

Research Article

The Capacity of Indonesia as a Source Country in Enabling Trafficking in Persons

Devina A Millenia¹⁰²³

Received: 12 February 2025 / Accepted: 10 June 2025

©The Author(s), 2025

Abstract

This paper examines the analytical discussion that Indonesia, as an origin or source country, has an enabling role in Trafficking in Persons (TIP). It argues that the failure of the government's institutional and social dimensions in the source countries is the main reason that facilitates the widespread acts of TIP in Indonesia. This article consolidates insights from the extensive literature on the combination of sociology, criminology, politics, economy and cultural aspects of TIP to find the key drivers of it in the source country. In this regard, it asserts that the institutional factors, failure of effective bureaucracy, the lack of fiscal capacity, and weak border-security management can create a permissive situation for TIP and maintain the prevalence of trafficking flows. The social aspects, compounded by the government's ineffective social assistance policy, can lead to acts of TIP because it fails to address the root causes of economic viability at the individual level.

Keywords: trafficking, trafficking in persons, source countries, Indonesia, state capacities

¹⁰²³ Devina A Millenia is MSc graduate in Global Crime, Justice and Security from University of Edinburgh.

I. Introduction

There has been a turn in research towards the role of states as the key drivers of the contemporary transnational issue of Trafficking in Persons (TIP). In particular, growing attention has been directed toward origin or source countries, whose structural and institutional conditions can facilitate and sustain trafficking networks.¹⁰²⁴ In light of this shift, the present paper aims to critically examine how the internal dynamics of a source country contribute to enabling TIP, using Indonesia as a focused case study. Indonesia presents a particularly compelling case due to its status as one of the source countries for TIP, with documented cases involving forced labour, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, and other forms of modern slavery.¹⁰²⁵ While economic inequality is often cited as a primary driver of trafficking in Indonesia, what makes the country especially relevant for this study is the paradox of its continued TIP prevalence despite being a politically stable, middle-income nation.¹⁰²⁶ This aspect enables a deeper investigation into how governmental factors, notably legislative shortcomings, administrative inefficiencies, systemic corruption, and insufficient grassroots-level social interventions, interact to enable TIP.

It will be done, firstly, by conceptualising TIP and providing a general overview of the role of source, transit, and destination countries as the drivers of TIP. It will then proceed to consider the case study analysis, using Indonesia as an example to investigate the role of the source country in enabling TIP. This analysis will examine the general overview of how the state's capacity acts as the causal and driving factor of TIP. Next, this paper will examine each contributing aspect to Indonesia's capacity as a source country in enabling TIP. It will then be discussed by analysing four

¹⁰²⁴ Robert G Blanton, Shannon Lindsey Blanton, and Dursun Peksen, "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 37, no. 4 (2018): 471-489, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0738894218789875>.

¹⁰²⁵ "Indonesia: Counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), December 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/indonesia/en/issues/counter-transnational-organized-crime-and-illicit-trafficking.html>

¹⁰²⁶ Evie Ariadne, Benazir Bona Pratamawaty, and Putri Limilia, "Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Dialectic of Poverty and Corruption." *Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 23 no. 3 (2021): 356-363.

prominent factors, including the efficacy of the bureaucracy, border security management, fiscal capacity, and social assistance programmes.

II. Conceptualising TIP and state capacity

The international and legally accepted definition of ‘trafficking in persons’ or ‘human trafficking’ is regarded in the 2000 United Nations Trafficking Protocol,¹⁰²⁷ in which the term TIP includes three key elements of action: recruitment, buying, and selling; using means of violence (such as threat, coercion, abduction); and serving the purpose of exploitation.¹⁰²⁸ In short, significant features of TIP shall comprise a range of exploitative and non-consensual practices which are not limited to crossing the international border and that benefit from exploitative acts, namely forced labour, sexual exploitation, or any other forms of modern slavery.

In the increasing academic research, the significant drivers of TIP have been frequently identified as complex and multifaceted push and pull factors, ranging from economic, political, and socio-cultural.¹⁰²⁹ Firstly, financial reasons play a direct role in enabling an act of TIP, either as push or pull factors. Many economists and sociologists believe that various economic disadvantages (including low wages, limited job opportunities, unequal economic welfare, and poverty) are the prominent push factors that drive people to be vulnerable and trapped as a supply in trafficking acts¹⁰³⁰. Whereas the means of economic opportunities, which often include employment opportunities,

¹⁰²⁷ “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.” New York: United Nations, 2000, Art.3, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>.

¹⁰²⁸ Elizabeth M Wheaton, Edward J Schauer, and Thomas V Galli, “Economics of Human Trafficking” *International Migration* 48 no. 4 (2010): 114-141, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00592.x; Ella Cockbain and Kate Bowers. “Human trafficking for sex, labour and domestic servitude: how do key trafficking types compare and what are their predictors?,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 72 (2019): 9-34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-019-09836-7>.

¹⁰²⁹ Blanton, Blanton and Peksen, “Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity.”

¹⁰³⁰ Zarina Othman, “Trafficking in women from the former Soviet Union for the purposes of sexual exploitation.” In *Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry*, pp. 47-60. Lexington Books, 2006, 52. Wheaton, Schauer and Galli, “Economics of Human Trafficking,” 120-1.

better welfare and salary, in this case, become the pull factors for TIP¹⁰³¹. For example, in Southeast Asia, individuals from Thailand, the Philippines, or Indonesia are often trafficked to countries like Japan, Singapore, or Malaysia for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or other forms of modern slavery. Many are deceived by traffickers who lure them with false promises of better financial opportunities, despite the presence of seemingly viable economic prospects in their home countries¹⁰³².

Aside from this prominent economic factor, conflict and war can also enable TIP. Limoncelli argues that the disorder effects of conflict and war can increase the potential of supply and demand for trafficked persons¹⁰³³. For instance, orphaned children who lost their parents to ongoing conflict and violence in Africa are prone to being trafficked for labour exploitation.¹⁰³⁴ Finally, gender and racial discrimination also contribute to and perpetuate trafficking, because such inequalities can marginalise specific communities (women and minorities) from access to employment or formal work, eventually leaving them vulnerable to TIP.¹⁰³⁵ As noted by Wakgari, women in Ethiopia are particularly susceptible to trafficking to the Middle East under the false promise of a 'glorious life,' due to having little or no access to the workforce.¹⁰³⁶

While the push-pull factors are significant, a shift towards the state capacity has also been increasingly prominent since trafficking tends to emerge from multiple 'governance failures of the state regarding its responsibility to protect its most

¹⁰³¹ Wheaton, Schauer and Galli, "Economics of Human Trafficking," 121.

¹⁰³² June JH Lee, "Human Trafficking in East Asia: Current Trends, Data Collection, and Knowledge Gaps," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 165-201; Nicola Piper, "A Problem by a Different Name? A Review of Research on Trafficking in South-East Asia and Oceania," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 203-233.

¹⁰³³ Stephanie A Limoncelli, (2009) "Human Trafficking: Globalization, Exploitation, and Transnational Sociology," *Sociology Compass* 3, no.1 (2009): 72-91, 80, doi: 10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00178.x.

¹⁰³⁴ Terry Roopnaraine, "Child Trafficking in Kosovo," Save the Children in Kosovo, Pristina (2002); Thanh-Dam Truong. and Maria Belen Angeles. "Poverty, Gender and Human Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rethinking Best Practices." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2003.

¹⁰³⁵ Limoncelli, "Human Trafficking: Globalization, Exploitation, and Transnational Sociology," 80.

¹⁰³⁶ Gudetu Wakgari, "Causes and Consequences of Human Trafficking in Ethiopia: The case of Women in the Middle East," *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 2 no. 2 (2014): 233-246, 239.

vulnerable populations'.¹⁰³⁷ There are multifaceted aspects of state capacities that can enable TIP, which range from its different roles in the origin or source, transit, and destination countries. This paper will specifically examine the capacity of a source country to drive TIP. Origin or source state often refers to a country where traffickers find and recruit potential persons for their trafficking operations.¹⁰³⁸ In this regard, this paper finds that the government's inefficient bureaucracy in the source country, including corrupt officials and ineffective legal enforcement, the lack of fiscal capacity for anti-trafficking policies, largely contributes to driving crimes of TIP¹⁰³⁹, since they tend to disrupt and weaken the institutional system, which eventually leads to an opening for traffickers to carry on their trafficking projects. Another prominent factor that shows how the source country enables TIP is the ineffective attempt of the border-security management, which fails to prevent and stop trafficking crimes on the border, while driving and maintaining the prevalence of the trafficking flows.¹⁰⁴⁰ The last factor is the lack of effective government socio-economic policy, which can enable TIP through its unsuccessful attempts to tackle the root causes of economic viability in the origin countries.¹⁰⁴¹

III. Case study: Indonesia and its capacity to enable TIP

To better understand the state-level capacity that drives the transnational phenomenon of TIP, this paper deliberately shifts its analytical focus from merely redefining the concept of TIP to a more grounded exploration of the state's institutional capacities. In doing so, this paper selects Indonesia as the main case study, not only due to its

¹⁰³⁷ Blanton, Blanton and Peksen, "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," 473.

¹⁰³⁸ "Trafficking Routes," The Advocates of Human Rights, last updated April 2019, https://www.stopvaw.org/trafficking_routes.

¹⁰³⁹ Sheldon X Zhang. and Samuel L Pineda, "Corruption as a Causal Factor in Human Trafficking." In *Organized Crime: Culture, Markets and Policies* (Springer, 2008), 41-55; Blanton, Blanton and Peksen., "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," 473.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cassandra E DiRienzo and Joyoti Das, "Human Trafficking and Country Borders," *International Criminal Justice Review* 27, no. 4 (2017): 278-288, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1057567717700491>.

¹⁰⁴¹ Meidi Kosandi, Nur Iman Subono, Vinita Susanti, and Evida Kartini, "Combating Human Trafficking in the Source Country: Institutional, Socio-cultural, and Process Analysis of Trafficking in Indonesia," *Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research* 67 (2017): 241-246.

strategic regional significance but also because it presents an empirically rich and analytically complex example of a TIP source country.

At first glance, Indonesia may not conform to the conventional profile of a source country with extreme poverty, weak governance, or political instability. In contrast, Indonesia is a relatively stable, democratic and middle-income state. Nonetheless, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified it as being ‘a primary source country for TIP’.¹⁰⁴² Supporting this matter, recent data from the Public Relations team of the Indonesian National Police recorded more than 500 cases of TIP between 2020 and 2023.¹⁰⁴³ More strikingly, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also found an increase of 100%, from 361 to 752 cases in 2021 to 2022, respectively, of the issues of TIP that have been covered and prosecuted by the courts, highlighting the persistence and growth of TIP despite the country’s moderate economic and institutional strength.¹⁰⁴⁴

This contradictory assertion, where a country with seemingly adequate state capacity remains highly vulnerable to TIP, underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between state functionality and human trafficking. Limoncelli also argues that TIP manifests through distinct regional and institutional configurations,¹⁰⁴⁵ suggesting that deviations in state capacity may not universally deter TIP but instead shape its specific dynamics. Indonesia, therefore, offers a compelling context to examine how particular features of state governance, economic structure, and transnational engagement interact to facilitate TIP despite the absence of traditionally assumed vulnerabilities.

On the surface, the driving factor of the contemporary issue of TIP in Indonesia is primarily caused at the individual level due to unequal economic opportunities. For instance, the TIP Report finds that people from a relatively lower income are often trapped and trafficked for domestic slavery, sex trafficking, forced labour, and even, to

¹⁰⁴² UNODC, “Indonesia: Counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking.”

¹⁰⁴³ “National Police Reveals 500 Cases of Human Trafficking,” The Indonesian Police Public Relations Team, June 2023. <https://humas.polri.go.id/2023/06/07/polri-ungkap-500-kasus-perdagangan-orang/>.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Limoncelli, “Human Trafficking: Globalization, Exploitation, and Transnational Sociology,” 79.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 76-79.

an extent, child exploitation in neighbouring states like Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam, to seek welfare and job opportunities that could elevate their financial status.¹⁰⁴⁶ However, the means of the state capacity can be understood as indicative not only of root causes, but also of how Indonesia, as the source country, continues to enable TIP. Within Indonesia's institutional capacity, the lack of greater bureaucratic efficacy, including acts of corruption, weak legal enforcement, and administrative matters, contributed to the prominent drivers that cause TIP.¹⁰⁴⁷ Building on these overarching factors, Indonesia's attempt to oversee security and fiscal capacity simultaneously has a weak border management framework and ineffective efforts by robust agencies to reduce and prevent TIP.¹⁰⁴⁸ Substantially, the international and regional interstate cooperation attempts have also been minimal in Indonesia, which ultimately diminishes the surveillance and intelligence control of the prevention of TIP.¹⁰⁴⁹ While these seem to be relatively theoretical-based assumptions, the later sections will examine the empirical analysis of the relevance of each contributing factor in explaining Indonesia's capacity that enables the issues of TIP.

IV. Contributing factors to Indonesia's capacity as a source country for TIP

As discussed earlier, several causal factors help explain how Indonesia's state capacity may inadvertently contribute to its role as a source country in the transnational crime of TIP. What makes Indonesia particularly distinctive and thus an analytically valuable case study is the paradox it presents: despite being a middle-income country with relatively stable governance structures, it continues to experience high and

¹⁰⁴⁶ "2023 Trafficking in Persons Report," U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Indonesia, June 2023, <https://id.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/2023-traffic-in-persons-report/>; see also Endro Sulaksono. "The Patterns of Human Trafficking of Indonesian Migrant Workers: Case Study of the Riau Islands and Johor Border Crossing," *Masyarakat, Jurnal Sosiologi* 23, no. 2 (2018): 167-186, <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/mjs/vol23/iss2/3>.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ariadne, Pratamawaty and Limilia, "Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Dialectic of Poverty and Corruption."; Nathalina Naibaho, "Human trafficking in Indonesia: law enforcement problems." *Indonesia Law Review* 1 no. 1 (2011): 83-100.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Muhammad Pathan Ramadhan and Jihan Syahida Sulistyanti, "The Geo-Politics for Preventing Human Trafficking in Indonesia: A Lesson Learn from Maritime State," *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Service* 2 no. 2 (2020): 277-290.; Kosandi et al., "Combating Human Trafficking in the Source Country: Institutional, Socio-cultural, and Process Analysis of Trafficking in Indonesia," 244.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Kosandi et al., "Combating Human Trafficking in the Source Country: Institutional, Socio-cultural, and Process Analysis of Trafficking in Indonesia," 244.

increasing rates of TIP. This contradiction highlights that conventional assumptions, such as political instability or extreme poverty being prerequisites for TIP vulnerability, may not fully capture the complexities at play.

Hence, building on the previous section, which outlined broad causal patterns, this section delves into four key factors of Indonesia's state capacity that contribute to its ongoing vulnerability to TIP: bureaucratic efficacy, border security management, fiscal capacity, and socioeconomic factors.

IV.A. Bureaucratic efficacy

According to Blanton et al., most studies of TIP have regarded the significance of the role of bureaucracy in enforcing and addressing contemporary trafficking issues.¹⁰⁵⁰ They argue that greater bureaucratic effectiveness, including the absence of corruption and the presence of an effective and independent legal system, reduces the likelihood of creating a permissive environment for TIP.¹⁰⁵¹ On the contrary, the lack of efficacy in these bureaucratic factors would hamper the prevention attempt and increase the possibility of TIP acts. Firstly, corrupt state agencies play a prominent role in facilitating crime, which can incentivise traffickers to engage in TIP activities with minimal consequences.¹⁰⁵² This can also be seen in the case of Indonesia, where there is frequent in-depth involvement of government officials in the security forces and border agents facilitating the acts of TIP. Hoffstaedter and Missbach discover the participation of five lower-ranked military officers with smuggling-trafficking organisers that has been bribed to secure an exit point to smuggle and traffic immigrants or asylees from Indonesia to Australia by boats in one of the ports located in Southern Java.¹⁰⁵³ Another finding from Ariadne et al. also highlights the further role of government officials, even to the extent of village or sub-district officials, in facilitating and allowing the production

¹⁰⁵⁰ Blanton, Blanton and Peksen, "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," 473.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibid, 474.

¹⁰⁵² Rose Broad and Nicholas Lord, eds., "Corruption as a Facilitator of Human Trafficking: Some Key Analytical Issues," In *Corruption in Commercial Enterprise: Law, Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2018).

¹⁰⁵³ Gerhard Hoffstaedter. and Antje Missbach, "Facilitating Irregular Migration into Malaysia and from Indonesia: Illicit Markets, Endemic Corruption and Symbolic Attempts to Overcome Impunity," *Public Anthropologist* 3 (2021): 8-31, 26-7.

of fake identities for potential trafficking victims in exchange for personal gains.¹⁰⁵⁴ This empirical evidence substantiates the effect of Indonesia's corrupt government officials, which could further encourage the crimes of TIP by providing features that support traffickers with their trafficking projects.

In the aspects of the effectiveness of the legal system, Indonesia has also been lacking a more substantial judiciary and rule of law in addressing trafficking issues. This is noted by Naibaho in his study, who finds Indonesia's legal system ineffective in addressing TIP, as evidenced by most prosecutors often only charging the accused with a minor sentence.¹⁰⁵⁵ For example, in the case of Adelina Sau, the traffickers were not convicted of the Trafficking Laws. Still, instead, they were only found guilty of document fraud because of the lack of evidence to prove their trafficking acts.¹⁰⁵⁶ According to Naibaho, this factor is further stimulated by the role of weak legal enforcement, such as Indonesia's National Police, which cooperates with the judiciary to gather evidence substantiating trafficking claims.¹⁰⁵⁷ However, this makes evidence gathering harder to achieve since most government officials, including the police, are often corrupt.¹⁰⁵⁸ To further confirm, Indonesia's administrative system has also contributed to enabling the flow of TIP for the traffickers. In this case, Ariadne et al. consider the inefficient administration of the population data system that was not entirely online, allowing traffickers to use it to duplicate or falsify victims' identities for trafficking purposes, since the manual system would make them hard to track and under the radar of law enforcement.¹⁰⁵⁹ Thus, in this context, the implications of the legal system in Indonesia can be exploited by traffickers since it facilitates a way for them to hide and carry on their trafficking operations in the face of the government's ineffective bureaucracy.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ariadne, Pratamawaty and Limilia, "Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Dialectic of Poverty and Corruption," 360.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Naibaho, "Human trafficking in Indonesia: law enforcement problems," 92.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Endang Nurdin. and Raja Eben Lumbanrau, (2021) "Swollen face, burns, dog bites,' efforts to seek justice for Adelina Sau: 'No more abuse of domestic servants,'" BBC, December 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-59302288>.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Naibaho, "Human trafficking in Indonesia: law enforcement problems," 92.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ariadne, Pratamawaty and Limilia, "Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Dialectic of Poverty and Corruption." 360.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

IV.B. Border-security management

Aside from the bureaucracy's efficacy, the capacity of border security management is another prominent driving factor of TIP in most source countries. Most scholars in this field have often regarded how weak border management in the source country can enable the flow of trafficking due to most traffickers preferring to avoid routes with well-guarded police and checkpoints.¹⁰⁶⁰ DiRienzo and Das also argue that it often occurs because most source countries with weaker border security management have a better prospect of conducting the trafficking crossing projects with minimal cost and time.¹⁰⁶¹ This is also exemplified in the case of Indonesia, where its border security management tends to be ineffective in preventing the criminal acts of TIP. Keneddy et al. highlight the deficiencies in various aspects of Indonesia's maritime security, including the absence of marine defence facilities and a comprehensive strategy, as well as the limited number of border security officers along the outer marine border, which often facilitates trafficking crimes.¹⁰⁶² As a result, most traffickers can easily use some remote islands with a lack of security control as their entry and exit points. For instance, the Riau Islands have been preferred by most traffickers as gateway locations for TIP to Malaysia or Singapore since it is located in Indonesia's outer area and also separated from the main islands with fairly minimal defence and security facilities.¹⁰⁶³ In essence, the lack of robust border security management in the source country is prone to drive illicit crimes of trafficking since it would enable a prominent passage for traffickers carrying on TIP. However, this measure is often regarded as challenging for Indonesia due to its complex geographical locations, comprising many islands that could exacerbate the government's inability to secure the border from TIP.

As previous sections have already discussed the role of institutional dimensions within the bureaucracy and border-security management as drivers for TIP, the latter section

¹⁰⁶⁰ Louise Shelley, eds., *Human trafficking: A global perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁶¹ DiRienzo, C.E. and Das, J, "Human Trafficking and Country Borders," 278-288.

¹⁰⁶² Posma Sariguna Johnson Kennedy, Suzanna Josephine L Tobing, Adolf Bastian Heatubun, and Rutman Lumbantoruan, "Strategic Issues of Indonesian Border Area Development Based on The Master Plan 2015- 2019," *Proceeding International Seminar on Accounting for Society* 1 no. 1 (2018): 190-198, 194.

¹⁰⁶³ Sulaksono, "The Patterns of Human Trafficking of Indonesian Migrant Workers: Case Study of the Riau Islands and Johor Border Crossing," 178.

will then move on to consider the social dimensions of the government's lack of fiscal capacity to fund anti-trafficking socialisation and ineffective attempts to expand the social assistance programmes.

IV.C. Fiscal capacity

Thus, in addressing the overarching institutional issues, Blanton et al. recommend bringing in the state's fiscal capacity to increase and maximise attempts to combat trafficking matters.¹⁰⁶⁴ For them, the greater the budgetary means that states subsidise to enhance anti-trafficking policy (like agency training, raising awareness, outreach, education, and other protection programs) would play a prominent role in addressing the root causes of trafficking itself.¹⁰⁶⁵ On this note, the lack of the state's capital efforts, in most source countries, in reinforcing such attempts, means that it would become a significant barrier to addressing trafficking, which may be used by traffickers, on the one hand, to enable their trafficking schemes. For instance, the lack of awareness and education programmes for the public about trafficking is prone to cause most victims to be reluctant to give testimonies, because most victims do not know that they are part of a trafficking casualty.¹⁰⁶⁶ In effect, this would make most of the traffickers hard to detect without legitimate reports from the alleged victims as the initial step to track and stop the trafficking acts.

The lack of government funding for Indonesia's anti-trafficking policy has hampered its efforts to raise awareness and knowledge in the community, more importantly, those who are situated below the poverty line, often causing them to be vulnerable as potential victims of trafficking or trapped in exploitative conditions.¹⁰⁶⁷ This can be shown in the case of most Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, who often are found to be deceived by their traffickers (or agents in this case) in forced labour or exploitative contracts because they were usually unaware of their legitimate contracts or rights of

¹⁰⁶⁴ Blanton, Blanton and Peksen, "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," 475-6.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Naibaho, "Human trafficking in Indonesia: law enforcement problems," 92.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Sabungan Sibarani, "Policies Adopted by the Government of Indonesia in the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (Human Trafficking)," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 48 (2020): 19-24.

work.¹⁰⁶⁸ In this context, such occurrences show that the Indonesian government can prevent trafficking if it focuses on increasing funding for public awareness of the mechanisms of working in foreign countries and the acts of TIP itself, so that most people can be aware of the illicit crimes and eventually reduce their possibility as trafficking victims. Thus, consequently, these representative cases presented how the lack of fiscal capacity to increase public anti-trafficking socialisation in a source country can establish a permissive condition for TIP, since it opens up a chance for traffickers to deceive and traffic victims into an exploitative situation and make use of the people's lack of knowledge on TIP to avoid conviction of their actions.

IV.D. Social assistance programmes

The final aspect to consider is how the government's ineffective attempt to enact social assistance programmes can enable and, to some extent, increase the occurrence of TIP. Most scholars in the human trafficking field have frequently recognised the importance of implementing effective public social policy since it would prominently help to prevent and address poverty and low levels of job opportunities as the root causes of push factors of TIP in most source countries. Indonesia, under the recent Jokowi presidential regime, is a prominent source country for TIP. It has implemented policy initiatives that focus on improving and expanding social assistance programmes, aiming to enhance quality education and skills, thereby increasing job opportunities for the lower class. However, findings by Suryahadi and Izzati highlight critical limitations in the effectiveness of these initiatives, particularly in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations.¹⁰⁶⁹ While such programs may help sustain positive real consumption growth, essentially preventing further decline in living standards, they fall short of enabling long-term economic mobility.¹⁰⁷⁰ Crucially, they do not generate sufficient employment or income opportunities essential to lift people out of poverty.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Bar Council Malaysia, "Migrants' Workers Access to Justice: Malaysia," Bar Council Malaysia, November 2019.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Asep Suryahadi and Ridho Al Izzati, "Cards for the Poor and Funds for Villages: Jokowi's Initiatives to Reduce Poverty and Inequality," *Journals of Southeast Asian Economies* 35, no. 2 (2018): 200-222, 210.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Suryahadi and Izzati, "Cards for the Poor and Funds for Villages: Jokowi's Initiatives to Reduce Poverty and Inequality." 210.

This lack of economic prospects often pushes individuals to seek work abroad, making them vulnerable to traffickers who exploit their desperation with false job offers, especially in countries like Malaysia or Taiwan, where demand exists for low-skilled labour, resulting in many victims lacking higher education or formal skills, limiting their access to safe employment.¹⁰⁷¹ Hence, in this case, ineffective social policies in the source country indirectly facilitate trafficking by failing to address the structural poverty and lack of opportunity that drive people into exploitative situations.

V. Conclusion

Through examining an analysis of Indonesia as a source for TIP, this paper has demonstrated that states have an enabling role in trafficking by considering their institutional and social dimensions. The discussion within Indonesia's institutional capacity reveals that the country's weak bureaucracy, stemming from corruption and ineffective legal enforcement, facilitates TIP by providing traffickers with impunity to commit crimes, mainly due to poor governance. Secondly, the lack of a more robust border security management is also a contributing factor since it could establish several trafficking passages in areas with limited defences. Regarding the social implications, the lack of government funding to increase public awareness and knowledge about trafficking often causes permissive conditions for TIP that use the lack of understanding to deceive them into exploitative conditions and avoid convictions for their crimes. On a final note, the unsuccessful government's attempts to expand social assistance initiatives have not only facilitated but also prompted TIP to persist, as it fails to serve its primary purpose: preventing and addressing the economic factors that are the root causes of trafficking.

Despite presenting a set of compelling contributing factors, this paper acknowledges the need for more empirical evidence to substantiate a more rigorous analysis. However, several potential policy remedies can be inferred based on the challenges discussed earlier. For instance, improving bureaucratic transparency and strengthening legal accountability mechanisms could deter traffickers from operating within environments with weak governments. Likewise, enhancing border surveillance in trafficking-prone areas through inter-agency coordination and technological

¹⁰⁷¹ Kosandi et al., "Combating Human Trafficking in the Source Country: Institutional, Socio-cultural, and Process Analysis of Trafficking in Indonesia," 244.

monitoring could strengthen institutional capacity to combat TIP. On the social side, redirecting social protection programs to focus on long-term employment generation, vocational training, and local enterprise development may reduce the economic vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

These potential applications highlight the importance of a multi-sectoral, capacity-oriented approach to anti-trafficking policy. Future research should build on these insights through closer collaboration with state actors, local communities, and civil society to better identify, test, and scale effective interventions tailored to source-country dynamics.

Bibliography

- Ariadne, Evie, Pratamawaty, Benazir Bona, and Limilia, Putri. "Human Trafficking in Indonesia, Dialectic of Poverty and Corruption," *Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 23 no. 3 (2021): 356-363.
- Bar Council Malaysia. "Migrants' Workers Access to Justice: Malaysia," Bar Council Malaysia, November 2019.
- Blanton, Robert G, Blanton, Shannon Lindsey, and Peksen, Dursun. "Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 37, no. 4 (2018): 471-489, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0738894218789875>.
- Broad, Rose. and Lord, Nicholas. "Corruption as a Facilitator of Human Trafficking: Some Key Analytical Issues," In *Corruption in Commercial Enterprise: Law, Theory and Practice*, pp. 63-81 (Routledge, 2018).
- Cockbain, Ella. and Bowers, Kate. "Human trafficking for sex, labour and domestic servitude: how do key trafficking types compare and what are their predictors?," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 72 (2019): 9–34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-019-09836-7>.
- DiRienzo, Cassandra E and Das, Joyoti. "Human Trafficking and Country Borders." *International Criminal Justice Review* 27, no. 4 (2017): 278-288, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1057567717700491>.
- Friastuti, Rini, Pandapotan, Thomas Bosco. and Hadi, Fadjar. (2023) "Kemlu: Kasus Pidana Perdagangan Orang Naik 100%, Sepanjang 2022 Ada 752 Kasus." *Kumparan*, April 2023,

<https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/kemlu-kasus-pidana-perdagangan-orang-naik-100-sepanjang-2022-ada-752-kasus-209EJp3osaz/full>.

- Hoffstaedter, Gerhard. and Missbach, Antje. "Facilitating Irregular Migration into Malaysia and from Indonesia: Illicit Markets, Endemic Corruption and Symbolic Attempts to Overcome Impunity," *Public Anthropologist* 3 (2021): 8-31.
- Kennedy, Posma Sariguna Johnson, Tobing, Suzanna Josephine L, Heatubun, Adolf Bastian, and Lumbantoruan, Rutman. "Strategic Issues of Indonesian Border Area Development Based on The Master Plan 2015- 2019", *Proceeding International Seminar on Accounting for Society* 1 no. 1 (2018): 190-198.
- Kosandi, Meidi, Subono, Nur Iman, Susanti, Vinita, and Kartini, Evida. "Combating Human Trafficking in the Source Country: Institutional, Socio-cultural, and Process Analysis of Trafficking in Indonesia," *Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research* 67 (2017): 241-246.
- Limoncelli, Stephanie A. (2009) "Human Trafficking: Globalization, Exploitation, and Transnational Sociology." *Sociology Compass* 3, no.1 (2009): 72-91, [doi: 10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00178.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00178.x).
- Lee, June JH. "Human Trafficking in East Asia: Current Trends, Data Collection, and Knowledge Gaps," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 165–201.
- Naibaho, Nathalina. "Human trafficking in Indonesia: law enforcement problems," *Indonesia Law Review* 1 no. 1 (2011): 83-100.
- Nurdin, Endang and Lumbanrau, Raja Eben. "Swollen face, burns, dog bites,' efforts to seek justice for Adelina Sau: 'No more abuse of domestic servants,'" BBC, December 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-59302288>.
- Othman, Zarina. "Trafficking in women from the former Soviet Union for the purposes of sexual exploitation," In *Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry*, pp. 47-60. New York: Lexington Books, 2006.
- Piper, Nicola. "A Problem by a Different Name? A Review of Research on Trafficking in South-East Asia and Oceania," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 203– 233.
- Ramadhan, Muhammad Pathan and Sulistyanti, Jihan Syahida. "The Geo-Politics for Preventing Human Trafficking in Indonesia: A Lesson Learn from Maritime State," *Indonesian Journal of Advocacy and Legal Service* 2 no. 2 (2020): 277-290.
- Roopnaraine, Terry "Child Trafficking in Kosovo," Save the Children in Kosovo, Pristina (2002).

- Shelley, Louise. "Human trafficking: A global perspective," Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Sibarani, Sabungan. "Policies Adopted by the Government of Indonesia in the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (Human Trafficking)," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 48 (2020): 19-24.
- Sulaksono, Endro. "The Patterns of Human Trafficking of Indonesian Migrant Workers: Case Study of the Riau Islands and Johor Border Crossing," *Masyarakat, Jurnal Sosiologi* 23, no. 2 (2018): 167-186,
<https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/mjs/vol23/iss2/3>.
- Suryahadi, Asep and Izzati, Ridho Al. "Cards for the Poor and Funds for Villages: Jokowi's Initiatives to Reduce Poverty and Inequality," *Journals of Southeast Asian Economies* 35, no. 2 (2018): 200-222, 210.
- The Advocates of Human Rights. "Trafficking Routes," The Advocates of Human Rights, April 2019,
https://www.stopvaw.org/trafficking_routes.
- The Indonesian Police Public Relations Team. "National Police Reveals 500 Cases of Human Trafficking," The Indonesian National Police, June 2023,
<https://humas.polri.go.id/2023/06/07/polri-ungkap-500-kasus-perdagangan-orang/>.
- Truong, Thanh-Dam and Angeles, Maria Belen. "Poverty, Gender and Human Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rethinking Best Practices," Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2003.
- United Nations. "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime," New York: United Nations, 2000.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). "Indonesia: Counter transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking," UNODC, December 2023,
<https://www.unodc.org/indonesia/en/issues/counter-transnational-organized-crime-and-illicit-trafficking.html>.
- U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Indonesia. "2023 Trafficking in Persons Report," U.S. Embassy Jakarta, June 2023,

<https://id.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Wakgari, Gudetu. "Causes and Consequences of Human Trafficking in Ethiopia: The case of Women in the Middle East," *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* 2 no. 2 (2014): 233-246.

Wheaton, Elizabeth M, Schauer, Edward J, and Galli, Thomas V. "Economics of Human Trafficking," *International Migration* 48 no. 4 (2010): 114-141, [doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00592.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00592.x).

Zhang, Sheldon X and Pineda, Samuel L. "Corruption as a Causal Factor in Human Trafficking," In *Organized Crime: Culture, Markets and Policies* (New York: Springer, 2008): 41-55.