Peacebuilding Based on Internal and External Resources

Challenges from Traditional Regions and ASEAN

Edited by
Mitsuru Yamada
& Kazumi Abe

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The year 2025 marks eighty years since the end of World War II. While the "80th anniversary of the war's end" was a significant milestone toward peace, wars and conflicts still persist around the world. We hope this book offers insights for building a peaceful society.

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Preface

First of all, we would like to thank the contributors to this book. Despite their demanding university responsibilities, the contributors actively submitted outstanding work for this book. The planning of this book received the advantage of joint research supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research, JSPS KAKENHI, Grant Number 22KK0017.

Each chapter is composed of participants from the international symposium held at Waseda University on July 11, 2025, and participants from the seminar on Timor-Leste's ASEAN accession held at the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) on September 2, 2025.

The theme of the international symposium was "Peacemaking based on traditional resource management." As above-mentioned, it was supported by the JSPS Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research. Specifically, in collaboration with Warmadewa University in Indonesia as a joint research partner, we are conducting joint research on "The Role of Traditional Institutions for Resource Management and Their Relationship with Sustainability." For this event, we invited Rector Dr. Ir. I Gde Suranaya Pandit to deliver the keynote address. we would also like to thank Dr. Ir. I Gede Pasek Mangku, Dr. Putu Ayu Sita Laksmi, and Ms. Pande Ayu Naya Kaish Permatananda for their presentations.

We also invited Prof. Dr. Alarico da Costa Ximenes, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UNTL, and Lecturer Mr. Janio Tilman to present at the international symposium. Timor-Leste was incorporated as Indonesia's 27th

province, but following the August 1999 referendum and a period of UN interim administration, it formally achieved independence in May 2002.

The nation is currently advancing its state-building efforts toward modernization. The seminar held at UNTL on September 2 addressed the fact that the 11th member state will be decided at the ASEAN Summit in Malaysia on October 26, 2025. Dean Alarico and Lecturer Tilman arranged an opportunity to hold a seminar with members of the ASEAN Research Group in Japan, which I have participated in for over 20 years, on the prospects for Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership from Japan's perspective. In particular, I consider the ongoing plan to establish a Japanese Studies Center within UNTL's Faculty of Social Sciences, which I am advancing together with both of them, to be an important form of international cooperation from Japan toward Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership.

Finally, we would like to explain why this book is divided into two parts and describe the positioning of each chapter. Part I compiles papers examining how traditional resources can contribute to peaceful problem-solving. Here, "traditional resources" encompass not only peaceful resolution methods accumulated regionally over time, but also postwar developments such as Japan's pacifism. Part II then addresses the international context surrounding ASEAN, including its membership issue with Timor-Leste.

Now, we will explain the positioning of each chapter.

Part One: Challenges from Traditional Regions in Indonesia and Timor-Leste

Chapter 1 (Kazumi Abe) examines the complex interrelationship between conflict and development, using the author's fieldwork site of Papua, Indonesia, as a case study. While high poverty rates are a key factor in conflict in the Papua region, development approaches that ignore community participation do not lead to peacebuilding; rather, they suggest the potential for failure. Furthermore, by tracing natural resource management practices in Papua back to the Suharto era and comparing them across the Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo administrations, the chapter re-analyzes approaches to sustainable development.

Chapter Two (Gede Pasek Mangku and Naori Miyazawa) examines sustainable development from three perspectives: economic growth, social justice, and environmental protection. The chapter argues that sustainable development is crucial for a nation's economic progress, and that the role of rural communities is indispensable to achieving this. It also points out that the importance of human and natural resources cannot be ignored when considering regional development. Particular attention is paid to how cultural dynamics within local

communities enhance the practical adoption and sustainability of agricultural practices, re-affirming the importance of rural development for Indonesia's economic growth.

Chapter Three (I Gde Suranaya Pandit) argues that Bali, surrounded by the sea, requires ecotourism that combines three key elements: nature conservation, community empowerment, and heightened environmental awareness. While the sea is valued for its customs and culture, it also holds significant economic potential, particularly in fisheries like tuna fishing. From an environmental perspective, the author stresses the need to monitor the sustainability of tuna resources amid increasing catches. The author highlights the traditional wisdom of fishermen who respect fishing seasons and prioritize avoiding destructive fishing methods for sustainable fisheries development.

Chapter Four (Naori Miyazawa) notes that while the employment share of agriculture has been declining in recent years, it remains Indonesia's second-largest employment sector. However, the chapter also points out that Indonesian agriculture is fragmented, dominated by small-scale farmers, and that poverty is concentrated in the agricultural sector. It also revisits the *subak* irrigation system, a UNESCO World Heritage site that serves as a sociocultural institution integrating rural communities. Drawing on case studies, it examines how Bali's tourism industry, struggling under COVID-19, has paradoxically led to a return of young people to rural agriculture.

Chapter Five (Putu Ayu Sita Laksmi and Komang Adi Kurniawan Saputra) points out that Bali, a global tourist destination with Hindu philosophy, attracts millions of domestic and international tourists every year due to its various charms as the "Island of the Gods." However, it also highlights the increasing severity of overtourism, including water crises, widespread plastic pollution, severe traffic congestion, the commercialization of traditional Balinese culture, and discontent among surrounding communities. This chapter therefore considers a model integrated with the principles of a green economy, based on Bali's unique wisdom of circularity, low carbon, resource efficiency, and social inclusiveness.

Chapter Six (Alarico Ximenes) points out the importance of decentralization and community participation in advancing governance. Decentralization promotes citizen participation in decision-making by systematically transferring authority, responsibility, and resources from the central government to local governments, thereby ensuring the deepening of democracy and government accountability. On the other hand, community participation is important in involving local residents in decisions that affect their daily lives, and by

building bridges between formal institutions and informal societies, it strengthens social cohesion and accountability in the governance process. Based on these two arguments, the chapter also analyzes the current situation in Timor-Leste.

Part 2: Challenges from ASEAN

Chapter Seven (Nobuhiro Ihara) aims to theoretically elucidate the relationship between multilateralism centered on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and minilateral regional cooperation. It notes that while the regional security architecture has become multilayered and complex through ASEAN-led multilateral frameworks, bilateral cooperation between states within and outside the region, as well as small multilateral frameworks, are also taking regionally-driven initiatives. Specifically, this chapter examines the growing importance of small-scale multilateral cooperation, or minilateralism, exploring its complementarity with multilateralism and the respective advantages and criticisms when comparing the two approaches.

Chapter Eight (Ayae Shimizu) views Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership as more than a mere diplomatic achievement, seeing it as a new horizon for multilateral cooperation and a reconfiguration of the security paradigm in the Indo-Pacific region. It points out that while Timor-Leste has made significant progress in nation-building and institutional development since its independence in 2002, it still faces diverse challenges in the security sector from the perspective of establishing institutional stability. This chapter therefore examines the formation of Timor-Leste's security policy and the reality of regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Chapter Nine (Mitsuru Yamada) examines Japan's pacifism, a traditional national resource, as the nation marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in 2025. Utilizing various public opinion surveys, it clarifies the perspectives on peace held by the Japanese people, particularly the younger generation, from the renunciation of war in the Japanese Constitution promulgated in 1945 to the present day, focusing on the peace outlook represented by atomic bomb survivors.

Following a previous publication in 2018, this book also owes a great deal to Dr. Ikeda's editing and publishing efforts. We would like to express our gratitude once again.

<div align="right">Mitsuru Yamada and Kazumi Abe,
Editors</div>

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He finished an undergraduate course in Agriculture Technology at Udayana University, a master's degree in Agriculture Product Technology at Brawijaya University Malang East Java and a Ph.D. degree in Agriculture Technology at Udayana University. His activities scope, teaching in undergraduate and master's degree programs, research and community services in national and international collaboration with CBSUA-Philippines, UiTM-Malaysia, Chiang Mai University-Thailand, National Economic University-Vietnam and Waseda University-Japan. Also as a speaker and committee member in conferences in National and International levels and a guest lecturer, visiting professor and as a trainer in some government programs. He is presently in charge as Director of Education and Learning Development Universitas Warmadewa. He has many experiences with research and community services at national and international levels. His research focuses on Postharvest and Food Processing in fields of coffee, honey, coconut, rice, etc. He is active in organization profession as committee member in Food Technologies Association Indonesia (PATPI) in the Bali area, also as a coffee expert in Bali Coffee Association, and as a member in the Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Energy Network (SAFE).

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He embarked on a career as a lecturer at Warmadewa University. Amidst his busy schedule, he managed to pursue a master's degree at Universitas Gadjah Mada and a doctoral degree at Universitas Udayana. And not long after, he achieved the prestigious title of Professor. Dedicating 37 years of service to Warmadewa University, he held various structural positions before being entrusted as Rector of the Warmadewa University for the 2023–2027 period. With a strong commitment, he aims to advance Universitas Warmadewa towards excellence. He is actively involved international collaboration and earned 6 articles in Scopus-indexed journals, 94 articles in Google Scholar indexed journals, with a total citation count of 155. He obtained 10 Intellectual Property Rights (HaKI), authored 10 textbooks with ISBN, and secured 3 patents under approval status. He is an active writer in various mass-media platforms.

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She earned her Bachelor of Business (B.Bus.) in International Business from James Cook University, Singapore (2013–2015), followed by a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Management and Entrepreneurship from Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland (2016–2017). She completed her doctoral studies at Universitas Udayana, Bali, in 2022, graduating cum laude with a dissertation titled "Determinants of Tourism Industry Performance and Community Welfare in Mandalika Tourist Area, Lombok." At just 28 years old, she made history as the youngest woman in Indonesia to earn a Ph.D. in Tourism. Currently serving as a Lecturer and Head of the Management Program at Universitas Warmadewa, She specializes in sustainable tourism, entrepreneurship, and international business. Her academic roles are complemented by her entrepreneurial ventures, including co-founding PT. Perppus Media Publikasi and serving as Commissioner of PT. Tita Medica Sejahtera. Her career spans diverse sectors, from hospitality (e.g., Past 2 Present Singapore, Katsuya Singapore) to public relations and marketing (e.g., PT. Kusemas Citra Mandiri, PT. Biofrost

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Part I

Challenges from Traditional Regions in
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Acceleration of Development Caused a Failure of Peacemaking

Lost Traditional Resource Management in the Papua Region[1]

Kazumi Abe

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1. Introduction

Conflict and development have a strong and complex correlation. According to Collier & Hoeffler (2004), there is no effect of either income or land inequality on the risk of conflict. But there is a certain effect that once a conflict has started it will tend to last much longer if income is unequal. Mueller & Techasunthornwat (2020: 15) show that an area of high poverty rate matches the area of conflict debt. Most countries have been working on development to reduce poverty. However, development does not always bring a positive impact on peacemaking. Development ignoring participation of the local community may cause a failure of peacemaking. Especially, the way of managing natural resources is an important factor to influence peacemaking.

In this study, I will focus on the case of the Papua region in Indonesia. The Papua region has a complex history. After the conflict over the sovereignty of the region between Indonesia and the Netherlands, they concluded the New York Agreement which approved the annexation of the Papua region to Indonesia. Since then, the Indonesian government led by President Suharto started rapid development to utilize the rich natural resources in the region with foreign capitals. Nevertheless, those developments were conducted by a top-down approach without the participation of local people. On the other hand, no social development was launched for the Papuan people. Under Suharto's forcible and unilateral policy, there were several armed groups organized to claim the independence from Indonesia. President Suharto strictly cracked them down. Many ordinary Papuan people, who were not involved in armed groups, were

murdered by security personnel or during military operations. Policies under the Suharto presidency clearly oppressed the Papuan people and marginalized them. The anger against the Indonesian government among the Papuan people was accumulated during more than thirty years of presidency by Suharto.

After the fall of the Suharto presidency, the main policy of development toward the Papua region did not change. Following governments had focused only on natural resource development. The great achievement of the development was seen in the second term of the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono presidency from 2009 to 2014 and two terms of the Joko Widodo (Jokowi) presidency from 2014 to 2024. However, those achievements seem not to connect to peacemaking in the region as a result. In the second term of the Jokowi presidency, attacks by armed groups dramatically increased.

In this study, I will review the development promoted in the Papua region especially in the second term of the Yudhoyono presidency and two terms of the Jokowi presidency, and analyze the effect of their development projects on peacemaking from the perspective of developing sustainable livelihoods.

2. Importance of Developing Sustainable Livelihoods in Peacemaking

Research shows that at least seventeen violent conflicts have been fueled by the exploitation of natural resources since 1990 (Ross, 2004: 17–18). The World Bank (2003: 83) shows that the typical country reaching the end of a civil war faces around a 44 percent risk of returning to conflict within five years. It is because of low average income, rural areas well endowed with natural resources, a hostile neighbor, and a large diaspora in the country. Problems which the country had during conflict can become the trigger of returning to conflict. As it is shown in much research, the development to reduce poverty and appropriate management of natural resources are important factors of peacemaking.

The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) shows the significant role of natural resources and the environment in peacebuilding. UNEP (2009: 19) shows three important reasons that environment and natural resources can concretely contribute to peacebuilding. The first is supporting economic recovery. High-value resources such as minerals and metals can produce positive economic development, employment and budget revenue. Paying enough attention to environmental sustainability and the equitable distribution of revenues are important. The second is developing sustainable livelihoods. As durable peace fundamentally hinges on the development of sustainable livelihoods

with the provision of basic services, and on the recovery and sound management of the natural resource base. The third is contributing to dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building. The environment can be an effective platform or catalyst for enhancing dialogue, building confidence, exploiting shared interests and broadening cooperation between divided groups as well as within and between states. These three reasons are connected to another four sections such as socioeconomic development, good governance, reform of justice and security institutions, and culture of justice, truth and reconciliation.

According to UNEP, the development project should have a positive impact on the local people and should have no negative impact on the environment when states promote development to the area in the conflict. At the same time, the profit cause from the development should be equally distributed. Development should also support people's sustainable livelihoods based on appropriate management of the natural resources in the area. Thus, development which does not help development of sustainable livelihoods of the local people does not contribute to durable peace.

3. Development Policy Toward Papua and Impact on Local Community

3.1 Background of Papua Conflict

The Papua region is rich in natural resources. There is one of the richest mines of copper and gold in the world operated by Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. in the region. Development of the mines started during the Suharto regime. However, development of the rich natural resources based on a top-down approach from the government did not provide local community with much benefit. Those natural resources development by a top-down approach and foreign capital came to be seen as an exploitation of the natural resources among the Papuan people. Though Suharto achieved rapid economic growth and poverty reduction in the country utilizing foreign capital (Rock, 2003), Papua remained one of the poorest regions in Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2000: 575).

When we see the government development policy toward the Papua region, we have to consider the influence of the independence movement in the region. To destroy the independence movement, the government launched military operations and cracked down on political activity of the Papuan people (Osborne, 1985). Many Papuan people experienced brutal human rights violations

committed by security personnel. The government regarded the Papuan people as subversive elements and as the target of suppression. Naturally, the development to support their sustainable livelihood did not become the objective in the development policy of the government.

After the fall of the Suharto presidency in 1998, Indonesia turned to become a democratic country. There was a transitional period to democratic system under the presidency of Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie from May 1998 to October 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid from October 1999 to July 2001, and Megawati Sukarnoputri from July 2001 to October 2004. The government worked hurriedly on the reform of an electoral system, amendment of constitution, and decentralization. There were several conflicts that broke out for separation requests and ethnic tensions during the transitional period. But those conflicts were settled down gradually.

In the Papua region, the movement for a separation request became active after the fall of the Suharto presidency. In August 1998, Irian Jaya Reconciliation Forum (Forum Rekonsiliasi Rakyat Irian Jaya: FORERI) was formed with researchers, religious leaders, traditional community leaders, and NGO activists in the Papua region. FORERI is the first cross-regional and cross-cutting organization under the Indonesia governance. FORERI, which became the center of increased independent movement, requested an official meeting with the president of Indonesia. In February 1999, a hundred Papuan representative people including the members of FORERI met President Habibie to express their request of independence. They did not receive any clear answer of their request from the president there. After the meeting, there was no progress of the meeting though various reforms were taken place one after another in Indonesia. In Jakarta, in the fourth People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat: MPR) held in October 1999, the policy to keep state unity including the Aceh region and the Papua region was confirmed (IV/MPR/1999). On the other hand, historical large-scale gatherings were held in the Papua region to express the unity of the Papuan people in 2000 such as Musyawarah Besar Papua with four hundred participants, and Kongres Papua II with five hundred participants. Effectively, those gathering were approved by President Wahid who showed a liberal attitude toward the independence movement in the Papua region.

According to the resolution of MRP, the draft of the Papuan special autonomy law was passed in MRP in October 2000 (Law No.21/2001). In article 12, it is written that the requirement of the governor and the vice-governor of the province should be Papuan (Orang Asli Papua). This sentence promoted

the political participation of the Papuan people. In article 34 (3), the sharing of the revenue from natural resources is written that eighty percent in forestry, fishery, and general mining, seventy percent in natural oil and gas mining goes to the region. Adding to that, special revenues in which two percent of the National General Allocation Fund are allocated in education and health services, and another budget for infrastructure development is allocated. In article 42, the policy of development is shown; the economic development investment should be based on democracy and should respect and empower the local *adat* community. In article 43, it is said that the traditional land rights of the local *adat* community should be respected.

The special autonomy law of the Papua region became effective on January 1 in 2002. To implement the contents of the law in each article, several special regulations of the Papua Province (*perdasi*) are necessary. To implement *perdasi*, the authority of the Papua People's Assembly (Majelis Rakyat Papua: MRP) which is written to establish in article 5 of the special autonomy is necessary. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs did not approve the establishment of MPR until October 2005. At the same time, the Ministry did not give approval to implement *perdasi*. Therefore, not a few important articles of the special autonomy law were not implemented for the first few years. Needless to say, the government's attitude toward the special autonomy law of the Papua region caused great confusion in Papua.

3.2 Development Policy Under Yudhoyono Presidency

The change of the government attitude was seen under the Yudhoyono presidency from October 2004. At the time, the special autonomy funds were not properly utilized, and the Papua region remained one of the poorest regions in Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2009: 185). Then President Yudhoyono worked on a new development approach to change the situation of the Papua region. He issued a president instruction in 2007 (Inpres No.5/2007) to accelerate development of Papua Province and West Papua Province.[2] In 2009, The president issued two president regulations (Perpres No.65/2011, and Perpres No.66/2011). Based on those regulations, President Yudhoyono established a new team to accelerate development in Papua Province and West Papua Province (Unit Percepatan Pembangunan Provinsi Papua dan Provinsi Papua Barat: UP4B). The goal of UP4B is (1) basic infrastructure development, (2) improvement of education, (3) improvement of health service, (4) improvement of the social economic situation of the Papuan people, (5) implementation of affirmative action for the Papuan people (UP4B, 2014). This development plan

focused not on the development of natural resources but on social development of the Papuan people to achieve their empowerment. In the implementation of this plan, UP4B adopted a bottom-up approach though UP4B itself is the top-down team established by the presidential regulation. The team held meetings at the district level to gather opinions on the development from local communities. Based on the meetings, they created a strategic plan for the development. UP4B was the first national development team to adopt a bottom-up approach, and to focus on the social development of the Papuan people.

However, UP4B did not make an important achievement for the lack of budget. There are several small achievements of UP4B. In infrastructure development, the team focused on access to isolated villages through building roads, bridges, and airports. The plans to secure alternative energy such as small-scale hydroelectricity and solar power were not in action. In the education field, the team increased the number of schools. But there was not significant improvement in the number of teachers in schools and the level of the literacy rate of the students. In health service, the team increased the number of clinics and fulfilled free health service. But the number of doctors and nurses in clinics did not increase enough. In social economic development, the team supported cultivation of rice paddy fields and the purchase of fishing boats. The plan to increase people's income through selling their local products such as coffee beans, cacao, sago, rubber, and nutmeg was not carried out. The best result was seen in the affirmative action of the Papuan people. The number of the Papuan students who went to high schools and universities in Jawa and Bali, a military academy, and a police academy increased dramatically.

3.3 Development Policy Under Jokowi Presidency

The first term of Jokowi's cabinet put "work, work, work" as a slogan. President Jokowi appealed a nine prioritized development program (Nawa Cita) in 2014 when he became the president; (1) Returning the state to its task of protecting all citizens and providing a safe environment, (2) Developing clean, effective, trusted and democratic governance, (3) Development of peripheral areas, (4) Reforming law enforcement agencies, (5) Improve quality of life, (6) Increasing productivity and competitiveness, (7) Promoting economic independence by developing domestic strategic sectors, (8) Overhauling the character of the nation, and (9) Strengthening the spirit of "unity in diversity" and social reform. As he mentioned in (3), elimination of the development gap between the Jawa and peripheral areas became one of the top priorities.

To balance the price of goods, Jokowi started projects to improve access

to major cities in the Papua region. In the Papua region, price of daily necessities was the highest in Indonesia (World Bank, 2011: 69). Especially, the price of daily necessities in mountainous areas in the Papua region was more than several ten times as high as in Jawa. Once the cost of transportation could be reduced, the gap of the price between Jawa and Papua must become smaller. Then Jokowi launched several development projects of major roads and deteriorated ports. The Trans-Papua road project is one of his highlighted projects in Papua. The road of 4,330 km from Sorong in West Papua to Merauke in Southern Papua which was launched under the Habibie presidency finally finished under the Jokowi presidency. Jokowi also adopted "one fuel price policy" to make the price of fuel the same all over the country. Before the adoption of the policy, one liter of fuel which was sold at 6,450 rupiah in Jawa was sold from 50,000 to 100,000 rupiah in the mountainous area in the Papua region (Kompasiana, 2016). After the adoption of the policy, the price of fuel increased in several areas like Jawa, but the price decreased significantly in the Papua region. Jokowi insisted that the standardization of the price all over the country is social justice (Jakarta Post, 2016a).

Jokowi also achieved the first cement plant with Chinese investment in Manokwari (Jakarta Post, 2016b). He also inaugurated two hydro power plant projects in Papua and West Papua (Jakarta Post, 2016c). Because of those projects, the electricity access rate of Papua Province increased to 85.72 % in 2019 from 30.48 % in 2013 (Detik News, 2019).

As a result of the development project under the Jokowi presidency, the living standard of people has increased. Table 1 shows the percentage of poverty per province in 2015 and in 2025, and the score of human development index (Index Pembagunan Manusia: IPM) measured by Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Indonesia: BPS) per province in 2015 and 2024. The percentage of poverty has reduced from 8.29 % in 2015 to 6.73 in 2025 in urban area of Indonesia, from 14.21 % to 11.03 % in rural areas. In total, it has reduced from 11.22 % in 2015 to 8.47 in 2025 throughout Indonesia. The development under the Jokowi government produced good results in poverty reduction generally. In the Papua region where he put a great effort, the percentage of poverty has increased from 5.86 % in 2015 to 9.1 % in 2025 in the urban area of Papua Barat Province. It has also increased from 4.61 % to 7.3 % in the urban area of Papua Province. In the rural area, it has reduced from 37.97 % to 27.8 % in Papua Barat Province, from 36.66 % to 33.81 % in Papua Province. In total, it has reduced from 25.82 % to 19.31 % in Papua Barat Province, from 28.17 % to 24.45 % in Papua Province. There is a certain result that can be seen

Table 1 Poverty rate and human development index (IPM) per province

Province	Poverty rate per province (2015)			IPM (2015)	Poverty rate per province (2025)			IPM (2024)
	Urban	Rural	Total		Urban	Rural	Total	
Aceh	11.13	19.44	17.08	69.45	8.54	14.44	12.33	74.03
Sumatera Utara	10.16	10.89	10.53	69.51	7.1	7.71	7.36	74.02
Sumatera Barat	5.73	8.35	7.31	69.98	3.91	6.93	5.35	74.49
Riau	6.79	9.46	8.42	70.84	5.75	6.43	6.16	74.79
Jambi	11.6	7.67	8.86	68.89	9.52	6.01	7.19	73.43
Sumatera Selatan	13.62	14.6	14.25	67.46	9.1	10.79	10.15	72.3
Bengkulu	17.79	17.93	17.88	68.59	12.34	11.95	12.08	73.39
Lampung	10.94	15.56	14.35	66.95	7.49	11.32	10	71.81
Kep. Bangka Belitung	2.98	7.75	5.4	69.05	3.89	6.59	5	73.33
Kep. Riau	5.46	10.23	6.24	73.75	4.13	8.33	4.44	77.97
Dki Jakarta	3.93	–	3.93	78.99	4.28	–	4.28	83.08
Jawa Barat	8.43	11.82	9.53	69.5	6.76	8.15	7.02	74.43
Jawa Tengah	11.85	15.05	13.58	69.49	9.1	9.92	9.48	73.88
Di Yogyakarta	13.43	17.85	14.91	77.59	10.16	10.46	10.23	81.55
Jawa Timur	8.19	16.18	12.34	68.95	7	12.86	9.5	74.09
Banten	5.03	7.78	5.9	70.27	5.58	5.89	5.63	74.48
Bali	4.31	5.44	4.74	73.27	3.27	4.97	3.72	77.76
Nusa Tenggara Barat	19.24	15.53	17.1	65.19	12.02	11.51	11.78	70.93
Nusa Tenggara Timur	11.28	25.46	22.61	62.67	7.68	22.66	18.6	67.39
Kalimantan Barat	5.62	9.09	8.03	65.59	4.48	7.22	6.16	70.13
Kalimantan Tengah	4.86	6.5	5.94	68.53	5.46	4.97	5.19	72.73
Kalimantan Selatan	3.91	5.78	4.99	68.38	3.43	4.25	3.84	73.03
Kalimantan Timur	4.03	9.96	6.23	74.17	4.16	7.48	5.17	78.83
Kalimantan Utara	3.67	9.49	6.24	68.76	5.27	5.98	5.54	73.02
Sulawesi Utara	5.52	11.27	8.65	70.39	4.25	9.95	6.71	75.03
Sulawesi Tengah	10.93	15.9	14.66	66.76	6.98	12.93	10.92	71.56
Sulawesi Selatan	4.61	12.23	9.39	69.15	5.14	9.88	7.6	74.05
Sulawesi Tenggara	7.24	15.19	12.9	68.75	6.42	13.13	10.54	73.48
Gorontalo	6.48	24.62	18.32	65.86	4.68	20.8	13.24	71.23
Sulawesi Barat	10.52	12.87	12.4	62.96	8.35	10.94	10.41	68.2
Maluku	7.91	26.9	19.51	67.05	4.36	24.61	15.38	71.57
Maluku Utara	3.85	7.95	6.84	65.91	5.95	5.76	5.81	71.03
Papua Barat	5.86	37.97	25.82	61.73	9.22 (9.10)[1]	25.88 (27.80)[1]	20.66 (19.31)[1]	67.02 (67.83)[1]
Papua Barat Daya	–	–	–	–	8.98	29.71	17.95	68.63
Papua	4.61	36.66	28.17	57.25	6.58 (7.30)[2]	38.47 (33.81)[2]	19.16 (24.45)[2]	73 (63.52)[2]
Papua Selatan	–	–	–	–	4.12	28.86	19.71	67.9
Papua Tengah	–	–	–	–	5.51	36.54	28.9	59.75
Papua Pegunungan	–	–	–	–	13	31.36	30.03	53.42
Indonesia	8.29	14.21	11.22	69.55	6.73	11.03	8.47	74.2

Notes: [1] The score of the previous area of Papua Barat Province in 2015 calculated by the author. [2] The score of the previous area of Papua Province in 2015 calculated by the author.

Source: Author based on the data of BPS.

but it is not as great as other regions in Indonesia. Compared to other regions in Indonesia, the poverty percentage in rural area in the Papua region is still outstanding.

IPM measured by BPS was composed of life expectancy, literature rate, education, and living standard. During the Jokowi presidency, the score of IPM through Indonesia increased from 69.55 in 2015 to 74.2 in 2024. In the Papua region, the score of IPM has increased from 61.73 to 67.83 in Papua Barat Province, from 57.25 to 63.52 in Papua Province. However, the score of IPM in the Papua region is still the lowest in Indonesia. Thus, one of Jokowi's top priorities to eliminate the development gap between the Jawa and peripheral areas still remains, though he achieved a good result.

On the other hand, Jokowi's achievement in development, security in the Papua region became worse during his presidency. The number of cases of human rights violation clearly increased. In 2016, the number of human rights violations increased to 68 cases from 16 cases in 2015 (Kompas, 2017). The number of people of unjustified arrests increased to 1083 in 2015, and to 5316 in 2016 from 370 in 2014 (International Coalition for Papua, 2017: 23). Research shows that at least 95 people were killed by security personnel from 2010 to 2018 in the Papua region. But none of them were judged of the crime of murder (Amnesty International, 2018: 6-7). There is no data to show that the situation of civil and political rights of the Papuan people became better under the Jokowi presidency.

From 2018, attacks by armed groups in the region dramatically increased. Especially, one of the armed groups TPNPB (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional Papua Barat) became active from 2018. In January 2018, TPNPB opened their strategic plan for independence from Indonesia, and appealed to another 29 armed groups to fight against security units, public enterprise workers, foreign companies, election staff, public servants (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2022: 2–4). Their attacks do not avoid civilians. In December 2018, one of the construction sites of the Trans-Papua road in Nduga Regency was attacked by armed groups who killed 19 workers. In October 2020, the investigation team sent by the government was attacked and Prof. Bambamg Purwoko of Gadjah Mada University was injured. In April 2021, the Brigadier General who was in charge of the head of the Papua branch of the State Intelligence Agency was killed by them. Armed fighting expanded its area to mountainous regencies such as Nduga, Intan Jaya and Puncak based on reinforced equipment (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2022: 7). Jokowi's government put them on the terrorist list (Jakarta Post, April 29, 2021). To arrest all

members of armed groups, Jokowi sent more security personnel to the Papua region. Though there is no official data of how many security personnel stay in the Papua region currently, the number of security personnel must have been increased. After the region became six provinces in 2022, the military established new stations one after another. The new stations are established not only as a garrison of provincial level but also a garrison of regency and districts level.

4. Structural Exploitation Obstructs Peacemaking

4.1 Mining

As I mentioned in the first section, developing sustainable livelihoods of the local community based on the appropriate management of natural resources is a key for durable peace. As a result, the development led by Jokowi did not change the structural exploitation of natural resources in the region which had started during the Suharto presidency. Any great results in development cannot contribut to peacemaking if the existing structural exploitation of natural resources is neglected.

In the case of the Papua region, the highest value resources must be 250 tons of gold and copper. There is one of the worlds biggest mines operated by PT Freeport-McMoran which is subsidiary company of Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. PT Freeport-McMoran has been one of the biggest taxpayers to the Indonesian government. It paid 4.4 billion US dollars to the Indonesian government (Tebay, 2005: 11-12). Freeport made a contract with the Indonesian government on mining development in 1967. Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. had a strong connection with the U.S.A. government. So it engaged in lobbying to the Indonesian government actively with the support from the U.S.A. government. After the contract was agreed, Freeport started to develop new town named Tembagapura in Mimika Regency near the mining. Tembagapura was established as a modern western-style town. In 1973, Freeport started operation in Ertsberg mine which generated profits of three hundred million dollars every year (Rifai-Hasan, 2009: 132). In 1988, Freeport founded Grasberg mine which is larger than Ertsberg mine. After Freeport made new contracts with the Indonesian government in 1991 and 1994, Freeport started large-scale development to establish another new town named Kuala Kencana. Today, Grasberg mine is the largest gold mine as well as the second largest copper mine in the world.

Its mining has become the target of armed groups which insist indepen-

dence from Indonesia in the region. Victims are not only Indonesian but also foreigners. In 2002, two Americans and one Indonesian were killed in the attack of an armed group. In 2009, one Australian and one guard and several police personnel were killed. In 2011, two persons were killed. The main reason why Freeport mining has become the main target of armed groups is that Freeport became a symbol of exploitation of local resources. For the Papuan people, the structure in which the government exploits their local resources with the foreign capitals has not changed for decades.

The area where Freeport has been operating was originally the land of Amungme and Kamoro people. When Freeport started its operation, there was no consultation held with those local people. It means that operations by Freeport were seen as an illegal occupation. After Freeport established two new towns, population in the area dramatically increased. In the area around Grasberg mine, the population was several thousands in the beginning of 1970s but reached to one hundred thousand by 1990 (Soares, 2004: 122-123). As immigrants increased in the city of Timika in Mimika Regency, local people such as Amungme and Kamoro became a minority in their own land.

The operation of Freeport had the lack of consideration for the environment and human rights. At the time of October 1995, its operation discharged 102,000 tons of tailings every day (Rifai-Hasan, 2009, 133). In 2001, the number of tailings increased to 750,000 tons. Those tailings spilled over rivers and damaged the ecological system seriously. The damage was observed to the area of 84,158 hectares offshore, 3,520 hectares of the coast including national park near the mine. The water pollution has caused serious harm to the Papuan people who have depended on natural resources for fishery, hunting and gathering.

In 1995, the report published by NGO exposed human rights violation and environmental pollution committed by Freeport (Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1995). With this as a turning point, local people who had experienced oppression by the resource development of Freeport started to discuss the problems in the community gathering and send request letters to the government (Abrash and Kennedy, 2002, 4-5). In 1996, the organization of Amungme people (Lembaga Masyarakat Adat Suku Amungme: LEMASA) sued Freeport in New-Orleans, U.S.A. where the head office of Freeport was located. As a settlement offer, Freeport published their new policy of human rights issue, and established a new fund for local people "one percent fund" as a compensation for their land-rights. One percent fund allowed social and economic development with one percent of the profit of Freeport. Every year, about fifteen mil-

lion US dollars became the resource of the fund. There were modern hospitals, schools, residences, and community facilities established in Timika from the one percent fund.

After that, other ethnic groups such as Ekari, Dani, Nduga, Moni, and Damaru also claimed their land-rights to Freeport. Freeport approved their land-rights and expanded the scope of compensation. At the same time, Freeport started to strengthen the managing of the fund by involving a member of the provincial government, regency government, the military, and Freeport. This decision met with strong opposition from ethnic groups (Yaluwo, 1999: 69-70, 128-129). The chaotic situation over one percent fund has caused ethnic clashes among local people. For example, a fight between Dani and Damaru occurred in 2007 which killed 18 people and injured 300 people (Berita Satu, 2016). Their conflict has been continuing since the 1970s when most of Damaru had to move to a new area from their land as Freeport started its operation there. Their settled area was a part of the land of Dani.

Freeport established a new fund "trust fund" but the dissatisfaction with Freeport which has continued violation of the ethnic people's land-rights and exploitation of their natural resources has not been settled. A report shows that Freeport has never compensated Amungme and Kamoro people enough for their land-rights (Mongabay, 2017).

4.2 Deforestation

The Papua region is a frontline of deforestation. The development of the region was delayed compared with other regions in Indonesia. From 2000 to 2006, 95 % of deforestation was seen in Sumatra and Kalimantan. However, after the Papua region became the main target of development by the government, deforestation in the region has rapidly increased. Data shows that 65 % of the region's total tree cover was lost from 2002 to 2004, at the same time the total area of humid primary forest in the region decreased by 2.0 % (Global Forest Watch, n.d.). Currently, several mega-projects are in process in the region. First, one is the sugar production project. A total of two million hectares of forest, wetlands and grasslands in Merauke Regency is for giant sugarcane plantations. There are five consortiums consisting of Indonesia and foreign companies in the projects. According to Mongabay, this is the world's biggest deforestation project (Mongabay, 2024).

In Merauke, another mega-project "Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE)" was launched in 2011. MIFEE is a 1.2 million hectares project to secure Indonesian self-sufficiency in food and energy. It is planning to raise

rice, corn, beans, sugarcane, palm oil and acacia. The area of MIFEE includes the land of at least 160 villages. Local NGO has accepted many claims of land-grabbing from local people regarding MIFEE since the plan was announced to the public (Ginting and Pye, 2013: 166-167).

The author visited one of the sites of MIFEE in 2024 and interviewed about the situation of the project with the village chief in Wampes, Manen.[3] According to him, the villagers had two hectares of palm oil plantation until 2016. The soil of the area is good for palm oil. But they had to change it to a corn field for feed as a part of the government project. Villagers were ready to work in a corn field but they did not have any knowledge nor skills to raise corn. As a result, they have not harvested corn of good quality. Adding to that, there are no markets to sell corn near their village. When they were forced to change their palm oil field to a corn field, Jokowi told the district governor that all necessary items would be prepared by the government, and all products would be purchased by the government. But villagers have not received any assistance from the government. They have to find seeds for the corn and agricultural chemicals, and buy them by themselves. Though they cannot achieve a good harvest, they are not allowed to raise other crops. As long as the author observed, there was no corn which was possible to eat in the field.

4.3 Palm Oil Plantation

There are not only government led mega-projects but also each project has a negative impact on the sustainable livelihood of the local people in the Papua region. The biggest company of palm oil plantation is KORINDO which is a joint-venture of South Korea and Indonesia. From 2001, KORINDO cleared 57,000 hectares of rainforest in Papua Province (Mongabay, 2020). From 2015 to 2019, KORINDO cleared 11,300 hectares for palm oil plantation (Greenpeace, 2020). At the back of expanding palm oil plantation projects, there are many problems between local community over the land-rights. According to special autonomy, local *adat* and the land-rights of the local community should be respected by all development projects, and the representative of the local community should participate in the development project.

The company which received approval of operation from the government started to approach local people to secure the land for the project. The illiteracy rate of mountainous areas of the Papua region is very high. When the company approaches someone in the local community, the person who meets the company tends to easily sign the contract without understanding the contents of the contract. There are many cases that the person who signed did not

recognize that they had agreed to sell the land by signing. Taking advantage of their ignorance, the companies secured the land for their projects by threatening and cheating them.

The author visited one village called Mahuze in Mutin District in Murauke Regency in 2018.[4] There was a project for a palm oil plantation promoted by six companies. Their land was occupied by the company, Pt Agriprima Cipta Persada (ACP) based on the contract which a person in another ethnic group signed though that land did not belong to the person who singed. It means that the land was sold to the company without agreement from Mahuze people. In 2015, people in Mahuze started demonstrations to obstacle of the land clearance. There was no action from the company though Mahuze people requested the opportunity to discuss about the effectiveness of the contract with the company. The land clearance was temporarily stopped. Then in 2016, a military officer visited the leader's house of Mahuze. According to the leader, he understands that the visit of a military officer is to threaten him. Though he did not give up fighting for the land-rights, there is no place for discussion held. People of Mahuze still continue to fight against the land clearance with consultation to local NGOs.

Like this, when local people request negotiation or a meeting with the company, their requests are mostly ignored. In the worse case, military personnel comes to attend the meeting instead of the company. For the Papuan people, who experienced human rights violation for several decades, this is enough reason to give up the fight for their land-rights.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the author reviewed the development promoted in the Papua region. After Indonesia annexed the Papua region, the Indonesian government led by President Suharto started rapid development to utilize the rich natural resources in the region with foreign capital. The social development for the Papuan people has not been the target of development in the policy of the Indonesian government. In the policy of suppression of the Papuan people, they have seen the natural resource development by the government based on foreign capital as the exploitation of their resources.

The development of the Papua region has become one of the main targets of government-led development since the second term of the Yudhoyono presidency. He established the special team called UP4B which promoted social development for the Papuan people. This team adopted a bottom-up approach for

the first time in government-led development in the Papua region. However, they could not make a big success in spite of their unique development plan.

A great achievement was seen during two terms of the Jokowi presidency. Holding up the elimination of the development gap between the Jawa and peripheral areas as a priority goal, he launched a number of development projects in the Papua region. To improve access to major cities, he launched an infrastructure project for major roads and deteriorated ports. At the same time, he adopted a "one fuel price policy" to make the price of fuel the same all over the country. The main target of this policy is the Papua region where the fuel policy was the highest in Indonesia. He also invited a cement plant with Chinese investment and inaugurated two hydro-power plant projects in the region. His development policy brought good results to poverty reduction and human development index. Comparing 2015 and 2025, the poverty rate has certainly decreased in the region. Human development index also increased in the region from 2015 to 2024. However, both achievements are smaller than other areas in Indonesia.

In spite of his achievement, the security situation of Papua became worse from 2018. The number of attacks by armed groups increased, and the victims of the attacks increased. The government sent more troops to the region to crack down armed groups. It seems that Jokowi's development did not contribute to peacemaking. Why did his great achievements in the development not bring a positive impact on peacemaking in the Papua region? The answer is that his development policy does not connect to development of the sustainable livelihood of the Papuan people. Though Jokowi launched many developing projects, the structural exploitation which started since the Suharto presidency in the region still remains. Durable peace fundamentally hinges on the development of sustainable livelihoods with the provision of basic services, and on the recovery and sound management of the natural resource base. His development policy did not touch the development of sustainable livelihoods with the provision of basic services and appropriate management of the natural resources.

The most symbolic case is Freeport mining, which was started during the Suharto presidency. The agreement of the operation was concluded between the government and Freeport without the participation of local people. Local people were suddenly deprived and expelled from their land. Their fight over the land-rights against Freeport established a fund as compensation. But Freeport has never compensated local people for their land-rights. As Freeport is the symbol of exploitation by the government and foreign capital for local

people, it frequently becomes the target of armed groups. Besides mines, there are many cases of deforestation and land-grabbing in the region under the name of development projects. The government-led mega-projects of sugarcane plantations and Food Estate are examples. Accelerated demand of palm oil in the world is also the main reason of deforestation and land-grabbing in the region. In many cases, the operation companies do not respect local *adat* law of the Papuan people although they have to respect it according to the special autonomy law. High illiteracy rates obstruct the Papuan people from protecting their land-rights based on their will. In the same way as Freeport, the security personnel who always follow the companies make the people's fight for the land-rights difficult.

In conclusion, Jokowi's development achievements, which left behind structural exploitation of natural resources, did not bring positive impact on peacemaking. For Papuan people who have been dependent on natural resources from fishery, hunting and gathering, environmental destruction including deforestation caused from development projects and the land-grabbing have brought a great negative impact on their life. Development projects launched under the Jokowi presidency and promoted today does not contribute to developing sustainable livelihoods.

Notes

1   This article is based on part of "Rapid development threatens community security in Papua, Indonesia" written by the author (Yamada, M. and Honda, M., Complex Emergencies and Humanitarian Response, Union Press, 2018) and "Konmei suru Indonesia Papua Dokuritsu Undo: 'Heiwa no Chi' wo Motomeru Tatakai no Yukue" (The Chaotic Independent Movement in West Papua: Whereabouts of the struggle for "the land of peace") written by the author (Akashi Shoten, 2022), with substantial additions and revisions made.

2   Papua Province was separated into two provinces, Papua Province and Irian Jaya Barat Province in 2003. After Irian Jaya Barat Province changed its name to West Papua Province in 2007, it gained equal legal status to Papua Province in Law No.1/2008.

3   The author visited Wampes Manen Village and interviewed the village chief Mr. Frans Abfuar on February 24, 2024.

4   The author visited Mutin Village in Merauke Regency and interviewed the chief of Mahuze, Agstino, and observed the disputed area of Mahuze people on January 3rd, 2018.

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CHAPTER TWO

Sustainable Agriculture Based on Traditional Management

Gede Pasek Mangku and Naori Miyazawa

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development has three main pillars: economic growth, social justice, and environmental protection (Sudrajat, 2018). Sustainable development is an integral part of national economic development, and the role of rural communities is inseparable. The potential of human resources and natural resources is also an integral part of regional development. Local wisdom plays an essential role in community-based resource management, which is fundamental for sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship. By involving local communities in decision-making processes, strategies are better aligned with the sociocultural dynamics of the area, which enhances the acceptance and sustainability of agricultural practices. Studies show that community engagement, grounded in local knowledge, leads to improved resource stewardship and significantly boosts economic outcomes by enhancing agricultural productivity and developing local markets (Sargani et al., 2020; Bignotti et al., 2021; Gadanakis, 2024).

Moreover, integrating local wisdom into agricultural entrepreneurship contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and improves food security. This is achieved by promoting the cultivation of indigenous crops and the use of traditional farming methods, which increase crop diversity and resilience against climate change. Such practices enable local farmers to better adapt to environmental uncertainties (Abdullah et al., 2020; Ionescu et al., 2022; Pliakoura et al., 2020). Thus, sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship nurtured by local wisdom supports not only economic livelihoods but also strengthens

community ties and ecological sustainability.

Agriculture is the most basic kind of human activity, encompassing both crop production and animal domestication. Agriculture provides a significant proportion of the household economy worldwide (Gamage et al., 2023). People rely on agriculture to feed their families, earn a living, and start a business, no matter how small (Dorosh and Thurlow, 2016; Abhilash et al., 2021). The reduction in agricultural land indirectly impacts food availability (Andayani et al., 2018), and the decline in biodiversity and local culture (Primdahl et al., 2013). Population growth and the increasing demand for land for development activities have continuously impacted land use. In Indonesia, the area of arable rice fields continues to decline. In 2018, the area remained at 7.1 million hectares, down from 7.75 million hectares in 2017 (BPS, 2018). Similarly, the area of rice fields in Bali Province decreased by approximately 2,077 hectares between 2015 and 2017 (BPS, 2017). Bali's economic development priorities focus on three sectors: (1) agriculture (in the broad sense) to achieve food self-sufficiency, (2) tourism, which is grounded in Balinese culture and Hinduism, and (3) small-scale industries and crafts that support both agriculture and tourism (Wiranatha, 2008).

Bali's economy is built on the tourism industry as the leading sector in terms of GRDP (economic growth), and the agricultural sector is a sector that can absorb a large number of workers and directly support the tourism industry. The agricultural sector also plays an important role in the economy of Bali Province. The conditions are relatively different when viewed from the sectoral contribution in terms of employment opportunities. The agricultural sector is the sector that provides the first largest contribution in terms of employment opportunities, while the tourism sector ranks second. Based on the description that has been explained, it is clear that the structure of the Balinese economy has unique characteristics compared to other provinces in Indonesia. This is in accordance with the five priorities and development targets of Bali Province, namely: (1) human development through improving basic services, (2) reducing disparities between regions through infrastructure development and environmental conservation, (3) increasing economic added value through agriculture, tourism, creative industries and productive services, (4) maintaining peace and order and preserving culture, (5) improving governance and quality bureaucracy (Anonymous, 2020).

Rural development is a crucial aspect of Indonesian development, as 80 % of Indonesia's territory is rural. Rural development can be defined as an effort to improve the social and economic conditions of rural populations. Generally,

rural economic activity is in the agricultural sector. As many as 90 % of rural Indonesians work in the agricultural sector. Although agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for rural populations, it remains marginalized. The agricultural sector has grown very slowly compared to the industrial sector and other sectors (Burano, 2017).

The growing demand for food is not only to fulfill the issues of food security but also to earn foreign exchange. The food manufacturing process has been evaluated from cultivation to distribution for consumers. However, the rapid increase in the requirement for food could not be provided by using traditional methods and people have invented more ways over the natural process. But now it has exceeded the natural boundaries of the environment and occurred so many adverse effects have occurred because of not following sustainable ways. The cost of environmental quality cannot be sustainable in the future because of the adverse changes being caused to the environment and ecosystem.

2. Sustainable Agriculture

The current condition of Indonesian agriculture, such as: the number of farmers is around 48 % of the Indonesian population, the average land ownership is 0.34 ha, the rate of conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land is 187,789 ha/year, 50–60 % of farmers' income is spent on food, the level of education of farmers is 77 % who have completed elementary school (SD), and Indonesian farmers are dependent on seeds, technology, capital, international trade and have weak access to resources (Sopandie & Munandar, 2008).

The opportunities and challenges faced in the agricultural sector require more serious attention to utilizing and increasing existing opportunities while continuing to make improvements and minimizing the obstacles faced. Based on national and global developments, the vision of Indonesian agriculture towards 2025 is "the realization of a sustainable industrial agricultural system that is competitive and able to guarantee food security and farmer welfare" (Hidayah et al., 2023). Its characteristics are: (1) resilient, modern and globally competitive agriculture, (2) environmentally friendly technology, (3) orientation towards farmer welfare, (4) sustainable natural resource management, (5) food security, safety and quality, and (6) providing raw materials for industry (Sopandie & Munandar, 2008).

Agricultural development policy is one of the most important national development policies and has a significant influence on the formation of national resilience (Bafadal, 2014). The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in na-

tional economic development nowadays and in the future due to the livelihood of majority of the population (Saragih, 2018). Agricultural development that utilizes potential of natural resources in accordance with regional agro-ecosystem to meet the needs and improve welfare of farmers is part of sustainable development process. According to Sugino (2003), there are two key issues in agricultural development: sustainability and diversification. Sustainable agriculture not only pursues economic aspects but also pursues the achievement of long-term sustainability. However, sustainable agriculture is highly dependent on two important factors: (1) good and correct agricultural production methods, in other words, implementing good agricultural practices (GAP), and (2) government intervention (policy/partisanship) in the agricultural sector (Sugino, 2003).

The basic principles of sustainable agriculture are: (1) eliminating production methods that use inputs sourced from industry and finding external input systems that are effective, productive, and cheap, (2) involving more farmers and appreciating and understanding local wisdom in agricultural and natural resource management, and (3) implementing active resource conservation integrated within the framework of the production system (Shepherd, 1998). The goal of sustainable agriculture is to improve the quality of human life. This can be achieved through (a) economic development, (b) increasing food security, (c) developing and improving human resource capabilities, (d) freedom and empowerment of farmers, (e) ensuring environmental stability (safe, clean, balanced, and renewable), and (f) focusing on long-term productivity goals (SEARCA, 1995). The position of agriculture will be very strategic if the community realizes the importance of agriculture in economic development. Agricultural development will be more optimal if it is combined with the management of superior commodities (Nainggolan, 2011).

Rural development requires support from all parties. The availability of potential, technology, capital, facilities and infrastructure, and clear market access are essential for achieving rural development goals: a prosperous, resilient, and independent society. Government involvement in promoting agricultural businesses can include providing infrastructure, mentoring and coaching, facilitating capital, managing permits, and providing market access. Although the government's role in encouraging agricultural business development in rural areas is already underway, it appears to be less than optimal and comprehensive, resulting in several agricultural programs being unable to increase the income and welfare of community groups. Budget constraints and strict regulations are contributing to the program's unsustainability. Program evaluations

based on activity indicators have been implemented, and budget absorption levels also hinder groups' success and independence in growing their agricultural businesses (Mangku, 2022)

Another problem frequently encountered in agricultural business groups in rural areas is that most businesses are still oriented toward economic growth through increased production without regard for quality, culture, and environmental sustainability. This model of farming activity is no longer in line with the direction of sustainable agricultural development being promoted by the Indonesian government and other countries worldwide. The sustainable development program currently prioritized by countries worldwide, including Indonesia, is green economy-based development, guided by three main pillars: economic, social, and ecological sustainability. Changing the mindset of farmer groups in developing agricultural businesses towards the green economy concept as mentioned above needs to be continuously implemented by providing education through mentoring, coaching, and training.

Several experiences have shown that success of an agricultural business developed in a region or village cannot be achieved short-term period, but rather requires a longer period of at least three years for the agricultural business to generate significant benefits. Therefore, mentoring and coaching activities provided by government or other parties such as universities, research institutions, community organizations, and other relevant parties should be carried out seriously and continuously until the agricultural business is successful and independent. The success of an agricultural business cannot be solely determined by time; more importantly, it must achieve "independence" for the business being developed. This means that mentoring and coaching activities will continue as long as the agricultural business is not yet successful and independent. The faster the agricultural business grows and develops, the shorter the time required to achieve independence.

Establishing the global crisis within the conventional food system, framing the challenge as a paradox: mass production coexisting with environmental destruction and persistent food insecurity. This section can be further enriched by elaborating on the specific mechanisms of environmental degradation caused by industrial agriculture and by more deeply exploring the concept of regenerative practices as the necessary evolution of sustainability.

Sustainability must shift from "reducing harm" to "restorative and regenerative practices." This is not simply a semantic difference; it is a fundamental reorientation of the agricultural goal. Sustainable agriculture traditionally aimed for a triple-bottom-line (environmental, economic, social) that sought to

minimize negative impact. Regenerative agriculture, by contrast, seeks to *actively improve* the ecosystem (Rodale Institute, 2023).

- Regenerative soil health: the core of the regenerative shift is the focus on building soil organic carbon (SOC). Instead of merely reducing the speed of soil depletion, regenerative practices such as minimal or no-tillage, cover cropping, and the use of organic compost aim to actively sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide into the soil, turning farms into carbon sinks rather than carbon sources. This makes it a crucial tool in climate change mitigation.
- Biodiversity enhancement: regeneration focuses on creating a multifunctional farm that is explicitly designed to support biodiversity, often by integrating livestock, agroforestry, and native habitat corridors (Mcneely & Schroth, 2006). This contrasts with traditional 'sustainable' efforts that might only focus on maintaining existing biodiversity on the field margins.

3. Traditional Management

The *subak* system, rooted in the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK), is the ultimate example of a proto-regenerative system (Lansing & Kremer, 2021). The THK principle mandates an institutional structure that prioritizes ecological harmony *palemahan* and social harmony *pawongan* alongside spiritual well-being *parhyangan*. The system is not designed to be regenerative in the modern, scientific sense, but its thousands of years of intimate observation and adaptation have resulted in a system that performs the functions of regeneration:

- Water equity and conservation: the gravity-fed, synchronized water management ensures water equity across the entire watershed, making the resource non-exploitable.
- Natural pest management: synchronized planting and fallow periods, dictated by spiritual observance *parhyangan* and enforced by customary law *awig-awig*, naturally break pest cycles, eliminating the need for chemical intervention.
- Soil building: the practice of utilizing rice straw, green manure, and maintaining the paddy terraces inherently builds and conserves soil.

By framing the *subak* system as an ancient, successful, and ecologically

sophisticated example of what the modern world now calls "regenerative," this chapter elevates its global relevance beyond a mere case study. The central problem remains the economic threat to this wisdom, underscoring the necessity of the proposed analysis to integrate economic resilience without sacrificing these inherent regenerative qualities.

3.1 The True Cost of Conventional Agriculture

Conventional, green revolution-inspired farming operates on a simplified, short-term economic model. This model treats natural resources soil, water, and biodiversity as endless external subsidies rather than finite capital. The intensive use of chemical inputs (synthetic fertilizers and pesticides) initially boosts yields but carries a compounding environmental debt. A key mechanism of this debt is the process of eutrophication. The massive application of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers leads to significant nutrient run-off into waterways, a direct consequence of a system prioritizing maximum yield over nutrient retention. This run-off fuels excessive algal growth, which then consumes oxygen when it decomposes, creating "dead zones" in coastal areas where marine life cannot survive (Rabalais et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the reliance on large-scale monocropping inherently reduces the genetic and functional diversity of the agricultural landscape. When vast areas are planted with a single high-yielding variety (HYV), the entire system becomes acutely vulnerable to a single pest or disease, necessitating a chemical defense that further harms beneficial insects and soil micro-organisms. This reliance is a direct trade-off for short-term efficiency, sacrificing the ecological insurance provided by traditional polyculture and landrace diversity (Altieri & Koohafkan, 2024).

3.2 The Theoretical Foundation: Tri Hita Karana and the Subak System

To provide a more comprehensive explanation, it is vital to delve deeper into the systemic interdependence of the three THK pillars and the legal mechanism of the *awig-awig* that enforces this interdependence. The three pillars *parhyangan* (spiritual), *pawongan* (social), and *palemahan* (nature) do not function in isolation; they are a mutually enforcing feedback loop. The entire system is built upon the idea that material prosperity is impossible without adherence to the spiritual and social contracts.

- *Parhyangan* enforces *palemahan*: the agricultural calendar is often dictated

by the calendar of religious ceremonies centered at the *Pura Tirtha* (Water Temple). This spiritual scheduling has a profound ecological function: it forces all farmers within a *subak*'s hydrological unit to operate synchronously. This synchronization is the most effective form of ecosystem-wide pest management. Thus, religious compliance becomes ecological compliance (Lansing, 2021).

- *Pawongan* enforces *parhyangan*: the social cohesion *pawongan* created by collective labor, shared rituals, and the value of "good relations" provides the necessary social pressure to ensure participation in the spiritual-ecological mandates. The community would quickly exclude an individual who refuses to participate in the rituals or cooperative labor (*ngere't*), thereby stripping them of their social safety net (Elias & Smith, 2022).

- *Palemahan* enforces *pawongan*: the physical reality of the terraced, gravity-fed irrigation system dictates the social structure. Water is a shared, limited, and continuously flowing resource. Its effective management requires a communal, democratic organization. The physical necessity of water equity thus necessitates the democratic, conflict-resolving structure of the *subak* institution. The environment itself is the constant teacher and enforcer of the social contract.

The *awig-awig* is the traditional, customary law of the *subak*. It is not merely a set of technical rules, but a living constitution that codifies the principles of THK into actionable regulations (Warren & Agung, 2023).

- Adaptability: crucially, the *awig-awig* is not static. It is a system of law that is adapted to local conditions and evolved through centuries of collective decision-making. Each *subak* can have unique regulations to address the specific characteristics of its terrain, soil type, and water source, making it a highly sophisticated example of place-based governance.

- Holistic regulation: the rules detailed in the *awig-awig* cover every aspect of the *subak* operation: water allocation, mandatory maintenance, ritual participation, and penalties.

- Democracy and self-governance: the fact that the *awig-awig* is collectively reviewed and enforced by the *subak* members (led by the elected *pekaseh*) in regular meetings (*sangkep*) is the essence of water democracy. This self-governance is what allowed the *subak* to historically operate as a buffer against state power, ensuring that the most critical resource water remained under the control of the farmers themselves (Setyawan & Wijaya, 2024).

By detailing the *awig-awig*'s role as the legal and social mechanism that translates the THK philosophy into practical, ecosystem-wide management, this chapter further validates the *subak* as a highly sophisticated example of ecological engineering and governance. The central conceptual divide between the *subak* and modern farming is one of goals: resilience and harmony versus maximum short-term yield.

3.2.1 The Ecological Pillar: The Superiority of "Palemahan"

The ecological superiority of the traditional *subak* system is rooted in the principle of *palemahan* (harmony with nature). To strengthen this argument, a deeper exploration of water use efficiency and the crucial, often-overlooked role of agro-biodiversity beyond just rice is necessary. The *subak*'s water management is a masterpiece of eco-engineering. Its superiority lies in its energy profile and its holistic treatment of water as a community asset, not a private commodity.

- Gravity-fed hydraulic system: the entire system is purely gravity-fed. This design has zero fossil fuel input for transportation, making it inherently energy-efficient and low-carbon (Geertz & Geertz, 2022).
- Terracing for water retention: the physical design of the rice paddies (terraces) is a form of passive ecological infrastructure. The vertical walls of the terraces and the horizontal mud barriers (*pemarem*) slow down the flow of water, maximizing the time water is available for the rice, and, critically, minimizing erosion. This systematic slowing of water allows for: maximum infiltration and sediment trapping.

The biodiversity section focuses on crop diversity and landrace varieties. However, the ecological benefit of *palemahan* extends to the entire agro-ecosystem, specifically in how other organisms are integrated to provide essential ecosystem services.

- *Minapadi* (rice-fish culture): the practice of integrating fish and sometimes eels or prawns into the flooded rice paddies (polyculture) is a potent example of a symbiotic relationship (Prein & Li, 2021). The fish provide nutrient cycling and natural pest control, while also providing a secondary source of high-quality protein and income.
- The role of ducks and eels: traditional systems often encourage the use of ducks in the paddies. Ducks graze on weeds and pests and their movements

naturally aerate the soil, further reducing the need for manual weeding or chemical herbicides (Sakamoto & Ishii, 2023).

The importance of soil organic carbon (SOC). The traditional practices actively work to increase SOC.

- Green manure and compost: traditional farmers use organic materials like rice straw compost and specific leguminous plants as green manure. These plants are incorporated back into the soil, directly adding organic matter and fixing nitrogen from the atmosphere.
- The problem with modern tillage: in stark contrast, modern conventional farming often relies on heavy tillage. Tillage breaks up soil aggregates, exposing the SOC to oxygen, which causes it to rapidly oxidize into CO_2 and release into the atmosphere, directly contributing to greenhouse gas emissions (Lal & Avery, 2024).

In sum, the ecological superiority of *palemahan* is not an accident of history but the result of a system where every component is integrated for long-term functional resilience.

3.2.2 The Social Pillar: The Strength of "Pawongan"

The non-economic but essential benefits of traditional management are centered on *pawongan* (harmony among people) and the social capital it creates. To fully grasp the system's strength, it's necessary to detail the concept of informal social security and the political implications of collective action.

The immense social capital generated by the *subak* system functions as a robust, informal social security net for its members.

- Cooperative labor (*ngere't* or *nge'joh*): the system of reciprocal, non-monetary labor exchange (*ngere't*) is a primary mechanism for social security. A farmer who falls ill or faces a personal crisis knows that the community will still come to help plant or harvest their field, guaranteeing a minimal yield despite the setback (Adger & Brown, 2023). This dramatically mitigates the catastrophic risk inherent in subsistence farming.
- The value of "good relations": in the *subak*, social trust and standing are forms of currency. A farmer with high social capital is assured of help, while one who acts purely out of self-interest risks social exclusion, a powerful deterrent against individualistic, short-term behavior (Putnam, 2025).

3.2.3 The Economic Pillar: Reconciling Profit with Principle

The profitability gap as the existential threat to the socially and ecologically superior traditional system rightly concludes that economic viability must be the immediate priority for the system's survival. A more detailed analysis requires a deeper look into the specifics of post-harvest loss (PHL) and a more structured approach to ecosystem services valuation.

3.3 Exiting Condition of "Subak Timbul," Tegalalang Gianyar, Bali

Subak timbul is a traditional irrigation group that is located in Pupuan Village, Tegalalang Gianyar Bali. This *subak* has 114 members and the total *subak* area is 65.54 hectares. Every member has land of approximately 25–35 acres. The average production of rice paddy is 4–5 ton/ha through the conventional farming system. This production is based on implementing organic fertilizer 100 %, biopesticide, poor post-harvest handling methods, etc. Meanwhile, the combined farming system can produce 8–8.5 ton/ha dried paddy rice by implementing of 80 % organic fertilizer and 20 % non-organic. This indicates that implemented pure organic farming produced lower yield of rice paddy than combined farming system. However, harvesting and threshing of paddy rice were carried out by workers from *subak*, close family, other family in the same village and most workers come from Bali. *Subak* groups prefer to use manpower/manual for harvesting and threshing of paddy rice (not machines/power threshers due to social and culture reasons).

3.3.1 Deconstructing the Post-Harvest Loss (PHL)

Reducing PHL is identified as the most direct route to increasing profitability without compromising the cultural or ecological integrity of the *subak*. for many traditional systems, this loss can be catastrophic, sometimes exceeding 30–40 % of the harvest (World Bank, 2023).

- Stages of loss in traditional systems: losses occur during harvesting, inconsistent drying, inadequate storage, and inefficient milling (Post-Harvest Loss Institute, 2025).
- The "technology adoption" solution: the solution is to introduce appropriate, small-scale, modern technology. Using hermetic storage kills insect pests without chemicals, while community-scale solar dryers ensure consistent drying, minimizing mold and spoilage risk. Investing in modern precision mills can also significantly increase the marketable yield.

   Table 1 shows the loss level of paddy rice during post-harvest handling. The total loss of paddy rice in agriculture practice is about 20.42 % and it was found that the harvesting step has the highest loss level 9.52 % and provides the highest critical point level then followed by threshing, milling, drying, storaging and transportation. The higher loss level on harvesting step is due to most farmers applied poor post-harvest handling, a manual process and limited equipment used. Increasing of paddy rice loss will decrease the production.

Table 1 Loss level of post-harvest handling of paddy rice

No	Type of activity	Loss level (%)	Critical point level
1	Harvesting	9.52	******
2	Threshing	4,78	*****
3	Milling	2.19	****
4	Drying	2.13	***
5	Storaging	1.61	**
6	Transportation	0.19	*
	Total:	20.42	

3.3.2 Case Study: Three Critical Points of Post-harvest Handling Paddy Rice in "Subak Timbul" Gianyar-Bali

Based on a survey, and observed by the representative member of the *subak* group, it was found that there are several problems and challenges that effect lower paddy rice production. These challenges are: limited land area is 25–35 acre (≤ 50 acre/person), lack of knowledge and skill in terms of agriculture innovation technology (poor post-harvest handling), low education level and culture interest, limited capital, less machine and equipment use, limited access market, pest control and disease to paddy rice by traditional methods using natural and organic materials and farmers in *subak timbul* use a natural process to control pest and disease due to safety for environment, ecosystem protection and cheaper. In post-harvest handling steps of paddy rice in *subak timbul* there are three steps with a poor handling process then decreasing of paddy rice yield such as: harvesting, threshing, and drying. In the harvesting step, farmers use manpower for harvesting paddy rice therefore there is a higher loss level of paddy rice. This manual process needs more labor and is not efficient as well as needing longer time. However, the *subak* group give more priority in

social and culture aspects and not profit income oriented.

The second critical step is threshing. In this step, *subak* groups use manpower to thresh the paddy rice and do not use a machine for support. During this process the farmers sometimes delay to thrash the paddy rice due to rain or bed weather. However, this condition takes longer time and provides a higher yield loss level of paddy rice. The operational cost for labor is carried out with sharing profit 8 : 1 (owner: worker) and this sharing is constant even when the production is lower. Some farmers in *subak* do not feel happy therefore and they want a solution of how to increase the production and quality of paddy rice without damage of social/culture and the ecology aspect.

The last step is the drying process. The drying process uses sun-drying therefore the weather is important, such as temperature and humidity. During the drying process when the weather is rainy and the temperature is low therefore the paddy rice will be delayed to dry. Meanwhile, during the rainy season farmers require more time to dry the grain paddy due to no artificial dryer to support the drying process (not efficient, decrease quality, damage of grain paddy and grain grow to be seed). Most farmers in *subak timbul* do not test the water content of paddy rice but observe visually and with experience. The *subak* group also do not have a moisture tester for testing the moisture content of the paddy rice.

3.3.3 Formalizing Ecosystem Services Valuation

To truly reconcile profit with principle, the farmers must be paid for all the services they provide, not just the rice they produce.

- Water regulation and quality payment (PES): a policy mechanism should be established where the local water utility or the regional government pays the *subak* for the water quality and flow regulation services it provides. This is an essential payment for ecosystem services (PES) (Wunder, 2022).
- Agri-tourism revenue sharing: the *subak* landscape is a key driver of Bali's tourism economy. Implementing a small, mandatory entrance fee for tourists, managed by the *subak* cooperative, would channel tourism revenue directly to the custodians of the land.
- Carbon credits monetization: farmers should be able to access and sell voluntary carbon credits through a collective *subak* certification, monetizing their role as climate change mitigators (UNFCCC, 2024).

By implementing these strategies, the economic priority (economy) is ele-

vated not through environmental compromise, but by creating market value for the system's inherent social (*pawongan*) and ecological (*palemahan*) benefits.

4. Traditional Management Farming Versus Modern Farming

Modern farming is an evolving approach to agricultural innovations and farming practices based on the use of high-yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, irrigation water, pesticides, etc (Gamage et al., 2023). The agriculture industry has been a source of income for many individuals in developing and developed countries, with construction programs, drainage systems, suppliers, and more (Bennett et al., 2013). Effectively synthesizes the findings into the core strategy of smart traditionalism or eco-cultural commercialism. To provide the final, comprehensive explanation, the future direction must be grounded in the specifics of institutional reform and the global applicability of the THK model to other traditional systems. The survival of the *subak* in the future is by institutional reform such as *subak* as a social enterprise The transition to smart traditionalism requires the *subak* institution to evolve from being a purely resource management authority into a collective social enterprise.

- Collective marketing and branding: the *subak* cooperative must be the legal entity that secures certifications (e.g., organic certified), manages the branding (*subak* heritage rice), and handles direct sales to premium buyers (Kotler & Lee, 2021).
- Targeted subsidies for public goods: governments must redirect funds to subsidize the outputs of traditional systems that deliver public goods. This includes stewardship payments to farmers who adhere to the *awig-awig* and certified organic practices, acknowledging their role as environmental and cultural stewards (OECD, 2023).

5. The Hybrid Future: Intensification Without Industrialization

The ultimate goal of smart traditionalism is intensification without industrialization. This means strategically boosting productivity and profitability while strictly adhering to the core tenets of the THK philosophy:

- Intensification: achieving higher yields and profits per hectare through PHL reduction, value addition, and using precision farming technology for organic input application (Drucker, 2022).

- Without industrialization: ensuring that the core structure remains non-industrial: water and land management remain under the democratic control of the *subak*, and primary inputs remain internal (organic fertilizer, local seeds).

5.1 Implementing Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)

How to increase production of rice in traditional resources management condition: the *subak timbul* in Gianyar Bali can do several steps such as protecting the transformation of agriculture land in the *subak* area. Based on the observation and interview process there are some processes needed to increase and improve the quality of paddy rice, namely strengthening regulation and policy of government to mitigate of agriculture land transformation, enhancing soil quality by use of organic fertilizer, biopesticide and crop rotation, improving knowledge and skill in terms of GAP and GMP, providing training, assistance/mentoring and involve young generation in agriculture field, balancing between culture, environment and economic aspect, increasing collaboration, access, and networking and increasing good with the government, University, NGO to obtain machines and equipment's. Otherwise, improving some critical steps: harvesting, threshing, drying, storaging, and milling need to improve to enhance the productivity and quality of rice.

Harvesting:
- Determining of harvesting time based on age and moisture content of paddy rice 20–25 %. Testing can use a moisture tester. Harvesting is prefered when not a rainy season or dried weather. The optimum harvesting time is 90–95 % indicated by yellow color on panicles in paddy rice
- Harvesting paddy rice using machines to reduce yield loss and more efficient or combine both machine and manual process (there is opportunity to make specific research about "analysis of different harvesting method on yield loss level"
- Several advantages of using a harvesting machine are time efficient, lower harvesting cost, decrease loss yield, increase grain paddy quality (Swastika, 2012)
- Use good and clean equipment to reduce yield loss
- Farmers or harvester recommend safe equipment to protect from accident such as clothes, footwear, shoes, masks, hats and gloves

Threshing:
- Separating the paddy rice from panicle and straw
- Using of power thresher machine to reduce yield loss or using both process manual and machine (power thresher) in other to obtain economic aspect, social and ecology (sustainable agriculture)
- Threshing step is better done immediately to mitigate grain damaged and yield loss
- Threshing paddy rice can not delay for more than 3 days because it increases yield loss 3,12 %, poor grain 2,84 %, and seed grow 2,22 % (Nugraha, 2012)
- Using of tarpaulin to minimize of grain loss

Drying:
- To reduce a moisture content of grain to 13–14 %
- Drying use naturally or mechanical drying
- Controlled temperature and humidity periodically
- Stir the grains to accelerate water evaporation
- Use moisture tester to check the water content of the grains
- Using of artificial dryer will be better especially during rainy or bad weather

Storage:
- Use of gunny or plastic sack for package of grain in standard warehouse (good circulation, clean, dried)
- Implementing of first in and first out (FIFO) to the next process
- Controling and mitigate of pest and disease during storage
- Recommended to storage of grain than rice to mitigate quality decrease
- Storaging rice in vacuum packaging or controlled atmosphere or using natural preservative to keep good quality and mitigate fleas *Sitophilus oryzae* during storage

Milling Processing:
- Milling of grain to rice
- Sortation and cleaning rice from other materials and damaged grains

6. Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of the Balinese *subak* system, governed by the

philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK), leads to an unambiguous mandate for action in the global pursuit of sustainable agriculture. The evidence is clear: traditional management systems excel in the social (*pawongan*) and ecological (*palemahan*) domains, fostering deep community resilience, preserving critical biodiversity, and ensuring water democracy for millennia. However, the analysis is equally clear on the system's critical vulnerability: its inability to compete with modern, subsidized, high-input farming on short-term economic viability (profit). The future is therefore a hybrid model of smart traditionalism (HMST) that utilizes strategic economic interventions such as value addition, PHL reduction, and ecosystem service valuation, not to supplant the cultural and ecological base, but to provide the necessary financial scaffolding for its survival and long-term thriving. The challenge now moves from understanding to implementation, requiring policy reform, institutional support, and a collective willingness to prioritize culturally appropriate and environmentally sound prosperity over mere maximum yield. This is the only path to a truly regenerative and resilient global food system.

Agriculture practice used by the farmers in Bali in general is similar based on economic, social and environment aspects although different priorities depend on area and condition. Most farmers in Bali, especially in *subak timbul* prefer to use traditional farming management than modern farming. Farmers provide more priority in social/culture and ecology aspects although economically not profitable. The farmers will adopt modern farming such as intervention technology, machines, etc as long as it provides economic benefit, and are social and environment-friendly. Training, mentoring, guidance regularly will increase knowledge and skill levels of farmers in *subak*. Farmers want to increase rice production, quality, safety and have a good profit. Implementing of GAP and GMP in the traditional farming system can increase productivity and reduce yield loss. Sustainable agriculture can be achieved while the economic aspect is the first priority and followed by social and ecology.

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<div align="center">CHAPTER THREE</div>

Traditional Fishing and Processing of "Frigate Mackerel" as Balinese Local Wisdom

<div align="right">I Gde Suranaya Pandit</div>

1. Balinese Fisheries and Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a type of tourism focusing on environmental awareness, emphasizing aspects of nature conservation, social, cultural, and economic empowerment of local communities, and learning and education. Ecotourism combines three important components: nature conservation, empowerment of local communities, and raising environmental awareness (Anonymous, n.d.).

Community-based marine ecotourism management is carried out through programs that provide support facilities for marine tourism, group diving training for communities, and guidance for community groups to manage tourism businesses so that communities can become empowered and self-reliant in running marine tourism businesses (Directorate General of Marine Space Management, 2019).

Bali is a small island with eight regencies between Java and Lombok. The island spans approximately 5,620 km^2, surrounded by the sea, with the Bali Strait to the west, the Indonesian Ocean to the south, and the Lombok Strait to the east. This small island, part of the Republic of Indonesia, is a world-renowned tourist destination. Bali is surrounded by the sea, where the sea holds great significance for customs and culture and has sacred meaning for the Balinese people. Additionally, from an economic perspective, Bali's seas possess immense potential in the fisheries sector. According to data and statistics from the Bali Provincial Government's Fisheries Department (Table 1), fish production in Bali has increased over the past five years.

Various aquatic biological resources are found in Bali's marine waters,

Table 1 Fish production in Bali

No	Year	Production (Ton)
1	2018	95.983,00
2	2019	101.926,00
3	2020	100.504,00
4	2021	104.927.00
5	2022	103.000,00

including various fish species, such as large pelagic fish like tuna and small pelagic fish like mackerel and skipjack. Additionally, there are demersal fish like red snapper, grouper, and barramundi, as well as various types of shrimp, lobster, squid, crab, and shellfish found on the seabed. Furthermore, there are various aquatic plants known as algae or seaweed. One of the community's potential management approaches to fish resources involves using traditional elements, including boats or canoes, as transportation and fishing gear, such as hand-lines and gill-nets. The target species for capture is small pelagic fish, specifically mackerel or frigate mackerel. This study aims to describe the process of catching frigate mackerel and its processing at the Kusamba Village fish processing center in Bali.

This is a descriptive observational study, where observations were made of catching frigate mackerel using traditional fishing methods along the Amed coast. From the fishing location, it takes three hours to reach Kusamba Village, the fish processing center. The processing of skipjack tuna into *pindang* at the Kusamba Village fish processing center is also carried out traditionally, passed down from generation to generation, using equipment such as brick stoves, wood-fired heat sources, and a simple processing method involving the addition of salt and bay leaves. To assess the quality of the *pindang* produced through the traditional processing method, quality tests were conducted on the processed tuna *pindang* in Kusamba Village, including chemical, microbiological, and organoleptic quality tests, which were carried out at the Fisheries Product Quality Laboratory of the Bali Provincial Government's Marine and Fisheries Department. Field observations were described qualitatively in the form of photos and narratives, while laboratory results were described in the form of analytical descriptions using Indonesian National Standards.

The observation results show that catching tuna and processing it in Bali still uses simple methods with traditional equipment. Despite the simple equipment, the quality of *pindang* products in Kusamba Village has been proven

good and meets Indonesian National Standards.

Based on the data of fish production above, the fish catch in Bali according to the data of the Marine and Fisheries Office of the Bali Provincial Government (2018), most of the fish production is utilised for fresh fish 48 %, and the remaining part is made into a processed form consisting of; *pindang* fish 22 %, frozen fish through the freezing process 8 %, canned fish by 8 %, and fish flour as much as 5 %. The 22 % *pindang* fish production was mostly 7.9 tonnes of tuna caught in the waters of South Bali and East Bali.

The 2.5 tonnes of tuna caught by traditional fishermen are used in the form of fresh fish and 5.4 tonnes are used as *pindang* fish through the process of boiling and salting. Based on direct observation and observation to the location to obtain raw materials for fresh tuna that will be used in the process of *pemindangan*. Objective exploration of the tradition of cobs fishing and processing is the local wisdom of fishing communities and *pindang* fish processors.

Furthermore, the *pindang* fish processing industry in Kusamba Village has been passed down from generation to generation, making it an important economic pillar for the local community. Most of the households involved in this sector operate at a small to medium scale, relying on family labor and locally available resources. The sustainability of this business is closely linked to the availability of raw materials, traditional knowledge, and market demand that continues to grow both locally and outside the region. Despite facing competition from modern processing industries, traditional *pindang* still holds a place in the market due to its distinctive taste and relatively affordable price.

In addition to economic value, the tradition of tuna fishing and *pindang* processing also has social and cultural significance. Fishing activities are not only a source of livelihood but also strengthen social cohesion among community members through cooperation in fishing, sharing equipment, and joint-maintenance of fishing boats. Similarly, the involvement of women in the *pemindangan* process shows the division of roles in coastal communities, where women contribute significantly to the household economy through fish processing and marketing activities. These social dynamics reflect the adaptation and resilience of coastal communities in facing environmental and economic challenges.

However, traditional tuna fishing and *pindang* production face various challenges, particularly related to technological limitations, product hygiene, and environmental sustainability. The use of simple boats without modern navigation tools limits fishing distance and time at sea, resulting in dependence on weather conditions. Additionally, the lack of proper sanitation infrastructure

in fish processing locations can potentially affect food safety if not managed properly. Therefore, continuous guidance in the field of good handling practices and improved infrastructure is essential to maintain product competitiveness and compliance with food safety standards.

From the environmental perspective, the increase in fish production must also consider the sustainability of tuna resources in Bali waters. The use of environmentally-friendly fishing gear and adherence to government regulations regarding fishing size and season become crucial to prevent resource depletion. The local wisdom practiced by fishermen, such as respecting fishing seasons and avoiding destructive fishing methods, should be preserved and integrated with modern fisheries management approaches. Collaborative efforts between local communities, government agencies, and research institutions are required to ensure sustainable fisheries development.

In the future, the development of tuna-based processed products such as *pindang* fish has great potential to be expanded through innovation and market diversification. The improvement of production technology, product packaging, and branding can increase the added value and competitiveness of Kusamba *pindang* fish in national and international markets. Additionally, the development of tourism in Bali provides opportunities to integrate the pindang processing industry into community-based marine tourism programs, such as educational tours on fisheries processing. This not only enhances the local economy but also promotes Indonesian culinary heritage to the world.

2. Frigate Mackerel

2.1 Frigate Mackerel Fishing Tradition along Amed Beach

Along the southern coast of Bali Island, from the Bali Strait, South Bali Sea to the East Bali coast is the migration area of small pelagic fish, namely lemuru and tuna or the local name *be awan* and the English name frigate mackerel
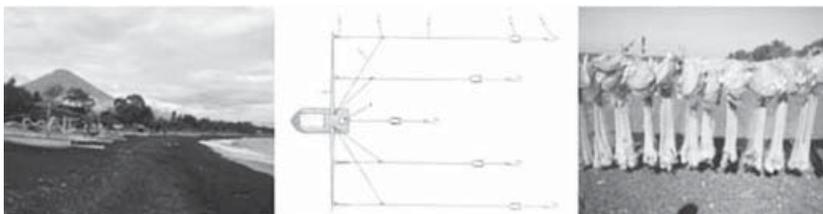

Figure 1 Along the shore, tonda fishing rod and gill-net

(Figure 1). During the fish season between between November to August, the above pelagic fish make routine migrations every year with the aim of finding food and roaming until the end of the migration year at the end of the east coast of Bali, namely in the Seraya beach area to Amed beach in Karangasem Regency Bali (Pandit, 2020).

During this fish migration season, traditional fishermen use boats or *jukung* equipped with outboard motors and fishing gear such as tonda fishing rods and gill-nets. The process of fishing using traditional fishing gear in the form of tonda fishing rods and gill-nets means conservation, namely fishing that still pays attention to the preservation of fish resources, so that the fish caught are only those attracted to artificial bait and the size is in accordance with the mesh size. This is in accordance with the principle of ecotourism which is a concept of sustainable tourism development that aims to support efforts to conserve the environment (nature and culture) and increase community participation in conservative management, thereby providing economic benefits to local communities (Riadi, 2019), furthermore it is also stated that ecotourism aims to minimise negative impacts on the environment, increase concern for local communities, contribute to the preservation of the area and increase visitor satisfaction with nature and culture. This is in accordance with the process of tuna fishing carried out by traditional fishermen along the coast of Seraya to Amed which is carried out at night around 1:00 am, fishermen start fishing until the morning before and when the sun rises in the east.

The number of traditional fishermen in Karangasem Regency is recorded at 3,000 fishermen who live in houses along the coast of Karangasem. The fishing attraction begins by spreading gill-nets (*purse seine*) to block the migration path of tuna, while waiting for the removal of the gill-nets, some fishermen operate tuna fishing by using tonda fishing rods which are given fake bait or artificial bait. The boat used by the fishermen will pull the tonda fishing rod against the current at a certain speed (Sumarid et al., 2014). The presence of this moving fake bait will attract the attention of the tuna. The tradition of fishermen catching tuna using tonda fishing rods has been continued for generations.

Before the sun rises, then sporadically, or in clusters, these traditional fishermen will land the boat/tray containing the catch of tuna on the beach near the fishermen's house (Figure 2). After arriving at the beach, many relatives of the fishermen's families are waiting for the caught fish. Fishermen work together to land their boats to the place that has been determined, while some other fishermen, place the catch in the form of tuna to be auctioned by fishermen

Figure 2 Fish landing area, fishermen's traditions and catches

to large traders who have been waiting for the arrival of the fishermen. The process of offering the selling price of fish, usually runs unilaterally, because previously there has been a transaction between the traders with fishermen.

In this early morning activity, the atmosphere at the shoreline becomes lively and full of interaction. The landing of fish is not merely an economic activity but also a social event that strengthens kinship among fishing families. Women and children are often involved, assisting in sorting the fish or preparing simple logistical needs such as drinking water and food for the fishermen after returning from the sea. This collective activity reflects the strong social cohesion within the fishing community, where cooperation and mutual assistance have become part of local wisdom passed down through generations.

The transaction process with wholesalers, as well as the transport, is evenly matched, as the dominance of the traders has determined the price of the mackerel (Soukotta, 2015). After the transaction is agreed upon and enough tuna has been collected, the tuna is transported using a pick-up truck with bamboo baskets with 100 tuna each (Figure 3).

The dependence of fishermen on wholesalers not only influences the determination of the selling price but also creates a patron-client relationship. In this relationship, fishermen often receive capital assistance in the form of fuel loans, fishing gear, or daily necessities from wholesalers before going to sea.

Figure 3 Transactions with wholesalers, as well as transporting the fish

As a consequence, fishermen are required to sell their entire catch to the same wholesalers at prices determined unilaterally. This cycle makes it difficult for traditional fishermen to become economically independent, as they remain tied to debt and contractual agreements that disadvantage them in the long-term.

In addition to economic dependence, the limited access to formal fish auction facilities also reinforces traders' monopoly over price-setting. In many traditional fishing villages, including those in Bali, fish auctions are still conducted informally and manually, without transparent bidding mechanisms. This situation results in a lack of competition in the fish market, reducing the bargaining power of fishermen. Ideally, government intervention through co-operatives or regulated auction systems could ensure fair-trading practices and provide better market access for fishermen.

After being transported using pick-up vehicles, the tuna is usually distributed to several destinations depending on its quality. High-quality tuna is generally sent immediately to fish processing companies or exported through cold storage facilities in Benoa Harbor. Medium-quality tuna is sold to regional markets to be processed into fresh fish products, while lower-quality tuna is usually purchased by small-scale processors, including *pindang* producers in Kusamba Village. Thus, traditional tuna processing still plays a significant role in absorbing lower-grade tuna, contributing to the reduction of post-harvest waste.

The role of women in post-catch handling is also very significant. Once the fish arrives at the household-based processing site, women are generally responsible for cleaning, sorting, and preparing the tuna for the boiling and salting process. These activities require specific skills and are usually acquired through experience passed down from generation to generation. The involvement of women not only supports household economic sustainability but also demonstrates gender-based division of labor in traditional fisheries communi-

ties, where men dominate fishing activities and women dominate processing and marketing activities.

However, the lack of cold-chain facilities during fish transportation from the coast to processing locations remains a major challenge. Most traditional fishermen do not use insulated containers or ice-boxes, resulting in decreased freshness and quality of the tuna during transport. This condition can accelerate spoilage due to bacterial activity, especially in tropical climates. Therefore, improvements in fish handling technology, even at a simple level, such as the provision of ice and proper storage containers, are urgently required to maintain fish quality and ensure food safety standards.

2.2 Frigate Mackerel Fishing Grounds

The mackerel tuna frigate is brought to the Fish Auction Place (TPI) in Kusamba Village which is managed by the Food Security and Fisheries Office of Klungkung Regency. The mackerel is brought by pick-up vehicles and large traders with the distance from the location along Amed beach to the TPI ± 60 km with a travel time of ± 3 hours. At this fish auction site, the tuna is in the

Figure 4 Place and process of fish aucation

form of bamboo baskets with 100 fish per basket. The auction is conducted to all *pindang* fish processors in the Fish Processing Centre, which is administratively managed by Kusamba Traditional Village, Dawan Klungkung Sub-district (Figure 4).

The auction process at the TPI generally takes place in the early morning, starting from 05.00 WITA until the entire fish supply transported by traders is sold. The auction mechanism is still traditional, where buyers—mostly *pindang* fish processors—gather around bamboo baskets filled with tuna and bid verbally. The price determination is influenced by several factors such as fish size, freshness level, market-demand, and weather conditions that affect fish supply. During the peak-fishing season, tuna prices may decrease due to abundant supply, while during the wet monsoon season prices tend to increase due to limited catches.

Although it is called an auction, the price negotiation system at TPI Kusamba does not fully reflect competitive market mechanisms. In many cases, certain large processors, who have long-term partnerships with wholesalers, receive priority access to higher-quality fish. As a result, small-scale processors have limited fish quantity and quality options, and are often left with smaller-sized or lower-grade tuna. This indirectly affects the quality of *pindang* products produced by small processors, limiting their competitiveness in broader markets.

Once buyers have obtained the fish, weighing activities are carried out to determine the total price to be paid. The payment system can be done in cash or on credit, depending on the agreement between sellers and buyers. For small processors who lack capital, payments are often made in installments, creating long-term business dependency with traders. This system has become a common business practice at the TPI, reflecting the limited access to formal financing institutions for traditional fish processors.

After the transaction is completed, the fish is transported to the Fish Processing Centre located not far from the auction site. The tuna is transported using pick-up trucks or motorized tricycles owned by processors. Generally, the fish is not stored for long and immediately processed upon arrival to maintain product freshness. However, handling practices often do not meet hygienic standards as the fish is transported without proper insulation or sanitation facilities. This indicates the need for technical assistance in fish handling and food safety practices in traditional processing centers.

At the Fish Processing Centre, the tuna is first sorted based on size and physical condition. Larger fish are usually preferred for premium *pindang*

products, while smaller fish are used for local market needs. Sorting is done manually and relies heavily on labor, especially female workers who have expertise in handling tuna. This stage is crucial because proper sorting ensures uniformity in cooking time and final product quality. If sorting is not done correctly, it can affect the appearance, texture, and taste of *pindang* fish.

The role of the Fish Processing Centre is very strategic not only as a production site but also as a center of community economic activity. In Kusamba Village, *pindang* processing has become the main livelihood for many households and supports the local economy significantly. The industry also creates secondary employment opportunities such as firewood suppliers, bamboo basket makers, and transport service providers. Thus, the *pindang* industry has a multiplier effect on the local economy and contributes to rural development in coastal areas.

Despite its important role, the Fish Processing Centre still faces infrastructure challenges. Facilities such as clean water supply, drainage systems, sanitation facilities, and waste disposal have not yet met ideal industrial standards. Waste-water from the boiling process and fish residue is often directly discharged into the environment without prior treatment, causing potential pollution and unpleasant odors. To address this issue, an environmentally friendly processing approach and the implementation of good manufacturing practices (GMP) and sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOP) are urgently needed.

2.3 Processing of Frigate Mackerel Fish

Pemindangan Ikan Centre in Kusamba is a fish processing centre managed by Kusamba Village, Klungkung Regency, Bali with a distance of 40 km from Denpasar City to the west with a travel-time of approximately 60 minutes. This fish processing centre consists of a collection of 70 blocks of *pindang* fish processors, which start production every day at 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The process begins with the collection of tuna as raw material for *pindang* fish obtained from TPI in Kusamba Village. The collected tuna is washed with prepared well-water. The tuna is washed thoroughly with running water (Pandit, 2018). The preparation and arrangement of the tuna into baskets made of bamboo is carried out. The first 5 tuna are placed in a row, then a few bay leaves are added to give a savoury taste (Kastrianti et al., 2017), then the next 5 tuna are added, then 10 % of the people's salt is added (Figure 5). In accordance with the definition of environmentally friendly technology, manufacture and application uses environmentally friendly raw materials, effective and efficient

Figure 5 The process of *pemindangan*

Figure 6 *Pindang* products

processes and emits minimal waste so as to reduce and prevent pollution or damage to the environment (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2020). At the same time, water is heated in a large pot, or a rectangular pot is made for the process of boiling tuna. After the water boils, the baskets of tuna are put into the boiling water until all the tuna are submerged. This boiling process lasts for ± 30 minutes with a sign that the *pindang* is cooked, namely the eyes of the fish have popped out and the meat on the tail stem has broken and the steam is removed and the fish is cooled (Sugitha, 2014). The resulting *pindang* fish is removed with a draining state that is not too wet and no longer contains odours (Figure 6).

After the boiling process is complete, the *pindang* fish are arranged neatly in bamboo baskets and allowed to cool at room temperature. Cooling is an important stage because it prevents condensation inside the packaging which may cause microbial growth. The cooling process is usually carried out naturally without the aid of fans or cooling equipment, following local processing traditions. This stage also allows excess water to drain so that the *pindang* fish achieve the desired texture—firm but not too dry.

The next stage is smoking or drying, which is sometimes done by certain

processors to extend the shelf-life of *pindang* fish. Although not all *pindang* fish from Kusamba undergo this additional processing, some producers choose to dry the fish under the sun for 2–3 hours. This method aims to reduce moisture content and inhibit the growth of spoilage bacteria. However, this practice depends heavily on weather conditions and is not always sustainable during the rainy season.

In terms of hygiene, the *pindang* fish handling process still uses simple equipment, including bamboo baskets, wooden stoves, and boiling pans made of metal. Although this traditional method has been proven effective in producing good quality products, it still raises concerns regarding sanitation. For example, bamboo baskets can potentially harbor bacteria if not cleaned properly. Therefore, training on sanitation and hygiene practices is needed to minimize contamination risks during processing.

The additives used in the *pindang* process, such as bay leaves and salt, are natural preservatives that enhance both flavor and shelf-life. Bay leaves contain essential oils with antimicrobial properties, which help inhibit bacterial growth during storage. Meanwhile, salt plays a crucial role in reducing water activity, creating an environment unfavorable for microbial growth. The use of natural ingredients reflects the community's local wisdom in maintaining product quality without the use of chemical preservatives.

The boiling water used in the processing is generally reused several times to save fuel and operational costs. However, this raises a potential risk of cross-contamination if the water becomes saturated with fish residue, fat, and blood over repeated use. Ideally, water should be replaced periodically, and the boiling pan cleaned to maintain hygiene standards. The implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) can help improve the safety of traditional fish processing without eliminating local processing characteristics.

Fuel used in the boiling process typically comes from firewood or coconut shells, which are abundant in the area. This choice of fuel is economically beneficial but contributes to smoke emissions that may pose health-risks to workers if proper ventilation is not available. Some processors have begun switching to gas stoves to reduce smoke, but this option requires higher operational costs. Therefore, innovations in energy-efficient and environmentally friendly fish processing technologies are needed to improve working conditions.

Once the boiling and cooling stages are completed, the finished *pindang* fish are ready for packaging and distribution. Traditionally, the fish are sold directly in bamboo baskets or placed in simple cardboard boxes lined with paper. Some larger processors have begun to adopt plastic or vacuum packaging to

improve product hygiene and shelf-life. However, most small-scale producers still rely on traditional packaging due to economic limitations and consumer preferences. Despite these limitations, Kusamba *pindang* fish continue to be in demand in local and regional markets due to their distinctive flavor and freshness.

3. Conclusion

To assess the quality and product quality of *pindang*, Kusamba Village was assessed by the Denpasar Bali Fisheries and Marine Service Laboratory for objective analysis including chemical composition, microbiological analysis, and subjectively, namely organoleptic analysis using panellists. The test results of the chemical composition of nutrients was, namely protein 27.00 %, fat 3.00 %, minerals 0.26 %, vitamins 0.07 %, water content 60.00 % (Hafidlun, 2011; Hadi, 2020). Other chemical test results such as histamine at 11.7 mgN%, salt 1.3 %., total volatile bases 68.0 mgN% (Pandit, 2017). Microbiological test results as follows include total bacteria 1,4,101 colonies/g, E Coli < 3, Coliform < 3, negative *Vibrio cholera*, negative *Salmonella*, negative *Staphylococcus aureus*. While the organoleptic score test was, appearance 8.7 odour 8.5 and taste 8.0. The results of this test indicate that traditional *pindang* products produced by *pindang* processors have good quality and meet the Indonesian National Standard (SNI-2717-2017) Pindang Fish (National Standardisation Agency, 2009).

The compliance of Kusamba *pindang* fish with the Indonesian National Standard (SNI) demonstrates that traditional fish processing methods are capable of producing products that meet modern food safety and quality requirements. This achievement reflects the combination of local wisdom and traditional knowledge that has been preserved over generations by the fishing community in Kusamba Village. Despite the use of simple equipment and traditional processing techniques, processors still maintain strict attention to cleanliness and quality of raw materials. This supports the notion that traditional food processing, when carried out correctly, can compete with modern industrial products in terms of quality.

Furthermore, the low histamine content detected from laboratory tests indicates that the handling of raw tuna before processing is conducted properly. Histamine levels are often used as a quality indicator for fish products, especially for the Scombridae family such as tuna, which are prone to histamine formation due to bacterial activity. The fact that histamine levels are far below the hazardous threshold (<50 mg/kg according to SNI) suggests that the raw

materials were processed while still fresh and that the boiling process was effective in inhibiting bacterial growth. This reinforces the importance of rapid processing after fish is caught to prevent spoilage.

In addition, the high organoleptic scores obtained through panelist evaluation reflect consumer acceptance of traditional Kusamba *pindang* fish. Appearance, odor, and taste are important quality attributes that determine marketability. Scores close to 9 on a 9-point hedonic scale indicate that respondents found the product highly appealing. These sensory characteristics are influenced by factors such as the freshness of raw tuna, the addition of natural ingredients like bay leaves and salt, and the optimal boiling duration. Therefore, maintaining consistency in processing techniques is essential to preserving the distinctive characteristics and market competitiveness of Kusamba *pindang* products.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Participatory Food Value Chain Development for Small-scale Farmers

Naori Miyazawa

1. Introduction

Agriculture represents Indonesia's second-largest employment sector, engaging approximately 29 % of the total labor force, following only the services sector at 49 % (World Bank, 2023a). Despite a steady decline in agriculture's employment share from 44 % in 2005 to 29 % in 2019, the sector continues to provide livelihoods for a substantial proportion of Indonesia's 276 million citizens. Notably, 64 % of poor rural households engage in agricultural production, underscoring the sector's critical role in poverty dynamics (World Bank, 2023b). Furthermore, 75 % of all agricultural households cultivate less than one hectare of land, reflecting the fragmented nature of Indonesian agriculture and the smallholder farming systems (FAO, 2018).

This concentration of poverty within agriculture necessitates targeted interventions addressing structural barriers that prevent small-scale farmers from accessing profitable markets and capturing adequate value shares from their production. The Indonesian government's long-term agricultural development plan (2020-2024) positions agriculture not only as a food provider but also as a key-engine for regional economic growth, rural poverty reduction, and the creation of productive employment (Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, 2020).

Bali Island presents a distinctive context where centuries-old agricultural traditions intersect with contemporary tourism development and global market integration pressures. The *subak* irrigation system, a UNESCO World Heritage site dating from the 10th century, represents not merely agricultural infrastructure but a sociocultural institution integrating water management, rice cultivation,

Figure 1   Many lands have been cultivated after the COVID-19 out-
break
Note: Left = before, right = after.

religious observance, and community governance (Lansing, 1991; UNESCO,
2012). However, rapid tourism development and other factors have triggered a
7 % annual decline in paddy-field areas, threatening system sustainability and
farmer livelihoods (Indonesian Government Statistics Bureau, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted Bali's tourism-dependent
economy, with international border closures eliminating an industry employ-
ing approximately 70 % of the island's workforce. This crisis reduced house-
hold incomes by an estimated 66 %, creating widespread economic hardship
(Kopernik, 2020). Agricultural communities experienced these disruptions
through collapsed hotel and restaurant markets for their products, coinciding
with eliminated remittances from family members previously employed in
tourism sectors. Paradoxically, the tourism-collapse catalyzed renewed interest
in agriculture as younger populations returned to rural areas seeking liveli-
hood alternatives (Miyazawa, 2024).

This study presents results from a pilot project implemented in Gianyar
Regency, Bali, since 2021. The intervention employed participatory food value
chain development addressing multiple constraints limiting farmers' prosperity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Food Value Chains and Smallholder Market Integration*

The food value chain framework emphasizes value creation across all stages
from production through processing, storage, distribution, and consumption,
recognizing that interventions at multiple points in the chain are necessary for
sustainable development (Blesh et al., 2023). In developing country contexts,

smallholder farmers frequently face more binding constraints at post-production stages—market access, quality standards, storage facilities, processing capabilities—than at production stages (Reardon et al., 2009). The World Bank emphasizes that disparities in market access among smallholder farmers constitute a critical determinant of poverty outcomes. Market access, in this context, extends beyond mere physical distance to markets to encompass information access, including knowledge of prices, quality standards, buyer requirements, and market opportunities (World Bank, 2008). This multidimensional conceptualization of market access recognizes that physical infrastructure alone proves insufficient without corresponding information-flows enabling farmers to make informed production and marketing decisions. Consequently, comprehensive interventions addressing multiple food value chain bottlenecks simultaneously may prove more effective for poverty reduction than isolated production-focused programs.

Participatory food value chain development approaches emphasize farmer group and collective action as mechanisms for rebalancing asymmetric power relationships within agricultural markets. Devaux et al. (2009) demonstrate that when smallholder farmers organize collectively and develop business management capabilities, they can negotiate more favorable terms with buyers, access premium markets, and capture larger value shares. This approach requires not merely technical improvements but fundamental organizational strengthening, enabling farmers to function as effective market actors rather than passive price-takers.

Direct marketing strategies connecting farmers directly with consumers offer pathways for alternatives intermediary margins while building relationships enabling information exchange and customer loyalty development (Hinrichs, 2000). Farmers' markets, direct-sales outlets, and e-commerce platforms represent alternative marketing channels particularly suited to producers emphasizing quality, traditional varieties, and sustainable production methods—characteristics often undervalued in conventional commodity markets (Brown & Miller, 2008).

3. The *Subak* System: Historical Significance and Contemporary Challenges

3.1 Historical Development and Cultural Significance

The *subak* irrigation system represents one of Bali's most distinctive cultural

institutions, embodying the Balinese philosophical concept of *Tri Hita Karana*—harmonious relationships among humans, nature, and the realms of the spirit (UNESCO, 2012). *Subak* water management practices constitute ecological management systems optimizing water distribution, coordinating planting schedules, and managing pest populations across watersheds.

The *subak* system operates through hierarchical coordination spanning individual rice terraces, farmer groups, and entire irrigation systems encompassing multiple villages. Each *subak* organization governs water distribution from a single water source, typically a spring or river diversion, through an elaborately engineered system of canals, tunnels, and weirs. Decisions regarding planting schedules, water allocation, and infrastructure maintenance emerge through discussion among members, with leadership by elected leaders (*pekaseh*) facilitating consensus-building and implementing collective decisions. Religious dimensions permeate *subak* operations, with water temples (*pura ulun carik*) serving as sites for ceremonies propitiating deities controlling water flow and agricultural fertility.

UNESCO's 2012 designation of Bali's *subak* system as a World Heritage site recognized its outstanding value as a cultural landscape integrating natural environment, religious life, artistic expression, and social organization. The inscription emphasized the *subak*'s demonstration of sustainable agricultural practices maintaining ecological balance over millennia. However, this recognition also highlighted increasing threats to system sustainability from urbanization, tourism development, and socioeconomic change.

3.2 Contemporary Challenges and Transformation Pressures

Despite centuries of successful operation, the *subak* system faces existential challenges in contemporary Bali. Tourism development, which has transformed Bali's economy over recent decades, exerts multiple pressures on agricultural landscapes and farming communities. Land conversion from rice-paddies to tourism infrastructure—hotels, restaurants, shops, villas—has accelerated dramatically in areas proximate to major tourist destinations. The 7 % annual decline in paddy-field area documented in this study reflects these conversion pressures, with land values for tourism development exceeding agricultural returns.

Beyond physical land conversion, tourism development transforms labor markets and community economic strategies. Young people increasingly pursue tourism employment, which offers higher incomes and perceived social status compared to agricultural work. The sustainability of *subak* organizations depends fundamentally on member participation and intergenerational knowl-

edge transmission—both threatened by youth out-migration from agriculture.

Sriartha and Giyarsih (2015) analyze *subak* sustainability through a framework distinguishing technological, ecological, sociocultural, and economic functions. Their research reveals that while irrigation infrastructure and water management technologies remain largely intact, economic functions have deteriorated substantially as agricultural returns fail to compete with alternative livelihood opportunities. This functional imbalance threatens overall system sustainability.

4. COVID-19 and the Reconfiguration on Bali's Economic and Agricultural Systems

4.1 Pandemic Disruptions and Economic Contraction

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated Bali's tourism-dependent economy with unprecedented severity. International border closures and domestic travel restrictions eliminated tourist arrivals, the foundation of an industry employing approximately 70 % of the island's workforce. The resulting economic contraction reduced household incomes by an estimated 66 %, creating widespread hardship across communities (Kopernik 2020). Unlike economic crises affecting primarily urban areas or specific sectors, the pandemic's tourism impacts rippled throughout Bali's economy, affecting not only hotel and restaurant workers but also agricultural producers supplying tourism establishments, artisans producing tourist goods, and service providers dependent on tourist expenditure.

4.2 Pandemic-Induced Agricultural Revitalization

Paradoxically, the tourism collapse catalyzed agricultural revitalization in Bali as communities redirected attention and resources toward farming activities. With tourism employment unavailable, returning migrants sought livelihood alternatives, often turning to family landholdings previously maintained by older relatives. This reverse migration injected younger, more educated populations into agricultural communities, bringing new skills, perspectives, and energies to farming operations.

Food security concerns intensified during lockdown periods, motivating urban and peri-urban households to initiate or expand food production. Home gardening proliferated as families sought to reduce market dependence and food expenditure. This food security imperative extended beyond subsistence

Figure 2   Local people utilizing a small space in a house garden for growing vegetables after the outbreak of COVID-19

production to encompass community-level initiatives establishing vegetable gardens, collective farming operations, and food distribution networks supporting vulnerable populations.

Government policies evolved to support agricultural sector expansion as an economic recovery strategy. The Bali Governor's explicit emphasis on agriculture as central to sustainable development signaled policy re-orientation away from tourism monoculture toward more diversified economic foundations. This policy shift created favorable conditions for interventions supporting agricultural intensification, food value chain development, and farmer organization strengthening.

Consumer behavior changes during the pandemic created new market opportunities for local agricultural products. Health consciousness intensified, driving demand for organic and pesticide-free foods, perceived as safer and healthier than conventional alternatives. These demand shifts created market opportunities particularly suited to small-scale producers emphasizing quality, traditional varieties, and sustainable production methods—precisely the production characteristics of farmers in the target area.

The proposed intervention capitalizes on these pandemic-induced transformations by building market connections between farmers and consumer segments seeking local, organic products; supporting food value chain development enabling farmers to meet quality expectations of health-conscious consumers; and strengthening farmer organizations capable of coordinating production and marketing to meet consistent demand.

5. Research Design and Methodology

5.1 Research Design and Theoretical Framework

This research has adopted an action research methodology emphasizing participatory engagement, iterative learning, and practical problem-solving. Action research, as conceptualized by Lewin (1946) and elaborated by Reason and Bradbury (2008), integrates inquiry and action through cyclical processes of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. This approach proves particularly appropriate for development interventions where objectives include not merely understanding existing conditions but generating social changes improving community welfare.

The theoretical framework integrates multiple analytical perspectives including sustainable livelihoods analysis, institutional economics, and participatory development theory. The sustainable livelihoods framework, developed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID, 1999), provides a holistic lens examining how households combine various capital assets (human, social, natural, physical, financial) through livelihood strategies shaped by vulnerability contexts, institutional environments, and policy frameworks. This framework guides analysis of how food value chain interventions affect asset portfolios and livelihood outcomes.

Institutional economics perspectives, particularly Ostrom's (1990) institutional analysis and development framework, inform understanding of how collective action institutions like *subak* organizations emerge, function, and evolve. Ostrom's work on common property resource management demonstrates that communities can develop effective self-governance systems under appropriate conditions, challenging assumptions that centralized control or privatization necessarily produce superior outcomes.

Participatory development theory emphasizes beneficiary communities, local knowledge valorization, and collaborative decision-making. Cornwall (2008) distinguishes between instrumental participation (community involvement to improve project efficiency) and transformative participation (empowering marginalized groups to shape development agendas). This intervention aspires toward transformative participation through organizational capacity building, enabling farmers to exercise greater control over food value chains affecting their livelihoods.

5.2 Study Site Characteristics

Pupuan Village in Tegalalang District, Gianyar Regency was selected as one of

the study sites based on several criteria. Gianyar Regency ranks among Bali's most prominent rice-producing regions, making it representative of broader agricultural challenges and opportunities. Pupuan Village, covering 11.61 km² with a population of 6,800, demonstrates strong agricultural engagement with a functioning *subak* organization comprising 117 formal members representing 750 rice-farming households.

5.3 Research Design and Implementation

The pilot project was implemented and led by the researcher (who resided in Bali for three years, conducting community-based research since 2018). Over 300 farmers were interviewed during preliminary research, revealing the challenges of the livelihood of farmers.

5.4 Data Collection Methods

The research employed mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data included sales records documenting prices received through different marketing channels, volumes sold, and revenue generated. Qualitative data collection included focus group discussions with participating farmers exploring their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and aspirations. Key informant interviews with *subak* leaders, village officials, market organizers, restaurant operators, and retail store managers provided diverse stakeholder perspectives on intervention effectiveness and sustainability prospects. Participant observation throughout implementation documented activities, interactions, challenges, and adaptive responses. The researcher's sustained presence in the community facilitated rich qualitative data collection, capturing nuanced insights beyond structured data collection instruments.

Consumer surveys at organic markets gathered data on purchasing preferences, willingness to pay for organic and traditional varieties, and factors influencing buying decisions. This market survey informed product positioning and marketing strategies.

6. Intervention Activities and Implementation

6.1 Product Packaging and Branding

Prior to intervention, farmers sold rice in bulk by weight without packaging, labeling, or differentiation. This commodity approach prevented communicating product attributes, including healthy rice, traditional variety characteristics, or
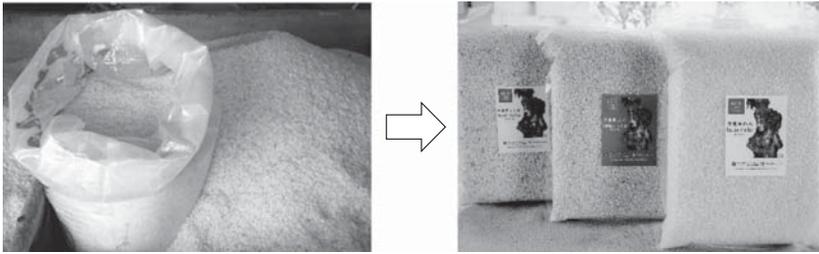
Figure 3 Rice packaging and branding

Note: In the past, rice was sold by weight as shown in the left photo, but now
rice is packaged and branded as shown in the right photo.

local production—attributes potentially valued by certain consumer segments.

The project supported development of branded packaging for rice products. Activities included designing attractive labels communicating product attributes, sourcing appropriate packaging materials, balancing cost with presentation quality, and training farmers in packaging procedures. Brand development involved collaborative processes with farmers identifying names, imagery, and messaging reflecting their values and production methods.

Packaged, branded products enabled products to be sold directly in retail environments, communicated quality signals to consumers, facilitated price premium justification, and built brand recognition supporting customer loyalty development. The transformation from bulk commodity to branded product represented a fundamental shift in market positioning, enabling access to premium market segments.

6.2 Market Development Support

Market development activities addressed farmers' limited knowledge of potential sales channels and absence of relationships with alternative market actors. The researcher leveraged three years of residence in Bali and established networks within international communities and organic market organizers to facilitate connections between farmers and potential buyers.

Specific activities included accompanying farmers to organic markets held regularly across Bali, organizing tasting events enabling consumers to sample products and interact directly with producers, facilitating introductions to restaurant operators seeking local products, and connecting farmers with retail stores targeting health-conscious consumer segments. The researcher attended organic markets almost every weekend with farmers, explaining the project and conducting consumer surveys revealing strong demand for locally-grown,

Figure 4 Support for developing sales opportunities at weekend markets

fresh rice over imported products from other islands.

These activities generated multiple benefits beyond immediate sales. Farmers gained confidence in direct marketing through supported initial interactions, developed understanding of consumer preferences and quality expectations through direct feedback, built relationships with market organizers and buyers which created sustained sales opportunities, and learned market research techniques applicable to future channel development.

6.3 E-Commerce Platform Linkage

Digital marketing and e-commerce represented completely new domains for participating farmers, requiring both technical capacity building and relationship development with platform operators. The researcher negotiated with an e-commerce company supportive of farmer assistance, establishing online sales channels for farmers' products.

Activities included creating product listings with photographs and descriptions, establishing order processing and fulfillment procedures, training farmers in packaging for shipment, and developing customer service protocols. The researcher provided ongoing support trouble-shooting technical challenges and facilitating communications between farmers and platform operators.

E-commerce channel establishment expanded geographic market reach beyond immediate surroundings, accessed urban consumer populations, provided convenient ordering mechanisms increasing purchase likelihood, and created digital presence enhancing brand visibility and credibility.

6.4 Product Diversification

Product development activities created value-added offerings capturing additional value from rice production. Specific innovations included brown rice production through controlled milling processes, rice-bran packaging for sale (previously used only as animal feed), and exploration of other rice-based products.

Brown rice development responded to health-conscious consumer demand for less-processed grains. Such market demand enabled farmers to adjust milling equipment for consistent brown rice quality, meeting customer specifications. Rice-bran packaging proved particularly successful, with strong demand from Japanese residents finding high-quality rice-bran difficult to access through conventional channels. Some customers mentioned that they traveled several hours specifically to purchase these products.

Product diversification generated multiple benefits, including expanded revenue streams from single production inputs, differentiated product offerings serving diverse consumer preferences, demonstrated innovation capacity, building farmer confidence.

6.5 Agricultural Experience Events

The pilot project organized agritourism activities, such as rice planting and harvesting experience events. The event was particularly popular among international school children and expatriate families. The project organized not only farming activities but also an education program. Farmers explained rice cultivation processes, conducted educational quizzes, and facilitated hands-on participation in agricultural activities.

These events built consumer awareness and appreciation for local agriculture, created personal connections between producers and consumers, fostering loyalty, and provided educational experiences valued by international families residing in Bali. The educational ecotourism dimension aligned with the village's designation as a "Tourism Village" while maintaining an agricultural focus.

7. Results and Outcomes

7.1 Sales Price Improvements

The most significant quantitative outcome was sales price increases for participating farmers. Analysis of sales records revealed price increases ranging from 11 % to 50 % depending on product type and sales channel. These improvements derived from multiple factors including direct sales, price premiums for

branded and packaged products, access to premium market segments valuing organic and traditional varieties, and improved bargaining power through diversified sales channels, reducing dependence on any single buyer.

Price increases varied across different marketing channels. Direct sales at organic markets commanded premiums, and eliminated intermediary margins at favorable prices. E-commerce sales also achieved premiums while expanding market reach. Retail store partnerships generated consistent volume demand and payment reliability.

These price improvements translated directly into income increases for participating farmers. While individual farmer impacts varied based on production volumes and channel participation levels, the project documented that farmers achieving the highest engagement in project activities experienced price increases approaching 50 %, improving household economic situations.

7.2 Market Access Expansion

The project successfully connected with three physical retail outlets and one online shop providing farmers with diversified sales channels. This market access expansion represented alternatives from previous situations where farmers sold through intermediaries.

The project developed direct relationships with multiple market actors including organic market organizers, restaurant operators, retail store managers, and e-commerce platform representatives. These relationships provided not only sales opportunities but also created information channels enabling farmers to understand market trends, consumer preferences, and quality expectations.

Consumer surveys at organic markets revealed a strong demand for locally-produced rice, with 78 % of surveyed consumers expressing willingness to pay premiums for local products over imported rice from other Indonesian islands. This documented demand validated market development strategies and confirmed continued market opportunities.

7.3 Farmer Capacity Development and Attitudinal Changes

Beyond quantitative sales and price improvements, the project generated important qualitative outcomes including farmer capacity development and attitudinal changes toward market-oriented agriculture. Farmer feedback documented through focus group discussions revealed multiple dimensions of change.

One farmer stated: "I learned that I can sell rice at a higher price." This comment reflects increased understanding that product differentiation and

quality can command premiums—a fundamental shift from commodity production mentality. Another farmer reported: "By selling rice, I was able to cover my children's education expenses", illustrating how income improvements addressed pressing household needs including educational investments with long-term welfare implications.

Farmers expressed strong interest in continued learning and capacity-building. Comments included: "I want to receive marketing training, so I would appreciate further support," and "Now I know that I can sell rice at a higher price, and I want to improve production techniques, such as enhancing fertilizer usage." These responses demonstrate that successful initial market engagement stimulated demand for additional knowledge enabling farmers to maximize opportunities.

The project cultivated leadership among young farmers who became active participants in marketing activities. These individuals demonstrated aptitude for social media networking, innovative thinking, and entrepreneurial orientation. Their involvement proved crucial for e-commerce establishment and expansion while providing succession-planning for *subak* organizational leadership.

7.4 Organizational Strengthening

While the *subak* organization possessed extensive rice production expertise developed long time, it tends to have less experience in collective marketing, business management, or market-oriented operations. The project initiated processes strengthening organizational capacity in these domains, though substantial additional work remains necessary.

Farmers gained initial experience with collective marketing activities including coordinated delivery schedules, shared quality standards, and joint promotional efforts. While not yet fully systematized, these initial experiences demonstrated feasibility and benefits of collective approaches.

The project created space for organizational discussions about market-oriented strategies—conversations largely absent previously. *Subak* member meetings increasingly addressed marketing topics including pricing strategies, customer relationship management, and sales channel development alongside traditional discussions of water management and planting schedules. These planting strategies could be reflected by the market demand and price.

7.5 Scaling Challenges and Opportunities

The pilot project's success generated substantial interest from neighboring farmer organizations and farmers seeking to replicate activities in their areas.

The Bali Provincial Agriculture Office, universities, and farmer organizations have requested project expansion and technology transfer. This demonstrated demand confirms intervention relevance and scaling potential.

However, effective scaling requires systematic approaches for knowledge documentation, trainer development, and institutional support systems. Ad hoc replication attempts without proper preparation and support likely prove unsuccessful.

The project experience revealed needs for guideline documentation capturing lessons learned and implementation protocols, training-of-trainers programs developing local capacity for continued support, and multistakeholder partnerships connecting farmer organizations with government extension services, university expertise, and NGO resources.

8. Discussion

8.1 Contributions to Food Value Chain Development Literature

This research contributes food value chain literature in several ways. First, it demonstrates that comprehensive interventions addressing multiple constraints simultaneously can generate substantial impacts within relatively short timeframes. The 11–50 % sales price increases achieved within one year substantially exceed impacts typically documented for single-intervention approaches focusing narrowly on production or processing improvements.

Second, the study provides empirical evidence on participatory food value chain development effectiveness in traditional farming system contexts—a relatively under-researched area. Most food value chain literature focuses on export-oriented commercial crops or modern farmer organizations. This research demonstrates that traditional institutions like *subak* can successfully engage in market-oriented activities when provided appropriate support, contributing insights for contexts in other regions where customary resource management systems persist.

Third, the research highlights the importance of relationship-building and trust development for market integration success. Technical improvements in product quality or packaging prove insufficient without corresponding social relationship-building connecting farmers with buyers, creating mutual understanding, and establishing trust. The key-person's sustained presence in the community and established networks proved crucial for facilitating these connections.

8.2 Post-pandemic Recovery Implications

The COVID-19 pandemic context shaped this intervention in important ways. Tourism collapse created crisis conditions motivating farmer receptivity to alternative marketing strategies. Returning migrants provided work force and skills for project activities. Consumer behavior shifts toward health-conscious purchasing and local sourcing created market opportunities for organic and traditional products.

These crisis-induced conditions created a window of opportunity for transformative change. The experience suggests that disruptions, while painful, can catalyze innovations and adaptations which are difficult to achieve under stable conditions. Development practitioners should recognize and strategically engage opportunities emerging from crises rather than merely seeking to restore pre-crisis conditions.

However, sustainability questions remain. As tourism recovers, will young people return to tourism employment abandoning agriculture? These dynamics will substantially influence intervention long-term impacts and require continued monitoring and adaptive support.

8.3 Policy Implications

The intervention generates several policy-relevant insights. First, it demonstrates that market access constraints, not merely production limitations, often constitute binding constraints on smallholder prosperity. Development programs should allocate resources for market development support, infrastructure improvements facilitating product quality maintenance, and organizational capacity building enabling collective marketing.

Second, the research reveals substantial consumer demand for local, organic, and traditional agricultural products—demand often inadequately connected with producers. Government roles facilitating these connections through farmers' market infrastructure, institutional procurement programs supporting local agriculture, and e-commerce platform development linking rural producers with urban consumers could unlock substantial value.

Third, the experience highlights opportunities for integrating agriculture and tourism development in mutually reinforcing ways. Agricultural landscapes and cultural practices attract tourists while tourism provides markets for agricultural products and agritourism revenue. Policy frameworks should promote this integration rather than treating agriculture and tourism as competing with land uses.

9. Conclusion

This one-year pilot project demonstrated that comprehensive participatory food value chain development interventions can generate substantial sales price increases and market access improvements for small-scale rice farmers in Bali, Indonesia. Integrated activities encompassing product branding, market development, e-commerce establishment, product diversification, and agritourism enabled participating farmers to achieve price increases ranging from 11 % to 50 % while connecting with three physical retail outlets and one online shop.

Beyond quantitative outcomes, the project generated important qualitative impacts including farmer capacity development, attitudinal changes toward market-oriented agriculture, organizational strengthening within the *subak* system, and demonstrated feasibility of traditional farming systems engaging successfully in contemporary market economies.

Implementation challenges, including quality control constraints, organizational capacity gaps, and market relationship instability, highlighted the need for continued support extending beyond initial implementation. The substantial interest from neighboring communities and regional institutions in replicating project activities demonstrates intervention relevance and scaling potential.

The research contributes to literature on food value chains, smallholder market integration, traditional agricultural systems adaptation, and post-pandemic rural recovery. Policy implications emphasize the importance of market access support, infrastructure investments facilitating quality maintenance, organizational capacity building for collective marketing, and integration of agriculture and tourism development strategies.

Future research should investigate long-term sustainability of achieved improvements, distributional impacts within farmer communities, and scaling processes and enabling conditions. Longitudinal studies tracking outcomes over multiple years will provide crucial evidence on intervention durability and adaptive strategies maintaining benefits over time.

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Bali at a Crossroads

Weaving a Green Economy into the Fabric of Sustainable Tourism

Putu Ayu Sita Laksmi and Komang Adi Kurniawan Saputra

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1. Introduction: The Paradox of Paradise

Bali, the "Island of the Gods," has long held a mythical status in the global tourism imagination. Its allure is a potent combination of breathtaking natural beauty—emerald rice terraces, volcanic mountains, and pristine coastlines—and a deeply spiritual and vibrant living culture, expressed through intricate temple ceremonies, vibrant arts, and a unique Hindu philosophy known as *Tri Hita Karana*. This very allure, however, has precipitated one of the most pressing and complex challenges of modern tourism development: the paradox of a destination being loved to death (Ardika & Putra, 2017). Since the dawn of mass tourism in the 1970s, Bali has transformed from a secluded haven for intrepid travelers into one of the world's most visited islands, welcoming millions of international and domestic tourists annually. This influx has undeniably fueled economic growth, lifted countless families out of poverty, and created a thriving service-based economy (Cole, 2012). Yet, the linear, volume-driven model of tourism has exacted a heavy toll, manifesting in a water crisis, rampant plastic pollution, chaotic traffic congestion, cultural commodification, and a growing sense of discontent among local communities who bear the burden of tourism's externalities. It is within this critical context that the discourse on sustainable tourism evolves from an academic ideal to an urgent necessity for survival (Dharmiasih, 2020). This chapter argues that for Bali to secure its future, it must fundamentally transition from a conventional tourism model to one that is fully integrated within the principles of a green economy. This transition requires moving beyond isolated eco-friendly initiatives to a systemic,

island-wide re-engineering of the tourism value chain, one that is circular, low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive, all while being rooted in the island's indigenous wisdom. We will explore Bali's unique journey, analyzing the deep-seated pressures, the innovative solutions being implemented, the formidable barriers that remain, and the potential for Bali to emerge as a global beacon of a truly regenerative tourism economy (Gössling, 2017).

The concept of a green economy, as championed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), provides a robust framework for this analysis. It calls for an economic system that results in "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities." For Bali, this translates to a tourism economy that actively enhances its natural capital (its water, soil, and biodiversity), strengthens its social and cultural capital (community well-being and cultural integrity), and generates sustainable economic prosperity that is widely shared. This is not merely about building greener hotels; it is about rethinking urban planning, waste management, agricultural linkages, energy systems, and governance structures to serve both the resident and the visitor (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2015). The Balinese philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*—harmony with God, harmony with other people, and harmony with nature—offers a profound cultural and spiritual foundation for this transition, aligning seamlessly with the triple bottom line of sustainability (Planet, People, Profit). This chapter will dissect how this ancient wisdom can be operationalized within a modern economic context to navigate the island away from the precipice and towards a resilient and flourishing future (Harrison & Pratt, 2015).

2. The Unraveling of the Traditional Model: Pressures and Pains

The symptoms of unsustainable tourism in Bali are now too severe to ignore. They represent a systemic failure of the traditional model and underscore the imperative for a green economic transition. The most critical pressure point is the water crisis. Bali's water resources are under immense strain, with the tourism industry being the largest consumer. The lush, iconic rice terraces of regions like Jatiluwih and Tegallalang, which are not only agricultural lands but also major tourist attractions, are facing existential threats due to water scarcity (Kurniawan et al., 2019). The proliferation of hotels and villas, many with swimming pools and landscaped gardens, has led to the over-extraction of groundwater, causing saltwater intrusion in coastal areas like Sanur and Denpasar. This not only jeopardizes the island's food security and cultural

landscape but also the very aesthetic that draws tourists in the first place (Lane, 2018). The traditional *subak* system, a UNESCO-recognized cooperative water management system of canals and weirs built by farmers over centuries, is being disrupted as water is diverted for tourism, creating social conflict and ecological degradation (MacRae, 2016).

Concurrently, Bali is grappling with a waste management catastrophe. The island generates thousands of tons of waste daily, a significant portion of which is plastic packaging from the tourism and consumer goods industries. The local waste processing infrastructure is overwhelmed, leading to widespread illegal dumping and burning. A significant amount of plastic waste ends up in rivers and, ultimately, the ocean, polluting the very beaches that are the cornerstone of Bali's tourism brand. The visual blight of plastic litter in canals and roadside ditches, coupled with the seasonal "plastic monsoon" where waste washes up on beaches like Kuta and Legian during the rainy season, presents a stark contradiction to the island's image of natural purity (Mowforth & Munt, 2015). This linear "take-make-dispose" model is a textbook example of an economy that fails to internalize its environmental externalities, a core issue the green economy seeks to address.

Furthermore, the cultural and social fabric of Bali is being stretched thin. The intense concentration of tourism in southern hubs like Kuta, Seminyak, and Canggu has led to profound socio-cultural changes (Pitana & Gayatri, 2005). The commodification of sacred ceremonies and the construction of large-scale venues in traditionally residential areas have sparked concerns about the erosion of cultural authenticity and community values. Traffic congestion has become a daily nightmare, degrading the quality of life for residents and the visitor experience alike, while also contributing significantly to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (Scott, 2012). Economically, despite the vast wealth generated by tourism, economic leakage remains a significant problem. A considerable portion of the revenue from large, internationally-owned hotels, airlines, and tour operators is repatriated abroad, rather than circulating within the local Balinese economy. This creates a scenario where the local population endures the negative impacts of tourism without reaping its full economic benefits, fueling resentment and social inequity (Simpson, 2009). These interconnected crises—water, waste, cultural dilution, and economic disparity—paint a clear picture: the old model is broken. Bali's future depends on its ability to pioneer a new one.

3. Pillars of Transition: Operationalizing the Green Economy in Balinese Tourism

The shift towards a green economy in Bali's tourism sector is not a singular project but a multi-faceted transformation built on several interdependent pillars (Suarta & Paranoan, 2020). These pillars represent a strategic reorientation of policies, business practices, and community roles.

1. Water security and circular water management:
    Addressing the water crisis is the most critical pillar. A green economy approach moves beyond conservation to a circular model of water use. This involves:
    *   Regulating groundwater extraction:
        Strict enforcement of regulations on deep-well drilling and the promotion of water pricing that reflects its true scarcity and environmental cost.
    *   Investing in water recycling and reuse:
        Mandating large hotels and resorts to install advanced wastewater treatment plants (AWTP) to treat sewage to a standard where it can be reused for irrigation, toilet flushing, and landscape watering, significantly reducing the demand for freshwater.
    *   Rainwater harvesting:
        Promoting and incentivizing the widespread adoption of rainwater capture systems for both commercial and residential buildings to augment water supplies, particularly during the rainy season.
    *   Supporting the *subak* system:
        Recognizing the *subak* as critical green infrastructure and developing tourism models that directly support it. This could include a dedicated tourism levy that funds *subak* maintenance or agro-tourism programs that educate visitors about the system and contribute to its preservation financially and socially.
2. Zero-waste circular economy:
    Transforming Bali's waste problem into a resource opportunity is central to the green economy (Sugiarta & Paturusi, 2017). This requires a systemic shift from a linear to a circular waste management model.
    *   Upstream reduction:
        Implementing and strictly enforcing bans on single-use plastics, while simultaneously fostering markets for reusable and compostable alterna-

tives. This requires strong provincial government leadership, as initiated by the Gubernatorial Regulation on Single-Use Plastic Waste Reduction.

- Midstream innovation:
  Investing in modern, integrated waste management facilities that can effectively separate, recycle, and compost waste. Supporting community-based waste banks (*bank sampah*) and social enterprises that create value from recycled materials, turning waste into economic opportunity.

- Downstream clean-up and awareness:
  Mobilizing regular beach and river clean-up programs, often driven by NGOs and local communities, and integrating waste education into the tourism experience itself, encouraging visitors to be part of the solution.

3. Low-carbon energy and mobility:
   Decarbonizing the tourism sector is essential for climate action and reducing local pollution (UNEP, 2011).

   - Renewable energy transition:
     Encouraging tourism businesses to invest in rooftop solar PV systems to power their operations, reducing reliance on Bali's fossil-fuel-heavy grid. The government can facilitate this through streamlined permitting and fiscal incentives.

   - Sustainable mobility solutions:
     Developing a reliable and efficient mass public transit system, such as the long-proposed Bali LRT (Light Rail Transit), to connect the airport with major tourism hubs. In the interim, promoting and regulating electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, including EV rentals for tourists and charging stations. Furthermore, creating and maintaining safe, dedicated infrastructure for non-motorized transport—walking and cycling—in urban and semi-urban areas is crucial for reducing congestion and enhancing the visitor experience.

4. Community-led and culturally-rooted tourism:
   A green economy is inherently inclusive. This pillar focuses on rebalancing power and economic benefits in favor of local communities (UNWTO, 2013).

   - Developing community-based tourism (CBT):
     Actively supporting villages to develop and manage their own tourism products, such as homestays, guided cultural walks, traditional cooking classes, and artisan workshops. This ensures that tourism revenue stays

within the community and that development is aligned with local values.

- Strengthening local economic linkages:
  Creating platforms and policies that encourage tourism businesses to prioritize local procurement, from food and beverages (e.g., sourcing from local organic farms) to construction materials and handicrafts. This builds a more resilient local economy and reduces the carbon footprint of imports.
- Cultural safeguarding:
  Developing tourism protocols that protect the sanctity of religious ceremonies and sacred sites. This involves visitor education and potentially regulating access to ensure that cultural practices are respected and not merely performed for tourist consumption.

4. Policy and Governance: The Bedrock of Change

None of these pillars can be realized without coherent, courageous, and effective governance (Warren & McCarthy, 2009). The government, at both the provincial and regency levels, plays the most critical role in setting the vision, rules, and incentives for a green transition (Wheeler & McKnight, 2012).

1. The Bali provincial government has shown awareness through policies like the *Bali Clean and Green* initiative and the single-use plastic ban. However, the challenge lies in implementation and enforcement. There is a need for an integrated, island-wide sustainable tourism master plan that is legally binding and aligns spatial planning, infrastructure development, and economic policy with green economy principles. This plan must define clear carrying capacities for different regions and halt unsustainable development in overburdened areas.
2. Green fiscal policy is a powerful yet underutilized tool. The existing Bali Tourism Levy, a small fee charged to foreign tourists, is a step in the right direction. However, these funds must be transparently managed and directly channeled into projects that address tourism's externalities, such as waste management facilities, water conservation projects, and cultural preservation programs. Furthermore, the government could explore tax incentives for businesses that achieve recognized green certifications or invest in renewable energy and water recycling systems, and Differential Pricing for utilities, where high-volume users like large hotels pay a premium that

subsidizes infrastructure upgrades.

3. Strengthening standards and certification by promoting and potentially mandating adherence to credible sustainability standards for all tourism businesses, from hotels to tour operators, would create a level playing field and combat greenwashing (Wiranatha & Smith, 2014).

5. Case Studies: Seeds of a Greener Future in Action

Across Bali, numerous initiatives, both large and small, are demonstrating the practical viability of the green economy model (Laksmi et al, 2023a).

1. The "Plastic-Free Bali" movement & local champions:
   Driven by a coalition of NGOs, local activists, and socially conscious businesses, this movement has been instrumental in raising awareness and pushing for policy change. Businesses like Mason Adventures in Ubud have operated on sustainability principles for decades, with robust waste management, cultural preservation programs, and community support. Similarly, cafés and hotels across the island are leading the way by eliminating plastic straws, using biodegradable packaging, and installing water refill stations to discourage plastic bottle sales. These pioneers prove that a green business model is not only possible but can be a powerful marketing asset.

2. Community-based tourism in Penglipuran and Tenganan Villages:
   The village of Penglipuran is a stellar example of community-led tourism. The village community collectively manages tourism, charging an entrance fee that is used for village development and preservation. They have maintained their unique architectural style, cultural traditions, and cleanliness, offering visitors an authentic and managed experience. Similarly, Tenganan Pegringsingan, known for its ancient *geringsing* double-*ikat* weaving, controls tourist access and has successfully used tourism to fund the preservation of its rare cultural heritage. These models demonstrate high-value, low-volume tourism that empowers communities and safeguards culture.

3. Green School & Green Village (A hub for sustainability education):
   Located near Ubud, the Green School has become an international icon for sustainable design and education. Its campus, built almost entirely from locally sourced bamboo, is a living laboratory of green architecture. It operates on renewable energy, practices organic farming, and integrates sustainability into its entire curriculum. The adjacent Green Village applies

similar principles to residential properties. While exclusive, these projects serve as powerful inspiration and demonstration sites, showcasing how modern development can exist in harmony with nature and inspire a new generation.

4. Sustainably-certified resorts:

   Alila Resorts and others: High-end hotel groups like Alila (now part of Hyatt) have embedded sustainability into their brand DNA. Alila Ubud, for instance, features strong environmental management systems, supports local communities, and offers immersive cultural experiences. The proliferation of such certified resorts, which adhere to global standards like EarthCheck or the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard, shows that the market for responsible luxury is growing and that large-scale operations can also adopt green practices.

6. Case Study: The Bukit Peninsula Regeneration—From Quarry to Conservation-based Economy

A powerful and granular case study that exemplifies the practical application of green economy principles in Bali is the ongoing transformation within the Bukit Peninsula, the southernmost part of the island. For decades, the Bukit was characterized by arid limestone plateaus, small traditional villages, and a few secluded temples (Saputra & Laksmi, 2024). However, the tourism boom led to rampant, unregulated development, particularly for private villas and hotels seeking cliff-top ocean views. This resulted in widespread environmental degradation: large swathes of land were clear-cut, limestone cliffs were excavated for construction materials, and the fragile, water-scarce ecosystem was placed under immense strain. The traditional linear economy was starkly visible: extract resources, build, and operate with little regard for long-term consequences (Laksmi et al., 2023b). The turning point came through the pioneering efforts of a few key actors who demonstrated that a conservation-led, circular model could not only restore the environment but also create superior and more sustainable economic value. A prime example is The Ungasan Clifftop Resort and its affiliated initiatives (Laksmi, 2023a). This development took a previously damaged site—a former limestone quarry—and embarked on a comprehensive regeneration project. Instead of simply building on the scarred land, the project's founders invested heavily in environmental restoration. They implemented large-scale reforestation programs, planting thousands of native, drought-resistant trees to combat soil erosion and restore habitat. This

single act aligns directly with the green economy's pillar of investing in natural capital, treating ecological restoration not as a cost but as a fundamental, value-adding investment (Saputra & Laksmi, 2024).

Furthermore, the project addressed the Bukit's critical water scarcity head-on by rejecting reliance on groundwater. It invested in a state-of-the-art de-salination plant to produce its own fresh water and a comprehensive wastewater treatment and recycling system (Laksmi, 2023b). This closed-loop water management approach ensures that no wastewater pollutes the surrounding environment and that treated water is reused for irrigation and other non-potable purposes, drastically reducing the operation's extractive footprint. This move internalizes an environmental externality—water consumption—and turns it into a circular, self-sufficient system. Economically, the project also embedded the green economy principle of local economic linkage and social equity. Through its sister foundation, it established robust community development programs, focusing on providing education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihood opportunities for the surrounding villages (Saputra & Laksmi, 2024). By prioritizing local employment and supporting local enterprises, it ensures that a significant portion of the tourism revenue is retained within the local economy, fostering social inclusion and reducing the leakage that plagues conventional tourism. The success of this model is evident. The resort and others following a similar ethos have created a high-value tourism niche. Visitors are increasingly attracted to destinations that can demonstrably prove their commitment to sustainability, and they are often willing to pay a premium for it (Laksmi, 2023a). This proves the green economy thesis that decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation is not only possible but profitable. The regenerated landscape itself becomes a primary attraction, offering guests an experience of beauty and well-being that a degraded environment could never provide (Laksmi, 2023b). The Bukit Peninsula case shows that the transition to a green economy in Bali is not a uniform process but a mosaic of individual and collective actions that, when combined, can shift the trajectory of an entire region from extraction to regeneration.

7. Challenges and the Path Forward

The path to a green tourism economy in Bali is fraught with challenges. Governance and enforcement remain the weakest link, with policies often poorly implemented due to a lack of resources, capacity, or political will, and complicated by the division of authority between provincial and regency governments

(MacRae, 2016). Economic pressures and the inertia of the mass tourism model are powerful; the short-term profitability of volume-driven tourism makes it difficult for stakeholders to commit to the long-term, albeit more sustainable, high-value model. Access to finance and technical expertise is a major barrier for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) wishing to go green (Pitana & Gayatri, 2005). Furthermore, changing tourist behavior is a slow process; a significant segment of the market still prioritizes cheap packages and is unaware of or indifferent to their footprint (Kurniawan, 2019).

Despite these challenges, the path forward is clear. It requires an unwavering, collaborative commitment from all stakeholders. The provincial government must demonstrate bold leadership by finalizing and implementing an integrated, enforceable master plan. The private sector, from large investors to small *warungs*, must innovate and view sustainability as a core competitive strategy, not a peripheral CSR activity (Harrison & Pratt, 2015). Local communities must be empowered as true partners and guardians of their culture and environment. And tourists must be educated and encouraged to make responsible choices, rewarding the businesses that are doing the right thing.

8. Conclusion: Reclaiming Harmony

Bali's journey towards sustainable tourism within a green economy is more than an environmental or economic imperative; it is a cultural and spiritual one. The philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* provides a timeless blueprint for a balanced existence. The current crises represent a profound disharmony—with nature through the degradation of land and water, with fellow human beings through social inequity and cultural stress, and with the spiritual realm through the commodification of the sacred. The green economy offers a modern, practical framework to restore this harmony. It provides the tools to build a tourism sector that functions like a natural ecosystem: circular, regenerative, and resilient. By valuing its natural capital, investing in its social capital, and building an economic system that nurtures both, Bali can transition from being a victim of its own success to a global exemplar of how to manage tourism in the 21st century. The goal is not to end tourism, but to transform it into a force that actively heals, enriches, and sustains the Island of the Gods for generations to come. The crossroads is now; the choice is between managed renewal or uncontrolled decline. The weaving of the green economy into Bali's tourism tapestry is the only way to ensure that its paradise is not lost, but preserved, enhanced, and shared responsibly.

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Decentralization and Community Participation
Bridging Traditional and Modern Governance

Alarico Ximenes

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1. Introduction

In the evolving landscape of governance, decentralization and community participation have become central themes in promoting democratic legitimacy, local empowerment, and sustainable development. Decentralization refers to the systematic transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central to local governments, aiming to bring decision-making closer to citizens (Rondinelli, 1981). Community participation, on the other hand, emphasizes the involvement of local populations in shaping decisions that affect their daily lives, ensuring that governance is both responsive and inclusive (Pretty, 1995).

Together, these principles form a nexus through which traditional and modern governance structures can be harmonized. Particularly in post-colonial, multicultural, or developing societies, the challenge lies not only in adopting modern administrative systems but also in integrating the deeply rooted traditional institutions that continue to hold social and political significance (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004). This introduction examines the theoretical underpinnings, historical evolution, and contemporary relevance of decentralization and community participation, with a focus on how these processes bridge traditional and modern governance systems.

Decentralization encompasses several dimensions—political, administrative, and fiscal—each contributing to a redistribution of power that reshapes the relationship between the state and society. Political decentralization focuses on transferring decision-making authority to locally elected officials, thereby deepening democracy and ensuring accountability. Administrative decentral-

ization entails delegating implementation responsibilities to regional or local institutions, promoting efficiency and responsiveness. Fiscal decentralization, meanwhile, enables local entities to manage resources and revenue generation, thus enhancing financial autonomy (World Bank, 2000).

These dimensions are interconnected and often pursued simultaneously to strengthen local governance. The theoretical foundation of decentralization is rooted in the principle of subsidiarity, which holds that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level of authority capable of effectively addressing the issue (Council of Europe, 1985). This principle not only promotes efficiency but also fosters a sense of ownership and legitimacy among local communities. The empowerment of local authorities through decentralization thus provides a platform for integrating traditional governance mechanisms into contemporary political systems, particularly where customary leaders or community elders have historically managed local affairs.

Community participation is the lifeblood of decentralized governance. It involves the active engagement of citizens in planning, implementing, and monitoring development programs. Arnstein's (1969) seminal "Ladder of Citizen Participation" conceptualizes participation as a spectrum ranging from mere tokenism to full citizen control. Genuine participation occurs when communities not only contribute labor or resources but also influence decision-making and policy outcomes. This participatory approach transforms governance from a top-down process into a collaborative partnership between state institutions and civil society.

In decentralized systems, community participation is both an instrument and an outcome of governance reform. It empowers marginalized groups, enhances transparency, and promotes the equitable distribution of public goods (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999). More importantly, participation revitalizes traditional communal values such as solidarity, reciprocity, and mutual aid—values often embedded in indigenous governance systems. Thus, community participation serves as a bridge between formal institutions and informal social networks, reinforcing social cohesion and accountability in governance processes.

Before the advent of the modern state, many societies functioned under traditional systems characterized by kinship-based authority, customary laws, and collective decision-making. Chiefs, elders, or village councils played pivotal roles in maintaining order, resolving disputes, and managing communal resources. These structures derived legitimacy from cultural norms, ancestral lineage, and community consent rather than codified legal systems (Logan, 2009). Despite modernization and state centralization, traditional governance

systems continue to influence local politics and social organization, especially in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

Traditional leaders often act as intermediaries between citizens and the state, ensuring that policies are culturally appropriate and community-oriented. For example, in Ghana and Botswana, chieftaincy institutions have been incorporated into local governance structures, enabling them to coexist with elected councils (Ray & Reddy, 2003). Similarly, in Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea, traditional village councils and customary law systems operate alongside formal government institutions to mediate local disputes and manage communal affairs (Boege, 2011). This coexistence demonstrates the resilience of traditional authority and its potential to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of decentralized governance if properly integrated.

Modern governance, grounded in principles of democracy, rule of law, and bureaucratic rationality, often seeks to standardize administrative procedures and enhance accountability. However, centralized governance has frequently been criticized for its inefficiency, bureaucratic rigidity, and disconnect from local realities (Crook & Manor, 1998). In response, many governments—particularly in the Global South—have embarked on decentralization reforms as part of broader democratization and development strategies. The World Bank (2000) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) have long advocated decentralization as a means to improve service delivery, reduce poverty, and strengthen local democracy.

Yet, decentralization alone does not automatically guarantee participation or development. Its success depends largely on how it interacts with local power structures, social norms, and historical legacies. In societies where traditional institutions retain moral authority and community trust, integrating these systems into the modern governance framework enhances local ownership and sustainability (Hendriks, 2010). Conversely, when decentralization reforms ignore traditional leadership or impose external models, they risk creating tensions and undermining both legitimacy and efficiency.

The intersection between decentralization and community participation provides a unique opportunity to reconcile traditional governance with modern state structures. Bridging these systems requires recognizing the complementary strengths of each. Traditional governance emphasizes consensus, moral legitimacy, and social cohesion, while modern governance promotes formal accountability, transparency, and legal equality (Chinsinga, 2006). Together, they can create hybrid models that are both culturally grounded and institutionally robust.

One illustrative example is the integration of traditional councils into decentralized governance in Botswana. Here, the *kgotla* system—an indigenous public assembly—has been institutionalized within the local government framework, allowing communities to deliberate on development issues and hold leaders accountable (Sharma, 2010). Similarly, in Timor-Leste, local governance reforms have sought to incorporate customary leaders into community development councils, fostering a participatory model that blends tradition with modern administrative procedures (Hohe, 2002). These hybrid systems demonstrate that bridging traditional and modern governance is not about replacing one with the other but about fostering complementarity that enhances both legitimacy and functionality.

While the potential benefits of hybrid governance are evident, the process of integration is fraught with challenges. One major concern is the tension between democratic principles and hereditary authority. Traditional leaders often derive their legitimacy from lineage and custom, which may conflict with the democratic ideal of equal representation (Logan, 2009). Furthermore, issues of gender equity and minority inclusion can arise, as some customary systems historically marginalize women or lower-status groups (UNDP, 2009).

Administrative and legal harmonization also poses difficulties. Modern states operate under codified legal systems that may clash with flexible and oral-based customary laws. Balancing these differences requires careful negotiation and adaptive legal frameworks that respect cultural diversity while upholding universal rights. Capacity-building and mutual trust between traditional leaders and state officials are essential to overcome these divides. Without such efforts, the coexistence of parallel governance systems may lead to duplication, competition, or even conflict over authority and jurisdiction.

Empirical evidence suggests that decentralization and community participation can significantly improve development outcomes when properly designed and implemented. Local governments that involve communities in planning and budgeting tend to allocate resources more equitably and deliver services more efficiently (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999). Participatory governance also fosters civic engagement, enhances transparency, and reduces corruption by enabling citizens to monitor public officials (Faguet, 2014).

In contexts where traditional governance plays an active role, these benefits are often amplified. Traditional leaders, with their moral authority and local knowledge, can mobilize communities more effectively than external bureaucrats. They can mediate disputes, facilitate collective action, and ensure compliance with community norms. Integrating these leaders into decentralized

structures thus enhances governance legitimacy and social cohesion, contributing to sustainable development. However, success depends on clearly defining roles, ensuring accountability, and preventing the politicization of traditional authority.

The reconciliation of traditional and modern governance through decentralization and participation requires a context-sensitive approach. There is no universal model; rather, each society must design systems that reflect its historical experiences, cultural values, and institutional capacities (Olowu & Wunsch, 2004). In pluralistic societies, hybrid governance offers a pragmatic path toward inclusive development by recognizing the plurality of authority sources. The ultimate goal is not to romanticize traditional institutions but to harness their legitimacy and community embeddedness to strengthen democratic governance.

Policymakers should prioritize participatory frameworks that empower both citizens and traditional authorities within the boundaries of constitutional democracy. Training programs, participatory budgeting, and legal reforms can facilitate this integration. Furthermore, decentralization should not merely be an administrative exercise but a transformative process that fosters civic responsibility, cultural continuity, and equitable development.

Decentralization and community participation represent more than administrative reforms—they embody a reimagining of governance that values local agency, cultural diversity, and democratic inclusion. By bridging traditional and modern systems, societies can construct governance models that are both legitimate and effective. Traditional institutions offer moral authority and social cohesion, while modern governance provides legal structure and administrative capacity. When harmonized through participatory and decentralized frameworks, these elements can create a balanced system that reflects both local realities and national aspirations.

The success of this synthesis depends on inclusive policy design, mutual respect between traditional and state actors, and a shared commitment to community empowerment. In this sense, decentralization becomes not only a mechanism of governance reform but also a pathway toward social transformation—one that unites heritage with progress, and tradition with modernity, in the pursuit of equitable and sustainable development.

2. Method

This section outlines the methodological approach used to examine how de-

centralization intersects with community participation to bridge traditional and modern governance systems. Because the subject spans multiple cultures, governance arrangements, and sociopolitical contexts, the study adopts a qualitative, literature-based comparative research design, grounded in thematic content analysis of academic literature, policy documents, and empirical case studies. This methodology allows for an in-depth understanding of how decentralization reforms influence, reshape, or coexist with traditional governance structures in diverse settings.

The study utilizes a qualitative research design, grounded in interpretive analysis. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for topics such as community engagement, customary leadership, and governance reforms, as these phenomena are deeply embedded in sociocultural contexts and historical legacies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An interpretive framework allows the researcher to examine variations in governance practices, understand community meanings, and analyze how local actors negotiate power and participation within decentralized systems.

Given the diversity of governance models globally, this study incorporates comparative analysis, reviewing cases from Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, and Latin America. Countries such as Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Mozambique, Ghana, Nepal, and Vanuatu were selected because each demonstrates important intersections between decentralization and customary governance (Boege et al., 2009; Brown, 2012; Kyed, 2011). The comparative method allows identification of recurring themes, shared challenges, and divergent experiences, strengthening the study's analytical rigor (Ragin, 2014).

The primary data source consists of peer-reviewed academic publications including journal articles, books, edited volumes, and institutional studies. Literature was gathered from scholarly databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Key search terms included:

- Decentralization and governance;
- Community participation;
- Traditional leadership;
- Customary governance;
- Hybrid governance;
- Local democracy;
- Participatory development;
- Timor-Leste decentralization;

- Indonesia village governance;
- Legal pluralism and decentralization.

Studies published between 1995 and 2024 were prioritized to capture contemporary developments and long-term trends in decentralization reforms.

To complement academic sources, the study integrates analyses from international and national policy documents, including reports from:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- World Bank;
- Asian Development Bank (ADB);
- Government ministries responsible for decentralization;
- Local governance strategies and legal frameworks.

These documents provide insight into the formal policy structures underpinning decentralization and offer empirical descriptions of implementation processes.

Rather than conducting original fieldwork, this study relies on empirical case studies published in the literature. This includes ethnographic accounts, participatory governance assessments, and policy evaluations that document community experiences under decentralized systems (Hohe, 2002; Ubink, 2008; Cummins, 2015). Using existing case studies ensures the analysis is rooted in real-world experiences while maintaining methodological consistency across diverse regions.

A systematic literature review methodology was employed to ensure comprehensive and unbiased selection of sources. The process followed steps suggested by Snyder (2019):

- Define key research questions;
- Identify relevant keywords and search strings;
- Screen abstracts and titles for relevance;
- Evaluate full texts based on inclusion criteria;
- Extract and code relevant information.

Inclusion criteria were:

- Relevance to decentralization, traditional governance, or community participation;

- Empirical evidence or theoretical contributions;
- Publication in reputable academic outlets.

Exclusion criteria included:

- Works unrelated to governance reform;
- Purely conceptual texts without empirical grounding;
- Materials lacking academic rigor.

The collected literature was analyzed using thematic content analysis, a method suitable for synthesizing patterns across diverse qualitative texts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed six stages:

- Familiarization with the literature;
- Generating initial codes capturing governance concepts;
- Searching for themes such as "local autonomy," "customary authority," and "hybrid governance;"
- Reviewing themes for internal coherence and external distinction;
- Defining and naming themes, ensuring conceptual clarity;
- Producing the analytic narrative that links themes to the research objectives.

Four major themes emerged:

- Decentralization enhances participation when authority is devolved;
- Traditional leaders remain central to local governance;
- Hybrid governance systems emerge under decentralization;
- Elite capture and inequality remain persistent challenges.

These themes formed the structural foundation of the Results and Discussion section of this chapter.

Thematic findings were compared across geographic contexts to identify similarities and differences in how decentralization interacts with traditional governance systems. Comparative interpretation was essential because decentralization does not occur in a vacuum; its outcomes depend on historical, cultural, and political conditions (Crook, 2003). This approach allowed the study to generate more nuanced understandings and avoid one-size-fits-all assumptions.

Because this research relies exclusively on secondary data, ethical considerations relate primarily to:

- Proper citation and academic integrity;
- Faithful representation of authors' findings;
- Avoidance of cultural misrepresentation;
- Respect for traditional knowledge systems.

No human subjects were directly involved, removing the need for institutional ethical approval. However, the study took care to interpret traditional governance with cultural sensitivity and avoid imposing external normative judgments.

Despite offering valuable insights, the methodology carries several limitations:

2.1 Reliance on Secondary Data

The study does not include primary data such as interviews or field observations. Therefore, analyses depend on:

- The quality of existing research;
- The perspectives of authors who conducted fieldwork;
- The availability of literature for specific regions.

Regions with limited published research may be underrepresented.

- Comparability challenges:
  Because the study examines multiple countries, cultural and political differences may limit comparability across cases. Although the comparative method offers valuable patterns, it may overlook context-specific nuances.
- Potential for publication bias:
  Academic literature sometimes overrepresents cases where decentralization produced clear outcomes—positive or negative—while understating more ambiguous experiences (Smoke, 2015). This may influence theme identification.
- Complexity of hybrid governance:
  Traditional governance systems are highly diverse and locally specific. Synthesizing these into general themes introduces the risk of oversimplifying complex social dynamics.

2.2 Justification of the Methodological Approach

Despite its limitations, this methodology offers several strengths:

- Cultural sensitivity and contextual depth:
  By relying on ethnographic and case-study-based literature, the study remains grounded in culturally specific understandings of governance.
- Breadth and analytical power:
  The systematic literature review enables the integration of evidence from multiple countries, enhancing the validity of themes.
- Suitability for governance research:
  Governance processes are complex and multilayered. Qualitative, interpretive methods allow for holistic analysis of power, norms, and relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
- Relevance to policy and practice:
  By synthesizing findings across contexts, the study provides insights applicable to policymakers designing decentralization reforms in culturally diverse societies. The methodology employed in this study provides a comprehensive and context-sensitive framework for analyzing how decentralization and community participation contribute to bridging traditional and modern governance.

Through systematic literature review, comparative case analysis, and thematic interpretation, the study illuminates the dynamic interplay between formal state structures and customary authority systems. This methodological approach ensures that the complexity of local governance is captured accurately while offering transferable insights for wider scholarly and policy debates.

3. Literature Review

Decentralization is typically defined as the transfer of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central governments to subnational entities, ranging from deconcentration within bureaucracies to delegation and political devolution to elected local governments (Oates, 1972; Rondinelli, 1981; World Bank, 2000). Political decentralization emphasizes elected local councils; administrative decentralization addresses functional responsibilities; and fiscal decentralization concerns revenue generation, intergovernmental transfers, and expenditure assignments (Oates, 1972; Smoke, 2001). The principle of subsidiarity, embedded in comparative public administration and European local govern-

ment norms, underpins these approaches: decisions should be made as close as possible to citizens, assuming sufficient local capacity and accountability (World Bank, 2000).

Participation has been theorized along ladders and spectrums of power. Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" remains canonical, distinguishing "manipulation" and "therapy" from "consultation," "partnership," and ultimately "delegated power" and "citizen control." Subsequent frameworks refined the concept to differentiate instrumental participation—sought to improve project performance—from transformative participation that redistributes power (Cornwall, 2008; Pretty, 1995). Gaventa (2006) proposes analyzing "spaces" (invited, claimed, created) and "places" (closed, invited, claimed) of participation to capture the political opportunity structures that shape voice and influence. Across these literatures, meaningful participation implies that citizens shape agendas and hold decision makers accountable—not merely provide labor or attend meetings.

The intersection of decentralization and participation is not automatic. Mansuri and Rao (2013) warn that community-driven development and local participation schemes can be undermined by elite capture when social inequalities remain unaddressed. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) similarly argue that local information advantages can coexist with entrenched local power asymmetries, producing capture unless countervailing accountability institutions and equitable design features are present. Thus, the promise of decentralization depends on how authority is devolved, what resources follow functions, and how participatory and accountability mechanisms counterbalance local inequalities (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999; Faguet, 2014).

Economic federalism posits that decentralized provision of local public goods can improve allocative efficiency when preferences vary spatially and when local governments face "yardstick competition" (Oates, 1972). Political science and development studies add democratic accountability and legitimacy: representatives who are closer to constituents may be more responsive, while participatory institutions can enhance transparency and oversight (Crook & Manor, 1998; Faguet, 2014). Empirically, Faguet's (2012) study of Bolivia finds that far-reaching devolution shifted investment toward under-served areas and locally prioritized sectors, suggesting that empowered local governments—when paired with mobilized citizenries—can reallocate resources in pro-poor ways.

Yet efficiency and accountability gains are conditional. Smoke (2001) notes frequent "mismatches" between assigned functions and local fiscal autonomy,

creating unfunded mandates. Weak intergovernmental transfer systems and unclear expenditure assignments dilute performance incentives. Social accountability can mitigate these problems by enabling citizens and civil society organizations to monitor service delivery, though Fox (2015) emphasizes that "strategic" combinations of transparency, civic mobilization, and state responsiveness are required to move beyond "isomorphic" (symbolic) participation.

Research on participatory governance emphasizes state–society synergy rather than substitution: enduring gains arise when robust civic engagement interacts with responsive local governments (Heller, 2001; Fox, 2015). Participatory budgeting (PB) in Porto Alegre—widely studied as a benchmark—linked open assemblies and elected delegates to binding budgetary decisions, expanding social inclusion and reorienting spending (Wampler, 2007). Comparative work shows that institutional design matters: clear rules, public deliberation, redistributive criteria, and administrative follow-through increase the probability that participation shifts allocations rather than becoming consultative ritual (Wampler, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

From a collective action perspective, Ostrom (1990) demonstrates that communities can sustainably manage common-pool resources under conditions of clearly defined boundaries, locally crafted rules, graduated sanctions, conflict-resolution arenas, and recognized rights to organize. Decentralization that legally recognizes these principles and gives communities authority over local commons can strengthen compliance and outcomes. However, when modern law negates customary resource rights or overlays contradictory regulations, local collective action can unravel (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999).

In many regions, traditional institutions—chiefs, elders' councils, village courts, lineage authorities—continue to adjudicate disputes, allocate land, and coordinate collective action. The coexistence of elected councils and customary authorities produces hybrid governance orders (Boege, 2011; Logan, 2009). Logan (2009) finds that citizens in several African countries express simultaneous support for democratic institutions and traditional authority, valuing the latter's moral legitimacy, proximity, and cultural resonance. Ray and Reddy (2003) document how chieftaincy can embed local state institutions within community norms, but also how ambiguous mandates can yield competition and politicization.

Hybrid arrangements can institutionalize traditional forums within decentralized structures. Botswana's *kgotla*—a public assembly for deliberation and dispute resolution—has been integrated into local government practices, serving as a venue for accountability and policy feedback (Sharma, 2010). In Gha-

na, recognition of chiefs alongside district assemblies has provided channels for land administration and social mediation (Ray & Reddy, 2003). In Timor-Leste, *suco* councils and customary leaders have been incorporated in community development and dispute settlement, increasing local legitimacy while sometimes clashing with formal rights regimes (Hohe, 2002; Boege, 2011).

The hybrid governance literature cautions, however, against romanticizing tradition. Customary institutions can reproduce patriarchal norms, exclude youth and minorities, and lack transparency (Chinsinga, 2006; UNDP, 2009). As such, "bridging" requires legal pluralism with safeguards: clearly delineated powers; compatibility with constitutional norms and human rights; and participatory oversight to prevent impunity or hereditary domination (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999; UNDP, 2009).

The political economy literature interrogates how local power relations shape decentralized participation. Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) model conditions under which decentralization improves targeting or, conversely, is captured by local elites. Empirical studies in South Asia and Africa document scenarios where elite patrons mediate access to state benefits, with councils becoming venues for clientelism unless countered by transparency, competition, and civic mobilization (Crook & Manor, 1998; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Cornwall (2008) argues for "invited spaces" to be complemented by "claimed spaces" where marginalized groups organize autonomously.

Quotas and representation reforms can reshape outcomes. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) find that women's political reservation in India's *gram panchayats* altered investment priorities toward goods valued by women (e.g., water). Complementary evidence suggests that social audits, grievance redress systems, and codified disclosure rules (e.g., public lists of beneficiaries, participatory planning rules) reduce capture and increase pro-poor targeting when enforced (Fox, 2015; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Thus, inclusive design and enforceable accountability are preconditions for participation to be democratizing rather than legitimizing existing hierarchies.

Institutional clarity—who does what, with which money, under what rules—anchors effective decentralization (Smoke, 2001). The literature converges on several design imperatives: (a) expenditure assignments that match local competencies; (b) predictable, formula-based intergovernmental transfers that equilibrate fiscal capacities; (c) meaningful local revenue authority to reduce dependence; and (d) local public financial management systems that enable citizen oversight (Oates, 1972; World Bank, 2000; Faguet, 2014). When functions are devolved without resources, or when fiscal discretion is residual,

local councils become implementers of central mandates, undercutting accountability.

- Participatory institutions require codification:
  Laws can mandate open meetings, participatory planning cycles, gender and minority representation, and disclosure obligations (Wampler, 2007; Fox, 2015). Enforcement mechanisms—ombuds offices, independent audit authorities, and judicial review—translate rules into practice. Conversely, overlapping statutory and customary jurisdictions without conflict-resolution pathways can generate forum shopping, inconsistent rulings, and erosion of trust (Boege, 2011; Ray & Reddy, 2003).
- Natural resources:
  Decentralized natural resource management often blends customary rules with statutory recognition. Where communities hold secure rights and enforcement capacity, outcomes for forests and rangelands can improve (Ostrom, 1990). Agrawal and Ribot (1999) emphasize that accountability of local authorities to users—not simply "localness"—predicts success; delegating to deconcentrated bureaucrats or unaccountable traditional figures need not enhance outcomes.
- Service delivery:
  Studies of education and health services show mixed results. Participatory school committees and health boards can improve monitoring and responsiveness, but effects hinge on information quality, decision authority, and resource discretion (Fox, 2015; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). In some settings, decentralization reallocated resources toward primary services and poorer areas; in others, wealthier jurisdictions captured benefits (Faguet, 2012, 2014). Equalization transfers and performance-based grants can reduce spatial disparities while rewarding inclusive practices (World Bank, 2000).
- Local development and budgeting:
  PB and community-driven development (CDD) create formal channels for prioritizing investments. Wampler (2007) shows that Porto Alegre's PB institutionalized distributive rules favoring underserved neighborhoods, while later diffusion cases reveal variation in depth and durability. Mansuri and Rao (2013) argue that "induced" participation through CDD performs best when embedded in long-term institution building, not short project cycles.

The literature points to five mechanisms for bridging:

- Legal pluralism with safeguards:
  Recognize customary forums for dispute resolution and resource management but bind them to constitutional rights, gender equality, and appellate review (Boege, 2011; UNDP, 2009). This reduces normative conflicts and enhances predictability;
- Co-governance institutions:
  Create joint bodies (e.g., council–chief forums, village assemblies) where traditional and elected leaders deliberate publicly, with minute-taking, disclosure, and citizen question periods to align informal authority with formal accountability (Ray & Reddy, 2003; Sharma, 2010);
- Participatory planning cycles:
  Mandate inclusive village assemblies and sector working groups that draw on customary knowledge while using modern tools (social maps, budgets, indicators), linking plans to funded budgets and performance audits (Wampler, 2007; Fox, 2015).
- Role clarity and division of labor:
  Assign customary authorities to domains of comparative advantage (mediation, customary land allocation within rights frameworks, cultural affairs) while elected councils manage statutory services and budgets, reducing turf conflict (Chinsinga, 2006; Ray & Reddy, 2003).
- Capacity building for all actors:
  Train both traditional and elected leaders in rights frameworks, budgeting, and inclusive facilitation; resource citizen groups to monitor decisions; and fund translation and public communication to bridge linguistic and cultural divides (UNDP, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

Trade-offs are inherent. Integrating customary authorities can bolster legitimacy and compliance but risks entrenching hereditary privilege or patriarchal norms (Chinsinga, 2006; Logan, 2009). Excluding traditional leaders may advance formal equality yet alienate communities and lower uptake of rules. The literature recommends pragmatic pluralism with enforceable inclusion mandates (e.g., women's representation, youth quotas), transparent procedures, and appeal pathways to mediate these tensions (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; UNDP, 2009).

Participation is mediated by gender, caste/ethnicity, class, age, and disability. Without proactive measures, "community" forums can reproduce inequalities (Cornwall, 2008; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Evidence from India's *panchayats* shows that descriptive representation can change priorities (Chattopadhyay &

Duflo, 2004), but complementary measures—capacity support, safety from backlash, and transparency—are necessary for substantive representation. In hybrid settings, gender norms embedded in customary law can constrain women's speech and mobility; redesigning meeting times, child-care provision, and women-only pre-meetings can expand voice (UNDP, 2009). Social audits and grievance redress mechanisms help marginalized groups challenge exclusionary practices (Fox, 2015).

Decentralization reshapes accountability across three axes. Vertical accountability refers to elections and electoral competition in local jurisdictions. Horizontal accountability encompasses oversight by audit institutions, courts, and anti-corruption bodies. Social accountability relies on civic action, transparency, and public deliberation (Fox, 2015). Durable improvements in service delivery and inclusion emerge when these forms complement each other: elections create incentives; oversight constrains malfeasance; and citizens can detect and publicize problems. Traditional forums such as *kgotla* can serve as social accountability venues when decisions are recorded, budgets disclosed, and questions permitted (Sharma, 2010). Absent such rules, traditional gatherings risk legitimizing decisions without recourse.

Hybrid local orders contribute to everyday peace by resolving disputes and preventing escalation, especially in fragile and post-conflict contexts. In Timor-Leste, customary leaders' authority to mediate land and family disputes has been leveraged to reduce caseloads in formal courts and sustain social cohesion (Boege, 2011; Hohe, 2002). However, the literature stresses that dispute resolution must be harmonized with statutory protections against gender-based violence and must provide appeal routes to formal institutions (UNDP, 2009). Fragile states benefit from hybrid mechanisms when they are embedded in a clear division of labor and accompanied by rights-based training.

Comparative experiences show that timing, sequencing, and political coalitions matter. In Bolivia, sweeping devolution came bundled with substantial fiscal transfers and authority, paired with mobilized civic committees; outcomes included more equitable territorial allocation (Faguet, 2012). In India, constitutional amendments created millions of elected local representatives, with reservation policies catalyzing descriptive representation (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004), though fiscal discretion remained uneven. In Botswana, the *kgotla*'s institutionalization fostered deliberative practices that coexist with modern councils (Sharma, 2010). In Ghana, competing mandates between assemblies and chiefs have sometimes yielded productive collaboration and sometimes turf conflicts, illustrating the need for role clarity (Ray & Reddy,

2003). Across cases, program depth (authority plus resources), codified participatory rules, and independent oversight best predict durable impacts.

The literature converges on a synthesis: decentralization can bridge traditional and modern governance when (a) devolved authority is real and matched by resources; (b) participation goes beyond consultation to shared decision-making; (c) traditional authorities are recognized within a constitutional and rights-based framework with defined remits; and (d) multilayered accountability restrains capture and promotes inclusion (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999; Fox, 2015; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Where these conditions are absent, decentralization risks institutionalizing symbolic participation, creating parallel jurisdictions, and reproducing inequalities (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006; Cornwall, 2008).

Three gaps stand out. First, measurement: many studies infer participation from attendance or meeting frequency, not from agenda-setting power, budgetary control, or realized outcomes; better indicators of *effective voice* are needed (Gaventa, 2006; Fox, 2015). Second, longitudinal evidence: reforms often ebb with political cycles; more panel analyses could identify durability conditions, including how crises (e.g., pandemics, climate shocks) test hybrid institutions. Third, intersectionality and rights: while inclusion mandates exist, more research is needed on how legal pluralism affects gender justice, disability access, and minority protections within hybrid forums, and which safeguards produce consistent remedies (UNDP, 2009).

The literature establishes that decentralization and community participation are complementary yet contingent reforms. When backed by meaningful authority, resources, and inclusive, enforceable rules, decentralization can harness local knowledge and social legitimacy—including that embodied in traditional institutions—to improve accountability and development outcomes. Hybrid governance, carefully designed, transforms coexistence into co-governance: traditional forums provide culturally resonant deliberation and compliance, while modern institutions secure rights, transparency, and fiscal responsibility. The challenge is not whether to bridge traditional and modern governance but how: through role clarity, rights safeguards, transparent participatory cycles, and multilayer accountability. Where these conditions are institutionalized, decentralization becomes a vehicle for democratic deepening and contextually grounded state–society relations.

4. Results and Discussion

A broad review of scholarly literature on decentralization and community participation reveals several core findings concerning how decentralized governance structures interact with traditional leadership systems, customary norms, and local-level participation practices. Research shows that decentralization reforms in developing countries often aim to promote local empowerment, strengthen democratic accountability, and improve public service delivery (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999; Smoke, 2015). However, the extent to which decentralization succeeds frequently depends on the quality of community participation, the strength of local institutions, and the relationship between formal state structures and traditional governance systems. In many contexts across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific—including Timor-Leste—traditional authority remains a dominant force in social organization, conflict resolution, and community mobilization (Boege et al., 2009; Richmond & Mitchell, 2012). As a result, decentralization outcomes are shaped as much by sociocultural dynamics as by institutional design.

The literature finds that decentralization has the *potential* to bridge traditional and modern governance by integrating local knowledge, customary decision-making processes, and democratic accountability into formal government structures (Ostrom, 1996; Larson & Soto, 2008). However, this integration often faces obstacles such as power imbalances, elite capture, limited local capacity, and tensions between state-centered reforms and existing customary systems. The results presented here identify key themes across the literature related to community empowerment, governance effectiveness, trust-building, and institutional compatibility.

One of the strongest findings across the literature is that decentralization increases opportunities for community participation when local governments are granted real authority over planning, budgeting, and decision-making (Ribot, 2002; Faguet, 2014). In many countries, decentralization devolves responsibilities to municipalities or village-level councils, thereby reducing the distance—literally and institutionally—between citizens and public authorities. This proximity improves communication, enhances service responsiveness, and fosters a stronger sense of ownership over development initiatives.

Studies in Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste indicate that local autonomy encourages communities to articulate their priorities more clearly through village meetings, consultative forums, and participatory budgeting processes (UNDP, 2014; Warren & Visser, 2016). For example, Indo-

nesia's post-1998 reforms facilitated local *musrenbang* (development planning forums), enabling villagers to participate directly in identifying projects and allocating resources (Antlöv et al., 2016).

Similarly, Timor-Leste's *suco*-level governance reforms introduced community assemblies that allowed citizens to engage in deliberation and decision-making in ways closely aligned with customary practices (Brown, 2012). Decentralization enhances community participation when authority, resources, and decision-making power are meaningfully transferred to the local-level.

Another major finding is that traditional leaders, institutions, and customary authority (chiefs, elders, *lia nain*, *adat* leaders) continue to play a fundamental role in governance in many decentralized systems (Boege et al., 2009; Kyed, 2011). These leaders are often trusted intermediaries who manage village-level affairs, resolve disputes, organize collective labor, and mobilize community participation. Their authority derives from cultural legitimacy rather than state appointment, which gives them influence that formal institutions frequently lack.

Research from Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Ghana, Mozambique, and Vanuatu demonstrates that communities often view traditional leaders as more accessible, trustworthy, and representative than elected officials (Hohe, 2002; Ubink, 2008; McLeod, 2008). In some cases, decentralization has unintentionally strengthened traditional authority by providing opportunities for local elites to influence resource allocation processes. Traditional governance structures remain deeply embedded in community life and strongly influence participation patterns in decentralized governance systems.

The literature shows that decentralization frequently creates hybrid forms of governance in which traditional and modern authorities share responsibilities or exist in overlapping institutional arrangements (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012; Brown, 2012). These hybrid systems emerge organically, as communities integrate customary norms and practices into formal governance processes.

Examples include:

- Timor-Leste: *suco* councils blend elected representatives with customary elders;
- Mozambique: traditional chiefs were incorporated into local administrative roles;
- Vanuatu: customary chiefs co-govern alongside municipal councils;
- Indonesia: *adat* institutions have regained authority in areas such as Aceh

and West Sumatra.

These arrangements often strengthen local legitimacy and improve service delivery, but they can also generate confusion over roles and responsibilities.

The result is that decentralization reforms often produce hybrid governance systems where customary and state institutions coexist, collaborate, or compete.

Despite the potential benefits of decentralized governance, the literature identifies frequent problems of elite capture, exclusion, and the marginalization of women, youth, and minority groups (Crook, 2003; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Traditional governance systems, while legitimate, may reinforce patriarchal structures or power hierarchies that limit democratic participation.

Evidence from several countries indicates that:

- Local elites dominate participatory meetings;
- Village chiefs control resource distribution;
- Political patronage networks influence local decision-making;
- Marginalized groups have limited voice in planning processes.

In Timor-Leste, for instance, village councils have increased participation opportunities, but customary norms often restrict women's involvement in decision-making (Cummins, 2015). Decentralization does not automatically ensure inclusive participation; structural inequalities often persist or re-emerge at the local-level.

The literature consistently shows that community participation contributes to more effective and contextually appropriate service delivery when participatory mechanisms reflect local realities, values, and governance traditions (Ostrom, 1996; Jütting et al., 2005). Successful cases—from Indonesia to Ghana, Brazil, and Timor-Leste—demonstrate that decentralized planning and participatory processes improve the responsiveness of local services such as water management, education, health, and infrastructure.

Participatory governance succeeds when:

- Local authorities have sufficient autonomy;
- Communities trust local leaders;
- Decision-making processes align with cultural expectations;
- Accountability mechanisms are in place.

Community participation enhances governance outcomes when participatory structures align with sociocultural norms and institutional capacities.

The results indicate that decentralization has the potential to transform governance by making it more participatory, culturally grounded, and responsive to local needs. However, the effectiveness of decentralization depends on how well it accommodates preexisting social structures, particularly traditional governance. The following sections discuss the implications of these results for broader debates on governance reform, state-building, and community empowerment.

The findings suggest that decentralization can deepen local democracy by increasing opportunities for citizen engagement and local accountability. When power is transferred from central authorities to municipalities or village councils, communities gain greater control over decisions that affect their daily lives (Faguet, 2014). This aligns with theories of participatory governance that emphasize the value of localized, bottom-up decision-making (Ostrom, 1996).

However, the literature warns that decentralization alone is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by:

- Clear mandates;
- Financial resources;
- Administrative capacity;
- Effective oversight mechanisms.

Without these, decentralization risks becoming symbolic rather than substantive.

Traditional governance systems remain integral to community participation, particularly in rural and post-conflict societies where customary norms shape collective identity and social order (Boege et al., 2009). These systems provide:

- Culturally legitimate leadership;
- Conflict resolution mechanisms;
- Social cohesion and mutual accountability;
- Community mobilization capacity.

The persistence of traditional authority suggests that decentralization must not attempt to replace customary institutions; instead, it should engage them as partners. Ignoring traditional governance risks creating institutional gaps or

undermining local legitimacy.

However, the integration of traditional leaders raises questions about democratic inclusivity. While they offer cultural legitimacy, they may also reinforce patriarchal norms and hierarchical power relations that exclude marginalized groups (Cummins, 2015). The challenge, therefore, is designing governance systems that respect tradition while upholding democratic principles.

The emergence of hybrid governance systems—where state and customary authorities coexist—illustrates how decentralization can bridge traditional and modern governance (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012). These hybrids are not signs of institutional weakness; rather, they reflect adaptive and context-specific governance arrangements.

Hybrid governance structures can:

- Enhance local legitimacy;
- Improve coordination between state agencies and communities;
- Embed governance in cultural norms;
- Strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms.

Yet hybrid systems also produce ambiguity and conflict over roles, authority, and resource control. Managing these tensions requires:

- Legal clarity;
- Well-defined institutional boundaries;
- Mechanisms for dispute resolution between traditional and modern authorities.

While decentralization increases opportunities for participation, the quality of participation varies significantly. Elite capture is a major challenge, particularly where local elites leverage their influence to dominate participatory processes (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). In many traditional societies, gender norms further restrict women's involvement in public decision-making.

Thus, decentralization does not automatically guarantee equitable participation. To address this, governance reform must:

- Strengthen accountability mechanisms;
- Promote gender and youth inclusion;
- Encourage transparency in local governance;
- Provide civic education and public awareness programs.

Inclusive participation must be designed, not assumed. The results highlight the importance of designing decentralization reforms that reflect local cultural realities. Formal participatory processes work best when they resonate with existing practices and belief systems (Jütting et al., 2005).

For example, communal decision-making traditions in Timor-Leste and Indonesia align with modern participatory planning forums, making them more effective and legitimate.

This suggests that governance reform should not aim for uniform institutional models but adapt to local cultures. Decentralization succeeds when it:

- Strengthens existing communal practices;
- Respects customary norms;
- Integrates local knowledge into policymaking.

In post-conflict societies such as Timor-Leste, Nepal, and Sierra Leone, decentralization plays a crucial role in rebuilding trust between citizens and the state. Traditional leaders often serve as stabilizing figures who embody continuity and legitimacy (Hohe, 2002). Integrating them into formal governance can help rebuild social cohesion and reduce conflict.

However, decentralization must be implemented carefully to avoid:

- Empowering wartime elites;
- Reproducing conflict-era inequalities;
- Fragmenting national governance structures.

Effective decentralization in post-conflict settings requires a balance between innovation and respect for cultural continuity.

The literature indicates that decentralization and community participation have great potential to bridge traditional and modern governance systems, enhancing democratic accountability, strengthening service delivery, and fostering culturally relevant governance. However, success depends on context-sensitive institutional design, the careful integration of traditional authority, and efforts to ensure inclusive participation. Rather than seeing traditional governance as an obstacle, the evidence suggests it can be an asset - provided that reforms safeguard equity, transparency, and democratic norms.

5. Conclusion

Decentralization and community participation have become central pillars in the quest for democratic deepening, inclusive governance, and sustainable development. Together, they represent both a structural and normative transformation in how power is distributed and exercised. Decentralization seeks to transfer authority, responsibilities, and resources from the central government to local entities, while participation ensures that citizens are active agents in shaping decisions that affect their lives. When effectively combined, these two processes enhance legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness in governance. Yet, their success depends on more than institutional reforms—it requires the recognition of social realities, particularly the coexistence of traditional and modern systems of authority that characterize many societies, including Timor-Leste.

Bridging traditional and modern governance entails reconciling diverse sources of legitimacy and distinct modes of decision-making. Traditional governance systems, often rooted in kinship, consensus, and moral authority, provide social cohesion and localized legitimacy. Modern governance, anchored in constitutionalism, bureaucratic rationality, and the rule of law, provides the institutional and legal frameworks necessary for equity and accountability. When aligned through participatory and decentralized mechanisms, these systems can complement rather than contradict each other. Hybrid governance models, as observed in Botswana's *kgotla* system and Timor-Leste's *suco* councils, demonstrate that integrating traditional leadership within formal structures can enhance state legitimacy and improve service delivery when guided by inclusivity, transparency, and rights-based principles.

However, the process of bridging these systems is not without challenges. The persistence of patriarchal norms, elite capture, and uneven capacity can undermine the participatory potential of decentralization. Similarly, tensions arise when customary practices conflict with constitutional guarantees, particularly in areas concerning gender equality, human rights, and justice. Thus, effective integration requires not merely coexistence but harmonization—through legal pluralism with safeguards, role clarity between traditional and elected authorities, and institutionalized mechanisms of accountability. This balance ensures that traditional values enrich governance without undermining the principles of democracy and equality.

Ultimately, decentralization and community participation are transformative when they move beyond administrative devolution to genuine empow-

erment. In contexts like Timor-Leste, where traditional institutions remain integral to community life, decentralization must respect local culture while fostering democratic inclusion. Participatory planning, fiscal autonomy, and community oversight are essential to anchor legitimacy and effectiveness. The experience of hybrid governance underscores that the vitality of democracy does not rest solely on formal institutions but on how governance resonates with the lived realities of citizens.

In conclusion, bridging traditional and modern governance through decentralization and community participation is both a pragmatic and ethical imperative. It creates a governance system that is culturally grounded, socially legitimate, and democratically accountable. The task ahead lies in institutionalizing inclusive frameworks that allow traditional wisdom and modern norms to coexist productively, thereby crafting governance models that embody both heritage and progress. Through such integration, societies can build resilient, participatory, and contextually relevant institutions capable of addressing the complex challenges of the 21st century.

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Part II

Challenges from ASEAN

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASEAN and Minilateralism
A Legitimacy-Based Analysis of Regional Cooperation

Nobuhiro Ihara

1. Introduction

This study aims to offer a theoretical understanding of the relationship between minilateral regional cooperation and multilateralism centered on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Asia-Pacific. Through minilateral cooperation between regional and external actors, and multilateral arrangements led by ASEAN under the principle of ASEAN centrality, the region's security architecture has become increasingly layered and complex. These layered and complex structures pose challenges to the analysis of their interrelations. Even among multilateral arrangements in which ASEAN plays a leading role, the region hosts a wide array of institutions, including ASEAN, ASEAN+3, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. In addition to these, bilateral cooperation between regional and external states and an increasing number of minilateral frameworks further complicate the landscape. Notably, minilateral arrangements centered on the U.S.A.—such as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), AUKUS (a trilateral security partnership among Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.A.), and the U.S.A.–Japan–Philippines trilateral framework—as well as regionally led initiatives such as the Malacca Straits Patrol (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand) and the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines), have attracted attention as mechanisms that contribute to regional order in the Indo-Pacific.[1]

The prominence of minilateral cooperation is frequently discussed in conjunction with negative assessments of multilateralism, particularly ASEAN-

led regional cooperation. Scholars argue that minilateralism can complement multilateralism by overcoming stalemates such as difficulty in consensus-building among member states and limited effectiveness in addressing regional challenges (Naim, 2009). However, these arguments presuppose a negative evaluation of ASEAN's regional cooperation as slow and ineffective, thus casting doubt on the principle of ASEAN centrality (Lin & Lee, 2023).[2] For instance, Panda and Ohn (2024: 769) contend that "minilaterals can be viewed as a modified version of multilaterals in response to the inefficient decision-making processes primarily due to the challenges arising from consensus among often states with diverse or even conflicting interests." Other scholars go further, suggesting that minilateralism could "eventually challenge multi-lateralism" (Teo 2018), or "minilateralism and its exclusionary nature posed a threat to the notion of regionalism and ASEAN's core values of centrality and unity" (Chhangani & Noor, 2022).

Kai He underscored that the Asia-Pacific region is witnessing a shift from ASEAN-centered multilateralism 1.0—characterized by a geopolitical focus on Southeast Asia—to contested multilateralism 2.0, which centers on Asia-Pacific, especially East Asia, and is driven by major powers such as the U.S.A., China, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. According to Tow (2020), multi-lateralism 2.0 was manifested as a *default strategy* during the Obama admin-istration, in which minilateralism emerges as its logical derivative (p. 54). In this sense, the emergence of minilateralism may be interpreted based on the context of contested multilateralism 2.0. Accordingly, minilateralism is in-creasingly viewed as a concept that has prompted a re-evaluation of ASEAN-centered multilateralism and its foundational values.

However, these criticisms of ASEAN are not new. Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has been persistently criticized for its institutional limita-tions, slow progress in regional security cooperation, and inability to deliver substantive benefits to member states. Moreover, ASEAN has coexisted with bilateral alliances (e.g., between the U.S.A. and Thailand or the Philippines) and minilateral arrangements (e.g., the Five Power Defence Arrangements). Scholars have long observed that bilateral and minilateral arrangements have played a more prominent role in regional security than did ASEAN. A recent development, however, is a strategic shift by major powers such as the U.S.A. by placing increased emphasis on bilateral and minilateral arrangements. How-ever, the structural conditions underlying such dynamics have existed for a long time. Consequently, the relationship between ASEAN and externally led arrangements has been a longstanding and pivotal subject of scholarly inquiry.

If minilateralism can challenge and complement multilateralism, then how can their relationship be theorized? As this study will discuss, minilateralism is frequently characterized as more effective, flexible, swift, and adaptable than multilateralism and features issue-specific and exclusive membership structures. Although this characterization is persuasive, highlighting that multilateralism does not pursue only tangible benefits is important. For example, Pouliot (2011: 18–19) emphasizes the intrinsic value of multilateral practice, citing that "the axiomatic practice of multilateralism brings about benefits that reinforce the drive for negotiated governance regardless of substantive outcomes." Simply put, minilateralism and multilateralism generate different types of interests, and considering them as equivalent or asserting that the former threatens the latter is not always logically appropriate. Therefore, analysis of their relationship needs to address differences in the types of interests pursued, while identifying common evaluative criteria applicable to both.

This study adopts the concept of legitimacy as the analytical framework (Iwata, 2013). The importance of legitimacy lies in the fact that when members perceive intergovernmental organizations and arrangements as legitimate, organizations are more likely to elicit respect and compliance from these members (Hurd, 2002: 36). Moreover, despite a reduction in benefits from the status quo, legitimacy remains *sticky*—continuing to generate compliance from group members (Sohn, 2005: 489). Moreover, as Kissinger (2014: 9–10) argued, maintaining world order requires not only power but also legitimacy: "a balance of forces does not in itself secure peace," and "a consensus on the legitimacy of existing arrangements" is also necessary. Given that not only member states but also external actors in forums, such as the ARF and EAS, have accepted ASEAN's norms and principles of regional cooperation, thereby contributing to the maintenance of regional order (Acharya, 2014), the legitimacy of interstate cooperation in this region nevertheless warrants close attention.

This study argues that minilateral arrangements led by the U.S.A. in the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN-centered multilateral organizations derive legitimacy from distinct sources, and these differences provide a basis for critiques on minilateralism or multilateralism, as well as their complementarity. If minilateralism threatens or complements ASEAN's multilateral cooperation, then it implies that minilateralism possesses advantages that cannot be found in multilateralism. These advantages may lead to criticism of multilateralism or enable minilateralism to supplement it. This study contends that these advantages are rooted in legitimacy. Simply put, ASEAN-centered multilateralism and Indo-

Pacific minilateralism are grounded in different sources of legitimacy, and processes of legitimation associated with each form of cooperation can generate critique or enable complementarity with each other.

The remainder of the chapter is structured into two main sections. The Literature Review section provides a review of existing studies on ASEAN's regional cooperation through the perspective of legitimacy. This review highlights the absence of comparative research on legitimacy in multilateralism and minilateralism and serves as the basis for the study's explanatory framework. The Empirical Studies section applies this framework to identify the distinctive features of multilateralism and minilateralism; it argues that each is rooted in unique sources of legitimacy, and this divergence enables complementarity. The Conclusion summarizes key findings and their implications and outlines future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review

Although the literature on ASEAN is extensive, only a limited number of studies explicitly focused on the topic of legitimacy. The current study intends to construct its explanatory framework by conducting a critical examination of representative articles in this domain.

To begin, without employing a formal theoretical framework, Saran (2023) offers an overview of various ASEAN-related developments in which legitimacy has been contested. According to Saran, the Bangkok Declaration—which established ASEAN—represented an effort to cultivate legitimacy by uniting countries with diverse political systems under a single organization. Subsequently, ASEAN has strengthened its presence as an inclusive and legitimate regional entity by institutionalizing cooperation within and beyond the region—as evident in the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (2000) and the launch of the ASEAN Community (2015). Furthermore, ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ARF, EAS, Asia–Europe Meeting, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus, and ASEAN+3, have contributed to conflict management and regional dialogue involving external actors, thus reinforcing the association's legitimacy. The current study similarly focuses on legitimacy derived from such achievements. However, Saran's analysis lacks a detailed account of the contributions of the adoption of relevant procedures in these successful governance processes to the enhancement of legitimacy.

Ba (2013) analyzes ASEAN's multilateral cooperation using the dual lens

of internal legitimacy—collectively assessed by member states—and external legitimacy—anticipated and evaluated by actors external to the organization. The author argues that ASEAN's performance, along with the external recognition it has received, contributes to the strengthening of internal legitimacy among member states (p. 140). In this context, the stabilization of regional relations and consequent economic prosperity and growth are emphasized as principal sources of ASEAN's legitimacy (pp. 142, 147). In addition, Ba underscores procedural legitimacy, particularly ASEAN's consensus-based politics and inclusiveness that enables all members to contribute their views, thereby avoiding opposition or defection. Ba also discusses substantive legitimacy, which is reinforced when the organization adheres to its core values and priorities (pp. 135, 144–145). However, Ba (2013: 148–151) notes that ASEAN's admission of Myanmar, its consensus-driven processes, and inability to provide swift and effective responses to the Asian financial crisis (1997) invited external criticism and weakened its external legitimacy. Moreover, Ba argues that these delegitimating pressures from external actors prompted legitimating efforts among ASEAN member states (pp. 152–159). In this manner, Ba focused on the processes, performance, and procedures of inter-governmental cooperation, examining the influence of external critique on ASEAN's legitimacy. However, she paid little attention to a legitimacy deficit that emerged from the limited participation of civil society in ASEAN's decision-making and cooperative processes.

He (2022) introduced the concept of legitimacy in his institutional balancing theory in analyzing the policies of external powers such as the U.S.A. and China toward ASEAN.[3] He argues that, by embracing international institutions, states can strengthen not only tangible interests but also the legitimacy and prestige they pursue within the international order. In certain cases, states may even undermine the legitimacy of other states by embracing international institutions (pp. 1109–1110). Furthermore, He integrates institutional balancing theory into role theory to explain variations in institutional strategies adopted by states during periods of order transition. He posits that the legitimacy of the international order serves as a causal mechanism that links role conception—a state's identification of its role—with its adopted institutional strategies. Thus, an order-defending state, as the inherent *holder of legitimacy* of institutions, becomes reluctant to share this legitimacy with others and tends to resist changes to the existing order. Consequently, this state is likely to adopt an exclusive institutional balancing strategy in response to challenges posed by rising powers.

This analytical framework offers a compelling explanation of the approaches employed by the U.S.A. and China toward ASEAN-centered multilateral cooperation. For instance, it accounts for the initial reluctance of the U.S.A. toward the establishment of the ARF, stemming from concerns that this initiative may undermine its established *hub-and-spokes* security arrangement (He 2018). From China's perspective, the theory similarly elucidates how "through multilateral cooperation with the ASEAN states in the ARF and ASEAN-dominated institutions, China has also challenged the legitimacy and dominating role of the US-led hub-and-spokes bilateral system in the regional security architecture" (He, 2022: 1124). However, He does not explicate the mechanisms through which ASEAN's cooperative practices, processes, or outcomes have enhanced legitimacy.

Similar to the current study, Sever and Mehmetcik (2021) adopt Schmidt's (2013) tripartite framework of input, output, and throughput legitimacy. However, their definitions are notably succinct: input legitimacy pertains to "the participation of member states in making decisions"; output legitimacy represents "the performance and efficiency of ROs' activities in creating better and more efficient outcomes"; lastly, throughput legitimacy denotes "procedures for making decisions or to the democratization of decision-making procedures" (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 90). The authors identify ASEAN's contributions to peace, stability, and economic success as sources of output legitimacy, which resonates with the current study (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 94). Additionally, they associate the ASEAN Way—its informal and non-confrontational communication style and adherence to regional norms such as sovereignty, noninterference, equality, and independence—with input legitimacy (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 93). Nevertheless, given Schmidt's emphasis on the quality of interaction among governance actors in the assessment of throughput legitimacy (Schmidt, 2013: 5–6), the ASEAN Way could also be interpreted as a source of throughput legitimacy. The authors further evaluate throughput legitimacy from the perspectives of democratization and civil society participation in regional cooperation (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 95), although they overlook the view of member states' governments—central actors in ASEAN cooperation.

Stubbs analyzes ASEAN's performance through the lenses of effectiveness, legitimacy, and efficiency—considering proponents and skeptics. In his discussion on legitimacy, he also refers to the input–output–throughput framework, albeit with concise definitions:

Input legitimacy refers to the selection of participants in any decision-making processes and more generally to how organizations are established and maintained. Throughput legitimacy concerns the rules and norms that govern how decisions are made (e.g., whether by consensus or voting and how much consultation takes place) and implemented (e.g., whether on a voluntary as opposed to a legally required basis). And output or performance legitimacy refers to the consequences of decisions and actions, particularly with reference to social stability, economic prosperity and state security. (Stubbs, 2019: 926)

His empirical analysis on throughput legitimacy underscores consultations and decision-making that align with Southeast Asian norms and argues that member governments confer legitimacy upon ASEAN. Conversely, skeptics emphasize the critical stances of civil society groups toward ASEAN policies. Although these findings resonate with the analysis of the current study, Stubbs's empirical treatment of input and output legitimacy is brief. The author solely attributes input legitimacy to Southeast Asian states without considering non-state actors such as civil society. Output legitimacy is discussed only in terms of broadly recognized outcomes—political stability, economic growth, and social progress—without reference to specific cases (Stubbs, 2019: 933–938).

In summary, while the aforementioned studies addressed legitimacy in the context of ASEAN, several gaps remain. First, these studies exclusively focused on ASEAN and overlook the legitimacy of minilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region or its complementary and tension-filled relationship with ASEAN's multilateral cooperation. Second, empirical studies on ASEAN only briefly defined the concepts of input, output, and throughput legitimacy. Thus, a thorough reconstruction of the explanatory framework, grounded in Schmidt's original arguments, is warranted. Third, building on this framework, identifying and comparing sources of legitimacy that underpin multilateralism and minilateralism is crucial.

2.2 Research Framework

This study analyzes intergovernmental cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region from the perspective of legitimacy in its sociological sense—assessing legitimacy on the basis of whether an institution's authority is appropriately exercised.[4] Toward this end, the study employs three evaluative criteria for legitimacy, as previously mentioned: input, throughput, and output. This framework

builds on Scharpf's (1999) concepts of input- and output-oriented legitimacy and employs the explanatory model developed by Schmidt for analyzing governance in the European Union (EU) and other European contexts (Schmidt, 2013; Schmidt & Wood, 2019).

Input legitimacy emphasizes which entities participate in decision-making and considers the legitimacy of these participants. In general, multilateral institutions derive legitimacy from inclusiveness, enabling the participation of diverse actors (Keohane, 2006: 64). Contemporary multilateralism has undergone evolution characterized by increased openness through the involvement of non-state actors—multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions—thus marking a deviation from earlier eras that were solely dominated by sovereign states (Ricci, 2014). Accordingly, analyses of input legitimacy in the EU typically underscore whether governance demands by citizens, interest groups, and networks are accommodated along with those of states (Schmidt, 2013: 5). However, in Asia—where many countries have experienced colonial rule and, thus, place high normative value on sovereignty and independence—states are typically regarded as legitimate participants in multilateralism (Ba, 2013). Therefore, ASEAN's input legitimacy is primarily derived from its inclusiveness in incorporating regional states into cooperative frameworks.

In contrast, output legitimacy is related to perceptions of the quality of institutional performance, including policies and outcomes (Schmidt & Wood, 2019: 728). Sources of output legitimacy are evaluated based on the extent to which institutions fulfill their substantive purposes (Keohane, 2006: 67). Importantly, output is assessed not only through the delivery of material goods (Keohane, 2006: 67) but also through non-instrumental values embodied by multilateral institutions (D'Alessandra & Gildea, 2025). For example, Pouliot (2011: 21–23) identifies the advantages of joint practice in multilateralism, arguing that the deliberative nature of multilateral processes inherently involves debate, and policies that emerge from these processes are thereby endowed with legitimacy.

Throughput legitimacy evaluates the legitimacy of procedures and processes that connect input with output (Schmidt, 2019: 729). While input legitimacy is mainly concerned with which entities participate in decision-making, throughput legitimacy focuses on the quality of interaction among governance actors (Schmidt, 2013: 5–6). Specifically, it examines whether governance is conducted in accordance with a concept that Ruggie (1992: 571) coins as "generalized organizing principles" ("principles which specify appropriate conduct

for a class of actions") and whether such principles are considered legitimate. In the case of ASEAN, throughput legitimacy entails an assessment of whether decision-making is conducted through consultation and consensus in accordance with foundational principles and norms, including non-interference in domestic affairs, sovereignty, equality, and respect for independence (Stubbs, 2019: 926).

Specifically, the legitimacy of governance processes is examined on the basis of whether they foster efficacy, inclusiveness, and openness (Schmidt, 2013: 5–6). In this regard, multilateralism enhances legitimacy by promoting widespread participation in fair decision-making processes through principled inclusive dialogues, which provide participating states with a degree of equality and mutual recognition (D'Alessandra, 2025: 651–654). Simply put, multilateralism enables smaller states *to sit at the table* on equal footing with major powers, thereby offer "voice opportunities" that would otherwise be unavailable (Pouliot, 2011: 20; Teo, 2018). If the interests of member states are considered, and decisions are reached through consensus, then the likelihood of powerful states behaving in arbitrary or despotic ways is reduced, and the potential of multilateral organizations to engage in untoward conduct is mitigated. Consequently, member states are more likely to accept these decisions, which are, thus, considered legitimate (Keohane, 2006: 66–67). Studies on EU governance typically evaluate legitimacy by examining the engagement of civil society—individuals or organizations—in decision-making processes (Schmidt & Wood, 2019: 729). While similar standards may be applied to ASEAN, legitimacy is frequently recognized even in state-centric decision-making processes, thus reflecting a pattern consistent with the logic of input legitimacy.

3. Empirical Studies

3.1 Input legitimacy

Assessments of ASEAN's input legitimacy—specifically, the perceived legitimacy of its participants in decision-making—remain contested. If sovereign states are regarded as principal actors in regional cooperation, then such legitimacy is generally viewed favorably. All ASEAN member states are Southeast Asian countries, and the organization has encompassed every state in the region following Timor-Leste's accession in October 2025. Accordingly, ASEAN will possess input legitimacy as an international organization that represents the entirety of Southeast Asia.

Conversely, skepticism toward ASEAN's input legitimacy stems from its

limited and selective engagement with actors of civil society (Rüland, 2021). While ASEAN has witnessed various forms of non-governmental involvement in regional cooperation—commonly referred to as Track 2 and 3 processes—this participation remains constrained, as the final decision-making authority resides nearly exclusively among government leaders. According to Uhlin (2023), civil society engagement has failed to significantly enhance ASEAN's institutional credentials. On the contrary, a number of civil society actors have criticized ASEAN for perceived deficiencies in democracy, fairness, and efficiency, thereby contributing to its delegitimation. Uhlin further argues that civil society's controlled and limited participation primarily serves as symbolic legitimation, intended to convey the image of ASEAN as a *people-oriented* organization.

With respect to input legitimacy, minilateralism is characterized by small-scale and more exclusive membership compared with multilateralism. This design reflects the critical mass approach, which aims to involve only those countries most relevant for achieving the greatest possible impact on a given issue. (Singh & Teo, 2020: 1; Naim, 2009: 135). Simply put, minilateralism is intentionally structured to avoid large and less cohesive groupings (Mladenov, 2023). Theoretically, transaction and information costs increase with the increase in the number of participating states, which leads to increased difficulty in identifying and achieving common interests. Therefore, greater heterogeneity among actors further reduces prospects for mutual cooperation. Sanctioning defectors also becomes less feasible when costs are distributed across a large membership. As Oye (1985: 19–22) notes, decreasing the number of participants can enhance the likelihood of cooperation under certain conditions. Therefore, while minilateralism does not inherently preclude membership expansion, enlargements that threaten group cohesion may compromise its effectiveness and, thus, require caution (Urhová, 2023). Moreover, the number of member states in minilateral arrangements significantly varies according to the issue at hand due to the critical mass logic.[5]

Certain minilateral arrangements are distinguished by their trans-governmental, multi-stakeholder cooperation (Fathah, 2022; Richey & Ohn, 2024: 801–802). For example, the Quad has expanded its scope since 2021—frequently referred to as Quad 3.0—to include areas in which non-governmental actors are more likely to engage such as vaccine distribution, climate change, infrastructure development, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (Richey & Ohn, 2024). Indeed, following the 2021 Quad Leaders' Summit, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement entitled "Quad Principles on Criti-

cal and Emerging Technology Standards" explicitly supports an "industry-led, consensus-based multi-stakeholder approach"—encouraging technology standards that "take into account the views of all parties concerned." It further emphasizes that these standards should reflect the "experience and expertise" of researchers in the industry and private sectors (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). Although the involvement of civil society in decision-making remains extremely limited, these processes nonetheless intend to incorporate the view of non-state actors into cooperative frameworks.

Notably, minilateral cooperation has a historical presence within ASEAN; thus, some may consider that the distinction between minilateral and multilateral cooperation should not be overstated. In fact, since its founding in 1967 until the end of the Cold War, ASEAN comprised only five or six member states. Moreover, ASEAN has employed various mechanisms such as the ASEAN-X formula, particularly in the economic domain, to foster cooperation among a subset of member states, particularly when other states are not ready to participate (Lin & Lee, 2023: 4–5). However, as will be discussed, ASEAN's decision-making is fundamentally based on consensus and consultation among all member states. Specifically, the peaceful and stable relations that ASEAN has fostered among its members have not been achieved through ASEAN-X mechanisms, which are rarely applied to such contexts (Lin & Lee, 2023: 4; Anuar & Hussain, 2021: 5).

3.2 Output Legitimacy

ASEAN's output legitimacy is frequently attributed, first, to its facilitation of regional stability through a series of free-trade arrangements not only among member states but also with external partners, and, second, to its role in fostering peaceful interstate relations within Southeast Asia (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 94). ASEAN's ability to unify a region marked by profound diversity it the political, economic, cultural, ethnic, and religious domains is a source of legitimacy by itself. Member states have accepted their differences, resolved disputes without resorting to war, and cultivated mutual trust. The 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), which institutionalizes the peaceful settlement of disputes and renunciation of threats or use of force, exemplifies this commitment (Saran, 2023: 210–212). During the Cold War, this intra-regional stability offered an international environment conducive to domestic development and enabled member states to prevent insurgency and subversion (Leifer, 2013).

In the post–Cold War era, ASEAN sought to extend this peace-oriented

framework to external actors by encouraging their accession to the TAC. Using various mechanisms such as summit meetings, the ARF, ASEAN+3, and the EAS, ASEAN has positioned itself as a *hub of discussions* for external states and organizations, thereby reinforcing its centrality within the regional architecture (Saran, 2023: 210–212). These institutions have become key platforms for the promotion of inclusiveness and cooperative security in the region. Notably, they enabled member states to engage with China in a coordinated manner, which has been a critical factor in their success (Paul, 2010: 22–23). Moreover, in multilateral settings such as the ARF, the presence of the U.S.A. and China renders the balancing of influence in the region feasible (Teo, 2018). The international recognition of these achievements has further enhanced ASEAN's output legitimacy from the perspectives of its member states (Sever & Mehmetcik, 2021: 94).

By contrast, attaining legitimacy in this sense remains a challenge for minilateral arrangements—characterized by exclusivity and limited membership. A number of minilaterals in the Indo-Pacific, particularly those with strategic orientations with China, complicate efforts to maintain stable relations with great powers. Minilateral frameworks led by the U.S.A. are typically perceived to possess objectives and functions similar to alliances, thus serving as tools for collective balancing and deterrence against rival states, notably China (Heiduk & Wilkins, 2024: 814–815; Richey & Ohn, 2024: 787). This perception is reinforced by the U.S.A. reliance on existing alliances as the foundation for these arrangements. Examples include the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue among the U.S.A., Japan, and Australia; AUKUS (Australia, U.K., and the U.S.A.); the U.S.A.–Japan–Philippines Trilateral Partnership; and the informal "Squad" (U.S.A., Japan, and Australia). The U.S.A. also emphasizes capacity building for treaty allies and partners, as evident in frameworks such as AUKUS, Five Eyes, and the Japan–U.K.–Italy agreement, which involve arms sales, advanced defense technologies, and intelligence sharing (Panda & Park, 2024: 934).

The exclusiveness of these minilateral arrangements may foster mistrust among governments and undermine cooperation and desirable outcomes, thereby limiting output legitimacy in terms of promoting peaceful and stable interstate relations (D'Alessandra & Gildea, 2025: 652). While the majority of Indo-Pacific minilaterals do not explicitly position themselves as anti-China, the initial iteration of the Quad (Quad 1.0), which formalized military dialogue and cooperation, was perceived by China as an Asian NATO and suffered from the lack of extensive commitment among its members, thus leading to its

suspension. Today's Quad has expanded its scope to less contentious domains such as vaccine distribution, climate change mitigation, infrastructure development, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (Richey & Ohn, 2024). India's multi-alignment strategy—referring to its simultaneous participation in the Quad and China-led platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS (i.e., Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)—adds a layer of complexity to simplistic characterizations of the Quad as anti-China (Panda & Park, 2024: 936). In the current climate of the intensifying rivalry between the U.S.A. and China, overtly anti-China positions may alienate ASEAN states and exacerbate divisions between pro-U.S.A. and pro-China countries (Koga, 2022: 33; Rajagopalan, 2021: 12). In this regard, Indo-Pacific minilaterals contrast with ASEAN's inclusive approach to trust-building among member and external states.

If the longevity of regional cooperation and its contribution to regional order are considered sources of output legitimacy, then minilateralism faces inherent limitations. Minilaterals tend to prioritize short-term benefits over long-term interests (Mladenov, 2023) and are typically designed with shorter lifespans than those of formal multilateral arrangements (Anuar & Hussain, 2021: 4). Their issue-specific nature renders their cooperative forms more transient (Heiduk & Wilkins, 2024: 813), while their informality and reliance on interpersonal connection render them vulnerable to personnel and administrative changes within participating states (Anuar & Hussain, 2021: 4). This fragility is evident in the Trump administration's review of AUKUS, which spanned several months beginning in June 2025, despite its eventual continuation.

Nonetheless, minilateralism poses considerable potential for delivering tangible short-term benefits. Its outputs are mainly realized through issue-based problem solving that directly serves the interests of participating states. Minilateralism emphasizes interests over shared values or ideologies (Mladenov, 2023) and intends to address specific challenges through targeted approaches (Fathah, 2022). Featuring fewer issues and stakeholders compared with those of multi-lateralism, minilateral cooperation is typically more effective, flexible, swift, and adaptable (Singh & Teo, 2020: 5). As previously noted, Indo-Pacific minilaterals have advanced cooperation across a broad range of sectors.

3.3 Throughput Legitimacy

ASEAN's throughput diplomacy has generated markedly divergent assessments from proponents and skeptics. As previously noted, from a state-centric perspective, the organization is deemed legitimate for providing a framework

that promotes interaction among actors with diverse preferences—including small states—on equal footing with major powers, thereby ensuring voice opportunities and inclusive participation (D'Alessandra, 2025: 653). Within ASEAN, decision-making is conducted through consensus and consultation, in accordance with foundational principles and norms such as sovereignty, equality, independence, and noninterference in domestic affairs. In this regard, ASEAN's procedures foster a high degree of legitimacy among member governments (Stubbs, 2019: 926).

However, multilateral regional cooperation led by ASEAN is frequently criticized due to its gradual institutionalization, which stems from the consensus-based decision-making model. Compared with the effectiveness, flexibility, swiftness, and adaptability attributed to minilateral cooperation, ASEAN's procedural emphasis—commonly referred to as the ASEAN Way—has been a focal point of longstanding skeptical scrutiny. For instance, subregional mechanisms such as the ARF have yielded limited success in constraining China's assertion in the South China Sea. Given that only the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei are directly involved, this issue poses inherent limitations to meaningful consensus-building among all member states. Cambodia's obstruction of a joint statement critical of China, as ASEAN Chair in 2012, exemplifies how the actions of the chair can undermine regional cohesion. Similarly, while a number of ASEAN states have pursued *flexible engagement* with post-coup Myanmar over humanitarian concerns, Myanmar—along with certain other members—has rejected such efforts, invoking the principle of noninterference (Caballero-Anthony, 2022: 15–17; Saran, 2023: 213). These dynamics have contributed to mounting skepticism against ASEAN centrality, while fueling expectations that minilateralism could be a potential alternative.

Minilateral arrangements tend to exhibit more informal and less binding institutional structures compared with many multilateral frameworks. As Heiduk and Wilkins (2024: 813) observe, the majority of minilaterals lack "formal treaties, organisational charters, secretariat, or physical headquarters"; instead, they "hinge upon common vision statements or agendas, periodic meetings of leaders and ministers, and joint working groups." This informality offers advantages beyond reduced costs associated with the establishment and maintenance of permanent secretariats; it also facilitates profound discussions among leaders and the formation of ad hoc arrangements, thereby enhancing the effectiveness, flexibility, swiftness, and adaptability of minilateral cooperation. However, Anuar and Hussain (2021: 4) highlight challenges associated with this informal character. Specifically, the ambiguity of organizational principles

and the broad scope of objectives may create room for member states in which to define actions they consider appropriate. Importantly, minilateralism tends to enable major powers to take initiative more readily and exert influence over smaller states with relative ease (Teo, 2018).

While such informal institutional features are observable in ASEAN-led regional cooperation, their underlying rationale differs. ASEAN has maintained a relatively non-binding institutional structure and has evolved in an gradual manner. It has cultivated informal venues for candid exchanges among leaders, such as the ASEAN Retreat (Thuzar & Ha, 2018), and, similar to minilateralism, has relied on personal relationships among leaders to advance regional cooperation. Nevertheless, ASEAN's institutional informality is oriented toward inclusiveness, thus enabling long-term regional cooperation that engages a broader set of internal and external actors, instead of issue-specific problem solving pursued by minilateralism (Caballero-Anthony, 2022).

As demonstrated in empirical studies on input legitimacy, a number of Indo-Pacific minilaterals have also exhibited willingness to encourage non-governmental participation in governance. For example, the "Quad Principles on Critical and Emerging Technology Standards" state that "technology standards should be developed with a view to reaching consensus among these affected parties, including governments, industry and citizens" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). The document further affirms a commitment to openness and inclusiveness:

> To aid this model, forums developing technology standards should be open and accessible, transparent, and include the appropriate technical expertise. In this regard, we support inclusiveness and encourage the development of programs to reduce barriers to participation of relevant parties in standards development activities. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021)

Notably, the informality associated with minilateralism is not inherently fixed or immutable; in certain cases, it has led to the institutionalization of regional cooperation. However, these tendencies have become increasingly rare in recent years. As an example of a formerly minilateral initiative that underwent formalization, Koga (2022) cites the Trilateral Summit among Japan, China, and South Korea, which was initially informally convened alongside the ASEAN+3 process. However, it began holding independent meetings since 2008, which culminated in the establishment of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat in 2010. As Koga observes, "minilateral groupings sometimes transi-

tion between formal and informal categories" (pp. 28–29).

Nevertheless, according to Richey and Ohn (2024), while earlier instances of minilateralism nested within multilateral frameworks or evolved into multilateral organizations, these transitions have become less frequent, and institutionalization has stagnated in recent years. The authors argue that this trend reflects the declining effectiveness of contemporary multilateral institutions, which have become increasingly unattractive as platforms for minilateral engagement. Consequently, the prospects for minilateralism to attain output legitimacy traditionally associated with multilateralism are seemingly diminishing in the current context (p. 792).

4. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing analysis, this study underscores fundamental differences in the sources of legitimacy of ASEAN-centered multilateralism and minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific region. With respect to input legitimacy, ASEAN—comprising the 11 Southeast Asian states and maintaining an inclusive posture toward external actors—is considered legitimate from the state-centric perspective. In contrast, minilateralism features a limited form of legitimacy due to its exclusive membership. For output legitimacy, ASEAN has produced intangible outcomes by fostering peaceful and stable relations among member states and extending these relations to external partners. By contrast, minilateral arrangements that resemble alliances may generate mistrust among regional and extra-regional actors, thereby complicating their claims to legitimacy. Against this background, minilateralism tends to more effectively deliver tangible benefits through issue-based problem solving. Finally, in terms of throughput legitimacy, decision-making in ASEAN—grounded in consensus and consultation, and aligned with core principles such as sovereignty, equality, independence, and non-interference—offers voice opportunities to smaller states and is, thus, perceived as legitimate. Conversely, minilateralism struggles to attain the same level of throughput legitimacy as ASEAN-style multilateralism given its tendency to enable major powers to take initiative and exert influence over smaller states with relative ease. These divergent sources of legitimacy aid in explaining the tension and complementarity between ASEAN's multilateralism and minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific region.

These findings are significant for the following reasons. First, this study cautions against the evaluation of the relationship between minilateralism and multilateralism solely on the basis of tangible outcomes. Multilateralism places

greater emphasis on procedural legitimacy—input and throughput—within regional cooperation processes. Replicating these aspects within minilateral frameworks is typically difficult. As Kissinger (2014) argues, regional order is sustained by striking a balance between legitimacy and power (pp. 9–10), and legitimacy is reinforced not only through tangible benefits but also through a range of intangible sources. If the relationship between multilateralism and minilateralism were to be assessed in light of these different sources of legitimacy, then the study cautions against over-emphasizing the narrative that tangible minilateral gains threaten ASEAN, even while acknowledging the institutional limitations of multilateralism.

Second, these differences in legitimacy may aid in explaining the divergent ASEAN policies of the U.S.A. and China. While the U.S.A. expresses respect for ASEAN centrality and unity, it increasingly emphasizes output-oriented regional cooperation and adopts a more minilateralist position. In contrast, China demonstrates a strong affinity with ASEAN's inclusiveness but simultaneously critiques the exclusivity of minilateral arrangements, thereby legitimizing the former but delegitimizing the latter. This approach differs from that of member states of the Quad, which seek legitimacy by emphasizing values such as rule of law, human rights, and democracy. Thus, China's strategy offers an alternative pathway for securing legitimacy in regional cooperation.

This study also points to several directions for further inquiry. First, research on international cooperation centered on legitimacy requires in-depth analysis that goes beyond the tripartite framework of input, output, and throughput. For example, throughput legitimacy encompasses not only efficacy, inclusiveness, and openness—as emphasized by the current study—but also accountability and transparency (Schmidt & Wood, 2019). Keohane (2006) further argues that an institution must satisfy not only inclusiveness but also decisiveness and epistemic reliability to enable it to validly claim legitimate policy on a global basis. Decisiveness refers to the ability of a multilateral organization to take effective measures despite opposition from its most powerful members, while epistemic reliability denotes transparency in decision-making and openness to internal and external critiques (pp. 68–69). While applying these criteria to ASEAN may pose difficulty, certain minilateral arrangements may warrant an in-depth examination in this regard.

Second, detailed case studies—extending beyond security cooperation—are required to apply the theoretical insights developed. This study primarily focused on minilateral arrangements in the Indo-Pacific led by the U.S.A., but the region also hosts minilateral initiatives that involve China and select ASE-

AN states such as the Lancang–Mekong Cooperation (comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam). While the study outlined the typical features of minilateralism in theoretical terms, the proliferation of such arrangements today implies ample room for further empirical research. Notable examples include the Malacca Straits Patrol (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand) and the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines), which involve ASEAN member states and are not led by extra-regional powers. These cases merit detailed empirical investigation.

Third, the evolving position of the Trump administration warrants attention. Although the first Trump administration exhibited limited interest in ASEAN, the second one signaled a shift by announcing participation in the 47th ASEAN-Related Summit. Nevertheless, Trump's evaluation of ASEAN's multilateralism—and ASEAN's response—remains unclear (Beeson & Hewitt, 2022: 212–213). Indeed, the Chairman's Statement during the 46th ASEAN Summit expressed concern over the economic impact of US unilateral tariffs, which prompted speculation that these policies may tilt ASEAN further toward China (Patton & Walker, 2025). Moreover, the Trump administration's review of AUKUS underscores the opacity of US policy toward ASEAN and minilateralism.[6] Accordingly, whether the analytical framework proposed by the study remains applicable to the evolving regional position of the Trump administration is a notion that requires thoughtful future consideration.

Notes

[1]   This dynamic is evident, for instance, in the multilayered and complex security mechanisms illustrated by the Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment 2024, which maps selected minilateral and multilateral frameworks operating in the region (IISS, 2024: 8).

[2]   The proposition that ASEAN and minilateralism can function complementarily has also been met with skepticism. Rajagopalan (2021), for example, argues that minilateral initiatives should not be regarded as instruments for strengthening ASEAN and may, in fact, serve to weaken multilateralism.

[3]   Kai He (2008: 492) has analyzed ASEAN member states' efforts to constrain China and secure US support within the ARF through the lens of institutional balancing theory. Institutional balancing refers to a realist strategy whereby states pursue security under conditions of anarchy by "countering pressures or threats through initiating, utilizing, and dominating multilateral institutions." He distinguishes between two forms of institutional binding: inclusive balancing, which entails "binding and constraining a target state within the rules, agendas, and practices of

institutions," and exclusive balancing, which involves "working to exclude a target state from a specific institution so that the target state will be isolated or pressured by the cohesion and cooperation of institutional grouping" (He & Feng, 2020: 487–501).

4   Broadly speaking, there are two principal approaches to analyzing institutional legitimacy. In addition to the sociological approach, legitimacy may also be assessed in a normative sense—based on whether institutions conform to principles such as justice, public interest, and democracy (Tallberg & Zürn, 2019: 583).

5   In practice, there is no scholarly consensus regarding the number of participating states that constitutes a minilateral arrangement. While some define minilateralism as involving five to nine states, empirical studies have examined cases involving up to twenty participants (Koga, 2022: 28; Richey & Ohn, 2024: 782).

6   "AUKUS Check Not Awkward – Marles." The Daily Telegraph, 1 October 2025.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Timor-Leste's Security Policy and Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation

Ayae Shimizu

1. Introduction

In October 2025, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste) was admitted as a full member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This event signifies a pivotal moment in the nation's history, representing its ongoing development since achieving independence and its active engagement in the regional political landscape. The incorporation of Timor-Leste into ASEAN signifies more than a mere diplomatic accomplishment; it unveils novel prospects for multilateral collaboration and the reconfiguration of the security paradigm in the Indo-Pacific region. Since achieving independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in the domains of nation-building and institutional development. However, in the domain of security, it confronts a myriad of challenges, including the maintenance of public order, border management, the protection of marine resources, and disaster response. Ensuring institutional stability necessitates the clarification of the division of duties and command structures between the National Armed Forces (F-FDTL) and the National Police (PNTL), in conjunction with the establishment of civilian control.[1]

The nation's security strategy is deeply intertwined with its historical experiences, including colonial rule, Indonesian occupation, and the attainment of independence under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), placing significant emphasis on "ensuring sovereignty" and "preventing external interference." Geographically, the nation is surrounded by Indonesia, Australia, and Pacific Island nations. The development of resources in the Timor Sea and the

assurance of maritime traffic safety is directly linked to its national economy.[2] This geopolitical position also holds significant meaning from the perspectives of maritime security, sea-lane defense, and disaster response within the Indo-Pacific Strategy. Since independence, Timor-Leste has sought institutional autonomy and regional integration while receiving support from the international community in its nation-building efforts (Yamada, 2010). The provision of assistance by UN in the domains of state institution building and security sector cooperation, as exemplified by contributions from Australia, Japan, the U.S.A. and other countries, has been instrumental in fostering institutional development and capacity building.[3] Strengthening disaster response capabilities and maritime surveillance systems, in particular, form the foundation for practical contributions in non-traditional security domains.

Its formal accession to ASEAN in October 2025 presents an opportunity for Timor-Leste to advance regional integration in its security policy. The country has gained institutional access to regional security frameworks like the ADMM and ARF, securing a position to actively engage in shaping the regional order. ASEAN membership represents a structural turning point that accelerates institutional coherence, ensures policy legitimacy, and deepens multilateral cooperation. Clarifying how Timor-Leste can contribute to security in the Indo-Pacific region going forward is also a crucial task for considering the sustainability and inclusiveness of the regional order. ASEAN's non-alignment and coordination policy aligns well with neutral diplomacy and provides opportunities to contribute to the regional order (Ba, 2009). Prior to accession, Timor-Leste advanced preparations include developing a national security strategy, enhancing administrative capacity, and adjusting legal frameworks, with technical support from the ASEAN Secretariat.[4] As a full member, it now participates in security frameworks like the ADMM and ARF, with new developments anticipated in both institutional integration and practical contributions.

This study analyzes the formation of Timor-Leste's security policy and the state of regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. It aims to clarify future challenges from the perspectives of integration potential through ASEAN membership, the impact of interregional cooperation and international support, and contributions to the regional security architecture. While much existing research focuses on economic and diplomatic aspects, this study concentrates on security policy. It examines how Timor-Leste can contribute to the security order in the Indo-Pacific region from the perspectives of institutions, human resources, diplomatic balance, and sectoral strategies. It particularly focuses

on the substantive contributions a small country like Timor-Leste can make within the regional order, exploring potential strategic choices based on institutional maturity and the multi-layered nature of international cooperation. This study aims to demonstrate the diversity and inclusivity of security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region through Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership.

In essence, the objective of this study is to explore the potential for the advancement of Indo-Pacific regional cooperation from a variety of perspectives, with the establishment of Timor-Leste's formal ASEAN membership serving as a catalyst for this discussion. The analysis will be conducted from four perspectives: (1) the formation and evolution of Timor-Leste's security policy, (2) the significance of ASEAN membership and integration into the regional security framework, (3) the current state and challenges of multilateral cooperation with Japan, the U.S.A., Australia, China, and the EU, and (4) the outlook for future Indo-Pacific regional cooperation and its policy implications.

2. Historical Background and the Starting Point for Security

East Timor was under Portuguese colonial rule from the 16th century and declared independence in 1975. Immediately thereafter, Indonesia launched a military invasion, denying the country's sovereignty for 24 years. In the context of the occupation, there were documented instances of severe human rights violations, which garnered international attention.[5] Indonesian rule involved not only military control but also assimilation policies that threatened East Timor's ethnic and cultural identity. In 1999, the UN-supervised referendum was held. The profound support for independence resulted in the withdrawal of Indonesian forces and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). UNTAET was responsible for the establishment of state institutions, the maintenance of security, and the construction of an electoral system. These actions laid the foundation for East Timor's nation-building process.[6] In the aftermath of the conflict, the international community characterized East Timor as a "post-conflict nation" and provided extensive support for its national reconstruction. (McWilliam, 2020).

2.1 The Starting Point for Security Policy

During the transitional period as a "post-conflict nation," the national armed forces (F-FDTL) and national police (PNTL) were established, forming the backbone of the security framework. The F-FDTL, originating from the former

independence struggle organization FALINTIL (Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste), assumed responsibility for national defense and border security, while the PNTL was tasked with maintaining public order and combating crime. However, ambiguities regarding the division of duties and chain of command between the two organizations persisted as institutional challenges. In 2006, tensions between the military and police escalated into riots.[7] This incident stemmed from regional conflicts within the military and dissatisfaction with the promotion system, exposing the fragility of the national security framework. In response, the Australian-led International Stabilization Force (ISF) was re-deployed, and a new framework was established with the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) supporting security maintenance and institutional reform. The government used this as an opportunity to advance Security Sector Reform (SSR), strengthening civilian oversight, restructuring training systems, and improving legal frameworks. SSR was positioned as a comprehensive institutional reform encompassing the clarification of military and police roles, the introduction of audit functions, and enhanced coordination with local security institutions (Uesugi, 2014).

The enactment of the National Security Act in 2010 and the formulation of the National Security Strategy the following year established a comprehensive policy framework addressing security maintenance, disaster response, maritime security, and border management.[8] This shift signaled a transition from a conventional military-centric security paradigm to an integrated approach encompassing non-traditional security domains, reflecting the evolution of international security concepts. The strategy document explicitly delineated the direction of the nation's security policy, establishing "maintaining sovereignty," "protecting the people," and "contributing to regional order" as its three pillars.

Furthermore, negotiations with Australia over resource development in the Timor Sea have significantly influenced Timor-Leste's sense of sovereignty and security policy. The 2002 Timor Sea Treaty and the 2018 Maritime Boundary Treaty represent diplomatic achievements concerning resource allocation and securing maritime rights and interests, serving as catalysts for reflecting the importance of maritime security into domestic policy.[9] These negotiations demonstrate Timor-Leste's ability to utilize international law and multilateral negotiations to secure its national interests. Moreover, the enhancement of disaster response capabilities has been prioritized from the outset. Vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and wildfires, Timor-Leste has advanced the development of fire-fighting and emergency medical systems,

cooperation with local governments, and the introduction of early warning systems with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Consequently, the scope of security policy expanded beyond the military and public security domains to encompass human security perspectives.

Accordingly, the security policy of Timor-Leste has been shaped by three principal factors: its history of independence struggle, the framework of international support, and responses to institutional challenges. In the nascent stages of nation-building, the foundational elements of the security system were meticulously laid, guided by two primary forces: external support and internal reform. This historical background is an essential element for understanding the current direction of security policy and the stance toward regional cooperation.

2.2 Formation and Evolution of Security Policy

Since achieving independence, Timor-Leste has experienced a period of experimentation and adjustment in the institutionalization and execution of its security policy. As previously stated, following the restoration of national sovereignty in 2002, the framework for the security sector was established through the establishment of F-FDTL and PNTL. Nonetheless, there were persistent challenges, including institutional immaturity, a shortage of personnel, and ambiguous chains of command.[10] Triggered by the 2006 riots, the government launched a full-scale SSR. SSR is a comprehensive reform encompassing strengthened civilian control, clarification of military and police roles, restructuring of training systems, and development of legal frameworks. It was advanced with support from UNMIT and the Australian-led ISF.[11]

In 2010, the National Security Law (Law No. 2/2010) was enacted, codifying an institutional framework for the integrated management of national defense, internal security, and civil protection.[12] This clarified the cooperative structure between the F-FDTL and PNTL, the principle of civilian control, and the responsibilities for formulating and implementing national security policy. Furthermore, the establishment of the National Security Council and the division of roles among the government, parliament, and the president in crisis response were institutionalized. In 2011, the National Security Policy was formulated, signaling a shift from the traditional military-centric security perspective to an integrated approach encompassing responses to non-traditional security domains.[13] This strategy identified key focus areas including public order maintenance, disaster response, maritime security, border management,

counter-terrorism, and human security.

Maritime security was identified as a pivotal element of the national strategy, occurring within the context of resource development and ongoing maritime boundary negotiations in the Timor Sea. The 2002 Timor Sea Treaty and the 2018 Maritime Boundary Treaty were the result of diplomatic negotiations with Australia, constituting a pivotal moment for Timor-Leste in terms of resource allocation and sovereignty assurance.[14] Consequently, the enhancement of maritime surveillance capabilities, the development of maritime security systems, and the participation in the international maritime order based on international law emerged as policy priorities. Since 2018, the government has made significant progress in establishing the National Maritime Authority, with the primary objectives of combating illegal fishing, monitoring maritime traffic, and enhancing coastal security. Moreover, through cooperative maritime frameworks with Indonesia, Australia, and China, there are ongoing efforts to promote information-sharing, joint training, and coordination in maritime search and rescue. The area of maritime security plays a key role in supporting policies related to economics, diplomacy, and the environment. It encompasses the protection of fishery resources and the preservation of the marine environment.

Furthermore, within the context of regional cooperation, the aspiration for ASEAN membership has exerted a substantial influence on the trajectory of security policy. Since 2002, East Timor has persistently sought to accede to ASEAN, and in 2022, its application was endorsed in principle.[15] Participation in ASEAN security frameworks (such as the ARF: ASEAN Regional Forum and ADMM: ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting) signifies a contribution to the regional order and deepens multilateral cooperation, strengthening the regional connectivity of the national security strategy. In the context of its pursuit of membership to ASEAN, Timor-Leste has demonstrated notable progress in several key areas. These include the harmonization of its legal system, the enhancement of its security sector capacity, and the establishment of a robust information security framework. Significant advancements have been made in the standardization of military training, the execution of disaster response exercises, and the enhancement of counter-terrorism cooperation, with a particular focus on ADMM-Plus participation. The enhancement of institutional and practical connectivity is being pursued through the implementation of collaborative training initiatives and the facilitation of policy dialogues with ASEAN member states.[16]

Furthermore, ASEAN membership represents more than merely an eleva-

tion of Timor-Leste's diplomatic standing; it has also served as an impetus for aligning its domestic security policies with international standards. Policy design premised on coordination with member states has generated spillover effects in areas such as transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights within domestic institutions, contributing to a qualitative improvement in national security. Thus, Timor-Leste's security policy has been shaped and evolved through institutional reform, strategic document formulation, diplomatic negotiations, and regional cooperation. Having passed through the initial stages of nation-building, the country has advanced in policy systematization and international connectivity. At present, it is seeking to establish itself as a cooperative actor within the context of the Indo-Pacific region.

3. The Significance of ASEAN Membership and Integration into the Regional Security Framework

For Timor-Leste after regaining sovereignty, efforts toward ASEAN membership represent a core challenge in regional cooperation. In 2022, its membership in principle was approved, and in 2023, the ASEAN Summit adopted a roadmap for its accession. Timor-Leste is advancing institutional alignment with ASEAN's Political-Security Community (APSC) and participates in regional security dialogues and joint exercises through involvement in the ARF and the ADMM. Particularly, disaster response exercises and maritime security cooperation within ADMM-Plus serve as institutional and practical engagement platforms for Timor-Leste. These frameworks discuss information sharing, maritime search and rescue, and responses to non-traditional threats (such as terrorism, climate change, and infectious diseases), with Timor-Leste actively participating through its own institutional reforms and capacity building.

3.1 Significance and Impact of ASEAN Membership

Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership represents a landmark turning point for its foreign and security policy, while also symbolizing the inclusivity and diversity of the Indo-Pacific regional order. Timor-Leste has pursued ASEAN membership as a national goal since shortly after its independence in 2002, continuing its application and preparations over the long term. Approval in principle came in 2022, twenty years after independence, followed by the adoption of a membership roadmap the next year. This marked the advancement of a phased approach to strengthening institutional alignment and building capacity.[17] The

formal accession in October 2025 represents the culmination of these long-standing efforts.

As a characteristic of its ASEAN membership process, Timor-Leste has prioritized alignment with regional standards, including strengthening its legal framework, enhancing the capabilities of its security sector, and establishing information security systems. Specifically, aiming for institutional connectivity with the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), it actively participates in regional security dialogues and joint exercises through its involvement in ARF and ADMM.[18] Disaster response exercises and maritime security cooperation within ADMM-Plus serve as institutional and practical engagement platforms for Timor-Leste, contributing to enhanced information sharing and strengthened capabilities to address non-traditional threats. The greatest impact of membership lies in Timor-Leste's institutional integration into the regional security framework and its attainment of a position to proactively engage in shaping the regional order. This has enabled the country to transition from being merely a beneficiary to becoming an active participant in order formation. ASEAN's non-alignment and coordination policy aligns well with Timor-Leste's neutral foreign policy, providing a foundation for the country to pursue flexible diplomatic strategies as a small state (Ba, 2009).

From the perspective of small-nation diplomacy, it is noteworthy that through ASEAN membership, Timor-Leste has expanded its multilateral cooperation platforms and is developing balanced relationships with key Indo-Pacific partners such as Japan, the U.S.A., and Australia. By leveraging the ASEAN framework, Timor-Leste is advancing the international standardization of its security policy while also working to develop human resources and enhance the transparency of institutional operations. Policy design premised on coordination with member states has also had spillover effects on domestic institutional accountability and respect for human rights.[19]

Thus, Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership significantly contributes to the qualitative improvement of its security policy and the strengthening of diversity and inclusivity in Indo-Pacific regional cooperation. While challenges remain in enhancing the effectiveness of institutional operations, strengthening diplomatic voice, and fostering sustainable human resource development, Timor-Leste's experience serves as an important case study demonstrating how small nations can actively engage in shaping the regional order.

3.2 ASEAN Membership and Integration

Throughout its ASEAN accession process, Timor-Leste has prioritized align-

ment with regional standards, including legal system development, security sector capacity building, and information security framework establishment. Specifically, aiming for institutional linkage with APSC, it actively participates in regional security dialogues and joint exercises through involvement in security frameworks like ARF, ADMM and the ADMM-Plus.[20]

ADMM-Plus is a core framework for regional security cooperation among ASEAN member states and eight dialogue partners, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the U.S.A. Its role is to provide a forum for strategic dialogue and practical cooperation, establishing Expert Working Groups (EWGs) in diverse fields such as maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations, military medicine, mine action, and cybersecurity, while promoting joint exercises and information sharing.[21] ADMM-Plus functions as a framework to deepen multilateral cooperation while maintaining ASEAN centrality and balancing engagement with major external powers. Currently held annually, ADMM-Plus actively conducts policy consultations among defense ministers alongside joint exercises and capacity-building programs.

At the 10th ADMM-Plus held in Jakarta in 2023, Timor-Leste's Minister of Defense participated officially for the first time as an observer. The Indonesian Minister of Defense, who chaired the meeting, welcomed Timor-Leste's participation in the ADMM-Plus forum following the approval of the guidelines. This meeting was attended by the defense ministers of ASEAN member states and partner countries such as Japan, the U.S.A., China, and Australia, with Timor-Leste joining the discussions among these nations. At the 11th ADMM-Plus held in Vientiane the following year, the forum addressed new security challenges such as "enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters." The joint statement confirmed deepened cooperation in non-traditional security areas including climate change, disaster response, and cyber threats.[22] In the maritime security domain, joint maritime exercises and the operation of the information sharing portal, ASEAN Military-Security Cooperation Information Portal (AMSCIP) are being advanced. In disaster relief, HADR joint training and the sharing of best practices are progressing. In the cyber domain, joint workshops and capacity-building support are being promoted.

The effectiveness of ADMM-Plus lies in its contribution to building trust and enhancing inter-operability among member states through multilateral joint training and expert exchanges. It has also strengthened practical response capabilities to non-traditional security challenges like climate change, infectious diseases, disasters, and cyber threats. Amid intensifying great power

competition, including U.S.A.-China rivalry, it contributes to regional stability as an ASEAN-led multilateral cooperation framework.

Through integration into these frameworks, Timor-Leste is transitioning from a mere beneficiary to an order-shaping actor. Despite its small size, it has become capable of contributing to regional order stability and deepening multilateral cooperation through institutional and practical connectivity. Furthermore, joint training and policy dialogue with ASEAN member states have generated spillover effects, improving the quality of domestic institutions by enhancing transparency and accountability in institutional operations and promoting respect for human rights. Future challenges include enhancing the effectiveness of institutional operations, strengthening diplomatic voice, and fostering sustainable human resource development. Nevertheless, Timor-Leste's experience serves as a significant example demonstrating that small-states can actively engage in regional order formation. The experience gained through ASEAN membership—in institutional integration and practical contributions—also significantly contributes to strengthening the diversity and inclusiveness of Indo-Pacific regional cooperation.

4. Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region

4.1 The Indo-Pacific Strategy and Timor-Leste's Geopolitical Significance

The Indo-Pacific region is a geopolitical pivot where the center of gravity for the global economy and security converges.[23] Concentrating approximately 60% of global GDP and over half of the world's population, this region where major sea lanes intersect is indispensable for the flow of energy and goods and the stability of supply chains. It is also an arena where major powers like the U.S.A., China, India, Japan, and Australia compete for strategic influence, with the formation of regional order having ripple effects across the entire international community.[24] Timor-Leste, situated in the Timor Sea between Indonesia and Australia, plays a significant geopolitical role due to its abundant marine resources and position as a key maritime transit point. In recent years, with the advancement of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept, Timor-Leste, despite being a small nation, possesses the potential to contribute to the stability of the regional order.[25]

As a geopolitical pivot in the Indo-Pacific region, Timor-Leste has sought participation in regional cooperation frameworks and international alignment

of its security policies. Bordering Australia across the Timor Sea and sharing a land border with Indonesia, the country possesses strategic value as a maritime transport hub and can be said to have the potential to contribute to the stability of the regional order.

4.2 Security Cooperation with Major Countries

4.2.1 Japan

Japan is one of Timor-Leste's most important partners in the security sector. Since independence, Japan has provided sustained support across a wide range of areas, including maritime security, disaster response, human resource development, and infrastructure development. In particular, the summit meeting between Ex-Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and President Xanana Gusmão in Tokyo in August 2025 marked a new turning point in bilateral security cooperation.[26] The Official Security Assistance (OSA) agreed upon at this meeting is a new framework under which Japan provides equipment and infrastructure development free of charge to address the security needs of like-minded countries. Its application to Timor-Leste is the first such case.[27] The specific elements of OSA include the provision of defense equipment and supplies, infrastructure development, and human resource development. This encompasses strengthening the capabilities of F-FDTL and the Coast Guard, enhancing disaster response capabilities, and modernizing critical infrastructure such as ports and airports.[28]

Ex-Prime Minister Ishiba emphasized the importance of cooperation with Timor-Leste, a key strategic location linking the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific and expressed Japan's intention to continue security and economic cooperation even after Timor-Leste's ASEAN accession. President Ramos-Horta welcomed Japan's long-standing support and the deepening of security cooperation through the OSA, expressing expectations for further development of bilateral relations.[29] Gratitude was also expressed for Japan's past support, and Japan's contributions to major infrastructure projects, such as the new passenger terminal at Dili International Airport and the modernization of the National Hospital, were highlighted. Going forward, comprehensive cooperation is expected to advance, including industrial diversification, human resource development, and collaboration on regional and international challenges.[30]

Academically, Japan's OSA is also evaluated as a new model promoting Timor-Leste's institutional stability and contribution to regional order as part of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy. Unlike Official Development As-

sistance (ODA), this security-focused support is drawing attention as directly contributing to establishing ODA's autonomous security policy and enhancing its capabilities as an ASEAN member state.

4.2.2 U.S.A.

The U.S.A. provides ongoing and practical support to strengthen Timor-Leste's defense capabilities and maritime security. In particular, the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercises have become a core component of bilateral cooperation, with the 14th CARAT Timor-Leste held in 2025.[31] CARAT is jointly conducted by the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet and F-FDTL. It facilitates expert exchanges and practical training across diverse fields including maritime security, port security, legal affairs, medical support, explosive ordnance disposal, diving and salvage, and Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations.[32]

The 2025 exercise involved the U.S. Navy's littoral combat ship USS Cincinnati (LCS 20), P-8A Poseidon patrol aircraft, U.S. Coast Guard VBSS teams, and the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team-Pacific (FASTPAC). The Timorese side participated with divers, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians, and medical teams.[33] On land, training included small arms, urban warfare, engineering, and medical drills. At sea, exercises focused on enhancing interoperability and deepening relations.[34] Community relations (COMREL) activities were also conducted during the exercise period, with U.S. and Timorese military personnel engaging local residents to build trust. The U.S. side emphasized principles such as maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, respecting international law, ensuring sovereignty, and guaranteeing freedom of navigation on commercial shipping routes, confirming that cooperation between the two countries contributes to regional stability.[35]

The CARAT exercise contributes not only to traditional maritime security but also to enhancing capabilities against non-traditional threats, disaster response, counter-terrorism and medical support, etc., promoting the improvement of Timor-Leste's defense forces and their contribution to regional order. The U.S.A. has expressed its intention to maintain its support for Timor-Leste's efforts to enhance its defense capabilities and capacity building in preparation for its eventual accession to ASEAN. This support is to be provided through the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET), which aims to provide military education and training to foreign nations, and the provision of technical assistance.

Furthermore, the IMET program is advancing the development of Timor-

Leste's military professionals and strengthening civilian control. F-FDTL officers and defense officials undergo training at U.S. military educational institutions, enhancing their strategic planning capabilities, understanding of international law, and crisis response abilities. IMET also contributes to laying the groundwork for Timor-Leste's institutional alignment with ASEAN's security framework, playing a vital role in both strengthening human resources and advancing institutional reform. The U.S.A. is also advancing water and sanitation infrastructure development and educational support through the Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC). It is supporting improvements in disaster response and territorial surveillance capabilities through initiatives such as the joint development of Baucau Airport. The construction of schools and clinics by U.S. Navy Seabees is also contributing to strengthening the foundations of human security.

4.2.3 Australia

Australia is one of Timor-Leste's largest defense and security partners, having built a continuous cooperative relationship since the 1999 United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor (INTERFET) peacekeeping operation.[36] Australia deployed the International Stabilization Force (ISF) after the 2006 crisis, supporting the reorganization and capacity building of the F-FDTL. Currently, through the Defense Cooperation Program (DCP), Australia provides ongoing support in areas such as tactical training, disaster response, maritime surveillance, and cybersecurity. This cooperation forms a practical foundation supporting Timor-Leste's institutional development and integration into regional arrangements.

The two countries signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement in September 2022, expanding cooperation under a legal framework in areas including military exchanges, joint training, maritime security, disaster response, and women's security.[37] Through the DCP, Australia has deployed 24 local advisors to implement capacity building for the F-FDTL, infrastructure development, joint exercises, and direct training support.[38] In 2024, Australia provided Timor-Leste with two Australian-built Guardian-class patrol vessels (Aitana and Laline) and is also providing operational and maintenance support. This has significantly enhanced Timor-Leste's ability to counter illegal fishing and protect its maritime interests within its own waters.[39] Operational training for the patrol vessels and maritime patrols are conducted under the guidance of Australian Navy experts.

Furthermore, the two countries are deepening cooperation through multi-

lateral military exercises such as "HARII HAMUTUK," meaning "Building Together," and gender peace and security programs, including women's capacity development.[40] Exercise HARII HAMUTUK is a multinational military exercise led by Australia. The 13th iteration in 2024 saw technical units from the U.S.A., Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Timor-Leste participate, constructing new barracks for both male and female soldiers at Buka Air Base.[41] The 14th practical activities were conducted, including small engine repair, combat engineering, and medical training, aiming to enhance the F-FDTL's capabilities and foster international trust. In addition, joint training exercises were conducted by female personnel from the Australian Defense Force and the Timor-Leste Defense Force, along with leadership skills development activities.

Since the conclusion of the maritime boundary treaty, Australia has deepened cooperation in maritime surveillance, fisheries management, and coastal security, with ongoing capacity-building support through the Department of Defense. This cooperation forms the practical foundation connecting Timor-Leste's security policy to the regional order. Such collaboration significantly contributes to strengthening Timor-Leste's defense capabilities, regional stability, and maintaining the security order in the Indo-Pacific region.

4.2.4 China's Cooperation and Engagement with Timor-Leste

Meanwhile, China has established a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Timor-Leste, developing multifaceted cooperation centered on economic, infrastructure, and diplomatic fields. In September 2023, the two countries signed the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement" during a summit meeting, explicitly outlining expanded infrastructure investment and economic cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework.[42] China has supported the construction of major infrastructure projects including the Ministry of Defense building, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building, the Parliament building, the Suai Highway, the Tibar Deep-Water Port, and the power grid. During the COVID-19 pandemic, China also provided vaccines and medical equipment.[43]

It has also indicated plans to expand cooperation in areas such as agriculture, particularly the coffee industry, food security, industrial promotion, and improving living standards.[44] In the military and security sector, past assistance included the provision of Shanghai-class patrol vessels, construction of the Defense Force headquarters and barracks, and development of police and military infrastructure. However, since the 2023 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement, direct military cooperation has been limited, likely

out of consideration for relations with Australia and the U.S.A.

In terms of diplomatic engagement, China has expressed support for Timor-Leste's aspirations for ASEAN membership and has sought to enhance collaborative efforts within various multilateral frameworks, including the United Nations and the Forum for China-Portuguese Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Cooperation. Both countries place significant emphasis on the advancement of "Global South" initiatives and the coordination of efforts within the international community. These initiatives are aimed at upholding the spirit of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.[45] China's engagement in Timor-Leste addresses local development needs through infrastructure investment and economic cooperation, while concerns remain over excessive debt dependency and transparency issues. The Timor-Leste government emphasizes a stance of utilizing Chinese capital and technology for economic diversification and sustainable development while maintaining a balanced diplomacy with other major countries.[46]

4.3 Challenges in Regional Cooperation Frameworks

Regional cooperation frameworks continue to face challenges. First is the lag in institutional coherence. Establishing legal frameworks for ASEAN membership, enhancing security capabilities, and building information security systems require time and resources, with domestic political instability hindering progress. Second is a shortage of human resources. Specialized personnel in fields such as diplomacy, defense, and disaster response are limited, sometimes hindering the practical implementation of international cooperation. Third is financial constraints. High dependence on oil and gas revenues makes building a sustainable fiscal foundation urgent. Budgets for infrastructure development and institutional reform are limited, leading to continued reliance on international aid. Fourth, there is a lack of capacity to address regional political tensions. While maintaining a neutral stance on contentious issues within ASEAN, such as the South China Sea dispute and the situation in Myanmar, Timor-Leste needs to enhance its diplomatic voice.

In order to address these challenges, Timor-Leste has set two primary objectives: the achievement of "sustainable nation-building" and the contribution to "regional order." Its Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011-2030 identifies infrastructure development, human resource development, and institutional reform as the three pillars of its strategy. The plan positions connectivity to the Indo-Pacific region as an extension of these efforts.

Overall, Timor-Leste's security policy is deepening institutionally and

strategically through participation in cooperative frameworks within the Indo-Pacific region. Progress toward ASEAN membership, cooperation with Japan, the U.S.A., and Australia, and strengthened maritime security demonstrate the country's transition into an actor contributing to regional stability. Going forward, establishing a more sustainable and autonomous security policy through institutional development and human resource strengthening is required.

5. Conclusion

Timor-Leste's security policy has strengthened its institutional and operational foundations with support from multiple international partners. However, the layered nature of this support has created new challenges in maintaining diplomatic balance. As the U.S.A. and China compete in the region, Timor-Leste's future strategic choices warrant attention. The country must uphold a diplomatic stance based on transparency and accountability while striving to harmonize regional stability and multilateral cooperation. Future security policy must integrate several elements: ensuring institutional coherence post-ASEAN accession; strategically managing cooperation with Japan, the U.S.A., Australia, and China; developing human resources and consolidating civilian control; building capabilities in maritime security, disaster response, and cyber domains; and incorporating human security perspectives. By holistically applying these elements, Timor-Leste can achieve both institutional stability and international credibility, establishing its position as a cooperative actor in the Indo-Pacific region.

Timor-Leste's formal accession to ASEAN in October 2025 signifies a new phase in nation-building for the country while also presenting a significant opportunity to greatly expand its potential contributions to the security order in the Indo-Pacific region. While Timor-Leste has advanced its security framework and institutional stabilization with support from diverse international partners including the UN, Australia, Japan, the U.S.A., and China, ASEAN membership enables its institutional integration into regional security frameworks such as ADMM, ARF, etc., and allows it to assume a role as an actor in shaping the regional order.

Particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, Timor-Leste's geopolitical position and the importance of its marine resources make it a key player in multilateral cooperation on maritime security, disaster response, and non-traditional security issues. ASEAN's non-alignment and coordination policy aligns well with Timor-Leste's neutral diplomatic approach. Despite being a small nation,

Timor-Leste has positioned itself to contribute to regional stability and enhanced inclusivity by pursuing a flexible diplomatic strategy. Going forward, Timor-Leste can play the following four roles in Indo-Pacific security:

1. Enhancing Maritime Security: Contribute to sea lane defense, combating illegal fishing, and marine environmental protection by strengthening surveillance capabilities and coastal security systems in the Timor Sea.
2. Disaster Response and Human Security: Expand practical contributions in non-traditional security areas by participating in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance activities in collaboration with ASEAN and partner nations.
3. Promoting Multilateral Cooperation: Contribute to stabilizing the regional order by deepening cooperation with major countries such as Japan, the U.S.A., Australia, and China, utilizing frameworks like ADMM-Plus.
4. Improving Institutional Transparency and Accountability: Enhance the quality of domestic institutions and ensure international credibility by aligning with ASEAN standards.

However, challenges remain, including the effectiveness of institutional operations, shortages of human resources, and fiscal constraints. Sustained reform efforts and layered international cooperation are indispensable. Timor-Leste's experience is an important case study demonstrating that small nations can actively engage in shaping the regional order through multilateral cooperation and institutional integration. It symbolizes the diversity and inclusiveness of future security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] UNDP Timor-Leste. (2022). Security Sector Reform Assessment Report. The unclear division of responsibilities between F-FDTL and PNTL remains an institutional challenge even after the 2006 riots.
[2] Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals, Timor-Leste. (2023). Timor Sea Resource Management Strategy. The Timor Sea contains gas fields such as Bayu-Undan and Greater Sunrise, which account for a significant portion of national revenue.
[3] JICA. (2021). Timor-Leste Disaster Risk Reduction Program Evaluation. Japan

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CHAPTER NINE

The Current State and Future of Japan's Peace Perspective

Accumulation Over 80 Years Since World War II's End

Mitsuru Yamada

1. Introduction

The year 2025 sees commemorative events marking 80 years since the war's end held not only in Japan but around the world. Needless to say, "postwar" refers to the period since the end of World War II. Furthermore, the United Nations, established to maintain international peace, also marks its 80th anniversary, though many voices now point to its dysfunction. While many Japanese have experienced travel to Asia, how does Japan confront its history of aggression in Asia—that is, its perspective on peace as a perpetrator? Section 1 examines this issue through Japan's diplomacy toward Southeast Asia.

In general, within Japanese society, the perspective on peace from the victims remains a significant position even now, 80 years after the war, as the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings. Therefore, we will revisit Japan's pacifism in Section 2. However, the population born before and during the war in Japan, who experienced the war, stands at 11.2 % according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' population estimates for 2024. Recent reports indicate this population is decreasing at a rate of approximately 1 % per year (*The Asahi News*, August 16, 2025).

This raises the question: How will the pacifism toward the world, based on the Japanese Constitution enacted immediately after the war, be passed down across generations? This is a particularly serious challenge for Japan, now facing super-aging and a low birth rate.

Section 3 focuses particularly on the views of the millennial generation, born after the war and poised to become the core of Japan's future pacifism,

based on public opinion surveys. It examines how they perceive the vision of peace held by the victims, represented by the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Concluding this study, we will revisit the future trajectory of Japanese pacifism and also touch upon comparisons with pacifism in other countries.

2. Japan's Concept of Peace as Seen Through Diplomacy with Southeast Asia

Japan's pacifism naturally stems from the tragedies of World War II, particularly the devastation wrought by the Allied powers, especially the U.S.A., through its attacks on the Japanese mainland. This was a so-called victim's perspective on peace, epitomized by the sacrifices caused by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many war survivors undoubtedly believed, "Whether you win or lose, war ultimately forces innocent people to make sacrifices. War must never be waged." Many of these war survivors have voiced a "no war" stance that rejects war itself. However, as mentioned in the "Introduction," war survivors now constitute only 11.2 % of Japanese society.

Among the various special features marking the 80th anniversary of the war's end, I would like to highlight a few examples. First, The Asahi Shimbun ran a five-part series titled "War and Politicians," exploring the peace perspectives of war survivors (*The Asahi News*, August 13–19, 2025). The series' first interview featured Yasuo Fukuda, then 89 years old, who served as Prime Minister alongside his father, former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda. Takeo Fukuda is known for the "Fukuda Doctrine," announced in the Philippines in 1977. Regarding Japan's acts of aggression in Southeast Asia during World War II (known in Japan as the Asia-Pacific War), Japan's re-engagement in postwar Southeast Asia began primarily with postwar reparations (Yamada, 1985).

Furthermore, Japan's war reparations, in accordance with Article 14 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, required Japanese labor services in production, salvage of sunken ships, and other labor operations, premised on maintaining a viable postwar Japanese economy. Thus, economic cooperation was included in the aforementioned reparations provisions for Japan as a method of postwar settlement, conducted concurrently with reparations payments. Based on this provision, in November 1954, Burma (now Myanmar) agreed to a war reparations amount of $200 million. The reparations were initially based on Japanese products and services, with an additional $50 million in economic cooperation. This method of combining reparations with economic cooperation was also applied to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam (Yamada, 1985: 53–59).

In fact, during the San Francisco Peace Treaty negotiations, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida at the time added a new interpretation to the aforementioned Article 14 on reparations in the form of services: "If capital goods are of a type that does not require special foreign currency expenditures and furthermore possess the nature of contributing to future economic development..." and proceeded with the actual reparations negotiations based on this interpretation (Yamada, 1985: 58).[1] In essence, this envisioned fostering capital-intensive industries like shipbuilding, automobiles, and electrical machinery, premised on Japan's postwar recovery. These very industries became the representative export sectors driving Japan's postwar economic development.

Lawrence Olson categorizes Japan's re-entry into Southeast Asia into two periods: 1952 to 1964 and 1964 to 1969. First, during the earlier period from the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty to the Ikeda Hayato cabinet, Japanese diplomacy generally maintained a low profile. However, Olson states, "Beginning in 1964, Japan's shadow presence in the region gradually became apparent" (Olson, 1970: 6). It is not difficult to imagine that the background to this earlier phase of Japanese diplomacy naturally coincided with the period of war reparations.

Next, from the perspective of the North-South problem, Japan's trade structure in the late 1950s became processing-oriented, importing natural resources (industrial raw materials) and exporting manufactured goods, emphasizing Japan's role in Asia's prosperity. That is, by the early 1960s, Japan had become the representative position of the Advanced Asian nations on the northern side in the North-South issue of that time (Yamada, 1985: 61–67).[2]

This postwar re-entry into Southeast Asia by Japan began with war reparations and economic cooperation proceeding in parallel. Overlapping with this were the intensifying Cold War and North-South divide, bolstered by U.S.A. backing, which led to massive exports of Japanese products to the Southeast Asian region. Japan's economic over-presence came to be labeled as "economic animals," eventually sparking anti-Japanese riots across the region. In essence, the background to these riots was dissatisfaction that while Japan's rapid economic development made it wealthy, this prosperity was not being shared with the people of Southeast Asia.

Under these circumstances, large-scale anti-Japanese riots, primarily involving young people, erupted in Bangkok and Jakarta during then-Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's visit to Southeast Asia in January 1974. As mentioned earlier, various grievances and protests stemming from Japan's economic expansion, combined with political backlash against Japanese support

for authoritarian regimes, reached a peak.[3] Dispelling these negative perceptions of Japan became an urgent task. This led to a re-examination of Japan's national interests, which had focused solely on economic development.

In an interview with Yasuo Fukuda (*The Asahi News*, August 13, 2025), his father, Takeo, emphasized the weight of diplomacy, stating, "The role of a politician is to devote all efforts to preventing situations that necessitate war." He also likened the 1972 Japan-China Joint Statement to a "suspension bridge" between the two nations. With the 1978 Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship, it became an "iron bridge," transforming from a bridge only people could cross to one where goods could also flow.

He further conveyed that deepening bilateral relations requires diverse exchanges. This very perspective would lead to the "Fukuda Doctrine" of 1977, which will be discussed next. Yasuo, then serving as Prime Minister Fukuda's chief secretary, recalled that the streets were lined with signs advertising Japanese products, which might have reminded people in Asia of the Japanese military's attacks during the war. He believed this was precisely why the Fukuda Doctrine was necessary.

Similarly, it is worth touching upon Yasuo's own vision of peace as a politician when he became Prime Minister in 2007. Yasuo stated that, as a politician, "without mutual trust between leaders, nothing can move forward." He advocated viewing Sino-Japanese relations not through the lens of hostility, but as a special relationship sharing history and culture. Regarding today's politicians who have never known war, he argued that a politician's duty is to exert every effort to prevent situations where "war becomes unavoidable." He asserted that the role of politicians is to use diplomatic power to avoid war, building mutual trust through dialogue rather than force, by exercising imagination based on historical records and testimonies.

Now, to conclude this section, I would like to touch upon the Fukuda Doctrine, which remains a guiding principle for Japan's Southeast Asian diplomacy to this day. The Fukuda Doctrine was the first postwar set of three principles for diplomacy toward Southeast Asia, announced in Manila, Philippines—the final stop on Prime Minister Fukuda's 1977 Southeast Asian tour. First, Japan will remain committed to peace and will not become a military power; from this stance, it will contribute to the peace and prosperity of Southeast Asia and the world. Second, Japan will build mutual trust with the countries of Southeast Asia, fostering heart-to-heart connections as true friends across a broad spectrum of fields, including not only politics and economics but also society and culture. Third, Japan would actively cooperate with ASEAN and its mem-

ber states as an "equal partner," foster relations based on mutual understanding with the Indochinese countries, and contribute to building peace and prosperity throughout Southeast Asia (Yano, 1978: 255–261).

The Fukuda Doctrine did not dramatically alter relations between ASEAN and Japan, but it represented a significant shift in Japan's policy toward Southeast Asia. It can be assessed as having enhanced interdependence across all fields—trade, investment, ODA—since the 1980s, while simultaneously easing previous wariness toward Japan and paving the way for the evolution of ASEAN-Japan relations (Kuroyanagi, 2003: 74–75). The Fukuda Doctrine likely drew upon the "heart-to-heart approach" to engagement mentioned by Yasuo in the interview cited above. Subsequent Japanese diplomacy toward Southeast Asia incorporated programs such as socio-cultural youth exchanges.[4]

3. The Concept of Peace in Japan

As previously mentioned, Japan's pacifism gained acceptance both domestically and internationally, with its starting point being the defeat in the Second World War (the Asia-Pacific War). In that sense, let us briefly revisit the Japanese Constitution promulgated on November 3, 1946, which proclaimed postwar pacifism.

The second paragraph of the Preamble states: "The Japanese people, deeply conscious of the noble ideals that govern human relations and earnestly desiring lasting peace, have resolved to preserve their security and survival by trusting in the justice and faith of peace-loving nations" (Yakushiji, Sakamoto, Asada eds., 2020: 168–173).

Next, Chapter II, which symbolizes Japan's pacifism, declares the renunciation of war. Article 9, Paragraph 1 confirms the "renunciation of war," stating that the Japanese people, based on justice and order, seek international peace and forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation, the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. Furthermore, Paragraph 2 declares that Japan shall not maintain land and naval forces or other war potential, and that the state's right to wage war is not recognized, confirming the "renunciation of war potential" and the "denial of the right to wage war" (Ibid).

Thus, Japan's vision of peace is declared in the final sentence of the Constitution's Preamble: "The Japanese people, pledging themselves before the honor of the nation, vow to achieve these lofty ideals and objectives" (Ibid). This not only communicates the Japanese people's strong commitment to peace within the international community but has also been confirmed as a crucial educa-

tional principle within the school system responsible for the next generation.

As mentioned above, Japan's pacifism was driven by both external actors—specifically, the elimination of Japanese militarism, democratization, and the aforementioned constitutional revision, all advanced by Supreme Commander Douglas MacArthur of the Allied Forces Headquarters (GHQ) based on the Potsdam Declaration—and internal motivations stemming from the fact that many Japanese became victims of war, as evidenced by the estimated 3 million Japanese deaths in the Asia-Pacific War, including both military personnel and civilians. Of course, there are no precise figures for the number of victims in many Asian countries harmed under Japanese occupation, but Japan's responsibility as the perpetrator is naturally called into question.

Here, as Japan's pacifism approaches its 80th postwar anniversary, its perspective as a victim's peace remains underpinned by the fact that it was the only nation to suffer atomic bombings, embodied in the slogan "No more Hiroshima, No more Nagasaki, No more War, No more Hibakusha." The 2024 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (*Nihon Hidankyo*). This award serves as a testament that the tragedy of nuclear weapons use continues to be recounted, particularly as the threat of nuclear weapon deployment is repeatedly mentioned by Russian President Vladimir Putin in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Indeed, the direct death toll from the atomic bombs is estimated at approximately 140,000 in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki. Over 400,000 people are believed to have suffered injuries from the blast, endured radiation exposure, and survived (*The Nikkei*, December 11, 2024).

Terumi Tanaka, representative committee member of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (*Hidankyo*), stated in her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that, having endured the historically unprecedented inhuman suffering inflicted upon atomic bomb victims, they resisted the Japanese government's stance that "the people must endure the suffering of war." He asserted that "the suffering caused by the atomic bombings must be compensated by the nation that initiated and carried out the war." Secondly, "Nuclear weapons are an extremely inhumane instrument of mass destruction that must not be allowed to coexist with humanity; they must be swiftly abolished." Finally, she called for humanity's united struggle toward a world without nuclear weapons or war, urging, "Let us prevent humanity from self-destructing with nuclear weapons!!" (Ibid).

Testimonies from survivors like those of the Hibakusha Association, and survivor speakers, are now actively incorporated into various civic lectures,

social education, and school education settings, partly because many survivors are now elderly. For example, the local Hiroshima newspaper *Chugoku Shimbun* and the Hiroshima Peace Institute at Hiroshima City University hold international symposiums and research forums.

Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) emphasize the significance of "Hibakusha Testimony" lectures, where survivors directly share their experiences during school trips and peace education programs. They also point out the importance of the lecture format, which allows many participants to hear the experiences directly from survivors face-to-face at once. On the other hand, they note the fixed time limit for these lectures, which means the content tends to focus on the immediate aftermath of the bombing, neglecting the long-term effects and issues of the damage.

They also highlight the reality that the number of people giving testimonies within Hiroshima Prefecture is within 0.2 % of all survivors, and that the number of storytellers is decreasing due to aging. It is also notes that there is insufficient time in these lectures to address the experiences of survivors who are not Japanese, including those from the Korean Peninsula, foreign survivors, and overseas survivors (Shijo, 2023).

Marking 80 years since the war's end, two representatives from Hiroshima municipal elementary schools recited a pledge for peace. They referenced how a single atomic bomb created "people whose identities were unrecognizable, their skin blistered," how countless lives were lost and ordinary daily life vanished, and how the aging of survivors means opportunities to hear their voices directly are being lost.

However, the children stated that they carry the mission to pass on the voices of the survivors to the next generation, and that "taking even small actions for those around us" leads to world peace. They emphasized that not only adults, but children like us must also act for peace (*The Chugoku Shimbun*, August 6, 2025).

The following outlines the Hiroshima Peace Declaration on the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing (Ibid).

- It is increasingly vital to convey the desire for peace based on the experiences of atomic bomb survivors.
- Globally, the trend toward military build-up is accelerating, and among policymakers, the view that possessing nuclear weapons is unavoidable for national defense is gaining strength.
- It is necessary to make the aspiration for nuclear abolition the collective

will of civil society. We expect the younger generation to recognize that nuclear weapons pose a challenge capable of bringing inhumane consequences to their future, and to take the lead in activities to form this collective will.

- If a culture of peace spreads across borders, it will prompt policymakers who rely on nuclear deterrence to shift their policies.
- Security policies are generating conflicts between nations. World leaders should visit Hiroshima to witness the reality of the atomic bombing firsthand and begin discussions on building a security framework based on trust through dialogue.
- We urge the Japanese government to participate as an observer in the first review conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to enhance support for atomic bomb survivors, including those living abroad.

Finally, looking at the results of a joint survey of atomic bomb survivors conducted by the *Asahi Shimbun*, *Chugoku Shimbun*, and *Nagasaki Shimbun*, which asked 3,564 valid respondents whether they believed the experiences and thoughts of survivors were being passed on to the next generation: 5.0 % said they were being passed on sufficiently, 43.9 % said they were being passed on to some extent, 33.3 % said they were not being passed on very well, 3.2 % said they were not being passed on at all, 8.8 % said they did not know, and 5.8 % did not answer. Combining "sufficiently" and "to some extent" yields 48.9 %, while conversely, "not very well" and "not at all" combined account for 36.5 %. Comparing these figures suggests the movement for nuclear abolition is weakening year by year, and the desire for peace is gradually fading (*The Asahi News*, August 6, 2025). [5]

Meanwhile, looking back before the 80th anniversary of the war's end, we can refer to a December 2019 survey on Japanese attitudes toward peacebuilding conducted by Conciliation Resource and The Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Conciliation Resource, 2020). [6] The survey results are based on responses from 2,149 people, selected to correspond to the population distribution across Japan's 47 prefectures. The survey organizations define peacebuilding as "the work of identifying and removing the root causes of conflict and factors that fuel disputes using nonviolent means." They also report conducting similar surveys in the U.K., U.S.A., and Germany, finding comparable results to their questions. The findings are summarized into four key points (Ibid: 3).

1. The Japanese people believe that peacebuilding plays an extremely important role.
2. The motivation for supporting peacebuilding is moral.
3. The Japanese people prefer non-violent and civilian means over military responses to conflict.
4. The Japanese people support engaging with armed groups as part of a strategy to resolve conflicts.

Regarding the results for point 1, specifically support for peacebuilding, Japan stands at 77 %, the U.K. at 71 %, and Germany at 82 %. However, for the response "funds and personnel should be allocated to peacebuilding," Germany is at 70 %, the U.K. at 60 %, and Japan at 46 %. The survey noted negligible differences by gender or age group, but some variation by income level. For point 2, an overwhelming majority (80 %, combining "strongly agree" and 'agree') stated that "People have the right to live in peace and be free from the threat of conflict." Next, "We are all citizens of the Earth" received 75 % (same as above). Subsequent responses suggest support for peace-building stems from moral reasons: conflicts, like human movement, are shared problems crossing borders; those with means should aid the less fortunate; and empathy for people in difficult situations.

Regarding point 3, which asks "Are Japanese people considering ways to achieve peace?," 63 % support peacebuilding based on civic roles like reconstruction and development through Japan's ODA, transcending differences in gender, age, and income. Conversely, 43 % support military means. Notably, 78 % of those aged 65 and over support civic means. Conversely, support drops to around 50 % among younger age groups, while support for military means rises to around 40 %. This clearly suggests perceptions of peacebuilding are diverging from the pacifist ideals of Article 9 of the Constitution. This shift appears to correspond with changes in voting behavior among younger generations in recent elections.

I would also like to address the final point, number 4. Essentially, it asks to what extent Japanese people agree or disagree with the assertion that "peace processes involving 'armed groups/terrorists' are important for ending violent conflicts." Specifically, it asks whether Japanese people support or oppose governments, international organizations, NGOs, or local communities playing a role in ending armed conflicts through direct involvement, dialogue, mediation, or negotiation.

The results show that for Japanese respondents, international organizations

receive the highest level of support in all three areas of dialogue, mediation, and negotiation with armed groups/unofficial terrorist groups, as indicated by the figures: 75 %/68 %, 67 %/62 %, and 69 %/64 %. The Japanese government's involvement in each area shows figures close to those for NGOs. However, as supported by responses to the previous question, this support appears to be based on civilian approaches such as development and reconstruction assistance through ODA, rather than direct engagement. Regarding this point, the survey organization concludes that Japanese people conflate peacebuilding with development/reconstruction (Ibid: 16).

Looking back on this section, it is undoubtedly true that in Japan, now marking 80 years since the end of the war, the importance of peace continues to be raised primarily by the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, based on their experiences.

The Japanese Constitution is a rigid constitution, making constitutional revision difficult. Consequently, new interpretations of the Constitution based on Cabinet decisions are being implemented. Naturally, public opinion will be divided, but Japan's defense policy will be strengthened by conservative politicians. While the survey results from the aforementioned organization reflect this growing instability in the international community, considering they were conducted before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and Israel's invasion of the Palestinian autonomous regions in October 2023, it is not difficult to imagine that the conservative mindset among the Japanese public has advanced even further.

4. The Younger Generation's View of Peace in Japan

As an introduction to this section, I would like to touch upon the establishment of the Peace and Security Legislation, which was approved by the Cabinet in September 2015 and changed the longstanding interpretation of pacifism based on Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. The year 2025 marks not only the 80th anniversary of the end of the war but also the 10th anniversary of the passage of this peace legislation, which fundamentally altered Japan's security policy. The primary reason this divided public opinion at the time was that the act violated constitutionalism—the ruling cabinet changed the interpretation of the Constitution rather than amending it.

Even now, the vast majority of constitutional scholars, and even the Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, which oversees the bureau's affairs, assert that it is "unconstitutional."[7] This was also the backdrop for the

large-scale demonstrations held in front of the National Diet at the time. While constitutional debate is not the focus of this study, the core issue here is that the Abe administration altered the interpretation of the postwar Constitution's principle of exclusively defensive, thereby permitting the exercise of collective self-defense rights.[8]

Furthermore, the ambiguity in the definition of a "crisis situation threatening the nation's survival" served as a prerequisite for exercising the right to collective self-defense. The following text was newly added to the existing definition of such a crisis situation: "An armed attack against Japan has occurred, *or an armed attack against another country with which Japan has close relations has occurred, and this poses a clear danger that threatens Japan's survival and fundamentally undermines the people's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*." By adding this italicized text, attacks on other nations could be interpreted as equivalent to attacks on Japan itself, thereby justifying the exercise of collective self-defense. This interpretation sparked significant debate as it clearly deviated from the constitutional norm of exclusively defensive enshrined in Article 9 (Ibid).

The Abe administration at the time forcibly pushed through the security legislation by cabinet decision, citing changes in the international security environment. How did Japan's younger generation, the subject of this section, perceive this? As mentioned above, large-scale demonstrations opposing the passage of the security legislation took place. One group organizing these protests, the youth-centered "Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy: SEALDs," used social media to urge participants in their teens and twenties to join protests of around 1,000 people. They argued that the ideals of the Japanese Constitution were in crisis, expressed distrust in a government not grounded in constitutionalism, and asserted that protecting Japanese democracy was necessary to prevent the younger generation from being sent to the battlefield.

As in Section 3, let us examine the younger generation's attitudes toward peace using the domestic survey results from Japanese millennials' view (Kakuda, 2022).[9] The survey targeted five prefectures: Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa. In October 2021, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted an anonymous questionnaire with six items among 1,033 male and female millennials.[10] A similar comparative survey was also conducted in 2019 among millennials[11] in 16 other countries worldwide.

Five major points were highlighted in the survey results. Focusing on the characteristics of Japan's millennials, the key findings are as follows: First, 48

% prioritize their country's problems, while 20 % focus equally on both their country's and the world's problems. Furthermore, while global millennials cited immediate political and economic issues like corruption, unemployment, and poverty as problems affecting people, Japanese millennials ranked global issues such as climate change, natural disasters, poverty, and war higher. This result is understandable, especially considering that by 2025, immediate political and economic issues were the primary reason for government overthrows, particularly in developing countries.

Second, regarding the question "I could be drawn into a war," only 26 % of Japanese millennials—one in four—expressed concern, compared to 42 % of millennials worldwide, including those in conflict-affected countries, reflecting differing levels of crisis awareness. Regarding the question "Is there a possibility that World War III will occur during your lifetime?", the Japanese survey showed 25 % believed it would occur and 39 % believed it would not. In contrast, the global survey, likely reflecting the unstable social conditions mentioned earlier, showed 46 % believed it would occur and 47 % believed it would not, resulting in nearly equal numbers.

Subsequent questions on the future trend of global wars within the next 5 years, 20 years, and 50 years showed a decreasing trend in responses expecting no change: 65 %, 53 %, and 44 %, respectively. Meanwhile, responses expecting an increase were 17 %, 27 %, and 31 %, while those expecting a decrease were 9 %, 13 %, and 17 %. Finally, responses expecting no war at all were 10 %, 8 %, and 8 %. Japan's millennial generation appears to believe the number of modern wars will remain unchanged in the short term. In contrast, the global survey shows consistent responses of around 35 % predicting an increase in wars across short, medium, and long-term horizons, while forecasting a decrease in wars over the short, medium, and long term.

Additionally, questions regarding weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons were posed. On the question "Nuclear-armed states should abolish their nuclear weapons," 74 % of respondents in Japan strongly agreed, while only 6 % disagreed completely. As confirmed in the previous section, this suggests the voices of the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings and its survivors are being heard. For reference, globally 64 % agree with nuclear abolition. Next, regarding the question "Are nuclear weapons an effective means of deterrence?," 36 % of Japanese respondents strongly agree, while 33 % strongly disagree, creating a close divide. The remaining 31 % were undecided or unsure. Considering that 49 % globally strongly agree—nearly half—it appears the same perspective as in the previous question has been passed

down to the millennial generation. However, considering this survey was conducted before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, attitudes toward nuclear weapons may have shifted further since then.

Extending from the above questions, regarding Japan's development of nuclear weapons, 62 % opposed it while 9 % supported it. However, the 27 % undecided or unsure suggests future international situations could influence these views. Next, regarding the question on whether the Japanese government should join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which it has so far declined to do, 60 % expressed support for joining, while only 8 % opposed it, showing overwhelming support for joining. However, when combining those undecided or unsure, the figure reached 29 %. Meanwhile, at the global level, 54 % expressed support, with opposition at 20 %. Overall, it appears that a certain level of support for opposing nuclear weapons among the millennial generation is shared across national borders.

Climate change stands as one of the major challenges facing modern society. Global news constantly reports on natural disasters such as floods and wildfires, while nations in the South Pacific face the threat of submersion due to rising sea levels. Against this backdrop, the question arises: "Does climate change make war more likely?" In Japan, 48 % agreed it makes war more likely, while 12 % believed it makes it less likely and 40 % thought it has no effect. Globally, the respective percentages were 40 %, 14 %, and 47 %. These results seem to reflect the high awareness of climate change among Japan's millennial generation, a group experiencing frequent natural disasters.

Let's turn to questions about the relationship between digital technology, which millennials excel at, and war. First, respondents were asked, "Do you think the existence of autonomous drones and robotic combatants not controlled by humans will increase civilian casualties?" Next, they were asked, "Can digital technology meet the needs of war victims?"

Regarding the first question, in Japan, 35 % predicted an increase in victims, while 12 % predicted a decrease, 23 % predicted no change, and 27 % were unsure. Globally, the figures were 36 %, 32 %, 24 %, and 8 %, respectively. While predictions of an increase were largely similar, the significant gap in the percentage expecting a decrease likely stems from anticipating the destructive power of drone attacks, as seen in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Next, regarding the latter question—"Can digital technology meet the needs of war victims?"—38 % in Japan predicted it would be possible, 17 % were unsure, 14 % said it would be impossible, and 28 % were undecided. In contrast, at the global level, 58 % expressed agreement that digital technol-

ogy could meet the needs of war victims. Comparing these responses—22 % unsure, 15 % impossible, and 5 % undecided—reflects how Japan's millennial generation, though often called the digital generation, has not experienced war in the 80 years since the war's end. Their perspective, detached from war, allows them to utilize digital technology and benefit from its advancements.

Finally, the survey concluded with questions regarding awareness of the Geneva Conventions—the four treaties of 1949 aimed at humanitarian protection during armed conflict, monitored by the International Committee of the Red Cross—and the Additional Protocols of 1977. In non-conflict nations like Japan and Western countries, the rule of law is prioritized above all else. However, data indicates that awareness of the Geneva Conventions among Japan's Millennial generation, who have no direct experience of war, is relatively low compared to global standards.

Section 4 examined the peace perspectives of Japan's younger generation based on various surveys. In conclusion, as the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings (Hiroshima/Nagasaki) and with the tragedy of nuclear weapons deeply ingrained through survivors' accounts, a peace perspective premised on nuclear abolition can be said to persist. However, on the other hand, having lived during the 80 years since the war's end, the younger generation lacks direct wartime experience, not only on the Japanese mainland but also in neighboring regions. Consequently, they increasingly base their views on political discourse about Asia's international situation. While the government, citing security reasons, changes constitutional interpretations, some young people, by feigning indifference, are effectively beginning to accept this. In this sense, the pillars of the peace constitution that have supported the postwar era for 80 years appear to be wavering.

The results of the July 20, 2025 House of Councillors election showed high support for parties advocating extremely conservative positions and policies on constitutional, diplomatic, and security matters. These included constitutional revision, strengthening defense capabilities, opposition to maintaining the Three Non-Nuclear Principles,[12] viewing China as a threat, and supporting the Prime Minister's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. This indicates a trend diverging from Japan's traditionally upheld pacifism. This divergence between the realities of young people's attitudes and the survey results mentioned above suggests it could become a major threat to Japan's pacifism going forward.

5. Conclusion

This study has traced the accumulation and future trajectory of Japanese paci-fism as it approaches the 80th anniversary of the war's end in 2025. There is no doubt that Japanese pacifism, as epitomized by the atomic bombings of Hiro-shima and Nagasaki, has generally been a peace perspective rooted in the ex-perience of victims. The discourse from the war generation—that "war has no winners or losers; ultimately, innocent people become the victims"—has held persuasive discourse. How will the postwar generation, and further, the mil-lennial generation, inherit this perspective? In contrast, the author views the Western peace perspective as originating from the perpetrator's standpoint—the conviction that the Holocaust must never be repeated. This seems linked to the peace perspectives emerging from perpetrators/bystanders, particularly evident in Germany, which experienced Nazi rule; Italy, which also pursued fascism; and the Western nations that were bystanders to the Holocaust.[13]

Tom Phuong Le, author of *Japan's Aging Peace*, identifies constraints and restraining factors that will limit Japan's future militarism. First, physical con-straints include an aging population and demographic decline, the abolition of conscription under Article 18 of the Constitution, and a shortage of volunteers for the Self-Defense Forces. Next, technological factors include an underde-veloped military-industrial complex, a lack of combat experience among Self-Defense Forces personnel, and an outdated technological base. On the other hand, among the restraining factors, normative factors include the existence of the Peace Constitution and related legislation, the presence of non-nuclear and non-militarist forces as a nation that experienced atomic bombings, and the public and media supporting them. Finally, political factors include the Japan-U.S.A. alliance and the policy of providing reassurance to neighboring Asian countries stemming from non-militarism (Le, 2021).

As Le noted, Japan has spent the 80 years since the war reflecting on the lessons of war and learning the importance of peace. Le concludes that Japan should not pursue the path of a nation building up its military capabilities, but rather demonstrate to the world, both domestically and internationally, that it is a "peace-loving nation" that can "age gracefully," thereby establishing an hon-orable position within the international community. Having maintained peace for 80 years since the war, Japan is now called upon to proactively demonstrate leadership that prioritizes international norms and the rule of law—through UN reform and other means—within an international community destabilized by war and conflict. This could provide an opportunity to redefine the very

concept of a great power. This serves as the conclusion I wish to propose in this study.

Notes

[1] This quotation is from Yoshida (1957), Volume 3, p. 165.

[2] For understanding Japan's postwar recovery, refer to Ohno (2005), especially Chapter 10 & 11.

[3] The background to Indonesia's large-scale anti-Japanese demonstrations stemmed from student movements critical of the Suharto regime, which were dissatisfied with Japan's support for that regime. Furthermore, during Tanaka's visit, mobs carried out arson attacks on Japanese companies and other targets in what became known as *the Malari Incident* (Indonesian for "January 15th Disaster"), though it is also said that power struggles within Suharto's political regime were a factor behind these events.

[4] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched the JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) program. This exchange initiative invites and dispatches young people who will shape the future from Japan and Asia-Pacific countries, aiming to deepen their comprehensive understanding of Japan and build friendly relations.

[5] A survey on attitudes toward the U.S.A. atomic bombings was conducted in August 2025. Among the 18-29 age group, 44 % denied the legitimacy of the bombings (27 % deemed them legitimate). Among adults, 31 % rejected it (35 % accepted it). Among men, 25 % rejected it (51 % accepted it), while among women, 36 % rejected it (20 % accepted it). As expected, those aged 65 and older and republican supporters showed a high percentage believing the atomic bombings were justified (The Asahi News, August 7, 2025).

[6] For a more systematic analysis, see Cate Buchanan (2020), *Accord an International Review of Peace Initiative: Pioneering Peace Pathway, Making Connections to End Violent Conflict*, Conciliation Resources.

[7] Former Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau Masahiko Sakata stated regarding the Abe administration's forceful introduction of collective self-defense rights: "It means there are no longer any politicians who can think about what Japan's participation in war would bring, based on real experience. The biggest problem is that Japan's participation in war is not just a matter for the Self-Defense Forces." (The Asahi News, September 19, 2025).

[8] For information on the Peace and Security Legislation, refer to the Cabinet Secretariat website, https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/housei_seibi.html (Accessed, September 23, 2025).

[9] For a report comparing global millennial's view on war, see Supervised & Translated by A. Kakuda (2021), *Millennials on War*, Topline report for International Committee pf the Red Cross.

[10] The millennial generation in this survey refers to those who reached adulthood after 2000, spanning ages from early 20s late 30s. At the time of writing, this cor-

responds to individuals born around 1981 to 1996, who became adult after 2000 and are now in their late 29 to early 40s. This generation is characterized by growing up alongside the development of digital technology.

[11] The breakdown of the 16 countries includes Afghanistan, Colombia, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Nigeria, Syria, and Ukraine as conflict states. From countries in a state of peace (non-conflict states), France, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Switzerland, the U.K., the U.S.A., and South Africa were selected as survey countries.

[12] The Three Non-Nuclear Principles refer to the principles of not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction od nuclear weapons, and are established as a national policy of Japan.

[13] Regarding Israel's ongoing military operations in the Palestinian Gaza Strip as of 2025 (which the UN Human Rights Council's Independent Commission of Inquiry classified as genocide on September 16, 2025), German Chancellor Martin Josef Merz stated, "I cannot understand why civilians are being harmed," marking the first time in 80 years since the war that a German leader has strongly criticized Israel (various media reports, NHK WEB, August 14, 2025). Criticism of Israel by European leaders continues, with the exception of the U.S.A. under President Donald Trump).

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About this book

Each chapter is composed of participants from the international symposium held at Waseda University on July 11, 2025, and participants from the seminar on Timor-Leste's ASEAN accession held at the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) on September 2, 2025.

The theme of the international symposium was "Peacemaking based on traditional resource management," and it was supported by the JSPS Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research. Specifically, in collaboration with Warmadewa University in Indonesia as a joint research partner, the editors are conducting joint research on "The Role of Traditional Institutions for Resource Management and Their Relationship with Sustainability."

For this event, Rector Dr. Ir. I Gde Suranaya Pandit was invited to deliver the keynote address. The editors would also like to thank Dr. Ir. I Gede Pasek Mangku, Dr. Putu Ayu Sita Laksmi, and Ms. Pande Ayu Naya Kaish Permatananda for their presentations.

Prof. Dr. Alarico da Costa Ximenes, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UNTL, and Lecturer Mr. Janio Tilman were also invited to present at the international symposium. Timor-Leste was incorporated as Indonesia's 27th province, but following the August 1999 referendum and a period of UN interim administration, it formally achieved independence in May 2002.

The nation is currently advancing its state-building efforts toward modernization. The seminar held at UNTL on September 2 addressed the fact that the 11th member state will be decided at the ASEAN Summit in Malaysia on October 26, 2025. Dean Alarico and Lecturer Tilman arranged an opportunity to hold a seminar with members of the ASEAN Research Group in Japan on the prospects for Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership from Japan's perspective. In particular, the editors consider the ongoing plan to establish a Japanese Studies Center within UNTL's Faculty of Social Sciences, which is being advanced together with both of them, to be an important form of international cooperation from Japan toward Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership.

This book is divided into two parts: Part I compiles papers examining how traditional resources can contribute to peaceful problem-solving. Here, "traditional resources" encompass not only peaceful resolution methods accumulated regionally over time, but also postwar developments such as Japan's pacifism. Part II then addresses the international context surrounding ASEAN, including its membership issue with Timor-Leste.

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