instruction within the education system, the state apparatus and society were guided by the 45 points of Pancasila. P4 training typically elaborated on Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution and the points of Pancasila as an elaboration of its five principles. These points are not stated explicitly in the original text of Pancasila in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution; they were formulated only at the second session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR RI) in 1978.

The legal basis for the points of Pancasila is MPR Decree No. II/MPR/1978 on the Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of Pancasila, or *Ekaprasetia Pancakarsa*, which sets out the 45 points explaining and applying Pancasila. At the school level, P4 was first taught through Pancasila Moral Education (PMP), introduced in the 1975 Curriculum as a compulsory subject from primary to senior secondary school. PMP covered the history of Pancasila and examples of its application as a moral guide for students. Alongside it, National Struggle History Education (PSPB), which aimed to deepen historical values, was introduced in the 1984/1985 academic year.

As its name suggests, PSPB sought to deepen students' understanding of Indonesian history as a history of struggle, from prehistoric times and the pre-independence era to the physical and human development that followed independence. PSPB was removed from the national curriculum with the introduction of the 1994 Curriculum under Wardiman Djojonegoro, Minister of Education and Culture during the New Order.

Following the removal of PSPB and the decline of P4 instruction, there was a growing debate among educators, policymakers, and the public about the long-term effects on national identity and civic values. Critics argued that the absence of structured Pancasila education contributed to a weakening sense of unity and a lack of moral guidance among Indonesian youth. As a result, discussions about reintroducing or reformulating Pancasila education began to surface in academic and political circles, highlighting the enduring importance of the ideology in shaping the nation's character.

The Reformasi movement of 1998, which ended the Soeharto government, generated a wave of anti-New Order (anti-Orba) euphoria in which anything associated with the New Order, including national legal instruments, was rejected indiscriminately. The People's Consultative Assembly of the Reform era subsequently issued MPR Decree No. I/MPR/2003, which upheld MPR Decree No. XVIII/MPR/1998. The latter revoked MPR Decree No. II/MPR/1978 on P4 and affirmed Pancasila as the foundation of the state, paving the way for the dissolution of BP7.

In the years following Reformasi, the Indonesian government and civil society continued to grapple with how best to instil Pancasila values in a rapidly changing society. While formal instruction in Pancasila was no longer mandated, various initiatives emerged to promote its principles through extracurricular activities, community programs, and public campaigns. These efforts reflected a recognition that, despite the political controversies of the past, the foundational ideas of Pancasila remained central to the Indonesian identity and social cohesion.

Subsequently, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System no longer required educational institutions to teach Pancasila, PMP, PSPB or P4 from primary school to university. As a result, Pancasila ceased to be taught as a dedicated subject for more than a decade. To revive the teaching of Pancasila, President Joko Widodo launched Pancasila Ideology Development by establishing the Presidential Work Unit for PIP (UKP PIP) in 2017. In 2018, UKP PIP was transformed into the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency (BPIP) through Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2018. The operational administration of BPIP was further strengthened by BPIP Regulation No. 5 of 2021 on the Organisation and Work Procedures of BPIP, which states that the main duties and functions of BPIP include disseminating PIP and fostering its internalisation.

### **Formulating a strategy for Pancasila character education through the internationalisation of PIP for Indonesian citizens abroad**

In general terms, strategy is the art by which individuals or groups deploy their capabilities and resources to achieve their goals through procedures considered effective and efficient (Davies et al., 2018). One function of strategy is to minimise the risk of failure while opening up and increasing opportunities for success. The discipline concerned with managing strategy is known as strategic management. The best-known strategic thinker in the literature is Sun Tzu (c. 500 BCE), the ancient Chinese general and military strategist renowned as the author of *The Art of War*. His writings are taught not only at leading military academies but also at prominent business schools worldwide.

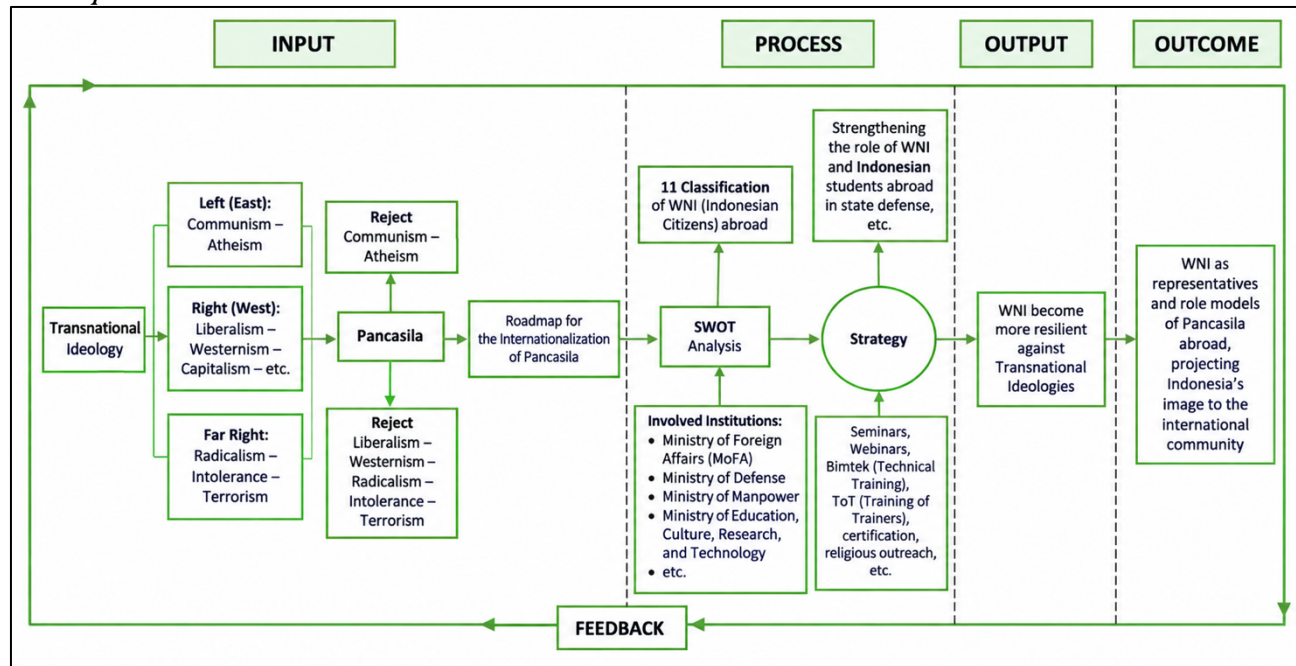
The historicity of Sun Tzu appears to have been confirmed by the 1972 discovery of his work, along with that of his apparent descendant, Sun Bin (d. 316 BCE). Sun Tzu is said to have lived, fought and composed his work during the Spring and Autumn period, which preceded the Warring States period (c. 481–221 BCE), when the Zhou dynasty was in decline. In the early part of this period, Chinese warfare followed traditional protocols governing the conduct of warriors before, during and after battle. Over time, however, the rigidity and uniformity of these protocols became frustrating, because no state could gain an advantage when all followed the same rules and tactics. Sun Tzu's work sought to break this deadlock by setting out a clear strategy for decisive victory by any means necessary (Mark, 2020).

Given society's dynamic nature, government institutions can apply such strategies in performing their duties and delivering services to the public, with adjustments appropriate to changing circumstances. During the New Order, for example, the government (through BP7) delivered PIP through PMP and PSPB for primary and secondary schools and through P4 training for universities, civil servants (ASN) and the armed forces and police (TNI/Polri). Since the transition from the New Order to the Reform era, however, the government (through BPIP) has implemented PIP for the public through programmes adapted to contemporary needs, in contrast to P4 training, which required participants to sit and listen to lectures by P4 instructors (*manggala*) and to take part in activity simulations for hours on end.

Likewise, BPIP supports the internationalisation of PIP to fulfil the mandate of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, under which Indonesia participates in establishing a world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. To internationalise Pancasila for Indonesian citizens abroad, the concept must first be defined, and a strategy then formulated. In this study, the internationalisation of Pancasila Ideology Development is defined as all strategies formulated and efforts undertaken by the Indonesian government, particularly through BPIP, to internalise and institutionalise PIP among Indonesian citizens abroad (civil servants, officials, professionals, migrant workers and students) and among members of the Indonesian diaspora who have long resided overseas (Hertzman, 2023). Figure 1 presents the resulting conceptual framework.

**Figure 1.**

*Conceptual framework for the internationalisation of Pancasila for Indonesian citizens abroad*



The figure illustrates an Input–Process–Output–Outcome framework for strengthening Pancasila-based ideological resilience among Indonesian citizens abroad. Transnational ideological influences constitute the input, while Pancasila functions as the normative reference for developing an internationalisation roadmap. Through SWOT analysis, inter-institutional collaboration, citizen mapping, and education and training strategies, the framework aims to develop Indonesian citizens who are more resilient in responding to transnational ideological influences. In the longer term, they are expected to represent Pancasila values and contribute to Indonesia's international image. The feedback mechanism enables continuous evaluation and refinement of the strategy.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the challenges and dynamics faced by Indonesian citizens (WNI) in the Indonesia–Malaysia borderlands and abroad, particularly in relation to transnational ideologies. Several main conclusions can be drawn. First, a marked development gap exists between the Indonesian and Malaysian sides of the border. North Kalimantan, particularly Nunukan, has limited infrastructure and public facilities compared with Tawau in Malaysia. This disparity fosters a high degree of economic dependence on Malaysia, including the use of the Malaysian ringgit in local trade, and exacerbates smuggling and irregular labour migration, which the Indonesian government finds difficult to control (Nesadurai, 2013).

Second, the Indonesian diaspora in Sabah is characterised by complex social dynamics (Belton, 2015). It is divided into ethnically based communities and faces various challenges, including stigma and discrimination from local Malaysian society (Dewantara, Budimansyah,

Darmawan, et al., 2026). The pejorative term 'Indon' for Indonesian migrant workers is one indicator of this situation (Kuntjara & Hoon, 2020; Lan, 2012). Diplomacy therefore plays a vital role in protecting migrant workers' rights and strengthening bilateral relations.

Third, transnational ideologies pose a real threat to how Indonesian citizens abroad understand and practice Pancasila. The two dominant ideologies are liberalism and radicalism. Indonesians who live abroad for long periods often absorb these ideologies and bring them back to Indonesia, whether as unrestrained freedom (extreme liberalism) or as ideological fanaticism (radicalism). Addressing this requires strengthening Pancasila values in the everyday lives of Indonesian citizens, both at home and abroad.

Fourth, British colonial rule has shaped Malaysia's political and economic systems. Although Sabah and Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, they continue to experience inequity in the distribution of natural resource revenues. This inequality has fuelled discontent among local communities and strengthened demands for greater autonomy in both states, offering Indonesia an important lesson in managing its border regions and ensuring a more equitable distribution of development.

Fifth, Indonesia needs strategic policies to address the problems facing border communities and the Indonesian diaspora. The Indonesian government should increase investment in infrastructure and education in border areas to reduce dependence on neighbouring countries. More proactive diplomacy is also required to protect the rights of Indonesian citizens abroad and to build a positive international image of Indonesia. Overall, this study confirms that the main challenges to sustaining Pancasila in border regions and among the diaspora are economic inequality, inadequate educational facilities and the influence of transnational ideologies (Fatmawati & Dewantara, 2022). With appropriate policies and synergy among government, society and the diaspora, Indonesia can strengthen its national resilience and ensure that Pancasila remains the guiding framework for all Indonesian citizens, at home and abroad.

### Competing interests

The authors have declared no competing interests.

### Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and of their right to withdraw at any time, and all identifying information has been anonymised: informants are referred to by their institutional role and participating companies by letter.

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