



# **CHINA-INDONESIA SURVEY 2024**

Insights into Indonesian Public  
Perceptions of China

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# CHINA-INDONESIA SURVEY 2024

## Insights into Indonesian Public Perceptions of China

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# PREFACE



**Muhammad Zulfikar  
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Director of  
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As the Director of the China-Indonesia Desk at the Center of Economic and Law Studies (CELIOS), I am proud to present the 2024 China-Indonesia Survey, especially at a pivotal moment marked by Indonesia's transition to a new presidency under Prabowo Subianto. This change in leadership introduces new dynamics and potential pathways for the relationship between Indonesia and China, two influential nations in Asia. Since President Joko Widodo took office in 2014, the bilateral relationship has evolved significantly, particularly with the launch of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has positioned Indonesia as a key player in China's regional strategy.

Indonesia's strategic location, vast market potential, and a population of 277 million have made it an essential ally for China. The deepening economic ties are evident, with China establishing itself as Indonesia's leading trading partner and a major source of investment. By mid-2023, Chinese investments in Indonesia surpassed US\$1.2 billion across various sectors, highlighting the substantial benefits of this partnership. Key projects, such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway and various industrial zones, exemplify the growing ties in recent years. Furthermore, initiatives like Local Currency Settlement agreements have facilitated smoother economic transactions, further solidifying the relationship.

However, this burgeoning partnership is not without its complexities. Political discourse in Indonesia reflects a careful balancing act between seizing economic opportunities and addressing concerns related to sovereignty, environmental sustainability, and social impacts. Issues such as China's activities in the South China Sea, fears of debt traps, and the environmental repercussions of Chinese investments have sparked public debate and occasional tensions.

This survey aims to capture a comprehensive snapshot of public perceptions regarding these critical dimensions, including the closeness of ties between the Indonesian government and China, as well as the perceived influence of their political connections. It also explores views on the U.S.–Indonesia relationship and how it affects ties with China, particularly in the context of increasing geopolitical competition.

Additionally, we delve into public opinions on key issues influencing perceptions of China, such as human rights concerns related to Uighur Muslims and China’s stance on international conflicts like the Palestine issue. By gauging sentiments on maritime tensions and environmental impacts, the survey reflects growing anxieties about sovereignty and ecological sustainability. We also assess public expectations regarding actions that China can take to strengthen its relationship with Indonesia, alongside perceptions of the Belt and Road Initiative and its implications.

This inaugural annual survey was conducted online with 1,414 respondents, utilizing random sampling to ensure a nationally representative sample that encompasses perspectives from elite to societal levels. By capturing a diverse range of opinions, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of Indonesian perceptions regarding China’s influence.

As we move forward under President Subianto's leadership, this report seeks to inform policymakers and stakeholders in both nations, providing actionable insights that foster mutual understanding and diplomatic strategies. Moving forward, we commit to updating this survey annually, refining our methodology and indicators based on feedback and evolving data. We welcome constructive criticism and suggestions as we strive for continual improvement.

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the insights derived from this survey are crucial for pinpointing opportunities for collaboration and recognizing potential areas of contention. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors, surveyors, and all those who contributed to the realization of this survey. Your dedication and expertise have been instrumental in developing a comprehensive tool for understanding public perceptions of Chinese influence in Indonesia. By fostering dialogue around these critical issues, we aspire to enhance a balanced and constructive partnership between Indonesia and China, ultimately benefiting both nations as they navigate the complexities of regional and global challenges together.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 China-Indonesia Survey provides an in-depth analysis of Indonesian perspectives on its multifaceted relationship with China, revealing a complex interplay of political, economic, and cultural factors that shape public opinion. As Indonesia seeks to clarify its role within both regional and global contexts, the survey underscores the various dynamics at play in its ties with China. While a significant portion of respondents acknowledge the closeness between the two countries, important discussions arise around issues such as economic dependency, political influence, and cultural exchange. This comprehensive data set offers valuable insights into how Indonesians perceive their national identity and sovereignty amid China's rising prominence and the shifting geopolitical landscape.

## ▲ Perception of the Indonesia-China Relationship

A significant 79% of respondents view the Indonesia-China relationship as strong, with 45% considering it very close and 34% fairly close. Notably, no respondents see it as very distant, indicating broad acceptance. However, 10% express concerns about over-dependence and potential dominance by China.

## ▲ China's Political Influence

70% believe China holds the most political influence in Indonesia, while 19% acknowledge the roles of other countries like the U.S. and Japan. A substantial 66% view this influence positively, linking it to economic benefits, though 34% express concerns over Chinese dominance and regional security.

## ▲ Indonesia-U.S. Relationship

Half of the respondents feel that the U.S.-Indonesia relationship balances ties with China. Additionally, 23% note potential implications stemming from U.S.-China rivalry. While 16% believe strengthening ties with the U.S. could reduce dependence on China, 11% worry it may harm relations with China.



## ▲ **Indonesia's Position Amid China-U.S. Rivalry**

A strong majority (78%) support maintaining a neutral stance in the U.S.–China rivalry, while 17% advocate for seeking new partnerships outside both superpowers. Only 5% favor aligning with one, reflecting a strong desire for sovereignty.

## ▲ **China's Global Leadership Potential**

51% believe China can lead the world, primarily due to its economic strength. However, 19% are sceptical, citing concerns about political stability and human rights issues, while 30% remain uncertain.

## ▲ **Issues Affecting Perceptions of China**

The survey reveals significant concerns affecting perceptions, including:

- **Economic Dependence**

57% worry that growing dependence on China may worsen negative views.

- **Uighur Muslims**

45% identify this issue as a major concern.

- **Natuna Waters Policy**

32% express concerns regarding China's stance.

- **Support for Russia**

17% voice worries about China's relationship with Russia. Minimal concern exists regarding Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Tibet.

## ▲ **Actions for Indonesia Regarding Uighur Muslims**

Responses indicate varied approaches:

- **Diplomatic Channels**

33% support this approach, consistent with Indonesia's "independent and active" policy.

- **Respecting Sovereignty**

23% advocate for non-interference.

- **Assertive Measures**

21% suggest more concrete actions.

- **Ignoring the Issue**

9% prefer maintaining strong economic ties.

- **Lack of Understanding**

14% are unaware of the complexities involved.

## ▲ **China's Response to Palestine**

Opinions are mixed on China's diplomatic support for Palestine:

- **Positive View**

43% see China's response as commendable.

- **Not a Priority**

23% believe it is of little importance in China's foreign policy.

- **Inadequate Response**

16% desire bold actions for Palestinian rights.

## ▲ **China's Approach to Maritime Tensions in Natuna**

Public sentiment is varied:

- **Inadequate Proactivity**

8% feel China has not been proactive.

- **Inappropriate Actions**

21% believe Chinese actions are misguided.

## ▲ **Factors Causing Decline in Trust Toward China**

Trust in China has declined due to several factors:

- **Economic and Military Threats**

46% cite these concerns.

- **Global Responsibility**

16% believe China does not act as a responsible actor.

- **Diverging Views on Peace**

15% link differing opinions to trust issues.

## ▲ **Improving China-Indonesia Relations**

To enhance relations, respondents suggest:

- **Mutually Beneficial Economic Relations**

58% emphasize this aspect.

- **Resolving Maritime Disputes**

31% highlight the need for addressing issues in Natuna.

- **Cultural Cooperation**

10% advocate for strengthening ties through soft power.

## ▲ **China's Economic Influence**

Most recognize China as the most economically influential country, although some believe other nations hold more sway. Concerns about dependence persist, with 51% fearing potential debt traps.

## ▲ **Negative Impact Areas in Cooperation**

Several concerns arise in key areas:

### ● **Infrastructure Development**

44% highlight environmental degradation and issues related to the influx of Chinese workers.

### ● **Chinese Investment**

31% worry about dominance in projects and inadequate local community benefits.

### ● **Trade**

20% view the influx of cheaper Chinese goods as detrimental to local industries.

## ▲ **Opinion on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

### ● **Familiarity**

42% are unfamiliar with the BRI, indicating a need for better public

### ● **Positive Perception**

41% recognize its role in infrastructure development.

### ● **Concerns**

17% worry about foreign dominance and environmental impacts.

## ▲ **China's Contribution to Environmental Destructions**

### ● **Significant Impact**

43% perceive considerable environmental degradation due to Chinese projects.

### ● **Neutral Views**

21% are neutral, possibly due to lack of experience or information.

## ▲ **China's Role in Indonesia's Energy Transition**

### ● **Positive Contribution**

47% believe China supports renewable energy efforts.

### ● **Uncertainty**

27% are unsure of China's contributions.

## ▲ Encouraging Clean Energy Transition

Respondents suggest:

- **Funding for Projects**

46% believe China should provide financial support.

- **Improved Governance**

26% emphasize better governance in the mining sector.

## ▲ Cultural Influence of China

- **Cultural Recognition**

57% of respondents consider China culturally influential, citing the significant Chinese community in Indonesia and the growing presence of Chinese cultural activities in the country.

- **Concerns about Cultural Influence**

63% express apprehension about increasing Chinese cultural influence, while only 8% support it.

The findings underscore the necessity for informed public discourse and proactive engagement to navigate the complexities of Indonesia's relationship with China amidst broader geopolitical dynamics. As respondents express both optimism and concern regarding the future, it is clear that fostering a balanced and mutually beneficial partnership will be essential for Indonesia. The survey highlights the importance of addressing key issues, such as economic dependency, maritime tensions, and cultural influence, while also advocating for Indonesia's sovereignty and autonomy in its foreign policy. Moving forward, it will be vital for both nations to engage in open dialogue and collaboration to enhance understanding and cooperation, ensuring that the Indonesia-China relationship evolves in a way that respects mutual interests and supports regional stability.





**57% worry that growing  
Indonesia's economic  
dependence on China  
may worsen negative  
views towards China**

# INTRODUCTION

The 2024 China-Indonesia Survey explores Indonesian perceptions of the intricate and evolving relationship between Indonesia and China, two pivotal nations in Asia that have reached a critical juncture since President Joko Widodo took office in 2014. This era coincided with the launch of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under President Xi Jinping, positioning Indonesia as a key player in China's regional economic strategy (Damuri, Perkasa, Atje, & Hirawan, 2019). With its strategic location, expansive market, and a population of 277 million, Indonesia has become an essential ally for China while actively seeking support to achieve its goal of becoming one of the world's top five economies by 2045.

The economic ties between the two countries have deepened significantly, with China establishing itself as Indonesia's leading trading partner and a major investor (Rohman, Setiawan, & Naufal, 2024). By mid-2023, Chinese investments in Indonesia had surpassed US\$1.2 billion across more than 2,300 projects in various sectors (Invest Indonesia, 2023). Notably, Indonesia emerged as the largest recipient of BRI investments in 2023 (Christoph, 2024), with key projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway and various industrial zones underscoring this collaboration. Additionally, a Local Currency Settlement (LCS) agreement has facilitated transactions in yuan and rupiah, further enhancing economic cooperation (Putra, 2022). China's influence extends beyond economic realms; its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included providing substantial vaccine supplies to Indonesia (Suhita, Ma'rifat, & Ramadina, n.d), and cultural initiatives, such as the establishment of Confucius Institutes (Theo & Leung, 2018), have further solidified bilateral ties. Media cooperation has also become a significant aspect of their relationship (Jia, 2024).

Despite these burgeoning ties, Indonesia's relationship with China is complex and multifaceted. Political discourse

within Indonesia reflects a careful balancing act between the economic opportunities presented by China and concerns over sovereignty, environmental impacts (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024; Rosada, Wibisana, & Paksi, 2023), and social implications (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024; Umagapi, 2017). Issues such as China's activities in the South China Sea (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024; Kusuma, Kurnia, & Agustian, 2021), fears of debt traps (Nabiilah & Sari, 2024; Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024), environmental degradation from extractive industries (Rosada, Wibisana, & Paksi, 2023), and the influx of Chinese workers have sparked public debate and occasional tensions (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024; Maksum & Sahide, 2019).

This survey seeks to capture public perceptions of these critical dimensions, including views on the closeness of the relationship between the Indonesian government and China and the perceived influence of their political ties. It explores beliefs about whether China is the most politically and economically influential country, offering insights into how Indonesians perceive the balance of power in the region. Additionally, the survey addresses Indonesia's relationship with the United States and its implications for ties with China, examining public sentiment regarding Indonesia's geopolitical stance amid U.S.–China competition.

Moreover, the survey delves into public opinions on key issues affecting perceptions of China, including human rights concerns related to Uighur Muslims and China's role in international conflicts such as the Palestine issue. It gauges views on China's handling of maritime tensions and environmental impacts, reflecting growing anxieties about sovereignty and ecological sustainability. The survey also explores expectations for what actions China can take to improve its relationship with Indonesia, along with public sentiment toward the Belt and Road Initiative and its perceived benefits and drawbacks. Additionally, it aims to assess how the public perceives China's cultural influence and its role in supporting Indonesia's energy transition.

In light of recent developments, Indonesia has welcomed a new president, Prabowo Subianto, who is expected to continue and potentially enhance the path established by his predecessor, Joko Widodo, in strengthening China–Indonesia relations. This transition in leadership adds another layer of complexity to the bilateral relationship, as President Subianto's policies could shape future collaborations and responses to ongoing challenges.

By analyzing these diverse perspectives, this report aspires to illuminate the nuanced landscape of the China-Indonesia relationship. It aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders in both nations with actionable insights that can inform diplomatic strategies and enhance mutual understanding. As global dynamics continue to shift, the findings of this survey will be invaluable in identifying areas for collaboration and addressing potential points of contention. By fostering dialogue around these critical issues, the report seeks to contribute to a more balanced and constructive partnership between Indonesia and China, ultimately benefiting both countries as they navigate the complexities of regional and global challenges together.





# METHODOLOGY

The 2024 China-Indonesia Survey employed a robust methodology to ensure the collection of reliable and representative data on Indonesian perceptions of China's influence. This survey marks the inaugural annual assessment specifically focused on this critical relationship.

## Sample Design

A total of 1,414 respondents were surveyed using random sampling to create a nationally representative sample that reflects a diverse range of perspectives across Indonesia. The participants included individuals from both elite and societal backgrounds, encompassing various income levels and employment statuses. This approach ensured that a wide array of demographic and socioeconomic factors were considered in the analysis.

## Data Collection

The survey was conducted online, leveraging digital platforms to maximize reach and engagement. To facilitate data collection, advertisements were distributed on popular social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. This approach allowed us to target a wide audience across all provinces in Indonesia, capturing opinions from urban and rural areas alike.

## Survey Instrument

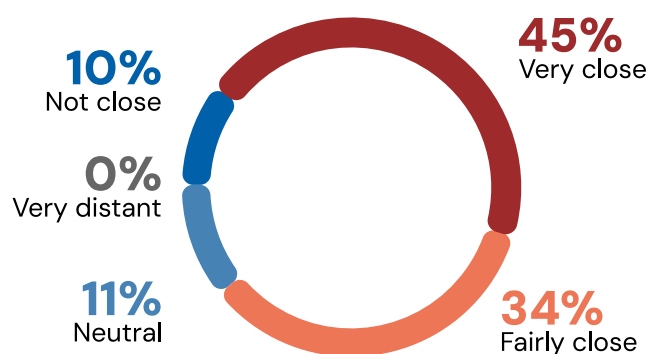
The survey instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire designed to elicit respondents' views on multiple aspects of the Indonesia-China relationship. Key themes explored included perceptions of economic and political influence, cultural ties, and other issues. The questions were formulated to ensure clarity and relevance, promoting thoughtful and informed responses.

## Data Analysis

Once the data collection was completed, the responses were systematically analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and significant findings. This analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of public opinion regarding China's influence in Indonesia, highlighting areas of both support and concern.

# KEY FINDINGS

## 01 The perception of the close relationship between the Indonesian government and China



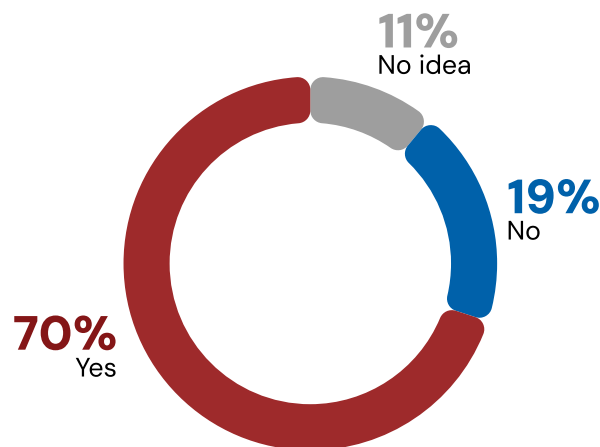
Based on the data presented in the graph, 45% of respondents perceive the relationship between Indonesia and China as very close, while 34% view it as fairly close. This indicates that 79% of the total respondents recognize a strong connection between the Indonesian government and China. This majority perception likely stems from China's increasing involvement in various national projects (Rakhmat et.al, 2024; Damuri et.al, 2019) which has made the relationship more visible and impactful. The positive sentiment is further reinforced by consistent government communication emphasizing the importance of ties with China, particularly in the realms of investment and trade (Rohman, Setiawan, & Naufal, 2024). Additionally, the growing presence of Chinese products in Indonesian markets and infrastructure projects funded by Chinese capital (Pramono et.al, 2022) contribute to the perception of a robust partnership.

Notably, 0% of respondents chose the option "very distant," indicating that there is virtually no significant perception of China and Indonesia as distant partners. In contrast, 10% of respondents viewed the relationship as not close, which may suggest that some Indonesians have limited

information about the ties between the two countries. Additionally, 11% of respondents remained neutral, likely reflecting individuals with balanced perspectives or insufficient information regarding the relationship.

**49% of respondents  
perceive the relationship  
between Indonesia and China  
as very close.**

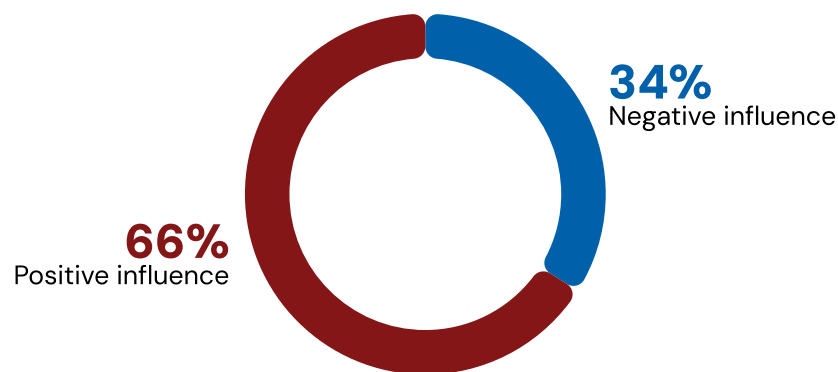
## **02** Is China the most politically influential country in Indonesia?



A significant 70% of respondents believe that China is the most politically influential country in Indonesia. This high percentage indicates that a substantial majority of the population recognizes China's considerable impact on Indonesian politics. This perception may stem from recent Indonesian government policies that have increasingly aligned with China, encompassing areas such as economics, investment, and foreign policy (Umagapi, 2017). Compared to Western nations like the United States, China has been more proactive in engaging with Indonesia through various infrastructure projects and substantial investment (Mahendru, 2021). This visibility likely contributes to China's dominant standing in the public's view.

In contrast, 19% of respondents feel that China is not the most politically influential country in Indonesia. This group may still acknowledge the significant roles played by other nations, such as the United States, Japan, or other Western countries, particularly in sectors like technology, education, and defense. Additionally, 11% of respondents selected "No idea," suggesting that a small segment of the population may either lack information about China's political influence or have not formed a strong opinion on the matter.

### 03 What is your view on that political influence?

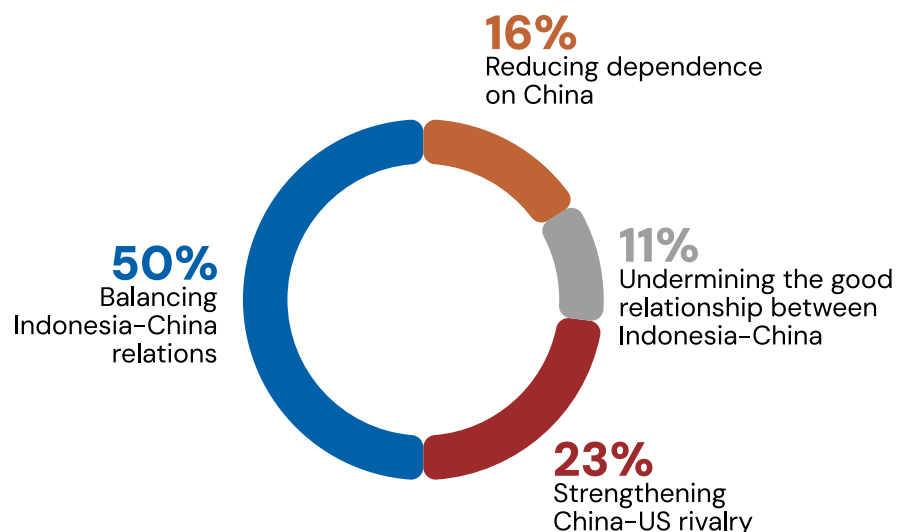


A notable 66% of respondents view China's political influence in Indonesia as positive. This finding suggests that more than half of the population perceives benefits arising from closer political ties with China, despite some underlying concerns and sentiments about the relationship. The positive perception may largely be attributed to the tangible economic benefits and investments experienced by the public, such as infrastructure development and the creation of job opportunities linked to Chinese-funded projects. On the other hand, 34% of respondents regard this influence as negative, indicating a significant portion of the population harbors skepticism or apprehension about the strengthening political ties with China. These concerns could stem from perceptions of potential Chinese dominance in the South China Sea (Kusuma, Kurnia, & Agustian, 2021) and a growing alignment of Indonesia's foreign policy with Chinese interests (Umagapi, 2017).



66% of respondents view China's political influence in Indonesia as positive.

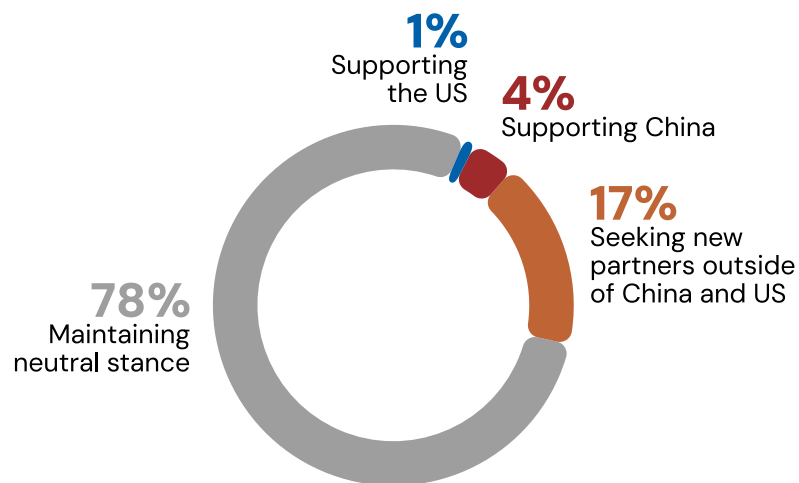
## 04 What is your view on the relationship between Indonesia and the United States



A majority of 50% of respondents believe that Indonesia's relationship with the United States balances its ties with China, avoiding dependence on either nation. This perspective aligns with Indonesia's foreign policy principle of free and active, which emphasizes maintaining neutrality and not aligning too closely with any one country. Additionally, 23% of respondents see the potential for strengthening the rivalry between China and the United States to have certain implications for Indonesia. This group may recognize that increased tensions between these two powers could create both challenges and opportunities for Indonesia in navigating its foreign relations.

Moreover, 16% of respondents believe that enhancing ties with the United States can help Indonesia reduce its dependence on China. This perspective suggests a desire for greater political and economic independence, enabling Indonesia to assert its interests more effectively on the global stage. However, a small minority of 11% express concern that this approach could potentially damage the positive relationship that Indonesia has cultivated with China. This highlights a recognition of the delicate balance Indonesia must strike in its foreign policy to maintain strong relationships with both major powers without alienating either side.

## 05 Indonesia's position in the midst of China-US rivalry. What do you think Indonesia's position should be?



The data indicates a strong inclination among respondents for Indonesia to maintain a neutral stance in the competition between China and the United States, with 78% supporting this position. This preference aligns with Indonesia's foreign policy principle of free and active, emphasizing the importance of not aligning too closely with any major power. By adopting a neutral position, Indonesia can navigate the complexities of global politics while minimizing the risk of conflict arising from the rivalry between these two superpowers.

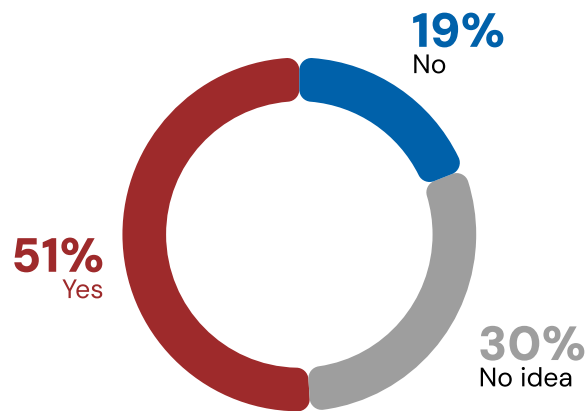
Additionally, 17% of respondents favor seeking new partners outside of both China and the United States. This option suggests a strategic

approach where Indonesia could expand its partnerships with other countries, such as those in the Middle East or Southeast Asia, thereby reducing dependency on either of the major powers. Establishing alternative alliances could help Indonesia mitigate potential risks and buffer against any negative impacts resulting from heightened tensions between China and the US. In contrast, only a small fraction of respondents chose to align with one of the major powers, with just 1% supporting the United States and 4% supporting China. The low numbers reflect a general consensus that siding with either major power could increase Indonesia's vulnerabilities in the global arena. This sentiment underscores the desire for Indonesia to preserve its sovereignty and agency in international affairs without becoming embroiled in external conflicts.

## Respondents strongly favor Indonesia adopting a neutral stance in the competition between China and the United States.



## 06 Do you believe China is capable of leading the world?



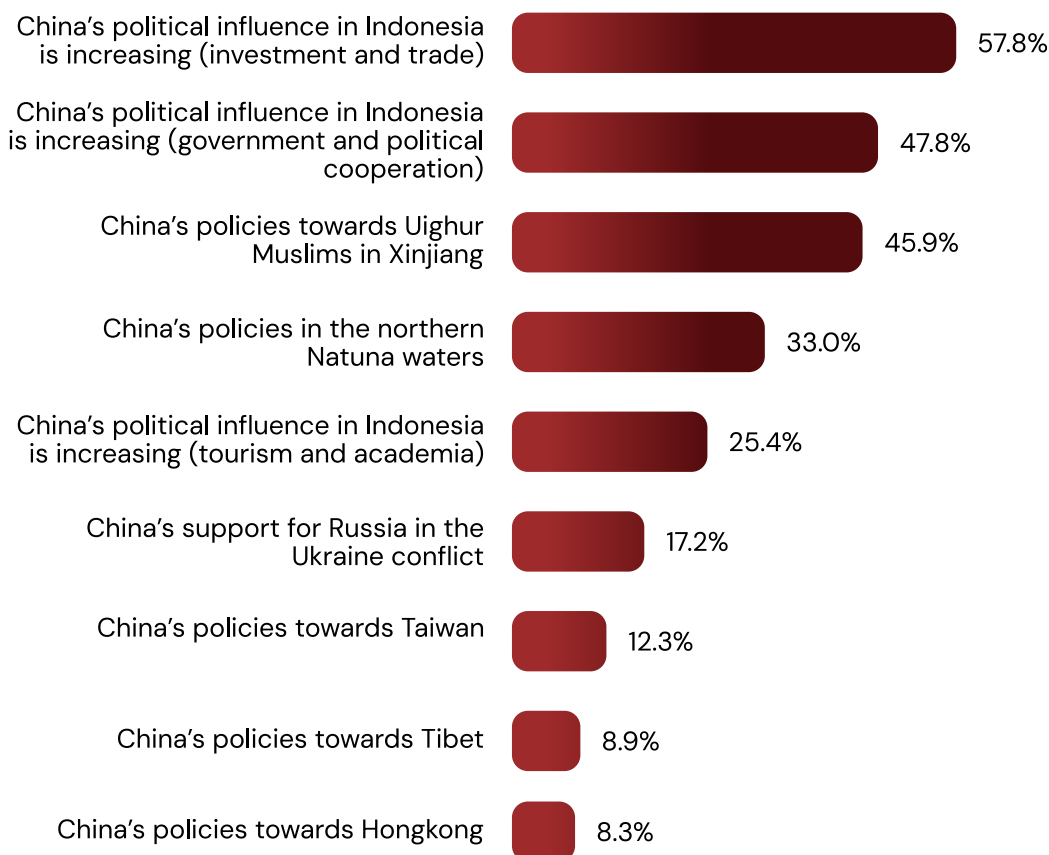
According to the data, a majority of respondents, 51%, believe that China has the capability to lead the world. This perception is likely linked to China's growing influence in the economic sphere, which positions it as a potential challenger to the dominance of the United States and other Western nations. With its robust economic power, China is seen as capable of shaping global markets, international trade, and the dynamics of global economic policy, prompting many to view it as a likely future leader on the world stage.

Conversely, 19% of respondents express skepticism about China's ability to lead globally. This uncertainty may stem from various concerns, including domestic stability, human rights issues, and other ongoing challenges (Larkin, 2022). These factors could hinder China's aspirations for global leadership and contribute to doubts about its suitability for such a role. Additionally, 30% of respondents selected "No idea," indicating a significant level of uncertainty or lack of information regarding China's potential as a world leader.

**51% of respondents believe that China has the potential to lead the world.**

## 07

## Which issues would worsen your perception of China?



The survey results reveal varying concerns among respondents regarding issues that could negatively impact their perceptions of China. A small 12% believe that China's policy towards Taiwan would worsen their perception. This low percentage suggests that, despite the international significance of the Taiwan issue, it does not resonate strongly with the Indonesian public as a primary concern affecting their views on China. In contrast, 17% of respondents express that China's support for Russia could negatively influence their perception. This small figure reflects the growing pro-Russia sentiment among many Indonesians (Dharmaputra, 2022), particularly in light of recent conflicts.

The policy of China in the Natuna waters emerges as a significant concern, with 32% of respondents indicating that it could worsen their perception. The tensions in this region are seen as directly impacting Indonesia's sovereignty and security, making it a focal point for public



apprehension. Issues related to Hong Kong and Tibet garnered minimal concern, with only 8% of respondents each identifying these as factors that would negatively affect their views. This suggests that these matters are either seen as internal Chinese issues that are less pertinent to Indonesia, or that Indonesians have limited awareness or understanding of them.

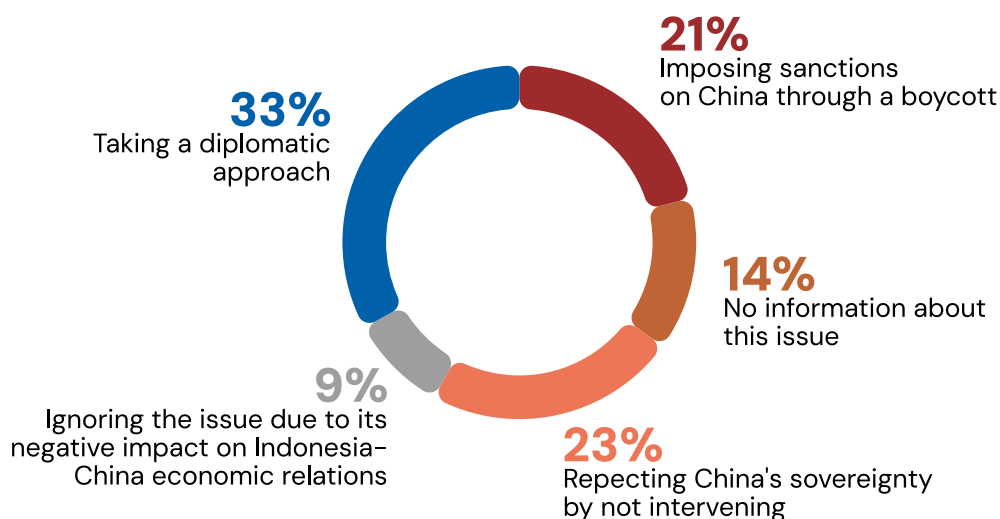
The treatment of Uighur Muslims stands out as a major concern, with 45% of respondents indicating that this issue significantly worsens their perception of China. Given that Indonesia is a majority-Muslim country, the human rights concerns surrounding the Uighurs resonate deeply (Yasmin, 2019). Additionally, 25% of respondents feel that increasing Chinese political influence in tourism and academia could negatively affect their perception. This indicates some apprehension about cultural and ideological influences, although this concern is not as pronounced as economic or political influences.

The highest concern relates to economic dependence, with 57% of respondents indicating that increasing Chinese influence in investment and trade could worsen their perception. This reflects fears that economic dependency might compromise Indonesia's policy autonomy, leading to a loss of control over domestic affairs and potentially prioritizing Chinese interests over national ones (Rohman, Setiawan, & Naufal, 2024). Finally, 47% of respondents express that direct Chinese political influence in Indonesia could negatively impact their perception. This underscores worries about the implications of closer diplomatic ties, which might erode Indonesia's political independence and reduce public trust in its government.





## 08 What actions can the Indonesian government take regarding the Uighur Muslims in China?



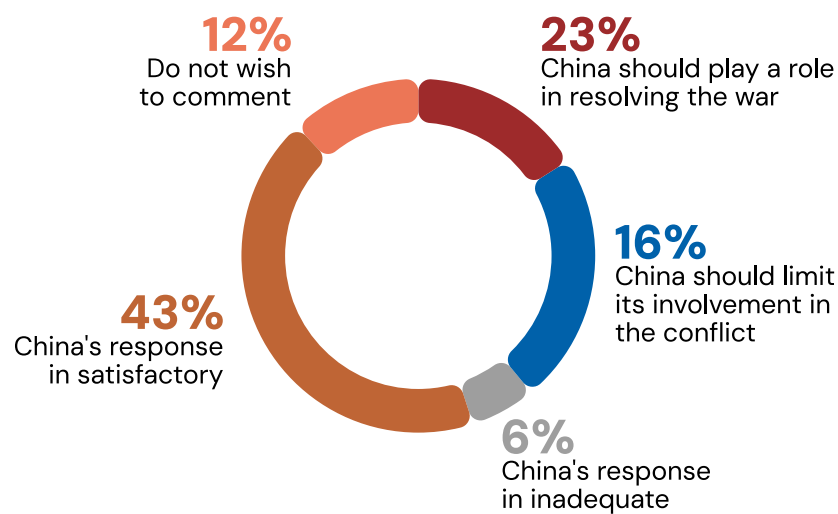
The results indicate a range of opinions on how the Indonesian government should address the issue of Uighur Muslims in China. A majority of respondents, 33%, advocate for pursuing diplomatic channels as the primary approach. This aligns with Indonesia's foreign policy principles, which emphasize peaceful resolutions and diplomatic dialogue in international matters. This approach is seen as appropriate within the context of Indonesia's commitment to a free and active foreign policy, promoting peaceful relations and avoiding partisanship.

Following this, 23% of respondents believe that Indonesia should respect China's sovereignty and refrain from interfering in this sensitive issue. This perspective reflects a view that Indonesia should prioritize respect for the internal affairs of other nations, especially concerning contentious matters such as human rights. In third place, 21% of respondents suggest that Indonesia should take a more assertive stance by imposing sanctions or boycotting China. This opinion underscores a call for Indonesia to adopt a firmer position on human rights, even if such actions could have repercussions for the economic relationship between the two countries.

A smaller segment of the population, 9%, favors ignoring the issue, prioritizing the maintenance of strong economic ties with China. This

pragmatic viewpoint suggests that economic interests may outweigh the need to engage with politically sensitive issues. Finally, 14% of respondents admitted to not understanding the issue, indicating that there remains a segment of the public that is either under-informed or lacks a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the Uighur Muslim situation in China.

## 09 What is your view on China's response to the Palestinian issue?



The survey results indicate a diverse range of opinions on China's response to the Palestinian issue. A significant 43% of respondents believe that China's response has been good. This positive perception likely stems from China's consistent diplomatic support for Palestinian independence at the United Nations. For instance, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi highlighted Palestine as the "greatest wound" to humanity during his address at the 79th UN General Assembly, emphasizing the need for recognition of Palestine's aspirations for statehood and the historical injustices faced by its people (Holtzman, 2024). This diplomatic stance appears to resonate with many, who see it as a commitment to the Palestinian cause without necessitating direct involvement in the conflict.

In contrast, 23% of respondents feel that while China supports Palestinian independence, its engagement in the conflict has not been a priority within its foreign policy, which tends to focus more on economic

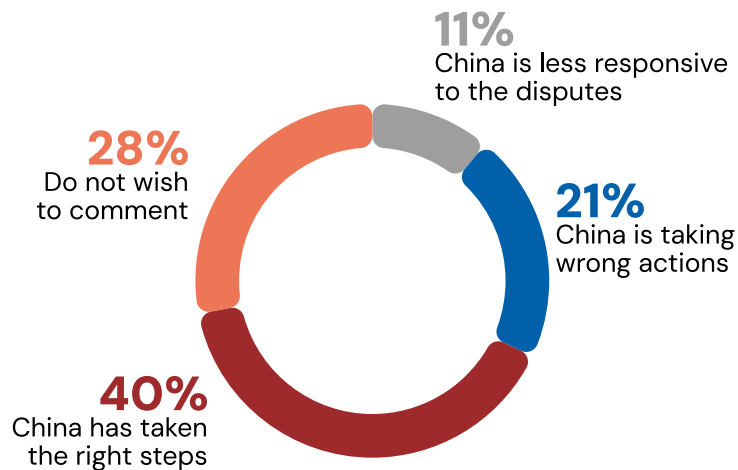
cooperation and global influence rather than direct involvement in complex military or political conflicts. A smaller segment of the population, 16%, expresses the view that China should limit its involvement in the Palestinian issue.

Only 6% of respondents believe that China's response has been insufficient, indicating a desire for more tangible actions or stronger lobbying efforts from China to support Palestinian rights more aggressively. Finally, 12% of respondents chose not to comment, which may reflect a lack of understanding regarding China's policies on Palestine at the UN or a general indifference towards China's position in this conflict.



**10**

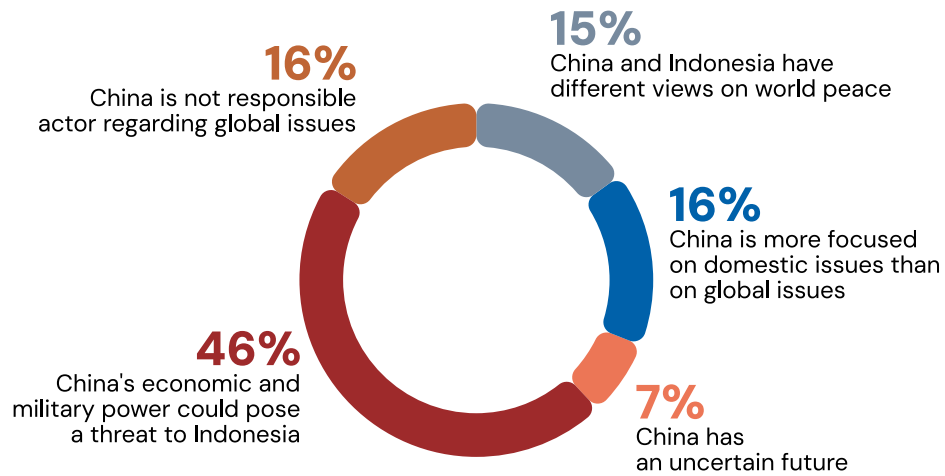
## What is your view on China's approach to resolving maritime tensions in the Northern Natuna Waters?



The survey reveals a range of perspectives on China's handling of maritime tensions in the northern Natuna waters. Only 11% of respondents feel that China has not been doing much to the dispute. This suggests a recognition that China should be more proactive in addressing sovereignty issues and maintaining stability in the region. About 21% of respondents express the view that the actions taken thus far by China are misguided. This sentiment likely reflects dissatisfaction with the diplomatic strategies or approaches being employed to resolve the conflict in Natuna, suggesting a need for more effective solutions. On the other hand, 40% of respondents feel that the steps taken are appropriate. This group demonstrates confidence in the diplomatic efforts being made to address the maritime tensions in the northern Natuna waters. They view these actions as vital for maintaining stability and security in the region, acknowledging the complexity of the issues at hand. Finally, 28% of respondents opted not to comment. This may indicate a lack of understanding or uncertainty regarding the situation, or perhaps a general indifference to the ongoing conflict in Natuna.

# 11

## What factors could cause a decline in public trust towards China?



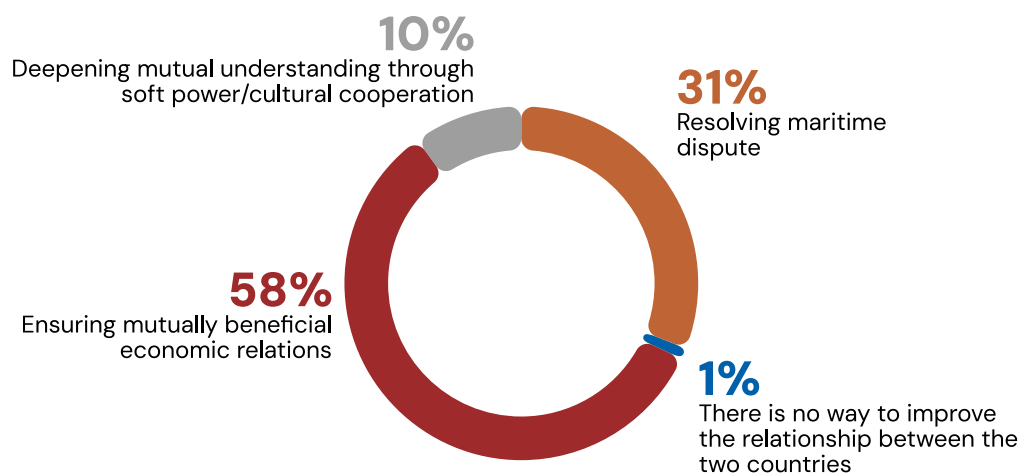
The survey results highlight several factors influencing public trust in China, with varying levels of concern among respondents. Only 15% believe that differing views between China and Indonesia on global peace are a significant factor in declining trust. This indicates that, while respondents recognize these differences, they do not perceive them as a major issue affecting their overall confidence in China. A slightly larger group, 16%, feels that China focuses more on domestic issues than on global concerns. This perspective suggests that some respondents are disappointed by China's lack of active engagement in international affairs, particularly regarding pressing global issues like human rights. Such a focus on internal matters may lead to the perception that China does not value its role as a global actor, fostering disappointment among those who expect a more prominent international stance.

Interestingly, only 7% of respondents cite China's uncertain future as a reason for declining trust. This suggests that while uncertainties may exist regarding China's trajectory, they are not seen as a primary concern compared to other factors. The most significant factor identified by 46% of respondents is the perception of China's economic and military power as a potential threat to Indonesia. This reflects deep-rooted anxieties about China's growing dominance in the region and its implications for Indonesia's sovereignty. Concerns are intensified by the experiences of other countries that have fallen into debt traps with China (Wang, 2022), fueling fears about the potential erosion of Indonesia's economic independence and stability, as well as the growing threat posed by China's actions in the South China Sea.



Additionally, 16% of respondents express the belief that China does not act as a responsible global actor. This sentiment may be linked to China's perceived inaction on certain issues, such as discrimination against Uighur Muslims, which resonates particularly with Indonesia's majority-Muslim population, and China's aggressiveness in the South China Sea. The lack of a strong stance on such issues could further diminish public trust in China's role on the global stage.

## 12 What do you think China can do to improve its relationship with Indonesia?



The survey results reveal a clear preference among respondents for how China can enhance its relationship with Indonesia. A significant 58% of respondents believe that ensuring mutually beneficial economic relations is the most effective strategy. This aligns with the historical context of the bilateral relationship, which has been predominantly anchored in economic ties, such as increasing trade and investment. Respondents recognize that a robust economic foundation is essential for fostering trust and collaboration between the two nations.

Additionally, 31% of respondents emphasize the importance of resolving maritime disputes, particularly in the Natuna Islands. This reflects widespread concern over issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity, as unresolved disputes pose a significant threat to Indonesia's national interests. A smaller segment, 10%, advocates for strengthening cultural cooperation through soft power initiatives, such as education, tourism,



and cultural exchanges. While economic interactions are strong, the relatively underdeveloped cultural ties present an opportunity for deepening mutual understanding. By fostering closer people-to-people connections, both countries can cultivate goodwill and enhance familiarity beyond mere economic interests.

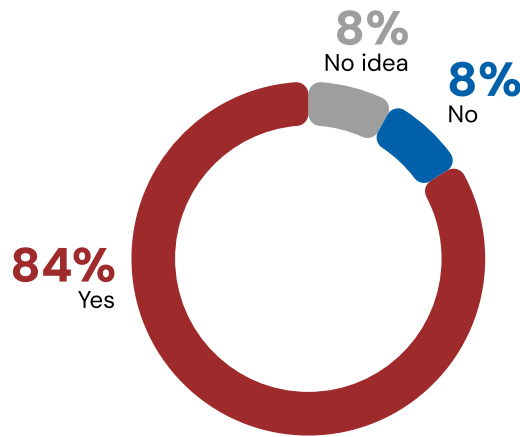
Only 1% of respondents express a pessimistic view, believing that there is no way to improve the relationship between the two countries. This perspective likely stems from the complexity of the bilateral challenges, which may seem insurmountable to some individuals. Overall, the findings indicate that the Indonesian public places a high value on economic cooperation while recognizing the importance of addressing specific disputes and enhancing cultural ties to build a more robust and harmonious relationship with China.



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**13**

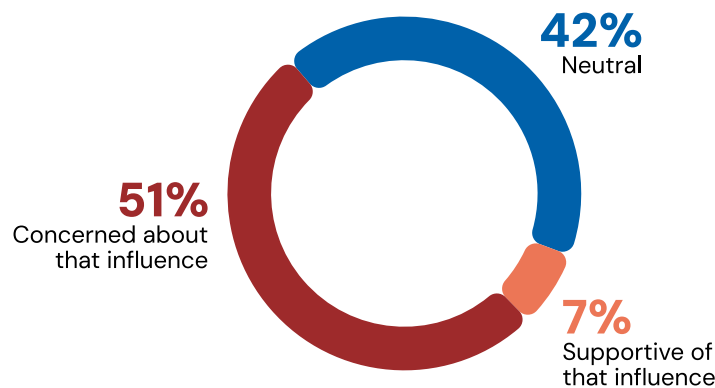
## Do you believe China is the most economically influential country in Indonesia?



The survey results indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding China's economic influence, with the majority selecting "Yes." This overwhelming response, represented by the red section of the diagram, highlights the widespread recognition of China's significant role in the Indonesian economic sector. Respondents are likely aware of the substantial investments, trade partnerships, and economic collaborations that China has established within the country, reinforcing the perception of China's economic clout.

A smaller segment of respondents chose "No," represented by the blue portion of the diagram. This suggests that some individuals may view other countries, such as the United States or Japan, as more economically influential or do not perceive China's impact as the most significant. This perspective may stem from varying experiences or information regarding global economic dynamics. Additionally, a minor group selected "No idea," indicated by the grey section. This reflects a level of uncertainty or lack of information among some respondents about Indonesia's relationship with China. Such responses could point to a need for better public awareness and education regarding the economic ties between China and Indonesia.

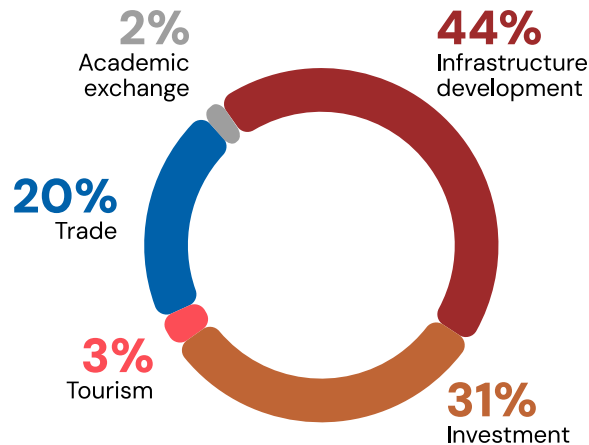
## What is your view on China's economic influence?



The survey reveals a predominant concern among respondents regarding China's economic influence, with 51% expressing apprehension. This anxiety likely stems from fears of Indonesia becoming overly dependent on China, potentially leading to a "debt trap" (Rakhmat et.al, 2024; Rakhmat & Purnama, 2023; Afifa, 2023). Respondents are particularly wary that failure to meet financial obligations for Chinese-funded projects could result in the loss of critical infrastructure, such as transportation systems. A notable example cited is the "Whoosh" high-speed train project, which has raised alarms about escalating debt burdens and the implications for national sovereignty (Nabiilah & Sari, 2024).

Conversely, 42% of respondents maintain a neutral stance on China's economic influence. This indicates a segment of the population that recognizes both the opportunities and risks associated with economic engagement with China. These individuals may appreciate the potential benefits, such as increased trade and investment, while also being mindful of the associated challenges. Only 7% of respondents express support for China's economic influence. This small group likely views Chinese investments as a catalyst for economic growth. Their perspective reflects a belief in the positive contributions that Chinese investment can make to Indonesia's overall economic landscape. Overall, the findings illustrate a landscape of cautious optimism tempered by significant concerns, underscoring the need for Indonesia and China to navigate their economic relationship carefully to maximize benefits while mitigating risks.

## 15 In which areas of cooperation between China and Indonesia do you think the negative impact is most felt?



The survey results indicate that 44% of respondents perceive negative impacts primarily in the area of infrastructure development involving Chinese companies. Concerns are likely focused on environmental degradation caused by these projects (Rosada, Wibisana, & Paksi, 2023). Additionally, there is possibly a sentiment of resentment towards the influx of Chinese workers, as many positions in these projects are filled by foreign labor, which has led to feelings of jealousy among the local workforce (Maksum & Sahide, 2019).

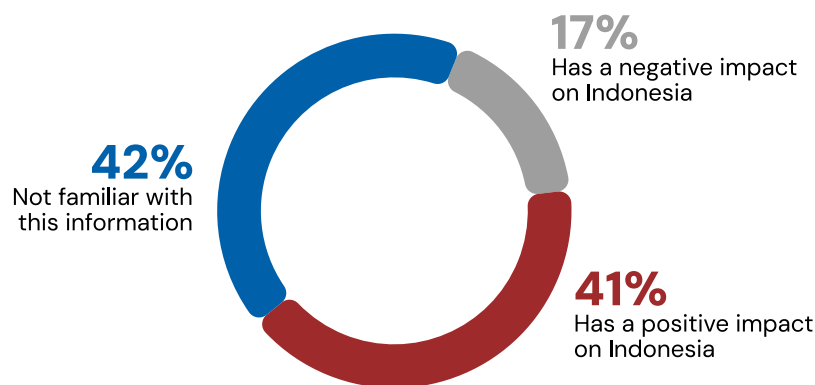
31% of respondents also express apprehension regarding Chinese investment in sectors beyond infrastructure. This concern stems from the perception that Chinese companies dominate large projects (Zhou, 2024), often at the expense of local workers and the surrounding environment. There is a belief that these investments do not sufficiently benefit local communities or promote local employment.

20% of respondents point to trade as a significant area of concern. The influx of cheaper imported goods from China is viewed as detrimental to local products, creating an uneven competitive landscape (Yulisman, 2024). This situation poses challenges for domestic industries, which may struggle to compete against the lower prices of Chinese imports, potentially stifling local economic growth.

In contrast, the areas of tourism and academic exchanges receive minimal negative feedback, with only 3% and 2% of respondents indicating concerns, respectively. This suggests that these sectors are not perceived as having significant adverse effects, or that the impacts are relatively minor compared to those felt in infrastructure, investment, and trade.

Overall, the findings underscore a prevalent unease regarding the environmental and economic implications of Chinese involvement in key sectors, particularly infrastructure and investment, highlighting the need for Indonesia to address these concerns while navigating its relationship with China.

## 16 What is your opinion on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?



The survey reveals that 42% of respondents are not familiar with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), indicating a significant lack of awareness or understanding of this project within the community. This suggests that more effective communication and outreach are needed to inform the public about the initiative and its implications. Conversely, 41% of respondents view the BRI positively. This perspective is largely attributed to the significant infrastructure developments it has facilitated in Indonesia, such as the construction of ports, toll roads, and railways.

On the other hand, 17% of respondents express concerns about the negative impacts of the BRI. These apprehensions are primarily focused on issues related to foreign investment dominance, the employment of



foreign labor, and environmental consequences associated with infrastructure projects (Pramono et.al, 2022). For instance, the construction of coal-fired power plants (PLTU) has raised alarms regarding air pollution and environmental degradation, while hydropower projects (PLTA) may disrupt local ecosystems and biodiversity (Shalati & Simanjuntak, 2023; Maulia, 2022).

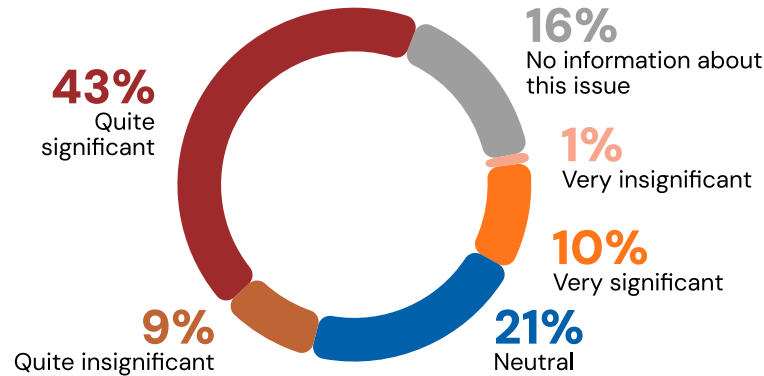
Overall, while the BRI is perceived by a substantial portion of the population as a catalyst for development, the significant percentage of respondents who are unfamiliar with it and those who express concern highlight the need for a balanced dialogue addressing both the benefits and potential drawbacks of the initiative.

**42% of respondents are not familiar with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**





## How significant is China's role in environmental destruction in Indonesia?

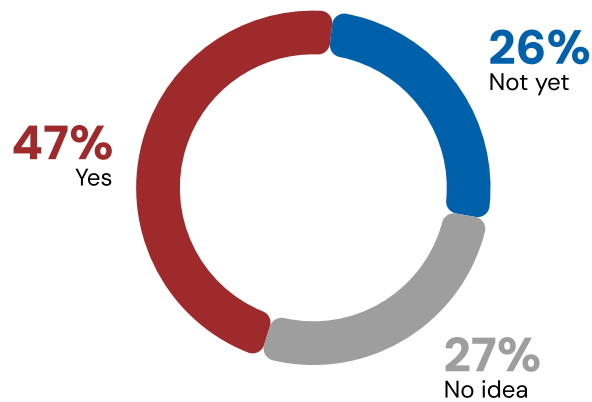


The survey indicates that 43% of respondents perceive Chinese companies' activities as having a considerable impact on environmental degradation in Indonesia. This concern is exemplified by projects like those in Morowali, where reports of industrial waste contaminating clean water sources have raised alarms about the ecological consequences of such operations (Shalati & Simanjuntak, 2023). Additionally, 21% of respondents hold a neutral stance, suggesting that they may either lack sufficient information or have not experienced direct effects from these activities, which could reflect a broader uncertainty about the scale and visibility of environmental issues tied to foreign investments.

A smaller segment, 10%, believes that China's influence on environmental damage is very significant. This group expresses serious concerns about the potential destruction of local ecosystems and the subsequent negative effects on the quality of life for surrounding communities. Conversely, 9% and 1% of respondents view the impact as quite and very insignificant, respectively, indicating that a minority may see these environmental challenges as less concerning or not directly linked to Chinese involvement. Finally, 16% of respondents indicate that they are unfamiliar with the issue, underscoring a gap in awareness or understanding of the environmental implications of Chinese projects in Indonesia.

Overall, the findings reveal a predominant sentiment of concern regarding the environmental impact of Chinese activities in Indonesia, highlighting the need for greater transparency and accountability in foreign investment practices to mitigate ecological risks and protect local communities.

## 18.a. Has China helped with Indonesia's energy transition?



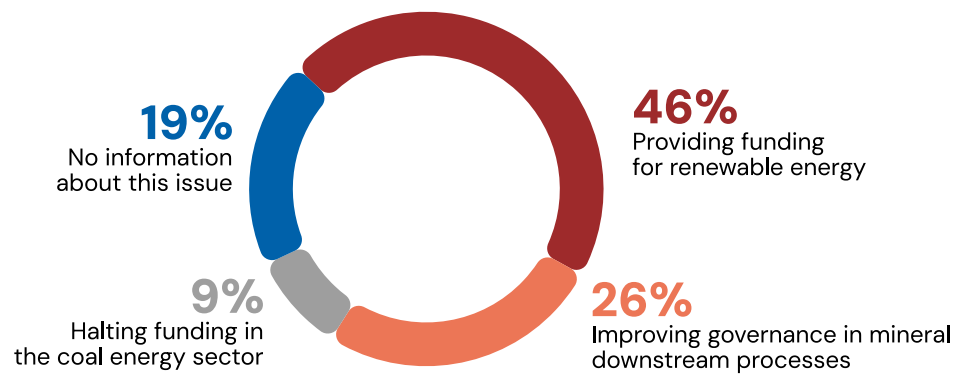
The survey reveals that 47% of respondents believe that China has played a positive role in Indonesia's energy transition. This perception is likely bolstered by significant projects in the renewable energy sector (Chandak, 2024). These initiatives are viewed as critical steps toward increasing Indonesia's renewable energy capacity and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. On the other hand, 27% of respondents expressed uncertainty by answering "No idea," indicating a lack of awareness or information regarding China's contributions to Indonesia's energy transition. This suggests that while some respondents recognize the involvement of Chinese investments, others may not be fully informed about the specific projects or their impacts.

Additionally, 26% of respondents answered "Not yet," reflecting a sentiment that China has not yet made a significant impact in this area. This group may be looking for more tangible results or a broader range of projects that align with Indonesia's energy goals. Overall, while there is a notable level of recognition regarding China's contributions to Indonesia's energy transition, there remains a substantial portion of the population that is either uncertain or feels that more needs to be done.

**While 43% of respondents view the activities of Chinese companies as significantly contributing to environmental degradation in Indonesia, 47% believe that China has played a positive role in the country's energy transition.**

**18.b.**

## How can China encourage Indonesia to transition to clean energy?



The survey indicates that 46% of respondents believe that China can significantly support Indonesia's transition to clean energy by providing funding for renewable energy projects. This perspective highlights the crucial role of financial investment in facilitating the development of sustainable energy infrastructure (Interesse, 2024). As a leading investor in various sectors, China is positioned to help Indonesia accelerate the implementation of renewable energy initiatives, such as hydropower, solar, and wind energy projects. Financial backing from China could help Indonesia diversify its energy portfolio and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.

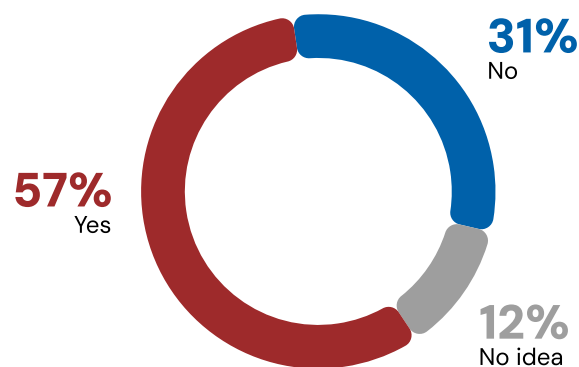
Additionally, 26% of respondents emphasize the need for improved governance in the downstream mining sector. This view reflects a growing concern about the sustainable and responsible management of natural resources, particularly minerals essential for clean energy technologies. By enhancing governance standards and practices, China could contribute to more sustainable mining operations, thereby minimizing environmental impacts while ensuring a steady supply of materials needed for renewable energy development.

Only 9% of respondents advocate for China to stop funding the coal energy sector as a means to promote clean energy transition. This relatively low percentage suggests that many perceive halting coal funding as a significant challenge (Salma, 2023), given Indonesia's longstanding dependence on coal as a primary energy source. Transitioning away from coal will likely require a more comprehensive approach involving gradual shifts in energy policy and investment.

Lastly, 19% of respondents expressed unfamiliarity with this information, highlighting the need for increased awareness and education regarding clean energy issues and the necessary steps for achieving a successful transition. By fostering a better understanding of these topics, both China and Indonesia could engage in more constructive dialogues about energy strategies moving forward.

Overall, while there is a strong recognition of the potential for Chinese funding to drive Indonesia's clean energy transition, addressing governance challenges and managing the coal dependency will be critical factors in shaping a sustainable energy future.

## 19 Do you think China is the most culturally influential country?



A significant 57% of respondents believe that China is the most culturally influential country. This strong recognition highlights the impact of Chinese cultural influence in Indonesia, particularly given the substantial Chinese community, estimated at between 7 to 10 million people, which is one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. The cultural presence of this community manifests in various aspects of Indonesian life, such as festivals, cuisine, and arts. The widespread celebration of events like Imlek (Chinese New Year) reinforces this cultural influence, fostering greater appreciation of Chinese heritage within the broader Indonesian context.

Moreover, initiatives like the Confucius Institutes play a crucial role in promoting Chinese language and culture, further solidifying China's

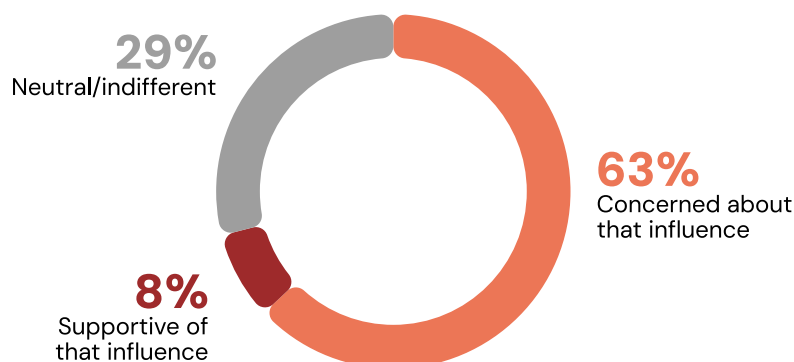
cultural footprint in Indonesia. These institutes facilitate educational programs, cultural exchanges, and language classes, enhancing mutual understanding and increasing interest in Chinese culture among Indonesians. Additionally, the growing cultural exchange activities, including art exhibitions, music performances, and joint educational programs, contribute significantly to this perception. These activities encourage collaboration and dialogue between Chinese and Indonesian cultures, promoting a more interconnected cultural landscape.

Conversely, 31% of respondents remain uncertain about China's status as the most culturally influential country. This skepticism may stem from historical tensions and complex relationships between indigenous communities and the Chinese diaspora. Respondents in this group may be comparing China's cultural impact with that of other countries known for their strong cultural exports, such as the United States, South Korea, or Japan. Such comparisons could reflect a desire for a more nuanced understanding of cultural influence, recognizing that various nations contribute differently to global cultural dynamics.

Only 12% of respondents expressed no opinion on China's cultural influence. This relatively low figure suggests that the majority of the population is at least somewhat informed or engaged with the topic, indicating a general awareness of the discussions surrounding cultural influence. Overall, the data suggests a moderate recognition of China's cultural influence in Indonesia, enhanced by initiatives like Confucius Institutes and growing cultural exchange activities, tempered by a degree of skepticism and the need for further exploration of how cultural influences interplay in a diverse society.



## 20 What is your view on this cultural influence?



A notable 63% of respondents express concern about China's cultural influence in Indonesia. This significant apprehension likely stems from historical tensions between indigenous communities and the Chinese diaspora, particularly following the events surrounding the 1998 monetary crisis, which heightened societal tensions. Many respondents may still feel the repercussions of these historical conflicts, leading to fears that increasing Chinese cultural influence could further exacerbate anti-Chinese sentiments and potentially ignite social discord (Sumaktoyo & Muhtadi, 2023).

Additionally, there are possibly worries related to the perception of communism, with some Indonesians viewing China's political ideology as a potential threat to democratic values and social norms in Indonesia (Rakhmat & Purnama, 2024; Sampurna, 2018). Concerns could also arise regarding elements of Chinese culture that may not align with Islamic values, which is significant in a predominantly Muslim country. Respondents may fear that the increased penetration of Chinese cultural activities could challenge or conflict with Islamic teachings and local traditions, further complicating the acceptance of this influence.

Conversely, only 8% of respondents show support for China's cultural influence. This low percentage reflects a strong attachment to local culture and values, with many viewing Chinese influence as misaligned with Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape. Around 29% of respondents remain neutral or indifferent towards China's cultural influence. This segment may reflect a more pragmatic perspective, suggesting that some individuals do not perceive significant impacts from Chinese culture in their daily lives. Additionally, this neutrality may indicate a



broader acceptance of cultural diversity within Indonesia, where people recognize various influences without feeling threatened by them.

Overall, the data reveals a complex landscape of opinions regarding China's cultural influence in Indonesia. While a significant portion of the population expresses concern rooted in historical context and ideological fears, a small minority supports this influence, and a notable group remains neutral. This diversity of views underscores the ongoing conversation about identity, cultural exchange, and the implications of globalisation in Indonesia.



# CONCLUSION

The 2024 China-Indonesia Survey attempts to provide insights into the evolving perceptions and sentiments of the Indonesian public regarding its relationship with China. At a time of political transition and heightened global competition, these findings underscore both the potential benefits and significant challenges that characterize this multifaceted partnership.

A substantial 79% of respondents view the Indonesia-China relationship as strong, indicating widespread acceptance of its closeness. However, this sense of connection is balanced by concerns about economic dependence and political influence, with 10% expressing apprehension about the risks of over-reliance on China. This complexity in perceptions underscores the need for careful navigation as Indonesia aims to leverage its strategic position while safeguarding its sovereignty.

The survey reveals that while many Indonesians acknowledge China's substantial contributions, particularly in economic terms, they remain vigilant about the broader implications of these ties. Key issues, such as human rights concerns, maritime tensions, and environmental sustainability, feature prominently in public discourse. These anxieties demand proactive engagement from both governments to promote transparency and address the various challenges impacting their relationship.

Respondents also indicated a strong desire for Indonesia to maintain a neutral stance amid U.S.-China rivalry, emphasizing the importance of sovereignty in shaping foreign policy. As Indonesia moves forward under President Prabowo Subianto's leadership, the findings suggest a pressing need for strategies that enhance economic cooperation while addressing public concerns regarding dependency and cultural influence.

Moreover, the survey highlights the importance of effective communication and education about initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, as many respondents expressed unfamiliarity with it. Increased public awareness can play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and mitigating fears associated with foreign investments.

Looking ahead, this survey will be conducted on an annual basis, with refinements to the questions based on developments in China-Indonesia relations and broader global dynamics. This commitment to continuous assessment will ensure that future iterations of the survey remain relevant and reflective of the changing landscape.

In conclusion, as Indonesia and China navigate this complex environment, fostering a balanced and constructive partnership will be essential. The insights from this survey provide a foundational understanding for policymakers and stakeholders in both nations, emphasizing the importance of addressing key issues and ensuring that the relationship evolves in a manner that benefits both countries and contributes to regional stability. Continued dialogue and collaboration will be key to achieving a mutually beneficial future.



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