

# INDONESIA'S SECURITY POLICY IN BORDER AREAS: A STUDY OF NATUNA ISLANDS IN CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH (2014-2020)

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## Abstract

- This paper aims to describe Indonesia's border security policy in the Natuna Islands between 2014 and 2020. The state used to play an active role in moderating tensions in the South China Sea, yet paid less attention to its own security while the Natuna was one of the vulnerable borderlines. The rise of domestic interest orientation in the new presidency of Joko Widodo brought about the importance of border security.
- The research applied the qualitative method with a descriptive analysis. In order to understand the border security policy in the Natuna, the research applied Wendtian constructivist approach suggesting the role of identity and institution to analyze the state's behavior and policy in international politics.
- The research found that Indonesia increased military and defense capability as the form of its border security policy in the Natuna made up by deploying troops and military equipment, building defense infrastructure, and strengthening constabulary function and boarding patrols. Such border security policy portrays Indonesia's rising awareness as a maritime state amid the perceived regional structure of East Asia.
- **Keywords:** border security policy, Natuna Islands, military and defense capability.

## Introduction

- The region of East Asia (including Southeast Asia) was persistently challenged by a variety of issues for instance; border disputes [1], maritime competition [2], military balance [3], competing natural resource exploitation and strategic rivalry [4].
- During the leadership of Joko Widodo, Indonesia's foreign policy shifted from outward-looking to inward-looking orientation which focused on pursuing domestic interests [5] [6].
- In term of security, the orientation was followed by the priority of national security interest especially in the border.
- In the case of Natuna, most literature provides analysis on Indonesia's security in power politics and institutional liberal perspective. Meanwhile, non-material determinants such as identity and institution affecting states' behavior were yet to gain significant attention among scholars. The research was intended to narrow the gap.

## Results

In order to pursue border security interest in the Natuna, Indonesia issued a border security policy in the form of military and defense capability improvement. Such border policy was driven by the sovereignty practice in a regional individualistic security system and identity as an archipelagic or maritime state. The policy could be seen through some maneuvers such as deploying troops and military equipment, building defense infrastructure, and strengthening constabulary function and boarding patrols.



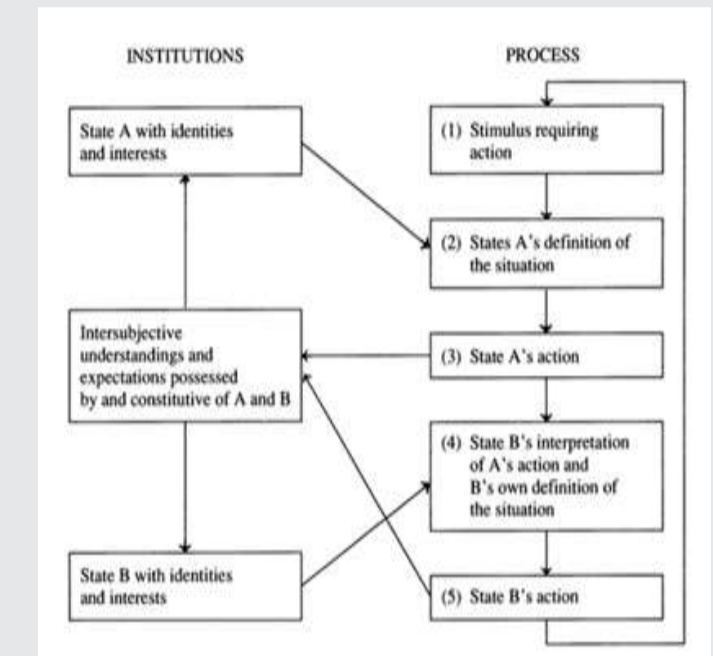
Picture 2. President Jokowi's Visit in the Natuna Islands [8]



Picture 3. Indonesian Military Alert in North Natuna Sea [9]

## Theory and Research Method

- Systemic constructivist approach (Alexander Wendt)



Picture 1. Constructivist Approach [7]

- Qualitative method; Mile and Hubberman's data analysis

## Conclusion

- The identity of an archipelagic or maritime state and institution of sovereignty in a regional individualistic security system were determinants of Indonesia's border security policy in the Natuna. The border security policy was purposively issued to create stability and remove threats, defend sovereignty over the EEZ of North Natuna Sea and maintain maritime integrity.

## Acknowledgement

- This research was funded by Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education through the Scheme of PDP Grant 2020.

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