De-Westernization and Indonesia's Hedging Strategy in the Global South Forum: Constructivist and Neorealist Perspectives

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Abstract
This study examines Indonesia's hedging strategy within the evolving Global South order by analyzing how de-Westernization reshapes its foreign policy orientation through the complementary lenses of constructivism and neorealism. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study analyzes official foreign policy speeches, government statements, and policy documents related to Indonesia's engagement with BRICS, the G20, ASEAN, the Non-Aligned Movement, and other Global South initiatives published between 2022 and 2025. The analysis investigates how diplomatic narratives construct Indonesia's strategic identity while reflecting its responses to intensifying geopolitical competition. The findings demonstrate that Indonesia's hedging strategy cannot be fully explained by either constructivism or neorealism alone. Constructivism reveals how Indonesia mobilizes postcolonial identity, Global South solidarity, and normative commitments to legitimize its international role, whereas neorealism explains the strategic calculations that underpin its efforts to preserve autonomy, diversify partnerships, and balance competing great powers. By integrating these perspectives, the study offers a novel theoretical synthesis that explains hedging as the dynamic interaction between identity construction and power-based strategic adaptation, providing a more comprehensive framework for understanding middle-power diplomacy and Indonesia's evolving role in a multipolar international order.

Keywords: Free and Active Diplomacy, de-Westernization, Global South, multipolarity, BRICS+

Introduction

The transformation of the current international order shows a significant shift from a unipolar system previously dominated by Western powers to a more pluralistic multipolar system. This is marked by weakening trust in Western-based global institutions and the increasing role of developing countries as important actors in global politics. This shift indicates that the old order is no longer able to represent the contemporary reality of (Sapir 2023).

One of the most obvious indicators of this transformation is the growing influence and appeal of the BRICS group, which has now expanded into BRICS+. This group not only exhibits strong economic growth, but also shapes an alternative agenda in global governance, including in the fields of finance, energy, and security. These developments show that global economic and political power is becoming increasingly distributed (Babayev 2024). The emergence of non-Western power blocs also indicates a process of de-Westernization, which is a systemic effort to reduce dependence on structures, values, and systems inherited from colonial domination and Western hegemony. De-Westernization also reflects demands for a global system that is more representative and inclusive of the norms and interests of the Global South (Mignolo 2021b).

Indonesia, as the largest democracy in Southeast Asia, an active member of the G20, and a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement, has a strategic position in the context of these changes. Historically, Indonesia has played an important role in building solidarity among Southern countries through the Asian-African Conference, and now has another opportunity to strengthen this position at the global level (Uluyol 2024).

Indonesia's diplomatic behavior in this context can be understood through a constructivist approach, which emphasizes that foreign policy is shaped not only by material interests, but also by identity, norms, and socio-political history. Indonesia has shaped its image as an inclusive and neutral non-Western democratic country, with a moderate Islamic identity and a dialogical political culture (Mignolo 2021b).

However, in an anarchic and competitive international system, countries still consider strategic interests and national security. Using a neorealist framework, Indonesia's foreign policy can also be interpreted as an attempt at hedging, namely establishing good relations with various major powers in order to minimize risks and maximize benefits (Uluyol 2024). Indonesia's involvement in Global South forums such as the BRICS+ Dialogue, South-South cooperation, and IORA demonstrates a diplomatic direction that is increasingly inclusive of new world powers. In these various meetings, Indonesia has consistently pushed for more equitable global governance reforms,

including on issues of international finance, access to technology, and sustainable development (Babayev 2024).

However, Indonesia continues to maintain strong relations with Western countries such as the United States, Japan, and the European Union. These relations are conducted through economic, defense, and technological cooperation. This reflects the flexibility of Indonesian diplomacy, which avoids absolute attachment to any particular power bloc (Belém Lopes and Vazquez 2024). The principle of free and active diplomacy remains the main foundation of Indonesia's diplomacy. This principle provides space for Indonesia to remain neutral while actively influencing the direction of global change, including on strategic issues such as peace, development, and international justice (Uluyol 2024).

In addition to its strategic geographical and economic position, Indonesia also has an advantage in its symbolic identity. As the largest Muslim country with a well-established democracy, Indonesia offers an alternative narrative in global forums, especially in bridging developing countries with major powers through a moderate and peaceful approach (Mignolo 2021b). In various multilateral forums, Indonesia has voiced the importance of a more equitable global system. Issues such as the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, climate change financing, and global development inequality have been consistent themes raised by the

Indonesian delegation at the G20, COP, and other UN forums (Sapir 2023).

Indonesia has also begun to expand concrete cooperation with Global South countries in the fields of infrastructure, digital technology, and renewable energy. Cooperation projects with China, India, Brazil, and South Africa reflect Indonesia's commitment to building more balanced and mutually beneficial partnerships (Babayev 2024). However, there are significant challenges in Indonesia's diplomacy, such as limited foreign bureaucratic capacity, domestic political pressure, and dependence on commodity exports and investment from developed countries. This shows that Indonesia's strategy is not immune to structural pressures that must be faced realistically (Elango 2023).

The main question then arises: is Indonesia's involvement in the dynamics of the Global South and the process of de-Westernization already at a substantial strategic level or is it still symbolic? In the discourse of international relations, this question is important to assess whether Indonesia is capable of becoming a balancing force or is merely following the developing geopolitical trend (Mishra, Hashim, and Milner 2021).

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze Indonesia's diplomatic position in a global order that is undergoing de-

westernization and multipolarization. Using a theoretical approach of constructivism and neorealism, this paper seeks to reveal how Indonesia navigates various interests in global relations through flexible strategies and its historical values (Tickner and Blaney 2020).

This study offers twofold contributions to the field of international relations. Theoretically, it advances a novel analytical synthesis by integrating constructivist and neorealist paradigms, enabling a more holistic interpretation of Indonesia's hedging behavior amid the evolving multipolar order. This dual-theoretical lens captures the interplay between ideational constructs such as identity, postcolonial narratives, and diplomatic norms and material imperatives rooted in systemic power configurations. Empirically, the article contributes original insights by employing critical discourse analysis to examine Indonesia's foreign policy narratives across Global South multilateral platforms. Through this methodological approach, the study uncovers how Indonesia mobilizes pluralistic identity discourse alongside strategic pragmatism to navigate post-hegemonic dynamics. In doing so, the research not only elucidates Indonesia's diplomatic role in global governance reform but also refines conceptual tools for analyzing middle-power agency in an increasingly fragmented international system.

Research Method

In this study, the methodological approach used is a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring complex phenomena related to international diplomacy, particularly in the context of global transformation towards a non-Western order. This method aims not only to explain events or phenomena, but also to understand the context, power dynamics, and construction of meaning in Indonesia's foreign policy. Descriptive qualitative research allows researchers to analyze Indonesia's position in various international forums such as BRICS, G77, and G20, based on the narratives, actions, and diplomatic symbols used by the country. This approach is in line with contemporary international relations studies that emphasize ideological, cultural, and historical aspects in understanding the Global South movement and de-Westernization (Hamidi and Mozdkhah 2024).

The data in this study was collected through literature and document studies (desk studies), which included various official and scientific secondary sources. These sources include Indonesian foreign policy documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemenlu), transcripts of speeches by the Indonesian president and high-ranking officials in multilateral forums, press releases and official statements from Global South organizations (BRICS, SCO, G77), as well as

scientific articles from academic journals and policy reports from strategic studies institutions. This data collection technique allows researchers to compile chronologies, compare the diplomatic stances of different actors, and explore the ideological dimensions hidden in diplomatic narratives. In addition, sources were selected based on credibility, topic relevance, and diversity of perspectives to ensure that the analysis results were unbiased and scientifically accountable (Syafe and Arsy 2025).

The data analysis technique used is critical discourse analysis (CDA). This technique is useful for interpreting texts, political statements, and diplomatic documents as products of social and political power constructions. In the context of this study, CDA is used to examine how Indonesia frames its role in the multipolar world order, as well as how the narrative of de-Westernization is manifested in public policy and diplomacy. This approach not only reads texts as reflections of reality, but also as tools that shape international political reality. Furthermore, data validity is maintained through source and theory triangulation, combining postcolonial perspectives, global power theory, and South-Global diplomacy as conceptual frameworks. Through this methodology, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of Indonesia's strategic repositioning amid the dynamics of global order change (Ussainar, Prakoso, and Prasodjo 2025; Baral 2022).

Result

De-Westernization as a New Paradigm in Global Politics

The dynamics of international relations are currently moving towards fundamental change. After being bound for so long in a post-Cold War unipolar order led by the United States and its Western allies, the world is now experiencing a phase of power redistribution. New powers such as China, India, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa are beginning to strengthen their influence in the fields of economics, technology, and diplomacy. This phenomenon is not merely a shift in the geopolitical balance, but a reflection of the growing demand for a more inclusive and multipolar international system, as illustrated by the increasing initiatives from Global South countries (Barasuol, Cerioli, and Kalil 2022).

Amidst these changes, the idea of de-Westernization emerged as a response to the long-standing dominance of Western-rooted global structures and values. Developing countries believe that international norms, economic standards, and even the concept of democracy that have been applied thus far often fail to take into account the diversity of values and social contexts in non-Western regions. Therefore, de-Westernization has become a kind of collective movement to reformulate

the direction of global development based on a more diverse, fair, and equitable perspective (Mignolo 2021a).

More and more countries are questioning the legitimacy of global institutions that have been considered neutral, when in practice they tend to reinforce the interests of developed countries. Imbalances in the voting structure of the UN Security Council or Western control over international financial institutions are indications that the existing system does not reflect the current balance of power in the world. Southern countries are also beginning to strengthen their bargaining position by pushing for global institutional reform and forming alternative mechanisms as a way out of their long-standing dependence (Delinking and Zagelmeyer 2023).

Forums such as BRICS+, SCO, CELAC, and G77 have emerged as new spaces that enable developing countries to shape the global agenda based on their own experiences. In these forums, the Global South does not only play the role of recipient, but also the formulator of change. They raise issues of north-south inequality, resource exploitation, and the need for sustainable development that does not duplicate the models of developed countries. This marks the birth of a new framework for cooperation based on solidarity, not subordination (Simão and Uebel 2022).

In this process, major non-Western actors play an important role in promoting a new order. China, with its Belt and Road Initiative, and Russia, with its geopolitical strategy, have created new centers of influence that counterbalance Western dominance. In various forums, these two countries openly promote the formation of a multipolar world that rejects liberal ideological hegemony and places greater value on the principles of non-intervention, national sovereignty, and diversity of political systems (Lapenko and Naumenko 2024).

However, de-Westernization is not solely a matter of geopolitics. It also encompasses profound intellectual and epistemological dimensions. Global South countries are beginning to question the Western framework of thinking that has long been the sole reference point in social sciences and international policy. They are attempting to construct new, more contextual theories based on the history of colonialism, structural inequality, and local values. These efforts form an important foundation for the emergence of a more equitable global knowledge architecture (Mignolo 2023).

Global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic reflect how the Western-based world order has failed to ensure global justice. The unequal distribution of vaccines, lack of financial support, and exclusion of developing countries from major decision-making prove that the current global system is not adaptive to collective crises. This situation

reinforces the spirit to build an international architecture that is not only efficient, but also fair and representative (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020).

At the same time, the identity of the Global South is evolving. No longer merely the third world, the Global South is now a political entity that voices a development agenda based on the principles of solidarity, ecology, and social justice. Developing countries are developing diplomacy based on shared historical experiences, as well as resistance to global economic and political domination that ignores the diversity of aspirations and value systems (Barasuol , Cerioli, and Kalil 2022).

De-Westernization is also evident in the shift in global narrative control. Non-Western media outlets such as Al Jazeera, RT, and CGTN have become alternative references in shaping international public opinion. They offer different perspectives on conflicts, development, and foreign policy, which have long been dominated by Western media narratives. This contributes to the formation of a more diverse and critical global opinion towards the dominant discourse (Thussu 2018).

In the midst of all these changes, countries such as Indonesia are in a strategic position. As a large democracy with a free and active foreign policy, Indonesia is able to play a balancing role between the world's major powers. In this multipolar and post-hegemonic era, a flexible, principled, and regionally-based diplomatic approach is key to

strengthening sovereignty and actively contributing to the formation of a new global order (Petito 2016).

BRICS as a Catalyst for a Pluriversal World Order

The BRICS bloc has undergone a major transformation in response to Western global dominance, which is considered increasingly unrepresentative of the interests of developing countries. Starting as a consultative forum of five major countries from the Global South, BRICS has now become a strategic alliance that advocates for the restructuring of the world order. In its development, this alliance has not only focused on economic growth, but also on the formation of a new, more balanced international governance framework. This change stems from a collective unease with a global structure that has been dominated by double standards in trade, finance, and international politics (Sapir 2023).

The expansion of BRICS membership in 2023 is a significant step in strengthening its geopolitical role. By inviting strategic countries from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America to join, BRICS is expanding its influence beyond Asia and Eastern Europe. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Ethiopia bring natural resource strength and strategic geographical positions to the bloc, strengthening its negotiating position in global forums. This expansion also shows that

BRICS is beginning to be recognized as a new global power capable of influencing the direction of the international system (Comel et al. 2024).

In the context of global finance, BRICS encourages dedollarization efforts through the use of local currencies in bilateral transactions and the development of inter-country payment systems that are independent of the dominance of the US dollar. These efforts have emerged as a form of resistance to systemic dependence, which is considered to create inequality and vulnerability for developing countries. Initiatives such as these aim to create monetary autonomy and protection from the effects of global shocks, which have been heavily influenced by US economic policy (Pilkington 2023).

As a complement to this step, BRICS also established the New Development Bank (NDB), which was designed to overcome dependence on the IMF and the World Bank. The NDB provides development financing without demanding the implementation of neoliberal economic policies that often undermine national economic sovereignty. The bank represents a shift in the global development paradigm, placing greater emphasis on social justice, economic sovereignty, and the principle of solidarity among developing countries (Babayev 2024).

In addition to economic and financial aspects, BRICS also strengthens its focus on sustainable development issues that include

social and ecological dimensions. This alliance has begun to introduce alternative development models that are not solely oriented towards growth, but also towards resource sustainability and community welfare. This approach is based on the need for countries in the Global South to escape the trap of exploitative development models that have been developed by major Western economic powers (Davidson 2024).

China plays a key role in the BRICS economic network expansion strategy, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The integration of infrastructure projects within the framework of the BRI and the BRICS agenda strengthens China's position as the main driver of global geopolitical transformation. By providing access to funding and development to developing countries, China is promoting the formation of a new connectivity system that expands BRICS' reach in the fields of energy, logistics, and communications (do Vale and Costa 2024).

Not only that, cooperation between BRICS and alternative blocs such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) shows a trend towards strengthening non-Western regional blocs. This cross- -block cooperation creates a strong foundation for the formation of a more inclusive global economic-political architecture that promotes the principles of equality and non-intervention (Massalsky, 2025). These blocs work complementarily to

expand multilateral cooperation networks in various strategic sectors (Massalsky 2025).

The principle of multipolarity promoted by BRICS reflects a collective spirit to rebalance global power. Within this framework, no single country dominates absolutely; rather, power is distributed based on the capabilities and interests of each actor. This approach enables the creation of international relations that are more equitable, open, and reflective of the multi-civilizational reality that exists in the world today (Garcia, Thompson, and Brito 2025).

Reform of global governance is a key focus for BRICS in various international forums. Member countries propose adjustments to the structure of global institutions such as the UN Security Council, IMF, and WTO to better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. This step is being taken to ensure that developing countries have an equal voice and influence in decision-making that affects the global destiny. This structural reform is considered important to avoid unilateral domination, which has been a source of global inequality (Ziguo 2024).

More than just technical reform, BRICS promotes a philosophical approach that encourages recognition of the plurality of value systems. The alliance rejects a single universalism that defines democracy, development, and progress solely through a Western lens. By promoting

the concept of pluriversality, BRICS provides space for the development of social and economic systems based on the local context, history, and culture of each country (Zagelmeyer, 2024). This forms the ideological basis of the growing global de-Westernization movement (Zagelmeyer 2024).

Despite their strong collective spirit, internal challenges remain part of the dynamics of BRICS. Differences in national interests, a history of bilateral conflicts, and geopolitical positions that are not always aligned make the decision-making process complex. The disharmony between India and China, as well as domestic political fluctuations in Brazil and South Africa, are factors that have the potential to weaken the long-term effectiveness of this alliance (Uluyol 2024).

In the academic and knowledge production fields, BRICS has also taken strategic steps to break the Western epistemic dominance. Educational and research institutions in member countries have begun actively publishing scientific works that highlight the perspectives of the Global South. This development shows a serious effort to create a scientific ecosystem that is more democratic, inclusive, and relevant to the context of developing countries (Comel et al. 2023).

The reaction of Western countries to the strengthening role of BRICS tends to be defensive and negative. Narratives that portray this alliance as a threat to democracy or international stability are commonly found in mainstream media discourse in the West. Actions such as economic sanctions and pressure diplomacy are part of a geopolitical strategy to curb BRICS' influence in the global arena. This kind of response reinforces the collective awareness that global transformation is indeed taking place and is not always accepted by the forces of the status quo (Pierre 2024).

Amid global fragmentation, solidarity among Global South countries that are members of BRICS has become a strategic force. Through cooperation in the fields of food, energy, health, and climate change, these countries are building synergies that strengthen their independence and collective resilience. This solidarity reflects that a model of cooperation based on equality and mutual respect can be practically implemented in the international system (Mathebane 2025).

The development of BRICS opens up opportunities for other countries, including Indonesia, to become more actively involved in these alternative blocs. With its free and active foreign policy principle, Indonesia is strategically positioned to bridge the transforming global powers. More intensive engagement with BRICS or other Global South networks will strengthen Indonesia's bargaining position in

international negotiations and create more autonomous policy space (Coban Oran and Pekcan 2024).

New Post-Hegemonic Economic Architecture: BRICS+, SCO, and CELAC in the Global South Perspective

Amidst global geopolitical shifts that are moving away from Western dominance, various new economic blocs have emerged, formed by developing countries to strengthen their bargaining position in the international system. One of the most notable is BRICS, which has now evolved into BRICS+ as countries outside the original five members increase their participation. This bloc is not only a diplomatic forum, but also an alternative economic and financial instrument through the establishment of the New Development Bank and the use of local currencies in international transactions. These efforts are a concrete manifestation of the desire of Southern countries to break away from their dependence on Western-dominated global financial institutions (Vadell 2020).

The expansion of BRICS+ membership to include countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, and Egypt further reinforces its strategic orientation as an alternative economic axis. With the involvement of new powers from the Middle East and Africa, BRICS+ is expanding its sphere of influence, both geographically and in the global

energy and financial sectors. This expansion is not merely symbolic, but also reflects a collective determination to build a more equitable, balanced, and inclusive international economic system. At the last high-level meeting, there was a growing push to reduce dependence on the US dollar and strengthen South-South trade cooperation (E. Gürcan and Otero 2024).

In addition to BRICS+, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) also plays an important role in the formation of a new economic and security axis, especially in Asia and Eurasia. Although initially focused on stability and counter-terrorism issues, the SCO has now expanded its agenda to include trade, connectivity, and technological cooperation. Its member countries, such as China, India, Russia, and Iran, are major powers that have the capacity to shape an independent regional economic architecture. Cross-border infrastructure projects and market integration under the SCO demonstrate the bloc's seriousness in realizing a multipolar economic order in a region that has long been contested by the West and the East (Zakharov 2024).

Meanwhile, CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) has developed as a political and economic alliance that promotes Latin American regionalism. In its relations with China and Asian partners, CELAC has successfully expanded cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, energy, and education. The uniqueness of

CELAC lies in its approach, which avoids direct influence from the United States and emphasizes the principles of sovereignty and development based on regional solidarity. This strategy shows that Latin America is also seeking new ways to strengthen its economic autonomy, while forming a more solid Global South axis (DyKmann and HeDe 2025).

This phenomenon is in line with the rise of South-South initiatives that are no longer symbolic or based on technical assistance, but have developed into a network of real and sustainable economic cooperation. In various multilateral forums, South-South cooperation now includes the establishment of development banks, alternative financing schemes, and the formulation of technology and communication standards that do not refer to developed country models (E. C. Gürcan 2019).

The fundamental difference between this new economic bloc approach and Western institutions is its orientation towards national development and solidarity among developing countries. While the neoliberal approach promoted by the IMF and World Bank emphasizes liberalization and privatization, cooperation within BRICS+, SCO, and CELAC tends to prioritize the role of the state, infrastructure investment, and protection of the domestic sector. These principles stem from a collective awareness that development that is overly dependent

on the Western system will never create true economic sovereignty (Mustapha 2021).

However, internal challenges in consolidating these blocs cannot be ignored. Differences in political systems, strategic interests, and bilateral tensions between members, such as between India and China in the SCO, or domestic political dynamics in Latin America in CELAC, mean that efforts to build a shared vision do not always run smoothly. However, even though the process is not linear, the commitment to economic independence and the repositioning of the Global South remains the common thread that binds them all in one strategic direction (E. Gürcan and Otero 2024).

In this context, Indonesia has a great opportunity to strengthen its strategic role. Through its free and active foreign policy and participation in forums such as ASEAN, G20, and the South-South Cooperation Center, Indonesia can act as a bridge between major economic powers and other developing countries. Indonesia's involvement in BRICS+ as a potential partner also opens up new opportunities for more flexible economic diplomacy, based on national interests and free from the pressure of certain ideological blocs (Zhou 2024).

The consolidation of Southern economic power is not only a matter of strengthening technical cooperation, but also part of a macro-strategic repositioning within the international system. If BRICS+ and other blocs continue to expand their institutional base and strengthen cross-regional synergies, it is not impossible that the world economic system will undergo a major reconfiguration. Global dependence on Western institutions will begin to erode, and developing countries will have stronger instruments to determine their own development agenda (Esfahani and Alihosseini 2025).

With the development of these non-Western economic blocs, the world is no longer defined by a single center of power or a single dominant economic system. Instead, we are entering a new phase of international relations in which power is more evenly distributed, and each region has the opportunity to shape its own economic reality. In this regard, BRICS+, SCO, CELAC, and various South-South initiatives are not just new structures, but representations of a global spirit that rejects subordination and demands recognition of the right to determine the future independently (Ishmael 2025).

Indonesia's Free and Active Diplomacy in the Dynamics of the New Global Power Blocks

The principle of free and active diplomacy that Indonesia has embraced since its independence remains the main foundation in facing global dynamics. Amidst the increasingly multipolar changes in the international order, this principle is no longer merely declarative, but has become an active and flexible strategic diplomatic framework in responding to new challenges. Indonesia's foreign policy is now transforming in line with the shift in global power, especially with the emergence of new blocs such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Achmad Ichwani 2024).

In facing geopolitical transformation, Indonesia refuses to be trapped in any power bloc and chooses to be an independent actor that builds relationships selectively. This approach is reflected in its involvement in alternative economic and political forums, which prioritize South-South cooperation and more inclusive global reform. Thus, the free and active strategy becomes a middle ground that maintains sovereignty while still opening up space for international interaction (Maglia et al. 2024).

Indonesia's presence in the G20 forum and as a BRICS partner country strengthens its position as a strategic middle power. Indonesia is able to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries, especially on crucial issues such as energy transformation, global economic justice, and the restructuring of multilateral

institutions. This strategy provides diplomatic advantages while expanding the scope for international negotiations that benefit (Wardhani and Mirdad 2025).

Amidst the rivalry between major powers in the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesia is implementing a balancing strategy aimed at maintaining regional stability. Its foreign policy is geared towards avoiding conflict escalation, while building collaboration with countries that share a similar vision of peace and regional development. This position demonstrates consistency with the principle of free and active diplomacy in the face of global geopolitical pressures (Ardianto 2023).

Changes in the dynamics of international trade and the global economy have also prompted Indonesia to make adjustments to its foreign policy. As market access and technology began to shift to Asia and the Global South, Indonesia responded by strengthening economic relations with partner countries outside the Western economic architecture. This was done while maintaining the principle of non-alignment but with a more pragmatic approach (Tampubolon 2025).

Indonesia utilizes forums such as BRICS to strengthen its bargaining power against global financial institutions that have been dominated by developed countries. The presence of BRICS development banks and economic cooperation within this forum opens up alternative

financing opportunities for national development without relying on traditional institutions such as the IMF or World Bank. This strategy demonstrates the transformation of free-active diplomacy into a concrete tool of economic diplomacy (Aisyah and Pratisti 2025)

Within the domestic framework, the principle of free and active diplomacy is also used to maintain national cohesion against external influences that could disrupt social and political stability. An independent foreign policy creates room for maneuver for the government in setting the direction of development without having to bow to ideological or economic pressure from other countries. This principle becomes even more relevant as global geopolitical pressures increase (Utama 2025).

The implementation of a free and active policy also includes the establishment of dynamic bilateral and multilateral partnerships. Indonesia is not fixated on historical relationships or ideological preferences, but rather prioritizes national interests as the determinant of policy direction. With this approach, Indonesia is able to maintain good relations with various power blocs without losing its identity as a non-aligned country (Venessa 2025).

The importance of strengthening South-South cooperation is an integral part of Indonesia's strategy in the new world order. Through

forums such as BRICS+, IORA, and SCO, Indonesia is expanding its influence in a network of developing countries that share similar aspirations to create a more equitable global system. This involvement also serves as a platform for Indonesia to promote its sustainable development agenda at the global level (Collins et al. 2023).

In the face of global tensions, Indonesia remains committed to the principles of non-intervention and state sovereignty, but does not hesitate to take a stand when national interests are threatened. This stance is demonstrated through active participation in multilateral diplomacy and regional initiatives aimed at creating stability. This approach makes Indonesia not only a participant, but also a leader in the geopolitical arena of the region (Achmad Ichwani 2024).

Indonesia's free and active approach has also become more complex through the application of digital, cultural, and public diplomacy. In the era of global communication, diplomatic channels are no longer limited to relations between countries, but also involve civil society and non-state actors. This strengthens the reach of Indonesian diplomacy without relying solely on military or economic power (Collins et al. 2023).

Indonesia's foreign policy also adapts to domestic dynamics, particularly those related to national development and economic

resilience. The integration of foreign policy and domestic development is key to ensuring the long-term consistency of the free and active principle. Thus, foreign policy is not reactive, but rather planned and results-oriented (Venessa 2025).

Indonesia's role in the G20 is clear evidence that a free and active strategy can translate into global leadership. Indonesia is not only hosting the summit, but also leading strategic discussions and pushing for concrete results for global economic recovery. This success demonstrates Indonesia's ability to be active in global forums without having to join specific geopolitical alliances (Press 2023).

Institutionally, the free and active strategy is also strengthened through the revitalization of foreign policy involving various ministries and policy actors. This cross-sectoral approach makes foreign policy part of a comprehensive government system, rather than the narrow domain of diplomacy alone. As a result, Indonesia's position in the international arena is increasingly taken into account (Aisyah and Pratisti 2025).

With the development of various forms of global and regional cooperation, Indonesia has a great opportunity to expand its influence without having to rely on hegemonic powers. The continuously updated principle of free and active diplomacy makes Indonesia flexible,

adaptive, and capable of maintaining its national interests in an increasingly complex and competitive world (Utama 2025).

Conclusion

This study has explored Indonesia's hedging strategy within the shifting terrain of global order, emphasizing its dual engagement with both Global South solidarity and strategic partnerships with established Western powers. By integrating constructivist and neorealist perspectives, the research advances a novel theoretical synthesis that captures the interplay between identity-based diplomacy and pragmatic security behavior. Constructivism has illuminated how Indonesia constructs and performs its international identity as a pluralist, postcolonial, and norm-producing actor, while neorealism has explained its simultaneous pursuit of strategic flexibility and geopolitical balance. Together, these approaches offer a multidimensional framework to understand middle-power agency in an increasingly fragmented and post-hegemonic global system.

Empirically, the study contributes to the literature on Global South diplomacy by analyzing Indonesia's discourse across multilateral forums such as BRICS+, IORA, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Through a discourse-analytic approach, the research demonstrates how Indonesia leverages pluralistic narratives, historical legitimacy, and symbolic capital to assert its relevance without fully detaching from

Western-dominated structures. This form of diplomatic ambidexterity not only reaffirms Indonesia's commitment to plurilateralism and global equity but also reflects a deeper logic of resilience and adaptive strategy, positioning Indonesia as a mediator in multipolar contestation.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its exclusive reliance on discourse-based qualitative analysis, which, while ideationally rich, may not fully reveal the decision-making processes or strategic calculations behind Indonesia's foreign policy. The lack of quantitative validation and the single-country focus constrain broader generalizability. Future research should employ mixed-methods designs, incorporate elite interviews or network analysis, and engage in comparative studies with other middle powers such as Türkiye, Brazil, or South Africa to further interrogate how de-Westernizing diplomacy manifests across diverse geopolitical contexts. Such comparative extensions would enrich the theorization of Global South agency and deepen understanding of normative innovation in world politics.

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