ISTIQSHA
Adnin Journal of Integrative Islamic Inquiry http://dx.doi.org/.../...

Negotiating Power and Practice: Pre-Service Teachers' Political Geographies during Teaching Internship

Riski[a]

[a]*Faculty of Islamic Family Law, Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an Jannatu Adnin Kendari, Kendari, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT
Teaching internships place pre-service teachers (PSTs) within school environments shaped by authority, institutional rules, professional expectations, and interpersonal relationships. However, limited research has examined how EFL PSTs negotiate these political relations during teaching internships, particularly in the Indonesian context. This study explores the political geographies of EFL PSTs during a teaching internship at schools in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, focusing on how they experienced and negotiated power, authority, expectations, and professional agency. A qualitative case study was conducted with five EFL PSTs from a state Islamic university in Southeast Sulawesi who completed a one-month teaching internship in different schools. Data were collected through reflective journals, observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions and analyzed thematically. The findings show that PSTs encountered varying forms of authority and institutional expectations that shaped their pedagogical decisions, responsibilities, relationships with supervisors and mentor teachers, and sense of professional autonomy. They negotiated these conditions through adaptation, communication, compliance, reflection, and selective assertion of their teaching preferences. The study contributes to understanding teaching internships as political spaces in which PSTs continuously negotiate power and professional positioning. The findings highlight the need for stronger university-school collaboration and dialogic supervision to support PST agency and professional development.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received: 12/04/2026
Accepted: 10/06/2026

KEYWORDS
EFL Pre-service teachers (PSTs); Political geographies; Teaching internships

HOW TO CITE:
Riski. (2026). Negotiating power and practice: Pre-service teachers' political geographies during teaching internship. *Istiqsha: Adnin Journal of Integrative Islamic Inquiry, 1*(1). 1-22.

Introduction

In recent decades, the experiences and challenges of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers (PSTs) have received considerable attention in teacher education research. Previous studies have identified difficulties related to classroom

CONTACT: Riski | **MAIL:** riski@iiq-jakendari.ac.id

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Rumah Jurnal Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an Jannatu Adnin Kendari.
This is an Open Access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided appropriate credit is given to the original author(s).

time management and the organization of learning activities (Mudra, 2018), the use of instructional media and the gap between expectations and actual teaching conditions during school-based practice (Maharani & Fithriani, 2023), classroom language use (Hadi, 2019), and the comprehension and delivery of instructional materials (Sumani & Arifin, 2018). These challenges indicate that teaching practice involves more than the application of pedagogical knowledge; it also requires PSTs to respond to the institutional conditions and professional expectations of the schools in which they undertake their training. In teacher education programs, school-based teaching experience is therefore an essential component before prospective teachers complete their degrees (Hamilton & Margot, 2019; Mukeredzi & Mandrona, 2013). In Indonesia, this preparation generally involves two stages of teaching experience: microteaching (Suryani et al., 2018) and teaching internship or school-based teaching practice.

Through these experiences, PSTs are expected to connect theoretical knowledge with actual classroom practice (Isworo, 2016). The transition from university-based learning to school-based teaching provides opportunities for PSTs to develop pedagogical competence while encountering the institutional expectations and professional responsibilities of real school environments. Applying theoretical knowledge to practice is considered an important component of teacher development because it enables prospective teachers to connect what they learn with actual teaching situations (Saban & Coklar, 2013; Koross, 2016). Teaching practice has consequently become an important component of teacher preparation programs internationally (Anthonia, 2014; Koc & Ilya, 2016).

Teaching internships have been examined from various perspectives and in different contexts, both internationally (e.g., Adebola, 2022) and in Indonesia (e.g., Isworo, 2016). Research has generally emphasized the contribution of school-based practice to the development of prospective teachers and their readiness to respond to classroom demands (Zhao & Zhang, 2017). Through teaching internships, PSTs become familiar with the responsibilities of teaching and gain opportunities to apply their pedagogical knowledge in authentic school settings. However, entering a school also means entering an established institutional structure in which PSTs must respond to school rules, mentor expectations, teaching assignments, and existing professional relationships. Thus, the experience is not only a matter of developing teaching competence but also of negotiating one's position within the social and institutional structures of the school.

Previous studies have documented several difficulties that PSTs encounter in negotiating these school contexts. Abdillah and Fithriani (2023), for example, reported challenges related to inadequate guidance from mentor teachers, while other studies have identified difficulties in lesson planning and classroom management (Pakpahan, 2023). Such findings suggest that the relationships between PSTs and school personnel are important because mentor teachers and other school authorities can influence how PSTs participate in teaching activities and respond to institutional expectations. Zain (2023) and Zein (2014) consequently emphasized the importance of appropriate training, teacher support, and institutional policies in strengthening EFL teacher

preparation in Indonesia. These issues point to the need to examine not only what PSTs experience during teaching internships but also how authority, institutional expectations, and professional boundaries shape those experiences.

Preliminary observations of EFL PSTs undertaking teaching internships in Kendari similarly indicated that their experiences were closely connected to relationships with mentor teachers, school personnel, and students. PSTs were expected to follow school regulations, prepare teaching materials according to the school's requirements, attend school regularly, and respond to teaching assignments determined by school personnel. At the same time, the degree of guidance and supervision provided by mentor teachers varied across schools. Some PSTs received opportunities to consult with their mentors and make pedagogical decisions, whereas others experienced closer supervision or additional institutional demands. These conditions illustrate how PSTs entered school environments in which their participation and professional actions were shaped by existing authority structures while they simultaneously attempted to negotiate their roles as beginning teachers.

This relationship between authority, institutional expectations, and professional action can be understood through Hargreaves' (2001) concept of emotional geographies, particularly its political dimension. Political geography refers to the patterns of proximity and distance that emerge from differences in power, authority, and freedom within professional relationships (Hargreaves, 2001). From this perspective, school-based teaching is not simply an individual process of applying pedagogical knowledge; it is also a social and institutional process in which teachers negotiate their position in relation to those who possess different levels of authority. For PSTs, these relations may involve mentor teachers, supervisors, administrators, other teachers, and students. Political geography therefore provides a useful lens for examining how PSTs experience institutional authority, negotiate professional boundaries, and exercise agency within school settings.

Previous research provides evidence that power and authority are relevant to teachers' experiences in school contexts. Liu (2016) highlighted the importance of power structures in determining patterns of interaction and practice, while Misdi et al. (2020) examined the experiences of a pre-service EFL teacher in relation to mentor teachers, students, and the school environment. Zhu (2017) also showed that student teachers negotiate their position of authority while developing relationships with students. Similarly, Adebola (2022) reported that pre-service teachers encountered institutional conditions that did not always adequately support their teaching practice. These studies indicate that teaching internships involve negotiations of authority and professional positioning, although such processes have not been sufficiently examined through the specific lens of political geography.

In the Indonesian context, research has also explored pre-service and EFL teachers' experiences during teaching practice. Misdi et al. (2020), for instance, examined a female pre-service EFL teacher's emotional geography in Cirebon and identified experiences involving collaboration with a mentor teacher, communication with students, and adjustment to the school environment. Rejeki et al. (2018) examined

an EFL teacher's experiences in Asmat, Papua, while Ubaidillah et al. (2023) explored an EFL teacher's experiences during emergency remote teaching. Although these studies contribute to understanding teachers' relationships and experiences, the political dimension of these relationships—particularly how PSTs negotiate authority, institutional expectations, professional boundaries, and autonomy during teaching internships—remains insufficiently explored.

Therefore, there is a need for further investigation of the political geographies of EFL pre-service teachers during teaching internships, particularly in the context of Southeast Sulawesi. The present study focuses specifically on how EFL PSTs experience and negotiate power, authority, institutional expectations, professional boundaries, and autonomy within their placement schools. Drawing on Hargreaves' (2001) political dimension of emotional geographies, this study examines how school structures and professional relationships position PSTs and how they respond to and negotiate these conditions during their teaching internships. By focusing on political geography rather than emotional experience more broadly, the study seeks to contribute a more focused understanding of how power relations shape PSTs' professional positioning and agency in school-based teacher education.

Method

A qualitative case study design was adopted to investigate how EFL pre-service teachers (PSTs) navigated and negotiated political relations during their teaching internships. The design enabled the study to examine participants' experiences as they occurred within their actual school environments, particularly in relation to power, authority, institutional expectations, and professional positioning (Yin, 2009). The participants comprised five sixth-semester EFL PSTs enrolled in the English Education Department of a state Islamic university in Southeast Sulawesi during the 2024/2025 academic year. They completed a compulsory 45-day teaching internship across three anonymized junior and senior high schools in the region. Purposive selection was applied to include PSTs who had completed microteaching, were undertaking their first teaching experience in a formal school, completed the entire internship, and maintained reflective journals throughout the program. To protect the identities of the participants and institutions, pseudonyms were assigned.

Data were generated through four complementary sources: reflective journals, classroom and school observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGD). The reflective journals provided participants' accounts of situations involving authority, school expectations, professional relationships, and pedagogical decision-making. Observations supplemented these accounts by documenting relevant interactions and contextual conditions in the school setting, using field notes as the primary recording technique (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed accounts of participants' relationships with supervisors and mentor teachers, their experiences with institutional rules, and their perceived opportunities to exercise professional

autonomy. The FGD subsequently allowed participants to discuss and compare their experiences, generating further perspectives through interaction among the group (Mishra, 2016). The data-collection instruments were developed by adapting relevant instruments from earlier studies (Imamyartha et al., 2023; Sari, 2021) and tailoring them to the political-geographical focus of the present study.

Following data collection, all journal entries, observation notes, interview transcripts, and FGD transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis. The analysis followed the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), beginning with data familiarization and initial coding, followed by theme development, review, definition, and reporting. Rather than examining emotional experiences broadly, the analysis concentrated on the political dimension of Hargreaves' (2001) emotional geographies. The analytical process therefore focused on how power and authority were distributed and negotiated within the school environment, how institutional expectations shaped PSTs' professional boundaries, and how participants exercised or experienced constraints on their agency. Attention was also given to participants' positioning in relation to supervisors, mentor teachers, administrators, students, and university expectations. Patterns identified across the four data sources were compared and consolidated into themes representing recurring power relations, negotiation, and professional positioning. The resulting themes were interpreted to explain how the political organization of school spaces influenced PSTs' participation, pedagogical decision-making, autonomy, and agency throughout their teaching internships.

Results and Discussion

Political geography refers to the pre-service teachers' closeness and distance because of the power or authority that controls them in that school. This study showed several subthemes of political geographies dimensions as follows:

Political Geographies Dimensions: "Not Only Teaching, but We also Have to Make Some School Document"

The participants' experiences demonstrate that teaching internships were shaped not only by classroom teaching but also by institutional expectations and relationships with mentor teachers. One prominent expectation concerned the preparation of teaching modules based on the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Halfin pointed out that during his teaching internship, he was required not only to teach but also to construct teaching modules that corresponded to the curriculum implemented at his placement school. His mentor teacher instructed him to prepare the modules, although Halfin initially acknowledged that he did not fully understand how to develop them. His reflection illustrates this experience:

> *"……. I had to be able to create teaching modules that were following the school curriculum so that I could apply them in class later, and almost every day, I revised my modules with the mentor teacher". (Halfin's Reflection)*

He further stated:

> *"I felt that something challenging about being a teacher with the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum was that there were a lot of administrative matters". (Halfin's Reflection)*

These accounts indicate that the mentor teacher occupied an authoritative position in determining part of Halfin's responsibilities during the teaching internship. However, the relationship was not characterized solely by control. Field notes showed that the mentor teacher provided Halfin with flexibility in developing the module and allowed him to consult when difficulties arose. Thus, authority operated together with opportunities for guidance and negotiation. Halfin responded to this structure by repeatedly discussing and revising his module with the mentor teacher. His experience illustrates how a PST's practice was shaped by the expectations of a more authoritative member of the school while still allowing room for participation and adjustment.

The administrative demands associated with the *Merdeka* Curriculum further shaped this relationship. Reza et al. (2023) noted that implementing the curriculum can require teachers to balance instructional responsibilities with substantial administrative tasks, which may create difficulties in managing time and responding to students' needs. In Halfin's case, however, the significance of these demands extends beyond workload. The requirement to produce and revise teaching modules positioned him as an apprentice who had to operate within the institutional expectations of the school. Although he did not initially feel fully prepared to undertake the task, he was expected to fulfill it because it was part of his responsibilities as a teaching intern. This situation reflects the intermediary position of PSTs, who are simultaneously learning as students and expected to perform responsibilities associated with teachers (Orgovanyi-Gajdos, 2016). Consequently, the teaching internship became a space in which Halfin had to negotiate between his own level of preparedness and the authority and expectations established by the school.

A similar pattern appeared in Defin's experience. In addition to teaching, she was entrusted with preparing teaching modules because of her familiarity with the task. She explained:

> *"Alhamdulillah, the mentor teacher did not demand much. She always said, "Do what you can, and if you encounter problems, do not hesitate to ask. If you don't know the solution, we will look for the solution together". I carried out my duties well, such as teaching and creating teaching modules …" (Defin's reflection)*

She also stated:

> *"The guidance I received was when creating the teaching module that was handed over to me….." (Defin's Reflection)*

Defin's account illustrates a different form of political relationship. Her mentor teacher retained the authority to delegate responsibilities, but the delegation was accompanied by flexibility and access to support. Defin therefore did not experience authority simply as restriction; rather, it was mediated through consultation and assistance. Her statement that she was pleased because the mentor teacher did not demand too much suggests that the degree of pressure experienced by PSTs was partly related to how mentor teachers exercised their authority. Herni expressed a similar pattern:

> *"We always let the mentor teacher know if there was something we did not understand." (Herni's reflection)*

The opportunity to communicate difficulties indicates that the participants were not excluded from the decision-making process. Instead, they occupied a position in which they could seek clarification and negotiate how responsibilities were carried out. This is significant because the political geography of the teaching internship was not constituted only by hierarchical authority but also by the proximity and distance created through relationships between PSTs and mentor teachers. Hargreaves (2001) conceptualizes political geography in terms of the proximity and distance generated by different perceptions of power, authority, and freedom. In this sense, the participants' relationships with mentor teachers demonstrate how authority could simultaneously create obligations and provide spaces for interaction.

Haris's experience further illustrates the negotiation between institutional expectations and PST agency. His mentor teacher required him to prepare a teaching module individually, although Haris recognized that the module still required improvement:

> *"…… instructions from the mentor teacher that we had to make the teaching module individually, so I did not think the teaching module was perfect and should still be able to be improved both in terms of existing materials and methods. ….." (Haris' reflection)*

Haris also explained that the school did not provide teaching modules, which required him and his colleagues to construct their own:

> *"…… The school did not give us a teaching module which made me quite overwhelmed with making this teaching module because we had to make the teaching module individually as well as the revisions and files that had to be included in the teaching module as well as the grades or assessments of the students which were very lots…." (Haris' reflection)*

These accounts demonstrate that institutional expectations were not always accompanied by ready-made resources. Consequently, Haris had to respond to the expectations of the school while simultaneously developing the knowledge necessary

to meet them. His experience therefore reflects a form of political negotiation in which the institution established what needed to be accomplished, while Haris had to determine how to fulfill those expectations within the resources and capabilities available to him. The pressure became particularly evident when Haris described the difficulty of balancing teaching, module preparation, and revisions:

> *"……. I felt quite burdened with making this teaching module because I just wanted to focus on improving my practice in teaching during FTP. I felt very tired, and it was quite difficult to manage my time because I was at school……." (Haris' reflection)*

Nevertheless, his subsequent account shows that he did not merely comply with the expectations placed upon him. He also reinterpreted the requirement as an opportunity for professional learning:

> *"……. Then, for other rules, such as creating teaching modules, we learned more about how to prepare teaching modules based on the Merdeka curriculum. So, I gained more experience because of the demands of the module, how to determine materials and techniques that were in line….." (Haris' interview on March 6, 2024, at 7.18 p.m)*

This shift is important for understanding Haris's political geography. His initial response reflected the constraint imposed by the school's expectations, whereas his later interpretation demonstrates agency in assigning value to the experience. Rather than positioning himself entirely as a passive recipient of institutional demands, he gradually used the requirement to develop his teaching knowledge. This process also influenced how he interacted with his mentor teacher:

> *"My way of meeting the demands of supervisors and mentor teachers was by interacting a lot with them and also consulting with them. This was because by doing this, the mentor teacher could direct me to comply with the demands set by the school. Moreover, we were still newcomers here in terms of teaching school students, and we needed direction from mentors and supervisors to improve and adapt according to the school's policy." (Haris' reflection)*

Haris's response illustrates negotiation rather than simple obedience. He deliberately sought interaction and consultation to understand institutional expectations and adjust his practice accordingly. His recognition that he was a newcomer positioned him within an unequal but developmental relationship with his mentor teacher. The mentor possessed greater institutional and professional authority, while Haris retained some agency through consultation, reflection, and adaptation. This corresponds with Orgovanyi-Gajdos (2016), who explains that student teachers occupy an intermediary position between being learners and performing the responsibilities of teachers. In Haris's case, this intermediary position was visible in

his need to follow school expectations while simultaneously developing his own professional judgment.

Selin's experience reveals that the political geography of the teaching internship extended beyond teaching modules. She reported being required to prepare several forms of teaching documentation:

> *"……. Until now, we had been required to make teaching modules, annual programs, semester programs, educational calendars, and effective weeks, and in my opinion, it was very difficult because it was our first start doing this task……" (Selin's Reflection)*

She also explained that the *Merdeka* Curriculum required her to adopt a student-centered approach:

> *"Because in the Merdeka curriculum, the teaching should use the student-centered method, we were required to create teaching modules referring to that method, which is not teacher-centered. And I think that influenced my teaching, where I had to create those modules." (Selin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 7.36 a.m)*

Selin's account shows that institutional power operated not only through direct instructions from mentor teachers but also through curriculum requirements and school procedures. The expectations concerning teaching documents and pedagogical approaches established boundaries around what she was expected to do as a teaching intern. Her position therefore involved adapting her teaching to institutional norms that were already established before she entered the school. This demonstrates that political geography is also produced through institutional structures that define acceptable practices and responsibilities. Despite these expectations, Selin described a strategy for managing the demands:

> *"For me, I always thought, "Just do it, and it will eventually be finished." I always did that so that I did not think too much, and yes, there were many demands from the mentor teacher, but in the end, we could finish it too." (Selin's reflection)*

Rather than openly resisting the requirements, Selin adopted an adaptive response. Her strategy allowed her to remain within the expectations of the school while maintaining a sense of control over her own participation. This suggests that agency within political geographies does not necessarily require direct resistance to authority. It may also be expressed through adaptation, consultation, compliance, and the ability to reinterpret institutional demands in ways that make them manageable.

Thus, the participants' accounts demonstrate that teaching internships constituted spaces in which power and professional practice were continuously negotiated. Mentor teachers and school structures established expectations concerning teaching responsibilities, curriculum implementation, documentation, and pedagogical approaches, while PSTs responded through consultation, adaptation,

compliance, reflection, and, at times, the exercise of their own pedagogical preferences. The relationships were therefore characterized by both authority and proximity, rather than by unilateral control. This interpretation is consistent with Hargreaves' (2001) concept of political geography, which concerns the proximity and distance produced through perceptions of power, authority, and freedom.

The participants' experiences show that these relations were not fixed: the degree of authority experienced by PSTs varied according to the way mentor teachers delegated responsibilities, provided guidance, allowed consultation, and responded to their needs. At the same time, PSTs negotiated their position by seeking guidance, fulfilling institutional expectations, and gradually exercising greater professional agency. Thus, the political geography of the teaching internship emerged through the interaction between institutional authority and PST agency, shaping how participants participated in school practices and developed their professional identities.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "I must Arrive at School Promptly on all Days, even if there is no Schedule"

Another political geography experienced by the EFL pre-service teachers concerned school norms and institutional regulations. The school rules required them to follow specific routines, including attending school every day, arriving before 7:00 a.m., and completing attendance requirements. These regulations positioned the PSTs within the authority structure of their placement schools and required them to adjust their routines and practices. Haris explained that attending school every day, even when he did not have a teaching schedule, was difficult for him:

> *"Apart from cultural differences, I also felt a little difficulty with the school rules, which required EFL pre-service teachers to come to school always even though they did not have a teaching schedule. I felt very tired because every Monday to Friday, from morning to evening, I kept doing the same activities and it was quite tiring… (Haris' reflection)*

He also described the requirement to arrive before 7:00 a.m.:

> *"For the influence of school policies or regulations, which influenced my teaching practices, such as the rule of coming to school very early before the gate closed, before 7.00 a.m. …" (Haris' interview on March 6, 2024, at 7.18 p.m)*

These statements show that school regulations structured Haris's daily participation in the internship. Although he found the routine tiring, he adjusted his daily activities to comply with the school schedule. Haris further explained:

> *"In my opinion, there was absolutely no problem with the distance between the school and where I lived, but the problem was the school time rules. We had to arrive on time. That was a bit of a problem for me because at this school the students were late at 7 o'clock. So before 7 o'clock, we had to be on standby at school. Personally, in my*

opinion, it made me less comfortable because I had to advance some of my activities earlier before going to school …" (Haris' interview on March 6, 2024, at 7.18 p.m)

Although the distance was not his main concern, the school's time regulation required him to reorganize his morning routine. His compliance is further shown in his reflection:

"Since I always obeyed the rules of the place I visited, I did not find it difficult at all to comply with the existing regulations. For example, the school wanted us to come early and go home according to the students' home time... then the school also wanted us to come every day and fill in the absences. I also obeyed this without feeling burdened." (Haris' reflection)

This evidence indicates that Haris responded to institutional authority through compliance and adjustment. His experience illustrates the political geography of the internship because his freedom to organize his participation was shaped by school regulations. Herni also described the difference between her university routine and the school schedule:

"Yes, regarding the different rules there, usually on campus we had lectures at 8 o'clock, and at school before 7 o'clock during the second FTP, we always woke up early and prepared food to take to school …" (Hernis' reflection)

She further explained:

"The distance might be quite far, but it could not be helped, but it has been placed. I thought we were still better compared to friends at other schools, some of whom were further away... Estimated to take 20 minutes to get to school. Then, in this second FTP, discipline was very important, and we always tried to wake up early and make breakfast." (Herni's interview on March 5, 2024, at 9.22 a.m)

These statements indicate that Herni adjusted her daily routine to meet the school's expectations. Although the school routine was different from her university experience, she accepted the requirement and developed a new routine of waking up early and preparing food before going to school. Her response demonstrates adaptation to institutional expectations rather than control over the schedule. Selin similarly identified the school arrival time as a challenge:

"In my opinion, the difficulty was in the rules, namely the rules for coming to school, so we were required to arrive before 7 o'clock. Then, I think that was very difficult because we had to get up at 5:30 in the morning and had to arrive on time …" (Selin's reflection)

She also mentioned the distance and transportation costs:

> *"I did not like such long distances because they were very expensive. I went there by motorbike. I wanted a school that was close by." (Selin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 7.36 a.m.)*

Despite these difficulties, Selin stated:

> *"For me, I always obeyed the rules at school, such as coming to school on time". (Selin's reflection)*

The evidence shows that Selin experienced the school regulations as restrictive to her preferred routine, but she still complied with them. This reflects her positioning as a PST who had to respond to the expectations of the placement school. In this sense, professional positioning is partly shaped by the position and expectations associated with the surrounding context (Lunenberg et al., 2018). Halfin also experienced the daily attendance requirement as a challenge:

> *"I was happy because my favorite school, a superior school, had its pride. However, it became a challenge because I knew the demands of the school, such as having to come every day even though I did not have a teaching schedule ..." (Halfin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 8.06 p.m)*

The distance between his home and school created another challenge:

> *"The distance between the placement school and my house was very far. Even that was a very long distance to come every day for 45 days. Since I wanted to save on petrol costs, I decided to look for a boarding house near the school so I could be close to the school area." (Halfin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 8.06 p.m)*

Rather than avoiding the school requirement, Halfin responded by changing his living arrangement and renting a boarding house closer to the school. This demonstrates how institutional regulations influenced his decisions beyond the classroom. His action can be understood as agency exercised within institutional constraints. Defin also confirmed the requirement to attend school every day:

> *"… Moreover, the school required us to come to school every day. We even created our absences to comply with school rules or policies ..." (Defin's reflection)*

She explained that she was able to follow the school schedule:

> *"The distance to school was not too far. Yes, if I wanted to say from another school, to be honest, my school was the closest, and I had a motorbike. Moreover, at school, we had to come home in the morning and back home based on the school time unless there were things beyond our control, such as illness, then we could ask for permission.*

> *Well, if I am late, Alhamdulillah, I was never late. I attended according to the existing schedule." (Defin's interview on March 8, 2024, at 7.59 p.m)*

Defin's account shows that following the school schedule became part of her participation as an EFL PST. Her regular attendance and punctuality demonstrate how she adapted her behavior to the institutional expectations of School B.

Across the participants, the evidence shows that school regulations shaped the PSTs' participation and daily practices during the teaching internship. The requirements to attend school daily, arrive early, and follow school schedules limited their freedom to determine their own routines. This corresponds to Hargreaves' (2001) concept of political geography, which concerns relationships shaped by differences in power, authority, and freedom of action. Armenta (2023) noted that teachers may not always agree with school authorities' decisions while having limited influence over them, while Ball (1993) described teachers as being embedded within institutional power relations that shape their practices. In this study, however, the PSTs responded to these regulations through different forms of adaptation, including reorganizing their routines, complying with attendance requirements, waking earlier, and changing their accommodation. Thus, the political geography of the teaching internship was evident in the interaction between school authority and PST agency.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "My Mentor-teacher Controlled Me"

Another political-geographical feature of the teaching internship was the authority exercised by mentor teachers over the pre-service teachers' daily activities and teaching practices. The evidence shows that mentor teachers did not only supervise teaching but also determined when PSTs could leave school, how teaching modules were implemented, and how classroom teaching was monitored. These practices created different degrees of autonomy and dependence in the PSTs' relationships with their mentors. Defin described a new rule that allowed the PSTs to leave school earlier when they had completed their responsibilities:

> *"... The new rule that I discovered is that we can be allowed to go home at 12.00 if the mentor permitted, we could be allowed to go home first if the mentor allowed, and there was nothing that needed to be done at school". (Defin's reflection)*

She also explained that the school normally implemented a full-day schedule:

> *"To be honest, we spent more time discussing because our school had set a full day schooling from morning until afternoon, and we had to follow that rule". (Defin's interview on March 8, 2024, at 7.59 p.m)*

The evidence indicates that Defin could not independently determine when to leave school. Permission from the mentor teacher was required, even when she had completed her teaching responsibilities. Field observations further showed that after

teaching, the PSTs usually returned to the designated pre-service teacher space in the school laboratory when they had no other responsibilities. At the beginning of the internship, they had limited places to rest and sometimes used the school prayer room.

The observations also showed that the PSTs often waited for one another before leaving school. Thus, although the mentor teacher provided some flexibility regarding home time, the PSTs remained subject to the school schedule and mentor's permission. This illustrates a political relationship in which the mentor teacher had greater authority to determine the PSTs' participation and movement within the school. Mentor authority was also evident in the way Halfin experienced the use of teaching modules. He stated:

> *"50% of us were cared for in the sense that our teaching module controlled us, how we taught. Then 50% of the time, we were freed to explore our way of teaching or our teaching techniques. So, it was balanced." (Halfin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 8.06 p.m)*

Halfin's statement indicates that his teaching was partly structured by the teaching module and the mentor's expectations, while he retained some opportunity to explore his own teaching techniques. Thus, his experience was not characterized by complete control or complete freedom. Instead, his pedagogical autonomy was negotiated within the boundaries established by the mentor and the school. Mentor authority was particularly visible in Selin's classroom teaching. She explained:

> *"I think it controlled me because every time I came to teach, my mentor always came in and monitored the class until it finished. I felt nervous every time I taught because she was always monitoring me. So sometimes I often forgot what I had to say." (Selin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 7.36 a.m)*

The field notes also indicated that the mentor regularly observed Selin from the side of the classroom. The continuous presence of the mentor affected how freely Selin expressed herself during teaching. Therefore, although she was given the opportunity to teach, her classroom autonomy was exercised under continuous supervision. The evidence illustrates how mentor authority could shape not only what PSTs did but also the conditions under which they performed their teaching.

These findings are consistent with Misdi et al. (2020), who reported that a student teacher, Prili, experienced strong expectations to follow regulations and mentor instructions within the school environment. Such experiences demonstrate how PSTs are positioned within professional relationships involving different levels of authority and responsibility. In the present study, the mentor teachers similarly occupied a position that allowed them to regulate PSTs' activities, while the PSTs negotiated their participation within those boundaries.

The findings can also be understood through Hargreaves' (2001) concept of political geography, which focuses on how relationships are shaped by differences in power, authority, and freedom. Defin's need to obtain permission before leaving

school, Halfin's negotiated freedom in using teaching modules, and Selin's continuous classroom supervision demonstrate different forms of authority exercised by mentor teachers. At the same time, the PSTs were not completely without agency. They continued to teach, adapt their practices, and work within the conditions established by their mentors. Thus, the political geography of the teaching internship involved a continuous negotiation between mentor authority and PST autonomy.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "I Need to Enter My Collagues' Class Expectedly"

Another political-geographical experience emerged when PSTs had to respond to unexpected responsibilities created by their colleagues' absence. Such situations required them to negotiate their roles and responsibilities within the teaching internship and respond to expectations from both colleagues and mentor teachers. Herni described an unexpected situation in which a colleague was unable to attend class:

> *"… but they were unable to attend, and they did not inform us in the WhatsApp group, and that made us confused because when teaching and not having preparation, it would be very difficult …". (Herni's Reflection)*

Herni had to substitute for her colleague despite having little time to prepare for the lesson. The absence had not been communicated through the WhatsApp group, leaving her uncertain about the situation before entering the class. Nevertheless, she took responsibility for the class and maintained the teaching activity. This shows how her role as a PST could extend beyond her initially assigned teaching responsibilities when circumstances required it. The situation also illustrates the influence of professional expectations within the school context. Herni had to respond to an unexpected absence rather than simply remain within her predetermined responsibilities. In this sense, her action can be understood as a form of agency exercised within the institutional and collegial expectations of the teaching internship. Rather than refusing the additional responsibility, she adapted to the situation and continued the teaching process.

The experience also provided an opportunity for Herni to develop her ability to respond to unexpected classroom situations. This is relevant to the preparation of teachers because effective EFL teaching requires careful consideration of learners' needs, curriculum, teaching scenarios, technology, and other contextual factors (Kusriandi et al., 2022). Similarly, Herdiawan et al. (2023) found that varied teaching experiences can provide PSTs with opportunities to develop professional competence. From the perspective of political geography, however, the important issue is not simply that Herni experienced difficulty, but that her position as a PST required her to respond to responsibilities beyond her original preparation. Her experience demonstrates how professional roles and expectations can be negotiated among PSTs within the school setting. Thus, political geography was evident not only through

formal mentor authority but also through collegial expectations, shared responsibilities, and PST agency in responding to unexpected situations.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "Entering teacher's class to fill their schedule"

Another form of political geography emerged when PSTs were unexpectedly asked by other teachers to take over classes. These situations placed them in a position where they had to respond to requests from teachers while having limited time to prepare. The evidence shows how the PSTs negotiated additional responsibilities within the authority relations of the school. Defin explained that she communicated with her mentor and colleagues before teaching, but sometimes received teaching assignments unexpectedly:

> *"… I also communicated with the mentor teacher and other colleagues before entering class to ensure my planned preparations were safe. However, sometimes some teachers directed teaching suddenly, which made me teach without preparation ..." (Defin's reflection)*

The unexpected directions meant that Defin sometimes had to enter a class without sufficient preparation. Her account shows that the teacher who assigned the class had greater control over the immediate teaching arrangement, while Defin had to adjust her plans to respond to the request. This illustrates how her teaching responsibilities could be determined by other teachers within the school hierarchy.

Herni similarly explained that she could be assigned to other classes when teachers were absent:

> *"I have taught in various classes, but I focused more on class VII and classes VIII and IX. It was possible that if a teacher were absent, we would be asked to change." (Herni's interview on March 5, 2024, at 9.22 a.m)*

> *"… However, in other classes other teachers entrusted without preparation and as they were because they were suddenly asked to do so." (Herni's interview on March 5, 2024, at 9.22 a.m.)*

These accounts indicate that Herni's teaching responsibilities were not always limited to the classes she had initially prepared for. When another teacher was absent, she could be asked to take over without prior preparation. As a PST, she had limited authority to determine whether to accept such requests, particularly because she occupied a less authoritative position within the school. The experience illustrates the negotiation of professional boundaries during the teaching internship. The PSTs were expected to respond to requests from teachers even when those requests differed from their planned responsibilities. This is consistent with Misdi et al. (2020), who found that PSTs may experience difficulties when responding to requests from mentor or school teachers because of the unequal positions within the school environment. Their

study illustrates how school-based relationships can involve expectations that PSTs must accommodate.

From the perspective of Hargreaves' (2001) political geography, these situations demonstrate how differences in authority influence PSTs' freedom to make decisions about their teaching activities. Defin and Herni could prepare their own lessons under normal circumstances, but their autonomy was reduced when teachers unexpectedly assigned them to other classes. Therefore, the political geography of the teaching internship was also evident in the negotiation of responsibilities between PSTs and school teachers, particularly when institutional roles and authority shaped what PSTs were expected to do.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "I Had Reported My Students"

The second sub-theme concerns the political dimension experienced by Defin when negotiating authority and student behavior in the classroom. Her experience shows that classroom authority was not always automatically recognized by students. When her own authority was insufficient to address student behavior, she relied on the authority of school personnel and experienced teachers. Defin explained that she responded directly when students did not respect her authority as a teacher:

> *"…. However, I did not let it go or did not care, but I reprimanded it to remind the students that they should not behave like that. I even reported it to the Deputy Head of Curriculum, so I took action according to their level of respect. If we could not take care of it ourselves, we reported it to the school." (Defin's interview on March 8, 2024, at 7.59 p.m)*

The evidence shows that Defin initially exercised her own authority by reprimanding the students. However, when the situation exceeded what she could manage herself, she referred the matter to the Deputy Head of Curriculum. This indicates that her authority as a PST was situated within a wider school hierarchy. Rather than acting independently, she recognized the authority of the school administrator and used the existing institutional structure to address the problem. Defin also discussed student behavior with a teacher who was familiar with the class:

> *"Well, for other classes, there are also things that I discussed with the teachers, like Mr. Musrin. I also had a discussion with him regarding class VIII, which I was in when he gave me his learning hours. So, I discussed the students, some students did not understand, and he said that there were students like that who did not want to understand, and there were those who wanted to understand. So, if it was for his consideration, he reprimanded him directly ..." (Defin's interview on March 8, 2024, at 7.59 p.m)*

This evidence indicates that Defin also relied on the authority and experience of the classroom teacher when dealing with students. The teacher's familiarity with the students enabled him to identify their different characteristics and respond directly

to their behavior. Defin therefore positioned herself within a professional relationship in which the colleague teacher had greater contextual authority over the students. These experiences demonstrate that Defin's classroom authority was negotiated rather than absolute. She could reprimand students and make decisions about classroom management, but she also depended on administrators and experienced teachers when student behavior exceeded what she could manage. This reflects the political dimension of teaching internship relationships, in which power structures shape interactions and practices (Liu, 2016, p. 1). In Defin's case, authority operated at several levels: student–PST, PST–teacher, and PST–school administrator. Her experience therefore illustrates how pre-service teachers develop their professional positioning while operating within an established hierarchy of authority.

Political Geographies Dimensions: "Following the school's rules"

Throughout the second teaching internship, the EFL pre-service teachers were expected to follow the norms and policies of their placement schools. These regulations extended beyond teaching responsibilities and included expectations concerning personal appearance and student–teacher relationships. Halfin's experience illustrates how school regulations shaped his positioning as a pre-service teacher. Halfin explained that he was reprimanded because his hair did not meet the school's regulation:

> *"I was once reprimanded because my hair size did not comply with school rules. My hair was 5 cm long, while school required only 3 cm, so I felt disciplined about this. Then there were no students who disobeyed their teachers, including when I taught, because school rules require respecting teachers or interns whether they liked it or not. They could show their displeasure by frowning or asking to leave for a moment. Therefore, I think it was very helpful for my practice to discipline students." (Halfin's interview on March 5, 2024, at 8.06 p.m)*

The evidence shows that Halfin had to adjust his personal appearance to meet the school's established regulations. His statement also indicates that the school's authority extended to students' expected treatment of teachers and PSTs. Thus, the school norms shaped not only how Halfin presented himself but also the classroom environment in which he exercised his teaching role. Halfin responded to the regulation by accepting the requirement and viewing it as part of becoming more disciplined. His response demonstrates adaptation to institutional expectations rather than resistance to them. In political-geographical terms, the experience illustrates how the placement school established boundaries of acceptable conduct and how the PST negotiated his position within those boundaries.

This finding is consistent with the view that teachers' experiences are shaped by the institutional and sociocultural contexts in which they work, as different educational settings may involve different expectations and forms of regulation (Apriliyanti et al., 2021). In this study, however, the important political-geographical

feature is the relationship between institutional rules and PST agency: the school established the norms, while Halfin responded by adjusting his conduct and incorporating those expectations into his professional practice.

Conclusion

This study found that EFL pre-service teachers' political geographies during teaching internships were shaped by institutional expectations, authority, professional boundaries, and autonomy. School rules, mentor supervision, teaching assignments, and administrative demands structured their participation, while PSTs negotiated these expectations through adaptation, consultation, and professional decision-making. Thus, their experiences reflected an ongoing relationship between school authority and PST agency. The findings extend Hargreaves' concept of political geography by showing how power relations operate through everyday interactions within schools. Practically, schools and teacher education programs should provide clear expectations, appropriate mentoring, and opportunities for PSTs to develop professional autonomy. The study was limited by its small, context-specific sample and focus on PST perspectives; future research could include mentor teachers, administrators, and students across different school contexts.

References

Abdillah, M. G., & Fithriani, R. (2023). Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers' experiences: Revealing English instructional challenges during teaching practice. *REiLA: Journal of Research and Innovation in Language, 5*(1), 32-47. https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.v5i1.13228

Adebola, O. O. (2022). Pre-service tachers experiences during teaching practice in South Africa: Challenges and solutions. *Journal of Education, Teaching, and Learning, 7*(1), 66-72.

Anthonia, O. I. (2014). Micro-teaching: A technique for effective teaching. *African Research Review, 8*(4), 183-197. https://doi.org/10.4314/afrrev.v8i4.15

Apriliyanti, R., Hidayati, A. N., Supriyono, Y., & Abdullah, F. (2021). 'Another place, another feeling': Narrating the emotional geography of an Indonesian English teacher. *J-SHMIC: Journal of English for Academic, 8*(2), 97–111. https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2021.vol8(2).7535

Armenta, Á. R. (2023). Emotional labor practices: A case study of EFL teachers in Mexico. *Mextesol Journal, 47*(1), 1–12.

Ball, S. J. (1993). Education policy, power relations and teachers' work. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 41*(2), 106-121. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.1993.9973954

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Applied qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-35913-1

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Hadi, A. (2019). Exploring preparation of pre-service teachers' English proficiency and pedagogy: Stories from an EFL teacher education program. *Qualitative Report, 24*(8), 1946–1966. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3771

Hamilton, E. R., & Margot, K. C. (2019). Preservice teachers' community-based field experiences. *Frontiers in Education, 4*(115), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00115

Hargreaves, A. (2001). Emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 1056–1080. https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00142

Imamyartha, D., Cahyono, B. Y., & Khotimah, K. (2023). The portraits of Indonesian pre-service English teachers' emotional geographies and coping strategies. *Teflin Journal, 34*(1), 60–78. https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v34i1/60-78

Isworo, C. E. (2016). Practice teachers' possible solutions to students' problems of Speaking during PPL in junior high schools. *LLT Journal, 19*(1), 12–18. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v19i1.308

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2014). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (fifth edit). Sage Publications.

Koc, B., & Ilya, A. (2016). Exploring pre-service language teachers perceptions and actual practices of giving feedback in micro-teaching. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 232*(2016), 421–429. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.058

Koross, R. (2016). The student teachers' experiences during teaching practice and its impact on their perception of the teaching profession. *IRA-International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies, 5*(2), 76–85. http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v5.n2.p3

Kusriandi, W., Mujianto, J., Fitriati, S. W., & Rukmini, D. (2022). Prepare prospective teachers to teach EFL through teaching ractice using technology. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6*(8), 3909–3921.

Liu, Y. (2016). The emotional geographies of language teaching. *Teacher Development, 20*(4), 482–497. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1161660 482–497.

Lunenberg, M., Dengerink, J., & Korthagen, F. (2018). *The professional teacher educator: Roles, behaviour, and professional development of teacher educators*. Sense Publishers.

Maharani, F., & Fithriani, R. (2023). Exploring challenges EFL pre-service teachers experience in teaching practicum: A transformative learning perspective. *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching, 7*(2), 173. https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v7i2.16305

Misdi, M., Rachmawaty, D., Hartini, N., Nurhadi, K., & Hendriwanto, H. (2020). The emotional geography of a female EFL pre-service teacher in teaching practicum: Voice from initial teacher education. *Langkawi: Journal of the Association for Arabic and English, 7*(1), 106–118. https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v7i1.2321

Mishra, L. (2016). Focus group discussion in qualitative research. *TechnoLearn: An International Journal of Educational Technology, 6*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-5223.2016.00001.2

Mudra, H. (2018). Pre-service EFL teachers' experiences in teaching practicum in rural schools in Indonesia. *Qualitative Report, 23*(2), 319–344. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3115

Mukeredzi, T. G., & Mandrona, A. R. (2013). The journey to becoming professionals: Student teachers' experiences of teaching practice in a rural South African context. *International Journal of Educational Research, 62*, 141–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2013.07.010

Orgovanyi-Gajdos, J. (2016). *Teachers' professional development on problem solving: Theory and practices for teachers and teacher educators*. Sense Publishers.

Pakpahan, E. M. (2023). Challenges faced by pre-Service teachers during teaching practicum. *International Journal of Educational Narratives, 1*(5), 258–263. https://doi.org/10.55849/ijen.v1i5.389

Rejeki, S., Kristina, D., & Drajati, N. A. (2018). Emotional geographies of an EFL teacher in Asmat, Papua: Male perspective. *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education, 2*(2), 113–121. https://doi.org/10.22437/ijolte.v2i2.5204

Reza, F., Rohmah, Z., & Abdullah, N. N. (2023). Challenges in implementing kurikulum Merdeka for EFL teachers. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies), 10*(2), 439–469. https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v10i2.1899

Saban, A., & Coklar, A. N. (2013). Pre-service teachers' opinions about the micro teaching method in teaching practice classes. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 12*(2), 234–240.

Sari, D. R. (2021). Rural EFL teachers' emotions and agency in online language teaching: I will survive. *Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning, 10*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.21580/vjv10i17727

Sumani, S., & Arifin, S. (2018). The EFL pre-services teachers' pedagogical competence based on the instructional approach. *International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2017), 145*, 203–207. https://doi.org/10.2991/iconelt-17.2018.45

Suryani, F. B., Rukmini, D., Bharati, D. A. L., & Hartono, R. (2018). Promoting EFL student teachers' life-long learning through microteaching lesson study. *Celt: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature, 18*(2), 266–281. https://doi.org/10.24167/celt.v18i1.1212

Ubaidillah, M. F., Sudarwati, E., Suryati, N., & Namaziandost, E. (2023). "At times, I feel I'm talking to myself": An EFL teacher's emotional geographies in emergency remote teaching. *Issues in Educational Research, 33*(2), 821 838.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Zain, D. S. M. (2023). How does emergency remote learning affect the future career readiness of Indonesian EFL preservice teachers? *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 22*(3), 74–92. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.3.5

Zein, S. (2014). Pre-service education for primary school English teachers in Indonesia: policy implications. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36*(1), 119 134. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.961899

Zhang, L. J., Fathi, J., & Mohammaddokht, F. (2023). Predicting teaching enjoyment from teachers' perceived school climate, self-efficacy, and psychological wellbeing at work: EFL teachers. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 130*(5), 2269–2299. https://doi.org/10.1177/00315125231182269

Zhao, H., & Zhang, X. (2017). The influence of field teaching practice on pre service teachers' professional identity: A mixed methods study. *Frontiers in Physiology, 8*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01264

Zhu, G. (2017). Chinese student teachers' perspectives on becoming a teacher in the practicum: Emotional and ethical dimensions of identity shaping. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 43*(4), 491–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2017.1341162