POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF INDONESIA-AUSTRALIA BORDER MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT. *This study offers a political science analysis of border management policies in Indonesia and Australia, focusing on security, community welfare, and international relations. Indonesia adopts a development-oriented approach aimed at enhancing infrastructure and economic access in border areas, promoting national integration but facing coordination and surveillance challenges. Australia, in contrast, implements a security-driven approach, particularly through Operation Sovereign Borders, effectively preventing illegal immigration yet criticized for its stringent, less humanitarian stance. Employing qualitative methods, including literature review and online media analysis, this study examines the political implications and geopolitical context of each policy. Findings suggest that Indonesia could enhance border security by integrating advanced technology, while Australia might benefit from a more cooperative, humanitarian approach to improve regional relations. This analysis contributes to political science discussions on border governance, proposing a balanced model that addresses both security and welfare in managing national borders.*

Keywords: Australia; Border Management; Indonesia; Political Comparison

INTRODUCTION

Border management is a crucial issue for an archipelagic country like Indonesia, which possesses an extensive and complex maritime territory. As part of its efforts to uphold sovereignty, Indonesia has established a legal framework to regulate its border areas, encompassing several laws such as Law No. 17 of 1985 on the Ratification of UNCLOS, Law No. 6 of 1996 on Indonesian Waters, Presidential Regulation No. 118 of 2022, and Law No. 43 of 2008 on State Territory. These laws underpin Indonesia's border management policies aimed at enforcing sovereignty and sovereign rights, protecting national interests, and enhancing the welfare of communities in border areas.

Indonesia also adopts a comprehensive approach to border management, with primary principles encompassing welfare and security approaches, cross-sectoral integrated management, and cooperation with neighboring countries (Humas Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2022; Pratiwi, 2020). These objectives are realized through efforts that include establishing maritime boundaries via negotiations, creating dedicated institutions like the National Border Management Agency or Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan (BNPP), and strengthening monitoring and empowering communities in border regions. The government also develops master plans and action strategies for strategic border area management, including border diplomacy as an effort to resolve disputes (Humas Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2022).

Despite the various strategies implemented, Indonesia faces significant challenges in managing its maritime borders. One of the biggest challenges is the unresolved delimitation of maritime boundaries with several neighboring countries, resulting in certain sea boundaries remaining uncertain (Harruma, 2022; Strating, 2021). This situation creates the potential for conflict with neighboring states, especially as the disputed waters are often rich in natural resources and strategic for trade activities. This dilemma complicates sovereignty enforcement, particularly in cases of border violations by foreign vessels exploiting the unclear maritime boundaries.

Another major obstacle is the weakness in surveillance systems and law enforcement in maritime border areas (Harruma, 2022). Given the vast area that must be monitored, the current personnel and infrastructure are far from sufficient. This shortage hampers control over various illegal activities, such as illegal fishing, goods smuggling, and cross-border crime (Humas KKP RI, 2023; Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative, 2024). The lack of surveillance infrastructure also affects Indonesia's ability to protect its marine environment from illegal exploitation that damages ecosystems. Additionally, with limited resources, the Indonesian government faces internal constraints such as overlapping regulations and authorities among agencies, leading to a lack of coordination and difficulties in implementing unified policies (Suharni & Arman, 2023).

These border management challenges are further exacerbated by the limited understanding among the public, particularly fishers, regarding maritime boundaries (Harruma, 2022; Strating, 2021). Many fishers inadvertently cross international boundaries, triggering incidents that harm them and strain diplomatic relations. The economic

disparity between border regions and the center also contributes to this issue, as many border residents rely on cross-border economic activities that sometimes conflict with international regulations (Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative, 2024). On the other hand, limited infrastructure and facilities in maritime border areas, such as transportation, communication, and economic services, worsen the living conditions for border communities, making these regions vulnerable to illegal activities and exploitation (Ika, 2022).

To address these various challenges, the Indonesian government has indeed established the BNPP and formulated multiple strategies for monitoring and empowering communities in border areas. The government also continues to pursue border diplomacy with neighboring countries to resolve boundary disputes peacefully. However, the success of border management requires a more integrated approach.

Compared to Australia, which has strict border policies and employs advanced technology to ensure maritime security, Indonesia's approach can be seen as pragmatic, given its technological and budget constraints. Australia enforces stringent and security-oriented border policies, particularly to prevent illegal immigration and human smuggling by sea. A key policy reflecting this approach is Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), launched in September 2013 under Tony Abbott's administration. OSB is a military-led border security operation supported by various federal government agencies (Gumay et al., 2018). The main objective of OSB is to protect Australia's border sovereignty, prevent illegal immigration, and tackle human smuggling by sea. This policy is also encapsulated by the slogan "Stop the Boats," which was a core message of Abbott's campaign to completely halt asylum-seeker arrivals by boat to Australia (Trihastuti & Setyawanta, 2019). This contrast highlights Indonesia's unique challenges in safeguarding its sovereignty and border security while maintaining a community-centered welfare approach.

In the academic context, comparative studies on border regions underscore how geographical proximity to national boundaries can shape political dynamics uniquely through what is known as the "border effect" (Braun & Kienitz, 2022). This effect manifests in three main forms. First, border regions attract diverse actors (both pro-state and anti-state), such as border guards, immigration officials, and local residents engaged in cross-border activities like trade or smuggling. Second, borders shape group identities by amplifying differences and perceived threats from neighboring states, thus reinforcing ethnic

and national loyalty or division among residents. Third, borders provide unique strategies for local actors, enabling them to leverage overlapping power structures on both sides of the boundary. Local elites or rebel groups, for instance, may use the border as a safe haven or leverage to negotiate their interests with the central government.

Previous research has shown the complexity of Indonesia's maritime border management, particularly in security, diplomacy, and interagency synergy aspects. A study by Pratiwi (2020) highlights the security challenges in Indonesia's maritime borders, such as piracy and smuggling, and emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to address these threats. Meanwhile, research by Gumay et al. (2018) focuses on defense diplomacy between Indonesia and Australia in dealing with illegal immigrants, revealing that differences in the two countries' approaches (with Indonesia prioritizing humanitarian concerns and Australia focusing on strict security) often lead to diplomatic friction. Additionally, Suharni and Arman (2023) discuss the challenges of interagency coordination in Indonesia, where overlapping authorities among the TNI AL, Polairud, Bakamla, and other agencies hinder effective maritime border surveillance.

This research brings novelty by offering a comparative analysis between Indonesian and Australian border management policies, particularly regarding security and handling illegal activities at sea. Hence, this study is essential as border management is a strategic element in safeguarding national sovereignty, maintaining regional stability, and protecting the rights of border communities. Indonesia and Australia, as neighboring countries sharing a maritime border, have vastly different border policies and approaches. This study will provide an in-depth understanding of these policy differences and how their implications affect the dynamics of the two countries' relations and regional security overall.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using literature review techniques and online media analysis to compare border management policies between Indonesia and Australia. The literature review includes an analysis of academic journals, government reports, and relevant policy documents to understand the political dynamics, institutional structures, and border policy approaches in both countries.

Additionally, online media analysis is conducted to supplement data with recent information from

news reports, opinion articles, and public statements related to border issues. This technique helps capture field perspectives on policy implementation and public responses. The collected data are analyzed descriptively, focusing on aspects of political security, community welfare in border areas, and the dynamics of bilateral relations, to identify the differences in approaches and the impact of policies in both countries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Policy Approaches and Priorities

Indonesia and Australia face different challenges in managing their maritime borders, resulting in diverse policy approaches and priorities for each country. Indonesia's approach emphasizes infrastructure development and the welfare of border communities. Through the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), the Indonesian government aims to enhance connectivity by building border parallel roads, sea toll routes, airports, and ports and docks (BNPP, 2023). Indonesia has also developed 18 National Strategic Activity Centers (PKSN) and 26 Border Crossing Posts (PLBN) to strengthen economic activities and public services in border areas, especially across 54 priority regencies/cities in 15 provinces (BNPP, 2023). With a budget allocation of Rp7.717 trillion in 2023, Indonesia aims to reinforce territorial sovereignty and improve the welfare of border communities, including on the 49 Outer Small Islands (PPKT) that are uninhabited (BNPP, 2023).

Indonesia also adopts an open approach toward asylum seekers, functioning as a transit country without imposing strict policies on migrants headed to Australia (Pujayanti, 2014). This approach reflects Indonesia's orientation towards humanitarian principles and regional cooperation in addressing cross-border migration issues. The management of border areas with a focus on development and the welfare of local communities demonstrates that Indonesia's priority is to strengthen national integration through enhanced economic access and infrastructure in border regions.

In contrast, Australia applies a highly strict border policy, particularly in handling asylum seekers arriving by sea. Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), implemented since 2013, serves as the foundation of Australia's border policy, with a primary focus on national security and the prevention of illegal immigration. Through OSB, the Australian government directs its Navy to intercept and turn back asylum seeker boats attempting to reach Australian territory (Trihastuti & Setyawanta, 2019). Australia has also enforced policies of turning back or redirecting migrant boats and processing asylum seekers in offshore detention centers, such as those in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, to prevent illegal immigrants from directly entering Australian territory.

Australia's strong commitment to securing its maritime borders is bolstered by significant domestic political support. This policy receives backing from major Australian political parties, underscoring the country's security-oriented stance, which focuses on extraterritorial processing of asylum seekers and strict surveillance in border zones (Trihastuti & Setyawanta, 2019). Australia's focus on security also extends to stringent management of its fishing zones through the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) (Australian Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, 2023), where regular patrols are conducted to control fishing activities in its waters and to prevent foreign fishers, including traditional Indonesian fishers, from entering Australia's exclusive economic zone.

The contrasting approaches to border policy between Indonesia and Australia reflect divergent priorities: Indonesia emphasizes border area development as a means of integration and community welfare improvement, while Australia focuses on strict security measures to safeguard border sovereignty and control illegal immigration. Indonesia's pragmatic and humanitarian-based approach contrasts with Australia's extraterritorial security stance, directly affecting the diplomatic dynamics between the two countries, especially concerning the handling of migrant and asylum seeker issues.

Indonesia's focus on development and community welfare in border areas demonstrates its intent to build strong national integration by enhancing economic access and infrastructure. With significant investment in border area development through the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), this approach strengthens ties between border communities and the central government while asserting Indonesia's sovereignty over these areas. However, this approach risks overlooking crucial security aspects, given real challenges such as smuggling, illegal fishing, and other illicit activities in maritime borders.

Conversely, Australia's strong emphasis on security, particularly through Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), reflects a major commitment to securing borders from the threats of illegal immigration and asylum seekers. Strong support

from Australia's main political parties provides a solid political foundation for these stringent policies. However, these policies are often criticized by the international community, particularly because the practices of turning back migrant boats and placing asylum seekers in offshore detention centers are considered to violate human rights principles. This approach underscores Australia's reluctance to compromise on security issues, even at the risk of negative diplomatic relations, particularly with neighboring countries like Indonesia. Strict security policies, such as the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ), often tighten control over foreign fishers, including traditional Indonesian fishers, who sometimes inadvertently enter Australia's exclusive economic zone. This approach generates friction, particularly in maritime border areas where conflicts arise between historical rights and modern maritime regulations.

These differing approaches create challenging diplomatic dynamics. Although Indonesia tends to function as a transit country for asylum seekers heading to Australia, Indonesia's open stance, without strict policies, generates differing perceptions between the two countries. Australia views this lenient stance as a loophole that could be exploited by illegal immigrants, while Indonesia sees its approach as part of a regional cooperation effort prioritizing humanitarian solutions. Consequently, there is tension between Indonesia's focus on development and regional stability and Australia's focus on extraterritorial security, which is perceived as highly protective.

Overall, Indonesia's pragmatic and humanitarian-based approach demonstrates a commitment to the welfare of border communities, yet it lacks rigorous law enforcement aspects. On the other hand, Australia's strict security approach, while effective in curbing migrant flows, risks neglecting human rights and creating diplomatic tensions. The imbalance between Indonesia's development approach and Australia's security approach suggests the need for a more balanced and cooperative policy approach between the two countries, one that can accommodate security needs while maintaining humanitarian principles.

A. Legal Framework and Related Institutions

Differences in institutional structures and the legal framework for border management between Indonesia and Australia also reflect contrasting approaches, adapted to each country's national priorities, geographical conditions, and governmental systems. In Indonesia, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) acts as the primary institution responsible for border management at the central, provincial, and regency/city levels. This structure represents a decentralized approach, allowing local governments to engage in border area utilization. Based on Law No. 43 of 2008 on State Territory and Presidential Regulation No. 12 of 2010 on BNPP, the central government holds authority over border policies, but its implementation also involves local governments in infrastructure development and regional border area advancement.

BNPP's focus is largely on planning, coordination, and infrastructure development to enhance the welfare of border communities, including the development of uninhabited Outer Small Islands (PPKT). BNPP collaborates with relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to address border issues through cross-sectoral cooperation. This structure provides Indonesia with the flexibility to build local capacity for more integrated border management.

In contrast, Australia adopts a more centralized institutional structure, with primary authority vested in the federal government through the Department of Home Affairs. For border policy operationalization, the Australian Border Force (ABF) is tasked with conducting security operations along both maritime and land borders. Under the Migration Act 1958 and Border Force Act 2015, ABF functions as the sole operational entity responsible for protecting and securing Australia's borders.

Australia emphasizes security as the main priority in border management, and this institutional model is integrated with nationwide operations, such as Operation Sovereign Borders, which aims to prevent the arrival of asylum seekers by sea. Within this more centralized structure, intelligence-based security approaches allow the Australian government to respond quickly and effectively to threats, utilizing federal resources to protect its sovereignty and border security (Gumay et al., 2018; Rahmat, 2018; Saragih & Pramita, 2020; Trihastuti & Setyawanta, 2019).

Upon closer examination, several key points of comparison can be identified as follows:
1. Structure and Decentralization
   Indonesia operates a decentralized structure with the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) present at both central and regional levels, enabling a more inclusive approach and collaboration with local governments. Meanwhile, Australia maintains a centralized structure where border management is concentrated within the federal government through the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force (ABF), centralizing security operations.

2. Institutional Focus and Scope
   BNPP in Indonesia has a broad focus, encompassing the development of border areas, while ABF in Australia plays a primary operational role in law enforcement and border security, supported by a pre-emptive approach to prevent illegal immigration.
3. Coordination and Authority
   BNPP collaborates with various ministries and agencies for border management, indicating a coordinated approach involving multiple relevant stakeholders. In contrast, ABF in Australia functions as a single primary entity overseeing airports, ports, and Australia's maritime zones, enhancing effectiveness in implementing unified border policies.
4. Legal Framework and Approach
   Indonesia's legal framework supports a diplomatic and development-oriented approach to strengthen state sovereignty while improving the welfare of border communities. In contrast, Australia's legal framework supports a strict security approach with an emphasis on law enforcement at maritime borders, including offshore migrant processing centers aimed at limiting the influx of asylum seekers.

The comparison of institutional structures and legal frameworks in border management between Indonesia and Australia reveals significant differences in each country's priorities and approaches, shaped by their respective challenges and national interests. Indonesia applies a decentralized structure through the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), which grants authority to local governments to manage developmental aspects in border areas. This approach allows for flexibility and local participation in border area development. However, a major drawback of this model is suboptimal interagency coordination, often leading to overlapping authorities and internal friction that can hinder effective border monitoring. This issue limits Indonesia's ability to respond swiftly and efficiently to security threats at its borders.

In contrast, Australia adopts a more centralized institutional structure, with the Australian Border Force (ABF) as the primary entity under federal control. This centralized model enables Australia to implement a tightly coordinated border security policy, such as Operation Sovereign Borders, which aims to intercept migrant vessels. This approach enhances the effectiveness of safeguarding border sovereignty with rapid responses to threats. However, it also brings the risk of rigid, overly strict policies, particularly in managing migrants, which frequently draws criticism from international human rights organizations.

This difference in priorities is also evident in each country's border management policies. Indonesia emphasizes development and the welfare of border communities, while Australia prioritizes national security. Indonesia's policies are oriented towards diplomacy and infrastructure development to foster integration in border regions, but this focus on development could weaken law enforcement efforts if not balanced with strong interagency coordination. Conversely, Australia's stringent security policy creates a controlled and responsive border management system, but its unilateral approach to turning away asylum seekers often strains diplomatic relations with neighboring countries, including Indonesia.

Moreover, these differences in institutional structures reflect divergent legal orientations. Indonesia's legal framework, based on Law No. 43 of 2008, supports a diplomatic approach prioritizing development, while Australia's Migration Act 1958 and Border Force Act 2015 emphasize security-oriented law enforcement. The centralization of authority in Australia enables ABF to carry out its mandate in a structured and firm manner; however, this approach can generate negative perceptions regarding the treatment of asylum seekers and is often seen as lacking in consideration for humanitarian principles in border management.

Critiques of both models highlight that while Indonesia benefits from a more inclusive and collaborative approach, weaknesses in domestic interagency coordination may reduce the effectiveness of border monitoring and law enforcement. Meanwhile, Australia's centralized model provides firm control and clarity in its border policies, but its overly strict policies risk damaging Australia's international reputation in human rights contexts. This study underscores the importance of balancing security and humanitarian aspects in border management. On one hand, Indonesia needs to strengthen its capacity for more integrated law enforcement, while Australia might consider adding flexibility to its border policies to accommodate humanitarian needs without compromising national security.

B. Use of Technology and Surveillance

The role of technology in border management is critical for both Indonesia and Australia, each employing different approaches to leverage technology in addressing border security and efficiency challenges. In Indonesia, technology is

primarily used to support physical infrastructure improvements and enhance surveillance capabilities. The government has increased the number of checkpoints and strengthened monitoring systems to manage the flow of goods and people in border areas (Humas KKP RI, 2023; Humas Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2022; Pratiwi, 2020). Additionally, the Integrated Border Control Management (IBCM) program aims to improve the capacity of border management units through risk-based screening and interagency cooperation (Zulfikar, 2022). International collaboration also enables Indonesia to leverage technology for intelligence data sharing with neighboring countries to address cross-border threats like smuggling and human trafficking.

However, Indonesia's IBCM program faces several significant challenges affecting its effectiveness in managing the country's complex border regions (Humas Imigrasi RI, 2022). The first challenge is geographical complexity; Indonesia's vast land and maritime borders, which are shared with many neighboring countries, make comprehensive monitoring difficult across such an expansive area. This varied geographical landscape necessitates customized management approaches for each border area, including remote and hard-to-reach regions.

Resource limitations also pose a major obstacle. The implementation of IBCM requires adequate infrastructure, technology, and human resources, but Indonesia faces challenges in providing these elements, especially in border areas with limited access and facilities (Priangani, 2014)such a position, however, has not been optimally utilized. Borders area is an enticing entrance for investors. Accordingly, there will be a need of integrated management so as to be able to improve competitiveness mainly in the field of investment and trade. The reason why management model more suitably refers to the IBM because the model in some countries has successfully maximized function o fborders area. This research aims to study and give input into implementation of Border Management mainly Integrated Border Management (IBM. IBCM also requires close coordination among government agencies, such as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the National Police (Polri), and immigration authorities, which often have differing procedures and interests. This divergence can create challenges in aligning the vision and mission of IBCM among the various involved agencies.

IBM in Indonesia must also address non-traditional security threats frequently encountered at borders, including smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism (Zulfikar, 2022). These threats necessitate the integration of adequate surveillance technology and the development of a risk-based monitoring system capable of identifying and preventing threats effectively. However, differences in capacity with neighboring countries add to the challenges in implementing IBM, as optimal application also requires cross-border coordination and cooperation, especially in dealing with cross-border issues.

The socio-cultural aspects in some border areas require special attention as well. Border communities often share social and cultural ties with residents of neighboring countries, so IBM policies must consider sustaining these interactions without disrupting daily life. Moreover, the technological infrastructure needed to support IBM is still limited. Integrated information technology and modern surveillance tools are essential for effective border management, yet establishing and maintaining this infrastructure across Indonesia's borders requires substantial investment and long-term commitment.

Finally, implementing IBM in Indonesia demands a paradigm shift from a traditional security approach to a more comprehensive and integrated approach. This means changing long-standing mindsets and conventional practices entrenched within the various agencies involved in border management. Addressing these challenges requires strong government commitment, sustained investment in infrastructure and technology, and close cooperation among various stakeholders at both the national and international levels.

In contrast, Australia relies on advanced technology and automation to strengthen its border security. The Australian Border Force (ABF) employs modern technology such as biometric systems, Departure SmartGates, and data-driven intelligence analysis to process and monitor the movement of people efficiently (Idemia Group, 2023; Saragih & Pramita, 2020). ABF also has the Australian Trusted Trader (ATT) program, which facilitates trade processes for accredited traders by using technology to enhance supply chain efficiency without compromising security (Australian Border Force, 2024). Furthermore, Australia bolsters cybersecurity to protect the information systems supporting border management from digital threats (Idemia Group, 2023).

Australia's layered approach to border surveillance has proven to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its border management. The centralized institutional structure through the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force (ABF) facilitates interagency coordination and

speeds up decision-making related to border security. With this structure, various related functions, such as customs, immigration, and border security, are integrated into a comprehensive system, allowing for more efficient border monitoring and management.

ABF combines various surveillance functions using an intelligence- and risk-based approach, enabling resources to be allocated more effectively in high-risk areas. The use of modern technology, such as biometric systems, automation, and Departure SmartGates, also plays a key role in expediting border inspections, reducing queues, and optimizing the screening process without sacrificing security rigor. This technology enables the monitoring of legitimate movements of people and goods while minimizing the risk of threats entering Australian territory.

Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), implemented with strict enforcement, adds another layer of security for Australia's borders. This policy successfully reduced the number of unauthorized arrivals from approximately 25,000 in 2012 to zero in 2014, reflecting the success of a firm approach in tackling illegal immigration (SBS News, 2014). Additionally, Australia's extraterritorial policy for managing asylum seekers and cooperation with neighboring countries allows it to anticipate threats beyond its borders, further enhancing its surveillance strategy.

In supporting trade, the Australian Trusted Trader (ATT) program demonstrates Australia's commitment to economic efficiency without compromising security. This program facilitates accredited traders, speeding up cross-border trade processes while securing the supply chain.

Australia's layered approach, which integrates a unified institutional structure, modern technology, an intelligence-based approach, and international cooperation, has enabled more comprehensive and efficient border surveillance. The combination of integrated surveillance functions and advanced technology ensures that legitimate movements of people and goods are smoothly facilitated, while national security is protected from threats.

In this comparison, Indonesia's approach is more focused on physical infrastructure development and international collaboration to enhance border surveillance. In contrast, Australia prioritizes modern technology and automation, with programs like SmartGates allowing for self-service screening, and ATT supporting cross-border trade efficiency. Australia also invests resources in digital technology and advanced monitoring systems to strengthen border surveillance, including using drones for patrols and threat detection in hard-to-reach areas.

Both countries face different challenges: Indonesia is focused on addressing issues such as smuggling and human trafficking, while Australia emphasizes preventing illegal migration through strict policies supported by advanced technology. Despite their differing approaches, both Indonesia and Australia recognize the importance of international collaboration, but their differences lie in the scale of technology employed. Indonesia's approach is more bilateral with neighboring countries, while Australia's approach is more integrated and intelligence-based, with significant investment in surveillance technology.

C. International and Regional Cooperation

A comparison of international and regional cooperation in border surveillance between Indonesia and Australia reveals differing approaches that reflect each country's policy priorities. Indonesia favors a more diplomatic and multilateral approach, actively engaging in frameworks such as ASEAN and the Bali Process to address border and migration issues. This multilateral approach positions Indonesia as a country open to collective regional solutions, particularly in managing migration and cross-border trade. In contrast, although Australia participates in the Bali Process, its unilateral and often aggressive policies (notably through Operation Sovereign Borders with its strict stance on asylum seekers) highlight a focus on national security, sometimes at the expense of broader regional coordination.

In dealing with asylum seekers, Indonesia often functions as a transit country without enforcing strict oversight policies like Australia. This allows asylum seekers headed to Australia to temporarily reside in Indonesia, occasionally creating tension due to Australia's firm policy of preventing asylum seekers from entering its territory by sea. Operation Sovereign Borders emphasizes intercepting migrant vessels and processing individuals in offshore detention centers, illustrating Australia's commitment to securing its borders through strict, law-enforcement-oriented policies.

Both countries maintain bilateral cooperation, including the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA), which encompasses various aspects, including intelligence-sharing relevant to border security (Rahmat, 2018; Saragih & Pramita, 2020). Through this bilateral dialogue, Indonesia and Australia exchange intelligence data to address border threats, although differing approaches can often influence how each country responds to cross-border issues, particularly regarding illegal migration and smuggling.

The differences in focus for cooperation also reflect differing priorities: Indonesia emphasizes border area development and the welfare of border communities as part of an integrative effort involving multiple sectors. In contrast, Australia prioritizes security, leveraging advanced technology such as biometric systems and automation to enhance inspection efficiency and border surveillance. While Indonesia is still in the early stages of adopting advanced surveillance technology, Australia has developed modern technologies that support its security-focused, stringent border approach.

Despite differences in approach and priority, both Indonesia and Australia face shared challenges in handling human trafficking and illegal trade issues. Both countries acknowledge the importance of strengthening maritime security in their border regions. Therefore, despite their divergent approaches, both continue to pursue enhanced bilateral dialogue and regional forum participation to address common border challenges. Thus, while their differing approaches reflect each nation's focus, Indonesia and Australia ultimately find common ground in the pursuit of sustainable border cooperation.

D. Impact of Policies on Local Communities and Bilateral Relations

The differing approaches of Indonesia and Australia regarding security and migration management impact not only local communities but also their bilateral and regional relations. In Indonesia, border policies focused on infrastructure development and improving welfare for border communities aim to strengthen national integration and enhance the quality of life for local residents. This approach reflects Indonesia's efforts to maintain domestic stability in border areas by providing better access to economic opportunities, education, and transportation infrastructure.

The Indonesian government has undertaken various infrastructure developments in border areas to improve accessibility, security, and welfare for local communities. A notable achievement is the construction of border roads in several regions. In East Nusa Tenggara, the government has completed a 176-kilometer Border Road equipped with 27 bridges to improve regional connectivity. Additionally, the 1,900-kilometer Kalimantan Border Road is under construction, with 1,582 kilometers completed by the end of 2017. In Papua, 892.3 kilometers of a 1,098.2-kilometer Border Road were completed in the same period (Putra, 2018).

In addition to roads, advanced technology has begun to be implemented in border management, including technology-based monitoring and surveillance systems to prevent various illegal activities (Humas Imigrasi RI, 2022). These initiatives are supported by the development of complementary infrastructure, such as airports, ports, and sea toll routes in border regions, which are expected to facilitate the movement of goods and services and support local economic growth.

For strategic area development, the government has also initiated the establishment of 18 National Strategic Activity Centers (PKSN) and 26 Border Crossing Posts (PLBN), which are expected to serve as new economic growth centers in border areas. Furthermore, the government allocated a budget of Rp7.717 trillion in 2023 to support border area development (BNPP, 2023). The government's focus also includes managing 49 uninhabited Outer Small Islands (PPKT) as part of efforts to strengthen sovereignty and address strategic interests at the borders.

International collaboration is also part of Indonesia's border management strategy, with Indonesia actively cooperating with neighboring countries to address complex border challenges. This includes intelligence and security data exchange aimed at anticipating cross-border threats more effectively. Overall, these various border area developments are expected to support security, improve the welfare of border communities, and reinforce Indonesia's sovereignty in these areas.

However, while this approach benefits local communities in the long term, weaknesses in security surveillance make border areas vulnerable to smuggling, human trafficking, and other illegal activities. Without adequate support from advanced technology and robust surveillance capacity, border communities continue to face security risks that threaten their well-being, indicating that the development policy requires a stronger security component to be more effective.

In contrast, Australia's stringent, technology-based border security policies, such as Operation Sovereign Borders and the Australian Border Force (ABF), effectively control the threats of illegal migration and smuggling. However, these policies, particularly in handling asylum seekers, are often viewed as harsh and lacking in compassion (Strating, 2021; Trihastuti & Setyawanta, 2019). Policies of redirecting and processing asylum seekers in offshore detention centers, such as those in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, have had negative impacts on local communities in these regions and often face international criticism for perceived human rights violations. For Australia's local communities,

these strict policies provide a sense of security and protect the domestic labor market from unwanted competition, though they may limit openness toward migrants who could contribute positively.

In terms of bilateral relations, Indonesia's diplomatic and multilateral approach, which involves cooperation with neighboring countries through initiatives like the Bali Process and the ASEAN framework, strengthens Indonesia's position as a country open to collective solutions for cross-border issues. This approach enables more harmonious dialogue and cooperation with neighboring countries, recognizing the social and cultural ties shared by border communities. This open approach helps maintain good relations with neighboring nations and positions Indonesia as a mediator on border and migration issues at the regional level.

In contrast, Australia's more assertive unilateral policies, such as Operation Sovereign Borders, effectively deter illegal migration but can sometimes create diplomatic tensions, especially with Indonesia. Australia often overlooks collective efforts for multilateral solutions and instead enforces its strict policies independently, leading some neighboring countries to view these policies as overly stringent and less cooperative. The "turn back" policy for asylum seekers redirected to Indonesian waters, for example, has been a recurring source of diplomatic tension. This stance shows that Australia prioritizes national security interests, even if this occasionally strains relationships with transit countries like Indonesia.

The differing approaches taken by Indonesia and Australia in border management policies present complementary strengths and weaknesses. Indonesia focuses on social integration and economic development for border communities, yet weaknesses in security oversight reduce its effectiveness in addressing non-traditional security issues such as smuggling and human trafficking. On the other hand, Australia's strict, technology-based policies provide protection against security threats and ensure controlled borders. However, this approach tends to overlook humanitarian considerations and sometimes creates diplomatic friction.

To improve the effectiveness of border management and its impact on local communities and bilateral relations, both countries should consider more balanced approaches. Indonesia could strengthen surveillance and technological capacity in border regions to complement its development policy, while Australia might consider a more collaborative and responsive approach to humanitarian issues at its borders. By combining each country's strengths, there is an opportunity for both to foster sustainable border cooperation, enhance mutual security, and create a more stable and harmonious diplomatic relationship in the region.

Based on these discussions, an ideal political policy for managing border areas in Indonesia should focus on balancing security, development, and social inclusion. The following policy recommendations take into account current conditions, evaluations of existing policy implementation, and lessons from best practices in other countries, such as Australia:

1. Enhancing Technology Infrastructure and Integrating Intelligence Data
   Given the extensive land and maritime borders of Indonesia, it is crucial to strengthen technology infrastructure and implement intelligence-based surveillance systems. Indonesia should expedite the adoption of surveillance technologies, including biometric systems, sensor-based monitoring, and drones for hard-to-reach areas. Furthermore, data integration across agencies involved in border security can significantly enhance the speed and efficiency of responses to security threats. Insights from Australia illustrate that effective utilization of technology can improve border surveillance, particularly in high-risk zones.

2. Risk-Based and Layered Surveillance Approach
   Adopting a risk-based, layered surveillance approach, as implemented in Australia, would enable Indonesia to focus resources on higher-risk border areas. This approach supports more efficient resource allocation, prioritizing strategic and high-traffic zones prone to smuggling and other illegal activities. A layered surveillance model could comprise a combination of physical checkpoints, maritime patrols, and technology-based monitoring at vulnerable locations.

3. Integrated and Effective Interagency Coordination
   Challenges in interagency coordination remain a primary obstacle to effective border management in Indonesia. An integrated institutional framework is essential for rapid coordination and collaborative decision-making. Establishing a coordinating body that includes all relevant agencies—such as TNI, Polri, Customs, and Immigration—would promote synergy. A centralized system for coordination and communication within a dedicated agency, similar to the Australian Border Force, could bolster responses to security challenges and enhance operational efficiency.

4. Empowering Local Communities as Border Stewards
   Strengthening community engagement in border regions is also critical. Local communities can

play a vital role within the surveillance system through training and empowerment programs designed to facilitate reporting of suspicious activities. This initiative not only bolsters surveillance effectiveness but also strengthens the relationship between the government and border communities. This approach ensures that border residents actively participate in safeguarding their region, beyond merely being beneficiaries of development.

5. Inclusive and Sustainable Development Approach
Indonesia should maintain its development strategy in border areas, focused on enhancing community welfare, with an inclusive and sustainable approach. Infrastructure development—such as roads, ports, and national strategic activity centers—should continue to be prioritized to stimulate economic and social activities in these areas. The government should also ensure equitable public services, including access to education, healthcare, and employment, so that border communities experience a fair and inclusive state presence.

6. Enhancing International Cooperation and Border Diplomacy
In addressing transnational threats like smuggling and illegal migration, Indonesia should bolster international cooperation with neighboring countries and leverage regional forums such as ASEAN and the Bali Process. This border diplomacy enables Indonesia to address threats before they reach its borders, adding an additional layer of protection to national security. Drawing from Australia's extraterritorial policies, Indonesia could deepen cooperation with neighboring countries through intelligence data sharing and joint operations for cross-border security.

7. Human Rights and Humanitarian Principles in Policy Development
An ideal border policy must uphold human rights and humanitarian principles, particularly in handling migrants and asylum seekers who frequently enter through border areas. Learning from critiques directed at Australia's offshore detention policies for asylum seekers, Indonesia can adopt a more humanitarian approach that respects the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in line with international law.

Overall, an optimal border policy for Indonesia is one that integrates security and sustainable development approaches, prioritizes the welfare of local communities, and fosters cross-border cooperation. Implementing a balanced policy that combines development and security surveillance will support Indonesia's sovereignty and national integration while enhancing its role as an active and responsive partner in the region.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights key differences in border management policies between Indonesia and Australia. Indonesia's approach focuses on community welfare through infrastructure and economic access improvements, strengthening local ties with the central government but facing challenges in inter-agency coordination and security enforcement. In contrast, Australia emphasizes a security-oriented, technology-driven approach under the Australian Border Force and Operation Sovereign Borders, effectively preventing illegal immigration but drawing criticism for its stringent, less humanitarian stance. Both countries could benefit from integrating each other's strengths: Indonesia by enhancing security measures and technology use, and Australia by adopting a more cooperative, humanitarian approach to improve regional relations.

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