

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF THAILAND AND INDONESIA IN THE PHILIPPINES

Romina Eloisa Manabat Abuan^a

ABSTRACT

Cultural diplomacy, often overlapping with public diplomacy, is defined as the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture with the intent to foster mutual understanding, enhancing socio-cultural cooperation and promoting national interests between two or more States. The Philippines can be conceptualised as an arena for States to win hearts and minds through cultural diplomacy. This article focuses on Indonesia and Thailand. Indonesia, at a glance, is active in sharing its culture and language through the Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) programme while Thailand is the first to practise ‘gastro diplomacy’ or tourism diplomacy. This paper tackles three questions: Firstly, how do Indonesia and Thailand’s respective foreign policy goals translate to cultural diplomacy set in the Philippines? Secondly, using the concept of soft power, why are Indonesia and Thailand actively practicing cultural diplomacy? And thirdly, what possible outcomes do Indonesia and Thailand seek to achieve from the cultural and educational events and programmes provided for and promoted by their embassies in the Philippines?

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, soft power, public diplomacy, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Cultural diplomacy is everywhere and encompasses trade, tourism, student flows, communications, book circulations, migration, media access, inter-marriage, and millions of other daily cross-cultural encounters (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, 2012). Cultural diplomacy also includes educational scholarships, visits of scholars, artists, cultural groups and artist performances, exhibitions, seminars and conferences, and festivals (Mark, S., 2009). Throughout the formation of the term ‘Southeast Asia’ and of Southeast Asia as a region, the Philippines was seen to be an outlier and have been omitted at times by scholars from the ambit of Southeast Asia (Emmerson, D., 1984, p. 11). This is no longer the case with the development of the region as a field of study and as a reality. In the Southeast Asian region, the Philippines, as an agent exercising cultural diplomacy and an audience receiving cultural and public diplomatic efforts, can be thought of as an arena to win the hearts, minds, and money of the Filipino citizens by foreign States. Indonesia and Thailand, a maritime and a mainland Southeast Asian state respectively, aspire to be regional powers and are actively promoting its culture and identity through cultural diplomacy within and out of the region. Indonesia has been actively promoting its

^a Romina Eloisa Manabat Abuan (rmabuan@up.edu.ph) is a Graduate Student at the Asian Center in the University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines.

culture and language, while Thailand is the first to practise gastrodiplomacy and tourism diplomacy.

The author hypothesised that Indonesia is actively strengthening and promoting their constructed 'Indonesian' identity domestically and abroad through cultural diplomacy alongside its middle power aspirations, and that Thailand's goal is to promote itself as a tourism destination and its identity of being a Mainland Southeast Asian regional power. Various cultural and educational activities and events conducted by their respective embassies in the Philippines depend on their capabilities and funding. The achievement of their foreign policy outcomes depends on how well their cultural and public diplomacy efforts are done in their target country. What intervenes is the capacity and capability of the embassies to implement its foreign policy goals.

This short research paper will tread through the literature of soft power, public diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy. Sources for this research paper were secondary sources: press releases from their respective embassies, embassy Facebook posts, news articles, journal articles, and available online files from their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, among others. Soft power methodology to determine the effectiveness of diplomatic actions as argued by Ji (2017) should be two-dimensional in which it focuses on the agent and the audience. This paper will focus on the agents' resources, capabilities, and behaviours. At the receiving side of Indonesian and Thai cultural and public diplomatic efforts, Filipinos are observed to become unofficial cultural ambassadors and meet the States' efforts halfway. Analysis of cultural and public diplomacy practices of Southeast Asian countries is underdeveloped in the field of International Relations and in Southeast Asian studies. This paper hopes to illuminate the empirical dimensions albeit cautiously optimistic, and to contribute to the literature of foreign policy, however broad the analysis may be, of such diplomacy and on the audience side of the soft power dimension.

SOFT POWER

Power, as defined by Nye (2004), can be resources or behavioural outcomes. Power has three faces which allow for hard and soft methods: The first face is the subject's strategies, the second is the subject's agenda, and lastly is the subject's first preferences. Hard methods entail coercion and inducement, whilst soft methods are the use of attraction or persuasion. Soft methods emphasise inducing behavioural change for the first face, framing and agenda-setting to convince a subject for the second face, and shaping a subject's first preferences through priming for the third face (Chitty, 2017, p. 10). Soft power is qualitatively different in that it is mostly on the co-optive side of a spectrum, whilst hard methods that coerce are on the other side according to Nye. Soft power, as proposed by Nye, is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. Nye identifies culture as the first of the three primary resources of a country's soft power alongside political values and foreign policies. Ji (2017) first points out that "Culture and political values are relatively stable, whilst foreign policies are variable and relate to actions of the country [which] are mostly intangible assets...By contrast with hard power, it is far

more difficult to measure and evaluate effects of influence in a given country.” (p. 75) and then that there is a lack of a comprehensive methodological framework for measuring the effects and the challenges of evaluating soft power. To ascertain the effectiveness of public and cultural diplomatic efforts is challenging as it is, however, Ji argues “the evaluation of soft power effectiveness should be two-directional: agents’ resources, capabilities and behaviours, along with subjects’ perceptions, affections and behaviours towards soft power exerted by agents.” (p. 78).

Hall & Smith (2013) posit that Asian states aim to project a better image to its neighbours through the use of traditional and new media. Their work examines the various cultural and public diplomatic efforts of Asian states from the Cold War until the time of their writing and concludes that there is little evidence that diplomatic efforts work as intended. They observe that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was among the first to increase investment in public diplomacy. The PRC established a Public Diplomacy Office and has funded Confucius Institutes at foreign universities around the world among other public diplomacy efforts. As one of the closest and biggest neighbours of Southeast Asia, it is pertinent to briefly examine its soft power diplomacy discourse. The PRC’s history and traditional culture, as posited by Chinese scholars, could be a source of soft power. The Chinese model of development is also seen by Chinese analysts as being another source of soft power, however there are debates within the PRC on China’s foreign policy, as examined by Li (2008), whether it should take an active role or not. Critically, many analysts add that mass media is an important aspect of soft power. Deviations from Nye by Chinese scholars include the consideration of political institutions, norms, and credibility as a source of soft power, the consideration of the domestic sphere and contexts, the international community’s acceptance of a nation’s policies, and the Overseas Development Aid (ODA) as another form of Chinese soft power.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

All forms of diplomacy share a common mission, which is to represent national interests abroad, collect knowledge and advice, negotiate, and develop social networks, influencing outcomes and managing consular activities. Ross (2003) defines public diplomacy as “[engaging] carefully targeted sectors of foreign publics in order to develop support for those same strategic goals” (p. 252). Cultural diplomacy, simply put, is representing national cultures abroad. Cultural exchange and foreign policy have been intertwined throughout history with “people [using] culture to display themselves, to assert their power, and to understand others.” (Briggs et al., 2007, p. 15). Increasingly, the importance of cultural diplomacy can be seen especially in the context of the globalised and interconnected world. Briggs et al. posit that through cultural exchange as a means of understanding one another, “cultural contact provides a forum for unofficial political relationship-building...[keeping] open negotiating channels...” (p. 12). They further argue “we should no longer think of culture as subordinate to politics [instead] we should think of culture as providing the operating context for politics.” (p. 20).

The general practice of scholars is to treat cultural diplomacy as a “subset of public diplomacy” (Chitty, p. 19). Chitty expounds that public diplomacy is the engagement between governments and publics between countries or within one country through the use of media, mobility or cultural production. Villanueva Rivas (2007), on the other hand, differentiates public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy; the latter being concerned with the long-term perspective and how people’s identities are constructed and represented in discursive terms, whilst the former focuses on short-term problems concerned with the level of communication and image-making of society. He stresses that “cultural diplomacy is responsible for the artistic, cultural and scientific fields, preparing educational exchanges and developing official discourses about that national and cultural identities of the country” (p. 47), while likening public diplomacy to an information agency concerned with official communications, public relations, and the image of the country abroad.

In the public diplomacy realm, nations initiate and conceptualise a brand with the intent to promote it for global respect or name recognition through the use of slogans or words that characterise the essence or core feature of a particular product and service. As described by Anholt (2007), nation branding is “a strategic, policy-making approach, intended to assist nations to construct on the strengths that later will benefit them a grander reputation”. The country as a brand is “seen by people through shorthand that colours both its products - be it tourism or business activities - and its politics” (Rana, 2011, p. 75). The nation brand influences the inflow of tourism, which is a major industry for many countries, and the external economic relations. Importance is placed on the actions contributing to the image and that any deviation of a country’s self-image and actual image will become a source of embarrassment even affecting the government’s political standing at home. Certain cultural or geographical features can also be used to promote the nation brand which in turn leans more to cultural diplomacy than public diplomacy; in the context of tourism, nations will always associate national brands that utilise their appealing features and the exported national dish or national cuisine is the use of food as a nation brand (Nirwandy, N., & Awang, A. A., 2014).

INDONESIA’S FOREIGN POLICY

Indonesia’s foreign policy reflects the State’s constructed Indonesian historical, cultural, and political experience. The State seeks to project its capabilities in acting globally and regionally. Indonesia’s foreign policy aims and objectives do not differ from other countries’ in that it must reflect and promote national interest. However, what differs is the emphasis on the State’s commitment to the two basic principles of *anti-kolonialisme* (anti-colonialism) and the framework of *politik luar negeri bebas-aktif* (independent and active foreign policy). In Dr. Mohammad Hatta’s speech, ‘Mendayung Antara Dua Karang’ (Rowing between two coral reefs), made before the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) on September 2, 1948, he laid the foundations of Indonesia’s foreign policy. The use of Bahasa Indonesia, he said, has been conceptualised by political leaders as playing a role in Indonesia’s external relations and not the use of English as the global lingua franca; “The role of the discourse of foreign relations address to a domestic audience

therefore has a particular acuity for the widespread use of Bahasa has been an essential vector in developing a sense of national unity” (Hatta, M., 1976).

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), during his term as president, redefined the State’s view of its position in the international arena as a country with “a thousand friends and zero enemies” and an “all directions foreign policy”, thereby promoting Indonesia overseas (Connelly, A. L., 2014., p. 2). Due to the State’s size and strong economic performance, it has been perceived as a rising middle power and an emerging market in the region. His successor President Jokowi Widodo promotes Indonesia as a maritime archipelagic state and its active role in maritime issues. His vision and mission are for Indonesia to act as a “global maritime axis”. As articulated by Acharya (2015), the Purposes/Strategic Goals of Indonesia’s Foreign Ministry are as follows: to increase Indonesia’s role and leadership in the creation of an ASEAN community; to increase Indonesia’s diplomatic role in handling multilateral issues; to increase cooperation in a variety of fields between Indonesia and other countries and intra-regional organisations; to increase the quality of international law and cooperation; to increase the quality of protocol and consular services; to increase Indonesia’s image before domestic public and the world; and to increase the governing quality and total diplomacy. The stages and priorities of Indonesia’s Foreign Policy from 2005 to 2025 have also been articulated: The first four years (2005-2009) were to strengthen and expand national identity as a democratic country, the next four (2010-2014) after that were spent into recovering Indonesia’s role as a democratic country, from 2015-2019 the aims were to increase the role of Indonesia as a leader and to contribute in international cooperation, and finally from 2020-2024 Indonesia seeks to position itself economically and politically in the right place.

THAILAND’S FOREIGN POLICY

A Siamese proverb likens the Kingdom’s foreign policy to the “bamboo in the wind” wherein it is solidly rooted but able to bend in any direction to survive and “with the ‘bamboo’ precept in mind, a particular historical narrative and Thai identity [emerges].” (Kislenko, 2020). Thailand’s foreign policy is and was influenced by global actors, external conflicts, and the domestic situation inside the Kingdom. Scholars differ in views when analysing Thailand’s history and international relations on whether the State truly maintained its bamboo stance, but despite contestations, the bamboo flexibility has been a cornerstone in Thai foreign policy. Thailand understands the importance of the Southeast Asian region, specifically its neighbours and ASEAN. Busbarat (2020) proposes that Thailand’s foreign policy posture exhibits an ideational aspiration to maintain a leading role and status specifically within Mainland Southeast Asia and in ASEAN. Contemporary Thai foreign policy can be better described as swirling in the wind rather than bending, given that it is sensitive to the external environment (Kislenko, 2020; Busbarat, 2016).

Thailand’s 20-year “5S” Foreign Affairs Masterplan, or “5S Strategy” in short, reveals the State’s vision to become a developed, stable, prosperous, and sustainable country by focusing in five key strategic priorities: Security, Sustainability, Standard, Status, and Synergy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kingdom of Thailand, 2020). The Status

component of the 5S Strategy focuses on enhancing the State's status through soft power diplomacy, more specifically cultural diplomacy, to promote Thai food, arts, sports, and tourism; "Thailand's standing will be achieved through worldwide promotion of the unique and legendary Thai culture and gastronomy as well as through development diplomacy" (p. 5). This effort has resulted in a significant surge in Thailand's popularity and an increase in tourism revenue. Raising Thailand's image is also sought through international Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) events; the income gained from these events contributes to the economy and society as well.

Domestic policy plays a role in influencing foreign policy, and Kislenko observes that the relationship has been more acute - the crisis surrounding the former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006) has left foreign policy without coherent direction due to the Foreign Ministry's inability to develop a long-term policy and with infighting in the domestic political sphere (p. 403). It is acknowledged by several Prime Ministers of the importance of keeping their domestic situations in order because a volatile domestic situation could significantly affect the confidence that countries would place in the State. In 2008 the domestic economy took a heavy hit from the political instability and global economic crisis wherein Thai exports dropped by around thirty percent and tourism dropped around eighteen to twenty percent (Royal Thai Embassy Singapore, 2009). Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva spoke of a participatory foreign policy in 2009 during a special lecture titled "Thailand's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century". Foreign policy, he stated, "is a conduit between the international and domestic spheres; the Thai public should be included and given a role in the formulation of their policy because they are the main beneficiaries of foreign policy". If the domestic situation, he stressed, is peaceful and the society harmonious and progressive, foreign policy can be conveniently carried out for the advancement and benefit of Thailand.

INDONESIA'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Indonesia's foreign minister from 1978 to 1988, pushed for arts diplomacy and formulated the notion of cultural diplomacy (*diplomasi budaya* or *diplomasi kebudayaan*) in 1983 (Cohen, 2019). Although his rhetoric was the continued vitality of Indonesian arts and culture despite Dutch colonialism, he was less interested in fostering mutual understanding or general goodwill as was the *Gotong royong* (Mutual cooperation) and *Musyawarah* (Consensus) foreign policy concepts pushed by Indonesia at the time. Rather, he was focused on the strategic goal of *membangun citra Indonesia di luar negeri* which translates to 'raising the image of Indonesia abroad' or to 'developing a portrait of Indonesia internationally' (Kusuma-Atmadja, 1987).

In 1974, the Darmasiswa scholarship scheme began to promote and increase the interest in Indonesian language and culture among the youth of other countries. It had been designed to foster stronger cultural links and understanding initially among students from other ASEAN countries although it has spread today to more than 126 countries worldwide. This has been the primary mode to train foreigners in the arts of the traditional gamelan, dance, wayang kulit, and crafts. Students, upon returning to their home countries, act as

unofficial cultural ambassadors for Indonesia (Cohen, 2019). Supplementing this in the 1970s was the policy “to appoint artists...to key embassies where there was local interest in studying Indonesian arts” (p. 263). Cohen notes that Indonesia’s arts diplomacy differed depending on the country, the government policy, the ambassador’s personal interests, the capacities of the embassy staff, and offers made from overseas institutions for collaboration (p. 269).

The *Pusat Perkembangan dan Diplomasi Kebahasaan* (Strategy Development and Linguistic Diplomacy Board, PPSDK) has been trying to internationalise Bahasa Indonesia through the *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* (BIPA), the Indonesian Language for Foreigners Programme (Kemdikbud, 2019). BIPA and PPSDK were implemented in 2009 during the Presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The purpose of PPSDK, based on the 2015-2019 PPSDK’s strategic plan, was to promote Bahasa Indonesia for foreigners, improving national identity through the language, and through language diplomacy to improve strategic development through BIPA (Pusat Pengembangan Strategi dan Diplomasi Kebahasaan, 2015). BIPA also facilitates the cultural exchange as a cultural promotion programme, and provides free materials on their website that communicate day-to-day Indonesian socio-cultural experiences through a variety of topics.

THAILAND’S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Most of the literature on Thailand’s cultural diplomacy pertains to its gastrodiplomacy. Thailand’s cultural diplomacy is a mix of or can be branched out to gastrodiplomacy, cuisine diplomacy, and tourism diplomacy which the State actively pursued through the incorporation of cultural elements to traditional diplomatic tracks from 2000 to 2010. Its cultural diplomacy followed, how Briggs et al. put it as, “...the quest for the tourist dollar as well as the battle for hearts and minds...” (p. 18-19). What is common in the different classified strands of diplomacy is the active exporting of Thailand’s cultural elements such as its cuisine and beautiful geographic locations. Tourism is an essential foundation to the Thai economy with the government paying special attention to it calling for joint efforts from all ministers in the promotion of the Kingdom. Thailand is also assumed to be the first State legitimately engaging in gastrodiplomacy and is considered to be successful in its efforts to win what Paul Rockower describes as winning the hearts and minds through the stomach (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Lipscomb; 2019).

Gastrodiplomacy is the “government’s practice of exporting its national culinary heritage as part of its public diplomacy efforts to raise national brand awareness, encourage economic investment and trade, and engage on a cultural and personal level with everyday diners” (Pham, 2013). Gastrodiplomacy can also be used in creative ways, but the most common are serving traditional food at diplomatic events and utilising food for enriching ties through the etiquette of gift giving (Strugar, 2019). Thailand began to promote itself as the “Kitchen to the World” and “the Food Basket of Asia”. The “Global Thai” program was launched in 2002 wherein it aimed to significantly escalate the number of Thai restaurants out of the country and to increase the familiarity of Thai cuisine alongside the program “Amazing Thailand” which was to promote its tourism. The Global Thai

campaign was just one of the multiple national projects aimed to create a positive image of Thailand. The program “[would] not only introduce deliciously spicy Thai food...and persuade more people to visit Thailand, but it could subtly help to deepen relations with other countries.” (The Economist, 2002). Thailand was successful in that the number of Thai restaurants abroad increased drastically from 5,500 in 2002 to 10,000 in 2013 and that it increased the interest of foreign intentions to travel to or revisit Thailand. Thailand became a destination country with the number of tourists visiting Thailand in 2019 counted at well over 14 million and generating more than USD20,000 million in tourism-related revenue.

INDONESIA IN THE PHILIPPINES

Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the Philippines were formally established on 24 November 1949, however, friendly relations between the two States have existed for centuries prior to that (Philippine Consulate General Manado Indonesia, n.d.). During President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s State visit to the Philippines in 2014, the two States signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Education (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2014). The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI Manila) has a Social and Cultural Affairs section manned by a Minister Counsellor and a Second Secretary. Notably, Indonesia is the only ASEAN State that has a Cultural and Education Attaché to the Philippines with most other ASEAN States having a Défense attaché in its respective embassies.

The two States celebrated their 70th anniversary of bilateral ties in 2019. Philippines-Indonesia Friendship Day was held on January 15 at the Sekolah Sukma Bangsa in Pidie, Aceh, with cultural performances and traditional games. The event was attended by the Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia Leehiong Tan Wee and the Former Indonesian Embassy Education and Cultural Attaché Lili Nurlaili. The Philippine Ambassador expressed hope that the more than 20 Filipino students from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao studying on various scholarships at the school will learn from the interactions with Indonesian students to promote peace and development in their communities. The ambassador also highlighted the growing cooperation of the Philippines and Indonesia in the education sector (Philstar, 2019).

Throughout the 70 years, Indonesia has interacted with higher education institutions by sharing its culture through BIPA, Batik-making workshops, Gamelan shows, and Wayang Kulit shows among others. The Philippines is among the 46 countries wherein BIPA is held. In 2016, 80 BIPA teachers were sent to various countries’ higher education institutions and embassies or consulates to facilitate the promotion and learning of Bahasa Indonesia and, by extension, Indonesian culture and values.

Competitions are also another way to engage Filipino audiences. The KBRI has actively promoted Bahasa Indonesia writing competitions, singing competitions, and video competitions among others, with a large number of participants joining the competitions. Notably, for Indonesia’s 75th Independence Day, the KBRI Manila organised a virtual solo

singing competition, both under children and adult categories, and a TikTok Dance Competition with prizes provided for by the KBRI. The competitions incorporate Indonesian Cultural artefacts and products like Batik and IndoMie among others, while also promoting the usage of Bahasa Indonesia in these competitions.

The Darmasiswa scholarship application for 2019 was promoted by the KBRI Manila and circulated by Philippine higher education institutions to interested Filipinos. As of 2019, 71 Indonesian universities participated in the programme willing to teach Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian Culture. The KBRI Manila also actively interacts with Philippine universities such as the University of the Philippines (UP) and the University of Santo Tomas (UST) among others, to host cultural lectures and events and actively provides materials for related events. Former Attaché Lili Nurlaili and her group have gone around the country giving free interactive Batik-Tulis (hand-painted batik) workshops to schools and private entities. These workshops are also supported by the Social and Culture Section of the KBRI Manila in giving presentations about Indonesia. Establishing and fostering cooperation and relations between respective universities is also a goal worked on by the Attaché.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the KBRI Manila and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) celebrated the Philippines-Indonesia Cultural Festival 2020 digitally through video conference (KBRI Manila, 2020). The festival aims, through art exchanges and workshops, to advance and promote Philippine-Indonesian bilateral cultural relations. BIPA classes and various competitions have also been adjusted to being conducted through the Zoom platform during the pandemic.

THAILAND IN THE PHILIPPINES

Formal relations between Thailand and the Philippines began on 14 June 1949 upon the signing of the Treaty of Friendship in Washington D.C., but the two States had commercial and people-to-people contact throughout history way before that. Throughout their formal relations, there have been exchanges of high-level visits by Heads of State and Government, and the two States have concluded 25 key bilateral agreements – three of which pertain to culture, education, and public or presidential communications, with the Cultural Agreement between the two governments signed in Manila on 22 July 1975 (Embassy of the Philippines Bangkok Thailand, n.d.).

The Philippine-Thai Cultural Organisation (PTCO) was established in 2009 and was formally linked with the Royal Thai Embassy the same year. The PTCO is composed of Filipinos who formerly resided in Thailand in various professional capacities and who are interested in enhancing relations through mutual networking and programs of socio-cultural, educational, scientific, and technological exchanges. The Royal Thai Embassy and the PTCO worked together multiple times since its inception. Notably was during the two States' 60th anniversary wherein Ambassador Singhara promoted Thai participation in the PTCO, and during the 70th Anniversary when the Embassy granted budgetary support to the PTCO to facilitate its activities and projects in 2019.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has consistently organised activities emphasising on cultural performances, film screenings, and food festivals aimed to promote Thai culture abroad. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Thai Airways International had a hand in organising and cooperating with Philippine counterparts for these events. In 2008 the Thai Food Festival was held at the Mandarin Oriental wherein the Ambassador of Thailand to the Philippines specifically mentioned “the Royal Thai Embassy will work closely...and support other activities through cultural diplomacy to promote better understanding between the Thai and Philippine [people].” (Royal Thai Embassy Manila, 2009a). The celebration of the two States’ 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations the following year was enhanced by a cultural dance performance and a Muay Thai competition, and afterwards was the signing of the Executive Program for Cultural Cooperation (Royal Thai Embassy Manila, 2009b).

Food festivals were organised by the Royal Thai Embassy and sometimes with collaboration from the TAT and from Dusit Thani hotel branches from 2017 onwards under the “Thai Kitchen to the World” policy. Wives of cabinet members and ministers, current Vice-President of the Philippines Leonor Robredo and family, and other eminent Filipino individuals were also invited to Thai cooking demonstrations in efforts to reach out to groups that will serve as a voice to promote Thai food and culture. “Thai Culinary Delights 2019” was organised for its third year (Royal Thai Embassy Manila, 2019a) with the previous year’s Thai Culinary Delights considered a success with the attendance of about 200 Thai and Philippine dignitaries, members of diplomatic and consular corps, representatives from business sectors, the media, and the educational institutions in the Philippines.

2019 was a big year for Thailand as the Kingdom held the ASEAN Chairmanship; Thailand stressed that 2019 would be the ASEAN Year of Culture in hopes to promote greater awareness of the ASEAN identity through international conferences with international partners (Royal Thai Embassy Manila, 2018). The 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Thailand was also in the same year wherein various commemorative activities were organised by the two governments through their respective missions in Bangkok and Manila. The first of its series of activities was the “Thai-Philippine Cultural Exchanges” in collaboration with the Ang Thong College of Dramatic Arts, Banditpatanasilp Institute of Thailand, Satri Ang Thong, UST, and UP-Diliman on January 22 (Viray, 2019). The Royal Thai Embassy also held a screening of a Thai Film at the Far Eastern University (FEU) auditorium on March 28 (Luna, 2019).

Thailand is the only ASEAN country that has joined the Cinemalaya, the Philippines’ biggest and famous film festival held annually for 15 years, three times. It first participated in Cinemalaya 2017 and was in collaboration with the Royal Thai Embassy, the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, and the Department of Information (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand). In the press release by the embassy, it specifically stated “...it is a part of cultural and public diplomacy, which film is playing a significant role as a bridge between Thais and Filipinos” (Royal Thai Embassy Manila, 2019b).

DISCUSSION

After independence, Indonesia faced three immediate concerns which were safeguarding national independence, maintaining internal consolidation, and safeguarding economic interests which Hatta's framework served to ensure (Sukma, R., 1995). Indonesia's foreign policy goals of increasing the role and leadership in the ASEAN community, to increase cooperation in a variety of fields, to increase the quality of protocol and consular services, and to increase the State's image before the domestic and international sphere can be translated into its possible cultural diplomacy actions in the Philippines. In Thailand, the emphasis of a stable domestic political and economic sphere is prominent in the formulation and success of foreign policy. Despite the political upheavals in Thailand throughout the years, Thailand however was successful in promoting and maintaining its foreign policy goals of promoting its status in the international arena and in ensuring economic income through tourism via cultural diplomacy, or more specifically, gastrodiploamacy. What outcomes brought forth from foreign policy and diplomacy when their society is peaceful and harmonious is up for speculation.

The respective State uses good public communications and actively promotes the nation brand. Thailand and Indonesia have the same concerns of nation branding much like an international corporation. Both States used nation branding, displaying great images of itself to the foreign publics, to move away from the negative images associated with their respective countries. Both countries seek to exert itself as respective powers. Both, however, suffered from militarism, weak rule of law, corruption, crony capitalism, and as unconsolidated or weak democracies. Kusumaatmadja's conception of cultural diplomacy was as Cohen termed it "a Soeharto-era development project that aimed to build a cultural superstructure to enhance credibility and trust in Indonesia for the sake of attracting overseas investment in physical infrastructure and industry, tourism, and export goods." (p. 264). The same concern for the nation brand can be seen in Thailand's Foreign Policy under the military government led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha; "Promoting international confidence in, and positive image of, Thailand" is written in the Vision and Mission section in the Kingdom's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

The promotion of defence equipment, food products, sea and air connectivity, and the increased interactions in different spheres can be pushed for and is to some extent achieved by Indonesia in the Philippines through culture. Turning Bahasa Indonesia into an international language is enshrined in Law No. 24 of 2009 Article 44 and the PPSDK is under the Language and Cultivation Board, Ministry of Education and Culture. Indonesia also provides BIPA classes, full paid scholarships to Indonesia, and premiums in competitions. Thailand's cultural diplomatic activities are well funded and partnered by the TAT, Dusit Thani Hotels, and Thai Airways International among others. Chefs and culinary lecturers were invited by the Thai Embassy to share their skills, talent, and the richness of Thai cuisine. Thai dances from various regions, Thai Puppet performances, and various workshops on Thai crafts were sponsored by the TAT with raffle prizes also sponsored by Thai Airways International. This goes to show that promoting Thai gastrodiploamacy is a goal by the State and by the business sector.

BIPA learners are not just students in universities, but also include workers from various industries. Former Attaché Lili Nurlaili, during the Zoom-conducted Bahasa Indonesia classes, would drop by to promote a new competition and to promote the Darmasiswa scholarship to interested Filipinos. In line with Thailand's tourism and gastrodiplomacy efforts, the number of Filipino tourists to the Kingdom steadily rose from 296,339 arrivals in 2014 to 432,053 arrivals in 2018. Total trade between the two States rapidly rose from 5,834,507,231 in 2014 to 10,762,453,723 in 2018, with 2018 bringing in the highest rate of imports from Thailand at 15.20 per cent. Exports to Thailand were at its peak in 2017 with the growth rate of 25.50 per cent from -6.27 percent the previous year (Embassy of the Philippines Bangkok Thailand, n.d.). This finding is in line with the goal of increasing Thailand's popularity to contribute to Thai economy and society.

Through soft power practices mentioned above, cultural diplomacy shapes public opinion through framing and priming, and the nation-brand. Their respective cultural diplomacy practices have brought about trust through the sharing of cultures and fostering inter-cultural understandings thereby enhancing business-to-business and people-to-people contact and interactions, and attracted the flow of money from the Philippines via tourism and investments. Contrary to the observations of Hall & Smith wherein Asian Public Diplomatic efforts do not amount to much, there has been no observed blowback, the repulsion rather than attraction to the foreign country, from Filipino BIPA and Darmasiswa scholarship students. Although cautiously optimistic, the author also agrees with the two authors in that "it is one thing to change the opinions of individual elites, and yet another for governments to change their policies in response" (p. 9) and that it is difficult to ascertain the political impact of cultural and public diplomacy in the recipient country. Even if public opinion has been swayed, the translation of public opinion to policy decisions is not explicit. Although there is no visible lobbying of Filipinos for Indonesian or Thai interests, nor is there the explicit changing of Filipino preferences or policies because of cultural diplomacy, the results are more subtle and can be seen broadly on the perceptions, affections, and behaviours of Filipinos instead. The Philippines and its people are not just passive receivers of cultural and public diplomatic policies, but are active in meeting the agent State halfway in fostering good relations needed as a basis for successful bilateral relations. Students of BIPA and of other educational or scholarship programmes and the PTCO become unofficial cultural ambassadors in the Philippines ensuring and promoting bilateral relations.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia and Thailand, through their respective missions in the Philippines, have been conducting cultural diplomacy differently. Indonesia is actively promoting the Indonesian language and culture through their State-sponsored scholarship programmes and the BIPA programme. Thailand's goal is to promote itself as a tourist destination through gastrodiplomacy and tourism diplomacy, and to an extent exert itself as a Mainland Southeast Asian regional power despite domestic political upheavals. Indonesia also aims to be a Maritime Southeast Asian regional middle power through its foreign policy of "A thousand friends and zero enemies" approach. The activities and events conducted and held

by their missions depend on their capabilities, funding and the active promotion of the State. Their desired outcomes or the achievement of their foreign policy goals depend on how well their cultural and interlocking public diplomacy is done in the Philippines. Both States' desired outcomes are, through their foreign policy goals and by extension, through cultural and public diplomacy, to promote its status as powers, as being stable and cohesive in the domestic sphere, and being a country with a rich and deep heritage. Culture provides the operating context for politics and the starting point for bilateral relations.

As elaborated by the author, both missions are well-funded and cultural diplomatic goals well institutionalised to promote positive country images through the practice of nation branding and through soft power's framing and priming changing the subject's preferences. There are no observable and explicit changes of Filipino perceptions or policies to the benefit of the foreign State. The Philippines and its citizens are not passive recipients, and the effects of their cultural and public diplomatic efforts are more subtle than overt - because of the BIPA and other educational programs, Filipino students become the informal cultural ambassadors in the Philippines. Through the experiences of Filipinos who have lived in Thailand, these individuals formed the PTCO, which serves as a bridge to connect the two States and promote Thailand in the country. The gastrodipomatic efforts of Thailand increased the interest in visiting and learning about Thailand.

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