

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: INDONESIA- MALAYSIA RELATIONS

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Abstract: Cultural diplomacy is part of soft power that brings the idea of culture at its best presentation abroad. This paper focuses on the cultural diplomacy imposed by the government of Indonesia and Malaysia. This study is written to identify the role of cultural diplomacy in building up the cordial relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia proven by the long diplomatic history way before the independence of Malaya in 1957. In conjunction of that matter this research paper sought to evaluate the cultural relations between Indonesia and Malaysia and then raises several cultural diplomacy programs that have been conducted by the two countries in educations, performing arts and literature. This research is a qualitative study proven by analysing the printed and digital materials as the secondary data and bringing the constructivism concept from Alexander Wendt. The concept that introduced by Alexander Wendt can explain the unprecedented condition in international relations. Having analysed the data, this study found that by enhancing the cultural diplomacy as the soft power approach in each country is able to give a good impact for Indonesia and Malaysia relations especially in reducing the tensions among the society over several societal issues in the past. It can be seen from the number of students who are coming to Malaysia and Indonesia to continue their study, the number of tourist every year and also the frequency of performing arts of Indonesia in Malaysia and vice versa.

Key Words: Constructivism, Cultural Diplomacy, Indonesia, Malaysia, Soft Power

Introduction

Diplomacy plays an important role as the mainstay and the core process of relations among nations in achieving national interest, the process of strengthening relationships, effectively begins with the establishment of a diplomatic mission in another country (Nye, 2004). Thereafter it is followed with diplomats being exchanged which paves the way for diplomacy to be used as the mean through which nations begin to develop their relations. This paper is precisely looking at cultural diplomacy as the way Indonesia and Malaysia maintain their relationship even before the independence of Malaysia.

Culture is very broad in its form where it allows another state to imitate and be inspired by one culture or willing to voluntarily do such cultural activities. All those soft power are identified to have the similarity of symbolic resources. Furthermore, there is no proof that all those five components would have the source from the military means, weapons, and financial resources and so on instead promoting the use of education, culture, ideas, images, theories, know-how and also the global symbol. In Nye's concept of soft power, it is clearly determined that as long as there is no violence and coerce, that power is regarded as soft power.

According to Jessica (2013), cultural diplomacy is slightly different from other kinds of diplomacy in which interactions are no longer between government to government, despite government to foreign populations. In this current situation, cultural diplomacy often denotes a national foreign policy designed to support the export of representative samples of the nation's culture in order to further the objectives of foreign policy.

Furthermore, cultural diplomacy attempts to manage the international environment by making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas as well as the facilitation of cultural transmissions abroad. In this landscape, it can be concluded that the scope of cultural diplomacy is very broad entailing many forms of cultural recognition between nations and cultures. Many but not all of which are mediated in some way by states so that they can manage the international environment (Isar, 2010). By maximizing the concept of cultural diplomacy, it is believed that it can increase the harmony of the international non-state actors among nations. More precisely, cultural diplomacy acts as the medium to resolve the tension between Indonesia and Malaysia relations and the impression of both nations in order to maintain each state's sovereignty. This research is made to preview various kinds of the program made by Indonesia and Malaysia government in education and tourism sector.

In this 21st century, the use of hard power is no longer applicable so that the country needs to find some other ways that are comparable with hard power but in a different approach. Moreover, nowadays the film, dance, artworks, and literature are more attractive to the world, despite the political differences. As the world is facing the erosion of the trust towards other nation in the international community, this cultural approach will be the most suitable way of shaping the world's opinion. This is just the matter of culture.

The concept of soft power may gain the success and the failure of its practice. For the success example is from the soft power goal by 'China's recent introduction of peaceful rising or development and the harmonious world'. This slogan combination creates the policy proposal and public diplomacy that can minimize the threatening image through a peaceful image so that the country can easily penetrate the international community as a new transformed member.

The most cost-effective way of exerting soft power is to produce the long-term cooperation by creating the social habits among recipients. To practice, the society also needs quite a long time but yet very worth to try. This similar pattern is suggested to be applied so that there will be no additional efforts which are necessary to be done. This framework can be explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Conversion process of soft power.

Sources	Cause	Effect	Sustainability
The use of soft power resources such as images, values, cultures	Fear	Coercive power	-
	Attractiveness, safety, calm, comfortable, and respect	Cooperative power	Through socialization to form the social habits

Source: Adapted from Lee (2009)

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section two discusses the literature review related to cultural diplomacy. The discussion is focusing on the cultural impact as the way of tighten the relationship between states. In part three of the paper the researcher explains the research methodology of the research. While in chapter four the researcher explain on the findings of the study followed by the overall conclusion in the last part of the paper.

Literature Review

A number of previous study has been conducted on this discipline comprising the variety of issues and programs in cultural diplomacy. To provide a clear discussion in this part of the paper the researcher will analyse the long history of Indonesia-Malaysia bilateral relations even before the independence of Malaysia followed by elaborating the concept of constructivism by Alexander Wendt. Further, the researcher also investigate the previous study that has been conducted by various scholars in regards to Indonesia-Malaysia relations in order to find the gap of the research.

In the year 1293-1500, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and South Thailand were under Majapahit Empire (Hall, 1956). Majapahit was known as the last Hindu-Budha empires and acknowledged as the most powerful empire at that time especially in South East region (Cribb, 2010). That is the reason that makes Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have a lot in common especially in terms of cultures due to the influence of the Majapahit Empire. Malaysia and Indonesia were apart due to the influence of colonialism where Indonesia was under the colonization of Dutch and Malaysia were under the British.

By looking at the formal perspective, Indonesia and Malaysia have engaged 60 years of diplomatic relations in the year 2017 since 1957. Even though that particular time is considered as short, the dynamics of the relationship has been filled by a lot of issues.

That condition has made Indonesia disregard this bilateral relationship as the ordinary one because it involves historical background, political factors, economics and also social-cultural perspectives.

Far behind, the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia has been regarded as important. This will be supported by the word *serumpun* which means bonded with the similar cultural background, geographical factor, and historical background. The cultural relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia has been regarded as important. It gives the perspectives on how important the meaning of *serumpun* is to define the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. The consequence is that the Indonesian government does not give the baseline of *serumpun* to enforce the foreign policy because the diversity of Indonesia archipelago cannot be limited to the Malays root itself (Bantarto, 1994).

The bilateral relations between Indonesia-Malaysia since the independence of Indonesia can be divided into three stages. The first stage was during President Soekarno where most of his foreign policy is to confront Malaysia because he adopted the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. The reason because Malaysia was under the power of British who tried to expand its area of colonization in Southeast Asia region. That's why the propaganda of "*Ganyang Malaysia*" was established during Soekarno term. For the second stage was during the Soeharto era. This was the totally different environment. Indonesia regards Malaysia as a strategic partner because it can bridge Indonesia to the several western power such as Great Britain, Australia, and the United States of America. As a result, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Philippines was united as one to form the regional organization called Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Besides that, the last stage of both relationships between Indonesia and Malaysia was during the Reformation era. This era was the critical relations between Indonesia and Malaysia where many disputes and clashes happened. Border issue has become a great concern of the Indonesian and Malaysian government (Mohd Noor, 2011).

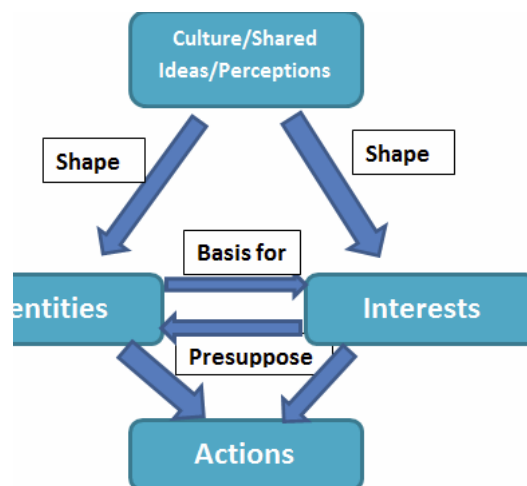
Although the word of confrontations is endlessly raised, many commentators have preferred to highlight another crucial problem such as mistreatment of Indonesian worker in Malaysia. This has marked the multi-layered unpleasant relationships between Indonesia and Malaysia but there must be some way out to tighten both relationships through the use of soft diplomacy. The government to government approach is seen as the traditional steps to penetrate each other's culture but the use of second track diplomacy actor has found as the best way of doing it.

Diplomacy and international law are two keys to be enforced by the countries that build international relations. In the practice of International Relations, International Law helps to set the boundaries for the states to obey certain rules so that the stability in the international arena can be felt. Additionally, the importance of diplomacy is certainly to maintain the balance of power and the peaceful structure in this modern world (Roy, 1991). To achieve their own interest, the country has to perform the competition among nations and often a country willing to pursue more than one interest. The interest is somehow the national interest and many of the cases have caused clash among nations due to different objectives. Therefore, diplomacy is the way to manage the process of pursuing their national interest through peaceful means of negotiation.

In international relations, the Constructivism gives a significant contribution due to its intersubjective perception and shared understandings (Shannon & Kowert, 2011). The social dynamics marked by the development of technology discovery, advanced transportation and communication have successfully changed the social structure of international relations. The idea of Wendt in his book *Social Theory of International Relations* believes that the structure of human association is determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces and the identities, thus the shared idea is naturally formed through interaction and socialization.

Through this concept, it can be seen that the national interest of Indonesia to Malaysia and vice versa has been changing along the way. As noted by Wendt in his book *Social Theory of International Politics* that the national interest is include life, liberty, and property (namely survival, autonomy and economic well-being). Those three elements will then lead to the fourth interest which is collective self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the good feeling of each state actor about themselves for respect or status. Thus the prestige of the country is not merely on the military ownership and other materials but rather on the collective identity. By having that aspect of interest the country will feel safe and ready to set the foreign policy. The concept of constructivism is also required the scale priority on which aspect do they want to focus first. In the context of Indonesia and Malaysia relations, the economic well-being is focusing the most.

Figure 1 : Wendt's theorization on culture, identity, interest, and action



The topic of this research has been discussed by various scholars especially from the international relations discipline as Indonesia and Malaysia has been regarded as the controversial neighbourhood due to their cultural similarity. Thus Constructivist on comes in place to explain the social dimension in various perspective. The strategy of constructivism is far from the materialist explanation rather close to the factor that shapes the mind-set of the decision makers towards the societal changes that exist. The cultural diplomacy back then in the year 1950's is totally different with the cultural diplomacy that is applicable to the year 2010 and above.

Among the scholars that have discussed this topic is Ho Ying Chan (2016) from Malaysia wrote a qualitative research to examine the concept of the special relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. From that research, it is found that Indonesia-Malaysia relations, as a special relationship, produce double-edged effects, that of substantial cooperation and substantial conflicts, between the two states. Meanwhile, the Indonesia-Malaysia Special Relationship, like other special relationships, constitutes a security regime, which means the two states are committed to avoiding war between them. Because of this commitment, the substantial conflicts between Indonesia and Malaysia will not easily become violent ones.

The scholar from Indonesia Mestika Zed (2015) is also doing the qualitative research in order to discuss the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia in the perspective of culture especially in the light of the spirit of a kinship-relation of *Melayu Nusantara*. From the research, the writer found that Indonesia and Malaysia relation is facing the challenges

due to the global political changes which cultural similarity is no longer regarded but what matter is the national interest.

From another scholar Marshall Clark (2013) was interested to examine two of the most prominent bilateral spats in terms of this ongoing politicization of cultural heritage: (1) the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games held in Jakarta and Palembang in 2011; and (2) UNESCO's awarding of batik as a distinctly Indonesian form of intangible cultural heritage. From that research, the writer found that Indonesia and Malaysia bilateral ties over the last decade have been marked by rivalry, acrimony, and conflict. Key issues include Malaysia's cavalier treatment of Indonesian foreign workers and various border or territorial disputes. Underlying these tensions is a low-level dispute over shared Indo-Malay cultural heritage and art forms, which increasingly overshadows all other aspects of the bilateral relationship.

However, this research sees the gap among the above mentioned where the element of cultural programs applied by several government body has a significant impact for bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia and Malaysia is known has organized several cultural program that involved both government and non-government parties and it shows that cultural diplomacy has the significant impact in blending the foreign society.

Research Methodology

In order to provide a wide range explanation on the context of cultural diplomacy, this research is using the qualitative research method so that it can satisfy the objectives of the paper. The characteristics of qualitative research are most appropriate for small samples and the outcomes are not measurable and quantifiable. However, this method offers a complete description and analysis of research subject without limiting the scope of the research and nature of participant's responses (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In order to make sure the effectiveness of the qualitative research, it is important to be aware of the skills and ability of the researchers, while the outcomes may not be perceived as reliable because it mostly comes from the researcher's personal judgments and interpretations. Even though it is more appropriate for small samples, it is also risky for the results of qualitative research to be perceived as reflecting the opinions of a wider population (Bell, 2005). In the process of collecting qualitative data is more time consuming and less able to generalize with the researcher plays a role as the data gathering instrument.

In the process of collecting data, the researcher analyze the literature from journals, books and official government website as the secondary data. The analysis process of this research is collected by the researcher from online journals, books, articles and also government publications. As noted by Moore & McCabe (2005), this is the type of research whereby data gathered is categorized in themes and sub-themes, so as to be able to be comparable. One of the main positive outcomes of content analysis is that, is able to help in data collected being reduced and simplified, while at the same time producing results that may then measure using quantitative techniques. Moreover, the content analysis gives the ability to researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives. However, human error is highly involved in content analysis, since there is the risk for researchers to misinterpret the data gathered, thereby generating false and unreliable conclusions (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008).

Discussion

A. Findings

As far as the researcher is concerned, the cultural diplomacy has bunches of advantages if one country successfully promotes it in such a way as to be able to create the fundamental trust with other people in order to reach political and economic agreements. Not only that, cultural diplomacy helps the nations, in this case, Indonesia to demonstrate the values, interest and counter the violent and godless. Outside of the country, Indonesia has to put a lot of extra effort in reaching the influence in the foreign societies that cannot be reached through traditional embassy function. This approach is considered as the neutral platform for people-to-people contact and involving the young people, non-elites, to broad audiences with a much-reduced language barrier. In fact, the maximization of cultural diplomacy is able to counterbalance misunderstanding, hatred, and terrorism that has become the real enemy in this world without border area.

The love-hate relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia is often recognized along the journey of ASEAN as the united organization that unites both of the sovereign states. The peak of the relationship may influence the regional security that impacted the neighboring country such as Thailand and Philippine. Over the years, the leader of each country has figured out uncountable effort to fill the gap between the two states. Undeniably it was starting from constructing the sentimental society until finally resorting into a mutual understanding in cutting off the solution from the problems. It was not an easy

task as both countries have to deal with the diverse society with even diverse characteristics available in the field.

To a certain extent, for the country that has the intersected historical background found as a viable relationship. Two sovereign nation would have to share the common socio-cultural in the daily life. Despite uncountable claims and clashes, both Indonesia and Malaysia will remain as the blood brother that inseparable no matter how hard the negotiation is. Those issue in the past will certainly happen again in the future but due to the maturity of its 60 years of bilateral relations, it will create the problem-solving process. This paper attempts to unravel the tension that turns into romanticism in conducting the international politics.

The concept of international relations between Indonesia and Malaysia seems unpredictable as the dynamic is socially constructed and nobody could ever anticipate what the future issue could be. The constructivism theory has brought the view that the rational and obvious cause and effect in exploring the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia. In conjunction with that, the role of state's leader in neutralizing the sentiments among the societies through the bilateral negotiations in a peaceful means is beyond important. In contrast, there is a paucity of studies that focus predominantly on the bilateral dynamics in this relationship. Finally, this paper will make the reader realize that it has always been the bilateral edifice that lies at the heart of questions of regional security.

B. Conclusion

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