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# The Riau Islands

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The SIJORI Series

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**Riau Islands**  
Setting Sail

Edited By  
Francis E. Hutchinson  
&  
Siwage Dharma Negara

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# FOREWORD

In 2012, the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute embarked on an ambitious research project to understand the cross-border regions of Southeast Asia. Aptly designated “Floating Frontiers”, the project focused not on the land borders, but the maritime areas. It has long been recognized that the countries of maritime Southeast Asia—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines—share a history of rich connectivity in centuries past through movements of its seafaring peoples and development of strong networks of economic, cultural and social ties.

There have been three attempts in maritime Southeast Asia to create subregional projects. SIJORI (Singapore-Johor-Riau Islands) is the first and the most developed. BIMP-EAGA (Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-the Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area) is the second, and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) the third.

Regarding SIJORI, in the 1970s and 1980s, Singapore and Malaysia saw deep and mutually beneficial engagement in cross-border investment and trade. The contemporary interest of Singapore in the Riau Islands began later in the late 1980s with Batam. That soon gained momentum, moving beyond Batam to Bintan and Karimun. Since the governments of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia decided to promote SIJORI, the growth triangle has seen the three territories register population and palpable economic growth.

This research project has produced its first fruit, a SIJORI trilogy. The *SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture* was the first volume. Then came *Johor: Abode of Development?* The third book *The Riau Islands: Setting Sail* is the final volume in the trilogy. Together, the three volumes provide a textured and qualitative understanding of subregional architectures and the resulting dynamics. We hope the analyses, the body of knowledge and data can be of use by highlighting the necessary refinements and adjustments that officials and investors may wish to make to the existing framework in light of changing developments.

*The Riau Islands* documents and analyses what is happening on the ground and the potential of the islands. It covers a large area and the spillover of dynamism arising from its location at the fortuitous nexus of Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.



In the thirty years since SIJORI was launched, the Riau Islands has emerged as the richest province in Indonesia, second only to Jakarta.

What lies ahead? The volume examines the province's economic dimensions and prospects by drilling down in the different sectors of manufacturing, tourism and the digital economy. The volume covers the political, social, cultural and ethnic dimensions as well as the urbanization and environmental trends taking shape. Without fear of contradiction, we can claim this book is the most comprehensive review of current developments in the Riau Islands.

With the volume as the backdrop, some key questions that emerge are the following: with the many layers of development, how can the original impetus of SIJORI be maintained; how will it change; how can it still be configured to address the interest of all partners and what are the shifting dynamics?

Going forward, external trends may play a bigger role in creating opportunities as well as limitations on future developments in this subregion. For instance, the global economic recession of 2009 and 2010 led to a recession in shipping worldwide, causing the shipbuilding industry to dry up in the Riau Islands. More recently, with intensifying tensions between the United States and China resulting in higher tariffs and sanctions placed by the former on the latter, some supply chains from China have been diverted to the region. Many American, Japanese, and even Chinese companies have sought to continue their production lines in some ASEAN countries—Malaysia and Indonesia among them. The redirection of supply chains can help to enhance the relevance of the Riau Islands and the growth triangle if the parties all agree it is in their interests. SIJORI should also think through how it can maximize on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) opportunities, with the two regional trade pacts coming into existence in 2019 and 2020. Finally, it should be pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic has further affected supply chains, providing new opportunities for SIJORI. In the past, companies were strategically planning for *just in time* production. Today they are planning for *just in case* production and the subregion can capitalize on its capabilities and location.

The next phase of development may be unfolding for the Riau Islands and for SIJORI.

*Chan Heng Chee*  
*Ambassador-at-Large and Chairman, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute*

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The idea for this project came from then Deputy Director of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Ooi Kee Beng, who put forward the idea of studying Southeast Asia’s “Floating Frontiers” in 2013. Focusing on border regions between Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, the emphasis was, rather than on land borders, to be on connections between countries across the sea. Seen from a historical perspective, this is consistent with Southeast Asia’s precolonial maritime focus, which was characterized by intense linkages. Consequently, the three sites of this project were: the Singapore and Johor Straits; the Sulawesi Sea; and the Andaman Sea.

This led to the work on the first volume of this series, *The SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture*, which looked at the interaction between Singapore, the Malaysian state of Johor, and the Riau Islands in Indonesia. Following the publication of this volume, the then Director of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Mr Tan Chin Tiong suggested building on this work with stand-alone projects on Johor and the Riau Islands, respectively.

The second volume *Johor: Abode of Development?* was published in 2020. This volume on the Riau Islands is the third and final in this series. As with the first and second volumes, we have collaborated with the Professorship of Architecture and Territorial Planning of ETH Zurich to cartographically depict important dynamics. In-depth conceptual and empirical discussions with Hans Hortig and Karoline Kostka were extremely fruitful, and their work on the maps that accompany the chapters has provided a valuable visualization of many of the relationships explored in this book.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AMDAL	<i>Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan</i> ; Environmental Impact Assessment
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASITA	Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies
BAPEDAL	Badan Pengendalian Dampak Lingkungan; Environmental Impact Management Agency
Bappenas	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional; National Development Planning Agency
BBK	Batam, Bintan, and Karimun
BI	Bank Indonesia; Central Bank
BIDA	Batam Industrial Development Authority
BIFZA	Batam Indonesia Free Zone Authority
BIG	Badan Informasi Geospasial; Geospatial Information Agency
BILIK	Bina Lingkungan Hidup Batam; Batam Environmental Development
BKPM	Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal; Investment Coordinating Board
BKSPK	Badan Kerja Sama Provinsi Kepulauan; Archipelagic Province Cooperation Agency
BP Batam	Badan Pengusahaan Batam; Batam Management Agency
BP3KP	Badan Pekerja Pembentukan Provinsi Kepulauan Riau; Agency for the Establishment of the Riau Islands Province
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik; Central Bureau of Statistics or Statistics Indonesia
BUMDES <i>bupati</i>	Badan Usaha Milik Desa; Village-Owned Enterprise regent/district head
CBR	Cross-Border Region
CBT	community-based tourism
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
DDI	domestic direct investment



DE	digital economy
DPD	Dewan Perwakilan Daerah; Regional Representative Council
DPOD	Dewan Pertimbangan Otonomi Daerah; Regional Autonomy Advisory Council
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat; (National) People's Representative Council
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah; Regional People's Representative Council
DPUD	Destinasi Pariwisata Unggulan Daerah; Regional Leading Tourism Destinations
DPW	Dewan Perwakilan Wilayah; Regional Representative Council
E&E	electrical and electronics
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EKPPD	Evaluasi Kinerja Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah; Evaluation of the Performance of Local Government Administration
FBSI	Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia; All Indonesia Labour Federation
FCL	Future Cities Laboratory
FDI	foreign direct investment
FGD	focus group discussion
FSPMI	Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia; Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers' Unions
GDP	gross domestic product
Gerindra	Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya; Pan-Indonesian Movement Party
GRDP	gross regional domestic product
Hanura	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat; People's Conscience Party
HDI	Human Development Index
HKBP	Huria Kristen Batak Protestan; Batak Christian Protestant Church
ICT	information and communication technology
IDI	Indonesia Democracy Index
IDR	Indonesian rupiah
IKTK	Ikatan Keluarga Tapanuli Kepri; Riau Islands Tapanuli Family Association
IoT	Internet of Things
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IT	information technology
<i>kabupaten</i>	district
KADIN	Kamar Dagang Indonesia; Indonesian Chamber of Commerce
<i>kecamatan</i>	subdistrict
KEK	Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus; Special Economic Zone

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<i>kelurahan</i>	A village that is headed by a civil servant ( <i>lurah</i> )
KKSS	Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan; South Sulawesi Family Association
<i>kota</i>	municipality
KPK	Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi; Corruption Eradication Commission
KPU	Komisi Pemilihan Umum; General Election Commission
KSBSI	Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia; Confederation of Prosperous Worker Trade Unions
KSPI	Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia; Confederation of Trade Unions of Indonesia
KSPSI	Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia; Confederation of All Indonesian Trade Unions
MICE	meetings, incentives, conferences and events
MNC	multinational corporation
MNE	multinational enterprise
MRO	maintenance, repair and overhaul
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia; Indonesia Ulema Council
NDP	Nongsa Digital Park
NTT	Nusa Tenggara Timur
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama; a traditionalist Sunni Islam movement in Indonesia
O&G	oil and gas
OSM	Open Street Map
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional; National Mandate Party
PBI	Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika; Unity in Diversity Party
PD	Partai Demokrat; Democratic Party
PDI-P	Partai Demokrat Perjuangan Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
<i>pemekaran</i>	blossoming or the proliferation of administrative units
Perhimpunan INTI	Perhimpunan Indonesia-Tionghoa; Indonesian-Chinese Association
PITI	Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia; Chinese Muslim Union of Indonesia
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; National Awakening Party
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera; Prosperous Justice Party
PLT	<i>pelaksana tugas</i> ; acting administrative officer
<i>pokdarwis</i>	<i>kelompok sadar wisata</i> ; tourism awareness group
PP	Peraturan Pemerintah; Government Regulation
PPBM	Persatuan Pemuda Bugis Makassar; Bugis Youth Assembly of Makassar
PPIB	Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru; New Indonesia Alliance Party
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United Development Party

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PRI	Province of the Riau Islands
PRRI	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia; Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia
PSMTI	Paguyuban Sosial Marga Tionghoa Indonesia; Indonesian of Chinese Descent Social Association
PT	<i>perseroan terbatas</i> ; limited liability company
R&D	research and development
<i>Reformasi</i>	political movement to overthrow President Soeharto in 1998
<i>Riau daratan</i>	mainland aspect of Riau
<i>Riau kepulauan</i>	archipelagic aspect of Riau
RPJMD	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah; Regional Medium-Term Development Plan
RTRW	Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah; Regional Spatial Plans
<i>rumah liar</i>	squatter settlements
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIJORI	Singapore-Johor-Riau Islands
SME	small and medium enterprise
SPSI	Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia; All Indonesia Workers Union
US\$	United States dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
VOC	volatile organic compounds
<i>Walikota</i>	City Mayor
WTE	Waste-to-Energy

