

Research Article

When Public Opinion is Left Behind: The Case Rejection of Visa on Arrival For Russian Tourists

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Abstract

The Visa on Arrival is Indonesia's foreign policy instrument to boost tourism. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 had an impact on the increasing arrival of Russian tourists to Indonesia. The increasing number of Russians was also directly proportional to the violative and negative sentiments about Russian tourists on social media, public demands to revoke their visa. Despite negative public opinion, the Indonesian government still maintained visa on arrival for Russians. This paper analysed the case study by using Doesser's (2013) model on circumstances when democratic governments neglected public opinion in foreign policy, with its indicators: issue salience, elite debate, and elite perceptions of international gains. This qualitative research used social media analysis to deconstruct the public opinion on issue salience and causal process tracing was used to analyse the context and development of the case. Interviews were conducted to obtain information and confirm the findings. This study found that the neglected of public opinion was carried out because the case categorized as non-critical issue happened episodically thus had low salience. Low media coverage and asymmetrical elite debates resulted in elite consensus. Then, Indonesia avoided economic and political losses and maintained bilateral relations with Russia.

Keywords: Visa on Arrival; Public Opinion; Issue Salience; Elite Debate; International Gains.

I. Introduction

Foreign policy has various instruments to achieve a country's national interests. The fact that Indonesia is an archipelago with a warm tropical climate throughout the year makes Indonesia have great tourism potential. Immigration policy as an instrument of foreign policy is used to achieve national interests and state influence (Duncan, 2020). Indonesia's immigration policy has a function as a facilitator of public welfare with policy derivatives, namely visa and residence permit policies that encourage the growth of the tourism sector. Tourists can come to Indonesia using a Visa Exemption and Visa on Arrival (VoA). One of the countries that got VoA facility was Russia.

To increase Russian tourist arrivals, since 2016 Indonesia has issued Presidential Regulation No. 21/2016 on Visa Exemption and held an Indonesian Festival in Moscow. Festival Indonesia 2016 themed Wonderful Indonesia: Bali and Beyond which was part of Indonesia's diplomatic activities promoting trade, investment, tourism, arts and culture in Russia (Ismail et al., 2022). The implementation of the policy has increased 33% the number of Russian tourists from 88,520 in 2016 to 117,532 in 2017 (Fig. 1). More than 75% of Russian tourists who come to Indonesia visit Bali as a top tourism destination. From 2016 to 2019 the number of Russian tourists continued to increase but decreased in 2020 to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The arrival of Russian tourists which was previously suspended due to the Covid-19 receive VoA after a decline in pandemic cases.



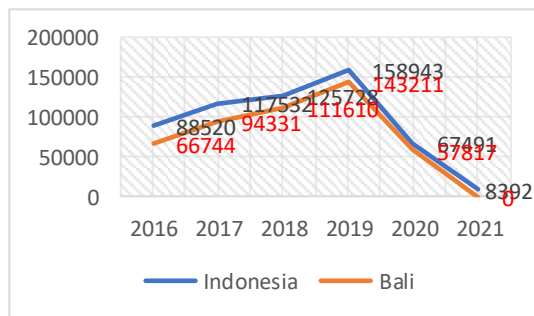


Fig. 1. Russian Arrivals to Indonesia and Bali 2016—2021

Source: Reprocessed from Central Statistics Agency (BPS), (2024).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 also had an impact on tourist visits to Indonesia. Data from the Central Statistics Agency showed an increase in Russian tourists to Indonesia after Putin announced partial mobilization on September 21, 2022 (Barker, 2023). With the increase in Russian tourist arrivals, social problems also increased, such as the violation of visa and local rules in Bali as an impact of the massive presence of Russian tourists there. The Ngurah Rai Immigration Office shows that in 2023, 230 foreigners were deported with 26% (60) of them Russian citizens. Although Russian tourists are known for their long duration of stay and high money spending, the increase in viral negative behavior has led to negative public sentiment.



Fig. 2. Public Concerns on X/Twitter

Source: Reprocessed from X/Twitter, (2024).

The accumulation of negative behaviors by Russian tourists in Bali went viral on social media such as X/Twitter and Instagram. Russian tourists violated Balinese local rules such as being naked on a sacred tree, taking off their pants on Mount Agung, and dressing inappropriately in temples. They also contributed to traffic violations. In addition to avoiding military service in Russia, they also misused tourist visas to work illegally as photographers, comedian, models, yoga trainers, surfing coaches, and even to sell drugs (Barker, 2023; BBC News Indonesia, 2023; Kadafi, 2023; Rachman, 2023). Thus, these are not just about the illegal use of their visa, but also about illegal activities that are detrimental to the local community. The public requested the central government to take decisive action and revoke the VoA of problematic Russian tourist in Bali. This phenomenon is interesting because it shows negative public sentiment towards the implementation of the VoA policy. Analysis of public sentiment from X/Twitter in the time span of May 2022 to July 2023 shows that there is a negative sentiment of 46.02% while the positive sentiment is 32.76.

Despite public demands to revoke the VoA for Russian tourists, the Indonesian government continues to maintain the policy. In a democratic country public opinion and participation are guaranteed in the constitution, they also have an electoral impact on the elites. The neglect of public opinion usually happens in security issues. However, this case shows something different regarding the issue and policy outcomes. This paper analyzes the dynamics of policy in this case VoA when dealing with public opinion input. This paper aims to analyze the factors of



ignoring public opinion input in the context of policy implementation and evaluation.

II. Framework and Methodology

In general foreign policy literature shows policy formulation as the result of the interaction between internal and external variables. Under this view, foreign policy is a reaction to an external stimulus. Doerer (2013) studied the case of why the Poland government participated on Iraq invasion when the public was opposed it. The context and circumstances are classified as the relationship between public opinion and policy, namely: issue salience, elite debate, and elite perceptions of international outcomes.

Issue salience refers to the significance, importance, urgency, and priority of an issue over other issues on the political agenda by the public (Oppermann & Viehrig 2009). Knecht & Weatherford (2006) divide the dichotomy of an issue's salience or not based on the duration and intensity of public interest, namely crisis and non-crisis conditions. Crisis issues relate to threats to basic values with the possibility of military involvement and require a rapid policy response. Meanwhile, non-crisis issues relate to issues that may or may not require military force options and the policy decision period is relatively longer. As issue grown to the public spheres, the more the media coverage, the more prominent the policy is the general public. Oppermann & Viehrig (2009) use the characteristics of news factors which consist of: sense of urgency, threat to basic values, and novelty of news that directly impacts the visibility of the foreign policy events in the media. The frequency of relevant media coverage integrated with Knecht & Weatherford (2006) illustration on the relationship between public attention and

policy stages which used to analyze the salience of the issue (Fig. 5).

These issues are then responded differently among political elites, which then serves as a driver for media to cover issues that are relevant to the public. The use of framing by these elites can also be interpreted as competition in influencing and gaining public support for their performance. For example, the Governor of Bali as a political elite, shows his support to the public by proposing the revocation of VoA for Russian tourists. The public will respond more to policies that have a real impact on their daily lives (Oppermann & Viehrig 2009) which this case was the negative behavior of Russians. When elites do not debate, what happens is elite consensus (Doerer 2013). Elite consensus refers to the absence of coherent opposition to foreign policy, so that political elites avoid electoral punishment (Kreps 2010). A unified elite perception of the international environment is more advantageous over not having elite consensus.

Elite debate also contains the perception of gains or in other terms, are pursuing of national interests. This served as background of policy decision. When formulating foreign policy, governments seek dual political advantages - both international and domestic - because states want to avoid a decline in their position of power in the international order, while maintaining their position (Alons 2007). Two indicators are used to predict a country's foreign policy preference between domestic or international incentives, namely internal polarity in the form of the degree of concentration of power in the hands of the government towards society. This polarity assesses domestic structure or the relationship between state and society in



Indonesia. External polarity refers to the degree of centralization of power in the international system (Alons 2007). By internal and external polarity, we can evaluate the context of policy preferences.

The author identifies the factors of public opinion neglect as intervening variables that explained the gap between policy input (public opinion) and output (maintains the visa on arrival for Russians). Data collection and analysis took place from 1 May 2022, based on the viral case on social media, until two months after the issuance of Bali Governor's Circular Letter No. 04 of 2023 on New Order for Foreign Tourists while in Bali, which was until 31 July 2023. The data set consisted of 671 tweets, while the online media analysis included 253 news articles to further explore the case trends.

The structure of public opinion in this research analyzed in social media analysis which determined the issue salience. Previous research on public opinion often uses polling results to determine issue salience. However, polling methods require significant resources, funds and time. To overcome these limitations, this research uses social media analysis as an alternative in analysing public opinion. The public opinion analysed in this research came from X/Twitter in social media, which allows for a more in-depth deconstruction of the structure of public opinion by analysing frequency, interaction, sentiment and social networks. The results of these analyses can also be integrated longitudinally with news analysis to track the development of public discussion. X/Twitter was chosen to overcome the discontinuity and availability of data which the Instagram account that first viralized *@moscow_cabang_bali* is no longer active.

The case study context and development analyzed by causal process tracing. Process-tracing focuses on identifying processes, chains, and causal mechanisms that link independent variables to dependent variables. Elite debate which media quoted and perception of international gains assessed by this analyse. The author also conducted interviews with stakeholders to obtain additional information, reveal the background of the events, and confirm the research results. The interviews to ensure correspondence between public opinion on social media and on the ground.

III. Discussions

a. Issue Salience: Russian Tourist Behavior in Bali

In 2023, Russian tourists ranked sixth among non-Asian countries visiting Bali. More than 90% per cent of tour packages to Indonesia sold are to Bali. High interest of Russian tourists to travel to Indonesia for long periods of time to avoid winter or as remote workers (Russian Travel Digest 2024). Statistics for 2022 show Russian tourist arrivals to Bali have doubled from 3,931 in September to 9,436 in October 2022. The increase occurred after President Putin announced partial mobilisation on 21 September 2022. Russian tourist arrivals gradually increased from October until early 2023 and decreased in the second quarter after many deportations of Russian from Bali (Fig. 3).



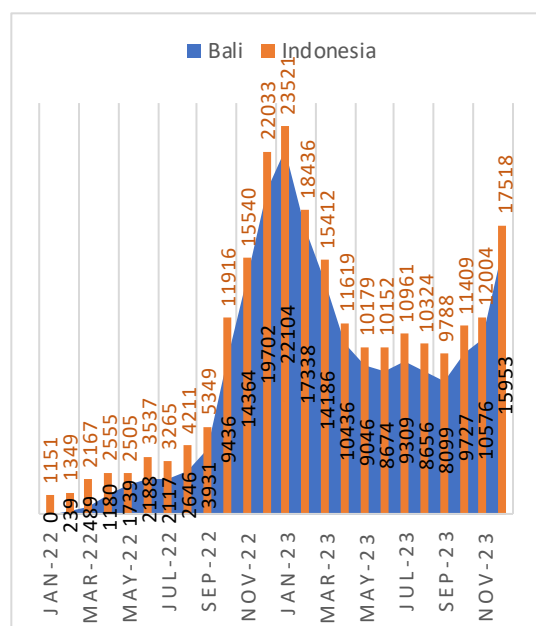


Fig. 3. Monthly Russian Arrivals to Indonesia and Bali 2022—2023

Source: Reprocessed from Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and Bali Tourism Authority (2024).

Public attention on the behaviour of Russian tourists emerged in early May 2022. When Alina Fazleeva, Russian tourist took a nude photo of a sacred tree at Tabanan, Bali. Her photo went viral on social media and the public condemned for disrespecting a sacred place. After Alina's case several other cases of violations followed later such as: Russian tourists who opened a motorcycle rental business and misused their visas for work. The social media factor caused these behaviours to gain public attention. In 2023, Ngurah Rai Immigration Office deported 60 Russian tourists, followed by 16 Americans and 15 Australians. Growing negative sentiment towards Russian tourists on social media indicates growing public attention. Although tourists from other countries also committed violations, the public paid more attention to the behaviour of Russian tourists. And yet despite high public attention, the issue of

Russian tourists in Bali has a lower salience. The low salience can be seen from the type of issues involved in these cases.

Tourism issues are categorised as non-crisis issues because the duration of the issue is protracted and public interest in the issue takes place episodically. Non-crisis issues only attract the attention of the attentive public who feel threatened by it or have an interest in the issue. It showing that the threat reaches a limited attentive public, which its confirmed by interviews with several parties in Bali show that the community's concerns about the behaviour of Russian tourists are specific to those who misuse VoA for tourism purposes but work illegally. An interesting finding from the interview with the Head of the Bali Indonesian Tour Guide Association classified the public into three, namely: tourism communities, non-tourism communities, and a mixture of both. Those who anger are predominantly from the non-tourism community because they perceive Russian tourists as violators of laws and customs, while the tourism community is concerned with potential revenue (HPI, *personal communication*, May 21, 2024). The public sentiment captured from social media is negative while the actual public is still open to tourists. This is also acknowledged by the Bali Motorbike Rental Association, that they are not concerned about Russian tourists as a whole. Their demand is for the government to take action against Russian tourists who open motorbike rentals illegally (PRM Bali, *personal communication*, May 16, 2024).



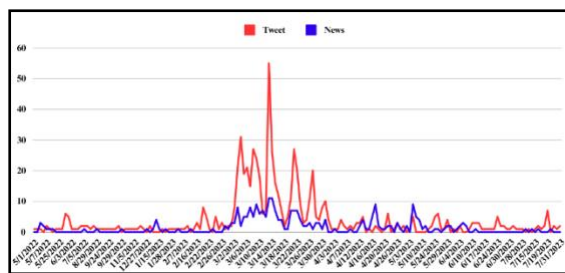


Fig. 4. Detail Public Conversation and Media Coverage

Source: Reprocessed from various sources (2024).

An analysis of X/Twitter conversation trends in the period May 2022 to July 2023 was conducted to get a real picture of the salience of public attention. The result is that throughout this period, public conversation did not occur continuously and consistently. In Fig. 4, from the beginning of May 2022, there is little public engagement in conversations but it increased in late May to June 2022. From July 2022 to February 2023 the frequency of the conversations tended to stabilise. The frequency of the conversations was highest from February to April 2023 with a peak in March 2023. The frequency of the conversations sloped in May 2023 to July 2023 but the intensity of conversations tended to be more than July 2022 to February 2023. This phenomenon means that although this issue was salience, the public does not always discuss it.

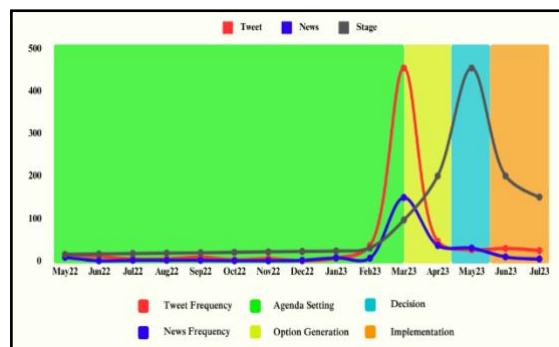


Fig. 5. Policy Stages, Public Attention, and Media Coverage

Source: Policy Stages reprocessed from Knecht & Weatherford (2006),

Tweet and news from various sources (2024).

The issue was salient, but the public's exposure to it was low due to the minor nature of the life threat. Low salience occurred because public opinion is not constant and is divided among various priorities of social issues among the general public. The highest frequency of media coverage occurred in the period March - April 2023. This pattern shows that public attention and media coverage are centred on the formation of issues as agenda setting for elite discussions. The slow agenda-setting process of ten months from May 2022 to March 2023. While April to May 2023 in the elite discussion period, both public discussion and media coverage experienced a gradual decline (Fig. 5). The public provided input in agenda-setting in the policy stages, but the public did not monitor the process to produce the desired output.

Media coverage raise public awareness and information about the issue. Local, national, and international media coverage raised this issue to the public. The narrative about Russian tourist behavior were framed in two ways. The first was that they were avoiding military service to fight the Russian war with Ukraine. This was a context



that made their large numbers in Bali more accepted by the public. The second one was that they were making money illegally in Bali. The highest frequency of media coverage occurred in the period March - April 2023. This pattern shows that public attention and media coverage are centred on the formation of issues as agenda setting for elite discussions. The slow agenda-setting process of ten months from May 2022 to March 2023. While April to May 2023 in the elite discussion period, both public discussion and media coverage experienced a gradual decline (Fig. 5). The public provided input in agenda-setting in the policy stages, but the public did not monitor the process to produce the desired output.

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b. Elite Debate and Consensus

Before going viral, the behaviour of tourists breaking the rules in Bali had not received significant attention from the government. Attention only emerged after media coverage of the incident. In addition to the media, the role of public figures such as Ni Luh Djelantik is also influential in public opinion. Ni Luh Djelantik often expressed her concerns about the behaviour of Russian tourists in Bali on her social media. In this case, public opinion was activated and successfully triggered a dialogue with the political elite. The

Bali Rental Motor Association (PRM) revealed that they utilised the media and community leaders to get the attention of the government. After the issue went viral PRM Bali sent a petition and got an opportunity for hearing session with the Governor of Bali (PRM, *personal interview*, 16 May 2024).

Media analysis revealed three elite attitudes in response to public demands regarding Russian tourists in Bali. Public attitudes, in this case of interest groups, are also noticeable in observed the dynamics of the discussion. The three group classifications are pro, accommodative and contra groups. The development of the case also shows that elite attitudes are not always linear based on the above groupings. The change in elite attitudes shows a discussion that produces consensus as an outcome. The pro group is the one that encouraged the revocation of VoA, namely Bali Governor I Wayan Koster. The proposal to revoke the visa was first put forward by the Governor of Bali on 12 March 2023. The Governor of Bali also proposed that tourists only be allowed to use vehicles from travel agencies. From an electoral point of view, the Bali Governor's stance in line with public demands on social media will affect electability in the future. So the rationalisation for the Bali Governor to follow public opinion input is to avoid the negative impact of electoral punishment if he ignores public opinion.

The accommodative group is for those who show cautious attitude in responding to public demands. President Joko Widodo and the the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy (Menparekraf) and several figures. President Joko Widodo on 13 March 2023 responded briefly to the case stating that tourists are here for tourism and not to



evacuate. This brief response did not indicate what should be done. The Minister stated that it will conduct a comprehensive review because VoA is cross-ministerial/institutional. The Minister's stance is related to the continuity and stability of tourism in Indonesia. The Ministry estimates that the tourism sector is expected to contribute foreign exchange worth USD 0.47-1.7 billion, with a contribution to GDP of 4.3% (Kemparekraf RI, 2022, p. 8). The cautious attitude shown by the Menparekraf is in line with the National Strategic Priority of 2020-2024 (RPJMN) to revitalise Bali's as tourism destinations. Both the president and the minister gave cautious responses.

The contra groups were those who opposed the VoA revocation, the Russian Ambassador, and Rental Motor Association. The Ambassador said that VoA is a tourist facility, so they do not want it to be revoked for Russian tourists (Fajri, 2023). The Russian Ambassador defended by saying that his party always encourages Russian tourists to comply with applicable regulations and that most Russian tourists are law-abiding. This defense reflects his duty to protect every citizen in the accredited country. Meanwhile, Motor Rental Association objected because it would interfere with revenue. They argued for prioritizing a strict law enforcement approach over visa revocation.

A more accommodating attitude change was shown by the Governor of Bali on 16 April 2023 by stating that Bali needs tourists and that the deportation can be a lesson for tourists to respect the Balinese local wisdom. This acknowledgment shows that his softened attitude reflects internal dynamics such as the rejection from motorbike rental business interest groups and the prudence of the

central government which prioritizes long-term interests. The discourse on the revocation of VoA for Russian tourists ended by accommodating national interests and public demands with the issuance of the Bali Governor's Circular Letter number 4 of 2023 on 31 May 2023. The circular regulates the obligations and restrictions (do's and don'ts) for foreign tourists while in Bali. The results of elite debates and discussions resulted in an elite consensus to continue to facilitate the VoA for Russian tourists. The elite consensus strengthened with the decreasing intensity of public attention and sentiment towards the development of the case (Fig. 5).

The central government's position is to maintain the status quo on the proposal. The central government certainly does not want to cause controversy and needs to comprehensively examine the current policy and available improvement options. The tendency for elite consensus can be examined from the Indonesian political system as a determinant factor. As a unitary state, Indonesia has high internal polarity. Foreign policy decisions are centralised in Jakarta. The parliament was dominated by a coalition of political parties supporting the executive so that the supervisory function of the parliament regarding visa policies did not run effectively. Indonesia's decision-making system was known for *musyawarah mufakat* (consensus) as preferably method (DPR RI, n.d.), which is a win-win solution that prevented the executive and legislative branches from electoral punishment due to policies that are not in line with public demands. Even in a statement by the Chairman of MPR RI Bambang Soesatyo stated that not all Russian tourists who came to Bali were problematic. Russia was one of the most important partners for Indonesia (MPR



RI, 2023). The statement emphasised that Indonesia's priority was to establish good relations with Russia regardless of public sentiment.

c. International Gains in Indonesia-Russia Relations

The tendency to maintain VoA for Russian tourists was not only caused by internal factors such as low salience issues and elite consensus. External considerations such as the economic potential of tourism were also quite influential. Bali had long been developed as a leading destination with infrastructure and tourism services that were superior to other tourist destinations. This condition makes Bali very dependent on tourism compared to other sectors. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2022 paralysed tourism in Bali. International borders were closed and human mobility was restricted in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Communities that depended on tourism lost their income due to the mobility restrictions in place.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia provided Visa Exemption for 169 countries and political entities. After the pandemic, the latest policy was replace the Visa Exemption policy with VoA. The provision of VoA as part of the National Economic Recovery strategy following the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023 the number of Russian tourists visiting Bali reached 144,104 people. Placing Russia at number eleven for overall tourists visiting Bali. The interview with Ngurah Rai Immigration officer also revealed similar considerations of economic acceleration by opening the border through VoA. The consideration of maintaining VoA was that the calculation of violations was smaller than the economic contribution provided. Of the 223

immigration administrative actions given to foreign nationals, the percentage was only 0.0005% of the 5.6 million foreign tourists entering Bali. The financial benefits generated were far greater than the losses by problematic tourists (Ngurah Rai Immigration, *personal communication*, May 22, 2024).

The tourism sector was one of the contributors to Indonesia's GDP. In 2023 the tourism sector contributed 3.9% to Indonesia's GDP with a foreign exchange value of USD 14 billion at an exchange rate of IDR 15,600. (Arini, 2024). However, the Secretariat General of the DPR RI considers that the tourism sector still has many shortcomings, especially in achieving performance targets. Tourism did contribute to the national economy, but this achievement was still far below the National Strategic Priority 2020-2024 target, while the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index in 2021 was ranked 32nd, which did not meet to the target ranking of number 29th (Setjen DPR RI, 2023).

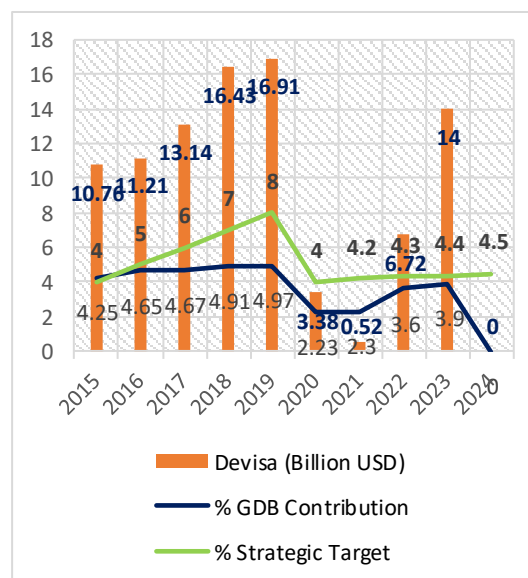


Fig. 6. Tourism Devisa, GDP Contribution, and National Strategic Target



Source: reprocessed from The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, (2024).

The National Strategic Priority 2015-2019 targets an increase in contribution to GDP of 1% per year, but in reality this was very difficult to achieve. In Fig. 6, the trend of percentage from 2015 to 2019 gradually increased from 4.25% to 4.97% with a foreign exchange value of USD 16.91 billion but dropped drastically in 2020 to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Considering the realisation of the contribution in GDP during the previous period which was a target that was difficult to achieve (1% per year), the National Strategic Priority 2020-2024 provided a more realistic target with the hope of an increase in contribution of 0.1% per year. However, this target was also difficult to achieve because the realisation of contributions were far below the National Strategic Priority 2020-2024 target, especially the economic slowdown during and after Covid-19. Based on these considerations and plans, rather than eliminating or reducing the contribution of the tourism sector, the government tends to maintain this growth even though the contribution value is below the performance target.

On the other hand, Indonesia has aspirations to expand its economy to non-traditional markets, namely the Eurasian Economic Area (EAEU). At the 33rd ASEAN Summit in Singapore in 2018 President Joko Widodo conveyed to President Putin Indonesia's intention to increase trade with the EAEU. With Russia's support, Indonesia hopes to capitalize the potential of new non-traditional markets in the Eurasian Zone, which consists of Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan (Manurung, 2018). Indonesia's leading export commodities to the

Eurasian Zone in 2023 consist of copra, palm oil, electrical machinery and equipment, and television sets. Meanwhile, Indonesia's import products from the Eurasian Zone are: fertilisers, coal, wheat, and non-alloy steel semi-finished products (Sayekti 2024). Although the ex-Soviet states were independent of their governments, Moscow always tried to secure its sphere of influence over them and prevent them from outside influence (Götz, 2022). Therefore, to gain access to the Eurasian Zone, Indonesia must gain Russia's support in the Eurasian region, which is Russia's post-Soviet zone of influence. Indonesia, a regional power in the Asia Pacific, especially the ASEAN, has geographical advantages for Russia in international trade routes (Manurung, 2016, 2018).

In the international system, Russia is still seen as a great power that is the legitimate heir to the Soviet Union. International sanctions after the 2014 annexation of Crimea have caused Russia to experience an economic slowdown, so it is looking for alternative solutions to new trading partners. Russia's pivot to Asia were also due to economic factors showing the dynamics of rapid geopolitical competition in the East. Russia's pivot to Asia is observing the competition between China and the United States. Russia seeks to be present as a balancing power in the Asia-Pacific (Korolev, 2016; Nguyen, 2023; Rangsimaporn, 2009). The key to Russia's presence in the Asia Pacific is its good relations with Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam.

The external polarity shows the expectations of the political elite in maintaining good relations with Russia. The revocation of the VoA that has been given to Russian tourists will put Indonesia in a difficult



position. Double losses are avoided in the implementation of foreign policy so that policy preferences are directed towards the fulfilment of long-term goals rather than episodic fluctuations from negative sentiments of public opinion. The first loss is economic in the form of losses in foreign exchange contribution from tourism, while the second loss is political in the form of a disruption in Indonesia-Russia bilateral relations. So far, Russia is an alternative strategic partner within Indonesia's policy orbit. Another consideration is that the revocation of visas for Russian tourists will cause friction in relations between the two countries. On the other hand, Indonesia would have to change all existing visa granting regulations, as visa granting regulations in Indonesia are given inclusively and not exclusively per country.

IV. Conclusion

This case provides a context for understanding when public opinion input is ignored in foreign policy. Firstly, because it is a non-crisis case, it has low salience than a crisis case. In the analysis above, it can be seen that the structure of public opinion is episodic and emotional. The intensity of public attention declines rapidly even before elite consensus occurs. Public sentiment towards an issue can occur due to spontaneity and lack of information about the issue, thus the government tends to ignore the sentiment. Furthermore, spontaneous public opinion is episodic and does not last long. Noisy social media doesn't reflect actual the general attitudes, confirmed by interviews.

Second, the framing of the media coverage did not generate public opinion sustainably. The trend of media coverage congruent with public opinion causes both

were only became a policy context and did not a driving force for policy change. Even the elite debate showed that higher internal polarity and asymmetrical elite discussion resulted consensus.

The third is the rationalisation of neglect due to the stakes of bilateral relations. External polarities are difficult to understand by a spontaneously acting public. The government has expectations in establishing and maintaining bilateral relations. Observing the dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region, Indonesia seeks to maintain good relations with all countries, especially great powers such as Russia. Rational consideration to Indonesia is not to act unilaterally, which has the potential to cause friction with Russia. So that with this neglect, domestic interests, namely economic growth and international interests in maintaining good relations with all countries can be achieved. In the interviews, there were discrepancies between public opinion on X/Twitter and field searches. This discrepancy can be an opportunity for further study of actual public opinion and public opinion on social media.

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