

## Indonesia's Perception of China`s Leadership in Southeast Asia (Dalam Joint East Asian Studies Conference 7, 8, adn 9 September 2016) : Book of abstracts

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### Abstrak

#### <b>ABSTRAK</b><br>

The discussion of regional leadership in South East Asia tends to be dominated by analysis of the relationship between the United States and China. Looking beyond great power competition this paper examines Indonesia`s perception of China in Southeast Asia. This is worth studying because Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia and has its own aspirations of regional leadership.

This paper analyses how China`s leadership is perceived by the Indonesian government and national media through a content analysis of government documents and media reports from 2008-2015. This paper argues that overall China had been portrayed positively by both the Indonesian government documents and media. However, despite this positive portrayal of China, concerns regarding Beijing`s leadership aspirations in SEA continues to have an impact on Indonesian policy. Concerns include the impact of China`s trade policies upon Indonesia`s economy, the potential use of joint port infrastructure projects under China`s 21st Century Maritime Silk Road program for military purposes, and Beijing`s territorial claims which overlap with Indonesian territory. This concern has manifested in an Indonesian hedging strategy regarding China. This strategy includes the introduction of Indonesia`s Maritime Axis initiative and the militarisation of Indonesian territory adjacent to the South China Sea. It is therefore apparent that while China is, on the surface, perceived positively there are areas of potential tension which continue to affect Indonesia`s decisions and actions.