

**SOUTH KOREA’S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGY THROUGH THE  
NEW SOUTHERN POLICY TOWARDS THE SPREAD OF THE KOREAN  
WAVE IN 2017-2021**

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**Abstract**

South Korea is a country that active to conducting public diplomacy. In carrying out its public diplomacy, the South Korean government uses the Korean Wave as an icon in its diplomacy with other countries. With the Korean Wave, South Korea received full attention globally, many international people were interested and wanted to know more about South Korean culture. The Korean Wave are very popular all over the world starting from its kpop music, dramas, films, food, beauty products, language and so on. In 2017, South Korea issued the New Southern Policy during the reign of Moon Jae In, deciding to establish cooperation with countries in ASEAN and India. This policy focuses on the three 3Ps, namely People, Prosperity and Peace. In these 3 cases, the South Korean government sees that this policy has been quite successful in helping to build the country's image and increasing the interest of the international community to visit and cooperate with South Korea because it will be mutually beneficial.

Keywords: Korean Wave, New Southern Policy, South Korea, ASEAN

**Introduction**

Public Diplomacy are the forming of diplomatic tool, that are popularly used to achieve the interests of the state by reaching out to foreign public, as the thought (dkk) (Kumalaningrum)developing that winning the heart and mind of foreign public

will be able to make it easier for the country to achieve its interests.<sup>1</sup> Today, the state conduct diplomacy to achieve its national interest. However, the state does not only focus on conducting traditional diplomacy, and public diplomacy are also one of the things that the country does.

South Korea is one of the country in Asia that is active in carrying out public diplomacy. South Korea has also shown its country as the pop culture producer country through various entertainment shows that can be reached by the internet in this day, and age and become the country that competes with Europe and America. It can be seen through the industrial progress in South Korea known as the Korean Wave.<sup>2</sup> The South Korean government also firmly stated that it will focus on implementing public diplomacy by involving various parties, one of which is carried out using the Korean Wave. Korean Wave are phenomenon that shock the whole world for its scattered cultural products such as drama, music, movies, food, style and fashion. Where with the Korean Wave it has succeeded in successfully attracting all the attention of the people in the world.

NSP focused on three aspects of development, namely society, welfare, peace (people, prosperity and peace) so that are does not touch on security issues. To demonstrate the tangible form of the NSP, South Korea's representative to ASEAN reinforced 18 diplomats. President Moon has also visited 10 ASEAN member states, Indonesia (November 2017), Vietnam and the Philippines (March 2018), Singapore (July 2018), India (July 2018), Malaysia, Cambodia and Brunei Darussalam (March 2019), Thailand, Laos and Myanmar (September 2019).<sup>3</sup> Then, this policy are also ready to go to New Southern Policy 2.0 in 2021 after the South Korean government gathered various opinions from the government of ASEAN countries, corporations,

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<sup>1</sup> Sofia Trisnani dkk, “Pencapaian Kepentingan Korea Selatan melalui Diplomasi Publik Korean Wave”, Jurnal Global & Strategis, No.2, page 132.

<sup>2</sup> Widya Sari Kumalaningrum, “Strategi Diplomasi Publik Pemerintahan Korea Selatan terhadap Indonesia melalui Hallyu”, Jurnal Indonesia Berdaya, 2(2), page. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

experts and civilians has considered the course of the previous New Southern Policy to be on stable and proper path.<sup>4</sup>

### **Conceptual Framework**

In Analyzing how South Korea's public diplomacy strategy through the New Southern Policy towards the spread of the Korean Wave in 2017-2021, the author will use the concept of Public Diplomacy and the concept of foreign policy.

Jan Mellisen, stated that public diplomacy is as tool used by a country to influence the will of other countries in a good way. Therefore it can be concluded that public diplomacy is the tool used by a country to promote the country's interests through understanding, information and influencing the public abroad.<sup>5</sup> Public diplomacy is considered relevant in this study, such as the way the Korean Wave culture is spread from the South Korean government which is trying to promote and spread its country's culture to countries in ASEAN, especially in Indonesia.

According to Kegley and Wittkopf, foreign policy are the government policy that are authorized to the international environment based on national interests and goals and at the same time there are values and instruments in pursuing these goals.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, according to Webber and Smith, foreign policy is the policy that consists of effort to achieve goals, values, decision-making, and action taken by the state where the government largely takes part in acting with outside parties or the external environment, in addition to controlling society in interacting with the external environment.<sup>7</sup> It can be concluded that foreign policy is an instrument used by the country in achieving its national interests to cooperate with other countries. Foreign policy is considered relevant in the study, such as the way the South Korean

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<sup>4</sup> Lee Chi Dong, 2019, "S.Korea Announces New Southern Policy 2.0 Plan After Busan Summit with ASEAN", (Dong, n.d.)

<sup>5</sup> Jan Mellisen, " (Mellisen, 2006) ", (California: Rand Corporation, 2006) page 43.

<sup>6</sup> (Kegley Charles W. Jr, 2001), (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), page 55.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Webber, Michael Smith, "Foreign Policy in Transformed World", (London: Prentice Hall, 2022), page 11-12.

government issued a new policy in the era of Moon Jae In's leadership in 2017 to cooperate and strengthen ties with countries in ASEAN and India.

## **Discussion**

### **Implementation of the New Southern Policy**

Foreign policy, first introduced in 2017, has now produced some progress. One is the increasing level of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea to become a *Special Strategic Partnership*.<sup>8</sup> Then, this policy is also ready to go to the *New Southern Policy 2.0* in 2021 after the South Korean government has gathered various opinions from the governments of ASEAN countries, companies, experts, and civilians who have considered the previous *New Southern Policy* to be on a stable and appropriate path.<sup>9</sup> The subsequent steps of South Korea's diplomacy with the South countries have been going on for a long time and are quite intensive.

Therefore the presence of the *New Southern Policy* should have its agenda for South Korea's national interests, different from the previous diplomacy, coupled with the *personal diplomacy* of the President of South Korea. Who visited each of the ASEAN countries to introduce the new policy? This indicates that South Korea has gone through experiences or events in the previous few years, triggering the emergence of the *New Southern Policy*.

The New Southern Policy is South Korea's foreign policy focusing on ASEAN countries and India. The South Korean government also has an agenda of expanding support from countries targeted by *the New Southern Policy* to assist South Korea in realizing denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula and improving inter-Korean and United States-North Korean relations. In addition, through this *Peace concept*, the South Korean government will deepen cooperation

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<sup>8</sup> Adrini Pujayanti, 2019, "Potentials and Challenges of Indonesia-South Korea Economic Cooperation", Research Center for the DPR RI Expertise Agency - Vol.XI, No.23/1/Puslit, December 2019. (Aikal, 2022)

<sup>9</sup> Lee Chi Dong, 2019, "S.Korea Announces New Southern Policy 2.0 Plan After Busan Summit with ASEAN", <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20191127004500315>.

with the target countries of *the New Southern Policy* regarding the national defense industry through meetings between Defense Ministers, transfer of defense technology, production of weapons, and systems that has been localized.

### **South Korea's Public Diplomacy Strategy Against Indonesia**

South Korea carries out cultural diplomacy to spread culture and expand markets in Indonesia. The Korean Wave, which was carried out as the forming of instrument for implementing cultural diplomacy also had the positive influence in the economic, political, social, and cultural fields. Indonesian people are very fond of Korean celebrities and their music, so the South Korean government, in cooperation with companies from Korea, uses the K-Pop celebrity strategy as an icon for promoting Korean Wave culture and Korean products such as Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and other products. This are done to remember Indonesian people who are consumptive and feverish will Korean culture. Not only that, food typical Korean origin is also spread in Indonesia.

With this, the South Korean government can be successful because it has spread its country's culture worldwide with the help of K-Pop idols and artist. Through the Korean Wave, South Korea and Indonesia have also experienced major influences in the fields of trade, education and in the tourism sector:

#### **1. Trade Sector**

In the field of trade, South Korea and Indonesia need each other, for example, South Korea needs natural and human resources, while Indonesia needs capital and foreign investment to build infrastructure so that it can boost its economy and South Korea can help with this. In the field of trade in goods, South Korea will eliminate up to 95.54 percent of its tariff lines, while Indonesia will eliminate 92.06 percent of its tariff lines. As well as an increase in exports and imports between the two countries as in 2019, South Korea became the eighth export destination country and the sixth source of imports for Indonesia, and Indonesia's total trade with South Korea in 2019 touched USD 15.65 billion, it

was obtained from the value Indonesia's exports to South Korea amounted to USD 7.23 billion and South Korea's imports to Indonesia amounted to USD 8.42 billion, trade between the two countries grew by 2.5 percent from 2015 to 2019.<sup>10</sup>

## **2. Education Field**

The impact of the influence of the Korean Wave was also experienced in the field of education because it attracted the interest of the Indonesian people to learn Korean culture and language. The Korean Wave has also become a reference or has motivated some people to pursue a higher level of education. Because of this, South Korea provides scholarships to people who have an interest in studying in South Korea, such as: Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP), Scholarship for Asian Study in Korea, The Korea International Cooperation Agency and many others.<sup>11</sup> The high interest in studying in South Korea is evident from the data recorded in November 2019 which stated that the number of students from Indonesia currently studying in South Korea is 1,500.<sup>12</sup>

## **3. Tourism**

The number of South Korean tourists to Indonesia in 2018 totaled 358,885 people, a decrease of 15.28% compared to the previous year which amounted to 423,191 people. While Indonesian tourists who visited South Korea in 2018 totaled 249,067, an increase of 7.9% compared to 2017 which amounted to 230,837 people.<sup>13</sup> Indonesian tourist visits to Korea have a positive trend from year to year. This can be seen from the number of tourists who continue to increase every year. In 2018, there were around 249 thousand Indonesian tourists visiting Korea. In 2019, data on Indonesian tourist visits reached 225 thousand

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<sup>10</sup> Fikri Aikal, 2022, *“Analysis of Indonesia-South Korea Relations Through the Korean Wave in 2019-2021”*, Skripsi, hal. 26.

<sup>11</sup> INDBeasiswa, 2016, *“Daftar Lengkap Beasiswa Kuliah di Korea Selatan yang Dapat Anda Coba”*, <https://indbeasiswa.com/2016/03/daftar-lengkap-beasiswa-kuliah-di-korea.html>

<sup>12</sup> Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia, 2023, *“Profil Negara dan Hubungan Bilateral”*, [https://kemlu.go.id/seoul/id/pages/hubungan\\_bilateral/558/etc-menu](https://kemlu.go.id/seoul/id/pages/hubungan_bilateral/558/etc-menu)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

tourists. So that the number of tourists from Indonesia in 2019 is expected to increase by around 12% when compared to 2018.<sup>14</sup>

### **Pillars of the New Southern Policy from an Islamic Perspective**

*The ummah* or community in a country is one of the things that can be the reason for a country to make policies. Even in a society, one must be able to achieve and fulfill their needs. Even in relations between countries, it will be difficult to realize it if they do not apply the principles of community and use the community to participate in state policies. What has been explained in surah Ar-Ruum verse 22, is:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ إِذَا فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

The means: “And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. Surely in this are signs for those of ‘sounds’ knowledge.”<sup>15</sup>

The second pillar is cooperation. In Islam it is known as *Syirkah*. *Syirkah* is an alliance involving two or more parties, to make a profit. What has been explained in surah Al-Hujurat verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

The means: "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may ‘get to’ know one another.

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<sup>14</sup> Imagine Your Korea, 2019, “Korea Menyambut Wisatawan ke 17,25 Juta: Wisatawan Asal Indonesia”, <https://www.visitkorea.or.id/article/korea-menyambut-wisatawan-ke-1725-juta-wisatawan-asal-indonesia>

<sup>15</sup> TafsirWeb, accessed March 12, 2023, <https://tafsirweb.com/7386-surat-ar-rum-ayat-22.html>

Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware."<sup>16</sup>

The third pillar is peace. In Islam it can be said as *Salm*, is one of the meanings and characteristics of Islam as a religion that teaches its people to love peace or always fight for peace, not war or conflict and chaos. What has been explained in surah Al-Anfal verse 61:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

The means: "If the enemy is inclined towards peace, make peace with them. And put your trust in Allah. Indeed, He 'alone' is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing."<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

The public diplomacy strategy used by South Korea in spreading its Korean Wave culture is through the New Southern Policy by spreading its daily culture through dramas, films, and variety shows. Promoting the culture of the country and the actors who influenced the Korean Wave so that it is well-known in various countries, increasing the growth of South Korean industries so that it can increase the number of people who are interested in Korean culture and establish cooperation and provide learning for the global community to spread Korean wave culture. It can be seen that as time goes by, the Korean Wave fever has been raging all over the world. Everyone is competing to visit South Korea, dress and look attractive like South Koreans in general, many restaurants and cafes modify their places so that they are aesthetic like the restaurants and cafes we see in dramas and films.

The New Southern Policy that was born by South Korea also has many roles in helping spread the country's culture. As stated in its 3 pillars namely, Community of People by increasing the number of visits between the two entities in order to

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, <https://tafsirweb.com/7386-surat-ar-rum-ayat-22.html>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, <https://tafsirweb.com/2927-surat-al-anfal-ayat-61.html>



revitalize the Korean tourism market in order to attract more tourists from NSP countries, increase the number of visits of students from ASEAN to South Korea through student exchanges or through scholarships provided by the government. The second pillar are the Community of Prosperity to build mutually beneficial economic cooperation and strive to support Korean products that are promising in the ASEAN market, such as cosmetic products (Korean Beauty), and agricultural products (Korean Food). And for the third pillar, namely, Community of Peace, as the government's mission to build peace and a safe environment in every region.

From the perspective of Islam, it is also explained that the *Ummah* principle or community in a country is one of the things that can be a reason for a country to make policies that can be said to be a Community of People. The second pillar, the Community of Prosperity in Islam is usually called Syirkah. Syirkah is an alliance involving two or more parties to make a profit. The third pillar is peace. And on the last pillar, Community of Peace in Islam can be said to be Salm, which is one of the meanings and characteristics of Islam as a religion that teaches its people to love peace or always fight for peace, not war or conflict and chaos.

### **Suggestion**

The author considers that the New Southern Policy is a policy that is right on target and can be said to be successful. This assumption is seen based on the situation, opportunity, and great influence that the New Southern Policy can easily help spread Korean culture throughout the world. This foreign policy is also full of seriousness in its implementation so that in the end it can achieve national interests while at the same time increasing its country to become better known to the international community. And the authors hope that this discussion can be studied in more depth for future researchers by looking at the renewal of the New Southern Policy in the following years.

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