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AI Framing of Self-Determination in Southeast Asia: Diverse Conflict Contexts and Their Implications

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ABSTRACT

A recent study by Deloitte Asia-Pacific estimated that AI (Artificial Intelligence) usage is integrated into more than 11 billion productivity hours per week across the Asia-Pacific region. The rapid adoption of generative AI models globally and in Southeast Asia, particularly, is shifting where people source information. Generative AI models like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI are increasingly relied on to frame critical social and political issues. Despite considerable growth in the use of generative AI, minimal scholarly research is available documenting how generative AI frames vital social and political debates like the right to self-determination. The legitimacy of self-determination demands and their impact on peacebuilding and geoeconomic development is an ongoing debate in several Southeast Asian countries, with the conflicts in Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar being just a few examples. This study utilizes a mixed-methods critical political economy approach, informed by reflexive positionality and postcolonial analysis, to analyze how three popular generative AI models, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI, frame the debate over self-determination and its role in peacebuilding and geoeconomic development efforts in Southeast Asia. The AI models interviewed for this study framed self-determination as primarily a political issue with cultural, economic, and social sub-elements. Taking a back seat to political factors, cultural and economic sub-themes dominate the discussed causes of self-determination demands, while social factors bring the most legitimacy and popular remedies to the problem after political factors. Ultimately, the models' framing narrated the ambiguity of self-determination as a right and international standard.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Self-Determination; Political Economy; Framing Theory; Peacebuilding; Geoeconomic Development

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

How is the use of generative AI affecting how people gather information about societal issues and perceive critical challenges facing global society? As an early adopter of generative AI technology in their daily work as a communication professional in the international nonprofit sector, I understand the considerable promise that this technology holds for the future of learning, teaching, communication, and productivity at a global scale. At the same time, as a researcher studying the effects of rhetoric and discourse on peace and conflict from a critical constructivist perspective, I am aware of the potential impacts of entrusting AI with the ability to influence the perception of millions and potentially billions of people through its rhetorical framing of potentially divisive issues.

This rapid adoption of generative AI models globally and in Southeast Asia is shifting where the public sources information. This shift in information sources from human-generated sources to computer algorithms that summarize massive amounts of data raises questions about the reliability of AI-generated data and its potential to affect human understanding and perceptions of critical issues.

Self-determination is one of these critical issues. Demands for self-determination drive intra-state conflict, violence, and armed conflict in many countries around the world. In Southeast Asia alone, there are many ongoing conflicts and negotiations over the right to self-determination, how it is defined, and the scope and scale of determination available to groups demanding more autonomy and the opportunity to pursue their own political, economic, social, and cultural development.

1.1.1. Rationale

The extensive proliferation of self-determination demands and discourse, and the emergence of AI as a source of information, its rapid adoption in the region, and its ability to translate between languages and provide users with information in multiple languages present an opportunity for research into how AI frames critical issues like self-determination.

1.1.2. Defining the Problem

Self-determination conflicts are often volatile, emotional conflicts that can escalate from combative rhetoric

and tense negotiations to violence and armed conflict when political or social conditions change or trust in the pursuit of the common good becomes irreparable. The perceptions of stakeholders involved in these conflicts, from government officials to civil society organizations, public majority groups, and minority groups seeking self-determination, are all susceptible to influence through various communication and information delivery mechanisms. Generative AI models are an emerging form of software that provides quickly accessible public research and information dissemination platforms. They also function as communication and writing assistants, helping people communicate more effectively. These AI models and software platforms are quickly acquiring a scale of influence that has the potential to dramatically shape stakeholders' perceptions, beliefs, and values in self-determination conflicts.

1.2. Purpose

This study aims to analyze the framing of self-determination by generative AI models and its implications for peacebuilding and geopolitical development in Southeast Asia.

1.2.1. Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions to develop an empirical analysis of AI framing of self-determination in Asia.

1. How do generative AI models frame the issue of self-determination in Southeast Asia?
2. What are the critical aspects of AI models' framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia?
3. Why is this framing significant in the context of peacebuilding and geoeconomic development in Southeast Asia?

1.2.2. Research Objectives

This study focuses on achieving the following research objectives.

1. Determine how generative AI models frame the issue of self-determination in Southeast Asia.
2. Identify the critical aspects of AI models framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia.
3. Analyze the significance of AI framing of self-

determination in Southeast Asia in the context of peacebuilding and geoeconomic development.

1.3. Overview of the Topic

Significant Debates Regarding Self-Determination

Self-determination as a universal right^[1] is a cornerstone of international customary law^[2] and a source of international and intranational conflict. Three key debates define the discourse surrounding self-determination.

1. Internal or External: Is self-determination a national or international issue? This debate is often the cornerstone of self-determination debates. Embedded aspects within this debate are sovereignty, territorial integrity, the principle of non-intervention, and the right to independence and secession versus the conceptualization of self-determination as a domestic process issue^[3–5].
2. Legitimacy vs. Illegitimacy: What gives a self-determination movement legitimacy and credibility? International declarations state that ‘Peoples’ have the right to self-determination, but the ‘peoples’ described in that declaration of rights lack specificity and fuel intense debate, negotiation, and conflict^[2, 6].
3. Nature of the Problem: What drives self-determination demands? Are the causes political, social, cultural, or economic? Similarly, is the solution political, social, cultural, or economic^[7, 8]?

1.4. Identifying the Gap

While generative AI is increasingly used as an information acquisition interface, the more significant concern is not only that AI “frames” political issues but that historically grounded and locally specific conflicts may be translated into generalized output shaped by uneven global knowledge infrastructures. Despite emerging work on AI governance and digital systems in Southeast Asia, limited research examines how AI represents self-determination conflicts in the region and what is at stake when politically, culturally, and historically complex claims are rendered into publicly readable narratives by these models. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how three widely used AI models frame self-determination in Southeast Asia and by considering the implications of that framing for peacebuilding and geoeconomic development.

1.5. Significance

This study is significant because it provides an empirical analysis of the framing of self-determination, a topic at the core of many ongoing conflicts in Southeast Asia, by generative AI models. Generative AI models have seen mass adoption and ever-increasing use rates since the launch of their publicly accessible interfaces in late 2022 and early 2023. These models promise to have a considerable impact on the dissemination and intake of information as the technology progresses, presenting unprecedented opportunities for these models to influence public opinion and actions toward peaceful solutions to self-determination conflicts or the escalation of these disagreements into violence and armed conflict.

1.6. Scope

This study is limited to the outputs of three generative AI models, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI, and their answers to a structured series of interview questions regarding self-determination in Southeast Asia.

The paper will proceed with a rapid review of existing literature^[9, 10], followed by a detailed description of the methodology. The findings section provides qualitative and quantitative results to answer research question one regarding how generative AI models frame self-determination. Following the initial findings, the discussion turns to an analysis of the critical aspects of AI framing of self-determination to answer research question two and why these results are significant in the context of peacebuilding and geoeconomic development efforts in Southeast Asia to answer research question three.

1.7. Literature Review

The following literature review proceeds as a critical rapid literature review per Grant and Booth’s^[9] description of this approach. The following boundaries constrain the literature review. The literature review on self-determination is chronologically limited to starting with Woodrow Wilson’s introduction of self-determination on the world stage, proceeding to international declarations that mention self-determination, and ending with the Pact for the Future^[11].

The section on self-determination also includes a limited review of literature related to the distinctions between internal and external self-determination.

In addition to reviewing the literature on self-determination, the review summarizes Robert Entman's^[12] framework on the functions of framing theory and the literature on AI models. The literature review related to AI is limited to the area of Generative AI, focusing on how the training of AI models and the adoption and scale of use of these models globally and in Southeast Asia specifically. A limited critical discussion of political economy theory with a specific focus on the role of social and cultural factors in the framework of political economy theory follows the literature review on AI. The section concludes with updated operational definitions of key terms that inform the research.

1.7.1. Conceptual Definitions of Key Terms

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI): "Software designed to imitate aspects of intelligent human behavior^[13]".
2. Self-Determination: The right of a people to "determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development^[6]".
3. Political Economy: The interaction between the modern state and the market economy^[14].

1.7.2. Self-Determination

Allen Lynch^[15] and Woodrow Wilson^[16] often receive credit for the modern conceptualization of self-determination. In the aftermath of World War Two, Wilson announced that "the day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone^[16]." Wilson desired an international community where national sovereignty was honored, borders were respected, and economic trade prospered. Despite his lofty goals, his vision did not usher in a modern global utopia. As Allen Lynch^[15] points out, Wilson lacked the depth of knowledge necessary to understand the geopolitical challenges his ideas would catalyze in the aftermath of a global war. His conceptualization of national self-determination was optimistic and overlooked critical realities, such as the importance of "security, diplomacy, and economics^[15]." His ideological stance reflected an American exceptionalist mindset that assumed the American path to freedom and leadership should be universal. This stance neglected the complex realities of political geography, sparking a light of hope in the social consciousness of many

groups and setting the stage for global intra-state conflicts for the next century and beyond^[15].

Despite Wilson's flawed reasoning, the international community moved forward with Wilson's framework for the League of Nations. Membership in the League of Nations was open to "any self-governing state, dominion, or colony^[17]." While the League covenant does not explicitly refer to self-determination, its embedded respect for sovereignty as a principle created the foundation for the United Nations, its charter, and subsequent declarations and conventions that enshrine self-determination as a key right. Though a critical building block on the path to human rights, the League Covenant also established a hierarchy of nations. The League's hegemonic conceptualization of the capacity of 'peoples' and the need for considerable oversight by hegemonic forces is a core point of contention embedded in self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty conflicts moving forward.

In 1945, following World War II's catastrophic loss of life and destruction of infrastructure^[18], the United Nations (UN) was formed to replace the League of Nations. The UN Charter formalized the UN's construction and functions and established self-determination as one of its founding principles^[2]. Article fifty-five of the UN charter states:

"With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a. *Higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;*
- b. *Solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and*
- c. *Universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion^[2]."*

Article fifty-five establishes self-determination as a principle of equal rights encompassing political, economic,

social, and cultural elements and the essential connection between self-determination in these areas and “peaceful and friendly relations among nations^[2].” Self-determination is now a cornerstone of UN Declarations and Conventions, as detailed in **Table A1** in **Appendix A**.

A critical challenge in implementing self-determination is the ambiguity in the UN documents that establish this right. The wording of the right, “All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development^[19]” lacks clarity on what makes a group a ‘people.’ While scholars and courts have established some precedent, these ideas are not readily accessible or easily understood by the public. The UN declarations seem to present an open invitation to pursue self-determination, triggering demands for self-determination worldwide.

Attempts to clarify this ambiguity have resulted in two subcategories of self-determination: internal and external. Internal self-determination is defined as “the right of the people to govern themselves without any interference Booley and van Schalkwyk^[4]” where “the people” represents the entire population of a nation-state. Sterio^[5] defines external self-determination as applying “to oppressed peoples, whose basic rights are not being respected by the mother state and who are often subject to heinous human rights abuses.” These two definitions reflect two perspectives from a broad and ever-growing range of interpretations of self-determination and its sub-categorizations. Each definition introduces different concerns for nation-states regarding self-determination, territorial sovereignty, and national unity.

While distinctions between sovereign and domestic self-determination are useful for organizing contemporary legal and political debates, they do not fully capture the more fluid ways in which authority, belonging, and collective rights are understood in Southeast Asian contexts. Heryanto^[20] argues that knowledge on Southeast Asia has long been shaped by externally produced analytical frameworks, leaving locally grounded perspectives in a more marginal position within the formal production of regional knowledge. In the Indonesian context, Bedner and Arizona^[21] describe the re-emergence of adat as a central discourse in struggles over land and dispossession, while also showing that its status within national law remains contested and constrained by political realities. Bakker^[22] similarly

demonstrates that communities claiming adat land rights mobilize custom as a basis for justice, legitimacy, and resistance in conflicts with corporate land control, even where such claims lack strong formal legal standing. These perspectives are significant for the present study because they suggest that claims related to self-determination in Southeast Asia may also be articulated through customary authority, land-based moral community, and locally grounded notions of justice that do not map neatly onto a strict sovereign-versus-domestic binary.

1.7.3. Framing Theory

Robert Entman^[12] theorizes that human beings frame ideas, events, and beliefs to make sense of our world and influence how others interpret it. Our need for meaning and persuasion influences how we communicate. Entman establishes four functions of framing: defining the problem, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. These functions create a structure for identifying, organizing, and analyzing AI framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia.

1.7.4. Generative AI

Generative AI applications like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI are examples of a rapidly expanding landscape of applications available for general public use. In the Asia-Pacific region, the adoption of AI has been rapid. A 2023 study by Deloitte Insights found that the adoption of AI in developing countries exceeds that of developed countries by thirty percent^[23]. Additionally, 43% of the workforce uses AI to assist with daily tasks, and 80% of students use AI in their learning processes^[23]. The simplicity of these percentages masks the true scale of AI adoption. The Deloitte study estimated that AI usage is integrated into more than 11 billion productivity hours across the region per week^[23]. This incredible usage rate represents a staggering shift in where people source information, how it is processed, and who or what influences thinking and perspectives in communities and regional society.

This extensive adoption leads to a necessary discussion of AI model training methods and how the models respond to user questions and generate answers. Open AI released ChatGPT 3 on November 22, 2022, accumulating over one million users in just five days^[24]. According to OpenAI, ChatGPT is trained on three types of information: informa-

tion available online, datasets purchased from other companies and organizations, and information contributed directly by users or GPT staff^[25]. Prior to the release of ChatGPT 3, two non-public models preceded the public release. Model 1 utilized “117 million parameters, and model 2 used 1.5 billion data parameters to source its responses to queries and prompts”. Model 3 launched with access to an even more incredible 175 billion data parameters to inform its decisions and outputs^[24]. Models read these large volumes of data and analyze how words appear together in the text. As they learn, they can output answers to queries and prompts—generating answers and, in a way, interacting with users^[25].

Despite the enormous potential of generative AI models, they are not perfect. First, early models and new emerging models are prone to “hallucinations,” where, when faced with a question that they cannot answer from their existing database, they make up an incorrect answer rather than admit they cannot answer^[26]. Second, AI models reflect the data informing their training and the limitations imposed by the humans managing the training. Any prejudices that influence the inclusion of data to train the model can create limitations in the model’s thinking or cause inclinations toward one particular point of view over another^[26]. These potential risks create a need to analyze how generative AI models understand and portray critical societal issues.

Because generative AI systems produce human-like conversational outputs through predictive text generation, users may interact with them as though they were dialogic partners. However, these outputs should be understood not as expressions of agency, intention, or belief, but as patterned textual artifacts shaped by training data, model architecture, interface design, and system-level constraints. As recent scholarship has noted, the human-like communicative qualities of large language models can make them difficult for users to distinguish between text-based interactions with AI and those of human beings, even though AI systems remain predictive models that reproduce biases, exclusions, and hegemonic over-representations embedded in large-scale training corpora^[27–29].

These concerns also point to a broader structural and epistemic problem in generative AI. Large language models are trained within global data environments marked by deep inequalities in language visibility, digital access and platform representation. Putri and Permandi found consid-

erable structural inequalities and biases were present and reproduced even in Indonesian large language models^[30]. These inequalities are not neutral. They are embedded in a global digital economy where data is extracted, standardized, and monetized through platform infrastructures that are disproportionately controlled by powerful technology firms and states located outside the global south^[31, 32]. Ilyas describes this process as digital data colonialism, where extraction and commodification of digital data reproduce coloniality by converting online relations, population, and knowledge into resources for prediction, securitization, and profit^[32]. Similarly, Ruagadi et al. argue that generative AI can function as an instrument of digital neocolonialism when it reproduces Western hegemonic narratives, marginalizes local knowledge, and intensifies epistemic injustice in cultural education^[33]. Bender et al.^[27] caution that large-scale language model training can amplify dominant perspectives while obscuring the limits and politics of the data on which these systems depend. At the same time, the human-like communicative quality of these systems can mask their underlying dependence on statistical pattern prediction, and commercially structured platform logics^[28]. A full critique of AI infrastructure and platform political economy is beyond the scope of the present study, but these concerns remain important because they shape how conflicts in the global south may be rendered legible through AI-generated outputs.

Regional scholarship from Southeast Asia further suggests that digital systems should not be treated simply as neutral channels for information delivery, but as socio-technical environments that shape discourse, visibility, and power. Writing in the Philippine context, Pineda^[34] demonstrates that mediated communication practices are conditioned by platformed environments marked by disinformation and algorithmically structured social media interactions. Similarly, in the Thai context, Sutirat et al.^[35] conceptualize social media as a structure of political power in which algorithmic filtering, echo chambers, and communicative amplification influence polarization and public perception. In the Indonesian context, Asrori et al.^[36] show how digital platforms can obscure unequal power relations by framing precarious labor through narratives of flexibility while algorithmic systems structure control and dependency. Read together, these studies help frame the present research not only as a technical investigation of generative AI outputs, but also as

an inquiry into representation, regional digital power, and the broader knowledge infrastructures through which complex local conflicts may be rendered into generalized digital narratives. This concern is especially significant where locally grounded narratives, such as customary rights claims, traditional peace agreements, or community-based conflict resolution practices, may be less visible in dominant digital environments than state-centered or internationally legible accounts of conflict.

Local and regional scholarship on AI and language further sharpens this concern. In the Philippine context, Canite et al. identify both the usefulness and limitations of AI in Filipino-language learning, noting that students face serious challenges related to ethical use, limited understanding, and responsible application of AI tools^[37]. Their discussion of Filipino and Indigenous language technologies is significant because it shows that AI adoption in Southeast Asia is not only a question of access or efficiency, but also a question of linguistic and cultural fit. In the Indonesian context, Putri and Permadi argue that Indonesian-language LLM development faces distinct challenges related to demographic, geographic, socioeconomic, and cultural bias in training datasets, including the underrepresentation or distortion of cultural values such as *gotong royong*, *unggah-ungguh*, and local wisdom^[30]. These studies support the concern that AI-generated representations of conflict may not only simplify local realities, but also reproduce the unequal visibility of languages, cultural values, and knowledge traditions within the data environments from which generative AI systems learn.

1.7.5. Political Economy

As discussed earlier in this review, self-determination includes “the right to freely determine political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural development^[20].” These aspects of self-determination share commonality with political economy, especially critical approaches. The roots of political economy can be traced to antiquity and early philosophical understandings of the core functions of human society, as evidenced by Confucius’s statement that “everything under heaven is for the common good,” as cited in the study of Ty^[38]. Political economy is an interdisciplinary field containing multiple ideological and scholarly ontologies attempting to explain past and current realities. Robert Gilpin^[14] defines political economy as the interac-

tion between the nation-state and the market economy. He subdivides the field into three subcategories: classical liberal political economy, economic nationalism, and Marxist interpretations. The liberal approach to political economy sees “per capita wealth increase” as the measure of global success^[14] while “economic nationalism posits that economic activities are and should be subordinate to the goal of state-building and the interests of the state^[14].”

In contrast, the Marxist approach to political economy is critical of the inequalities and conflicts created by capitalist and economic nationalist approaches. Marxist philosophies critique the pursuit of profit at all costs, the colonialist and imperialist agendas that proliferated colonial expansion, and the monopolistic hegemony of international superpowers and mega-corporations^[14]. Gilpin’s seminal work on political economy emphasizes the ideological differences between these approaches and the intense debates that have lasting effects on people and communities worldwide.

Gilpin’s work on political economy hints at but does not directly address the role of social and cultural forces. His discussion of Marxist economic philosophies provides a foundation for the Marxist critique of colonial practices but underemphasizes the role of cultural and social factors in economic and political processes. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the work of post-colonial theorists like Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and scholars like Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson to understand these impacts. Acemoglu and Robinson^[7] describe the disregard and disrespect for culture that dominated early colonial expansion and the decimation of political, economic, social, and cultural rights by extractivist approaches, resulting in the breakdown of society and eventual armed conflict and revolution. *The Wretched of the Earth*^[8] argues that cultural and social realities are shaped by colonization long after it ends as foreign and local elites continue to maximize profits from extractive ventures, with global corporations enhancing extraction efficiency, suppressing wages, and profiting from developing markets.

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said^[39] describes Western cultural hegemony that justifies the need to manage and oversee the colonized countries for their benefit and the benefit of colonizing nations. Said’s description of Orientalist attitudes purporting the superiority of Western culture and the impact of Orientalist ideas on global perception of these groups’ capacity for self-governance remain embedded

in the ambiguity of self-determination. These post-colonial perspectives solidify the role of social and cultural factors in the political economy and the connections between political economy and self-determination conflicts. Lowes^[40], Shields^[41], and Sayer^[42] also connect culture with political economy, and Hodgson^[43] and McMurtry^[44] affirm the integration of social factors in political economy.

1.7.6. Operational Definitions

Based on the literature review above, this paper will proceed with the following operational definitions of key terms that inform the undertaking of the research. The operational definitions divide self-determination into two subcategories: sovereign and domestic. These operational definitions reflect the previously mentioned internal and external self-determination definitions but add specificity that aims to clarify the nature of the two types and the conflicts that arise between people groups and nation-states over the scope and applicability of the guaranteed right. The operational distinctions below are used as heuristic categories for analyzing AI outputs, not as exhaustive descriptions of the full range of locally grounded understandings of authority, belonging, or self-rule in Southeast Asia.

1. **Sovereign Self-Determination:** The right of nation-states (or groups with international approval to become nation-states) to determine their political structure and create economic, social, and cultural frameworks that allow for their full development and independence.
2. **Domestic Self-Determination:** The full participation of a group of people in the political, economic, social, and cultural processes of their nation-state in pursuit of the full realization of their potential.
3. **Generative AI:** Generative AI software programs like Chat GPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI use predictive algorithmic models to answer user queries.
4. **Political Economy:** The integrated and reciprocal relationship between political, economic, social, and cultural factors and the market economies and the effects of these relationships on society, governance, and human well-being.

1.7.7. Gap in the Literature

There is a gap in the literature regarding how generative AI models frame pressing social issues, specifically the

right to self-determination.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Introduction

This research on AI framing of Self-Determination in Southeast Asia utilized the following methodological approaches. The study utilized a convergent and concurrent deductive mixed method social justice design approach^[45] to analyze how AI models frame self-determination in Southeast Asia using Entman's^[12] framework on the four functions of framing."

The study combines qualitative critical constructivist analysis of structured prompt-response interactions with three Generative AI models, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI, with post-positivist descriptive quantitative analysis of the coding results to achieve the research objectives. The structured interview format in this study does not treat AI models as human informants with agency, intention, or stable views. Rather, the format was used as a standardized elicitation strategy appropriate to conversational AI interfaces in order to generate comparable outputs across models for analysis.

AI models were selected using the following purposive sampling criteria. First, the models had to have a version that provided free access to the public in Southeast Asia. This criterion eliminated Meta AI, whose model is currently unavailable in Southeast Asia. Second, the author chose models based on their popularity and perception of their market share, as empirical market share data is currently unavailable. Open AI's ChatGPT model was selected because of its dominant market share in the generative AI Space. Google's Gemini AI was selected due to its integration with Google's suite of apps that accompany its Gmail email service platform and its perceived market dominance in the region. Perplexity AI was chosen due to its free availability in Southeast Asia and its reputation for research-oriented results.

It is also important to note that the AI systems analyzed in this study are commercially developed platforms produced by private technology companies headquartered outside Southeast Asia rather than by states or public institutions within the region. This institutional context is significant because the outputs of these systems are shaped not only by training data, but also by proprietary design choices,

moderation systems, platform governance, and commercial logics that influence how information is organized and presented in response to user prompts.

The interviews were conducted with the basic free, publicly available models, which were accessed using private browsing windows in a Chrome internet browser to ensure that chats were unbiased and unaffected by previous interactions with the author of the research.

The specifications of each model and the dates of the interviews are as follows. The interview with ChatGPT was conducted on September 16, 2024, using ChatGPT model 4o mini. Similarly, the interview with Google Gemini AI was conducted on September 16, 2024, using Google Gemini 1.5 Flash. Google Gemini requires a user account to access the model, so a new, free Google account with no prior history was created. Finally, the interview with Perplexity AI was conducted on September 17. Perplexity AI sources information from multiple AI models and lacks a version identifier.

The research began with a structured series of prompts presented to each AI model consisting of 21 questions (**Table A2**). All three models received the following prompt to in-

troduce them to the interview. “I am interested in exploring self-determination in the context of Southeast Asia. I will ask you a series of questions as part of a structured interview format.” The AI model responses were copied into a Word document, exported to a PDF file, and imported into Atlas Ti for coding. The interviews were coded using an open, systematic, grounded approach^[46] with the following initial code categories: definitions of the problem, diagnoses of causes, moral judgments, and suggested remedies. Coding also captured emergent themes under these umbrella categories.

Additionally, the author grouped emergent sub-codes into political, economic, social, and cultural-themed categories in alignment with the four core aspects of self-determination as identified in UN Declarations and Covenants (**Table A1**), human rights, and political economy for descriptive quantitative analysis (**Figure 1**). The findings report these quantitative results and qualitative examples from the interviews to answer RQ1. The findings from RQ1 were analyzed to answer RQ2 and RQ3. Data integration in this convergent design occurs through the intent to compare and illustrate the results using “side-by-side joint displays in order to identify points of convergence or divergence^[47].”

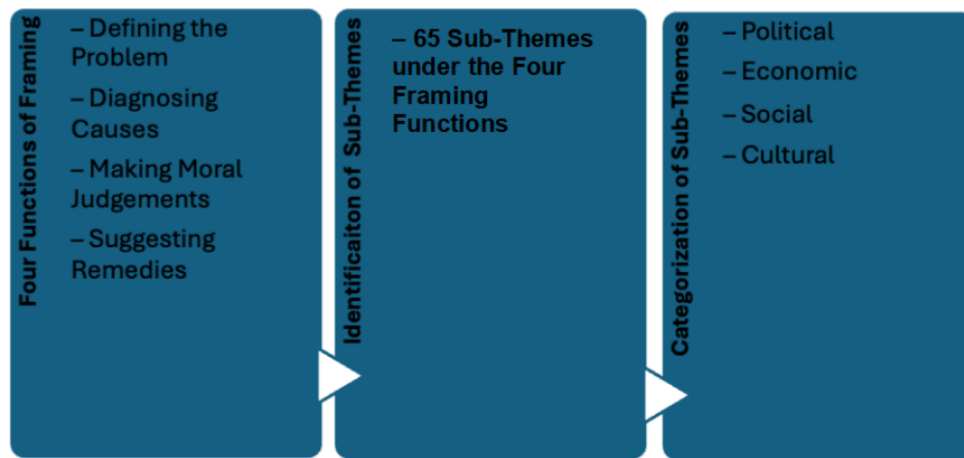


Figure 1. Coding Progression.

2.2. Positionality

This topic is explored from a critical constructivist perspective to generate a pragmatic understanding of the topic while remaining mindful of the chain of historical events that constructed the current system of power and sovereignty that disproportionately favors particular regions, nations, and peoples. In contrast, others remain underserved, and the mo-

nopolistic nature of the existing world order inhibits their development.

2.3. Validity and Reliability

The author conducted the prompt administration, coding, and analysis as a single researcher. Therefore, intercoder reliability testing was not possible. To mitigate this limita-

tion, the study incorporated peer debriefing and researcher feedback sessions during the study design, coding and analysis process. Emerging codes, category groupings, and interpretive decisions were presented in peer review sessions with other researchers for critique and refinement. While these procedures do not replace intercoder reliability testing they strengthen the transparency, consistency, and analytical rigor of the study.

2.4. Limitations

This paper is limited in scope to the framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia as produced by three generative AI models (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity AI). A further limitation of this study is that, while it incorporates postcolonial and selected regional scholarship, it does not develop a full analytical framework grounded in Southeast Asian local epistemologies, customary sovereignty traditions, or indigenous conflict-resolution systems. It also does not analyze the data sourcing, training models, or algorithmic foundations of the models studied.

2.5. Delimitations

This paper does not assess the accuracy of individual statements made by AI models regarding the details of specific self-determination conflicts. A separate forthcoming qualitative analysis paper will be planned to address this aspect of the study.

3. Results

3.1. Introduction

The following section will present the research findings related to research question one: How do AI models frame the issue of self-determination in Southeast Asia? The findings are organized using the study's analytic distinctions, including the sovereign/domestic differentiation, which is useful for comparing model outputs but does not exhaust the full range of locally grounded understandings of authority, belonging, and self-rule in Southeast Asia. The results are categorized using Entman's^[12] four functions of framing. The inclusion of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of self-determination and political economy are dis-

cussed as they emerged within the four framing functions. The findings also cover the sovereign or domestic nature of self-determination and what legitimizes a self-determination movement. The research results highlight key differences in the three models' framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia.

The themes that emerged from the three models had many similarities. However, the structure, length, and level of detail in response to the interview questions varied significantly from model to model. ChatGPT produced the longest answers to the interview questions, with thirty-three pages of material generated in response to the interview questions. It was also the most organized and detailed in its responses. In stark contrast to the lengthy, detailed responses of ChatGPT, Google Gemini produced significantly shorter and less detailed responses, generating only twelve pages of responses to the interview questions. Perplexity AI balanced these contrasting styles, generating eighteen pages, which fell in between the other models in the level of detail it provided and the length of its responses.

3.2. Defining the Problem

The first function of framing a social or political issue, as defined by Robert Entman^[12] is to define the problem. Defining the scope and application of a people's right to self-determination is arguably the most significant challenge associated with this highly politicized issue. UN declarations and conventions lack the specificity and clarity needed to prevent conflict over the scope and application of self-determination (**Appendix A**). The AI model's responses reflect the challenge associated with this ambiguity. However, despite the issue's complexity, the models identified the critical political, economic, social, and cultural aspects that define the right and the foundation of self-determination conflicts.

In defining the problem of self-determination, two of the models used similar approaches that were significantly different from that of the third model. ChatGPT stood out with a unique approach to framing self-determination, highlighted by its approach to the sovereignty vs. domestic process debate (**Figure 2**) and its distribution of the four critical aspects of self-determination (**Figure 3**). The other two models, Google Gemini and Perplexity AI, were much more balanced as they framed the definition of the problem.

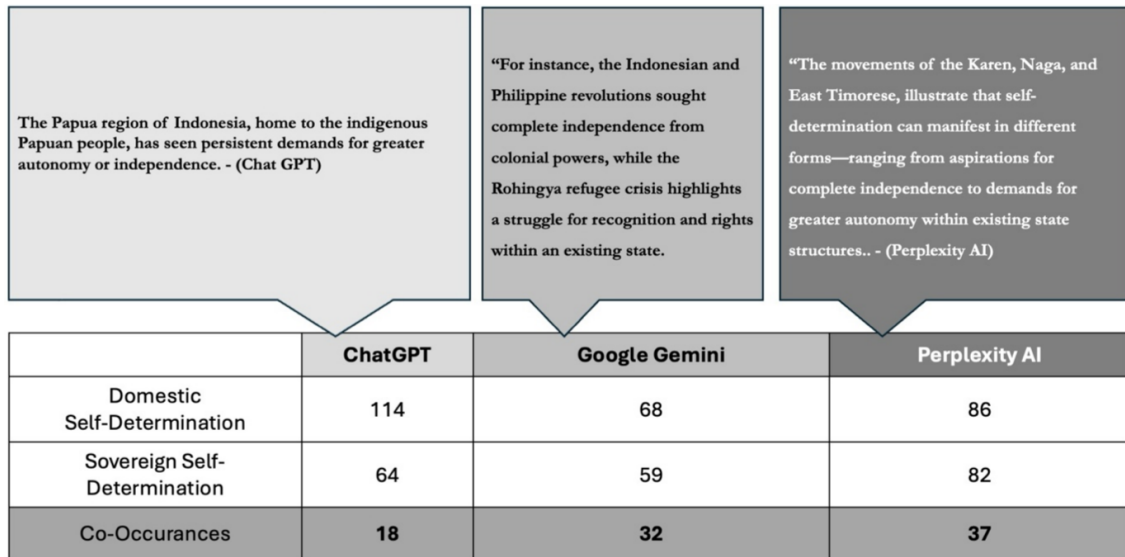


Figure 2. Defining the Problem: Domestic vs. Sovereign Self-Determination.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

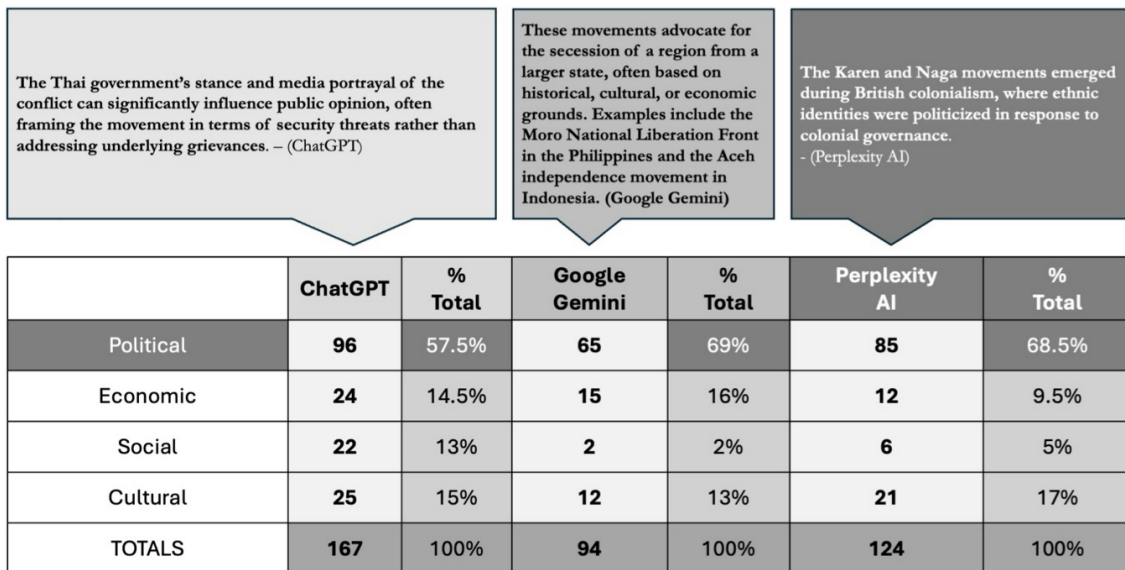


Figure 3. Defining the Problem: Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

The following quote from ChatGPT incorporates aspects of self-determination that are both domestic and sovereign in nature. However, it fails to create clear boundaries and distinguish between sovereign and domestic self-determination.

Self-determination refers to the right or ability of a group or individual to make their own choices and govern themselves. It is a principle that emphasizes the freedom and autonomy of people to shape their own political, eco-

nomic, and social systems. In international relations, self-determination is often associated with the right of nations or ethnic groups to decide their own political status and pursue their own economic, social, and cultural development.—ChatGPT Interview

The above quote from ChatGPT is an example of how lack of clarity can result in co-occurrences of domestic and sovereign codes, with the more balanced models, Google Gemini and Perplexity AI, generating significantly more co-

occurrences (**Figure 2**). The models also highlighted that governments tend to view self-determination demands as threats to their national sovereignty and territorial integrity as part of framing the sovereignty vs. domestic process debate. “Many governments in Southeast Asia are concerned that self-determination movements could pose a threat to national unity and territorial integrity. (Google Gemini).”

A second aspect of defining the problem framed by the AI models was the nature of the problem. Codes emerging under the category of defining the problem were groups aggregated into four thematic subcategories reflecting the different aspects of self-determination: political, economic, social, and cultural, as articulated in the UN Declarations and Conventions (**Appendix A**). The coding of the three models’ responses revealed unanimous agreement that self-determination was primarily a political issue (**Figure 3**), with ChatGPT using the least political framing. The following quote is an example of this political framing from ChatGPT: “Malaysia has a strong emphasis on national unity and ethnic harmony, which can lead to skepticism or opposition to movements perceived as challenging the existing order.”

While the models were clear on the dominance of the political aspects of self-determination, they differed in their framing of its economic, social, and cultural aspects. ChatGPT balanced its portrayal of these aspects, while Google Gemini and Perplexity AI were less balanced in their framing (**Figure 3**).

While this research focused on the macro issues of sovereign vs. domestic self-determination and the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of AI framing of the issue, other defining characteristics of the problem also emerged in the coding. These included democratic processes, human rights, representation and inclusion, self-governance and autonomy, and threats to sovereignty and unity. In summary, the models define the problem of self-determination as more of a domestic issue than an issue of sovereignty and independence. Additionally, it is primarily a political problem with cultural and economic elements and minimal connections to social factors.

3.3. Diagnosing Causes

Understanding the underlying causes of self-determination demands is a prerequisite to successfully

resolving these conflicts. The results of the interview coding revealed that all three models diagnosed political factors as the most significant cause of self-determination demands (**Figure 4**). All three models diagnosed cultural factors as the second most prominent cause of self-determination demands and conflicts. Regarding cultural causes of self-determination demands, Perplexity AI stated, “The Naga National Council has sought recognition of their distinct identity and rights, and while their movement has been complex and fraught with challenges, it is often viewed as legitimate due to its historical roots and cultural significance.” Similar to the models framing of the problem, their diagnosis of the cause largely excluded social factors, with social frames accounting for eight percent of the total for ChatGPT and just two percent of the total for Google Gemini (**Table 1**).

While the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of self-determination are examined first by this study, other causes of self-determination emerged in coding the interviews with AI Models. The other factors that emerged as significant causes of self-determination demands were armed conflict and violence, colonialism, exclusion and marginalization, historical grievances, international support, human rights abuses, and suppression of dissent by the state. The weighting of these factors differed significantly across the AI models, but the models agreed that political causes followed by cultural, economic, and social causes drive self-determination demands.

3.4. Making Moral Judgments

This study examines two key aspects of the debate over self-determination in the AI model’s responses to the interview questions. The first is the nature of the debate over what makes a self-determination movement legitimate or illegitimate. The AI responses identifying legitimizing or legitimizing factors were coded under a subheading of legitimacy or illegitimacy followed by the legitimizing or legitimizing factor, for example, “Illegitimacy: Human Rights Violations, or Legitimacy: Peaceful Approaches.” The resulting code totals for the legitimacy and illegitimacy categories were then totaled to identify the prevailing framing of the legitimacy of self-determination movements in Southeast Asia (**Figure 5**). ChatGPT again emerged as the most decisive, strongly favoring legitimizing frames, with the other models also favoring legitimacy but not as strongly. An ex-

ample of the less-used illegitimacy framing is Perplexity AI's identification of national sovereignty and territorial integrity concerns as factors contributing to illegitimacy in the following quote.

Many Southeast Asian leaders interpret self-determination in a collective sense, focusing on the rights of the nation-state rather than the rights of individual ethnic or cultural groups. This perspective often leads to the suppression of minority rights in favor of a homogenized national identity.—Perplexity AI

The second aspect of framing moral judgments analyzed by the study is whether political, economic, social, or cultural factors confer legitimacy or illegitimacy. Again, the models strongly favored political factors as the most critical contributors to legitimacy or illegitimacy (**Figure 6**). Political factors dominated, followed by social, cultural, and economic factors in last place. The sub-themes identified during coding for moral judgments are loss of moral support, right violations, violence, armed conflict, perceived threats to national security, broad representation, historical and cultural support, international support, and peaceful approaches to conflict resolution. ChatGPT provided the following description of what legitimized the Bangsamoro self-determination

movement in the Philippines.

The signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014 and the subsequent creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019 were significant milestones. The peace process has received support from international organizations and foreign governments, which helped to legitimize the movement, and the agreements reached.—ChatGPT

3.5. Suggested Remedies

The remedies suggested by AI models in their interview responses showed a more balanced approach than the model's definitions of the problem, diagnosis of the causes, and moral judgments about the issue. However, despite their more balanced approach, there was disagreement between the models over the distribution of suggested remedies. Similar to its dominance in the three previous aspects of framing, political factors received unanimous support from the three models as the suggested remedy for self-determination conflicts (**Figure 7**). Social remedies for self-determination conflicts in Southeast Asia emerged as the second-most popular solution.

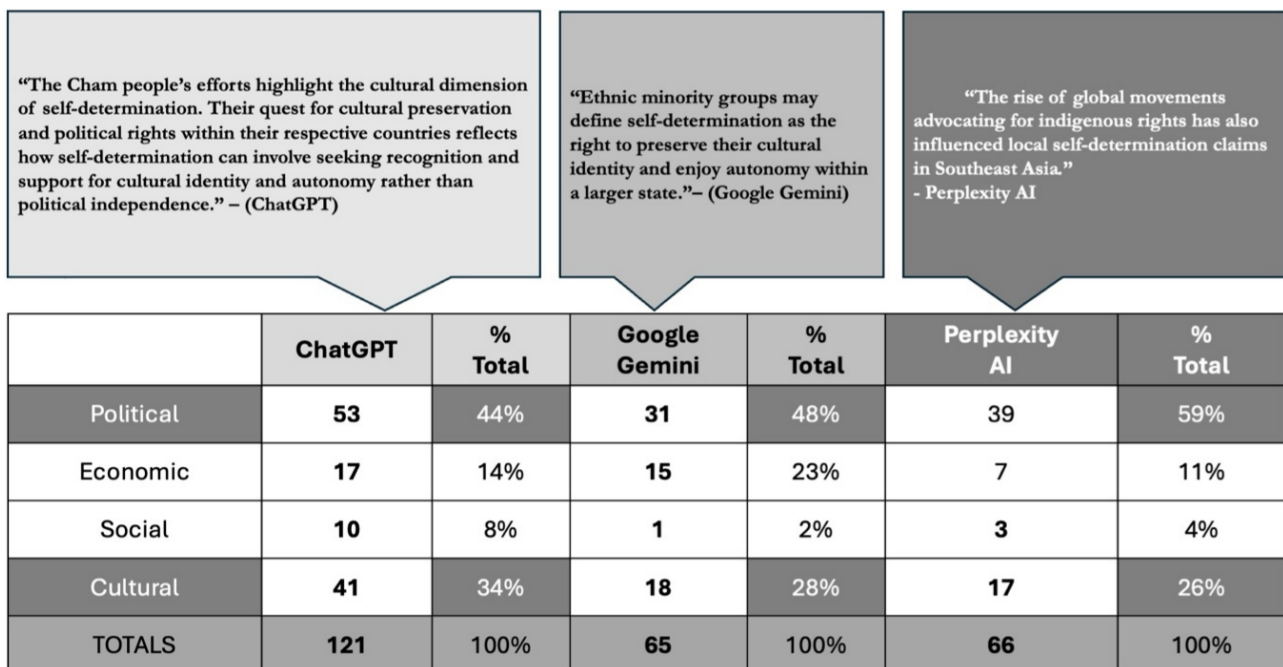


Figure 4. Diagnosing the Cause: Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

Table 1. Congruence of Self-Determination Factors across the Four Functions of Framing (Averages of Code Distribution Across Models).

	Coding Results 1st Place	Coding Results 2nd Place	Coding Results 3rd Place	Coding Results 4th Place
Defining the Problem	Political (64%)	Cultural (15%)	Economic (13%)	Social (8%)
Diagnosing the Cause	Political (49%)	Cultural (30%)	Economic (15%)	Social (6%)
Making Moral Judgements	Political (67.3%)	Social (24%)	Cultural (7.3%)	Economic (1.4%)
Suggesting Remedies	Political (44%)	Social (27%)	Economic (19%)	Cultural (10%)

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

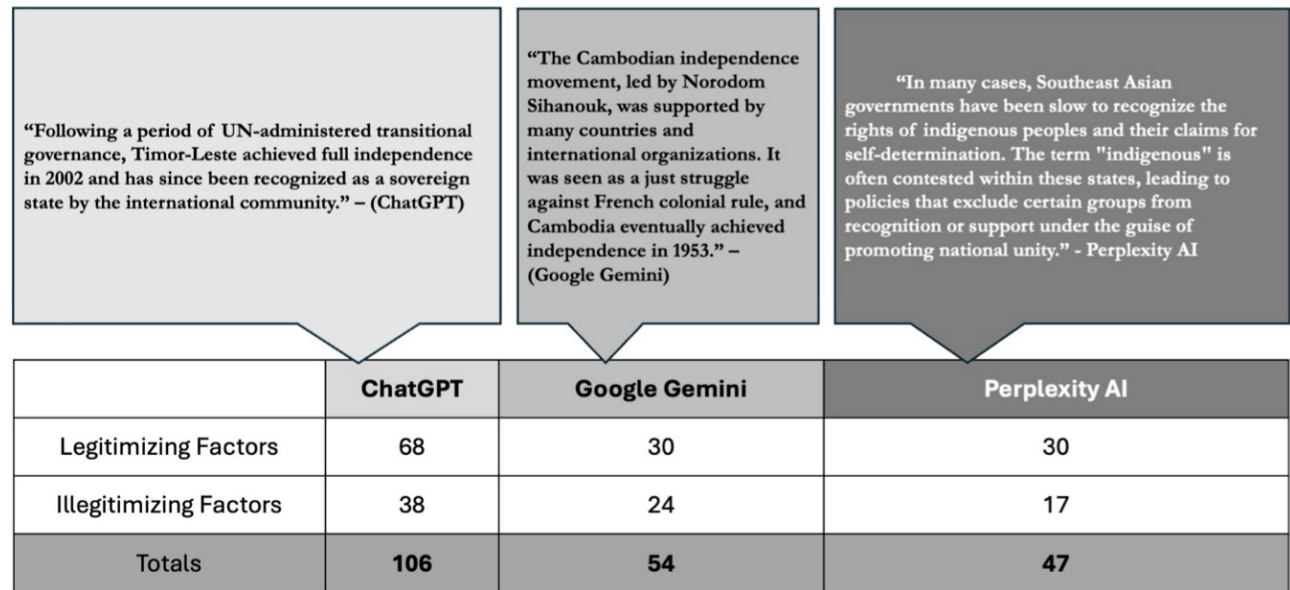


Figure 5. Making Moral Judgements: Legitimacy and Illegitimacy of Self-Determination in Southeast Asia.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

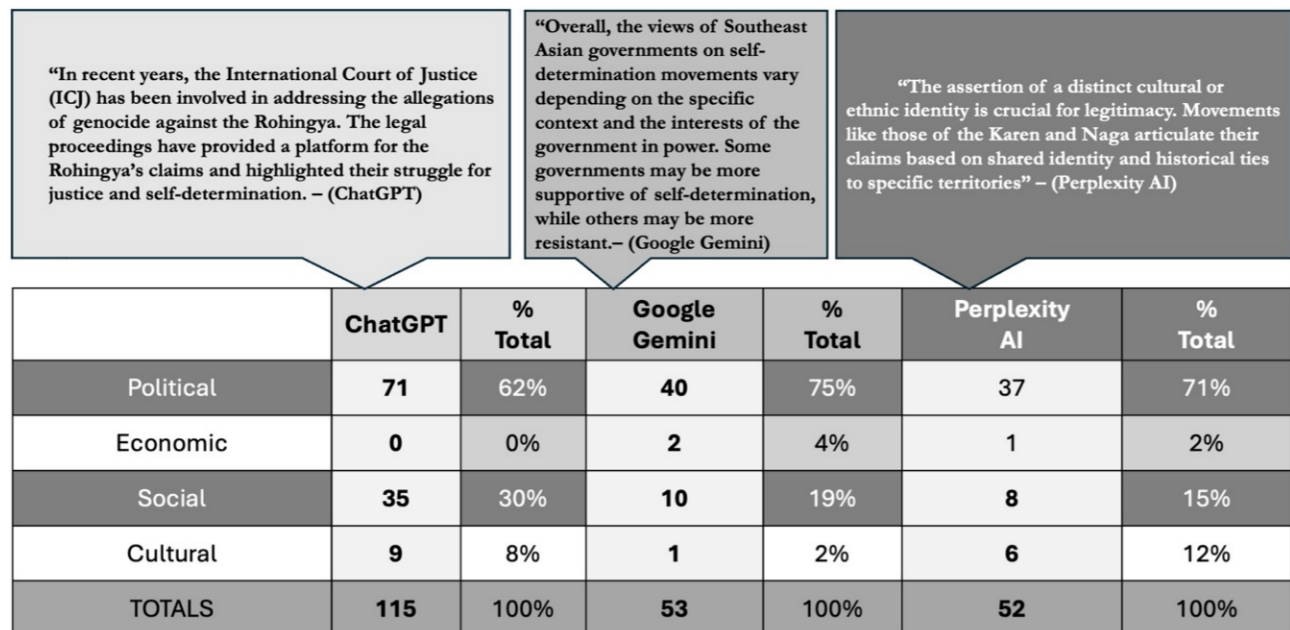


Figure 6. Making Moral Judgements: Basis of the Legitimacy or Illegitimacy of Self-Determination in Southeast Asia.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

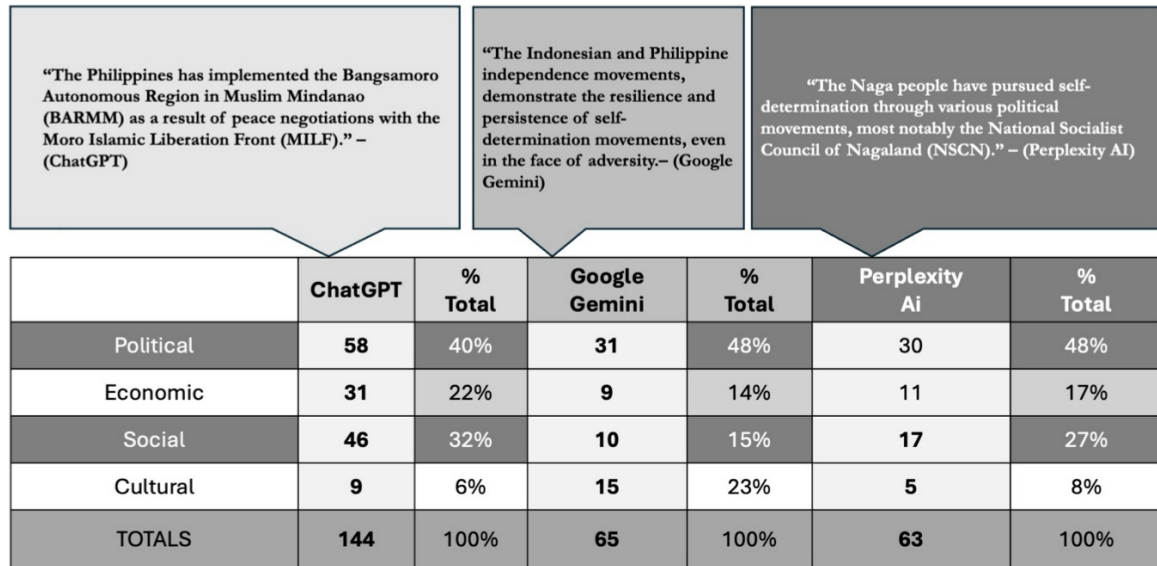


Figure 7. Suggesting Remedies for Self-Determination Conflict in Southeast Asia.

Note: Distribution reflects AI output patterns, not necessarily ground-truth realities of Southeast Asian conflicts.

Despite the model’s agreement on the arrangement of political and social factors, the models disagreed on the ranking of the economic and cultural remedies. ChatGPT and Perplexity AI framed economic solutions as the third most important factor in solving self-determination conflicts, while Google Gemini preferred cultural solutions over economic solutions (**Figure 7**). Sub-themes of remedies that emerged in coding included dialogue, economic justice, education, geoeconomic development, human rights, inclusion, independence, infrastructure development, negotiation, peace-building, respect for culture and identity, autonomy, representation, and suppression of dissent. These subthemes depict a wide range of potential peaceful and conflict-driven solutions.

ChatGPT was the strongest advocate for autonomy and self-governance solutions while respecting national sovereignty. *“Offer greater political and administrative autonomy to regions or groups seeking self-determination. This can include devolving powers related to governance, education, and cultural preservation while maintaining national sovereignty”*—ChatGPT. While Perplexity AI took the opposite approach, only advocating for political inclusion of marginalized groups as its most extreme solution. *“Promote inclusive governance that provides minority groups with meaningful political participation and representation. Enhancing minority rights and participation within existing states can help address self-determination aspira-*

tions”—Perplexity AI. It is important to note that while the models identified independence as a solution to self-determination debates throughout the interviews, none identified independence explicitly in their list of solutions when asked for solutions to self-determination conflicts.

4. Discussion

The discussion of the findings detailed above will proceed with a discussion of research question two, focusing on the critical aspects of the models’ framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia. This discussion will begin by examining the congruence of factors across the four functions of framing, followed by a discussion of the prominent sub-themes that emerged in the findings.

4.1. RQ1 & 2: Critical Aspects of AI Models Framing of Self-Determination in Southeast Asia

A discussion of the congruence of the AI Models’ collective framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia is needed to assess the critical aspects of the models’ framing of self-determination. The prevalence of coding for each aspect of self-determination, political, economic, social, and cultural, was averaged to determine a collective ranking of the four aspects for each framing function (**Table 1**). These quantitative collective rankings provide an opportunity for

mixed methods analysis of the congruence of the models' framing of political, economic, social, and cultural factors across the definition of the problem, diagnoses of the causes, moral judgments of legitimacy, and suggested remedies.

The primary strength of the model's framing of the issue is their consensus that political factors dominate self-determination discussions and discourse. **Table 1** also illustrates the significant weakness of the models' framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia: the absence of consensus beyond political factors. The collective ranking of factors in second, third, and fourth places reveals incongruences in the models' framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia.

The models' framing of cultural and economic factors as significant contributors to self-determination demands strengthens the integrity of their response as it aligns with a critical political economy-based understanding of self-determination conflicts. Google Gemini, when asked to provide examples of self-determination movements in Southeast Asia, identified three successful independence movements by colonized countries, namely, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, asserting that each of these movements sought to address grievances rooted in "colonialism, ethnic identity, and economic disparities." Edward Said^[39], in his book *Orientalism*, describes the disregard and disrespect for culture inherent in the colonization process in Asia.

"Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien^[39]."

Franz Fanon's discussion of colonialism and the transition to a post-colonial society in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*^[8] describes a world where politics, economics, geography, culture, social interaction, and civic practices have been forever changed by the long imperialist and capitalist road that has constructed our current reality.

"All the while the native, bent double, more dead than alive, exists interminably in an unchanging dream. The settler makes history; his

life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: "This land was created by us"; he is the unceasing cause: "If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages"^[8]."

Additionally, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson^[7] explain the impact of the colonialist legacies on modern society, "Nations fail today because their extractive economic institutions do not create the incentives needed for people to save, invest, and innovate." These descriptions of economic and cultural factors from critical political economy perspectives help validate the strength of the AI models' framing of the role of cultural and economic factors in driving self-determination conflicts in Southeast Asia. However, the models fail to account for local epistemological values, knowledge production, and alternative ways of knowing, being, and belonging that are structurally marginalized and often central to self-determination conflicts.

The dominance of social factors in discussions of legitimacy and potential solutions to self-determination starkly contrasts the dominance of cultural factors in defining the problem and its causes. This underscores the structural marginalization of local cultural differences present in these conflicts, and the reproduction of these marginalizing frames of the issues in AI responses to prompts and queries. Similarly, the reduction of cultural remedies for self-determination to the least important factor in favor of social and economic solutions is misaligned with the cultural factors the models identified as drivers of self-determination conflicts.

4.2. RQ3: Implications for Peacebuilding and Geoeconomic Development in Southeast Asia

Ultimately, the AI models' framing of self-determination in Southeast Asia reflects the strengths, weaknesses, ambiguities, and incongruences inherent in human debates on the topic, but does not simply mirror them. Because generative AI system reorganize information through predictive and opaque processes shaped by training data and platform logics, they may also flatten, amplify, or redistribute those ambiguities in ways that are difficult for users to detect. This distinction is significant for the ethics

of conflict-related technology research. In the context of self-determination, where legitimacy, historical grievance, political status, and potential remedies are already contested, AI-generated outputs may do more than summarize existing debates. Their apparent fluency and coherence can obscure the uneven assumptions, silences, and representational gaps that structure the output, making it more difficult to trace how particular conflict narratives are being organized and legitimized.

While the models acknowledged different applications of self-determination—sovereign and domestic—they failed to articulate the standards and criteria for accessing each form and under what circumstances. This ambiguity allows any disenfranchised group to make self-determination demands, potentially creating significant conflict with nation-states that perceive these demands as threats to national sovereignty and unity. At the same time, the models' delegitimization of local epistemologies and political organization and cultural norms reproduces and further entrenches structural barriers that may prevent marginalized groups from securing forms of self-governance they are entitled to. Indonesia exemplifies this issue, as noted in responses from all three generative AI models.

The Indonesian self-determination movement progressed in phases, beginning with the consolidation of kingdoms last colonized by the Dutch into a single nation-state in 1949^[48, 49]. Kadir^[48, 49] argues that while post-colonial self-determination recognized the rights of the Indonesian majority, it ignored other colonized groups. Regions like East Timor, Aceh, and West Papua continued their self-determination movements after Indonesia became independent. However, Fadilah and Adirespati^[50] contend that the Netherlands' attempt to separate West Papua from Indonesia between 1949 and 1963 violated Indonesia's territorial sovereignty and the non-intervention clause, conflicting with West Papua's self-determination narratives. Only East Timor achieved sovereign self-determination in 1999, while Aceh has a level of domestic self-determination^[51], and the West Papua self-determination conflict is ongoing^[48, 49, 52]. Kadir's quotation from Ramos Horta, East Timor's two-time president, illustrates the ambiguity of self-determination in national and international contexts and the difficulties even successful leaders face in defining its scope:

“Self-determination should not be equated only with

independence or secession.

Rather, it should be an informed choice that ranges from limited autonomy which guarantees their native language, culture, social and economic rights, to full independence [...] what remains are the political will and vision from the Indonesian authority and the international community at large to bring about a swift and peaceful settlement.”—Ramos Horta, as quoted in the study of Kadir^[49].

As previously noted, the remedies suggested by the AI models were misaligned with their problem definitions and cause diagnoses. While they framed cultural and economic factors as the second and third most important in defining the problem and diagnosing causes, they proposed social remedies as the second most important, followed by economic and cultural factors. This incongruence is both problematic and reflective of current realities, revealing a key challenge in addressing self-determination conflicts with implications for peacebuilding and geoeconomic development strategies.

First, this incongruence suggests that social peacebuilding remedies—such as awareness-raising, dialogue, education, and reconciliation—may be insufficient to address the power imbalances between nation-states and self-determination groups. The AI models' recommendation of social peacebuilding to address political, cultural, economic, and social grievances has often yielded limited results. In East Timor's case, social solutions led to international pressure and a UN-supported referendum, serving as a path to the solution rather than the solution itself. For many movements, including others in Indonesia, social peacebuilding fails to catalyze meaningful change, potentially increasing frustration and leading to violent escalations.

Second, social peacebuilding has limited influence over geoeconomic development, which is shaped by political priorities favoring majority interests and resource extraction from underdeveloped areas, thereby increasing minority discontent and distrust. The AI models' advocacy for peaceful, non-violent solutions is politically and socially acceptable but often ignored by states intent on maintaining the status quo. When efforts to secure cultural respect and economic and political concessions fail, self-determination movements may resort to violence. In such cases, violence becomes both a political and geoeconomic weapon, disrupting resource extraction and forcing the state to expend resources.

This research represents an initial empirical analysis

of the framing of self-determination by leading generative AI models. The research also suggests considerable incongruences in human and scholarly epistemology of self-determination and that more research is needed. The results also highlight that the structural and epistemic inequalities that define self-determination conflicts, are reproduced in the data foundations of generative AI models, and their increas-

ing role in knowledge acquisition and dissemination risks perpetuating these inequalities across populations through the dynamics of platform capitalism. Additionally, the mixed methodological design of the research allowed created additional value, revealing the scale and nuance of variation across the models, and the resulting inconsistencies in framing that result (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Value Added by Mixed Methods Design^[47].

Research Question	Value Added by Mixed Methodology
RQ1: Framing of Self-Determination	The integration of data types allowed for the scale and nuance of variations in framing to be shown.
RQ2: Critical Aspects	Integration revealed the incongruences and ambiguities of models' framing.
RQ3: Implications for Peacebuilding and Geoeconomic Development	Integration of data allowed for a detailed comparison between AI framing and human understanding

5. Conclusions

In summary, this research used a mixed methods approach to analyze how generative AI models frame self-determination in Southeast Asia. Secondly, it sought to identify the critical aspects of the model's framing and the implications of that framing for peacebuilding and geopolitical development efforts in Southeast Asia.

The AI models interviewed for this study framed self-determination as primarily a political issue with cultural, economic, and social sub-elements. Taking a back seat to political factors, cultural and economic sub-themes dominate the discussed causes of self-determination demands, while social factors bring the most legitimacy and popular remedies to the problem after political factors.

While the models agree on the importance of political factors, the mixed method analysis found that their framing of other factors in defining the problem, diagnosing the causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies introduced considerable incongruence in what causes self-determination demands and what works to create lasting solutions to self-determination conflicts. The model framing of social solutions to economic and cultural grievances aligns with common interventions and suggests there is a considerable need for research in search of cultural and economic solutions more aligned with these conflicts' root causes.

The models' framing of self-determination narrated the ambiguity of self-determination as a right and an interna-

tional standard. The ambiguity of the model's narratives and the incongruence of suggested remedies with the root causes will not discourage groups from seeking self-determination. They also provide little guidance for how groups can pursue self-determination over their political, economic, cultural, and social affairs through peaceful means. The lack of official criteria to legitimize self-determination movements and the models' articulation of the limited likelihood of success with social remedies pose considerable challenges for the peacebuilding community seeking practical approaches to reducing violence and ending these conflicts.

These findings also have wider implications for how AI-generated conflict narratives are assessed. Specifically, they emphasize the need to analyze whose knowledge traditions, languages, and conflict-resolution methods are most visible in the digital spaces from which generative AI systems learn. Future research in this area could benefit from paying closer attention to materials in multiple languages, locally-based knowledge sources, and review processes that include those with direct experience of the conflicts being depicted. These considerations are important for epistemic justice because they show how AI-generated stories might reproduce unequal patterns of visibility and legitimacy among different types of knowledge.

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Institutional Review Board Statement Conflicts of Interest

Not applicable.

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

AI Use Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT (OpenAI) solely for language refinement. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or generation of scientific content. All outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

Data Availability Statement

Data is not available for this study.

Appendix A

Table A1. Self-Determination in UN Declarations and Conventions.

UN Article	Inclusion of Self-Determination	Mention
Universal Declaration of Human Rights ^[1]	Article 55	<i>“based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote: a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development; b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” (Article 55)</i>
Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples ^[19]	Paragraph 2 and Article 2	<i>“All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” (Article 2)</i>
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ^[53]	Article 1	<i>“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” (Article 1)</i>
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ^[54]	Article 1	<i>“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” (Article 1)</i>
Declaration on the Right to Development ^[55]	Introduction (p. 1)	<i>“Recalling the right of peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development,” ... full and complete sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources, (p. 1)</i>
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ^[56]	Pages 5–6	<i>“affirm the fundamental importance of the right to self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (pp. 5–6)</i>
Pact for the future, Global Digital Compact, and Declaration for Future Generations	Section 2, International Peace and Security (p. 12)	<i>“We reiterate our full respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States, the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.” (p.12)</i>

Table A2. Index of Item Objective Congruence—Interview Questions.

Interview Question	Framing Component	Research Questions and Objectives
What is self-determination?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
Is self-determination the same as independence?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
Do all groups requesting self-determination want independence?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
Can you provide examples of self-determination movements in Southeast Asia?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How do these examples give context to the definition of self-determination?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How do different parties in Southeast Asia define self-determination?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How are their ideas similar or different?	Defining the Problem	RQ1 and OBJ-1
Why are people demanding self-determination in Southeast Asia?	Diagnosing the Causes	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What underlying factors enhance the aggressiveness of these demands?	Diagnosing the Causes	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What makes a self-determination movement legitimate?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What roles do international and domestic politics play in self-determination discussions?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What are some examples of self-determination movements in Southeast Asia that were seen as legitimate by the international community?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What made these movements legitimate?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How does violence or armed conflict affect the recognition of self-determination claims?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How do Southeast Asian governments view self-determination movements?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How does this affect their legitimacy?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How does the majority of the public in Southeast Asian Countries view self-determination movements?	Making Moral Judgements	RQ1 and OBJ-1
How can we resolve self-determination conflicts in Southeast Asia?	Suggesting Remedies	RQ1 and OBJ-1
What is the relationship between peacebuilding and self-determination in Southeast Asia?	Suggesting Remedies	RQ1, RQ3 and OBJ-1, OBJ-3
What role does geoeconomic development play in solving self-determination conflicts?	Suggesting Remedies	RQ1, RQ3 and OBJ-1, OBJ-3

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