

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RUMAH BUDAYA

INDONESIA (RBI) IN SINGAPORE

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Abstract

Indonesia has much kind of diversities. As an archipelago country, there are a lot of cultures, languages, ethnic groups, beliefs, and so on. Although many different cultures and so on, Indonesia still become united, like one of the slogan which reads, “Bhineka Tunggal Ika”. The slogan itself told the people, although there’s a lot of a differences between the societies, they are still united. The cultural diversities itself was created because there are many kind of tribes and also ethnic groups in Indonesia. Not only because of the tribes and the ethnic groups, but also because of the geographic condition in Indonesia which have many islands that are separated. One of the heritages from Indonesia is the culture, such as traditional dances. There’s lot of traditional dances and it depends on which part on Indonesia is that or where is it came from. As the nation’s cultural heritage, traditional dances could become the identity of Indonesia and spread it through the international world. Traditional dances show the beautiful moves and also there’s a story behind the dances. The art of the dance itself could be the effective way to attract the international societies and reflect the peculiarities of Indonesia as a great nation uphold the diversity and also shows the value of the nation through friendship. This paper will analyze a program that is called as Rumah Budaya Indonesia in Singapore. It involves cultural diplomacy concept and also decision making-process as the instruments that is used to know the reasons why Indonesia built Rumah Budaya Indonesia in Singapore. First, this paper will explain the meaning of Indonesian cultures and why Indonesia needs to protect it.

Keywords:

Cultural Diplomacy, Decision-Making Process, Identity, Indonesia, Singapore, Bilateral Relation

Introduction

This paper will explain about the reason why Indonesia built and develop a program that is called as *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* in Singapore. *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* is considered as one of the strategies to protect Indonesian cultural heritages, because it is possible that Indonesian cultures become extinct or claimed by another states. Through *Rumah Budaya Indonesia*, Indonesian government could protect Indonesian cultural heritages and also introduce it to the other states, and it is one of the methods to promote Indonesia to the international society through cultural aspects, which means using diplomacy through cultures.

Rumah Budaya Indonesia (RBI) is a public space of cultural diplomacy which was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture of 10 countries including, East Timor, the United States, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, Germany, South Korea, France, Singapore, and Turkey. RBI in Foreign Countries program has a function to introduce Indonesian culture to the world in order to improve the image, and the appreciation of the international community to build cultural ties to Indonesia. Indonesian government chose a program that is called as “Rumah Budaya Indonesia (RBI)” as a means of soft diplomacy (Zuraya, 2014).

Rumah Budaya Indonesia (RBI) in Singapore has a purpose to introduce Indonesian cultures to Singapore citizens. To fulfill the purpose of the RBI, there are some programs that could support Indonesian government and also give some advantages to the international society and also to the Indonesian citizens who live in Singapore, the programs are:

A. Indonesian Culture Expression

This program is an activity to introduce about Indonesian cultural heritage to Singapore citizens. There is an exhibition for Indonesian Batik, wayang (Indonesian puppet) performances, Indonesian culinary exhibition, keris (ceremonial knives) exhibition, Traditional dances, Indonesian movies screening, and also Indonesian literary performances (Rumah Budaya Indonesia Singapura, 2015)-.

B. Indonesian Culture Learning

This program is an activity to conserve the heritage of Indonesian Cultures, like Batik, Indonesian culinary, traditional music, and also Indonesian language learning program (Rumah Budaya Indonesia Singapura).

C. Indonesian Culture Advocacy and Promotion

This program is an activity to talk about Indonesian Cultures and also a place to develop the image of Indonesia to the International society, especially Singaporean and also to the Indonesian citizens who lived overseas. This program also has a purpose to build recognition from International society and also a discussion about cultures and a challenge to develop the program of *Rumah Budaya Indonesia (RBI)* itself (Rumah Budaya Indonesia Singapura).

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The cultural wealth of Indonesia needs to be protected and also should be preserved by Indonesian government so that Indonesian cultural heritages doesn't need to meet the extinction. Indonesian cultures also need to be protected so that any other countries can't make any claims towards Indonesian cultures. As an example is when Indonesian government chose to make a patent through the UNESCO and made

batik as one of the Cultural heritage of the world (intangible heritage), which originally came from Indonesia. Before hand, there was also shadow puppet and *keris* as Intangible Cultural heritages of the world from Indonesia through UNESCO (Unix Project, 2015). One of the strategies is to introduce and also shows Indonesian cultures to the international world as a means of promotion and diplomacy.

To protect and maintaining the integrity of a nation, diplomacy is needed. Diplomatic power would be useful for a nation to protect its national security and also give an opportunity to build a better relation with other countries. On the other hand, although diplomacy could be used as an instrument for foreign policy, diplomacy also could be used to fulfill the purpose of a nation. In this globalization era, there are many ways to use diplomacy, not only use military forces to reach the goals. There is more power or there is another instrument that could be used as a means of diplomacy. Soft diplomacy is one of the instruments that could be used besides using military forces to fulfill a nation's purposes or to solve several issues in international relations field. Soft diplomacy itself means that it is use several values like cultural values and also moral values. At the end, Indonesia also using this kind of diplomacy to promote the state to the international society.

In the previous chapter, the writer has already explained about the definition and also the purpose of *Rumah Budaya Indonesia (RBI)* program that is to introduce Indonesian cultural heritages to the international community through the program. In this section, the writer would like to answer the research question on the previous section. To answer the question, the writer would like to analyze the topic and in order to do that, the writer would like to use several concepts that could answer the question.

The writer would like to use a concept that is called as cultural diplomacy, and it is also considered as a part of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is also shows the process to achieve national interest by influencing the foreign policy of a country. According to John Lenchowski, public diplomacy affects several aspects, and one of the aspects is the security aspect. Public diplomacy itself is a strategy to achieve national security of a state (Lenczovvski, 2011). Cultural diplomacy itself several aspects of culture as a tools by the government, including traditional arts as the tools of cultural diplomacy. The purpose of cultural diplomacy actually to build the mutual understanding between the society and also to build the image of a country to the international society and also give some positive values of a country.

Diplomacy is simply explained as the dialogue among states, and it is more precisely a dialogue between actors of a state. The word of diplomacy was originally came from the word of “diploma”, diploma itself was the letter of credence that certified an ambassador’s power to negotiate and serve as the direct representative of the sovereign in early modern Europe era. Diplomacy is defined specifically as an act of negotiation among accredited persons, not states as a whole.

Diplomacy is a relation between states with actors of international relations. From a state perspective, diplomacy is concerned with advising, shaping and implementing foreign policy of a country. As such it is the means by which countries through their formal and other representatives, as well as other actors, articulate, coordinate, and secure particular or wider interests, using correspondence, private talks, exchanges of view, lobbying, visits, threats, and other related activities (R.P., 1997).

The main purpose of cultural diplomacy is to persuade public opinion of foreign community so that it could give supports to certain

foreign policy. Public opinion that is used here is to affect the policy from the society that is related. General pattern that usually occurred in the cultural diplomacy is between societies (of a certain state) with society (other states) (Warsito & Kartikasari, 2007).

Cultural Heritage as Tools To Attract Singapore Citizens

Indonesia has much kind of diversities. As an archipelago, there are many kind of cultures, include languages, ethnic groups, beliefs, and many more. Although there is various kinds of cultures, Indonesia still become united, like one of the slogan, which is “*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*”. The slogan itself told the society that although there’s a lot of differences between societies, they are still become one, united. Cultural diversities itself was created, because there are many kind of tribes and ethnic groups in Indonesia. Not only because of tribes and ethnic groups, but also because of geographic conditions of Indonesia which has many islands that are separated.

The word of cultures itself defined as a thing that will affect the level knowledge, includes the system of ideas or the idea itself, which was located in human mind, and it is used to understand and interpret the environment, and used as the basis of their behavior. So that, culture is a sequence of rules, clues, plans, and also strategies, which were originated, came from human mind (Suparlan, 2008).

One of the strategies, which were done by Indonesian government to protect Indonesian traditional cultures, is made a list and assigns several traditional cultures to UNESCO (Suhilman, 2016). UNESCO also chose batik as one of the intangible heritages that are originally came from Indonesia. Before hand, UNESCO also chose shadow puppet and *keris* as the Intangible heritages from Indonesia (Unix Project, 2015).

Singapore is one of the nearest countries from Indonesia beside Malaysia and Brunei. It is also surrounded by Indonesian territory on the

West, south, and east, This country also flanked by Malaysia and Indonesia. Over the years, Indonesia and Singapore have been fostering the relationship of a State visit. This relationship is characterized by a strong economic cooperation. Over the past few years, Singapore has consistently been Indonesia's top foreign investor. Singapore and Indonesia also cooperate across a wide range of sectors, including health, defense and the environment (Singapore Government, 2016).

One of the approaches that have been done by Indonesian Embassy in Singapore through cultures was an event that was called Enchanting Indonesia on 18-19 of July 2009. There was many event that being held at that time, such as the promotion of Indonesian cultures, tourism field, Indonesian culinary, and also Traditional product that was offered on the event. Enchanting Indonesia was held in Civic Plaza, Ngee Ann City (Takashimaya) and more than 23.000 visitors that came on the event (Kementrian Luar Negeri).

On 2013, Indonesian Embassy in Singapura implement the proxy strategy to improve cultural promotion and chose the way of exploring the role of Indonesia in Singapore, and also optimize the cooperation with third parties in order to held an activity (Kementrian Luar Negeri).

On 2013, Indonesian Embassy in Singapore has already support , and facilitated several kind of activities which is related to Indonesian cultural promotion that was held by Indonesian citizens in Singapore, such as Indonesian Arts Festival, Gelar Budaya, Insight, NUANSA, and also Indonesian Cultural Night that was held by Indonesian students in Singapore.

On November 30, 2013 Rumah Budaya Indonesia was establish in Singapore. It is located in the School of Indonesia-Singapore, 20A Siglap Road, Singapore 455859. Similar with RBI building in other countries,

RBI in Singapore take a role as a center of Indonesian cultural diplomacy in Singapore through various exciting programs.

Rumah Budaya Indonesia In Singapore As the Result of Decision Making Process

Decision-making is a process to assess and determine an option. Simply put, the decision could be interpreted as the result of problem solving. In other words, the decision is a definitive answer to the question of what should be done. Furthermore, it could be said that the decision was the result of a tough process in the form of election of one of several alternatives that could be used to solve the problem. To understand why a country should behave accordance with their area of interests, people need to understand as well why or what is the background of the leader to make several decisions. Each foreign policy that is given could be seen as the result of three categories of considerations that influence the foreign policy of a state. First is the condition of domestic politics in the area, second is the economic or a military capability of a state, and the third is the international context (Coplin, 2003).

The condition of domestic politics during 2009-2014, although there was some issues about the political party that was related with the leader during that period. Indonesia's political condition during the period was stable enough rather than 5 years before, so that the president (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) on his second period chose to focus on the cultural development of the state as the strategy to develop the state based on his vision and mission during the period.

The program that is called *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* is program that was planned by Indonesian government in order to protect Indonesian cultures and promote the culture to the International society. The program itself was built, and Ministry of Education and Culture

Republic of Indonesia was chosen as the actor behind the program. There is also the supporter behind the program that was also considered as the actor or the decision maker, the first is Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia, the second is The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Singapore.

The reason why Indonesian government chose *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* program is also to manage the economic condition that was unstable during 2009-2014, in fact after achieving economic growth of 6.5 percent in 2011, and 6.23 percent in 2012, economic growth in 2013 was below 6 percent. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded economic growth in Indonesia during 2013 amounted to only 5.78 percent. The numbers are down compared to the whole 2013 by 6.23 percent (Kementrian Keuangan RI, 2014).

If the RBI program succeed, it is possible that there will be many tourists attracted to Indonesian cultures and decided to visit Indonesia, automatically there will be an improvement in the economic field.

Why Indonesian government chose Singapore as one of the country to develop the RBI program? Simply put, Singapore is considered as a port country that any kind of economic activities like trading from many countries was done in Singapore. Various kinds of tribes and ethnics groups was gathered in Singapore, so that it could be easier to spread and promote Indonesian culture in Singapore.

Conclusion

Rumah Budaya Indonesia in Singapore is considered as an important part of Indonesian cultural diplomacy. The reason why Indonesian government chose Singapore as one of the country to develop *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* is because Singapore considered as a port country because Singapore has a strategic location. Singapore is an international transport hub in Asia since it is located in a wide range of

sea and air trade routes. Because of those reasons, there are several countries that visit Singapore for business. Singapore is a country that prioritizes trade and is heavily dependent on exports and imports.

As an archipelago, Indonesia has much kind of cultures. Some of the culture was already approved by UNESCO, for example like batik, *keris*, and also shadow puppet, temples, and so on. Those cultures need to be protected and also preserved, so that those cultures still exist from time to time. One of the strategies is to build *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* that was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* was being planned to build in 10 countries, such as East Timor, United States, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, Germany, South Korea, France, Turkey, and also Singapore. This program is expected to introduce Indonesian cultures to the International community in order to improve the image and also appreciation of the International community to build cultural ties between countries. *Rumah Budaya Indonesia* also built as the instrument of Indonesian cultural diplomacy that is also part of public diplomacy.

Rumah Budaya Indonesia itself plays an important role as the Indonesian cultural diplomacy instrument. The program expected to implement 3 important role for Indonesia, that is expected to present Indonesian cultures in overseas to the International community, as a place to know and learn more about culture (cultural learning), and also as an important role to improve the image of Indonesia (Cultural empowerment toward global civilization). In *Rumah Budaya Indonesia*, domestic citizens of a country could learn more about Indonesia, including Indonesian histories, languages, and also various kinds of cultures.

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