Politics of Interfaith Diplomacy in Indonesia: A Critical View on World Peace Forum

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Abstract

This paper investigates politics interfaith diplomacy in Indonesia. Indeed, interfaith diplomacy is part of the inclusion of religion in international relations that has been neglected because of the dominance of the secularity foundation in the realism tradition. After 11 September 2021, interfaith dialogue, is widely used as a framework in solving global religious problems, including in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach, this research answered the question of why the interfaith diplomacy of the World Peace Forum (WPF) emerges, continues, and becomes successful in maintaining its continuity. In addition, aspects of the socio-political context of interfaith diplomacy were studied. To better understand the puzzle, this working paper employed the concept of New Public Diplomacy in analyzing the topic. The paper contends that interfaith diplomacy emerged in Indonesia because of global conditions that were being hit by global conflict and war as well as clashes between civilizations so that religious organizations and religious leaders such as Muhammadiyah took part in playing the role of inter-religious diplomacy through WPF.

Keywords: World Peace Forum, Interfaith Diplomacy, Global Conflict, New Public Diplomacy, Religious Leaders.

Introduction

In International Relations (IR), religion has little place because of the dominance of realist views that have a strong secular foundation. Jack Snyder argues that the neglect of religion in IR is because "scholars find it difficult to integrate religious subject matter into their normal conceptual frameworks"[1]. Similarly, Shah and Philpott point out that the discipline of IR has little to say about religion because "the theory, like the phenomenon of international relations itself, has been secular from its very origins in the seventeenth century"[2]. In the same vein, Samina Yasmeen states that the study of IR has ignored the role of religion because since the end of World War II, the dominant approach in the discipline, namely the realist paradigm, prioritizes national interests between states and political entities[3]. As a result, most IR scholars seem to accept the 'secularization theory', an idea that modernization naturally leads to the weakening of traditional culture and the decline of religion[4]. In short, religion and culture have no place in world politics.

However, an important impetus for the interest in religion was the wave of terrorist attacks, starting with 9/11 in 2001, the Bali Bombing in 2002, the Madrid Bombing in 2004, and similar attacks in Paris, Barcelona, Belgium, and London. In response to these acts, some Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), such as the UN (United Nations), the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), religious institutions, and the Catholic Church, are working to promote interreligious dialogue or interfaith dialogue. Hence, the interfaith dialogue is a growing field in IR. In addition, these provided an impetus for recognizing religion as a significant part of international relations, which in turn resulted in a lot of literature being published on religion and its political implications.

Interfaith dialogue has influenced international relations and vice

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[1] R. Snyder, "Scaling down: The Subnational Comparative Method," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, no. 1 (2001): 1, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02687586.

[2] T.S. Shah and D Philpott, "The Fall and Rise of Religion in International Relations," in *Religion and International Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 24.

[3] S. Yasmeen, "Islamic Groups and Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Lashkar-e-Taiba," in *Islam and West: Reflections from Australia*, ed. S. Akbarzadeh and S. Yasmeen (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), 45.

[4] J. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 29.

versa. Two stories below describe the phenomenon[5]. Firstly, Pope Benedict XVI delivered a speech at Rosenburg University in 2006. He talked about "Faith, Reason, and University: Memories and Reflections". His scholarship delighted the participants who attended the lecture. However, his speech echoed beyond the lecture hall because the Pope mentioned some harsh quotations regarding the Prophet Muhammad and Islam that made Muslims angry. It took two years to solve the tension after a high-level dialogue between the Vatican and Muslim leaders was conducted. Secondly, the accession of Turkey into the European Union (EU) is not easy because two influential countries in the EU, Germany, and France, have seen that Turkey's culture does not fit with the EU's culture that is dominated by secular values. Also, Islam in Europe is associated with, amongst other things, extremism, terrorism, and ignorance.

Efforts to combat the development of terrorism and religious extremism have become a concern and policy enactment for many countries, including Indonesia. To date, several interfaith dialogue activities as part of public diplomacy have been carried out in Indonesia, including the 2014 UN Alliance of Civilizations Conferenced, the Jakarta, World Peace Forum (WFP), the Bali Democracy Forum, the International Conference of Islamic Scholars, and the Religion Twenty (R20). Meanwhile, in response to acts of terror in the country, for example in Bali, Jakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kementerian Luar Negri) has encouraged interfaith dialogue as a framework carried out by the government as well as non-state actors, such as Islamic organizations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which seeks to encourage cooperation between international religious groups.

Both organizations have participated in promoting peacebuilding and conflict management in Asian regions, for example, in Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines, Myanmar, and Afghanistan. They have also participated in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in numerous countries, such as South Thailand, South Philippines, Myanmar, and Afghanistan. As a result, their efforts are seen to encourage religion as a balancing solution where Islam in the Middle East and Central Asia is highlighted as a source of extremism and bloody conflict. Such efforts are known as public

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[5] T. Banchoff, "Interreligious Dialogue and International Relations," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, ed. A TS Shah, A. Stepan, and Toft MD (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), 204–16.

diplomacy[6], which is intended as a force to influence the international community. In theory, public diplomacy developed from the work of Joseph Nye who introduced soft power in 1990.

In Indonesia, not many studies have been carried out seriously on interfaith diplomacy. Some scholars such as Thomas state that religion and diplomacy have become more interrelated since the end of the 20th century, one of which is because globalization and changes in conflict have revealed the limitations of conventional diplomacy in resolving new conflicts in the global era. This condition opens new opportunities for religious actors involved in diplomacy, resulting in the birth of "religion-based diplomacy" which encourages dialogue within and between religious traditions[7]. However other scholars such as Rachmawati have started researching interfaith dialogue, but her studies only focus on interfaith dialogue policies and programs carried out by the government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[8].

Furthermore, due to the lack of adequate literature on the subject, the discussion of interfaith diplomacy does not provide a broader perspective on the politics of interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. In addition, WPF has not been studied and ignored by past researchers. We take the issue with a lack of study of it and argue that we exclude a substantial and influential section of interfaith diplomacy by ignoring the politics of interfaith and presenting an incomplete portrait of the interfaith dialogue in the country. Only by including the political aspects of interfaith diplomacy in the analysis and considering the socio-political context can we come to understand the difficult dynamics and prospects of interfaith diplomacy. In sum, the studies on WPF are very limited, so this study can enrich discussions about interfaith diplomacy in the country.

Hence, the underlying hypothesis for this paper is that the politics of interfaith dialogue is very influential in the formation, continuity, and success of interfaith forums as a new public diplomacy to support the

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[6]N Snow, *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (California: USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2009).

[7]Scott Thomas, "Diplomacy and Religion," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2017, https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-154.

[8] Novita Rachmawati, *Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesian Public Diplomacy : The Role of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Interfaith Dialogue*, 2009.

promotion of global peace. To test the validity of this hypothesis, this paper investigates the politics of interfaith diplomacy of WPF by explicating its emergence, impetus, and initiators, the existence of CDCC, and its strengths and weaknesses. We chose the WPF case because this forum has been held regularly since 2006 and is held every two years, despite being able to vacuum during COVID-19. By explicating the WPF, the authors explain New Public Diplomacy as a framework for this paper to provide a broad perspective on interfaith diplomacy.

Method

This research employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is the systematic investigation of social phenomena in a natural setting, which includes, but is not limited to, aspects of human experience and life, how individuals/groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships. In this study, researchers become instruments in data collection, which will test why an event occurs, what happens, and what the meaning of these events is through participant studies. Meanwhile, to explore the data, this paper is sourced from several documents about the WPF. In addition, it draws on interviews with several actors or organizers of the WPF to give an analysis from a broader perspective (See Table 1).

Table 1
Resource person data

NO	Name of source	Date of Interview	Description / Position
1	Alpha Ammirachman	August 24, 2023	CDCC Director 2013-2014 and Chairman Vth WPF Committee
2	Yayah Chisbiyah	August 25, 2023	Secretary of Bureau of International Relations and Cooperation Muhammadiyah Central Board period 2022-2027 and CDCC Committee VIII (2022)
3	Greg Fealy	September 20, 2023	Emeritus Professor in Indonesian politics and history, (specialises in Islam) at Australian National University (ANU)
4	Rifqi Muna	Rabu, 23 Agustus 2023	Organizing Committee of WPF 7 (Year 2018) (Special Assistant of Prof. Din. Syamsuddin at UKP DKAP RI)

To analyze the findings, the authors made descriptions, categorizations, and conceptualizations. The process of data collection and analysis cycle was carried out to ensure that the process of data collection and data analysis was carried out reciprocally. In short, after collecting the data, the authors analyze and reflect on the data; Based on analysis and reflection, the data is reviewed to ensure the validity of the findings.

Defining New Public Diplomacy: A Framework

Public diplomacy has evolved rapidly through scholarly debate, and no single definition of the concept exists. The phrase public diplomacy was coined by Edmund Gullion in 1965, which refers to "deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies"[9]. This concept shows diplomacy as an attempt to influence public attitudes in the formation and implementation of foreign policy. In the old paradigm of public diplomacy, the state played the role of exclusive agent and became the sole player. Today, however, non-state international groups and domestic communities could engage in public diplomacy because of the availability of means of information dissemination [10] driven by key world events and changing international political landscapes. In particular, the end of the Cold War, the democratization of communications, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism, and the aftermath of 9/11 have contributed to the development of theory and methodology in the study of public diplomacy[11].

The practice of diplomacy in international relations not only includes shifts in relations between governments but also transformations that occur at the non-state level. In line with this, Nye also emphasized that the effectiveness of public diplomacy is challenged amid globalization and the development of information technology. Therefore, the new public diplomacy covers at least three dimensions: everyday communication to

[9] Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2009), 19.

[10] Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jen Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 23–24.

[11] Melissen, 7; Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 2008* 616, no. 55 (2008): 57, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312142.

explain the context of domestic and foreign policy, strategic communication on specific themes, and long-term cultural relations aimed at creating a country's positive image and supporting the achievement of desired results. In addition, as an instrument of *soft power*, "good public diplomacy must go beyond propaganda"[12]. Thus, the way of disseminating hierarchical information from the state as occurs in traditional diplomacy needs to be expanded into horizontal communication and in the form of cooperation involving various actors [13].

The changing context of international relations, politics, and information networks allows people to engage in diplomacy as active actors, rather than merely passive objects of foreign policy. The internet has opened opportunities for individuals and groups giving rise to 'networks' in new public diplomacy. This model network centers on non-hierarchical and interdependent relationships that connect various actors who have common interests [14]

Due to the democratization of information and technological advances that provide communication channels expanding the choice of diplomatic instruments, in the era of traditional diplomacy, state-owned broadcast media spearheaded the dissemination of messages and propaganda. The state becomes the gatekeeper of messages to the public so that the state controls the dissemination of messages, responses, and dynamics of diplomacy. Since the presence of the internet has become home to digital media with unlimited reach, government control over communication lines is very limited. Thus, digital media expands the platform to advocate universal values, which is not the mission of public diplomacy[15]. Digital media also accommodates the involvement of individuals and groups more actively in shaping public opinion. This includes reaching out to parties who are not the public they expect.

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[12] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 101–2, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699.

[13] Cao Wei, "Public Diplomacy : Functions , Functional Boundaries and Measurement Methods," *IntechOpen*, 2020, 2, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.92664.

[14] Brian Hocking, "Rethinking the 'New' Public Diplomacy," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2005), 36–37.

[15] Gary D. Rawnsley, "Communications Technologies and Public Diplomacy: A History of the Tools of Statecraft," in *The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy: Hegemony, Morality and Power in the International Sphere*, ed. Colin R. Alexander (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2021), 36.

Consequently, the complexity of public diplomacy today is increasing amid the ease of designing and disseminating information and the breadth of the reach of messages to the public.

On the other hand, Melissen[16] underlines that the new concept of public diplomacy is more than just the transmission of information to foreign publics, and places more emphasis on building interactive relationships with such publics. The new concept of public diplomacy represents a new form of traditional public diplomacy, which usually involves unilateral communication between the state and the foreign public, as well as propaganda techniques to improve the image of a country or selectively promote positive aspects to the foreign public. Like public diplomacy, new public diplomacy must be separated from propaganda, *nation branding*, and foreign intercultural relations, although some features can be found among these concepts in recent public diplomacy. Nevertheless, the practice of cultural relations is recognized closely, even overlapping with new concepts of public diplomacy.

Furthermore, according to Kim, there are six characteristics of new public diplomacy derived from interactions between *soft power* sources as follows:

"(1) new public diplomacy is more than a technique of foreign policy, instead pursuing soft power; (2) new public diplomacy is primarily concerned with the international credibility of the nation-state; (3) new public diplomacy manages two-way and symmetric communications in the information age; (4) new public diplomacy pursues collaboration to achieve common goals; (5) new public diplomacy engages non-state actors and relates to multi-stakeholders and partnerships; and (6) new public diplomacy can cultivate a favorable diplomatic environment for a nation-state in world politics" [17].

Kim's concept was also examined by Huijgh,[18] who said that future diplomacy, which is like the concept of new public diplomacy, has changed in four narratives: (1) the purpose of public diplomacy in designing and delivering messages that initially from static to dynamic or mutual message

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[16] Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," 11–16.

[17] Hwajung Kim, "Bridging the Theoretical Gap between Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 15, no. 2 (2017): 301, http://dx.doi.org/10.14731/kjis.2017.08.15.2.293.

[18] Ellen Huijgh, *Public Diplomacy at Home: Domestic Dimensions*, ed. Jen Melissen, *Diplomatic Studies Series* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019), 174–75, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004394254.

exchange; (2) Actors become more complex involving supranational, sub-state and non-state actors. In other words, the state no longer opposes public diplomacy; (3) the intended public is more diverse, ranging from international leaders to the wider community; (4) meaning, public diplomacy prioritizes public networks over information from the government.

At some point, the concept of new public diplomacy is like the definitions of public diplomacy introduced after the Cold War by Nye, Gilboa, Kelley, and Huijgh. However, some important changes distinguish the new public diplomacy from traditional diplomacy. The first change is the increase of non-traditional actors, which shows the increasing role of non-state actors in public diplomacy. The second change, the information transmission mechanism, is increasingly sophisticated in information technology, including real-time dissemination through the Internet. The third change is a shift in public diplomacy that was originally related to propaganda to a new public diplomacy that refers more to communication networks. In other words, new public diplomacy affirms understanding through two-way communication, engagement, and relationship-building between its actors[19].

Concerning Gilboa, there are three models of public diplomacy: the Basic Cold War model, the Non-state Transnational model, and the Domestic PR model. He suggests five variables to assess variation between models: lead actors, initiators, goals, media types, and means and techniques. In the first model, both superpowers use campaigns to persuade and spread their ideology to foreign societies, which is more akin to propaganda. These activities shape people's attitudes toward competitors' ideologies and aim to achieve long-term results by using their communication channels, such as radio stations. The flow of communication is one-way and initiated by the state. Second, the Transnational Non-State model accommodates the emergence of new actors in international relations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), groups, and individuals. These actors conduct transnational public diplomacy using global news and communication networks. This model is a revision of the basic model that only focuses on the state as an actor of public diplomacy. In stark contrast to the previous two models, the domestic PR model describes the use of PR

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[19] Kim, "Bridging the Theoretical Gap between Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy," 294.

firms, even by lobbyists to achieve the goals of public diplomacy. Usually, the government prefers this strategy because it is considered more effective than direct government-sponsored public diplomacy. In addition, using a PR firm can help hide the power and source of funding. The presence of local support groups or movements in target countries can help increase the legitimacy and originality of campaigns[20]. The application of one or a combination of the three models has significant implications for government, media, and public opinion, thus benefiting the practice of public diplomacy in analyzing WPF as a diplomatic tool.

The Emergence of World Peace Forum (WPF)

Din Syamsuddin, Chairman of the Muhamamdiyah Central Leadership for the period 2005-2010, initiated the World Peace Forum (WPF), a peace forum that brings together political, religious, policymakers, academics, entrepreneurs, and civil society figures as well as peace activists from around the world held for the first time in Jakarta on 15-16 August 2006 in collaboration with the Multi-Culture Society. In this regard, we can ask why WPF emerged in Indonesia.

From a broader perspective, the emergence of WPF was related to the dynamics of international politics after 9/11 on its journey is getting warmer. The pendulum shifts back to conflict and violence marked by rampant acts of terrorism, US unilateralism invading Iraq and Afghanistan over democracy, and the global war on terrorism. Another phenomenon is the emergence of misperceptions against Islam. For example, a study conducted by Muhammad Ali[21] shows that the response after the events of 9/11 is the existence of various literature that states that Islam is an evil religion (*evil*) and devils (*devil*) who work on violence, including terrorism, even Islam is said to want to rule the world. Steven Emerson's American *Jihad: Terrorist Living Among Us* (2006), DVD *Terrorist among Us: Jihad in America* (2001), as well as Daniel Pipes' *Militant Islam Reaches America* (2003) and William Wagner's *How Islam Plans to Change the World* (2004), are just a few examples of publications Ali cites promoting Islam as inherently and strategically posing a threat to American culture and world.

To respond to the above phenomenon, former Indonesian Minister

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[20] Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," 59.

[21] Muhammad Ali, "Dinamika Islam Dan Amerika, "Jurnal Prisma, 29, no. 4 (2010):59.

of Foreign Affairs, Hasan Wirajuda stated that the Indonesian government as a majority country with a Muslim population, through the foreign ministry held an *Interfaith Dialogue* to promote moderate Islam. Furthermore, he maintains in a democratic setting, moderate Islamic groups are an asset of Indonesian foreign policy that has become increasingly important in recent years when at the international level there is a tendency to misperceive culture, religion, and civilization. Therefore, the mainstream of Indonesian diplomacy at that time to respond to this was by empowering moderate Islam, and building mutual understanding between religions and cultures through interfaith dialogue [22].

According to Umar Hadi, the former Director of the Directorate of Public Diplomacy of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the inclusion of interfaith dialogue into the important agenda of Indonesian diplomacy is a response to changes that occur in the international and domestic environment. Several factors from the international environment that encourage the inclusion of interreligious dialogue into the implementation of public diplomacy carried out by Indonesia include, *first*, terrorism as a threat to international security and peace. *Second*, *the existence of the* label Islamic terrorism, *Third*, *the* strengthening of American unilateralism. Meanwhile, from the domestic environment, some of the drivers include, *first*, the existence of legal infrastructure constraints and institutional capacity in dealing with the threat of terrorism. *Second*, there is a crisis in the perception of the West versus Islam. *Third*, the need to balance security needs with democratization and human rights protection. *Fourth*, the need to project the image of Indonesia where most of the population is Muslim [23].

In addition, the big idea of *interfaith dialogue* in Indonesian diplomacy emerged closely related to the obstacles faced in handling the problem of terrorism. According to Umar Hadi, one of the constraints is the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself. According to him, in carrying out the policy of anta-religious dialogue in public diplomacy, the Foreign Ministry felt that it did not have the ability and adequacy of human resources in terms of establishing relations with religious organizations and

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[22] Gadis Ranty, "Islam Moderat Dalam Diplomasi Publik Indonesia" (Sekolah Dinas Luar Negeri Departemen Luar Negeri RI, 2009), 5.

[23] Novita Rachmawati, "Wajah Dialog Agama Dalam Diplomasi Indonesia," in *Dialog Antarumat Beragama : Gagasan Dan Praktik Di Indonesia*, ed. Banawiratma (Jakarta: Mizan Publika, 2010), 112.

community organizations because this is a legacy of the New Order, where the government has unfriendly relations with religious Community Organizations (CSOs) and/or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Hadi also said that before the reform era, the government's attitude towards community organizations seemed to take a distance, which is certainly different from the reform era where the government seemed to be trying to approach, even embrace, various community organizations. So, it requires adjustment because there is still a hesitant, even suspicious, attitude among CSOs or NGOs. Responding to this reality, according to him, the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs felt the need to prepare and get used to building a tradition of partnering with elements of civil society organizations or faith-based NGOs [24].

Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Directorate of Public Diplomacy then tried to encourage, guard, and put forward a forum for moderate groups so that their voices were heard [25]. The collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and religious leaders from various major religious groups such as Muhammadiyah and NU, is a good opportunity because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have expertise in the field of religion. Encouraged by this reality, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to hold routine agendas such as Foreign *Policy Breakfast* and *Interfaith Dialogue* by cooperating with prominent religious figures who have many followers in Indonesia.

In addition to the two public diplomacy activities above initiated directly by the government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several figures of large moderate-leaning religious organizations such as from Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) at the same time held similar activities—for example, the Chairman of PBNU, KH. Hasyim Muzadi founded ICIS (International Conference of Islamic Scholars). ICIS is a non-governmental organization, non-political, non-ethnic organization engaged in building and creating relationships and cooperation between Muslim scholars and scholars around the world for the realization of a peaceful, just and civilized society The organization was established in Jakarta on February 24, 2004, on the initiative of Kiai Hasyim with Hasan Wirajuda, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia who served at that time. Meanwhile, the recommendation letter was signed by President Megawati Soekarno

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[24] Rachmawati, 116.

[25] Rachmawati, 117.

Putri[26].

Against this backdrop, Din Syamsuddin maintains that WPF was present because world conditions were increasingly worrying with conflicts, violence, and wars. He said the promise of a "peace dividend" after the Cold War ended never materialized. He also touched on the conditions of the Lebanon (Hezbollah) versus Israel War at the time which he said had a major impact on world peace. For Syamsuddin, if war continues to be the main means of resolving differences, the world's dream of a new world civilization based on social justice, equality, peace, harmony, and prosperity, will continue to be far away [27].

In that context, Syamsuddin emphasized the need to intensify dialogue between civilizations is becoming increasingly urgent because every citizen of the world is bound by "One Humanity, One Destiny, and One Responsibility" of ours having universal human values, the destiny of mankind, the responsibility to create peace. In the view of Syamsuddin citizens of the civilized world, it is obliged to work together so that peace can be realized on this earth. For this reason, Muhammadiyah together with the Multicultural Society, took the initiative to organize the World Peace Forum (WPF) with the hope that through intensive dialogue the citizens of the world will increasingly realize that they are united by humanity [28].

Indeed, the first emergence of WPF was a response to global conflicts so a forum was needed that could be a dialogue between civilizations. However, there is also a local context that influences along with the implementation of WPF, namely the context of a plural Indonesian society which is a challenge for communal harmony to occur, and how to introduce moderate Islam to the global world. Therefore, it can be stated that the emergence of WPF was influenced by the global context and the local context, and the desire to promote moderate Islam. In this regard, Rifqi Muna, chairman of the 7th WPF committee, stated "*We see Indonesia is a plural, democratic country, and we have experienced many things in the peace nationally process, then we are also I think as a democratic country Indonesia has rich experience and rich background to share experience to encourage world peace in a setting that we pluralize, and this Indonesian moderate Islam*".

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[26]Muhammad Izharuddin, "ICIS: Sumbangsih Abah Hasyim Muzadi Untuk Dunia," 2022, https://walisongoonline.com/icis-sumbangsih-abah-hasyim-muzadi-untuk-dunia/.

[27] Din Syamsuddin cited in World Peace Forum.

[28] World Peace Forum, "World Peace Forum: One Humanity, One Destiny, One Responsibility."

Connecting it with the theoretical framework in this paper, it can be stated that the emergence of WPF can be seen as part of New Public Diplomacy, as explained above one of the tendencies is the increase of non-traditional actors, which shows the increasing role of non-state actors in public diplomacy[29].

Initiator and Financial Aid of WPF

Referring to the report document of the first WPF, Chairman of the Steering Committee (SC) of the first WPF who is also the Chairman of the Institute of International Relations and Cooperation (LHKI) PP Muhammadiyah for the period 2005-2010 Rizal Sukma said that WPF activities are intended to provide a place for concerned citizens of the world to share thoughts and wisdom, discuss practical ways to increase cooperation and remove prejudices, as well as fostering deeper mutual understanding among different civilizations. Although it sounds too idealistic, WPF provides hope, because it is often nurtured through consistent efforts by a few enlightened people. Therefore, WPF is scheduled to continue in the following years [30].

There are two main figures behind the implementation of WPF, namely Din Syamsuddin and Rizal Sukma. In addition to them, there were several Muhammadiyah functionaries, such as Hajriyanto J. Tohari and Bachtiar Effendy. But, according to Sukma, the big idea of WPF came from Din Syamsuddin who at that time was the General Chairman of the Central Leadership of Muhammadiya for the period 2005-2010. However, according to Chisbiyyah, Din Syamsuddin always said that the emergence of WPF was due to inspiration from Rizal Sukma, Executive Director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) who was also the Chairman of LHKI PP Muhammadiyah at that time (2005-2010).

Similarly, an Indonesianist from the Australian National University (ANU), Greg Fealy considered that WPF and Interfaith dialogue activities could not be separated from the figure of Din Syamsuddin who has a wide international network, especially related to interfaith. For Fealy, in Muhammadiyah itself until now there has been nothing significant to

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[29] Kim, "Bridging the Theoretical Gap between Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy," 294.

[30] World Peace Forum, "World Peace Forum: One Humanity, One Destiny, One Responsibility," 2006.

replace the figure of Din Syamsuddin in international issues. So, it makes sense according to him when President Joko Widodo appointed Din Syamsuddin to be the Special Presidential Envoy for Interreligious and Civilizational Dialogue and Cooperation (UKP DKAP) in 2017. In this sense, Fealy maintains that the existence of UKP DKAP is not significant, and the government has not consistently implemented this issue at the grassroots level.

WPF funding relies more on Din Syamsuddin's relationships and networks. We conted that Din Syamsuddin and its team have "conducted transnational public diplomacy using global news and communication networks", from new public diplomacy's perspective. The 1st WPF was held in collaboration between the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah and the Multicultural Society founded by Chin Kung, an activist for interfaith harmony and world peace. As for the opening of the 1st WPF, Chin Kung could not attend and was represented by Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew, founder of Cheng Ho Multicultural and Education Trust who on every subsequent WPF agenda became one of the supporters of the event. Chisbiyyah said that Chairman of the International Cooperation Relations Institute (LHKI) PP Muhammadiyah 2022-2027, Cheng Ho Multicultural and Education Trust is the largest institution in supporting WPF activities in the form of accommodation support such as event venues, lodging, and tickets for resource persons both at home and abroad.

Until the implementation of WPF in Solo 2022, Cheng Ho Multicultural and Education Trust continues to finance even though different funding schemes for the forum have been implemented. In addition to getting support from Cheng Ho Multicultural and Education Trust, because of Din Syamsuddin's character and having an extensive network both nationally and internationally, WPF also received support from various parties such as state officials (politicians), businessmen, and several leaders of international NGOs engaged in issues of religious harmony and peace.

However, there are three formal institutions or organizations that are pillars of supporting and implementing WPF consistently, namely Muhammadiyah, Cheng Ho Multicultural and Education Trust, and CDCC (Centre for Dialogue among Civilization) which acts as an organizing committee in a series of events. And Muhammadiyah, according to Chisbiyyah, channels many of its best cadres into *manpower* in every WPF agenda, be it being part of the Steering Committee (SC) to the Organizing

Committee (SC) filled by young people. We will elaborate a bit in detail on CDCC below.

The Existence of CDCC

The discussion of this section will begin with the question of how WPF relates to Muhammadiyah. Some think that WPF is a formation of Muhammadiyah. However, the fact is that WPF was formed by Din Syamsuddin who incidentally is a prominent Muhammadiyah figure, and implementation of the WPF forum is entrusted to the CDCC.

The establishment of CDCC, according to Chisbiyyah, was established ahead of the 2nd WPF in 2008, one of the main factors because Muhammadiyah is a large organization with its bureaucracy and administration which according to Din Syamsuddin at that time was not yet possible to carry out international forums that require small, solid, and more flexible teams. So, at that time Din Syamsuddin established CDCC with the components of the governing board of several Muhammadiyah figures with diverse backgrounds including Din Syamsuddin, Bahtiar Effendy, Hajrianto Y. Thohari, Didik J. Rachbini, Rizal Sukma, Fahmi Darmawansyah and Said Umar. As for the supervisory board, namely Rustam Effendy and Edy Kuschayanto, the executive level is led by Abdul Mu'ti as Executive Director and Piet Hezbollah Khaidir and Izza Rohman as Director and Deputy Director in charge of various programs [31].

It can be said that one of the outputs of the 1st WPF is the CDCC agency, which was established in 2007, exactly one year after the first WPF event was held on August 15-16, 2006, in Jakarta. In addition to the fact that CDCC is needed because it supports the implementation of WPF technically and periodically, the background of the establishment of CDCC is as an institution that aims to find points of differences through dialogue and cooperation. CDCC seeks ways to realize various interfaith and interfaith cooperation and avoid the clash of civilizations[32]. In addition, in line with the great mission carried out by WPF, the institution established by Din Syamsuddin aims to promote better understanding and strengthen harmony between religions, cultures, nations, and civilizations. Here are some of the programs that the CDCC has:

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[31]Fauzi Ningtyas, "Perspektif Komunikasi Budaya Untuk Peradaban: Studi Kasus World Peace Forum Dan CDCC" (UIN Jakarta, 2009).

[32]Ningtyas, 2009.

a. Public Lectures and Seminars

    CDCC has held inter-civilizational dialogues by gathering elites and citizens in a forum that discusses issues concerning interreligious, intercultural, and international relations issues. Among examples of such forums are the Lecture on Civilisations, international seminars, and international conferences and forums such as the World Peace Forum (WPF). Participants in attendance represented various groups, ranging from religious figures, academics, politicians, activists, businessmen, journalists, youth leaders, and government representatives such as diplomats, etc.

b. Strengthening Networking and Cooperation

    CDCC conducts various activities with various parties to develop a network to promote peace by promoting intensive and effective dialogues to dispel suspicions and respect differences.

c. Policy Advocacy

    CDCC seeks to prevent and mediate conflicts in society, and advocates against government policies that are incompatible with peace values.

d. Publication

    CDCC disseminates information and ideas through web pages and articles in the mass media.

e. Research

    CDCC conducts various research related to the development of dialogue and cooperation between communities, especially those who have differences in ethnicity, religion, race, and culture. According to Kelley, there are at least three activities that make up public diplomacy: information that includes the management and distribution of information for short-term events or crises; influence on long-term campaign agendas to change goal attitudes in society, and engagement to build relationships and mutual understanding as long-term goals [33]. Successful public diplomacy must carefully consider the components of new public diplomacy to translate into campaign models and structures, in this case, the WFP program through CDCC. To some degree, the CDCC's activities have echoed Kelly's views on the activities that shape public diplomacy. In other words, WFP activities represent

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[33]John Robert Kelley, "Between 'Take-Offs' and 'Crash Landing': Situational Aspects of Public Diplomacy," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, ed. Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2009), 73.

"new public diplomacy that affirms understanding through two-way communication, engagement, and relationship-building between its actors"[34].

One of the Executive Directors of CDCC (2013-2014 period), Alpha Ammirachman said that CDCC is the activity wing of Din Syamsuddin besides he is the Chairman of PP Muhammadiyah. Din Syamsuddin actualized the roles of peace by organizing important meetings of stakeholders, especially from faith-based *organizations* both nationally and internationally, one of which was in the form of WPF. Din Syamsuddin's mission is to encourage Muslims in Indonesia to have an important role in civilizational dialogue, and interfaith dialogue, to bring peace missions, and voices of peace, throughout the world. In short, Ammirachman said that CDCC is the implementing agency for Din Syamsuddin's big ideas on peace issues and manifested in World Peace Forum activities.

The implementation of international events according to Chisbiyyah (2023) requires large funds, but because the figure of Din Syamsuddin is *a free man* with a *free mind*, funding for WPF does not depend too much on the government. Therefore, the WPF is independent and can criticize the government. In Chisbiyyah's note at the WPF event, sometimes Din Syamsuddin often seeks his funds even in a meeting, when catering accommodation has not been paid, several figures join the joint venture because the sponsor has not provided funds. In addition, he has a perfectionist character and *attention to detail*. Finally, Din Syamsuddin accommodatively listened to proposals related to women's vision. One of the outputs is that WPF invites many women activists who are engaged in peace and justice issues. On the other hand, according to Chisbiyyah, because Din Syamsuddin's figure is too central, in the end, the WPF movement relies too much on the *network* owned by Din Syamsuddin. Included in the selection of speakers, the majority of whom still rely on the network owned by Din Syamsuddin.

On the other hand, Ammirachman assessed, that WPF has managed to consistently run every two years until now because, *first*, its character and driving motor are directly under Din Syamsuddin. *Second*, its inclusivity is owned by WPF itself. Although Din Syamsuddin came from and had been the Chairman of PP Muhammadiyah, the WPF event was not organized by

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[34] Kim, "Bridging the Theoretical Gap between Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy," 294.

Muhammadiyah, but organized by a separate organization, *detach* from Muhammadiyah, namely CDCC. Although WPF was founded by several figures from Muhammadiyah, because it is inclusive, it is more flexible and embraces all groups.

Some Strengths and Weaknesses

One of WPF's strengths is its independence in organizing WPF and ensuring its sustainability, from 2006 to 2022. Another benefit of WPF is the impact of interfaith diplomacy is quite resonant in the global world, by placing a positive image of Indonesia that supports global peace. This is different from similar activities carried out by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) which relies on full assistance from the government so that it does not last long.

Furthermore, examined from the perspective of public diplomacy, interfaith diplomacy of NU and Muhammadiyah mass organizations succeeded in promoting moderate Islam, and the role of NU and Muhammadiyah is between recognizing internal problems – conflict problems and religious realities in Indonesia – and presenting solutions that become models and bridges for achieving peace as goals in the perspective of peacebuilding at the global level. This is another strength.

One of the visible weaknesses of CDCC management lined up as WPF organizer is the dependence on Din Syamsuddin to seek funds. Scheduled, the implementation of WPF should take place in 2024 and we will wait to see if WPF will continue to be implemented because of the information of some informants Din Syamsuddin is busy with Muhammadiyah activities and his person.

Meanwhile, Chisbiyyah admits that one of the weaknesses of WPF is that until now there has been no variation and innovation in the format of activities. In this regard, WPF is still in the form of seminars and dialogues and sharing views and experiences on peace issues and conflict resolution. If you want to produce detailed and sharp discussions, he also realizes that the agenda format is not only panel to panel, but also *there is a special working group* then there is a *plenary*, there is *a parallel session*. By only relying on seminars, in the end, there has been no *more real follow-up* and follow-up in the field.

However, according to Chisbiyyah, WPF always provides cultural elements, *such as cultural* performances, *or visits to several places related to peace and religious affairs, such as* houses of worship, Istiqlal, cathedrals, etc. Another shortcoming, according to Chisbiyyah, is that publication and

dissemination are not optimal, especially targeting young people and people at the *grassroots.* It must be admitted that WPF so far, according to Chisbiyyah, is still around the elite level and he also realizes that WPF has not optimized the digital era that has a lot of contact with the current generation, such as social media optimization, etc [35].

Similarly, in Fealy's view, interfaith dialogue forums, both owned by the government and initiated by community organizations, still do not have a real impact on society. In addition, according to him, these events do not yet have instruments that can be used how we can see the success and impact at the grassroots. For example, he mentioned the frequency of use of the term kafir (takfiri), then religious conflicts, whether freedom of expression decreased or increased after these forums, or whether there was no change at all. He also highlighted events or summits other than WPF which he said were sometimes too expensive and involved people who had a not very good *track record* of interfaith tolerance. Fealy maintains that *"Criticism of Interfaith dialogue activities such as the WPF and similar conferences conducted by other Islamic organizations is that in substance and impact, they are not too different. If this needs to be an international conference on interfaith tolerance, what are the criteria for measuring its success or failure? If you compare the announcement of this year's World Peace Forum with previous World Peace Forums?"*[36]

Thus, the strengths and weaknesses of WPF should be an evaluation material for the improvement of similar activities in the future.

Conclusion

The paper maintains that, based on data in the field and desk review, the World Peace Forum (WPF) emerged in Indonesia because of global conditions that were being hit by conflict and war as well as clashes between civilizations, so that religious organizations and religious leaders such as Muhammadiyah took part in playing the role of inter-religious diplomacy. In carrying out interfaith diplomacy, funding is generally carried out by collaborating with donors from other parties, because it requires large funds and minimal financial support from the government. However, there is also the government's contribution by involving assistance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the implementation of these activities. Here also the

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[35] Chisbiyah, "Interview."
[36] Fealy, "Interview."

importance of the role of religious figures or leaders behind inter-religious diplomacy activities.

Then, from our findings, the WPF seems more sustainable because from the start it did not depend on the government and was free to criticize the government. However, it has not seen any further impact on the dissemination of results, and the implementation of communiques or declarations seems untraceable, especially when it comes to grassroots behavior. However, the impact of interfaith diplomacy is quite resonant in the global world, by placing a positive image of Indonesia that supports global peace. To maximize the impact of WPF, efforts are needed to follow up on the recommendations of each WPF meeting through dissemination to stakeholders, the public, including the grassroots, so that they can be applied.

Viewed from a new public diplomacy perspective, the interfaith diplomacy carried out by Muhammadiyah in the World Peace Forum (WPF) succeeded in prioritizing moderate Islam and presenting solutions that became models and bridges. to achieve peace as a goal from the perspective of peace-building at the global level. From the theory of peacebuilding change, it seems that Indonesia's interfaith diplomacy, through WPF, is more representative of theological and peacebuilding approaches, as seen in field findings. However, this effort of interfaith diplomacy is something that Indonesia is proud of, despite several weaknesses that have been revealed above.

As a recommendation, this paper only focuses on one case and has limited time, budget, and informants so it may not be generalizable, but the findings can be input and useful for further implementation of inter-religious diplomacy in the country. Similar research on this topic that covers the history and other initiatives of interfaith diplomacy is important to be studied further. Apart from that, it can become material for policy discussions in inter-religious diplomacy in the country. Another recommendation is the need for strong government support for inter-religious diplomacy carried out by mass organizations or non-state parties to display inter-religious diplomacy that supports peace at the national and international levels.

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