

Mapping North-South Relations: The Case of Australia's Regional Refugee Arrangements

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Abstract

In recent years, Australia has created some regional refugee arrangements with their neighbouring countries. Under the agreements with countries such as Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and the most recent, Cambodia, Australia is committed to providing financial aid to run the supporting facilities and protect the asylum seekers who are relocated from their territory. These agreements then become questionable as the partner countries are developing countries which are relatively unstable in domestic politics and are not prosperous enough to bear the non-financial costs of refugee protection, such as integration and accountability issues. In this case, relations between Australia and their partner countries could be considered as an example of relations between the developed (north) and the developing countries (south). Thus, a question appears to be prominent: what do Australia refugee settlement agreements tell us about the relations between the (developed) north and the (developing) south? By employing structuralism model in international politics, we propose an argument that Australia's refugee resettlement agreement can be understood as a form of responsibility sharing on refugee issue between the concerning countries in the region. The arrangements have not only produced positive results but also negative ones, such as conflicts. Additionally, this research will also take into account the existence of international law(s) governing refugee issues as the basis to analyse the refugee protection, mainly in Australia's resettlement partner countries.

Keywords: Asia-Pacific, Asylum Seeker, Australia, Refugee Agreement

Abstrak

Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, Australia telah membuat prosedur penanganan pengungsi secara regional dengan beberapa negara tetangga. Dalam perjanjian dengan beberapa negara seperti Nauru, Papua Nugini, Malaysia dan yang terbaru, Kamboja, Australia berkomitmen untuk menyediakan kebutuhan finansial yang diperlukan dalam proses perlindungan pencari suaka. Perjanjian ini kemudian menimbulkan pertanyaan ketika negara rekanan yang dipilih adalah negara berkembang yang relatif tidak stabil kondisi politik domestiknya dan tidak cukup sejahtera untuk mengemban beban non-finansial dalam perlindungan pengungsi seperti integrasi dan akuntabilitas. Dalam kasus ini, hubungan antara Australia dengan negara rekanan dapat dianggap sebagai contoh dari hubungan negara maju (utara) dan negara berkembang (selatan). Sehingga, pertanyaan penelitian yang muncul adalah: bagaimana perjanjian pengaturan pengungsi secara regional yang dikembangkan oleh Australia menunjukkan hubungan antara negara maju (utara) dengan negara berkembang (selatan)? Dengan menggunakan model strukturalisme dalam politik internasional, kami mengajukan argumen bahwa perjanjian ini dapat dipahami sebagai bentuk pembagian tanggung jawab dalam isu pengungsi di antara negara-negara kawasan yang terlibat. Perjanjian ini tidak hanya memiliki efek positif namun juga negative seperti konflik. Penelitian ini juga akan mengamati keberadaan hukum-hukum internasional yang mengatur pengungsi sebagai dasar untuk menganalisa perlindungan pengungsi, terutama yang terjadi di negara-negara rekanan Australia.

Kata Kunci: Asia Pasifik, Pencari Suaka, Australia, Perjanjian Pengungsi

Introduction

In today's international relations, "North" and "South" groupings are still prominent which lead to the prolongation of the discourse on the matters. Some dependency theorists must agree that the so-called "core" and "periphery"—which represent developed (North) and developing (South) countries respectively—are in relations characterized by exploitation. Some scholars such as Wallerstein (1974) have formulated a model of world system analysis from which international division of labour can be understood.

In this globalising era, understanding North - South relations can be done not only from the economic perspective but also from a more normative one such as international norms. As a matter of fact, the emergence of international laws which forms international norms has started to play a big role in international relations since the end of the World War II. In this sense, refugee has always been an issue which sparks public discourse at national and international levels. However, in the current era, refugee has grabbed more public attention at the international level, especially when the very first refugee convention was agreed in 1951 and followed by its protocol in 1967. Since then, countries have been struggling to provide favourable treatment to the refugees through resettlement and integration efforts.

In terms of refugee protection, Australia is among the top countries which provide the so-called durable solution through its resettlement policies. One of the most important features of Australia's resettlement policies is its regional arrangements under which Australia engages its neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific region to collectively deal with this issue. To be exact, Australia's regional refugee arrangements are targeted toward illegal asylum seekers who arrive in Australia in an unlawful manner. In spite of its aim, this regional refugee arrangement adds on unique perspective to the discourse of international relations. In a sense, regional refugee arrangements reflect on how countries interact with each other to address normative issues where the arrangements are made based on the capacity and capability of

each concerning country. Therefore, both normative approach and cost-benefit calculation are relevant to understand country's behaviour on certain issue at international level.

To start off the debate about Australia's regional refugee arrangements, this research will come up with one central question: what do Australia refugee settlement agreements tell us about the relations between the (developed) north and the (developing) south? By employing world-system analysis and constructivist approach, we propose an argument that Australia's regional refugee resettlement agreements have divided the countries involved into three categories, namely "core", "semi-periphery", and "periphery". This categorization can be understood as a form of responsibility sharing in a sense that refugee resettlement issues are solved collectively by Australia and its surrounding neighbours through formal agreements. Even so, the notion of responsibility sharing does not merely reflect an equal relation between Australia and its partner countries.

Conversely, the international division of labour on refugee settlement is present as shown by the different roles played by Australia (financial and technical needs provider) and its partner countries (venues provider). Additionally, the instances of poor refugee management and even violent cases inflicting financial and non-financial costs to the host countries and the asylum seekers illustrate the importance to revisit the regional arrangements. Therefore on the last part of this article we propose some policy suggestions to settle refugee issues which have raised global attention.

The argument will be organised into the following five sections which will be started by the discussion on world-systems analysis and constructivism as the main theoretical foundation to map the North-South relations on refugee settlement. It is followed by the explanation about the nature of refugee, asylum seeker and international laws governing refugee issues. Australia's regional refugee arrangements will be outlined in the following section which will show the established agreements between Australia and

its partner countries (Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, and Cambodia) in regards to refugee resettlement for those coming as asylum seekers. This will lead to the core of this research which is to map out the relations between North and South regarding the refugee settlement agreements by stressing on the notion of responsibility sharing and international division of labour on this issue. Lastly, this research will conclude by juxtaposing the proposed hypothesis with the findings. Some policy suggestions will also be presented based on the research findings.

World-Systems Analysis and Constructivism

This article will employ two tools to map North-South relations on refugee settlement issues, namely world-system analysis and constructivism. The so-called "world-systems analysis" was initially formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein in 1974 as to criticise the structural-functionalist underpinnings (Shannon, 1989, p. 18). Structural-functionalist approach is commonly used in sociology to understand how people interact with each other within a set of roles defined by the existing structure in society (Wendt, 1987). In a larger sense, Wallerstein defines world-system as "a multicultural division of labour in which the production and exchange of goods and raw material is essential for its inhabitants". This definition reflects that different societies are linked through the exchange of goods and raw material (Chase-Dunn and Grimes, 1995). It is essential to note that world-system is mainly based on Marxist critics on capitalism which has caused the fragmentation within global economy (Block, 1990). By fragmentation, world economy is divided into some other classes which reflect one's position against another, especially in terms of who owns the capital and who is exploited by the capital holders.

Furthermore, Wallerstein divided the world-system into three distinct categories as a form of world division of labour, namely "core", "semi-peripheral" and "peripheral" (Shannon, 1989, p. 24) which portray the economic capacities of the world economies. In economic sense, core countries are those specialising on the production of capital

intensive and high technology goods which are exported to periphery and semi-periphery countries. On the contrary, peripheral countries produce labour intensive and low technology goods needed by the core and semi-periphery countries. Meanwhile, semi-periphery countries are somewhere in between core and periphery and thus their economic activities are similar to the other two groups. Again, what is emphasised on this categorisation is the notion of capitalism which shapes the structure of global political economy. Through this categorization, the power distributed among countries will further determine their positions in the global arena. From historical point of view, this categorisation has helped to map the core-periphery relations in which it is still applicable in today's international relations.

In the current global affairs, however, economic power is not the only determinant which outlines the map of international politics and influences the behaviour of states. In this regards, we consider constructivist approach to be important in understanding state's behaviour and how it can be used to better understand about international relations, especially in refugee resettlement issues. Even though the combination between world-system analysis and constructivist approach is not so common but we consider these two concepts as the perfect match in understanding the international refugee resettlement issues. In the world-system, core countries are inclined to maximise the profit by exploiting the peripheral countries. It, somehow, implies that the decision they make must involve the so-called cost-benefit calculation in order to avoid the loss which may incur from the acts taken by the states. Yet, in the case of refugee settlement, what motivates (host) countries to receive asylum seekers is not merely the benefit since this activity is far from profitable in some senses. International norms which are institutionalised in international laws, then, are considered prominent to understand the reason of why some states are committed to receiving the asylum seekers and in many cases granting them with refugee and even residency status.

In international relations (IR), constructivism has been studied as the

opposition to realism (Barkin, 2003, p. 325). Constructivism considers knowledge and ideas as the important aspects which constitute social reality and its evolution (Adler, 2013: 123). For individuals, the norms and rules they use to construct social realities will become their reason, interests and intentional acts which, if institutionalised, will become international practice. In international politics, constructivists believe that shared norms, such as international laws, become the basis for interaction among actors which then constitute actors' identities and interests (Slaughter, Tulumello, and Wood, 1998, p. 373). Moreover, in regards to rational actors who take decisions based on rational calculation, the so-called practical or communicative rationalism believes that an actor's decision is sensitive to historical, social, and normative contexts (Adler, 2013, p. 124). This shows that even if rational calculation is present in actors' decision, the logic of "appropriateness" appears to influence their decision (Adler, 2013; Finnemore, 1996; March and Olsen, 1998). By considering state as individual and international laws as norms and rules under which individual state is embedded, it is logical to say that state's behaviour is somehow constrained by the existing international norms and rules.

Therefore, in order to understand international refugee settlement issue, we cannot necessarily rely on world-system analysis which emphasises more on economic approach. Rather, as mentioned earlier, constructivist approach may help us understand this occurrence. We do not consider world-system and constructivist as two opposite approaches as constructivism will help us understand how the division of labour is arranged within today's world-system especially in such human rights-related case as refugee settlement.

In the case of Australia's refugee resettlement agreements with some partner countries, world-systems analysis will help translate the instance of international resettlement agreement which is arranged based on the positions of the concerning countries in international or regional sphere. It is done through the division of labour which distinguishes the roles played by core countries

(e.g. Australia) and peripheral countries (Australia's partners). Also, the notion of responsibility sharing in this issue can be explained by using constructivist approach which regards international laws governing refugees as the internationally accepted norms and rules, thus constructing state's behaviour. In addition, the interplay between world-system analysis and constructivism will show that the international division of labour on refugee settlement issue is arranged not only by economic power but also internationally constructed norms on refugee protection and, to some extent, human rights.

Refugee, Asylum Seekers and International Laws Governing Refugee Protection

According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the term refugee can be explained as someone who is "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, 2015). This term is sometimes confused with the term asylum seekers. In this sense, UNHCR defines asylum seekers as the potential refugees who become the concern to UNHCR in which they have to be protected until their claims for refugee status have been determined (UNHCR, 2011).

By referring to the stated definition, asylum seekers are merely the challenge for countries which happen to be the destination of those asylum seekers. With insufficient documents they have to claim their rights as refugee, these people could easily be mistaken and being labelled as illegal and therefore may not get the same treatments as refugees who have been well examined and have documents needed to enter the host countries legally. In regards to the status of asylum seekers, article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention stated that (UNHCR, 2015):

1. The Contracting States (in this case, the destined countries) shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or

presence on refugees who coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in the territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

2. The Contracting States shall not apply to the movements of such refugees restrict other than those which are necessary and such restrictions shall only be applied until their status in the country is regularized or they obtain admission into another country. The Contracting States shall allow such refugees a reasonable period and all the necessary facilities to obtain admission into another country.

From the article, it can be concluded that asylum seekers, in regards the way they come and enter the territory and the lack of documents needed to prove their refugee status, have the rights to stay safe in the destination countries as soon as they arrived. They should be freed from any punishments for entering the territory without permission and also deserve the time and all necessary facilities for them to obtain admission into another country legally.

Beside the international refugee agreement that bounds countries to respect and protect refugees coming to their territory, there are other international laws which also support the idea. Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of the examples. The declaration is an important document for every country in the world that emphasizes the importance of respect and protection of basic human rights of each person in their territory. And this document also mentions about the

basic rights of people to seek asylum as stated in article 14 (United Nations, 2015):

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

This means that people seeking for asylum is not illegal or even deemed to commit any criminal act just by arriving at some territories without sufficient documents. To be able to provide safety for people who seek for asylum because their life is threatened in their own homeland is the responsibility for every country that understands and is committed to the ratification of this document. Even so, the responsibility to give asylum seekers protection will be bigger for those who ratify the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee.

In relation to the international regulations on the protection of refugees, Australia has already ratified the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee in 1954 (United Nations, 2015) and signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This shows that Australia is one of the countries that have been aware and concerned about the existence of asylum seekers and refugees in the world. In fact, Australia has provided protection for refugees and asylum seekers since the first period of refugee wave (around the time of World War I and World War II). At that time, Australia firstly resettled around 3,500 people after World War I and 181,700 persons after World War II (Hugo, 2002).

National Population Council even stated that the period between 1921 and 1975 was the period when Australia had established itself to be a generous country of resettlement, regular donor to international refugee funds, active participant in determining international response towards refugee situation, and compassionate community as reflected in the active support given by the network of NGOs and the involvement in refugee works

(National Population Council, n.d.). These commitments showed that Australia was very concerned about refugee protection issues since their early years. However, after 1975, the wave of asylum seekers coming from Asian countries, such as Vietnam and Cambodia (between 1975 and 1989), China (1994), Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan (around 1999) increased significantly. The soaring number of incoming asylum seekers has forced Australia to adopt mandatory immigration detention for unauthorized arrivals as introduced by Keating Government in 1992 under the Migration Amendment Act 1992 (Spinks, 2013). This is deemed to be necessary to effectively regulate not only the determination of refugee status but also the removal of people who do not establish an entitlement to be in Australia. This measure was also applied against the rising concerns over organised people smuggling that forms a chain from the home nation (especially coming from Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia) to Australia (Hugo, 2002).

As the signatories of UN Refugee Convention and its Protocol, Australia has been active in promoting refugee protection through two-folded means, namely onshore and offshore processing (Hugo, 2002). Onshore processing refers to Australian government's policy of providing facilities and support for asylum seekers in Australia as can be seen in through Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) or Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) followed by supports for integration to the local communities. On the contrary, offshore processing is the mechanism through which asylum seekers are sent to the processing facilities established by Australian government in agreement with partner countries to conduct necessary refugee assessment out of Australia. In the following section, offshore processing will be discussed further.

¹ Tampa Affairs happened on 26 August 2001 when Norwegian freighter named Tampa was instructed by Australian authority to rescue 433 asylum seekers from the sinking boat on their journey to reach Christmas Island for refugee processing

Australia's Regional Refugees Arrangements

Before going further into discussing about regional refugee arrangements, it is necessary to understand what is meant by resettlement. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) defines resettlement as the process which involves the selection and transfer of refugees from the state where they seek for protection to a third country which has the agreement to provide permanent resident status (UNHCR, 2011). Furthermore, resettlement should hold three main functions, namely 1) a tool for providing international protection; 2) a durable solution for a larger numbers of refugees; and 3) a tangible expression of international solidarity on refugee protection. Based on the 1950 UNHCR statute, UNHCR is the legitimate international body which holds the mandate to provide international refugee protection by assisting the government to provide such long-term solution such as repatriation and assimilation. Resettlement, therefore, lies on the assimilation effort through which the refugees are given protection in the third country.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Australia ranks first among countries receiving and granting refugee status. Nevertheless, the increasing number of asylum seekers fleeing to Australia on boat—or known as “boat people”—has made Australia revisit its refugee policy. The so-called “Tampa Affairs” in 2001 which led to the enactment of “Pacific Solution”, then, became the turning point for Australia's refugee policies in which the initiation of regional refugee policies was started since.¹ After the occurrence of the affairs, John Howard administration passed offshore processing procedures for the boat people in a view of mandatory detention due to illegal arrival status of the boat people (Fox, 2010, p. 356-373). In his campaign speech on 28 October 2001, Howard stated that “we will

(Taylor). Since then, offshore processing was introduced in which the asylum seekers will be transferred to Nauru or Manus Island in PNG.

determine who comes to our country and the circumstances in which they come".² His statement, then, became the foundation for Australia's refugee policies especially in regards to the "boat people".

Prior to the affairs, refugee issue has surfaced in the government debate since 1999 when Australia's Immigration Minister complained about the increasing flow of asylum seekers entering Australia's territory by sea (Maley, 2010). This situation called for a government action to reduce, if unstoppable, the number of boat people seeking refuge in Australia. Generally speaking, there are two forms of resettlement arrangements under which asylum seekers have to proceed in order to determine whether or not they are eligible for refugee status. These arrangements are offshore processing and refugee swap (Maley, 2010). Following these regional arrangements, asylum seekers intending to be resettled in Australia unlawfully would have to undergo certain procedures arranged by Australia and its partner countries. Through these arrangements, therefore, people who intend to take a boat journey to Australia in a hope to be resettled there will be discouraged. Furthermore, in order to understand deeper about these arrangements, let us discuss about each of these.

Offshore processing facilities in Nauru are the earliest offshore processing arrangement carried out by Australian government in which some other countries, such as Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Kingdom of Cambodia were involved afterwards.³ The agreement for offshore processing facilities was firstly signed between Australia and Nauru on 10 September 2001 and renewed by another MOU signed on 11 December 2001 (DIMIA 2002). The signing of MOU with Nauru was followed by another MOU signing with PNG on 11 October 2001. Offshore processing facilities in Nauru and PNG were known as "Pacific Solution". The main deal of these agreements is to establish offshore processing facilities in Nauru and PNG to assess the asylum seekers arriving on boat. The first "boat people" who were sent to offshore detention were those evacuated during the "Tampa Affairs" in 2001 and a group of unauthorised arrivals found in Ashmore Island (Phillips 2012). And yet, "Pacific Solution" which was implemented since 2001 was discarded by the Australian government in 2008 and after gaining prominence at the agenda setting, however, "Pacific Solution" has been re-enacted in 2012 by reopening the facilities in Nauru and Manus Island, PNG.

Figure 1 Asylum Seeker Caseloads in Nauru and Manus Island (PNG) within 2001 – 2008 (2012)

Country	Resettled Refugee	Resettled Non-Refugee	Returned Voluntarily	Deceased
Nauru*	769	78	474	1
Manus (PNG)	306	0	9	0
Total	1075	78	483	1

*There were 53 people transferred from Manus Island (PNG) to Nauru, of which 26 were resettled as refugee, 12 resettled as non-refugee and 15 returned voluntarily

Source: (Phillips, 2012)

² John Howard election speech can be obtained in <<http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/2001-john-howard>>.

³ The agreement on offshore processing between Australia and Cambodia was signed in May 2014 but

the transfer of asylum seekers have yet to be done until recently (Ponniah). Therefore, the arrangement with Cambodia cannot yet be discussed at the time when this research is conducted.

Figure 1 presents the numbers of asylum seekers who were transferred to Manus Island (PNG) and Nauru within 2001 – 2008 periods. Around 70% of those asylum seekers processed in offshore facilities could finally be resettled in Australia and other host countries, such as New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, Norway and Denmark with either refugee or non-refugee status (Phillips, 2012). Bem, Field and Maclellan (2007) suggest that, since 2001 until 2007, offshore processing have burdened Australia's taxpayers with at least \$ 1 billion. Following the re-enactment of "Pacific Solution" in 2012, the "boat people" arriving in Australia will be transferred to Nauru and Manus Island (PNG) for processing. As agreed on the MOU, Australia will bear all costs associated with the operation of offshore processing facilities which include many features, such as transportation, basic needs, staff payment, etc. Australia's National Commission of Audit (NCOA, 2015) reported that the costs incurred from offshore processing reached \$ 400,000 per person for 12 months in detention (2013 fiscal year) or around \$ 1 billion in 2014 fiscal year (Whyte, 2015). These costs are borne to accommodate about 2,200 asylum seekers in Nauru and PNG.

On the other hand, refugee swap arrangement has been agreed between Australia and Malaysia on 7 May 2011 through which as many as 800 asylum seekers coming to Australia on boat will be transferred to Malaysia for processing and 4,000 processed refugees from Malaysia will be resettled in Australia⁴ (Pastore, 2013). The agreement which is also known as "Malaysia Solution" works for four years (Pastore, 2013). In this arrangement, Australia will bear almost all the costs incurred from transfer of asylum seekers and refugees to Malaysia and Australia respectively. It is estimated that to fly the asylum seekers to Malaysia will cost Australian tax payers as much as \$76 million (ASRC, 2013). Interestingly, Malaysia is neither the signatory of UN Refugee convention 1951 nor

its 1967 protocol. Consequently, Malaysia does not have any laws protecting the refugees which results in the absence of obligation to guarantee the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, such as rights to education and work.

From the discussion in this section, it is clear that Australia has been engaging its neighbours in Asia-Pacific region to deal with refugee issues. In fact, the numbers of boat people sailing through ocean with an aim to reach and be resettled in Australia had decreased after the implementation of Pacific Solution. The abolishment of offshore processing facilities has sparked another wave of asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia's outer island, Christmas Island, to gain refugee status. And yet, since 2013 offshore processing facilities in Nauru and PNG have been reopened in addition to the swap agreement with Malaysia which will expire in 2015. Additionally, in 2014, Australia has another arrangement with the Kingdom of Cambodia for refugee resettlement. This agreement has broadened the regional refugee arrangements in Asia-Pacific region under which more countries are involved. These refugee arrangements, especially offshore processing, aim to deter the flow of asylum seekers in which Australian government considers it as people smuggling due to the unlawful nature of their entry to Australia.

Mapping North – South Relations: Australia's Regional Refugee Arrangements

This section will analyse the case of Australia's regional refugee arrangements based on international level of analysis. In doing so, we will employ two conceptual frameworks discussed earlier in this research, namely world system analysis and constructivism. By employing world-systems analysis, countries in Asia – Pacific region will be divided into three categories, namely core, semi-peripheral and peripheral. The use of this categorisation is adopted from the work of Wallerstein through which he divided world economy into these

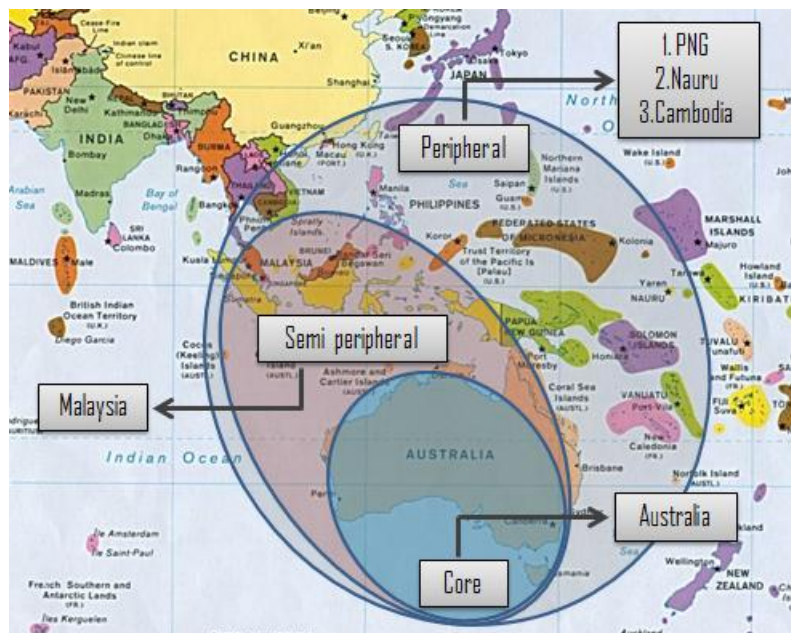
⁴See the MoU on refugee swap between Australia and Malaysia

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categories. That way, it will be more feasible to map the regional refugee arrangements between Australia and its partner countries in the region. In addition to world-systems analysis, this research will also employ constructivist approach as to identify the international norms related to refugee protection under which the signatories are obliged to comply with. The combination

between world-systems analysis and constructivism will, therefore, help deepen the understanding about the instance of regional refugee arrangements. As to begin, the following parts will discuss further about the utilisation of the proposed approaches to draw this particular international relations phenomenon.

The Map of Australia's Regional Refugee Arrangements
Figure 2 World-systems analysis on regional refugee arrangements



Source: Authors' illustration⁵

From the above illustration, it can be seen that regional refugee arrangements agreed between Australia and some countries in the Asia-Pacific region reflect the so-called international division of labour on refugee protection. As what Wallerstein suggested that countries in the world are divided into three categories, namely core, semi-peripheral and peripheral; regional refugee arrangements can also be divided into these three categories. The extent to which countries are categorised into one of these

groups is two-folded: 1) economic capacity and 2) level of dependency to "core" country. These two elements are deemed sufficient to justify the presumed categorisation from the above illustration about world-system analysis on regional refugee arrangements.

In terms of economic capacity, the five countries assessed in this research are at different levels. In order to illustrate their economic capacities, Figure 2 presents the juxtaposition of per capita income at current US \$ of these five countries.

⁵The map was downloaded from <<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/mapo9.htm>>

Figure 3 GDP Per capita (Current US \$)

Year	Australia	PNG	Nauru*	Malaysia	Cambodia
2001	19,497	558	N/A	3,878	319
2005	33,996	804	2,599	5,554	471
2010	51,801	1,382	6,234	8,754	783
2012	67,525	2,184	12,022	10,440	945

* The data on Nauru is generated from United Nations while the rests are from World Bank Statistics in which data on Nauru is not available

Source: World Bank, GDP per capita (Current US \$); United Nations

From Figure 3, it is evident that Australia is the strongest economy and, if compared to the others, there appear such huge margins or gaps among them. In the income classification introduced by the World Bank, Australia is considered as high income economy, Malaysia as upper-middle income economy, PNG as lower-middle economy, and Cambodia as lower income economy (World Bank, 2015). The classification for Nauru is not available on World Bank data but if compared to other

countries, Nauru can be considered as upper-middle economy like Malaysia.

On the other hand, the level of dependency can be used as another indicator which becomes the basis of this categorisation. It should be noted that, as the “core” country, Australia becomes the “centre” under which semi-periphery and periphery countries depend upon. In this regard, dependency on Australia can be understood in some senses, such as the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Australia and trades.

Figure 4 Australia’s ODA (Estimated Outcome in Million US\$)

Countries	2008-09	2013-14
PNG	357.3	448.5
Nauru	18.0	20.7
Cambodia	37.6	51.1
Malaysia	-	-

Source: (Australian Government, n.d.)

Based on the Figure 4, PNG becomes the biggest Australia’s ODA receiver compared to Nauru and Cambodia. It is estimated that Australia contributes almost 70% of total aids received by PNG and an additional aid worth \$ 47 million will be allocated to PNG for a four-year term as part of the offshore processing deals (Provost, 2015). Besides, for Nauru, Australia’s ODA in 2008-09 periods made up to more than 30% of Nauru’s GDP which accounted to only \$ 62 million in 2010.

Furthermore, Cambodia also receives additional financial assistance from Australia worth of \$ 40 million for a four-year term as a result of offshore processing deals in 2014 (UNSW, 2014).

On the contrary, Malaysia is not among the recipients of Australia’s ODA. Yet, Australia and Malaysia have established strong trade relations, particularly when the Malaysia – Australia Free Trade Agreement (MAFTA) was agreed in 2012 (MITI, 2015). Malaysia’s

exports to Australia have been increasing overtime. It was recorded that in 2011 Malaysia's exports to Australia reached A\$ 9,894 million and A\$ 10,944 million in 2013 (DFAT, 2014). In addition to trade figures, Malaysia will be less burdened by the refugees residing in their territory as four thousands of them will be resettled in Australia in exchange for approximately 800 asylum seekers under the swap agreement for which Australia is committed to providing the necessary funds to

run the deal. It is evident that these two indicators have shown that Australia can be considered as the core country while its partners are considered as either semi-periphery or periphery. As the "core", Australia has the strongest economy in juxtaposition with its partner countries. Besides, Australia's ODA and Australia's position as strategic trading partner for Malaysia and other countries in the region have made Australia gain more prominence.

Figure 5 Australia's Trade Flow (in Million US\$)

Partner	Export				Import			
	2000	2005	2010	2014	2000	2005	2010	2014
Cambodia	6.4	35.9	23.0	38.8	1.4	6.9	26.1	107.5
Malaysia	1,366.5	1,917.1	3,347.1	5,432.0	2,590.7	4,832.4	8,562.5	10,036.8
Nauru	14.7	9.1	13.1	84.5	5.1	0.2	5.7	5.1
PNG	569.1	1,019.5	1,874.0	1,945.0	847.6	1,559.1	2,794.3	3,340.7
Total	1,956.7	2,981.6	5,257.2	7,500.3	3,444.8	6,398.6	11,388.6	13,490.0

Source: (UN Comtrade, n.d.)

Besides, as suggested in the Table 5, trade relations between Australia and its other partner countries are also prominent to understand the level of dependency among each other. Although nominally speaking, the figure only represents a small portion of Australia's total trade which is around 1%, yet it is still necessary to note that generally the figures grow sustainably (except for Nauru). In other words, it is justifiable to assume that the dependency level between Australia and its partner countries are also increasing. Compared to Malaysia and Cambodia, Nauru and PNG have less access to trade or economic cooperation which then makes trading with Australia as one of the most promising ones. Still, Malaysia and Cambodia involved in some regional trading agreements with Australia, such as under AANZFTA, APEC and even TPP (for Malaysia) which add on dependency among each other.

Responsibility Sharing and Division of Labour on Refugee Issues

Based on the definition of refugee and asylum seeker outlined in the previous section, it can be understood that these people, with all the rightful reasons as explained above, are taking risk to go seeking for safety and fleeing from their home without certainty to pursue asylum somewhere, in a hope to find a place for them to live a safe life. By looking at this fact, we could conclude that no one is directly responsible for causing them to face such unfortunate situation, but everyone has responsibility to help them and not to mention, to respect their rights to receive fair treatments from countries that they happen to visit. In this regard, no country should reject those people fleeing to another country to seek refugee there. Therefore, it is deemed necessary for all states to work on refugee issues collectively in order to succeed the established international laws governing refugees.

Australia as one of the destination countries in Pacific area has been dealing with refugees coming to their territory since decades ago. Then challenges are up for Australia to deal with the significant increase

on the number of refugees and asylum seekers coming as shown in figure below:

Figure 6 People Seeking Australia’s Protection

Program Year	Non-IMA** Protection visa (PV) applications lodged	IMA* refugee status determination requests received	Total
2002 - 03	4,960	60	5,020
2003 - 04	3,485	87	3,572
2004 - 05	3,062	146	3,208
2005 - 06	3,191	101	3,292
2006 - 07	3,723	23	3,746
2007 - 08	3,987	21	4,008
2008 - 09	5,072	668	5,740
2009 - 10	5,986	4,579	10,565
2010 - 11	6,337	5,174	11,511
2011 - 12	7,036	7,379	14,415
Grand Total	46,839	18,238	65,077

*IMA= Irregular Maritime Arrivals

** Non- IMA generally refers to protection visa applicants who arrived by air and are already in Australia’s migration zone

Source: (Australian Government, 2012)

With the number of refugees going up each year, as we can see from the above figure in 2004 until 2012, Australia needed new ways to cope with the challenge. As mentioned earlier that asylum seekers and refugees are the responsibilities of every country, judged by their cause to flee from home, Australia’s partnership with its surrounding countries through offshore processing arrangement and refugee swap agreements are deemed to be a form of responsibility sharing between countries in the region.

The responsibilities for countries to respect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are emphasized in some of the international laws related to the issue, such as article 31 of UN Refugee Convention and article 14 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These laws have been the basic foundations to

use a constructivist approach to understand this issue. As Slaughter, Tulumello and Wood (1998) explained, shared norms (in this case, it is the same understanding about the responsibilities to respect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers) such as international laws become the basis for interaction among actors which then constitute actors’ identities and interests. And it could also be seen that the international laws become the firm foundation to see the responsibility sharing between Australia and its partners in the issue of refugee resettlement.

And yet, responsibility sharing between Australia and its partners also shows the pattern of division of labour in the sense that Australia plays the role of core countries to support the funding for refugees’ processing facilities in the partner countries. While on the

other hand, partner countries provide the place and facilities needed for the refugees in their territory. In this sense, international norms generated from international laws governing refugee issues are not the only determinant which influences state's behaviour. Rather, economic rationale also takes part in dividing the jobs among countries in dealing with refugee arrangement.

As a result, Australia takes the crucial roles in the arrangements by providing financial means and experts to support the processing procedures which makes it as the "core" country. Australia's policies on refugee resettlement arrangements confirm Australia's position as a good international citizen who promotes the fulfilment of human rights and refugee protection. It is, indeed, a form of soft power which may be used as a tool to strengthen its position in the region. While on the contrary, Malaysia, Nauru, PNG and Cambodia receive the resource allocations from Australia to make the arrangements work, making them as semi-peripheral and peripheral countries respectively.

It is clear that the relations between Australia and its partner countries are unequal where core country allocates more resources to the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. The transfer of resources, especially the financial one, is considered as the trigger for non-core countries to take part in the refugee arrangements. Otherwise, PNG, Nauru and Cambodia which have ratified UN Refugee Convention (UNHCR, n.d.) but with poor-performing economy and prone to political instability will not be able to put so much effort to provide processing facilities for asylum seekers by their own due to the costs associated with the facilities. And for Malaysia, its geographical and cultural proximities (as a Muslim-majority country) will not let them neglect the very existence of asylum seekers stranded on their coasts. With these regional arrangements, Malaysia will be able to gain not only financial support from Australia but also burden sharing with another country through

swap agreement. This unequal relationship on regional refugee arrangements has made Australia as a core country while Malaysia, Nauru, PNG and Cambodia as semi-peripheral and peripheral countries respectively.

Critics on Australia's Regional Refugee Arrangements

Despite the fact that regional refugee arrangements initiated by Australia have shown the sense of responsibility sharing among concerning countries, it is important to note that there are non-financial costs incurred from the implementation of these arrangements. In providing protection to refugees or asylum seekers, the host countries must not only prepare for financial support. Other costs which are not associated with the financial capacity can be considered as non-financial costs in which both host countries and refugees or asylum seekers themselves must bear. Such costs may include assimilation, human rights abuse, and poor living condition.

After the re-enactment of offshore processing in Nauru and PNG, asylum seekers begin to be transferred to the designated countries. Following the transfers, UNHCR conducted survey to each of Australia's offshore detention facilities and assessed the living condition there. UNHCR concluded that asylum seekers in both detention facilities lived in the "harsh" condition where the shelters were overcrowded with extreme heat and humidity (UNSW, n.d.). In the offshore detention centre, the asylum seekers often experience mental illness due to the long isolation and the lack of proper health infrastructure like hospitals (Bem, Field, and Maclellan, 2007). It is worsened by the conflicts which sometimes happened between the asylum seekers and local residents. Besides, Bem, Field and Maclellan (2007) also suggest that there is a need to impose the reform in Nauru, and to some extent other partner countries, in order to improve efficiency and to end corruption.

Figure 7 Corruption Perception Index 2001, 2012 and 2014

Country	2001	2012	2014

Australia	11	7	11
Malaysia	36	54	50
PNG	N/A	150	145
Cambodia	N/A	157	156
Nauru*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Countries assessed	91	176	175

Source: (Transparency International, n.d.)

Based on the above figure, it can be clearly seen that most of Australia’s partners are on the bottom list of corruption perception. Until recently, CPI becomes one of the most comprehensive and robust measurements of corruption perception even though some critics also appear (Roca and Alidedeoglu-Buchner, 2010). This implies that they are very much vulnerable to the corruption. In relation to the refugee arrangements, corruption may threaten the implementation of the regional arrangements on refugee. Accountability issue, for instance, will be exposed and questioned particularly when the aids given by Australia are not well allocated to the betterment of refugee protection and processing in the host countries. Even so, the data on Nauru is, again, unavailable. Yet, based on the country reports from Transparency International, Nauru is considered to be among those countries with low CPI like PNG and Cambodia.

All these situations should require Australia to be more selective in choosing partner countries for the implementation of its regional refugee arrangements. Two factors must be considered when choosing a partner country, namely country’s capability and its commitment to refugee protection. The former, as discussed earlier, can be seen from economic, political and social indicators while the later can be seen from international laws governing refugee and human rights ratification. Once these issues are assessed carefully, Australia will be able to ensure the same and standardised treatment towards the asylum seekers and refugees even in offshore processing facilities. Thus, harsh situation and even human rights abuse against asylum seekers and refugees can be prevented.

Conclusion and Policy Suggestion

The discussions outlined in this research have provided some insights regarding the mapping of “North” and “South” relations on the case of Australia’s regional refugee arrangements. The instance of these regional arrangements has provided an opportunity to understand the issue from different point of view. By combining world-systems analysis and constructivism, Australia’s regional refugee arrangements can be understood as a two-folded occurrence. On the one hand, these arrangements show the tendency to create a sense of responsibility sharing on the refugee, if not asylum seekers, issues. As countries are constrained by the international laws under which they are bounded in, their behaviour must reflect and comply with the provision agreed on the laws. On the other hand, however, international division of labour is still present in a way that engages economic and normative discourses on refugee issues. In this sense, even though dealing with refugee issues is costly, yet countries cannot neglect this very occurrence particularly those who ratified the refugee convention and its protocol like Australia. Regional refugee arrangements show that countries behaviour is constrained by the existing international norms resulting from international laws. As the strongest economy and the most favourite refugee destination in the region, Australia takes the lead to promote regional refugee arrangements and provide financial means as to work the plan out.

The categorisation of countries into core, semi-periphery and periphery is, thus, relevant to understand the regional refugee arrangements between Australia and some partner countries in the Asia – Pacific region.

By using economic and normative rationale, countries are categorised based on the economic power and the level of commitment to international laws. The notion of responsibility sharing is in line with the notion of international division of labour in which countries work collectively to promote refugee protection by performing distinctive roles from one another. Thus, the discussion in this research has outlined how the North and South interact collectively under the notion of responsibility sharing and division of labour on the matters of regional refugee arrangements.

Policy Suggestions

Based on the discussions and critics that have been outlined in this research, we propose some policy suggestions as to improve the treatment to asylum seekers and refugees and reduce the likelihood of people getting on boat to flee to other countries in a hope of seeking asylum.

1. If regional refugee arrangement is the most viable solution to deal with refugee issues, the countries where the asylum seekers will stay and apply for refugee status should possess political, economic and social stability. That way, the abuse of basic rights and the occurrence of conflict can be mitigated;
2. Strengthen the monitoring function in the offshore processing facilities as to lessen the possibility of human rights abuse and corruption to occur as most of Australia's partner countries are considered as Least Developed Countries;
3. Official Development Assistance (ODA) can be used as a means of improving the capacity of partner countries. This capacity building will prepare institutional capacity and infrastructure development of Australia's partner countries to take the lead in promoting refugee protection;
4. Australia and its partner countries should be more active in promoting peace building in the countries where most of "boat people" come from. The stability in the sending countries will

automatically reduce the number of people fleeing to seek refuge in other countries, including in Australia and other Asia Pacific countries.

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