Come to be stranded: the dynamics of refugee influx in three Indonesian government regimes

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Abstrak Indonesia telah menjadi salah satu negara transit pengungsi sejak abad ke-20. Namun, hanya beberapa sarjana yang mempelajari dinamikanya. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan dinamika pengungsi internasional di Indonesia dari tahun 1978 hingga 2022 dengan menggunakan pendekatan geografi sejarah dan desktop research. Studi ini menemukan bahwa pengungsi yang masuk ke Indonesia pada masa Orde Baru dan masa transisi krisis mayoritas berasal dari Asia Tenggara. Krisis besar yang terjadi pada masa itu antara lain krisis manusia perahu, krisis pengungsi Kamboja, pengusiran warga Timor Timur, dan krisis pengungsi MENA. Pada era reformasi hingga saat ini, jumlah pengungsi dan sebaran negara asal semakin meningkat dengan krisis utama adalah krisis laut Andaman dan krisis Rohingya. Faktor-faktor yang mendasari para pengungsi internasional memilih Indonesia sebagai negara suaka adalah kedekatan geografis, konflik regional, kedekatan sosial, sejarah, dan budaya, serta kebijakan anti pengungsi dari negara penerima. Sementara itu, kebijakan internal terkait pengungsi antar pemerintahan tidak terlalu berpengaruh pada dinamika pengungsi sebab indonesia konstan pada posisinya sebagai non penerima pengungsi.

Kata Kunci: pengungsi internasional, Indonesia, negara transit, geografi sejarah, migrasi

Abstract Since the twentieth century, Indonesia has been a refugee transit country. However, only a few academics have investigated its dynamics. This study uses historical geography and desktop research methods to explain the dynamics of international refugees in Indonesia from 1978 to 2022. According to this study, most refugees who arrived in Indonesia during the New Order era and the crisis transition period were from Southeast Asia. The boat people crisis, the Cambodian refugee crisis, the East Timorese refugees, and the MENA refugee crisis were all major crises at the time. The number of refugees and the distribution of countries of origin have increased during the reform era, with the main crises being the Andaman Sea and the Syrian refugee crises. Geographic proximity, regional conflicts, social, historical, and cultural proximity, as well as the receiving country's anti-refugee policies, all contribute to international refugees choosing Indonesia as a country of asylum. Meanwhile, internal refugee policies have little impact on the dynamics of refugees because Indonesia continues to be a non-recipient of refugees.

Keywords: refugees, Indonesia, transit country, historical geography, migration

INTRODUCTION

Refugees have become concerned about hosting and sending countries following the growing numbers in recent decades. More than 2.7 million people worldwide are recognized as refugees, and most are concentrated in developing countries (UNHCR, 2021). Even though the refugee crisis began in the European region (Frank and Reinisch, 2014), in recent decades, it shifted and has become a serious threat to Asian and African regions (Mackey and Bozovik, 2017). In Southeast Asia, several large cross-bordered displacement influxes have happened since Cold War in 1975, leaving sociopolitical threats and challenges to refugee management practice in this region (Tubakovic, 2019).

Recent studies found that among ASEAN countries members, Indonesia is a country that plays an important role in the Asia-Pacific refugee flow (Liliansa and Jayadi, 2015; Afriansyah et al., 2022). This country becomes a buffer zone for Australia to deter refugees from entering its territory (Liliansa and Jayadi, 2015). However, like most ASEAN countries, Indonesia has not signed refugee conventions and protocols and therefore is not responsible for giving permanent

resident status to refugees. Nevertheless, refugees still come to Indonesia, and its number has reached more than 13.000 refugees stranded in 2021 (UNHCR, 2021).

It has been studied by L and Jayadi (2015) that the refugees used Indonesia as a stepping stone before they were granted permanent status in receiving countries, mainly Australia and New Zealand. They add that the high number of refugees transiting in Indonesia is partly due to the geographical location between the countries of origin and the hosting country. Another argument may come from the improvement in refugee management in Indonesia. Presidential Decree Number 125/2016 formulation provides a more standardized procedure for refugee management even though it unnecessarily reflects the Indonesian government's commitment to participate in the UNHCR convention. Thus, the various possible factors and the changing government attitude toward refugee in each period is important to assess to give insight into refugee studies in Indonesia.

This study aims to fill the gap in refugee studies in Indonesia by providing detailed spatial-temporal characteristics of refugee influx in Indonesia and its influencing factors. The analysis

used a historical geography approach and discourse analysis, focusing on the spatial changes from 1975 to 2021. This study used three government regime periods: New Order, Transition, and Reformation Era, as an analysis framework. This paper argues that Indonesia has, and still is, become a third-country destination for refugees in Asia. Its government responses were changed over time, influencing the characteristics of the refugee influx. Finally, by understanding who and where they come from, it hopes this study can provide a foundation for refugee studies and management in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study used statistical data released by UNHCR, which authorized the registration of refugees in Indonesia. The data include the number of refugees from the origin country, the annual number of refugees, and the demographic characteristic of refugees in Indonesia. Data from UNHCR was used because it is considered legal and valid data about refugees since the refugee data record and management in Indonesia is the full responsibility of UNHCR. Data provided by UNHCR is a result of the refugee determination and registration process. The refugee statistics were used and presented as graphs and maps to make the interpretation easier. Then, the distribution of refugee countries of origin in Indonesia is visualized through a thematic map shown per government regime period. I used the political regime period as the analysis timeframe to see the role of government change on refugee management and inflow.

In addition to statistical data, this study also used historical data from books, journals, and news to support the analysis and also to make a historical chronology of refugees in Indonesia. The researcher uses discourse analysis to get information about the particular event during the time frame of analysis. In this case, the validity of the narration becomes a concern. Hence, the information from each resource was passed through several steps:

(1) Critics ensure these resources are credible by understanding the resources profile. Several criteria for media or information can be used, i.e. media has a formal office, it is informed about the writer, based on scientific analysis, and independent. We did a profile for each source of information, especially news, to ensure they were credible. This process results in 40 articles that will be used as sources for analysis.

(2) Interpretation is the process of understanding information. We coded information in articles according to several keywords, i.e. refugees, inflow, crisis, and conflict. The coded information is then used to create mind mapping to find patterns and historical correlations that explain the refugee influx in each time frame.

(3) Simultaneously with the interpretation process, we verified our used article. We verified the information by comparing and confirming other resources with a minimum of three resources.

(4) Historiography is the process of writing information to be chronologically arranged. The information obtained is sewn into a complete storyline that explains the incidents of the refugee crisis in each time frame.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Refugees in Indonesia have been narratively documented since 1975 when the Southeast Asia regions faced a refugee crisis due to the Indochina War 1975. At that time, many refugees attracted the media's and historians' attention to document it (Adam, 2012). However, refugee records in statistical data only existed in 1978 due to the presence of an agency that handled the registration of refugees, i.e. UNHCR. Based on the UNHCR data, the number of refugees coming to Indonesia has fluctuated throughout the years, with some peaks in 1979-1985, 1999-2002, and 2015-2018. (Figure 1). As shown on the graph, the fluctuating influx characterizes non-voluntary migration, commonly found in unsteady flow (Hugo, Abasi-Shavazi, and Kraly, 2018).

Besides the number of refugees, which fluctuates but tends to increase in recent years, the diversity of the refugees' countries of origin rises yearly. To explain the pattern shown in the graph, I will describe it in three different periods. Periodization of refugee flow based on the government regime is used to simplify the discussion and find the possibility of government attitude towards refugees in attracting or dis-attracting refugees. Previously Adam (2012) attempted to categorize the characteristics of refugees who came to Indonesia in 1978-1996 periodHegrouped into three important periods as follows: (1) Upon the arrival of the "Boat People" from Vietnam; (2) The presence of a representative office of UNHCR; (2) The centralization of refugee handling in Indonesia. In this study, the refugee influx in Indonesia is seen more comprehensively with the New Order era (1978-1998) to the Reformation era (1999-2018).
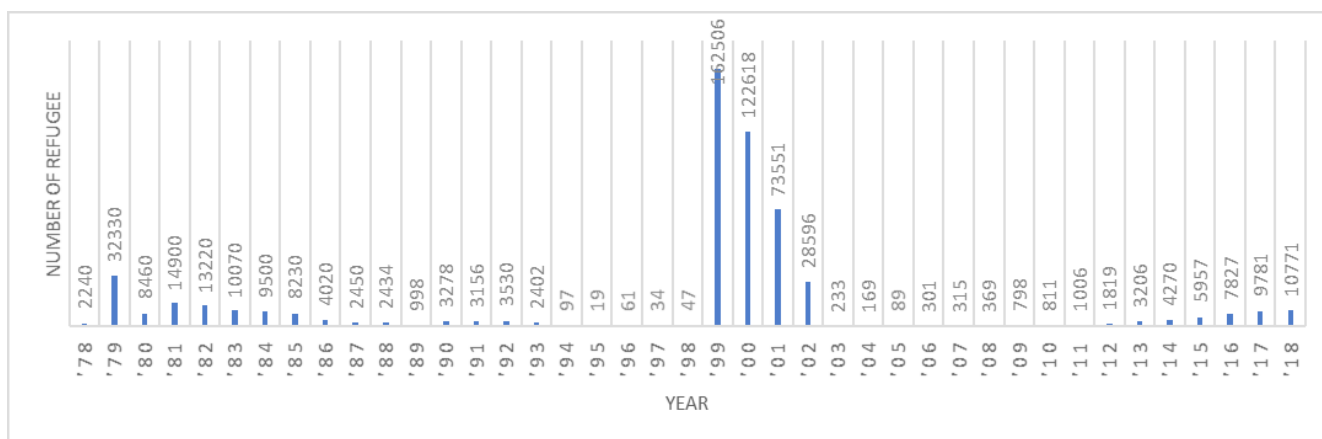

Figure 1. The Number of Refugees in Indonesia from 1978-2018
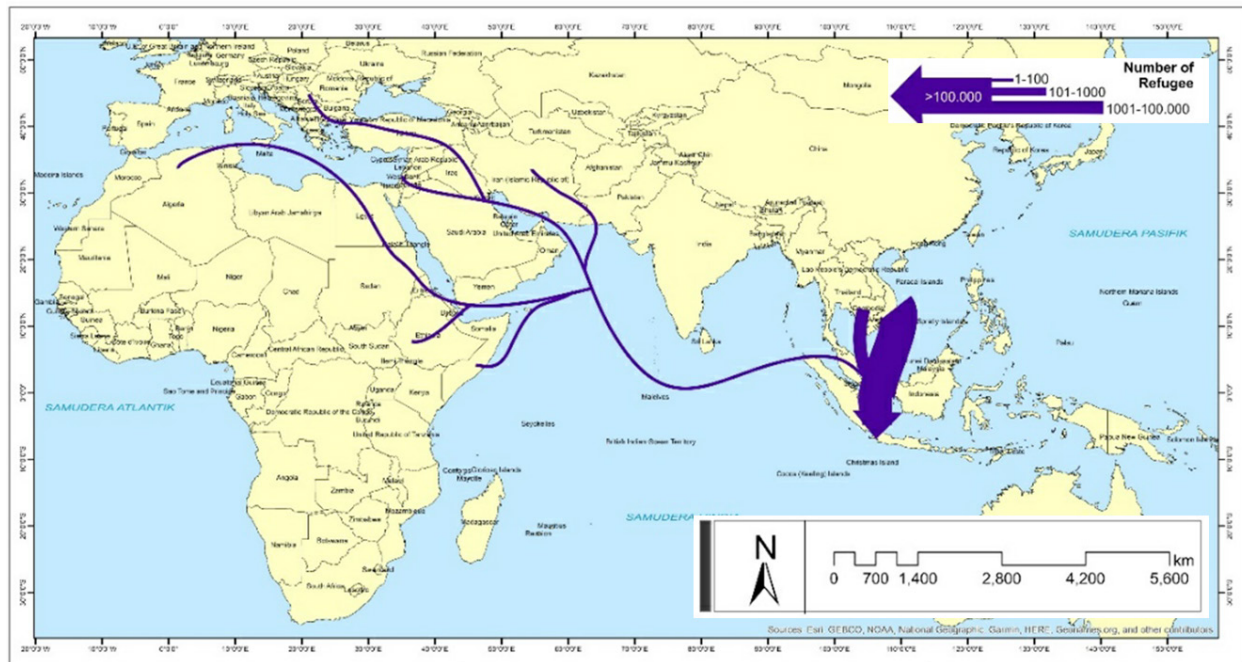Source: data from UNHCR, 2019

Figure 2. The Map of Refugee Flow into Indonesia during the New Order Era (1978-1997) Based on the Country of Origin
Source: data from UNHCR, 2019

The New Order Era (1978-1998) – Cold War Refugee Influx

During the Soeharto era, known as the New Order, Indonesia first faced a refugee influx. During this period, Indonesia also began to show its existence in handling the problem of refugees. Based on the map of refugee flow to Indonesia during the New Order era, the distribution of the refugees' countries of origin in Indonesia includes the countries in West Asia, Southeast Asia, North Africa, East Africa, and Southern (Figure 2). The refugees in Indonesia were dominated by those from Cambodia (i.e. 10,896 people) and Vietnam (i.e. 152,162 people) from 1975 to 1997.

During the New Order era, there were at least two main events of the refugee crisis in Indonesia; the "Boat People" crisis from 1975 to 1977, the Cambodian refugee crisis, and the starting point for refugee handling centred through UNHCR in 1978.

Vietnam Crisis

The second Indochina War caused a major humanitarian crisis in the Southeast Asia regions. Also, the war caused a large-scale exodus of the South Vietnamese, later known as Boat People. The term Boat People is addressed to refugees from Vietnam because, during the asylum search period, the people used boats to cross the ocean. The Boat People came in at least three main influxes during the New Order era, as Adam (2012) mentioned: The first refugee influx headed to Pulau Laut, Natuna Island. The second refugee influx headed to Riau Regency, Riau Islands, including Natuna Island, Anambas Island, and Bintan Islands. The third refugee influx headed to Pengibu, Anambas Island.

In early 1975 (i.e. May 22, 1975), 75 Boat People entered Indonesian territory. The refugees who came from Vietnam entered Indonesian territory via Pulau Laut, Natuna Island (Adam, 2012). The first Boat People influx in Indonesia occurred after the fall of the city of Saigon on April 30, 1975, on the communists' side. Most of the Vietnamese refugees who entered Indonesian territory were those who had been expelled from Malaysian territorial waters (Adam 2012). Most of the entry routes for refugees are through the small island in the South China Sea or what is now known as the North Natuna Sea.

Cambodia crisis

The Cambodian refugee influx in the 1980s was motivated by a conflict involving the Kampuchea government (now called Cambodia), which received the support of the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese government, which received support from China (Justin 2009). The conflict has a different background from the conflicts in North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The conflict between North Vietnam and South Vietnam was a tension between communist and anti-communist supporting groups, while the Cambodian war occurred between fellow communist groups (Mosyakov 2004). The conflict began when the Khmer Rouge government invaded the Vietnam border area and tried to control several areas in Vietnam, and the Vietnamese government then responded by making attacks (Corfield 1991). This conflict made tens of thousands of Cambodian refugees to Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. However, they were not referred to as refugees but internal refugees (IDP) in Thailand because their escape was still within the borders between Thailand and Cambodia (Frost 1991).

The pattern of long-distance migration (across two countries) of the refugees from Cambodia only happened in 1977, when the first refugee influx entered Malaysian territory (i.e. 1,580 refugees). The migration by sea only happened in 1980 in Italy and Japan. Therefore, the out-migration of Southeast Asia can be estimated as the refugee flow resulting from placement from the first countries in Southeast Asia because direct long-distance migration patterns are rare, and the risk of travel will certainly be greater. The migration across the Southeast Asian waters only happened in 1982, and Indonesia was the first destination for the refugee influx of 2,610 people.
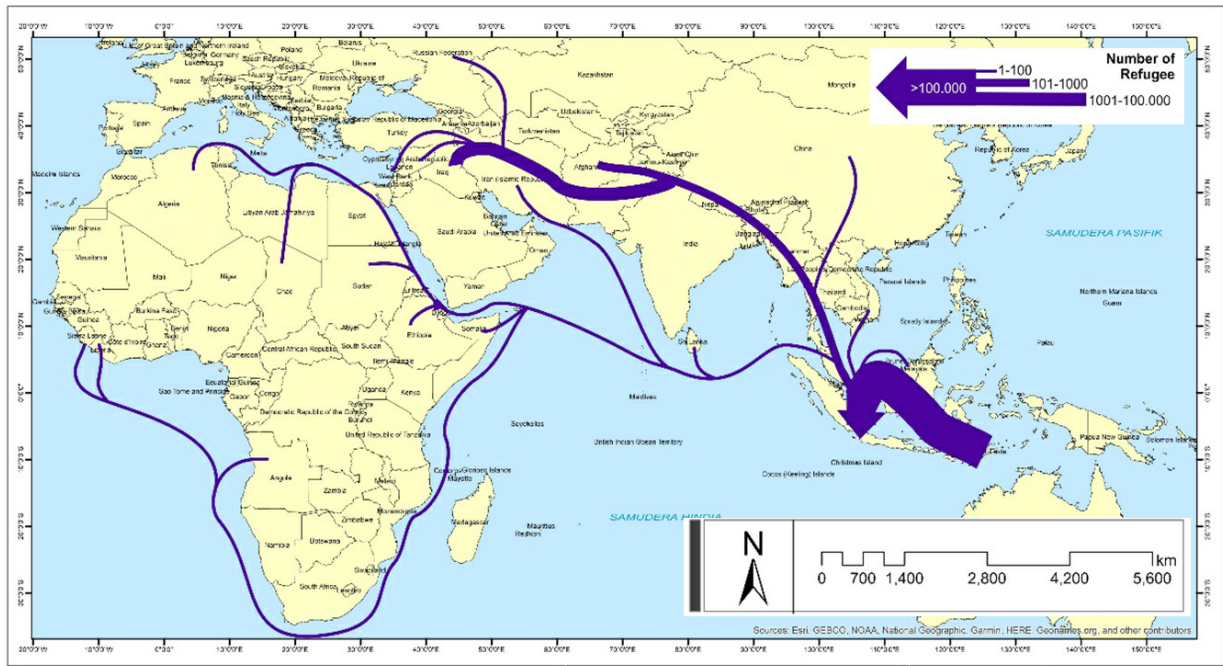
Figure 3. The Map of Refugee Flow into Indonesia during the Transition Era (1998-2002) Based on the Country of Origin
Source: data from UNHCR, 2019

The transition from New Orde Era to Reformation Era (1999-2000) – The Timor Timur Crisis

During the transition from the New Order era to the Reformation era, Indonesia experienced another large-scale influx. Approximately 162.506 people came to Indonesia, mostly from Timor Leste or former East Timor (Figure 3). Besides, the refugee influx from Middle Eastern countries also showed an increase and, at the same time, became the beginning of the existence of Middle Eastern refugees in Indonesia in the following years. Meanwhile, there were only a few refugees from other countries, such as China, Brunei, Russia, Sudan, Syria, Congo, Angola, Chad, and Sierra Leone, less than five refugees. The few refugees are those who have fled their country alone or have been expelled from Australian territory and are stranded in Indonesia.

The change from the New Order to the Reformation era did not immediately happen, but rather a transitional period marked by the immature idea of a new government system. Indonesia's economic and political crisis has shown an increase to its peak, which resulted in the end of the New Order era. The political turmoil and economic failure after the fall of President Soeharto triggered several conflicts in Indonesia (Clear et al. 2000). During this era, there was a change from a semi-authoritarian to a democratic government; military and opposition groups who disagreed with this subject ethnic groups and triggered regional conflicts to show the government's unpreparedness for the change (Taylor 1999).

The refugee influx from Timor Leste cannot be separated from the long history of conflict in East Timor since the Portuguese decolonization in 1975. On December 7, 1975, the Indonesian National Army (TNI) invaded East Timor, intending to make this area part of Indonesia by carrying out violent terror on the population (Taylor 1999). The security crisis in East Timor between the TNI and Fretilin continued, resulting in many civilian casualties. By the end of 1980, an estimated 200,000 people died due to hunger, disease, and continuing attacks from Indonesia (Clear et al., 2000).

After the fall of Soeharto in May 1998 through the Reform agenda and was later replaced by B.J. Habibie, the idea emerged to resolve the conflict in East Timor by holding a referendum. The referendum held on August 30, 1999, resulted in a decision that East Timor left the Republic of Indonesia and became the state of Timor Leste. The separation of East Timor from Indonesia impacted the disintegration of social groups in society. Muhammad Zainuddin, whose story was published by ABC Australia in Tempo (2019), said that after the 1999 referendum, there was a split between communities, where people who agreed with integration decided to flee to Indonesian territory. Jose Ximenes Siqueira Da Costa (Deputy Commander of the Aitarak Militia), whose story was published by Lumbanrau and Kusumadewi (2016), said that his escape to Indonesia is an attempt to escape the persecution of the Timor Leste government after the referendum. The Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CAVR) 2005 noted that around 250,000 East Timore people fled to the West Timor region in East Nusa Tenggara. In addition, Peake et al. (2014) stated that the West Timor region has an important role as the destination of the refugees since it is geographically close and this area has close historical, social, and cultural relations with the East Timorese people.

Reformation Era (2000-2022)-The Year of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Refugees and COVID-19 Pandemic Effect

During the Reformation era, especially after a transitional period marked by political and economic stability that had begun to recover, Indonesia became a transit country increasingly demanding refugees. The government has shown a commitment to giving better refugee management through Presidential Decree 125/2016. This law indicates that even though Indonesia does not sign the 1967 Protocol nor the 1951 Convention, the government is still committed to protecting the human rights of refugees. In this law, the government set several procedures to rescue refugees from the sea, manage
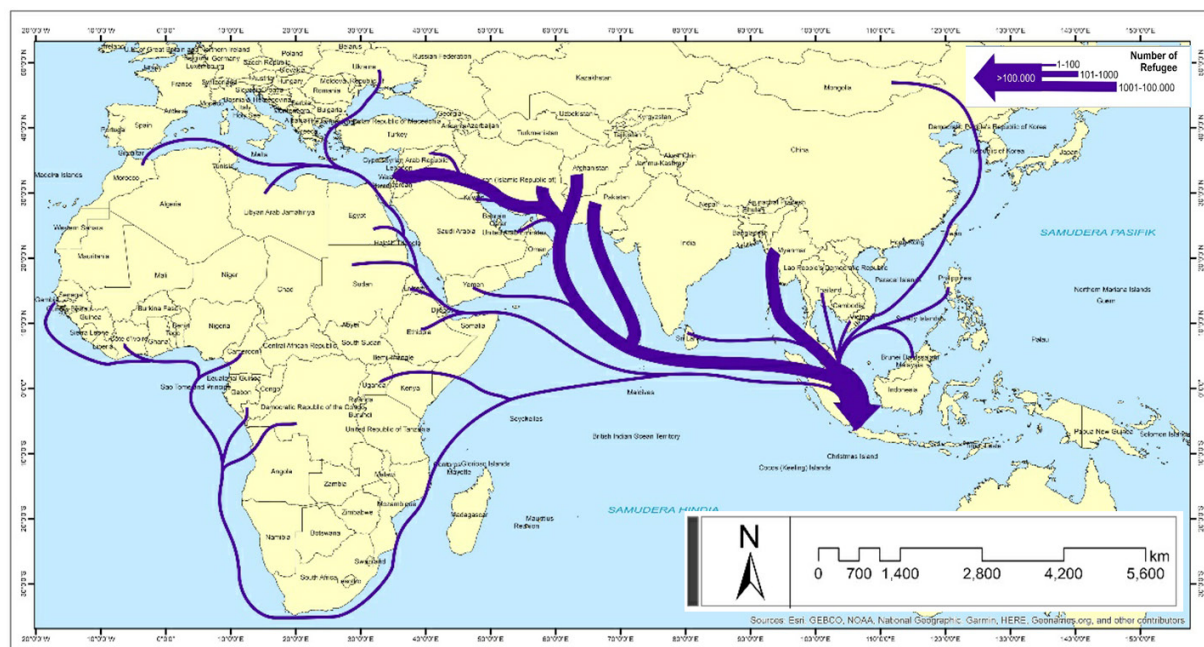
Figure 4. The Map of Refugee Flow into Indonesia during the Reformation Era (2003-2018) Based on the Country of Origin
Source: data from UNHCR, 2019

in-camp detention, and process the hosting country. It also regulates the responsibility of every stakeholder, including UNHCR, related ministries, and local governments. Still, its impact on refugee influx is weakly proven.

The distribution of the countries of origin for refugees in this period increased sharply compared to the previous period (Figure 4). During the Reformation period, the number of refugees from countries of origin in Indonesia was 33 countries divided into nine regions. Those who came to Indonesia were dominated by refugees from South Asia, West Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Africa (Figure 4). Middle Eastern countries were undergoing the turmoil of transnational conflicts in the 21st century, which then impacted the flow of forced migration. The refugee outflow was triggered by a security crisis caused by terrorist groups and territorial seizure, and the emergence of movements demanding the changes in the government system, such as in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria, is also one of the causes of the security crisis in this region (Sahide et al. 2015).

Africa was the second contributor to refugees in Indonesia in the 2000s. The refugee influx in Africa is largely the result of conflict between the government and the opposition or inter-ethnic conflict. Despite these factors, Africa's refugee crisis is also caused by environmental degradation, such as being certified in the Sahel region. However, the geographic scale of migration caused by environmental problems is relatively low, within the scope of one area only. On the other hand, the refugee influx caused by the security crisis has a larger geographical scale. This is because the population does not only move within one continent but also outside the continent.

Several main groups of refugees occurred in Indonesia during the reformation era, including Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Rohingya, and the African continent. The Afghanistan refugees are the largest number of refugees in Indonesia from 2003 to 2015, with 7,824 refugees. The Afghanistan refugee influx has occurred for a long time in surrounding countries, such as Pakistan, but in the early 2000s, the influx started to come to Indonesia. The number

of refugees who came to Indonesia in 1998 was only three. A significant increase only occurred in 2009. There were 29 refugees only in 2008, which increased to 220 in 2009. By the end of 2015, Afghanistan refugees in Indonesia reached 2,890 refugees.

Iranian refugees are refugees from the Middle East that dominate Indonesia. Iran is a country that has undergone a turbulent security crisis in the last decade, one of which is the result of terrorism developing in Indonesia. Besides, transnational conflicts occur due to the United States intervention to crush terrorism, mostly in Iran. Unlike Iran, the presence of Palestine refugees was caused by the existence of ethnic and religious persecution by Israel. The conflict between countries has lasted a long time and was sparked by a dispute over territorial sovereignty.

Furthermore, Somalia is the African country with the largest number of refugees in Indonesia. Somalia is one of five countries, including South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan, the largest contributor to refugees in the world in the 21st century (Specia 2018). For over fifteen years, most Somali people left their country to seek a more decent living due to civil war, economic failure, famine, and drought (Moret, Baglioni, and Efionayi-Mader 2006). According to Gundel (2002) in Moret Baglioni, and Efionayi-Mader (2006), most of these migrations were caused by civil wars, starting in 1988 in northern Somalia and 1991 in most areas when the end of Siyad Barre's regime. However, the coming of the Somali refugee flow to Indonesia only occurred in the 2000s, with an increasing trend until 2018. The migration of Somali refugees went to surrounding countries in Africa. Still, some also tried to go to Australia but were stranded in Indonesia due to restrictions on the quota for refugees' admission in Australia.

Then, the Sudanese refugees are the second biggest refugees from Africa in Indonesia. Sudan is one of the countries with large refugee growth. As reported in the UNHCR news (2012), the Sudanese refugee crisis was caused by the threat of night-time killing, abduction, and burning corps. As a result, Sudanese refugees primarily flee to neighbouring countries

such as Ethiopia, though many also escape to Indonesia. Those who migrated to Indonesia were refugees who hoped to be resettled more quickly in Australia or other western countries (Cochrane 2018). However, restrictions on refugee admission in Australia and other countries have trapped Sudanese refugees and many other countries in Indonesia, resulting in an increasing number each year.

Besides Middle Eastern refugees, the Rohingya refugee influx from Myanmar has occurred since 2015. The arrival pattern of Rohingya refugees is almost the same as that of Vietnamese refugees during the Indochina War, that is, by sea. Based on Figure 5.16, Rohingya refugees migrated from Myanmar by sea and land routes. The refugees took the land route to countries still in the same land as Myanmar, such as Thailand and Bangladesh, and partly to India. Meanwhile, the refugees took the sea route to other countries, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The entry route of Rohingya refugees to Indonesia is through the west coast of Sumatra Island. Fishermen rescued those who fled by boat and drifted into the ocean from Aceh (Davies 2015). Some were then accommodated in residents' homes. However, some were immediately handed over to detention houses in Medan (Tanu, Missbach, and Lumina, 2017). The arrival of the Rohingya refugees shows a new pattern, where human factors and a sense of solidarity among Muslims have led them to Indonesia. Besides, there are also a small number of refugees from other Southeast Asian countries, such as Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought changes to the refugee dynamic in the world. Several countries are enhancing border security to prevent virus transmission through human mobility. Fear of the virus was used to justify rejecting refugees from their homeland (Crawley, 2021). Data from UNHCR shows that from 2019 to 2022, there was thousands of refugee in Indonesia, but this showed a decrease. In 2019, there were 10.287 refugees, decreasing in 2020, 2021, and 2022 to 10.114, 9.982, and 9.736, respectively. Even though the number of refugees has fallen in the last three years, the number of new asylum seekers fluctuates, with a small increase in 2022. In 2019-2022. Several refugee boats entered Indonesia with the help of Acehnese fishermen who brought all those boats onshore through Pidi, Lokshumawe, and Banda Aceh, mainly departed from Myanmar, Thailand, and Bangladesh, bringing hundreds of Rohingya refugees (Charlton, 2020; U.N. News, 2022). According to the Director of Human Rights and Humanity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic Indonesia, 1.155 refugees entered Indonesia through nine boat onshore incidents from 2020-2022.

Then, the problems of refugees in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic are related to the management process, particularly in the camp area. The lack of sanitation and health services has put refugees prone to infection by COVID-19. Living in a crowded detention camp has failed them to maintain the COVID-19 protocols properly. Moreover, refugees do not have legal identification numbers like permanent citizens, so they face vaccination problems. They cannot provide proof of vaccination in PeduliLindungi, an application designed by the government, and cannot access public transportation and public spaces. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted refugee management in Indonesia, either from funding or the resettlement process. According to UNHCR (2021), the economic downturn during the pandemic has caused difficulties in refugee funding in Indonesia. Moreover, as many countries close their border, including limiting the refugee resettlement process, more and more refugees are stranded in Indonesia and living in limbo.

The growing number of refugees has led scholars to study refugees in Indonesia, ranging from social, political, and legal aspects (Shalihah and Nur, 2021; Afriansyah et al., 2022). However, while those aspects have received substantial academic attention, the geographical aspect still needs to be addressed. Scholars have found that identifying geographical elements, such as spatial-temporal of population movement, is essential. Kokcis et al. (2016) mentioned that spatial and temporal characteristics are important in predicting refugee impact. Hubl et al. (2017) add that understanding migration patterns is critical for administrative logistics such as refugee accommodation, transportation, education, and distribution and for reducing refugee causes. Moreover, studying the geographical characteristic of refugee inflow may enrich academic discourse in mobility geography by revealing patterns and reasons behind it (Iqbal, 2007).

In this study, the geographical characteristic of refugee influx in Indonesia has been identified. We found that the refugee country of origin has been expanding, initially from Southeast Asia to Africa and Europe. The increasing number and country of origin are likely influenced by external factors rather than internal factors, such as refugee policy for each government period. It is because refugee is a part of involuntary migration. Their movement is significantly influenced by the push factor in their country rather than the pull factors in the destination country. The conflict escalation in the neighbouring country, followed by the increasing anti-refugee policy in receiving countries, became the source of the refugee influx. Furthermore, we found that the refugee movement follows the law of migration, which will consider migrating to

Table 1. Refugee influx during the COVID-19 pandemic facilitated by local fishermen in Aceh

Date	Number of Refugees (person)	Point of Entrance
06/2020	99	Seunuddon Beach, Aceh Utara Regency
09/2020	296	Lhoksumawe Regency
06/2021	81	Aceh Timur Regency
12/2021	105	Lhoksumawe Regency
03/2022	114	Bireuen Regency
11/2022	229	Aceh Utara Regency
25/12/2022	57	Aceh Besar Regency
26/12/2022	174	Pidie Regency

Source: Antara, 2023

the closest destination. In this context, Indonesia has become closer to the conflict hotspot, predominantly located in South Asia and Middle Eastern. Refugees use Indonesia as a stepping country before migrating to Australia as their final destination.

The role of government regime succession in determining refugee influx is indirect. During the New Order Era, the government aimed to show the international community how Indonesia contributed to the humanitarian crisis (Adam, 2012). Therefore, the government establish an exclusive detention area in Pulau Galang refugee to show the country's generosity. However, following the end of the Soeharto regime and the involvement of the Indonesian government in Timor Leste, political turmoil has created a large refugee influx to Indonesia. In other words, the Indonesian government has contributed to the refugee dynamic in its country. Furthermore, during the reformation era, in the early twentieth-first century, the government participation in the Bali Process formulation also contribute to the increasing number of refugee influx in Indonesia. This regional agreement likely disadvantages Indonesia by allowing refugees to stay in Indonesia rather than enter Australia. Even though through this scheme, Australia is responsible for providing funding for refugee in Indonesia (Gordyn, 2018), it still does not offer a sustainable solution for refugees. This agreement will likely lead to the obscurity of waiting time for refugees and potentially stranded them in the transiting country.

Indonesia's refugee management policy does not significantly influence the refugee influx. The state remains a non-signatory for the 1951 convention and 1967 protocol. Even though Jokowi released presidential decree number 125 in 2016, it is unlikely to become why refugees keep coming. This decree only gives legal procedure to search and rescue refugees stranded within in territorial and does not provide improved refugee services. Refugees still face difficulty accessing public services like health, education, and employment (Birskman and Fiske, 2016). The internal factor contributing to refugee influx may come from local Indonesian attitude toward refugees. For example, the Acehnese local fishermen saved and brought Rohingya refugees offshore instead of expelling refugees like other governments. It shows generosity on one side and brings threads to territorial security on the other side. There must be more coordination between the local community and the border security officers to manage the foreign inflow identified as refugees.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia has a significant role in refugee dynamics in the Asia Pacific. Its location at a crossroads has made Indonesia a strategic country in human movement. Most of the refugees who headed to Indonesia from 1975 to 2019 came from Asian countries and were going to Australia. Indonesia had a position as a transit country before the refugees entered Australia, even acting as an exiled country for rejected refugees in Australia in some cases of the Indonesian refugee influx. They entered Indonesia through illegal routes, whether directly migrating from their home countries or not. The geographical setting, conflict escalation, anti-refugee policy in the neighbouring country and Indonesian political dynamics, including Indonesia's involvement in international conflict, are the main factors influencing the dynamics of refugees. The refugee policy development is unlikely to contribute to the fluctuation of the refugee influx. Indonesia is still a non-signatory country for the refugee convention, and there has been no significant improvement by the Indonesian government in handling refugees to attract more refugees. The refugee legal instrument released during Joko Widodo's leadership era is unlikely to underlying the decision of refugees to enter Indonesia because this law does not provide significant privileges for refugees. Refugees enter Indonesia because they do not have the option to survive their life. Finally, we encourage Indonesia's long journey in dealing with refugees should be responded to by improving the attention to the potential and threats of a future surge in refugees.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

B.A. contributed to designing research questions, data analysis, and writing research paper. A.J.P contributed to analysis, designing methods, and supervising.

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