

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Since the beginning of time, people and nations have interacted and conducted transactions with one another because they cannot solely depend on themselves. Oftentimes, these actors would have their respective needs or problems that can only be resolved through the transactions of goods or services. After both World Wars were over, the United Nations ensured that all states must resort to peaceful means in conducting international affairs instead of using violence as agreed in the United Nations Charter.<sup>1</sup> However, the international world is a complex and dynamic realm. Different states have different historical backgrounds, political systems, and relations with other states that would have to be considered by state leaders before conducting foreign affairs. Hence, a state would have to formulate a specific strategy that can influence other states to believe that their cooperation and foreign policy will be beneficial for both parties and foster a mutual understanding that will strengthen bilateral relations. In International Relations, this is called diplomacy which is a political interaction at the international level with dialogues as the instrument of their interaction.<sup>2</sup>

The increasing call to strengthen multilateral cooperation between state and non-state actors made diplomacy more relevant in the studies of International

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<sup>1</sup> “Chapter I: Purposes and Principles (Articles 1-2).” United Nations. United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/about-us/un-charter/chapter-1>.

<sup>2</sup> Leguey-Feilleux, Jean-Robert. *The Dynamics of Diplomacy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009.

Relations. Diplomacy is a big scope under International Relations and there are different types of diplomacy that state leaders use to conduct international affairs such as cyber diplomacy, which focuses on utilizing diplomatic instruments and initiatives to achieve national interests in the cyberspace.<sup>3</sup> Economic diplomacy, which focuses on strengthening ties through economic means such as trades, job creation, and investment to boost the economic growth of both states. Lastly, public diplomacy, which will be discussed further in this thesis.<sup>4</sup>

Public diplomacy is the state's strategy to influence the public's minds in other states to foster mutual understanding and achieve their national interests at the international level. Public diplomacy and soft power are both keywords that are often used together as soft power is often projected by the state to influence the foreign public although public diplomacy's influence can also be manifested through non-state actors or individuals instead of the state.<sup>5</sup> The promotion of culture is also one of the most used strategies in public diplomacy as it can influence the foreign public at a deeper level through the public's immersion in their cultural values and ideas. Some states used these strategies to build a positive image of their country and strengthen diplomatic ties such as Indonesia.

Indonesia is no exception when it comes to its efforts to advance its national interests through public diplomacy. As a democratic country, Indonesia maintains

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<sup>3</sup> By Mark B. Manantan, "Defining Cyber Diplomacy - Australian Institute of International Affairs," Australian Institute of International Affairs, November 11, 2021, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/defining-cyber-diplomacy/>.

<sup>4</sup> Pauline Ziegler, "Types of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practice in 21st Century," Best Diplomats | Diplomatic Conferences | New York, <https://bestdiplomats.org/types-of-diplomacy/>.

<sup>5</sup> Cull, Nicholas J. "Definitions." Essay. In *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*. Los Angeles, California: Figueroa Press, 2009.

good relations with many countries and aims to influence the foreign public through its culture as a soft power. Indonesia is a rising power with diverse cultural and ethnic groups; thus, it is one of the factors that motivated Indonesia to mobilize its strategies beyond its national borders. One way that they can accomplish this is through the implementation of a program called the Indonesian International Student Mobility Award (IISMA) under the Minister of Education and Culture's educational policy, *Kampus Merdeka*.

IISMA is a government-funded scholarship program that sends undergraduate and vocational students from Indonesia to study in partnered universities in regions around the world such as Europe, America, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Asia, and Australia for one semester only which can last from four to six months.<sup>6</sup> The program itself is funded and supported by Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP) under the Ministry of Finance, which has also funded several other *Kampus Merdeka* programs.<sup>7</sup> Indonesian students are free to choose which university they desire to study in and choose up to four or five courses that are either different or equivalent to their respective majors. The credits that they earn after they finish their program will then be transferred to their respective universities. However, the students must meet the program's requirements and pass the selection process before achieving this scholarship.

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<sup>6</sup> "Program Objectives." IISMA. <https://iisma.kemdikbud.go.id/info/program-objectives/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Kemendikbudristek Luncurkan IISMA, Dorong Mahasiswa S1 Belajar Ke Kampus Top Luar Negeri." Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi. <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2021/05/kemendikbudristek-luncurkan-iisma-dorong-mahasiswa-s1-belajar-ke-kampus-top-luar-negeri>.

IISMA has sent more than 2,500 students to world-class institutions from 2021–2022.<sup>8</sup> In 2021, IISMA sent 955 Indonesian students abroad, and in 2022, IISMA sent 1,565 Indonesian students abroad.<sup>9</sup> The enthusiasm to participate in the IISMA program continues to increase among Indonesian students throughout the years to study in another country and learn to live in a new environment away from their home country.

IISMA was first launched in 2021 by the Indonesian government under the leadership of President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Makarim, to enhance the student’s cross-cultural awareness, study courses from the perspective of their chosen country, and promote Indonesia’s culture during their studies. Many Indonesian students also partake in cultural activities that allow them to be introduced to another country’s culture, but they are also given the chance to showcase the diversity in Indonesia’s culture by introducing Indonesia’s traditional art, games, dances, music, and cuisines to the foreign public at the university level. The IISMA program as Indonesia’s public diplomacy strategy can be effective in influencing the minds of the foreign public by mobilizing Indonesian students to promote Indonesia’s culture and build mutual understanding between Indonesia and other countries, including Australia.

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<sup>8</sup> Hartati, and Wa Ode Riniati. “Exploring 21st-Century Critical Skills Needed for Preparing New Students for Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards.” *KnE Social Sciences* (2022): 7–11.

<sup>9</sup> “*Mendikbudristek Lepas 1.565 Mahasiswa Peraih IISMA Berangkat Ke Luar Negeri.*” *Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi.*

Indonesia and Australia have established diplomatic ties since 1940 and both countries have collaborated on many international affairs such as regional security, political and economic affairs. Australia also has become the most destined country for Indonesian students to study due to their close geographic proximity to Indonesia and high-quality institutions.<sup>10</sup> However, Indonesia's image in Australia is not always positive. Reports from the 2009 Lowy Institute Poll shows that the Australian public trust towards Indonesia is low with 23% of Australians not trusting Indonesia at all and 54% of Australians not trusting Indonesia to act responsibly in international affairs.<sup>11</sup> The reason for this distrust is due to many reasons such as the intervention of the East Timor issue and the West Papua issue. As a vocal country that strongly advocates for human rights, Australia has shown its bitter sentiment towards Indonesia's treatment of the West Papuans and the East Timorese during the East Timor genocide.

Nevertheless, in 2022, reports showed that the number of Australians not trusting Indonesia to act responsibly dropped to 40%, which meant that there are more Australians who trusted Indonesia in recent years compared to a decade ago.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is a wake-up call for the Indonesian government to build a more positive image of their country in Australia as the third-largest democracy in the world because of Australia's increasing relevance in Indonesia despite the

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<sup>10</sup> "Indonesia - Education and Training." International Trade Administration | Trade.Gov. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/indonesia-education-and-training>.

<sup>11</sup> Hanson, Fergus. Indonesia and Australia: Time for a Step Change. Lowy Institute for International Policy, March 1, 2010. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10221>.

<sup>12</sup> Institute, Lowy. "Trust in Global Powers." Lowy Institute Poll. <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/trust-in-global-powers>.

continuous tense relations between the two countries. One policy that can help enhance the image of Indonesia in Australia's public is through the IISMA program as Australia is one of the countries that have partnered with IISMA. The mandatory cultural activities that Indonesian students must participate in are a good way for Indonesia to utilize its soft power to improve Indonesia's image in Australia. Therefore, this research will focus on analyzing **“Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards as Public Diplomacy Instrument in Australia (2022-2023)”**.

### **1.2. Research Question**

The establishment of IISMA has pushed Indonesia to motivate Indonesian students to be the ambassadors of Indonesia while they are abroad. ISMA has established partnerships with numerous prestigious universities around the world. However, this thesis will focus specifically on exploring the role of IISMA as a public diplomacy strategy in Australia to further understand its impact on the Australian public. Given the research background, the following research question is proposed for this thesis:

How does IISMA act as Indonesia's public diplomacy tool in Australia to build a positive image of Indonesia in Australia?

### **1.3. Research Objective**

Following the previously mentioned research question, the objective of this research is:

To analyze the role of IISMA as a tool in enhancing the people-to-people diplomacy efforts in Australia to improve Indonesia's image through the



mobilization of Indonesian students to study in Australian institutions and promote Indonesia's culture within the campus environment.

#### **1.4. Research Significance**

Indonesia and Australia have continued to strengthen their diplomatic ties through collaboration in international affairs and intergovernmental initiatives, although their relations have faced uncertainties due to some issues such as the West Papua issue and terrorism. The Indonesian government has continued to try to build a positive image of Indonesia among the Australian public. However, the government realized that direct influence on the foreign public would minimize the effectiveness of their public diplomacy efforts. Hence, this research is important to understand how IISMA can be considered one of the Indonesian government's public diplomacy tools in Australia, as it allows Indonesian students to not only study in high-quality Australian educational institutions but also to introduce Indonesia's culture to enhance cross-cultural awareness and foster mutual understanding in Australia.

#### **1.5. Structure of Writing**

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter, which is Introduction, gives an introduction regarding the research topic and followed by the research question, research objective and research significance that provide an overview of the research on the following chapter.

The following chapter, which is Theoretical Framework, consists of two sub-chapters that are Literature Review and Theory and Concept. The Literature Review is divided into three categories that highlight past research about the topic

and Theory and Concept section provides relevant theories and concepts used in this research to answer the research question.

Before the analysis comes the third chapter, which is the Methodology to explain how the research is conducted, what type of data is collected and which method to use for data collection. This chapter is divided into four sections which are: research approach, research method, data collection technique, and data analysis technique.

The fourth chapter is the Analysis section and the most significant part of this research because it analyzes the data collected and explains it in a systematic way with the relevant theory and concepts to answer the research question.

Lastly, the Conclusion and Recommendation chapter concluded the findings from the Analysis chapter as well as providing recommendation for the current result of the research.

