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Diaspora Organisations, Political Settlements, and the Migration-Development Nexus:

The Case of the Indonesian Diaspora Network

Abstract

This paper examines the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN), an organisation that seeks to 'facilitate' and 'empower' Indonesia's diaspora and enhance its contribution to the country's development. IDN portrays itself as an expression of the collective will of a unified and coherent Indonesian diaspora that is working to promote development-for-all while critics suggest it is the instrument of elite and professional elements within the diaspora pursuing narrower interests and agendas. By contrast, this paper suggests that IDN is a political settlement between these and other elements within the diaspora, each of which has distinct interests and agendas with regards to Indonesia's development. Its impact on Indonesia's development is consequently much less clear-cut than existing analyses suggest while also being contingent on processes of political and social struggle. In theoretical terms, the paper encourages an understanding of diaspora organisations in terms of political settlements analysis.

Introduction

Since its establishment in 2012, the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN) has become an important new player in Indonesia's political economy. Indonesia has one of the largest diasporas in the world, albeit one that is significantly smaller and less prominent than those of India, China, Mexico and the Russian Federation. Estimates of its size vary considerably depending on the definition of diaspora and the data source used, ranging from 1.8 million people according to the University of Sussex's Global Migrant Origin database (Muhidin and Utomo 2015: 96) to 9 million people according to a World Bank (2017) report on the country's 'overseas workers'. United Nations migrant stock data suggests that the Indonesian diaspora is overwhelmingly concentrated in other parts of Asia and the Middle East, particularly Malaysia (35 percent of total migrant stock), Saudi Arabia (13 percent), United Arab Emirates (11 percent), Bangladesh (5 percent), Singapore (5 percent), and Hong Kong (4 percent) with significant populations in OECD countries such as the Netherlands (5 percent of total migrant stock), the United States (3 percent) and Australia (3 percent) (Muhidin and Utomo 2015: 98). The declared purpose of IDN is to 'facilitate' and 'empower' this diaspora and enhance its contribution to Indonesia's development (IDN nd). To this end, IDN has held regular high-profile diaspora congresses drawing attention to the achievements of the country's diaspora and promoting its potential to contribute to homeland development, mobilised funding to support charitable and development projects in poor parts of Indonesia, and lobbied for change in Indonesian government policies related to diaspora engagement. In 2013, one of its founders, Dino Patti Djalal, a former Indonesian ambassador to the United States, launched a campaign for Indonesia's presidency, albeit unsuccessfully.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the nature of IDN and assess its implications for Indonesia's development. IDN has presented itself as an expression of the collective will of a

unified and coherent diaspora: its statements and other materials have consistently emphasised the unity and solidarity of the Indonesian diaspora and the way the organisation facilitates and empowers its voice (IDN nd; Latifa 2019: 2). At the same time, it has claimed that it is assisting development-for-all in Indonesia by facilitating trade and investment links, improving human capital levels in Indonesia, encouraging technology transfer, and mobilising funding for poverty reduction and social development efforts (*Antara* 2019). Academic analyses of the Indonesian diaspora have largely accepted and reinforced this self-image (Setijadi 2017; Dewansyah 2019). For instance, Dewansyah (2019: 53) has argued that the 'IDN movement can be seen as a systematic effort to connect [the] Indonesia[n] diaspora abroad…to the national interests of Indonesia' and, in particular, to government efforts with regards to multitrack diplomacy, the promotion of Indonesian culture abroad, and the provision of assistance to the country's poor and marginalised.

However, Latifa (2019) has taken issue with this self-image, suggesting that IDN is in fact the instrument of particular sections of the diaspora, namely professional workers and political and business elites, and that it promotes neoliberal ideology rather than development-for-all. As Pellerin and Mullings (2013) have observed, the notion that diasporas can make a significant contribution to homeland development by enhancing trade and investment links, financial flows, and human capital flows is consistent with neoliberal ideology because such contributions rest on the operation of private market forces rather than state intervention. Not surprisingly, organisations such as the World Bank have actively promoted the so-called 'diaspora option', a 'policy orientation aimed at utilizing the human, economic and social capital of migrant populations in order to revitalize levels of investment, skill and development in the places with which they maintain ancestral ties' (Pellerin and Mullings 2013: 89). In accordance with this critical stance *vis-à-vis* the role of diasporas in development, Latifa (2019:

11) has argued that IDN promotes neoliberalism by 'giv[ing] a stronger representation to diasporic subjects located higher up in the global ranking of human capital' such as professional workers and political and business elites. It also does so by promoting 'an enterprise culture' in its events, statements and materials (2019: 11).

In contrast to these two viewpoints, this paper argues that IDN is best understood as a (somewhat fragile) political settlement between competing political and social elements within the diaspora, each of which has distinct interests and agendas with regards to Indonesia's development. These elements include Indonesian low-wage migrant workers and marriage migrants as well as professional workers and political and business elites. At the same time, political and business elites within the diaspora, who have played a central role in IDN, are not united but have been divided in terms of the specific agendas they have pursued with important consequences for the stability of the organisation. The upshot is that, while professionals and political and business elites have clearly been the dominant elements within IDN, IDN is a less coherent organisation in terms of the interests and agendas it promotes, and its implications for Indonesia's development are less clear, than both the viewpoints above suggest. Rather than being the instrument of the diaspora-as-whole promoting development-for-all or particular, dominant sections of the diaspora promoting narrower interests, it is instead a terrain on which different elements within the diaspora compete for the opportunity to represent the diaspora, determine the claims it makes, and, in so doing, shape the nature of development in Indonesia. Its implications for Indonesia's development thus depend on how conflict and contestation between these elements play out within the organisation.

In presenting this analysis, this paper seeks not only to contribute to our understanding of IDN specifically but also the nature of diaspora organisations and their role in shaping homeland

development outcomes more generally. While diaspora organisations 'have increased in number, spread to new regions, and engaged an ever-widening array of issues' in recent decades, they have received little attention from scholars in the social sciences and, in particular, disciplines such as international relations, migration studies, development studies, and organisational sociology where one might expect some interest (Dijkzeul and Fauser 2020: 16). This is notwithstanding growing recognition of the development potential of diasporas (Brinkerhoff 2011). At the same time, to the extent that such scholars have given attention to diaspora organisations and their development effects, they have tended to either elide the role of politics in shaping their operation and effects or, *ala* IDN's self-image, portray these organisations as expressions of the collective interests of unified and coherent diasporic communities. This has obscured the role of conflict and contestation within diasporic communities in shaping what these organisations do and their impacts on homeland development. In advancing an explanation of IDN based on the notion of political settlements, this paper seeks to offer an alternative view that, on the one hand, expressly emphasises the political character of diaspora organisations and, on the other hand, understands their political character in terms of contradictions between the various political and social elements within the diaspora that permeate these organisations rather than the collective interests of a unified and coherent diaspora. It accordingly also understands their implications for homeland development in terms of the balance of power and conflict and contestation between these political and social elements.

This paper begins by examining how scholars have so far sought to understand diaspora organisations and outlining the alternative understanding implied by a political settlements approach. It then examines the case of IDN, focusing on its evolution and activities as an organisation and the way it constitutes a political settlement. The paper concludes by

considering the implications of the analysis for our understanding of the organisation's impact on Indonesia's development and diaspora organisations more generally.

Before beginning with this analysis, however, it is necessary to briefly define the terms 'diaspora' and 'diaspora organisation' as they are used in this paper. The notion of diaspora has a long and complicated history. It originally referred to 'people who were forced to leave and could not go back to their homeland' (Dijkzeul and Fauser 2020: 19). Nowadays, it is commonly used in a broader sense to refer to: 'Emigrants and their descendants, who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin' (Agunias and Newland 2012: 15).[1] As Ang (2013) has observed, the notion of diaspora connotes inclusion/exclusion, just like the term 'nation', to the extent that membership is closed to a particular set of individuals. Diaspora organisations are thus organisations that bring together members of a diasporic community (excluding people outside the community) and in a way that forms a linkage back to a real or imagined national homeland. Examples include migrant associations, hometown associations (HTAs), ethnic interest bodies, and organisations representing diasporas-as-a-whole.

Understanding Diaspora Organisations

To the extent that scholars have examined the nature of diaspora organisations and their development-related effects, they have tended to do so through the prism of transnationalism, an approach to understanding the migration-development nexus that focuses on the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states'

[1] Note that, by this definition, a diaspora does not include individuals who move from one part of a country to another. Specifically, in the Indonesian case, it does not include the millions of 'transmigrants' who were relocated from Java over many decades to alleviate population pressure on that island. This understanding of diaspora is consistent with IDN's usage of the term.

(Vertovec 2009: prelims). Prior to the emergence of transnationalism in early 1990s, studies on the migration-development nexus operated within a paradigm of permanent migration and settlement and focused on the adjustment of immigrants to destination countries or the economic impact of migration in destination countries (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). Alternatively, they examined the effects of migration on countries of origin, particularly the economic effects of human capital transfers and financial remittances with many expressing concern about a 'brain drain' from developing countries. The emergence of transnationalism in the early 1990s reflected a view that these approaches were no longer fit for purpose because they entailed an assumption 'that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002: 301). This assumption, it was argued, was no longer tenable in a context where economic globalisation was impelling 'large numbers of people to live their lives across borders' (Glick-Schiller 2018: 201). Accordingly, transnational researchers shifted the analytical focus away from the national level towards the various linkages connecting people and institutions across national borders and—on the development side—the impact of these linkages for various forms development. Such linkages include remittances, trade and investment networks, knowledge networks, business associations, and—importantly for our purposes—diaspora organisations (Faist *et al* 2013).

As it has evolved, transnationalism has taken two main forms, each of which has presented a different picture of diaspora organisations. *Conventional* versions of transnationalism have identified the perceived benefits of transnational migration to origin and destination countries through the creation and operation of transnational linkages. They have often been framed as a challenge to earlier analyses of the migration-development nexus that emphasised 'brain drain' effects because they present an essentially positive view of migration. They have often had an explicit policy focus and been associated, one way or another, with official international

organisations (Nyberg-Sorenson *et al* 2002; Orozco 2003; IOM 2018). Such perspectives have tended to portray diaspora organisations in politically neutral terms, emphasising their potential role as agents of development due to their presumed ability to enhance trade, investment and financial links between origin and destination countries and mobilise funding to support development projects in the former.

Critical versions of transnationalism, by contrast, have sought to explain how power relations rooted in the nature of global capitalism and associated processes of political and social struggle have shaped the nature of transnational linkages and, in so doing, who benefits from migration, when and in what ways (Portes 2016; Glick-Schiller 2018). Grounded in analytical frameworks such as world systems theory, or notions of imperialism, they have often made a distinction between 'transnationalism from above'—that is, forms of transnationalism that are carried out by the state and corporations and that embody 'hegemonic' interests—and 'transnationalism from below'—that is, forms that are produced by migrants themselves embodying 'counter-hegemonic' interests (Smith and Guarnizo 1999). In accordance with this distinction, they have generally portrayed diaspora organisations as a form of transnationalism from below on the grounds that such organisations are created by migrants and migrants *qua* workers constitute a counter-hegemonic force (Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2016). In some cases, scholars operating in this vein have emphasised tensions between diasporic organisations and homeland communities rather than the former and states/transnational capital (Mazzucato and Kabki 2009). In both cases, however, a similar image of diasporic organisations has emerged: namely, of these organisations as an expression of the collective interests of a coherent and unified diasporic community.

Both conventional and critical perspectives are problematic in terms of how they portray diaspora organisations. In the case of conventional perspectives, this is simply because they obscure the political character of diaspora organisations when there is plenty of evidence to suggest that these organisations represent particular political interests and pursue particular political agendas (Dijkzeul and Fauser 2020; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2016). In the case of critical perspectives, it is because in construing diasporic communities as unified and coherent entities, they obscure the way in which conflict and contestation *within* these communities shapes these organisations and their development implications. The point here is twofold. First, diasporic communities are divided along multiple lines, producing internal conflict and contestation and limiting their ability to act in a unified and coherent manner. In particular, they are divided along class, ethnic, religious, and gender-related lines (Anthias 1998). Second, diaspora organisations can consequently reflect, not the common interests of diasporic communities, but rather those of particular class, ethnic, religious, or gender-based elements within these communities or compromises between these elements. Put differently, they are, to quote Iskander (2016), 'arenas of contestation' in which a variety of actors, interests and agendas compete to shape these organisations and their effects.

In this paper, we contend that diaspora organisations are best understood as political settlements. Political settlements analysis (PSA) has become an increasingly influential framework for understanding development processes and outcomes in recent years (Khan 2010; Hickey *et al* 2015). It begins with the notion that 'institutions'—that is, the formal or informal rules, regulations and enforcement mechanisms that govern economic and social activity (North 1990)—not only shape prospects for economic and social development—as many new institutional economists have shown (North 1990)—but also the distribution of political, economic and social resources (Khan 2010). They are consequently subject to conflict

and contestation between competing sets of actors. In accordance with these ideas, Khan (2010: 4) has defined a 'political settlement' as 'a combination of power and institutions that is mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability'. The institutions and the distribution of power, he argues, 'have to be compatible because if powerful groups are not getting an acceptable distribution of benefits from an institutional structure, they will strive to change it' (2010: 4). The implication is that institutions are subject to change over time as a result of shifts in the balance of power between competing actors (Rosser 2020).

PSA has so far been used primarily to explain institutions and their effects at the national level. But, in an important recent contribution, Goodhand and Meehan (2018) have called on PSA researchers to 'spatialise' their analysis and do so specifically in a way that brings transnational spaces into the discussion. Actors, interests and agendas central to national-level political settlements, they point out, may simultaneously operate within and across local and transnational spaces. Focusing on issues related to civil war and other forms of violent conflict in borderland environments, they point to what they call 'borderland brokers' as a good example in this respect. Such brokers are 'go-betweens, gatekeepers or representatives that span spatial divides between competing elite coalitions or connect political elites to their constituencies. They seek to occupy and monopolise a 'deal space' – a point of friction and an interface – which links the centre to periphery, the (trans)national to the local' (Goodhand and Meehan 2018: 16). The takeaway point for our purposes is that PSA researchers need to recognise that actors, interests and agendas may operate simultaneously within and across multiple spaces each of which is characterised by own its own political settlement and associated processes of conflict and contestation. Furthermore, these spaces include not only local and national spaces but ones that are transnational in nature.

Applied to the analysis of diaspora organisations, PSA suggests that such organisations need to be understood as sets of institutions situated in transnational spaces connecting countries of origin and destination. These institutions include internally-defined rules governing behaviour and action (e.g. articles or association, unwritten norms of behaviour) and mechanisms for enforcing these (e.g. internal complaints processes, family decision-making processes). Importantly for our purposes, they include written or unwritten organisational objectives or priorities. PSA also suggests that the nature of these institutions should be understood in terms of the balance of power and processes of contestation between competing elements operating in the relevant (transnational) spaces. This in turn entails an understanding of the interests and agendas of these elements, the tensions between them, and the way they produce agreements through processes of conflict and contestation. It also entails construing the relevant elements not in terms of a divide between migrants/the grassroots and states/capital—as in the critically-oriented studies cited above—but rather political and social elements who permeate both these entities (as well as the transnational spaces that they occupy), albeit to different degrees and with different levels of influence and consequence (Rosser 2020).

In defining actors for the purposes of PSA, PSA researchers have for the most part focused on the role of elite actors on the grounds that these are typically the most powerful political elements (di John and Putzel 2009). However, some recent contributions (e.g. Hickey *et al* 2015) have also sought to incorporate 'popular forces' such as workers, peasants and NGO activists into the analysis, in recognition of the fact that, while elite actors generally dominate policy-making and implementation processes, popular actors can also play a significant role, particularly when empowered by democratic reform or structural change in an economy and society. Importantly for our purposes, in both cases, PSA researchers have tended to define these actors in terms of broad political social strata related to class, ethnic, religious, and

gender-based divides rather than in terms of individuals or cliques *ala* Waldinger *et al* (2008), although they have recognised that intra-elite division is an important driver of conflict and contestation.

In the following sections, we use this theoretical approach to explain the nature of IDN and assess its implications for Indonesia's development. We begin by providing an overview of IDN's evolution as an organisation and the nature of its activities. We then examine the nature of the political settlement underpinning the organisation, focusing on the competing political and social elements it has brought together, their respective interests and agendas, the balance of power between them, and the way conflict and contestation between these elements has shaped the organisation and its activities. We conclude by examining the implications of this political settlement for Indonesia's development.

The Indonesian Diaspora Network

Evolution and Activities

IDN was formed in the wake of the first Congress of Indonesian Diaspora in Los Angeles in 2012 to empower the Indonesian diaspora and enhance its contribution to Indonesia's development. The brainchild of Dino Patti Djalal, then Indonesia's ambassador to the US, this Congress brought together thousands of current and former members of the Indonesian diaspora, senior Indonesian government officials, and various others (USINDO 2012). The main outcome was a 'Diaspora Declaration' articulating an intention on the part of the diaspora to build a greater sense of collective identity, contribute to Indonesia's development, and establish a diaspora network to assist in these efforts (IDN 2012). IDN grew quickly in the wake of the 2012 Congress: by August 2013, it had 55 chapters in 26 countries (Sipahutar

2013); by October 2013, it had a global arm (Al-Arief 2014); and, by 2020, it had 60 local and national chapters (IDN nd). In 2017, IDN split into two rival organisations. The first, which uses the name 'IDN Global', is controlled by Djalal. The second, which adopted the name 'IDN United', is controlled by Edward Wanandi, a US-based businessman who is a leading member of the Gemala Group, one of Indonesia's largest business conglomerates, and one of the founders of IDN.[2] At the time of writing (early 2021), these organisations continued to operate independently, holding separate congresses in 2017 and in the case of IDN Global in 2018 and 2019 as well (the former being a youth congress rather than a regular congress).[3] For the sake of simplicity, we refer to these organisations below as if they were a single outfit except where the distinction between the two is important.

Since IDN's establishment, it has engaged in a range of activities. It has become best known for a series of high-profile diaspora congresses held in Jakarta every one-to-two years. These have involved presentations by prominent current and former members of the Indonesian diaspora, senior Indonesian government officials (for instance, then President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono opened the 2013 congress and then Vice President Jusuf Kalla opened one of the two Congresses held in 2017), migrant worker activists (in some cases), and assorted others. A separate 2017 congress featured a presentation by former US President Barack Obama who had spent part of his childhood in Jakarta. As Reeve (2014) has observed, despite the inclusion of migrant worker activists in some congresses, they have focused on showcasing the achievements of the most successful members of the diaspora. 'The dominant tone' of these

[2] Edward Wanandi has two better known brothers: Jusuf, a politician and public intellectual associated with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Jakarta-based think tank; and Sofyan, the head of the Gemala Group. Both have close links to senior figures in the Indonesian military and played an important role in the consolidation and maintenance of Suharto's New Order regime. Subsequent references to 'Wanandi' in the paper are to Edward, not his brothers.

[3] Interviews with Hamdan Hamedan (Executive Director IDN United), Dino Patti Djalal, and Nuning Hallett (a former Executive Director of IDN) Jakarta, September 2018. See also *Jakarta Globe* (2017) and *Tempo.co* (2017).

congresses, he notes, has been 'that of appreciating the diaspora as a national resource' and 'of revelling in the success of Indonesians competing internationally' (Reeve 2014).

In addition to holding diaspora congresses, IDN has also mobilised funding to support charitable and development projects in Indonesia, particularly in poor, disadvantaged parts of the country and parts affected by natural disasters, although its activities in this respect have been modest and selective. According to Dewansyah (2021), IDN has had a concern with social development in Indonesia since its inception, establishing the Indonesia Diaspora Foundation as a sister organisation to take the lead in this area. And over time social development has assumed an increasingly prominent place within IDN's activities. Since the split in 2017, IDN United has been the most active of the two manifestations of IDN in this domain, running a series of education and health projects in Papua and West Papua (Dewansyah 2021). But IDN Global has also engaged in some social development activities. For instance, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, IDN Global collaborated with the Manpower Ministry in Jakarta to establish a program called Diaspora Care to mobilise funding from the diaspora to support Indonesian workers who had lost their jobs (Santia 2020). According to media reports, the Manpower Ministry expected six million members of the Indonesian diaspora to participate in the program (Iswara 2020).

Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, IDN has also engaged in lobbying of the Indonesian government in relation to policy issues of concern to members of the diaspora. The first and foremost of these has been dual citizenship. Indonesia's 2006 Citizenship Law only permits dual citizenship for children born to mixed couples—that is, couples in which one partner is an Indonesian citizen. Once such children reach the age of 18, they must choose

whether to be Indonesian citizens or foreign citizens.[4] This situation has imposed restrictions on the ability of many members of the diaspora to invest, own land, open bank accounts, and receive inheritances in Indonesia or their country of destination depending on their citizenship status.[5] It has also complicated their ability to address child custody disputes and engage in international travel. IDN has consequently called on the Indonesian government to introduce full dual citizenship (Setijadi 2017). A second issue has been improved representation of the Indonesian diaspora in the country's national parliament (DPR). IDN has complained that parliamentarians elected from Jakarta's second electoral district, where votes by members of the diaspora are counted in national elections, have failed to properly attend to the needs of the diaspora which, it has argued, are distinct from those of domestic voters (*Kompas* 2013; *Tempo.co* 2017). This is despite the considerable size of the diaspora and the fact that it outnumbers domestic voters in many electorates. To address this problem, IDN has proposed the establishment of a 'special electorate' for the diaspora (Setijadi 2017).

A third and final issue is the rights of low-wage migrant workers (*pekerja migran Indonesia,* or PMI). Indonesia's overseas workers are predominantly employed in low-wage occupations such as maids/baby sitters (32%), farm workers (19%), construction workers (18%), factory workers (8%), and care givers for the elderly (6%) in countries in Asia and the Middle East with poor human rights records such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore (World Bank 2017: X-XI, 13-14). Many PMI experience physical and sexual abuse, forced labour, and/or unpaid wages during their migration experience (Missbach and Palmer 2018). IDN has sought to raise public awareness about abuses of PMI and lobby Indonesian policy-makers to improve

[4] Article 6(1).
[5] Interview with Hamdan Hamedan, Jakarta, September 2018.

protection of their rights, establishing a migrant worker taskforce (MWTF) in 2013[6] and, as noted above, providing some space at diaspora congresses for matters to do with PMI rights. In contrast to the other two issues mentioned here, however, it has done relatively little in relation to the issue of PMI rights. [7] IDN United appears to have been more active in relation to PMI rights than IDN Global, providing a base for the MWTF since the organisation split in 2017.[8]

IDN has engaged in lobbying related to these three policy issues in a number of ways. Most important in this respect have been the diaspora congresses. Other relevant activities have included contributions to the media (Hallett 2012; Hamedan 2015), creation of an IDN website, publication of books celebrating the success of prominent members of the diaspora (Djalal 2012), and meetings between IDN figures and government decision-makers. Such decision-makers have been located in a range of state institutions, reflecting the fact that many such institutions are involved in diaspora-related affairs including the Ministry of Manpower (which hosts BNP2TKI/BP2MI, the agency responsible for dealing with migrant worker affairs), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which established a 'diaspora desk' in 2012), the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (which has responsibility for immigration), and the DPR (which formulates and enacts legislation). Most notably, IDN figures have also met the Indonesian President, especially when he is abroad (*Jakarta Post* 2015).

IDN has so far been only moderately successful in promoting its desired policy changes. President Joko Widodo indicated that he would 'push' for dual citizenship in a meeting with

[6] The MWTF was one of many taskforces established at the time to work on IDN priorities. Interview with Didi Yakub, Director of the MWTF, Singapore (by Zoom), May 2021. IDN United's (nd) website lists eight other current taskforces including ones on dual citizenship, small and medium enterprise empowerment, and tourism, culinary and fashion matters.
[7] Interview with Wahyu Susilo, Migrant Care, Jakarta, September 2018.
[8] Interviews with Hamdan Hamedan and Dino Patti Djalal, Jakarta, September 2018.

members of the Indonesian diaspora in the US in 2015, but he does not appear to have done so (*Jakarta Post* 2015). The DPR included an amendment to the 2006 Citizenship Law on its legislative agenda in 2015. But it has not progressed this in the face of vocal opposition from nationalist parliamentarians (Dewansyah 2019: 57). In 2017, the Indonesian government issued a presidential regulation introducing a new 'Diaspora Card' for which both Indonesian citizens abroad and former Indonesian citizens can apply; but it offers them no additional entitlements, making it redundant (Sapiie 2017). Take up rates have accordingly been very low (Wijaya 2020). So far, the only significant gain for IDN on this front has been the government's decision in 2016 to extend the validity period for multiple-entry 'visit' visas from one year to five years (Herlina 2016). IDN pursued this change through negotiations with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, seeing it as an interim arrangement that would benefit the diaspora pending full dual citizenship.[9] With regards to the issue of a special electorate, IDN figures report a similar lack of progress.[10] The DPR has proven unresponsive to calls for the electoral law to be changed to create a special electorate for the diaspora while a Constitutional Court challenge aimed at having the existing election law ruled unconstitutional because it failed to provide for such an electorate proved unsuccessful (Mahkamah Konstitusi 2013).

Much more progress has been made with regards to protection of PMI rights, with the government introducing a range of measures with this aim including a new law on migrant workers in 2017 (*Jakarta Post* 2017). But these improvements appear to have had very little to do with the intervention of IDN given the relatively low-profile PMI rights have had within the organisation notwithstanding the establishment of the MWTF. Since its establishment, the MWTF has become integrated into wider migrant worker activist networks, often participating

[9] Interview with Nuning Hallett, Jakarta, September 2018.
[10] Interviews with Hamdan Hamedan, Nuning Hallett and Dino Patti Djalal, Jakarta, September 2018.

in public fora organised by other migrant worker organisations aimed at promoting regulatory change and in some cases sponsoring such fora itself.[11] But it has been a small-scale and poorly-resourced outfit, lacked a significant membership base, and been reliant upon the voluntary contributions of key figures such as Didi Yakub and Sring Atin, each of whom has had day job.[12] It has consequently been unable to exercise leadership in the struggle for PMI rights.

IDN as a Political Settlement

IDN brings together a range of competing political and social elements within the Indonesian diaspora that are defined in terms of class, ethnic, religious and gender-related divides. These are: i) PMI—which, as indicated earlier, are by far the largest group within the Indonesian diaspora (World Bank 2017); ii) marriage migrants—that is, people who settle in other countries through marriage; iii) professional workers and students training for professional careers by studying overseas; and iv) political and business elites. The latter group in turn includes two discrete sections: a) individuals who are part of, or connected to, Indonesia's ruling politico-business oligarchy and have spent time abroad (such as Djalal and Wanandi); and b) individuals who are independent of this oligarchy but have accumulated significant wealth through successful business activities in destination countries such as Sehat Sutardja (the co-founder of Marvell Technology Group, a US electronics and information technology company) and Iwan Sunito (a Sydney-based property developer). This group of elites is tiny as a proportion of the diaspora but politically important within IDN. For their part, PMI have often been represented in IDN activities by activists from migrant worker NGOs based in Jakarta

[11] See, for instance, Jaringan Buruh Migran (2017).
[12] Interview with Didi Yakub, Singapore (by Zoom), May 2021.

such as Migrant Care, the Indonesia Migrant Worker Union (SBMI), and Solidaritas Perempuan (Female Solidarity) as well as members of the MWTF.[13]

Each of the aforementioned elements within the diaspora has different characteristics in class, ethnic, religious, and gender-related terms. PMI are predominantly from poor rural communities, *pribumi* (indigenous), and Moslem, and include both men and women (although women outnumber men) (IOM 2010: 9; World Bank 2017). Accurate data on the characteristics of marriage migrants is scarce. But they appear to be more differentiated than PMI in class terms, including people from middle class and poor backgrounds with the latter being greater in number. They also appear to be more differentiated in ethnic and religious terms including people from ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* backgrounds and people from non-Moslem and Moslem backgrounds (Lu 2005; Winarnita 2009). In gender terms, studies of marriage migration to Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan suggest that Indonesian marriage migrants are predominantly female reflecting wider global patterns in marriage migration (Lu 2005; Khoo *et al* 2009; Lawson and Callister 2011). Professional workers and political and business elites typically hail from elite or middle-class communities in urban areas. Again, we know little about their ethnic, religious and gender characteristics. But it is likely that they include a higher percentage of ethnic Chinese Indonesians and Christians than the two previous groups given the strong presence of ethnic Chinese Indonesians (many of whom are Catholic or Protestant) in the country's business sector. It is also likely that they include some balance between men and women.[14] A lack of data makes it difficult to say much about the geographic

[13] Much work in the structuralist tradition of analysis of Indonesia's political economy (e.g. Robison and Hadiz 2004; Rosser and Kartika 2020) has identified predatory/oligarchic elites, the middle classes, and subaltern/subordinate elements as key politico-economic forces. The typology used in this paper mirrors these categories, although with some variation (e.g. inclusion of marriage migrants) to suit the specific context. Scholars such as Levy (2018) and Goodhand and Meehan (2019) have argued that it is necessary to reconsider actor-based categories as the analytical focus in terms of issues or decision-making realms changes.

[14] I thank Ariane Utomo, Ken Setiawan, Dewi Wahab and Nuning Hallett for their advice on the points in this paragraph.

distribution of each of these elements except for PMI, who, as noted above, are concentrated in particular countries in Asia and the Middle East.[15]

Each of these four elements has had distinct interests *vis-à-vis* the nature of IDN and in particular the sorts of change it has sought to promote in Indonesia. *Marriage migrants* have been principally interested in effecting change with regards to dual citizenship because of the implications a policy of single citizenship has *vis-à-vis* child custody matters and financial security for Indonesian women who marry and then divorce foreign men. *Professional workers* and *political and business elites* have also had a strong interest in dual citizenship because, generally speaking, they are affluent enough and globally mobile enough to be affected by the aforementioned restrictions on investment, land ownership, inheritances, travel, and so on. At the same time, they have had a strong interest in the establishment of a special electorate for the diaspora because they and their networks are best placed to compete for the new seats and exercise political influence in Jakarta. Figures associated with all three of these elements in the diaspora and IDN have accordingly been key proponents of change in relation to the issue of dual citizenship (*Kompas* 2013b; Mallon 2014; Ramadhani 2016; Saraswati 2005; Hartiningsih 2005; Jong 2016) while figures among the political and business elite have been key proponents of the establishment of a special electorate(*Kompas* 2013; Mahkamah Konstitusi 2013).

By contrast, *migrant worker* advocates have been equivocal with regards to both the issues of dual citizenship and a special electorate for the diaspora. This is because: i) dual citizenship is an unobtainable goal for many PMI reflecting the fact that a large proportion of them are undocumented; and ii) PMI and their networks are less well placed to capture parliamentary

[15] One consequence of the fact that PMI are concentrated in particular countries in Asia and the Middle East is that the Indonesian diaspora in these countries is quite distinct from that in OECD countries where the other three elements are more prominent.

seats generated by a dedicated electorate for the diaspora. Some migrant worker advocates have actively supported IDN initiatives on both issues for strategic reasons, viewing doing so as a way of building a wider coalition of support for their own cause: for instance, Wahyu Susilo, one of Migrant Care's most prominent activists, appeared as an expert witness on behalf of the petitioners in the Constitutional Court case on a special electorate for the diaspora (Mahkamah Konstitusi 2013). But other migrant worker advocates have chosen not to engage with these initiatives.[16]

Finally, PMI and politico-business elites have each had additional interests vis-à-vis the nature of IDN and its agendas beyond those related to dual citizenship and a special electorate for the diaspora. Specifically, some migrant worker advocates have viewed IDN as a potential vehicle through which they can raise public awareness about abuses of PMI rights and lobby Indonesian policy-makers to improve protection of these rights;[17] while politico-business elites—in particular, individuals who are part of, or connected to, Indonesia's ruling politico-business oligarchy—have, viewed IDN as a potential vehicle for promoting their respective political and/or business careers. This has particularly been the case with Djalal and Wanandi.

Prior to becoming Indonesia's ambassador to the US, Djalal had built a close relationship with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Indonesia's President from 2004 to 2014, acting as his spokesperson from 2004 to 2010. This relationship offered Djalal a potential electoral vehicle through which to launch a political career—namely, the Democrat Party, the party Yudhoyono had established in the lead-up to his successful presidential bid in 2004—so long as he could secure the party's presidential nomination. He pursued this unsuccessfully in 2013 in the lead-

[16] Interviews with Heriyanto, Indonesian Migrant Workers Union, and Wahyu Susilo, Jakarta, September 2018.
[17] Interviews with Wahyu Susilo, Jakarta, September 2018 and Didi Yakub, Singapore (via Zoom), May 2021.

up to the 2014 presidential elections. This relationship also potentially offered him the backing of the military, political and business interests that Yudhoyono could mobilise in support of the party's nominee. But as a career diplomat—and someone whose parents were also career diplomats—he had no personal popular or institutional base to support his entrée into politics. The 2012 Congress and the formation of IDN provided him with a means through which he could endeavour to build such a base within the diaspora.

Similarly, Wanandi and the (different) fraction of Indonesia's ruling politico-business oligarchy with which he has been associated appear to have viewed IDN as a vehicle through which they could pursue their respective political and business interests. From the outset, Wanandi appears to have been keen to seize whatever business opportunities flowed from the political mobilisation of the Indonesian diaspora following the 2012 Congress, establishing the Indonesian Diaspora Business Council (IDBC) at the same time as IDN. According to its website, IDBC aims to help members of the Indonesian diaspora 'in establishing and growing their careers, businesses, and entrepreneurship'; 'promote and propel economic growth in Indonesia by opening doors to businesses and professional opportunities for Indonesian Diaspora'; and 'bridge and leverage the businesses of the Indonesian Diaspora with businesses in Indonesia' (IDBC nd). In this context, it seems likely that he remained active in IDN at least partly because of the access to political power, networking opportunities, and hence additional business opportunities it presented. At the same time, he had political interests at stake. In the lead-up to the 2014 presidential election, his elder brother, Sofyan, the head of the Gemala Group of companies and the Wanandi family's leading member, played a key role in mobilising support for Joko Widodo, then the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle's (PDIP) presidential nominee (*Tempo.co* 2014). The Wanandi family again aligned itself with Jokowi in 2019 when the latter sought re-election. With the Wanandi clan so aligned, Edward Wanandi

thus had an interest in using IDN to cultivate and mobilise support from the diaspora for his family's preferred candidate.

While IDN has accommodated all four of the groups identified above in one way or another, it has been dominated by political and business elites and professional workers. This is most visible in IDN's governance arrangements. For instance, IDN's inaugural President was Mohamad Al-Arief, a development professional employed by the World Bank; its inaugural Executive Director was Nuning Hallett, a feminist activist with a PhD from an American university; and its inaugural Chair of the Board of Trustees was Wanandi (*Diaspora News* 2014: 5). Although Djalal has not held a formal position within the organisation, he has clearly also been a key figure in terms of its governance. As a former coordinator of the Indonesian Mixed Couples Club, an advocacy-oriented NGO representing couples comprising Indonesian and foreign citizens, Hallett gave the organisation a senior figure attuned to the interests of marriage migrants. But the organisation's governance structure did not include any figure with a background in migrant worker advocacy. Subsequent iterations of IDN's governance structure have similarly been dominated by political and business elites and professional workers. The result has been to bias IDN's activities towards advocacy on dual citizenship and a special electorate for the diaspora and the pursuit of Djalal's and Wanandi's political and business interests, and away from advocacy for the protection of PMI rights. It has also left the organisation vulnerable to internal divisions within particular sections of the diaspora, most notably within the political and business elite.

Furthermore, this orientation has emerged through processes of conflict and contestation involving these four groups. For instance, dual citizenship emerged as a key concern of IDN in part because of activism within the organisation by marriage migrants, particularly a group

from the Mixed Marriage Community (Komunitas Kawin Campur, or KKC) Facebook group, aimed at placing the issue on IDN's radar. At the 2012 Congress, figures from KKC reportedly 'invaded' the stage during one panel, seized the microphone, and appealed to congress attendees to support a petition calling for full dual citizenship.[18] This appeal resonated sufficiently with congress attendees that they were able to attract an additional 1,000 signatures, bringing the total to 5,000.[19]

Similarly, the space given to PMI issues within IDN—limited as it has been—has been secured in part through protest on the part of migrant worker activists. The birth of the MWTF itself does not appear to have been characterised by significant conflict and contestation. It was initially established following discussions between figures from elite and professional backgrounds at, and in the wake of, the first diaspora congress in Los Angeles, reflecting a judgement on their part that IDN needed to find a way to accommodate the largest section of the Indonesian diaspora in order to be a legitimate representative of the Indonesian diaspora-as-a-whole and to support its claims about the diaspora's ability to contribute to Indonesia's development.[20] Since the outset, IDN has sought to demonstrate the diaspora's developmental potential by pointing to the fact that Indonesia's overseas workers, especially PMI, provide substantial remittances to Indonesia every year, amounting to around 1 percent of GDP (Hamedan 2015).[21] Susilo Cahyono, an engineer based in Qatar, was the MWTF's primary instigator. Cahyono believes he was asked to take the lead in establishing and running the MWTF because he knew the then head of BNP2TKI, a body that was represented at the 2012

[18] Interview with Nuning Hallett, Jakarta, September 2018.
[19] Interview with Nuning Hallett, Jakarta, September 2018.
[20] Interview with Susilo Cahyono, Doha (via Zoom), June 2021.
[21] According to World Bank (nd) data, remittances to Indonesia amounted to US$11.6 billion in 2019. This was the third highest level within Southeast Asia after The Philippines ($35.1 billion) and Vietnam ($17.0 billion). Given the relatively large size of the Indonesian economy, however, remittances account for a much lower share of GDP than is the case with these countries.

Congress in contrast to migrant worker activists who had little presence at the Congress.[22] When Cahyono walked away from IDN in 2013 following a fallout with Djalal over his tilt at the presidency, he reached out to Migrant Care, which by that point had become involved in the MWTF's activities. Migrant Care judged that the MWTF had the potential to be a useful vehicle through which to promote PMI rights[23] with the result that Didi Yakub and Sring Atin, both of whom had long been involved in migrant worker activism in Singapore and Hong Kong respectively, took over the organisation.

However, the marginalisation of PMI within IDN and particularly its congresses has been a matter of tension and contestation. According to Yakub, IDN has left the MWTF largely to its own devices, not seeking to interfere in its operations.[24] But nor has it offered much support beyond permitting the establishment of the MWTF and creating limited space for discussion of PMI affairs at the congresses.[25] In a clear indication of disquiet among migrant worker activists about this situation, figures from the Indonesian Migrant Worker Union (SBMI), Migrant Care and other NGOs have protested the fact that IDN and its Congresses have focused on the most successful elements within the diaspora. For instance, in a 2017 media interview, Wahyu Susilo stated that 'as for migrant worker advocacy, IDN never speaks up. Rather it focuses on issues that reflect its needs such as dual citizenship' (Indana 2017). Likewise, in a separate interview around the same time, the head of SBMI Heriyanto stated: 'From the first to the third diaspora congresses, migrant worker issues were never broached with the result that there is distance between these two elements [i.e. PMI and other elements of the diaspora—

[22] Interview with Susilo Cahyono, Doha (via Zoom), June 2021. The lack of representation of migrant workers activists reflected in part the fact in general delegates self-funded their attendance at the congress. Interview with Didi Yakub, Singapore (via Zoom), May 2021.
[23] Interviews with Susilo Cahyono, Doha (via Zoom), June 2021, and Didi Yakub, Singapore (via Zoom), May 2021.
[24] Interview with Didi Yakub, Singapore (via Zoom), May 2021.
[25] Interview with Didi Yakub, Singapore (via Zoom), May 2021.

Author]' (Suastha 2017). In the interview, Heriyanto suggested that congress programs have become more inclusive over time as a result of the criticisms launched by migrant workers activists, but other accounts have emphasised these programs' continued focus on the professional and business sections of the diaspora (Latifa 2019).

Finally, IDN's split into two separate organisations in 2017—one led by Djalal and the other Wanandi—reflected contestation between both these individuals and the particular fractions of Indonesia's politico-business elite with which they are aligned. One aspect of this was the fact that Djalal was aligned with Yudhoyono camp in the 2014 and 2019 elections while the Wanandi family backed Joko Widodo and the PDI-P. This placed them on opposite sides of the ledger in the competition for the diaspora vote.

Conclusions/Implications

This paper has analysed the nature of IDN. Contrary to existing analyses of the organisation—which have portrayed it as either an expression of the collective will of a unified and coherent Indonesian diaspora or an instrument of particular segments within the diaspora (specifically professional workers and political and business elites)—it has argued that IDN is best understood as a political settlement between these elements and other elements in the diaspora, namely PMI and marriage migrants. At the same time, it has pointed to the fact that the most influential of these elements—political and business elites—has been divided into two rival camps with implications for the stability and operation of the organisation. Rather than an expression of the collective will of a unified and coherent Indonesian diaspora or an instrument of particular segments within the diaspora, it thus suggests that IDN is a terrain on which different elements compete for control, influence and access to power and resources.

What does this mean for our understanding of IDN's contribution to Indonesia's development? Firstly, it suggests IDN's impact is much less clear cut than existing commentary on the organisation has suggested. As noted earlier, this commentary has suggested that IDN is either i) working to promote development-for-all in Indonesia by enhancing the country's trade and investment linkages, stimulating financial flows, and providing aid to the poor and marginalised; or ii) working solely to promote the narrow interests of a particular section of the diaspora—namely, professional workers and political and business elites—by propagating neoliberal ideas. The analysis in this paper indicates that the organisation is neither as benevolent as viewpoint i) implies nor as pernicious as viewpoint ii) implies. This is because, while the organisation has pursued agendas that accord with the interests of professional workers and political and business elites, it has also accommodated to some extent the concerns of marriage migrants and PMI. Secondly, the analysis here suggests that, to the extent that IDN *has* acted as an instrument for professional workers and political and business elites within the diaspora, it has not simply served to promote neoliberal ideas. As we have seen, IDN has promoted diasporic elites' access to power in Indonesia in a range of ways: by creating informal networking and lobbying opportunities, seeking to establish a special electorate for the diaspora, and acting as a launching pad for Djalal's political career. In these ways, it has worked not so much to promote neoliberal reform in Indonesia as to ensure that diasporic elites are well integrated into the political and business institutions that characterise the country. As numerous studies have shown, these institutions are predatory and oligarchic rather than neoliberal in nature (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Rosser and Kartika 2020). Thirdly, and finally, the analysis suggests that there is scope for IDN's impact on Indonesia's development to shift over time as a result of continued struggles between competing elements within the diaspora for control of the organisation. Such struggles may yield new political settlements with attendant effects for the organisation's agendas and activities.

The analysis in this paper also has implications for the way in which scholars study the role of diaspora organisations in shaping development processes and outcomes in homeland countries. Specifically, it suggests that scholars need to move away from approaches that see diasporas as apolitical entities contributing to development-for-all in homeland countries or, while recognising their political character, view them as coherent and unified collectives. Instead scholars need to employ an approach that i) disaggregates diaspora into relevant elements defined in class, ethnic, racial and gender-related terms; ii) analyses the power relations between these elements, how this permeates diaspora organisations, and the implications of these relations for the evolution and activities of diaspora organisations; and iii) explores how conflict and contestation between these elements changes the factors in ii) above. Such an approach will give the requisite attention to the role of political dynamics in shaping diaspora organisations while construing these dynamics in more nuanced terms than existing analysis.

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