

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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Research Title:

Challenges and Opportunities in Indonesia's Maritime Boundary Delimitation: A Legal and Technical Approach

General Description of Research

Indonesia is an archipelagic state with ten neighbours, namely (clockwise from the northwest), India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Australia and East Timor. Indonesia faces considerable challenges to settle and subsequently maintain its maritime boundaries with these neighbouring states. Achieving this objective has the potential to deliver significant benefits to both Indonesia itself and its maritime neighbours. In particular, maritime boundary delimitation provides certainty concerning sovereignty and sovereign rights between states. In economic terms, clarity of jurisdiction is likely to assist in enhanced ocean management and natural resource exploration and exploitation. In addition, the definition of boundaries helps to minimise or eliminate sources of stress between states. Indeed, it has been evident that failure in settling maritime boundary may cause devastating international disputes. Therefore, research and activities concerning maritime boundary settlement and management is of high importance for Indonesia.

Research Aims

To conduct a critical and comprehensive study and analysis concerning legal and technical/geodetic aspects of maritime jurisdiction and delimitation relevant to Indonesia. This research will contribute significantly to relevant disciplines such as surveying, geodesy, and law of the sea.

Methodology

This research will combine extensive literature study and technical experiments using geospatial data (maps, satellite images, and field data) to produce a comprehensive thesis concerning legal and technical/geodetic aspects of maritime boundary delimitation. Analysis will be achieved by comparative studies among the Indonesian cases against relevant state practice and international jurisprudence. Fieldwork will be conducted to carry out in-depth interviews and investigation involving government institutions related to maritime boundary issues in Indonesia such as Bakosurtanal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Indonesian Naval Hydro-Oceanographic Office, and educational institutions.

Relevant Research or Work Experience

My master thesis concerned maritime boundary delimitation between Indonesia and East Timor in the University of New South Wales. Since then, I have been publishing more than **50 publications (books, journals, newspapers, magazines, online publications, and conferences) within 3 years**. As a lecturer I also established a new course in Boundary Delimitation and Demarcation and have been teaching students as well as providing technical training for government officials.

Significance to Indonesia

There are only few researchers in Indonesia with expertise in technical aspects of the law of the sea, and even less in the particular area of maritime boundary delimitation. By completing this study and disseminating the results arising from it, it is hoped that the study will fill the vacancy of expertise in this area. The study I am proposing has potential of considerable significance to Indonesia in light of the number and scope of the international jurisdictional challenges it faces (internationally and nationally).