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DIASPORA IN INDONESIA-CHINA RELATIONSHIP AT THE COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ERA

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora is a potential non-state actor as a driver of people-to-people connections between the country of origin and the country of residence. People-to-people connections are part of public diplomacy, increasing in importance with information and communication technology. Indonesia-China relations have existed for more than seven decades, experiencing dynamic ups and downs. Since the inauguration of the Strategic Partnership between Indonesia and China in 2005 and then in 2013, it has increased to become a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and bilateral and multilateral relations have tended to increase. Bilateral and multilateral relations have managed to grow. However, from the Indonesian side, there are still classic obstacles in the relations between the two countries, namely the suspicion of China's good intentions and the role of the Tionghoa (Chinese Ethnic Group). The Tionghoa is an Indonesian citizen but culturally is a part of the Chinese diaspora. Despite that, along with the rapid progress of China, the number of Indonesian citizens (WNI) and descendants of Indonesian citizens living and/or settling in China is also increasing rapidly and can be categorized as the Indonesian diaspora. How can the Indonesian diaspora play a role in people-to-people connection to increase mutual understanding between the two nations and reduce suspicion? that is the subject of this article. This research uses a historical approach to look at the role played by the diaspora, especially the Indonesian diaspora in China, in helping to improve Indonesia-China diplomatic relations.

KEYWORDS: Diaspora; Indonesia-China Relations; Strategic Partnership; Public Diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

The general understanding of the word diaspora is to refer to a person or group of people who live outside the territory of their country. The development of the meaning of the word diaspora has its own historical path. Along with the development of globalization which, among other things, has encouraged swift flows of human migration, the meaning of diaspora has also become more flexible. In a study of migration, Haning Romdiati (2015) states that diaspora does not only refer to communities who are forced to leave or move from their country of origin and

their descendants, but also includes those who live in the destination country of migration by choice or voluntarily.

Indonesian diaspora according to Hamid Abidin (2012) are "Indonesian citizens who have Indonesian blood, soul and culture, including Indonesian citizens who have changed their nationality and/or foreigners who research, love and practice Indonesian culture". Presidential Regulation number 76 of 2017 concerning Facilities for Indonesian Communities Overseas article 1 paragraph 1 and 2 states that,

“Indonesian people abroad are Indonesian citizens and foreigners who live and/or work abroad; Foreigners are former Indonesian citizens, children of former Indonesian citizens, and foreign nationals whose biological parents are Indonesian citizens who live and/or work abroad.”

Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs number 07 of 2017 concerning Issuance and Revocation of Indonesian Overseas Community Cards (KMILN) article 1 paragraph 4 also uses the same definition. Although the formulation does not mention the word diaspora, it is considered the Indonesian government's official definition of "Indonesian diaspora”.

In contrast to Indonesia, the Chinese government has had regulations regarding Chinese citizens or descendants outside its territory since the dynastic era. Understanding of the Chinese diaspora generally includes *Huaqiao* (Chinese citizens abroad) and *Huaren* (Chinese descendants who have become citizens of the country they live in) (Wu, 2019). There is also the term *Huayi* which is commonly used to designate Chinese descendants who live in Southeast Asia (Goodkind, 2019: 2). Meanwhile, globally, the current discourse on diaspora is no longer only related to identity but has expanded to become how the diaspora can play a role in the development agenda as a form of the revitalization of diaspora relations with their country of origin (Naufanita et al., 2018: 12).

In terms of encouraging the diaspora's role in developing their country of origin, China is one of the earliest countries or nations to do so; it can even be traced back to the dynastic era. For the Chinese government, especially in the modern era, the diaspora is an essential part of the development of the state and nation. The inauguration of the *Huaqiao* History Museum (*Quanguo Huaqiao Lishi Bowuguan*) in Beijing in 2014, according to Mette Thuno, could indicate the continuation of the vital role of the *Huaqiao* people. Thuno further said that this was in line with the strategic target of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) diaspora policy since 2011, which was directed at mobilizing its diaspora as agents of China's public diplomacy (2018, 199-200). Meanwhile, Indonesia is a country that is late in managing and exploiting its diaspora potential. Holding the first Indonesian Diaspora Congress (IDC) in 2012 in Los Angeles, United States of America is a momentum for the growth and development of discussions about the Indonesian diaspora in various aspects. In the IDC, the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN) was successfully formed as an organization that accommodates Indonesians abroad so that they can contribute to Indonesia's development; thus, IDN can undoubtedly become an effective means of public diplomacy.

Today's public diplomacy is increasingly showing its essential role in line with advances in information and communication technology which are also very influential on the development of the world situation. Diplomacy in the study of International Relations initially placed the state as the leading actor in foreign policy, gradually expanding its scope to interactions between various actors, including the general public and individuals (Gebhard, 2017). The development of democratization provides broad opportunities for the people, individually and in groups, to actively participate in foreign policy. Diplomacy can be carried out by inter-community networks

established and spread across various countries. It can also be interpreted that the relations between citizens (P-to-P Connection) are deemed necessary and able to bridge and complement the role of the government/state that has not been reached in carrying out foreign relations (Harini, 2016). People-to-people connections are intentional, political, and cross-border communication-based interactions between groups of people that promote the public interest and have implications for foreign policy. In practice, relations between citizens can help the government create a more conducive atmosphere and provide an understanding of the differences at the grassroots level.

Indonesia-China diplomatic relations have just passed the 70th-year mark. During this period, there were ups and downs, some of which were quite extreme highs or lows. The 1962-65 era can be called a high-tide point which can be identified from the emergence of the term 'Jakarta-Peking axis,' and the 1965-67 era was a very low ebb that froze relations between the two countries. Currently, three decades after the thawing of links (1990), especially after the inauguration of the Indonesia-China strategic partnership in 2005, which was later upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2013, relations between the two countries can be said to be at a tipping point. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs records, in the 2014-2020 period, President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) visited China four times, and President Xi Jinping visited Indonesia three times. The frequent visits of state leaders, which are reciprocated, are one indicator of the existence of these tidal currents.

Other indicators can also be seen from the rapid increase in bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Indonesia and China. This cooperation is not only in the economic field but also in the socio-cultural field, which is marked, among other things, by the increasing flow of visits by citizens of the two countries, both for business matters, cultural visits, family visits, tours, and others. Institutional efforts to improve inter-citizen relations can be seen, among others, from the holding of the High-Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism, which has taken place every year since 2015, Panda Diplomacy (2017), the establishment of the Confucius Institute in collaboration with the university's public and private sector in Indonesia, and various partnerships between institutions or other social organizations. This development has made it possible for more intensive relations between people to occur, which is expected to increase mutual understanding between the two nations. However, on the other hand, referring to China's policy towards its diaspora, the Tionghoa, namely Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent, are still often a source of tension in RI-PRC relations (Mutia¹, 2019). This is a classic obstacle in Indonesia-China relations which is often triggered by anti-Chinese or Tionghoa sentiments still shared by some Indonesians. Effective ways must be developed to take advantage of the diaspora as a potential for inter-citizen relations that can increase the harmony of Indonesia-China relations.

The explanation above is the background that leads to the research question of how the diaspora of the two countries, especially the Indonesian diaspora, has a role in driving relations between citizens to increase mutual understanding between the two nations and reduce suspicion. This question is the subject of this article, and a historical approach was used to execute the research and writing. The historical method includes collecting, sorting, and interpreting or analyzing primary and secondary data. The primary sources are government regulatory documents, agreements between the two countries, and recent mass media news. At the same time, secondary sources are scientific articles, books, and other written sources that discuss topics relevant to this article. This article's historiographical stage aims to reconstruct the various roles played by the diaspora in driving relations between citizens to increase mutual understanding and reduce suspicion between the two nations.

Given that the Indonesian diaspora has not raised much potential, the focus of attention is more on the activities of the Indonesian diaspora in China, especially those carried out by the Indonesian Diaspora Network China (IDN-China) and the Chinese Indonesian Student Association

(ISA-China). The discussion begins by describing the development of relations between the two countries in the Strategic Partnership era to provide a spatial and temporal basis for why the role of the diaspora is needed. Then it continued with a presentation on the two countries' diaspora policies and various Indonesian diaspora organizations' activities, which show a constructive role in it and is followed by a closing section.

Strengthening Partnerships and The Increasing Indonesian Diaspora in China

In the context of celebrating 70 years of Indonesia-China diplomatic relations, Mr. Xiao Qian, Ambassador of China to Indonesia, wrote an opinion in *The Jakarta Post* newspaper on April 14, 2020, that, in this new century, bilateral relations (Indonesia-China) have increased, from a strategic partnership in 2005 to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2013. China has been Indonesia's leading trading partner for nine consecutive years. Two-way trade reached US\$ 79.4 billion in 2019, a tenfold increase since 2000. Several cooperation projects have also been realized, such as the Suramadu bridge, the Jatigede reservoir, and the Morowali industrial area in Sulawesi. Data on increased cooperation in trade, investment, and infrastructure development can still be complemented by data on efforts to improve relations between citizens which have also received serious attention from both parties. The High-Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism between the two countries has been carried out routinely every year since 2015. Puan Maharani, the Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture in 2016, said that "relations between peoples have strengthened the bilateral relations between the two countries. Within six years, out of 60 cooperation agreements between Indonesia and China, 20 were within the framework of people-to-people connections" (Antara News, 2016). Inter-community relations are also listed in the 2017-2021 Indonesia-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Implementation Action Plan document, which includes cooperation in culture, tourism, education, social welfare, public health, media, youth and sports, religion, disaster mitigation, and the environment.

The implementation of this action plan can be seen, among other things, from the increase in tourist arrivals between the two countries; even Chinese tourists who entered Indonesia in 2019 reached 2.07 million, the second largest after Malaysia (Sembiring, 2020). The Indonesia-China youth exchange program (Indonesia-China Exchange Program/ICHEP), managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports since 2011, has been taking place every year (PCMI Jakarta). Cooperation between universities occurs not only between state universities but also between private universities; there is a cooperation between universities and companies, such as what was done with the Huawei company. The information and communication technology (ICT) company collaborated with seven universities in Indonesia in 2017 on the Smart Generation project (Jeghesta, 2017), and in 2020 Huawei also held ICT training for students from 33 universities in Indonesia (Pratnyawan, 2020). In the health sector, cooperation is increasing, especially in handling the Covid-19 virus and developing or providing vaccines. Biotechnology Company PT. Bio Farma (Indonesia) was assigned to take the Covid-19 vaccine produced by Sinovac Biotech Ltd. (China). The number of vaccines sent to Indonesia until January 2021 is three million doses. Indonesia plans to order an additional 122.5million of this vaccine (Antara News, 2021).

In the field of culture, especially education, the Confucius Institute, which is an institution formed by the China to spread the Chinese language and culture throughout the world, in Indonesia was first established in Jakarta in 2007. The Institute was a collaboration between Hainan University and Bina Terampil Insan Persada or BTIP (Embassy of PRC in Indonesia, 2007). Until 2022 seven other Confucius Institutes have operated in Indonesia in partnership with public and private universities. Apart from providing Mandarin classes in Indonesia, the Confucius Institute

also offers scholarships to continue studying in China for teachers or lecturers, students, and employees from various ministries in Indonesia, both for degree and non-degree programs. Multiple fields of knowledge can be chosen, not only to learn or improve Mandarin language skills. Apart from that, several scholarships are offered by the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC), local governments in China, various institutions or organizations, and the Indonesian government itself (Theo, 2018: 58).

The spectacular progress China has achieved in various fields, followed by the availability of a large quota of scholarships, has caused the interest of the Indonesian people to continue their studies in China to increase. According to Theo, 2008-2012 saw a surge in the number of Indonesian students in China, from 2,756 students (2008) to 9,539 students (2012), a three-fold increase in four years. Of these, students who pay themselves, who are generally Chinese, are far greater than those who receive scholarships (2018: 58). The increase in the number of Indonesian students in China can also be seen from the figures shown by the Indonesian Education and Culture Attaché in Beijing in January 2020 that, "... with an increase in the number of scholarship recipients last year, the number of Indonesian students in China also increased to 15,780" (Antara News, 2020). Apart from being a destination for further studies, advanced and wealthy China is also a destination for job seekers and Indonesian migrants from other professional groups. According to data from the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, in May 2020, there were 326,064 Indonesian citizens living in China with various interests and professions.

From the data presented, it can be seen that in line with China's progress and increasing Indonesia-China relations in various fields, the number of Indonesian citizens who live or stay for more than one year has also increased. Referring to the definition of "diaspora" outlined above, they fall into the category of Indonesian diaspora in China. They have great potential to drive people-to-people connections, which can support better bilateral relations between Indonesia and China. The number of Indonesian diaspora will be even more significant if it is expanded to include exiles who still maintain their Indonesian identity, even though their citizenship has been uprooted due to ideological contestation (P2SDR, 2019). Exiles are people who had to leave Indonesia due to events related to the implementation of PP 10/1959¹ and the 30 September 1965 Movement. Zhao Taomo, in his book entitled "Revolution, Diplomacy, Diaspora," specifically presents examples of exiles such as "Aunt Meiping," who still have emotional ties with Indonesia. Currently, exiles and their descendants mostly live in the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, and Hainan (2019: Chap. 11)

China's Policies and the Position of The Tionghoa

China's policies towards citizens or their descendants living outside its sovereign territory have a lengthy historical background. In the constitution of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), these migrants (*Huaqiao*) were called traitors (Yen 1981: 261). Along with the more visible potential of the *Huaqiao*, the views of the Chinese government have changed. China continues to forge closer ties with its diaspora actively, and the Nationality law of 1909 stated that overseas Chinese are automatically considered Chinese citizens (Wu, 2019: 6). When the PRC started to carry out

¹ PP 10/1959 is the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation number 10 of 1959, concerning the prohibition of retail trade in rural areas by foreigners and requiring foreigners to transfer their business to Indonesian citizens before January 1, 1960. In practice, only the Chinese were the target of the regulation, resulting in acts of violence and riots, which caused material losses and casualties. This incident raised tensions in RI-PRC relations (Mutia¹, 2019)

Reform and Opening Up (*gaige kaifang*) Deng Xiaoping spoke about the loyalty of Chinese migrants in the following words, "China is different from other countries and enjoys unique opportunities. For instance, we have tens of millions of patriotic compatriots living abroad, who have made significant contributions to the motherland". Deng Xiaoping's statement was followed by the reactivation of the Chinese Migrant Affairs Office (*Qiaowu bangongshi*) in the late 1970s, whose branches were in all provinces in China (Thuno, 2018: 186).

This policy continues to be developed; it was noted that Xi Jinping, who was the Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1995 in Fujian, had advocated for strengthening the institution's performance (*da qiaowu*). Two decades later, the institution has become an integral part of the China Dream², which encompasses economic modernization, scientific and technological innovation, and the revival of Chinese culture. Even the Belt-Road Initiative Action Plan (*yidai yilu/BRI*), established in 2015, also underlined the need to encourage the participation of Huaqiao people, especially those in Hong Kong and Macau (Hong, 2016). The China Dream (*Zhongguo meng*) is a slogan that reflects Xi Jinping's main program when he was elected as the General Secretary of the CCP in 2012 for China's revival. The Belt and Road Initiative is one way to make this dream come true.

According to Wu Xiao An (2019: 19-20), Xi's diaspora policy is also strengthened by the principle of "Three Benefits" that, the participation of the diaspora in China's revival is to benefit China, the host country, and the diaspora itself. China intends that its diaspora policies provide reciprocal benefits, not just to exploit or benefit China itself. This reinforces Thuno's (2018) opinion that China's diaspora policy since 2011 has been directed at mobilizing its diaspora as agents of Chinese public diplomacy, while also showing that China's national interests remain the main foundation in China's policy towards its diaspora.

The Chinese who are descendants of the Chinese nation are an inseparable part of the history of the formation of the Indonesian nation. Its presence in the regions of the archipelago has been recorded since the dynastic era. Their position becomes a dilemma because of their attachment to their ancestral land which is socio-cultural. As Indonesian citizens, rights and obligations as citizens are attached to them, but globally they are part of the Chinese diaspora to which cultural obligations are attached that demand fulfilment, namely "devotion to ancestral lands". The role of the Chinese in Indonesia, especially during the New Order era, was more in the economic field, so that their presence was seen as an "economic asset", especially by the ruling elite. This can be seen from a number of special regulations regarding the Chinese, which were later recognized as discriminatory policies after the events of May 1998³. Coupled with the various bad prejudices or stigma that have not disappeared, and the presence of political elites who use racial/ethnic issues to create state instability, the Chinese are often in the "victim" position. Meanwhile, the PRC, which is culturally a role model, also implements a diaspora policy that

² The Chinese Dream (*Zhongguo meng*) is the slogan carried out by Xi Jinping since 2012. The dream is formulated as a target of 'two centenary' or *liangge yibai*; that is, the one hundred years of the CCP in 2021 is expected that the PRC has realized *Xiaokang shehui*/a just and prosperous society, and 100 the year the PRC was founded, namely in 2049 it is hoped that the PRC will have achieved *Zhenxing Zhonghua* /revitalization of the Chinese nation (Sirait & R. Tuty Nur Mutia, 2015).

³ The events of May 1998, to be precise, occurred on 13-15 May 1998, which was a major riot in which the targets of attacks were mainly directed at the Chinese. The violence that occurred throughout May 1998 not only destroyed, looted and burned assets, but also raped and even killed more than a thousand people. This incident caused President Suharto to hand over his position to Vice President B.J. Habibie (Mutia¹, 2019).

continues to change according to various national interests that are currently its priority (Mutia¹, 2019). According to Thung Julian,

“How Chinese people have to deal with anti-Chinese related sentiments (PRC) is another aspect of the identity problem they have to solve, but it is not an easy thing to do when their position is always like a pendulum between China and Indonesia.” (Thung, 2017)

In the history of Indonesia-China relations, anti-PRC sentiment often triggers the emergence of anti-Tionghoa sentiment. This hypothesis has been around for a long time but seems to have not changed, in fact it can still be found in quite recent research results. As in the results of research conducted by Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo and Burhanuddin Muhtadi in 2020, it was revealed that,

“China's domestic and foreign policy actions proved to have indirect consequences for the Tionghoa. If China's actions are perceived negatively by the Indonesian public, the Tionghoa will most likely suffer additional losses.”

The findings above are of course not encouraging, because they show that there has been no significant change in the perceptions of Indonesians towards China and the Tionghoa.

The classic obstacles that still characterize Indonesia-China relations are a complicated problem. It includes very complex historical, economic, social, political and cultural factors. Complementing what has been revealed above, several factors that can trigger the emergence of anti-Chinese conflicts or movements include, among others, the economic gap between the Chinese and Indigenous people, the prejudice that the Tionghoa are not loyal to Indonesia, and the existence of a political elite that uses the issue of race/ethnic conflict to create state instability that is beneficial to its interests (Suryadinata, 2017: 54-55). The changing of generations within the Tionghoa community on the one hand and the more open access to information about China on the other hand, should be able to reduce the complexity of relations between these community groups.

Historically, especially after 1998, the Tionghoa played many roles as "liaisons/mediators" in Indonesia-China relations, especially in the field of trade. There are no cultural barriers mainly because in general the Tionghoa still master Mandarin or one of their dialect languages, and as business people they also have a ready-to-use national distribution network. These two factors made the Tionghoa to be natural trading partners for Chinese manufacturers. Even the implementation of Indonesian exports to China and Chinese investment in Indonesia, which should be managed by the state because they are related to natural resources, are also dominated by the Tionghoa (Harding, 2008). Setijadi (2016: 823) also emphasized that,

"In this era of new cooperation and China's efforts to promote its soft power approach in Southeast Asia, the Tionghoa individually and through their organizations play an important role as mediators of culture and trade."

This position for the long term is certainly not an ideal position, because in certain situations it can actually foster suspicion of the Indigenous people towards the Tionghoa and can trigger conflicts that should be avoided.

Indonesian Policy and The Development of the Indonesian Diaspora in China

Indonesia is a nation that has many tribes, some of which have the habit of migrating.

Migrants are one of the forerunners of the formation of the diaspora in the modern sense. In detail, Naufanita et al. (2018: 95) divide the typology of the Indonesian diaspora into five groups, namely, 1) ethnic nomads, 2) Indonesian workers or Indonesian migrant workers, 3) elite/expatriates, namely people who migrate voluntarily for advance study, career expansion, and the market, 4) exile groups, namely those who were exiled in 1965, and 5) ethnic refugees, namely those who migrated as a result of the 1998 conflict (Aceh, Maluku, and Papua). The number of Indonesian diaspora worldwide in 2013, according to the World Bank, reached more than four million people; according to the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2018, it is estimated to reach six million people (Risman et al., 2018: 42). Meanwhile, data from the Indonesian Diaspora Network in 2020 the number of Indonesian diaspora worldwide will reach eight million people (Wijaya, 2020).

The Indonesian government's policy to empower the diaspora is relatively late, and even the understanding of the meaning of diaspora within the government is also not uniform. This can be seen, among others, from the fact that the term diaspora has not been used in official texts such as government regulations. Instead of using the word diaspora, Presidential Decree number 76/2017 and its derivative, Ministerial Regulation number 07/2017, refer to it as "Indonesian Communities in Overseas"/MILN. This shows that there is a simplification of the meaning of diaspora, and it tends to be associated with the development context (Naufita et al., 2018). According to Risman et al. (2018: 46), the understanding of the term Indonesian diaspora is still different, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses the terminology of the Indonesian diaspora as outlined in Ministerial Regulation number 07/2017, which consists of Indonesian citizens who live and work abroad, and foreigners who have ties with Indonesia. Meanwhile, the terminology of the Indonesian diaspora understood by the Head of Human Resources Sub-Directorate of the Ministry of Defense is only limited to Indonesian citizens living and doing activities abroad.

Holding the first Indonesian Diaspora Congress (IDC) in July 2012 in Los Angeles, United States of America is one of the momentums for the growth and development of discussions about the Indonesian diaspora in its various aspects. IDC was initiated by Dino Patti Djalal, who served as Indonesian Ambassador to the United States at that time. Dino confirmed that,

“Indonesian diaspora are people who have Indonesian blood and/or culture, whose one generation or so lives abroad. For this reason, the new policy adopted to embrace the diaspora is the change from a legalistic approach (only Indonesian citizens) to a cultural approach (foreigners or Indonesian citizens who have become foreigners but are culturally still like and very Indonesian)” (P2SDR, 2019).

The first IDC gave birth to the "Indonesian Diaspora Declaration," which included the vision and future of the Indonesian diaspora. The declaration also emphasized that the Indonesian diaspora would become a link (hub) for ideas, solutions, resources, and networks to build shared prosperity and become a force for peace and progress. In addition, the first IDC also became a momentum for the Indonesian government's seriousness to start managing the Indonesian diaspora by forming a Diaspora Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as revealed in President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's speech at the congress (Mubtadi, 2012). The second IDC, which was held in Jakarta a year later (2013), emphasized the birth of the organization "Indonesian Diaspora Network" or IDN Global, which integrates affiliates (Chapters) of Indonesian diaspora networks in various countries. IDNs have been formed in 27 countries, including China, known as IDN-China (IDN Global, 2021).

IDN-China was initially formed as IDN-Beijing, the Indonesian Ambassador to the PRC inaugurated its management in May 2013, and Yenni Thamrin was elected as Chair. In the news upload about the inauguration of the IDN-Beijing, it was stated that the Indonesian diaspora in

Beijing could be categorized into five major groups, namely: first, the Huaqiao group who was born in Indonesia but have long lived in Beijing and renounced Indonesian citizenship, with a total of approximately 1,500 people, and the average age is above 72 years; secondly, the professional group, namely Indonesian citizens who work for Chinese companies or foreign companies with offices in Beijing; third, the Beijing Indonesia Group, namely the spouse group of expatriates in Beijing, some of whom have changed their citizenship; fourth, groups of Indonesian or Chinese businessmen who have links and emotional closeness with Indonesia; and, fifth, Indonesians or PRC citizens or foreign observers of Indonesia (IDN-China, 2014). Since its inauguration, IDN-China has organized various activities that mobilize the potential of the Indonesian Diaspora in China, especially in the social, cultural, and economic spheres.

The five significant groups categorized as Indonesian diaspora by IDN-China do not include Indonesian students currently studying in China. These Indonesian students will generally live in China for 1-5 years, so the same as Indonesian professionals working in China, they must also be included in the Indonesian diaspora category. Moreover, the social activities of the Indonesian student community in China are also quite prominent. In line with the increasing number of Indonesian students in China, in 2012 Indonesian Students' Association in the People's Republic of China (ISA-China/PPI Tiongkok) was formed. There have been 29 ISA branches spread across three regions of China. ISA-China also has an autonomous body, namely Overseas Indonesian Medical Association in PRC (PERLUNI Tiongkok).

Other organizations organizing Indonesian students in China are the PRC's Nahdlatul Ulama Special Branch (PCINU) and the PRC's Muhammadiyah Special Branch (PCIM). PCINU was founded in 2017, and currently, there are around 400 students affiliated with NU in China. Apart from studying, they simultaneously embody the spirit of *Wasathiyah* Islam or moderate Islam in China and play the role of non-state diplomacy actors (Zuhri, 2021). Meanwhile, PCIM China was founded in 2016 according to the Decree of the Central Executive of Muhammadiyah Number 290/KEP/I.0/B/2016 (Kabar Mu China, 2017). The development of these two Islamic organizations in China in terms of time paralleled the policy of the Chinese government to approach the Islamic community in Indonesia to reduce the issue of oppression against the Muslim community in Xinjiang. Since 2015 China has offered many scholarships to Islamic universities or those affiliated with Islamic organizations in Indonesia (Emon, 2016; Mustaqim, 2017).

The spread of the activities of Indonesian diaspora organizations in China can be a potential support for the government's efforts to improve Indonesia's image in the eyes of the Chinese nation. The May 1998 Incident in Indonesia, where most of the victims were the Tionghoa, caused some Chinese citizens to perceive Indonesia negatively. IDN-China and various Indonesian diaspora organizations in China can play a role in further strengthening people-to-people connections, which can reduce suspicion and increase mutual trust between the two nations so that the ties between the two countries can be closed in an equal and mutually beneficial partnership.

To increase the contribution of the Indonesian diaspora, as expected above, Romdiati (2015) argues that a comprehensive policy framework for the Indonesian government and legislative institutions is needed, not only by granting dual citizenship legal status but also by providing other facilities for the diaspora to contribute directly to Indonesia's development. This view seems challenging to materialize, bearing in mind that until now, the diaspora card (KMILN), as stipulated in Ministerial Regulation number 07/2017, has turned out to be of little interest. The report of the IDN-Global Immigration and Citizenship Working Group (WGIK IDN-G) notes that, until 2020, only 1032 people have applied for KMILN from the 4-8 million Indonesian diaspora worldwide. This reluctance is mainly because KMILM has not provided concrete benefits; even the definition of the Indonesian diaspora itself is still unclear. Based on the study, WGIK IDN-G recommended two (2) options: amend Ministerial Regulation number 07/2017 and Presidential

Decree number 76/2017 or amend both to become a new law. If these two options are difficult to implement, it is recommended that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focus on supporting the diaspora's struggle to get dual citizenship. Clarity of status is not only crucial for the diaspora itself but can also benefit the Indonesian government. These advantages include having a database on the diaspora's number, distribution, and potential, as well as obtaining economic, social, cultural, and political benefits from the existence of the diaspora (Romdiati, 2015). Nonetheless, implementing dual citizenship in the context of the Indonesian diaspora in China will likely be more challenging to implement, not only because of historical factors in the relations between the two countries but also because China legally does not recognize dual citizenship or dual citizenship.

Indonesian Diaspora in China and Its Role in P-to-P Connections

Along with the development of globalization, society's mobility and political awareness are also getting higher. Diplomacy carried out to achieve the interests of the state is no longer sufficient with conventional diplomacy, which only involves government actors and only focuses on the government to government relations. A diplomacy strategy is needed that can cover all levels of society to play an active role; this is where public diplomacy comes into play. Through public diplomacy, relations can be forged in the form of government-to-people or people-to-people connections to find friends from the community so that they can contribute to efforts to build good relations with other countries (Mapendere, 2005). Public diplomacy, especially in terms of people-to-people connections, is essential for Indonesia in enhancing bilateral ties, especially towards the PRC, which is still hampered by suspicion and distrust.

The Indonesian diaspora community in China that is increasing and being organized is IDN-China and various student organizations. Typologically, they are educated and skilled people, so they have the potential to become drivers of inter-citizen relations. Their activities, individually or in groups, can help the Indonesian government create a more conducive atmosphere and provide an understanding of the differences at the grassroots level. When they become drivers of P-to-P Connections, they carry out citizen diplomacy, which is part of public diplomacy. According to Harini (2016), there are three criteria for implementing citizen diplomacy, namely, state-based diplomacy, where the performance of citizen diplomacy appears as a form of citizen participation facilitated by other parties or on their initiative. Second, the autonomously initiating citizen diplomacy from the community illustrates voluntary citizen participation; this activity is complementary to state-based diplomacy. Third, the implementation of citizen diplomacy requires global awareness, where citizens act as lobbyists (citizen diplomats or citizen ambassadors).

Since their establishment, several activities initiated by IDN-China and ISA-China are generally related to the celebration of national and international holidays; the form of activities can be in the form of ceremonies, discussions, seminars, social actions, or festivals. Commemoration or celebration of Indonesia's independence day, for example, is a mandatory activity that must be carried out with the Indonesian Embassy and internally within their respective organizations. Referring to the three criteria for citizen diplomacy above, the activities coordinated by IDN-China and ISA-China are more towards type one and two citizen diplomacy, namely state-based and voluntary. Meanwhile, regarding roles and fields of action, the IDN-China tends to act as a mediator or facilitator in the economic relations between Indonesia and China.

Examples of these activities include IDN-China facilitating Indonesian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) product manufacturers to participate in the China Asian Year of Handcrafts and Arts in January 2017; on that occasion, the promotion of Indonesian SMEs products received support from the Chinese government in the form of facilities in a building built in the center of

Beijing, and in the World Trade Center (WTC) area for free (Youngster. id. 2017). Then, during the pandemic era, IDN-China also tried to help Indonesian SMEs to open export opportunities to China, such as finding a market for the export of 27 tons of mackerel (Merdeka.com., 2020) as well as Cirebon batik and striated products (Haryadi, 2020). Regarding raising solidarity among Indonesian citizens in China, IDN-China was noted to have held a World Women's Day celebration on March 3, 2014, which was carried out in collaboration with the Indonesian Huaqiao Association in China. IDN-China also collaborated with ISA-China in holding the Night of the Unification of Indigenous Indonesian-Chinese Heritage Cultural Assets on May 27, 2018, in Beijing (Kumpanan, 2018). In addition, IDN-China, on April 17, 2020, also distributed assistance to The National Agency for Disaster Countermeasures (BNPB) for 1.5 billion Rupiah (\pm USD 1 million) in the form of 80,000 medical masks, 800 sets of medical protective clothing, 6000 covid test kits, as well as protective gloves and goggles (IDN-Global, 2020).

Meanwhile, ISA-China, with a more homogeneous audience, namely Indonesian students, tends to act more as an advocate who utilizes academic skills, information, and communication technology to build networks to help find solutions. This is reflected in the activity reports recorded on their official website, namely <https://ppithiongkok.org/>, where it is evident that the activities they carry out are hectic, primarily related to the activities of the 29 branches in China, which are spread across various regions of China. Interestingly, in the 'Media' column of the official website, besides the tabloid '*Yinni hao*,' which has been published in three volumes, there is also a section, 'Image and Tourism.' As stated on the first page, the task of this section is to develop, introduce and disseminate Indonesian tourism in China as well as provide translator and tour guide services for Indonesians who will visit China. This proves their role in advocating so that more and more Indonesian tourist destinations are known to Chinese citizens and vice versa. They can also help Indonesian tourists visit China. In addition, ISA-China is also active in other social media formats; even since 2018, ISA-China has also had ISA Mobile Apps, which will make it easier for people to find information about ISA-China, educational programs and facilities in China (Kompasiana.com., 2018).

ISA-China seems to continue strengthening its role in improving Indonesia-China relations. Two other activities that have taken place in 2021 can be proof of this, namely, the holding of the ISA-China National Symposium online on May 21, with the theme "Reviving National Tourism through Introduction to Indonesian-Chinese Culture." On that occasion, the Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, even invited ISA-China to become 'agents of diplomacy' (Merdeka.com., 2021). Another activity is MillennialHub-The Asian Heroes, a collaboration between ISA-China and Millennialfest. ISA-China Chairperson Nikkolai Ali Akbar emphasized that this forum could strengthen cooperation between Indonesia and China, especially in the business and trade sector. ISA-China has developed an e-commerce platform called Tokonesia, with the primary mission of helping promote and accelerate Indonesia's primary commodities entering the Chinese market (Tribune News. 2021). Strengthening the role played by ISA-China can continue to be developed as a support for the achievement of ISA-China goals and the continuity of existing Indonesia-China cooperation programs.

CONCLUSION

The growing development of technology, especially in the fields of information and communication, as well as transportation, has made it increasingly difficult to stop international migration. The world has become increasingly globalized, so the diaspora community has grown. The meaning of diaspora itself has shifted considerably; today, diaspora is generally interpreted in the context of political economy, where respect for its existence tends to lead to how the diaspora

can play a role in the development agenda as a form of revitalizing diaspora relations with their country of origin. Even though Indonesia is far behind in managing and utilizing its diaspora compared to China, the presence of IDN-China and ISA-China, as well as various other Indonesian diaspora organizations in China, shows the significance of their role in strengthening relations between the two countries by reducing the element of suspicion towards China.

Since the status of the Indonesia-China strategic partnership was upgraded to become a comprehensive strategic partnership, the two countries governments have agreed to increase cooperation within the framework of people-to-people exchanges. According to (Asmarani, 2020), several collaborations developed by the two countries to encourage relations between citizens include 1) the Development of vocational schools and Mandarin Language training scholarships for Indonesian Civil Servants (PNS), 2) the Exchange of Journalists/Chief Editors to foster positive opinions society, 3) diplomacy track for handling radicalism and terrorism, 4) Santri and Ulama Exchange Collaboration, 5) support China as Host of the 2022 Asian Games. Three of the five cooperation programs can potentially increase the diaspora of the two countries. Therefore, strengthening the role of the diaspora to enhance relations between the two countries needs to be carried out in a more planned manner. The Indonesian diaspora in China, among others, through IDN-China and ISA-China, which are institutionally relatively new, have demonstrated their role in improving relations between citizens to increase understanding and reduce suspicion between the two nations. The Tionghoa, who are culturally part of the Chinese diaspora, can also increase their role in developing Indonesia-China relations in various fields, not only in the economic area. On the other hand, the government's relationship/cooperation with its diaspora, especially on the Indonesian side, must be more intensive; positive attention and appreciation from the government will encourage diaspora to play a more active role in the development according to their capacity.

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