

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the 21st century we live today, the use of hard power is increasingly highlighted by its limitations. States and experts nowadays have recognized the important role of soft power in solving multifaceted issues. According to Joseph S Nye, the concept of soft power is referred to the ability of a state to influence or shape preferences of other states through non-coercive means.¹ The sources of soft power are often called as intangible assets such as culture, political values, and foreign policy that have moral authority.² There are a range of tools used in the implementation of soft power, including education scholarship programs.

The use of scholarship programs is common in International Relations. As the world become more globalized, change in technology, and people interact more, the need for higher education is increasing. Thus, states have used scholarship programs as a tool of soft power to influence or shape preferences of other states and achieve something it wants to achieve towards other states

Singapore is one of the countries that has used scholarship programs as a tool of its soft power, named Singapore Scholarships. As a small country, it tend to build and maintain good relations in multilateral organisations such as the

¹ Reut Institute. Report. Reut Institute, 2007. Accessed September 10, 2020. <http://ezproxy.library.uph.edu:2056/stable/resrep10544>.

² Nye, Joseph S. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 94-109. Accessed September 10, 2020. <http://ezproxy.library.uph.edu:2056/stable/25097996>.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Thus, Singapore's foreign policy is focused on promoting good relations with neighbours in all spheres and supporting ASEAN. The Singapore Scholarship was launched in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998 to facilitate ASEAN students attain undergraduate degree with the expectation that they could contribute to their home countries's development. It is a bond-free scholarship which means that they allow the scholars to return to their home countries after finish the study. It covers several things, including full tuition, a living allowance, a return airflight, and accommodation fees with the targeted group ASEAN citizens. In 2009 news report, it is stated that 32 scholarships were granted that year.³

The scholarships have been into Singapore's annual program which indicates that the scholarship has been a part of its overall strategy in projecting soft power. It is believed that the scholarships will enhance Singapore's positive perception of foreigners. As the result, the intangible benefits which come from the intangible sources will arise such as future investments, future trade agreements, and word of mouth of the country.⁴ Thus, Singapore has used scholarships as its strategy in projecting soft power in the foreign policy.

Another example of country use scholarships as its soft power instrument is the European Union. EU is neither a state nor an international organisation but a unique economic and political partnership between european countries.⁵ The EU's

³ Charles Chia Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore," *EU Centre in Singapore* (March 2015).

⁴ Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore."

⁵ Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore."

foreign policy is to support stability, promote human rights and democracy, spread prosperity, and support the enforcement of the rule of law and good governance.⁶

The famous scholarship provided by the EU is the Erasmus Mundus scholarship program. The program was first started its first phase in 2004 and in 2014, the program was reorganised and now change into the new Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) is usually running for one to two years and the students should first be accepted in their chosen Master program. It is also the bond-free scholarships like Singapore Scholarships and covers full tuition fees, living allowance, and travel allowance with the targeted group any nationality. In 2013, there are almost 14.000 European and non-European students have been a part of the Erasmus Mundus program.⁷

The use of this scholarship program as a soft power is clearly seen by looking at its program objectives. In Article 3 of Decision 2317/2003/EC (2003) was written some of the objectives in which one of them is to promote a quality offer in higher education with a distinct European added value, attractive both within the European Union and beyond its borders.⁸ We can see that besides improving the quality, EU is also trying to improve the attractiveness of EU and European in general by allowing the students to live and experience the European values there. Thus, with these two examples of Singapore and EU, we can see of how countries project its soft power through scholarship programs.

⁶ Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore."

⁷ Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore."

⁸ Sheng-Kai, "Higher Education Scholarships as a Soft Power Tool: an Analysis of Its Role in the EU and Singapore."

The US also considers soft power is important where the importance of soft power tools such as scholarship programs has been increasing. The US has recognized the potential of scholarship as soft power to reach out international public. The most widely known among US scholarship programs is the Fulbright Program, an education exchange program between the US and other countries that give fully-funded grant. It consists of different types of grants awarded, including study abroad, graduate research abroad, language teaching assistantships, and others⁹

In 1992, since the end of the Vietnam War, the US for the first time offered Fulbright program for Vietnamese students to study in the United States.¹⁰ The US has used education and Fulbright scholarship program as a soft power strategy towards Vietnam since the two countries reestablish diplomatic relations. In 2013, they also endorsed the Fulbright University Program, an independent, private, and non-profit university inspired by the American education institution in which not under the control of the Communist Party of Vietnam.¹¹ The US government had committed about \$40 million toward the project and Vietnamese government had

⁹ Prachi Naik, “An Examination of the Fulbright Program,” last modified August 2012, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.scribd.com/document/102552266/An-Examination-of-the-Fulbright-Program>.

¹⁰ Barbara Crossette, “VIETNAMESE TO GET FULBRIGHT AWARDS,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, January 29, 1992), last modified January 29, 1992, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/29/world/vietnamese-to-get-fulbright-awards.html>.

¹¹ Mary Beth Marklein, “Fulbright University Vietnam – 'Put This War behind Us',” *University World News*, last modified July 16, 2016, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20160716065853277>.

donated a 25 hectares of rent-free land.¹² Thus, besides granting scholarships, the US also establish this Fulbright University Program as a soft power and a kind of commitment to rebuild diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The US also uses scholarship programs as a soft power instrument in Pakistan since both countries had uneasy alliances, resentment and anti-American sentiments among the people of Pakistan. Fulbright Program in Pakistan was begun in 1950 with the creation of United States Educational Foundation Pakistan (USEFP), a joint venture between the two countries government.¹³ The program's objective is to serve the US developmental and diplomatic goals and to support the higher education needs that set forth by the Pakistani government.¹⁴ The establishment of USEFP is expected to create an adequate education institution in Pakistan and also improve the image of the US and its interest to foster human development. It is believed that the lack of adequate education is contributing to the presence of terrorism.¹⁵

Other than those two countries that were previously mentioned, the US is also using scholarships as soft power's instrument towards Indonesia, a country which is positioned as the third largest democracy with largest Muslim-majority

¹² Isabelle Taft et al., "How a U.S.-Backed University in Vietnam Unleashed Old Demons," *POLITICO Magazine*, last modified February 4, 2018, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/04/how-a-us-backed-university-in-vietnam-unleashed-old-demons-216528>.

¹³ Saba Abbas, *International Educational Exchange Programs as a Modality of Public Diplomacy: An in-Depth Analysis of the Fulbright Pakistan Program*, (2015). 10.13140/RG.2.1.1889.8409.

¹⁴ Abbas, *International Educational Exchange Programs as a Modality of Public Diplomacy: An in-Depth Analysis of the Fulbright Pakistan Program*.

¹⁵ Lisa Curtis, "U.S. Aid to Pakistan: Countering Extremism Through Education Reform," last modified June 8, 2007, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/us-aid-pakistan-countering-extremism-through-education-reform>.

country in the world.¹⁶ According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the number of Indonesians go to tertiary education is not more than 40% which indicates that there are still a vast number of Indonesians do not get tertiary education. Furthermore, the current Muslim population in Indonesia is estimated around 207 million individuals.¹⁷ Since 9/11 attacks that happened in New York, the rise of radical Islamic group in Indonesia is becoming a concern and attention that would impact on the national security. The rise of the radical Islamic group is indicated by various terrorist attacks and the existence of terrorist networks in Indonesia.¹⁸ One of the notable terrorist attacks in Indonesia is on May 13th 2018, three churches in Surabaya were exploded that caused a vast number of people died and injured.¹⁹ This radical group is feared that they want to establish an Indonesian Islamic state and replace the democracy in Indonesia. Thus, the US has its attention towards Indonesia to protect the country's democracy through these scholarship programs. The education and scholarships are the two things that include and could play as source and instrument of US soft power towards Indonesia. Thus, this research paper would take a deep look at the US scholarship programs that granted for Indonesia citizens work as a soft power, including but not limited to Fulbright Program in Indonesia.

1.2 Research Question

¹⁶ "U.S. Relations With Indonesia - United States Department of State," *U.S. Department of State* (U.S. Department of State, January 21, 2020), last modified January 21, 2020, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-indonesia/>.

¹⁷ Indonesia Investments, "Islam in Indonesia," *Indonesia*, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.indonesia-investments.com/culture/religion/islam/item248>.

¹⁸ "Islam in Indonesia."

¹⁹ Commonwealth & Development Office Foreign, "Terrorism - Indonesia Travel Advice," *GOV.UK* (GOV.UK, September 13, 2020), last modified September 13, 2020, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/indonesia/terrorism>.

Based on the information that was previously explained, this research suggests the following research question:

How do the US scholarship programs work as soft power instrument towards Indonesia?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to describe and show how the US scholarships work as soft power towards Indonesia. This research paper also seeks to highlight the importance of using soft power for countries in this 21st century as the world more globalized.

1.4 Significance of Research

The result of this research paper focus on giving understanding on the importance of using soft power and how scholarships as the tool of soft power is being used by countries to influence other countries. This research is also attempting to provide a better understanding on how such soft power affects the countries bilateral relations, which are the US and Indonesia. This research is significant to the International Relations major as the topic discusses current international events such as education and soft power that includes international actors such as states. Thus, it is believed that this research will be beneficial both to scholars of social studies and the public audience.

1.5 Research Structure

The first chapter, which is the Introduction, provides the overall view of the research paper's main content that includes the background of the topic of the research paper, research objectives and research contribution.

The second chapter, which is the Theoretical Framework, explains about the International Relations theory and concepts that used as a framework to analyze and answer the research question. It talks about Constructivism theory, the concept of soft power and national interest that are relevant to the process of how the scholarships work as an instrument of soft power in Indonesia.

The third chapter, which is the Methodology, gives detailed explanation on the research approach, method, and data collection technique used in the data gathering. This chapter also provide the data analysis method to answer the research question of the research paper.

The fourth chapter, which is the Analysis, is the main content of the research paper. This chapter presents and analyzes all the data gathered regarding scholarships as soft power instrument towards Indonesia in line with the theories and concepts of International Relations. This chapter is also used to answer the research question

The fifth or the last chapter, which is the Conclusion, summarizes and concludes the analysis result that the writer would get from the previous chapters.