



DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2025-25-3-406-417


EDN: UXLPWT

Review article / Обзорная статья

Indonesian Regional Policy in the Focus of National Research Schools: A Comparative Analysis

Kirill S. Kablukov  

MGIMO University, Moscow, Russian Federation

 ki.s.kablukov@my.mgimo.ru

Abstract. Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia, which has a serious impact on international processes in the region. At the same time, Indonesia's foreign policy is shaped by a number of external and internal factors. Using the method of comparative analysis, the author aims to analyze the four most analytically developed national schools exploring Indonesia and its foreign policy. The criteria for analyzing the specifics of national schools are assessments by experts and researchers of Indonesia's regional policy, its goals and role in decision-making processes on key issues of regional development including security issues amidst the intersection of the interests of the United States and China in Southeast Asia and the emergence of a new spatial dimension of the clash of these interests — the Indo-Pacific region. Special attention in the study is paid to Islam and its influence on the foreign policy course of modern Indonesia. The presented comparison of expert assessments of various national research schools of Indonesian foreign policy with a special focus on its regional policy makes it possible to identify specifics of national schools in the analysis of Indonesian foreign policy and suggest a set of factors which influence or shift the focus of research in accordance with the foreign policy of those states whose national research schools are examined in this article. The author comes to the conclusion that the perception of Indonesia's role and place in regional processes in Southeast Asia differs among researchers from different countries and correlates not only with the national specifics of foreign policy analysis, but also with the goals and objectives pursued in the foreign policy of their state in relation to Indonesia, the Southeast Asian region and the broader macro-regional space, which is becoming an environment where the interests of various international players clash.

Key words: Association of South East Asian Nations, ASEAN, regional studies, USA, China, Russia, Australia, Indo-Pacific region, IPR, Islam

Conflicts of interest. The author declares no conflicts of interest.


For citation: Kablukov, K. S. (2025). Indonesian regional policy in the focus of national research schools: A comparative analysis. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 25(3), 406–417. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2025-25-3-406-417>



Региональная политика Индонезии в фокусе национальных исследовательских школ: сравнительный анализ

К.С. Каблуков  

МГИМО МИД России, Москва, Российская Федерация

 ki.s.kablukov@my.mgimo.ru

Аннотация. Индонезия — крупнейшая страна Юго-Восточной Азии (ЮВА), оказывающая серьезное влияние на международные процессы в регионе. Вместе с тем формирование внешней политики Индонезии обуславливается целым рядом как внешних, так и внутренних факторов. Используя метод сравнительного анализа, автор ставит целью проанализировать четыре наиболее аналитически разработанные национальные школы, исследующие Индонезию и ее внешнюю политику. Критериями анализа специфики национальных школ выступают оценки экспертов и исследователей региональной политики Индонезии, ее целей и роли в процессах принятия решений по ключевым вопросам регионального развития, включая вопросы безопасности, на фоне пересечения интересов США и Китая в ЮВА и проявления нового пространственного измерения столкновения этих интересов — Индо-Тихоокеанского региона (ИТР). Отдельное внимание уделено исследованиям в области ислама и его влияния на внешнеполитический курс современной Индонезии. Представленное сравнение экспертных оценок различных национальных исследовательских школ индонезийской внешней политики с особым акцентом на региональную политику Индонезии позволяет выявить страновую специфику национальных школ при анализе внешней политики Индонезии и сделать вывод о наборе факторов, которые оказывают влияние или смещают фокус исследования в соответствии с внешнеполитическим курсом тех государств, чьи национальные исследовательские школы рассматриваются в данной статье. Автор приходит к выводу, что восприятие роли и места Индонезии в региональных процессах в ЮВА отличается у исследователей из различных стран и коррелирует не только с национальной спецификой внешнеполитического анализа, но и с теми целями и задачами, которые преследуют во внешней политики их государства по отношению к Индонезии, региону ЮВА и более широкому макрорегиональному пространству, которое становится средой столкновения интересов различных международных игроков.

Ключевые слова: Ассоциация стран Юго-Восточной Азии, АСЕАН, региональные исследования, США, Китай, Россия, Австралия, Индо-Тихоокеанский регион, ИТР, ислам

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Для цитирования: Каблуков К. С. Региональная политика Индонезии в фокусе национальных исследовательских школ: сравнительный анализ // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2025. Т. 25, № 3. С. 406–417. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2025-25-3-406-417>

Introduction

In a time of increasing polarization in the international system and worsening relations between major powers on the global stage, the policy of small and medium-sized powers, whose influence on the world processes has been steadily growing since the beginning of the 21st century, is attracting more and more attention of researchers (Bogaturov, Kosolapov & Khrustalev, 2002). Researchers consider Indonesia to be a “middle-power” country (Vershina, 2020; Karim, 2018), which has a significant impact on regional

processes in Southeast Asia (SEA) and seeks to preserve the continuous development of the region by reducing tensions between both regional powers and the world’s largest countries.

At the same time, there are some differences in the assessments of Indonesia’s regional policy among scholars from different national research schools. These differences relate to the goals, priorities, and role of Indonesia in international processes within the South East Asia region, as well as the country’s status.

In foreign and Russian scientific studies, there are a number of comprehensive researches on Indonesia's foreign policy (Efimova, 2016; Kuklin, 2023; Weatherbee, 2013; Elisabeth, 2016; Shekhar, 2018), which provide an in-depth analysis of all the above-mentioned factors that determine Indonesia's regional agenda in SEA. However, when analyzing these works, which represent a variety of national research centers and institutions, there are visible differences in the set of variables used by researchers to assess Indonesia's foreign policy, as well as in their conclusions about Indonesia's role and place in contemporary processes in SEA.

The present study examines four national research schools that focus on Indonesia's regional policy in SEA. The author identifies the key components of this policy and attempts to explain the reasons for the differences in the schools' visions of Indonesia's role and place in SEA.

In the article, the author provides evidence for the following argument: although scholars from different national schools study Indonesia's regional policy using a similar set of variables, the conclusions about Indonesia's functional role in SEA will differ because they are often correlated with the foreign policy and interests of their states. This phenomenon in the study of Indonesia and international processes in SEA attracts interest in terms of developing a more objective understanding of the current situation in the region and the goals that each country pursues.

Indonesian National Studies of Regional Politics

Indonesian national studies of foreign policy emerged in the early years of the country's independence, from leading national universities in Jakarta and major provincial centers on Java.

One of the most commonly discussed topics in analyzing Indonesian foreign policy is

Indonesia's relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as the Association, ASEAN). Dewi Fortuna Anwar, a major Indonesian scholar and former foreign policy officer of Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla, points to Indonesia's significant role as one of the founding countries of the Association. For instance, Anwar argues that Indonesia was able to include Indonesian perception of national and regional sovereignty into key documents of the Association such as the 1976 Bali Declaration and has pushed ASEAN countries to sign the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific policy paper in 2019 which was majorly prepared by Indonesia. This style of Indonesian foreign policy in ASEAN is described by the researcher as "leadership from behind" (Anwar, 2018, p. 63).

Adriana Elisabeth, the head of the Center for Policy Studies at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*LIPi*), Indonesia's main government research organization, identifies five main features of Indonesia's foreign policy, one of which is "leadership," a term that refers to a complex value-based system in which Indonesia is informally assigned the function of setting the agenda for the entire region (Elisabeth, 2016, p. 23).

At the same time, the studies by Indonesian scholars point out that Indonesia's foreign policy in SEA is dynamic and constantly adapting to the international environment. For instance, if in the late 1990s researchers pointed out that Indonesia was cooperating with ASEAN partners to the detriment of its interests for the sake of creating a safe and developing SEA (a situation that D.F. Anwar calls a "golden cage" (Anwar, 1997, p. 26)), then since the beginning of the new millennium, Indonesia's foreign policy priorities have been increasingly shifting towards promoting its national interests above all else.

Not incidentally, in 2014, shortly after the election of Indonesian President Joko Widodo,

his foreign policy advisor, Rizal Sukma, stated in one of his first speeches that under Joko Widodo's leadership, Indonesia's foreign policy would become less ASEAN-centric.¹ A similar view was expressed by H. Juwana, a professor of law at the University of Indonesia, acknowledging the change from President S.B. Yudhoyono's formula of "One thousand friends, zero enemies" to Joko Widodo's slogan of "All friends who respect Indonesia's sovereignty."²

Special attention in Indonesian studies is paid to the role of Islam in shaping Indonesia's regional policy (Anwar, 2011). When considering Islam and its influence on Indonesia, experts note the dualism in foreign policy, which lies in the contradiction between the traditional for Indonesia principles of "independent and active" diplomacy, established by President Sukarno at the time of the founding of the Republic and attempts to link its diplomacy with its obligations to Muslim countries, while seeking to take a leadership position as it is being the largest Muslim country in the world. According to R. Sukma, a prominent sign of dualism was the example of the Indonesian policy towards the Muslim minority in the southern part of the Philippines. Indonesia did not support the openly extremist slogans of pro-Islamic political groups and supported the Philippine government, referring to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of the state. He notes that "Indonesia clearly prioritizes stable work of ASEAN" (Sukma, 2003, p. 142). Similar findings can be found in the work of Dewi Fortuna

Anwar, published 15 years after the publication of R. Sukma's study, which confirms the dualism of Indonesia's politics and the difficulties in reconciling the democratic path, supporting pro-Islamic political groups and states, and promoting national interests within Indonesia's regional policy, as well as noting Indonesia's efforts in the struggle for leadership in the world of Islam (Srinivasan, Mayall & Pulipaka, 2019, p. 186).

Another cluster of issues that has attracted more attention of scholars of Indonesian foreign policy is the growing tension between two of the largest countries in the region: the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America.

Indonesian scholar N. Sriyanto emphasizes the volatile nature of the relationship between Indonesia and China, within which Indonesia, in his view, is seeking a balance between the benefits of economic cooperation and the difficulties in discussing the resolution of the South China Sea dispute. In this regard, as the researcher notes, "Indonesia is open to external forces that contribute to the fixing of the regional architecture and balance of power" and tries to maintain the security of the region by involving both China and the U.S. in the resolution of security issues (Sriyanto, 2018, p. 75). This approach is common among Indonesian specialists because, as Anwar emphasizes, it is a consequence of strategic changes in the region where Indonesia has come to view cooperation with major extra-regional powers as a means of securing the regional space.³ D.F. Anwar refers to such a policy as *hedging plus policy* (Anwar, 2023, p. 365).

Another topic of Indonesian researchers' studies that deserves attention is the prospects

¹ Parameswaran P. Is Indonesia Turning Away from ASEAN under Jokowi? // *The Diplomat*. December 18, 2014. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2014/12/is-indonesia-turning-away-from-asean-under-jokowi/> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

² Jokowi Should Extend New Interpretation of RI Foreign Policy Says Expert // *The Jakarta Post*. October 11, 2014. URL: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/11/10/jokowi-should-extend-new-interpretation-ri-foreign-policy-says-expert.html> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

³ Anwar D. F. More Continuity Than Change in Indonesia's Security Posture // *The Strategist*. January 30, 2020. URL: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/more-continuity-than-change-in-indonesias-security-posture/> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

for the development of the Indo-Pacific region (IPR), which is actively promoted by the U.S. as a new format of relations in Asia and the assessment of Indonesia's position in terms of the transforming regional order. Indonesian experts generally follow the official line expressed by the current Indonesian Foreign Minister R. Marsudi on the pages of *The Jakarta Times*. According to the Minister, Indonesia's main goal in the IPR is to enshrine ASEAN centrality as one of the key principles of the IPR's existence. The very concept of cooperation in the IPR will contribute to security and economic growth in the waters of both oceans.⁴

Former Indonesian Foreign Minister (2009–2014) Marty Natalegawa is also positive about the changes in the region, arguing that to achieve equilibrium in the future, the regional space should be expanded to include new countries with access to the Indian Ocean, and “Indonesia and the US can overcome their contradictions in the new regional space.”⁵ However, according to a number of Indonesian scholars, it is important that Indonesian interests be maximized in the formation of the IPR, and the conceptual framework of the new regional order should be the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” (Mamentu, Rares & Lond, 2024, p. 4).

Taking everything into account, the Indonesian academic community, within the framework of Indonesian foreign policy studies, comprehensively examines all aspects of its regional policy in SEA. Within this

cluster of studies, there is a certain pluralism of opinions regarding the role and position of modern Indonesia in regional processes. Some Indonesian researchers see their country as a “peacemaker” that should be responsible for security and development within ASEAN, giving the Association a key place in its foreign policy. At the same time, there is an alternative line of researches, whose representatives criticize the authorities for excessive aspirations for regional leadership and believe that the regional agenda should not infringe on national interests but should be used primarily for the benefit of Indonesia.

Australian School of Indonesian Studies

One of the world's leading research institutes for Indonesian Studies is based at the Australian National University. The Institute of Indonesian Studies researches a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues, with a strong emphasis on the history and culture of Indonesia's indigenous peoples.

The reason for such interest of Australia in Indonesia is the fact that the latter is the nearest and most significant neighbor for Australia in Asia. In this regard, Australian experts and scholars annually publish hundreds of papers in the field of Indonesian foreign and domestic policy, and the conclusions of such studies are often directly relevant to the practice of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and Australia.⁶

C. Renshaw, an Australian researcher, emphasizes that relations between Australia and Indonesia are complicated by differences in the values of their policies. According to her, Australia remains a “Western” country which limits its foreign policy

⁴ Marsudi R. Time to Deepen Indo-Pacific Cooperation // *The Jakarta Post*. March 20, 2019. URL: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/03/20/insight-time-to-deepen-indo-pacific-cooperation.html> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

⁵ “An Indonesian Perspective on the Indo-Pacific”: Keynote Address by H.E. Dr. R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, at the Conference on Indonesia. Washington DC, 16 May 2013 // Center for Strategic and International Studies. URL: https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/attachments/130516_MartyNatalegawa_Speech.pdf (accessed: 02.04.2023).

⁶ Drysdale P., Sukma R. Bringing More Ambition to the Australia — Indonesia Relationship // *East Asia Forum*. July 2, 2023. URL: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/07/02/bringing-more-ambition-to-the-australia-indonesia-relationship/> (accessed: 18.01.2024).

towards the countries of SEA and the Asia-Pacific as a whole (Renshaw, 2018, p. 176).

At the same time, C. Renshaw notes Indonesia's initial commitment to the idea of dominance in SEA and its attempts to approach the status of a leading world power. She exemplifies it on the history of the mid-twentieth century, when in the 1960s, the purpose of Indonesia's participation in ASEAN was proclaimed to be the settlement of relations with Malaysia as well as the intention to lead the movement for the unification of SEA after the failure of the project of confederal unification of Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia (Maphilindo) in 1963 due to bilateral contradictions. C. Renshaw emphasizes that Indonesia shows its reluctance to cooperate with organizations where it would not be an unambiguous leader referring in particular to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASA) (Renshaw, 2018, p. 169).

An alternative point of view on Indonesia's regional policy is expressed by M. Beeson, a major Australian researcher of SEA. Considering Indonesia as a mid-level power, he comes to the following conclusions. First, Indonesia, in his opinion, adheres to a "nationalist" foreign policy and uses its influence to promote Indonesian principles of democracy and human rights in the ASEAN program documents, and second, in a manner typical of mid-level powers, realizes its foreign policy goals at the expense of international formats (Beeson, Bloomfield & Wicaksana 2021, p. 185).

In terms of regional security studies, Indonesia, according to a number of experts,⁷ seeks to demonstrate a policy of balance in its

interactions with China and the United States, as well as in the IPR and in relation to IPR-related formats of minilateral institutions such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and the Australia — UK — U.S. political-military alliance (AUKUS). Australian international relations scholar R. Medcalf, one of the prominent IPR theorists in Australia, highlights the importance of IPR and alliances related to this concept for Indonesia and Australia as both countries have similar geopolitical properties (surrounded by seas, neighboring one of the global centers of power — China), which forces these two states to resist Chinese expansion by creating "counterweights" involving other major world and — importantly — maritime powers (Medcalf, 2019, p. 58).

Australian researchers pay a lot of attention to the Islamic factor as well. In a number of works, Indonesia is presented as a country that, at different periods of time, had every reason to become one of the first Muslim countries with a stable democratic regime of the Western-style government (Fealy, 2018, pp. 149–155). At the same time, the well-known Australian researcher of Indonesian domestic politics E. Aspinall notes that, on the one hand, the current policy of Islamization of Indonesia undermines country's democratic development,⁸ and on the other hand, it limits the possibility of applying "active and independent" regional policy.

The Australian examination of Indonesian foreign and domestic policy is highly critical of the Indonesian leadership. For example, Australian National University researchers Hugh White and Greg Fealy note that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry remains the weakest agency among major countries in SEA

⁷ Engel D. Indonesia's 'Free and Active' Foreign Policy on Show in Ministerial Visits to Japan and China // *The Strategist*. April 13, 2021. URL: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/indonesias-free-and-active-foreign-policy-on-show-in-ministerial-visits-to-japan-and-china/> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

⁸ Warburton E., Aspinall E. Indonesian Democracy: From Stagnation to Regression? // *The Strategist*. August 17, 2017. URL: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/indonesian-democracy-stagnation-regression/> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

(Fealy & White, 2016, p. 98) while other scholars criticize Indonesia's policies in West Papua (Wanggem & Lawson, 2023, p. 84). Such rhetoric can only indicate the very high degree of Australian involvement in SEA affairs where Indonesia is a major player and Australian policy expertise is primarily aimed at identifying weaknesses in Indonesia's foreign and domestic policies and is then used to subsequently build foreign policy towards Indonesia by the Australian government.

National Specifics of Indonesia's Foreign Policy Analysis in the USA

Indonesian studies in the United States are represented by a number of small sections in major research centers for Asia-Pacific studies. At the same time, one of the oldest specialized journals of Indonesia is published at Cornell University, with most of its publications devoted primarily to research and culture, socio-economic development, and domestic policy.

D. Weatherby, a well-known American researcher on Indonesian foreign policy and security issues in SEA, in his monograph "Indonesia: Vision and Reality" emphasizes four basic principles of Indonesia's regional policy in ASEAN:

- 1) Indonesia's voice should carry weight in regional processes,
- 2) opposition to any changes in the existing regional order that could harm Indonesia's national interests,
- 3) limiting the presence of major world powers and offering Indonesian leadership as an alternative,
- 4) multilateralism as a way to promote Indonesia's interests in the international arena (Weatherbee, 2013, p. 17).

D. Weatherbee also agrees with the arguments of Dewi Fortuna Anwar and his colleague D.K. Emmerson that ASEAN is only one of the tools for Indonesia's foreign policy,

although extremely important.⁹ However, new factors such as the worsening relations between the United States and China and the presidency of Joko Widodo in Indonesia have also affected its regional policy. In his study of Joko Widodo's foreign policy, D. Weatherbee notes that Indonesia's interest in ASEAN is gradually declining (Weatherbee, 2016, p. 46) while American international scholar V. Shekhar, in turn, openly argues for a "reset" in Indonesia's foreign policy, an attempt to move from the category of a "middle" power to a leading and a shift in focus from ASEAN as a cornerstone in regional politics to a macro-regional format, particularly the IPR (Shekhar, 2018, p. 41).

The conclusions of American researchers and experts regarding the declining role of ASEAN in Indonesia's policy may indirectly indicate a shift in the discourse within the U.S. research community towards alternative projects of regional order and security formation, in particular within the framework of the IPR, which, according to American experts, are becoming more and more promising in terms of their practical implementation. Thus, recent works by U.S. experts clearly present a narrative that emphasizes the non-alternativity of the IPR and Quad in the realm of security and political architecture in SEA. As Carnegie Endowment¹⁰ researchers highlight, Indonesia, against the backdrop of the growing disunity of ASEAN members, is striving to become even more neutral towards the Association and is considering other formats to maintain security in the region.¹¹

⁹ Emmerson D. K. Invisible Indonesia // Foreign Affairs. December 1, 1987. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/1987-12-01/invisible-indonesia> (accessed: 20.04.2023).

¹⁰ The activities of the international non-governmental organization *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* have been recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation (*Editor's note*).

¹¹ Chivvis C. S., Noor E., Geaghan-Breiner B. Indonesia in the Emerging World Order // The Carnegie Endowment*. November 9, 2023. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/11/09/indonesia-in-emerging-world-order-pub-90966> (accessed: 18.01.2024).

D. Weatherbee argues that the growing influence of Islam on the life of Indonesian society helps the country's leadership to intensify its activities in international cooperation with Muslim countries and crisis management with their participation. Whereas prior to 2014, the work of Indonesian government in this area was mainly focused on humanitarian support to Muslim communities in the Philippines and Thailand, as well as on promoting reconciliation between the central government and Muslim minorities in Myanmar (Weatherbee, 2013, p. 42), then with Joko Widodo taking the office, Indonesia became an active participant in the settlement in the Middle East process, intensifying its activities in 2016 on the issue of recognizing Palestinian independence and acting as a mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Weatherbee, 2016, p. 14).

Thus, the analysis of regional processes in SEA and the role of individual states in them are increasingly being considered in the United States as part of a larger cluster of IPR studies. Such organization of research not only allows for reflection on, addition to, or justification of the U.S. foreign policy in this region, but also forms a conceptual framework for Western researchers which is used by various scientific organizations around the world to promote pro-American interests.

Russian School of Indonesian Studies

The Russian school of Indonesian studies was established during the period of the most active bilateral cooperation in the history of the two countries, when President Sukarno was the head of Indonesia. Over several decades, a few centers for training specialists on Indonesia were founded in the USSR. The largest ones were formed on the basis of the Institute of

Asian and African Countries at the Lomonosov Moscow State University (IAAS MSU) and at the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) State University (St. Petersburg State University, SPbSU). This allowed to train a number of talented specialists with Indonesian language whose legacy is alive and developing nowadays not only within the walls of SPbSU and IAAS MSU, but also at the Higher School of Economics, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (MGIMO University), the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, RUDN University, the Far Eastern Federal University and others.

In the studies of Russian researchers devoted to the issues of regional policy of Indonesia, there is a clear tendency to a more neutral and comprehensive approach to considering the subject of scientific interest. In the works of A. Drugov (2017), E. Kutovaya (Kutovaya & Evdokimov, 2021), N. Maletin, N. Khokhlova (Maletin & Khokhlova, 2020) and N. Kuklin (2023) on the foreign policy of Indonesia and ASEAN, much attention is paid to the historical aspect of the formation of Indonesia's foreign policy.

For instance, N. Kuklin analyzing the history of Indonesia's foreign policy comes to the conclusion that it was formed under the influence of a complex of traditions and national ideas. Only relying on this complex made it possible to create "a large-scale original concept of worldview, philosophy, traditions, which to this day are an important basis for the mentality of Indonesians and political elites of the country" (Ponka, Sibarani & Kuklin, 2018, p. 290).

N. Maletin, assessing Indonesia's role in ASEAN over the past half century, notes that Indonesia was the unofficial leader of the Association until 1998. However, the fall of the "New Order" regime (1968–1998) under President Suharto deprived it of this status setting a goal for the new Indonesian leadership

*The activities of the international non-governmental organization *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* have been recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation (*Editor's note*).

to restore Indonesia's regional leadership (Maletin, 2019, pp. 185–186).

In matters of regional security, L. Efimova, the Russian researcher of Indonesia, emphasizes the significant role of the Indonesian doctrine "Maritime Axis of the World," according to which "the main strategic goal of foreign policy and diplomacy for the period 2015–2019 was declared to be the assertion of Indonesia's identity as a world maritime power" (Efimova, 2016, p. 57). To achieve this goal, Indonesia needed, on the one hand, strengthen the role of ASEAN-centric institution in the world and in parallel increase its own role in ASEAN creating a platform for asserting itself as a maritime power contributing to security in the region at a time of escalating relations between China and the U.S. (Drugov, 2017, p. 124) as well as strengthen its position in the emerging IPR where there should be a place for Indonesia. Recent studies note the growing influence of the 'Indo-Pacific' agenda in Indonesia's foreign policy but Jakarta "prefers to maintain equidistance, including at the level of discourse" (Kosareva & Korolev, 2023, p. 25), preferring, as Russian scholar D. Mosyakov notes, a "win-win policy" (Mosyakov, 2023, p. 124).

A separate area of studies is Islam and its influence on various aspects of Indonesian foreign policy. M. Gusev and M. Kirchanov, the Russian researchers of Indonesian nationalism and Islam, have analyzed the influence of Islam on the domestic and foreign policy of Indonesia for many years. Emphasizing the growing influence of Islam on political processes in Indonesia, the authorities are increasingly turning to this phenomenon as a reason to promote their interests both regionally and globally¹² in international organizations (Kirchanov, 2022). N. Kuklin points out that the main points of the Islamic vector of Indonesia's

foreign policy at the present stage are Palestine and Myanmar, where Joko Widodo sees the need to combine regional interests and Islamic agenda as an obvious problem. The latter is also actively used by his political opponents (Kuklin, 2019, p. 109).

Thus, the Russian school of Indonesian studies has gradually formed a systematic view of the main aspects of Indonesia's regional policy, which is based on a comprehensive approach to the analysis of regional processes, generally accepted in Russia. The results of the analysis of the four national schools are presented in the Table.

Conclusion

Each of the national schools involved in the study has a different perspective on Indonesia's role and position in regional processes in Southeast Asia. Indonesian experts attribute to Indonesia the role of an informal leader in SEA and a guarantor of regional stability and development based on the principle of ASEAN-centricity. In this paradigm, ASEAN acts as a key instrument for promoting Indonesian interests and maintaining the established regional order. This approach is fully manifested in studies of the prospects for the development of such a new spatial format as the IPR. In the researches of Indonesian experts can be clearly seen the conclusion that such a format of interaction can exist in SEA but only if the central role of ASEAN is preserved. In terms of internal factors and their influence on decision-making on foreign policy issues, the Indonesian academic community agrees that Islam, which is the cultural basis of Indonesia, can and should be used by the Indonesian leadership to promote their country as a leader in the world of Islam.

In turn, American and Australian research schools provide different assessments of Indonesia's foreign policy and its impact on regional development and security, compared to their Indonesian counterparts.

¹² Gusev M. N., Ilyutichkin A. S. Indonesia Seeks to Enhance Its Role in the Muslim World // Middle East Institute April 17, 2017. (In Russian). URL: <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=34095> (accessed: 02.04.2023).

Indonesia's Regional Policy in the Analysis of National Research Schools of Russia, Indonesia, the USA and Australia

Criterion	National school			
	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Australia</i>
Indonesia’s role in ASEAN	“Equal among equals”	– “First among equals” – “Leadership from behind”	Gradually diminishing its leadership role in favor of national interests	False perception of leadership role
Indonesia’s goals in ASEAN	Maintaining ASEAN-centrality with Indonesia’s national interests in mind	Usage of ASEAN as a tool to promote its national interests in the international arena and enhance its status		
Indonesia’s attitude towards IPR	Policy of incorporating IPR into the Asia-Pacific ASEAN-centric architecture	Importance of IPR for maintaining a secure and developmental space in SEA		
Indonesia’s relations with China/the U.S.	Balance policy through equal involvement of both states in regional development and security issues			
Role of Islam in Indonesia’s foreign policy	Reflection of domestic politics and the way Indonesia promotes itself in the international arena	Phenomenon that undermines democratic development and regional security		

Source: compiled by K.S. Kablukov.

Most Australian and American researchers hold the opinion that Indonesia uses its influence in SEA primarily to raise its status in the international arena where ASEAN and its informal leadership in this organization is only one of the tools for Indonesia's emergence as a leading world power. The two national schools have similar views on the influence of Islam on Indonesia's foreign policy. Islam, as well as ASEAN, is seen as a tool for Indonesia to promote its national interests outside of SEA, while Australian experts emphasize that such a policy can have a destructive impact on conflict resolution in the countries of SEA where Muslim minorities live.

The Russian research school identifies a complex value and ideological basis for

Indonesian foreign policy, in which Indonesia should remain active and independent, but at the same time take into account the traditional foundations of Indonesian society, one of which is Islam.

Concluding, national schools of study of Indonesia's regional policy are subject to analysis of a wide range of problems related to the peculiarities and challenges in the implementation of Indonesia's foreign policy course at the regional level. Differences in conclusions can be attributed to both the national characteristics of each school and the research methodologies, as well as the political courses of their respective countries, which in some way influence the results of their research.

Received / Поступила в редакцию: 02.08.2023

Revised / Доработана после рецензирования: 27.08.2024

Accepted / Принята к публикации: 10.06.2025

References

- Anwar, D. F. (1997). ASEAN and Indonesia: Some reflections. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 5(1), 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185379708434092>
- Anwar, D. F. (2011). Foreign policy, Islam and democracy in Indonesia. *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3, 37–54. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.brin.go.id/jissh/article/view/8530/6565>

- Anwar, D. F. (2018). Indonesia's vision of regional order in East Asia amid U.S. — China rivalry: Continuity and change. *Asia Policy*, 13(2), 57–63. <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2018.0024>
- Anwar, D. F. (2023). Indonesia's hedging plus policy in the face of China's rise and the US — China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region. *The Pacific Review*, 36(2), 351–377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2022.2160794>; EDN: RXGZLN
- Beeson, M., Bloomfield, A., & Wicaksana, W. (2021). Unlikely allies? Australia, Indonesia and the strategic cultures of middle powers. *Asian Security*, 17(2), 178–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2020.1846525>; EDN: SXBDMY
- Bogaturov, A. D., Kosolapov, N. A., & Khrustalev, M. A. (2002). *Essays on the theory and methodology of political analysis of international relations*. Moscow: NOFMO publ. (In Russian). EDN: RAVHKT
- Drugov, A. Yu. (2017). Indonesia: Reaction to changes in the USA. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, (34), 115–130. (In Russian). EDN: ZELRSJ
- Efimova, L. M. (2016). The foreign policy doctrine of Indonesian president Joko Widodo. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, (33), 55–69. (In Russian). EDN: XHSUXX
- Elisabeth, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Grand Design: Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia (2015–2025)*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Fealy, G. (2018). *Islam in Australia — Indonesia relations: Fear, stereotypes and opportunity*. In T. Lindsey & D. McRae (Eds.), *Strangers next door? Indonesia and Australia in the Asian century* (pp. 149–168). Portland: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Fealy, G., & White, H. (2016). Indonesia's 'great power' aspirations: A critical view. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 3(1), 92–100. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.122>
- Karim, M. F. (2018). Middle power, status-seeking and role conceptions: The cases of Indonesia and South Korea. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 72(4), 343–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2018.1443428>
- Kirchanov, M. V. (2022). Radical Islam and ummah in Indonesia in 2021: Actors, processes and contradictions. *Minbar. Islamic Studies*, 15(2), 353–376. (In Russian). <https://doi.org/10.31162/2618-9569-2022-15-2-353-376>; EDN: XNEDXA
- Kosareva, E. S., & Korolev, A. S. (2023). Salient features of the Indo-Pacific region conceptualization by Indonesia and India. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, 4(3), 20–33. (In Russian). <https://doi.org/10.31696/2072-8271-2023-4-3-60-020-033>; EDN: LSATSJ
- Kuklin, N. S. (2019). Influence of religious and political factors on the foreign policy of Indonesia during the presidency of Joko Widodo. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, 1(2), 103–112. (In Russian). EDN: PEVWZI
- Kuklin, N. S. (2023). *Conceptual foundations of Indonesia's foreign policy*. Moscow: Aspekt Press publ. (In Russian). EDN: LQWJGV
- Kutovaya, E. A., & Evdokimov, I. O. (2021). Indonesia's foreign policy strategy in the research of Indonesian think tanks in 2014–2019. In A. L. Stremovskaya (Ed.), *Scientific notes: Some problems of the political development of the countries of the Afro-Asian region* (pp. 205–218). Moscow: Klyuch-C publ. (In Russian).
- Maletin, N. P. (2019). Indonesia in ASEAN: From first among equals to equal among equals? *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, 2(4), 178–186. (In Russian). EDN: WTHREI
- Maletin, N. P., & Khokhlova, N. I. (2020). Indonesia's relations with the United States under Joko Widodo. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, 3(4), 60–82. (In Russian). <https://doi.org/10.31696/2072-8271-2020-3-4-49-060-082>; EDN: FFTTTE
- Mamentu, M., Rares, J. J., & Lond, V. Y. (2024). Indonesian foreign policy in encouraging the acceleration of implementation of the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific. *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development*, 12(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v12i1.2776>; EDN: RBLCCW
- Medcalf, R. (2019). An Australian vision of the Indo-Pacific and what it means for Southeast Asia. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 53–60. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26939686>
- Mosyakov, D. V. (2023). Indonesian “win-win policy” as an alternative to Western “rules” of international politics. *South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development*, 5(4), 117–124. <https://doi.org/10.31696/2072-8271-2023-5-4-61-117-124>; EDN: YKGISR
- Ponka, T. I., Sibarani, D. M. N., & Kuklin, N. S. (2018). Indonesian approaches to perception of the international relations and worldwide policy. *RUDN Journal of World History*, 10(3), 282–296. (In Russian). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2018-10-3-282-296>; EDN: YYVGJN

- Renshaw, C. (2018). Indonesia, Australia and ASEAN. In T. Lindsey & D. McRae (Eds.), *Strangers next door? Indonesia and Australia in the Asian century* (pp. 169–192). Portland: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Shekhar, V. (2018). *Indonesia's foreign policy and grand strategy in the 21st century: Rise of an Indo-Pacific power*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315560977>
- Srinivasan, K., Mayall, J., & Pulipaka, S. (Eds.). (2019). *Values in foreign policy: Investigating ideals and interests*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sriyanto, N. (2018). Indonesia — China relations: A political-security perspective. In L. Christin Sinaga (Ed.), *Six decades of Indonesia — China relations* (pp. 5–79). Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8084-5_5
- Sukma, R. (2003). *Islam in Indonesian foreign policy*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Vershinina, V. V. (2020). Middle powers in international relations: Comparative analysis of conceptual approaches. *Comparative Politics Russia*, 11(3), 25–40. (In Russian). EDN: WLZAVZ
- Wanggem, H. R., & Lawson, S. (2023). The West Papua issue in Pacific regional politics: Explaining Indonesia's foreign policy failure. *The Pacific Review*, 36(1), 61–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1931417>; EDN: AJCGUV
- Weatherbee, D. E. (2013). *Indonesia in ASEAN: Vision and reality*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.
- Weatherbee, D. E. (2016). *Understanding Jokowi's foreign policy*. Singapore: ISEAS — Yusof Ishak Institute.

About the author:

Kablukov Kirill Sergeevich — Postgraduate Student, Department of Oriental Studies, MGIMO University; 76 Vernadsky Avenue, Moscow, 119454, Russian Federation; eLibrary SPIN-code: 4137-5686; ORCID: 0000-0003-0238-6683; e-mail: ki.s.kablukov@my.mgimo.ru