Culinary Diaspora: An Anchor for Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy in the Netherlands

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Summary

Many Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands have established culinary businesses for both economic purposes and out of a sense of nostalgia for their home country by emphasising Indonesian food authenticity and the richness of spices in their new home. The Netherlands, with its strong historical links with Indonesia, plays a pivotal role in Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. However, the Indonesian government has not yet paid attention to the importance of harnessing the existence of diasporas and targeting the Netherlands as a strategic country of implementation in the context of...
strengthening Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. This article suggests that Indonesian diasporas, through representation in restaurants, could be a ‘frontline messenger’ in introducing Indonesian foods to the Netherlands and be the anchor of gastrodiplomacy. While Indonesia is now strategising gastrodiplomacy, diasporas are of the utmost importance in winning the hearts and minds of the public.

Keywords

gastrodiplomacy – Indonesian diaspora – Indonesian food – Indonesian restaurants – the Netherlands

1 Introduction

Indonesian gastrodiplomacy is now seeking an influential actor and anchor to strengthen the status of Indonesian food and, more broadly, nation branding in many countries abroad. The Indonesian government has observed that Indonesian food is not always popular with international audiences. The state can play a prominent role in reaching out to the public while as part of its gastrodiplomacy strategy; however, non-state actors are also recognised as critical. In this regard, the practice of gastrodiplomacy should co-operate in gastrodiplomacy campaigns, involving both states and non-state actors in implementation. Polylateralism is defined as the interaction of states and multilateral institutions with non-state actors in diplomacy or public diplomacy. Paul Rockower has highlighted the importance of working across ministerial agencies and non-state actors in undertaking gastrodiplomacy campaigns. Thus, the search for an anchor for strategising gastrodiplomacy is of the utmost importance since diplomacy practice that utilises food as a tool is arguably incipient in Indonesia. Collaborations and engagements with many supporting actors are the key to the programme's success. The diaspora may be considered a potential non-state actor that could play a role as an anchor and ‘frontline messenger’ for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy.

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1 The authors are indebted to the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia, and the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP), Indonesia's Ministry of Finance, that have funded this research.
4 Rockower 2023, 299.
Cuisine is an essential non-verbal communications tool that the Indonesian government has neglected. The success of Thailand and other Asian middle-power countries using food as a soft power strategy to strengthen their nation's brand abroad has inspired the Indonesian government to act in a similar way. Prior to today's spirit of gastrodiplomacy, Indonesia's concern with gastrodiplomacy, or ordinarily culinary promotion in other countries, was not yet mature. Indonesian restaurants abroad, which clearly can be a display for Indonesia by representing culture and identity through foods, have previously not attracted special attention from the government. Thanks to Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy having promoted the Wonderful Indonesia Co-Branding Programme in 2018, today the Indonesian government situates itself differently in respect of gastrodiplomacy. However, the practice of the Co-Branding Programme remains at a rudimentary level. This initiative intentionally embodied President Joko Widodo's message at the Limited Working Meeting in 2016 and 2017 to strengthen Indonesia's branding power through food. It is considered a good move for Indonesia, as the institutional recognition of gastrodiplomacy represents an increased awareness of how food, as one of the oldest mediums of cultural exchange, can communicate culture, raise nation-brand status, and increase soft power.

The Indonesian government is currently formulating an Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy named Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) under the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs, involving ministries, local governments, state-owned enterprises, business owners, academics, associations and media. This national action plan, which was launched on 4 November 2021 at the National Day in the Expo 2020 Dubai, aims to broaden the market of Indonesian spice products and processed food in order to boost the Indonesian culinary industry by establishing and strengthening Indonesian restaurants overseas. ISUTW aims to increase the value of spice exports by 2024 from USD 1.2 billion in 2020 to USD 2 billion and establish 4,000 Indonesian restaurants abroad in 2024. In 2020, the export value of Indonesian spices reached USD 1.02 billion. Simultaneously, the plan is expected to attract foreign travellers to Indonesia to sample different cooking specialities with their unique spices. In the planning stage, the Indonesian government initially targeted two specific continents in which to implement the programme, Africa and Australia; it has been criticised by many stakeholders.

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5 Trihartono et. al. 2020, 2.
6 Interview, Thanon Aria Dewangga, 1 July 2019; Arifi Saiman, 1 July 2019.
7 Rockower 2020, 205.
8 Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia 2021a.
9 Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia 2021b.
for not having included other potential continents and countries. However, it was recently agreed that the initiative will be open to many other countries.\textsuperscript{10} This study suggests that Europe, and specifically the Netherlands, could be one of the focuses for strategy-making and the initial implementation of the Indonesian gastrodiploymacy project. Europe is a continent that is encountering a massive influx of migrants from many countries worldwide and that allows diversity, symbolised by a variety of language use and cultural heritages. Tight connections between Indonesia and some countries in Europe due to colonialism cannot be neglected as one of the underlying reasons why Europe should be a first choice for the plan. The Netherlands, in particular, should be targeted as a potential destination for Indonesian gastrodiploymacy implementation because of its historical links and the relatively large number of Indonesian diasporas living in the country that could form a non-state actor of gastrodiploymacy. The presence of many Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands established by Indonesian diasporas could showcase Indonesia more widely.

Nonetheless, Indonesian gastrodiploymacy to date pays little attention to Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands or their endeavours to preserve and promote Indonesian foods through Indonesian restaurants. The Indonesian gastrodiploymacy project still needs a clear and robust direction from the government to tap into non-state actors — in this context, Indonesian diasporas — and formulate a concrete action plan to utilise them and their business assets to help in promoting foods. In executing public diplomacy through food, especially in a radically diffused global power, diasporas have been re-energised and retooled as agents of diplomacy and development.\textsuperscript{11} Indonesian diasporas can be considered ‘civilian’ diplomats that could help Indonesia realise a gastrodiploymacy project in the Netherlands. Thus, this article also explores how Indonesian diasporas have become a ‘frontline messenger’ for culinary promotion in the Netherlands.

The introduction outlines the crucial role of the Indonesian diaspora as a non-state agent and the importance of the Netherlands in Indonesian gastrodiploymacy. Qualitative method operationalisation is used to answer research questions and offer a comprehensive elaboration of gastrodiploymacy, diaspora discourses, with the Netherlands as a potential targeted country. The results contribute to the diaspora in diplomacy and explain why the Netherlands is prominent in Indonesian gastrodiploymacy. The discussion continues through Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to identify the current internal and external factors in the implementation of

\textsuperscript{10} Sartin 2021.
\textsuperscript{11} Kennedy 2020, 213.
gastrodiplomacy in the Netherlands and outlines key factors to harness and anticipate. The study perceives that there are sufficient strengths and opportunities to suggest that the Indonesian diaspora could be a frontline messenger of gastrodiplomacy and that the Netherlands is a suitable place to harness both diaspora and material resources. However, the weaknesses and threats identified in the article should also be considered in respect of any further development. The last section presents the conclusion.

2  Gastrodiplomacy and Diaspora: A Conceptual Framework

Food and cuisine are essential elements in defining people living outside their home country from the nations to which they belong. Food and cuisine have been recognised as essential parts of traditional diplomacy since ancient times. As interpreted by Sam Chapple-Sokol, Brillat-Savarin believed that food is an essential means by which nations define themselves, implying that national cuisine is a marker for self-identification. Chapple-Sokol also added that food is a universally vital part of our lives, representing history, tradition, and culture. Hence, food can represent identity and draw an image or a national brand in other states. Food, therefore, can be a communication tool for supporting diplomatic ties among states. Dana Luša and Ružica Jakešević also agreed that food, as an essential ingredient of human existence, has always played an essential role in interstate relations and diplomatic practice. Given these longstanding beliefs in food utilisation as a tool of diplomacy, it is clear that food has contributed to the advent of gastrodiplomacy as an emerging concept in international relations.

Gastrodiplomacy makes food a medium of and primary tool in cultural engagement. Currently, neither developed nor developing states are reliant only on hard power in their interstate dialogues. In a globalised era, many states incline towards a softer way of influencing their counterparts and fulfilling their needs. Rockower explains gastrodiplomacy as a concerted public diplomacy campaign by a national government that combines culinary and cultural diplomacy — backed up by monetary investment — to raise its nation's brand status, not simply as an ad hoc or one-off culinary diplomacy
programme.\textsuperscript{18} Juyan Zhang also stated that gastrodiplomacy is intended to encompass a broad range of ‘users’ and aims to deliver a specific message to the larger populations of other countries through food.\textsuperscript{19} Combining a wide range of diplomacy practices from public diplomacy, culinary diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy aims to win hearts and minds through oblique emotional connections.\textsuperscript{20} Thus gastrodiplomacy is an essential diplomatic practice, containing public and cultural facets, to pursue nation-brand status in other states.

In implementing gastrodiplomacy, states have recognised the vital role of non-state actors. Diasporas have been re-energised and retooled as agents of diplomacy and development.\textsuperscript{21} Historically speaking, the term diaspora was used to explain the involuntary movement of Jewish, Greek and Armenian peoples. Stéphane Dufoix stated that in the second half of the 20th century, the term diaspora was often seen as applying specifically to the ‘Jewish’ and ‘Black’ diaspora.\textsuperscript{22} The Black diaspora referred to African people who migrated massively in the 1960s; diaspora became seen as a concept in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, it developed to become a modern concept in the mid-1980s with the influence of globalisation in which the growing importance of flows including human, economic, financial, but especially informational and cultural ones was started.\textsuperscript{24} Many people then began to move from the place where they were born for various reasons. Khacig Tölölyan is one of the experts who has contributed to a broader understanding of the term diaspora. He stated that:\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{quote}
The ‘semantic domain’ of the term ‘diaspora’ was being ‘shared’ with such terms as migrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile, overseas community, and ethnic community, and that diasporas had become ‘the exemplary communities of the transnational moment’.
\end{quote}

According to the above definition, many people can be categorised as belonging to a diaspora. Robin Cohen had similar assumptions in defining diaspora, as he also included forced or voluntary migration as a reason for diasporas.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{18} Rockower 2012, 2020.
\textsuperscript{19} Zhang 2015, 569.
\textsuperscript{20} Rockower 2012, 235.
\textsuperscript{21} Kennedy 2020, 213.
\textsuperscript{22} Dufoix, 2008, 19.
\textsuperscript{23} Dufoix 2019, 13–21.
\textsuperscript{24} Dufoix 2008, 31.
\textsuperscript{25} Tölölyan 2019, 22.
\textsuperscript{26} Cohen 1997, 2008.
As a result, the concept of diaspora has expanded to encompass not only forced migration, but also people who are mobile for certain reasons as a result of globalisation.

Yet diasporas have the potential to be considered as ‘frontline messengers’ in the implementation of gastrodipomacy. Despite an element of culinary nostalgia entrenched in the heart of diasporas, many ethnic restaurants have been created and so contribute to introducing national cuisine in the host country. Studies that combine gastrodipomacy and an awareness of diasporas as non-state implementor of a gastrodipomactic strategy are rarely discussed in the academic arena. In what follows the authors show evidence of how Indonesian diasporas have attempted to be ‘frontline messengers’ through their restaurants regardless of the challenges they face.

3 Diaspora in Diplomacy: An Important Role of Indonesian Diaspora for Gastrodipomacy

Diasporas play a pivotal role as non-state actors in diplomacy. They transform into a living transnational network that extends nation-state capacities and are now widely viewed by governments as sources of soft power, as ministries, institutions and programmes have engaged with them as agents of diplomatic goals. However, clear policy and strategy from the government of their original state are required to address how to best utilise their potential and what roles they should assume to help their place of origin. Through a sense of romanticism, diasporas have been eager to retain memories and create myths of homelands that can function as powerful narratives of identity formation. Moreover, connections to home are also assumed to be the most important ties to members of diasporas. Their wish to retain the spirit of their homelands in their new locations is also reflected in how they create restaurants that serve authentic foods and beverages from their home country.

It is commonplace to say that governments tend to harness a diaspora as an economic agent to support development in their place of origin. Nevertheless, according to Liam Kennedy, several governments seek to incentivise such investments by means of issuing diaspora bonds or remittance matching schemes. Meanwhile, the diaspora’s contributions are not merely about
economic features to support the home country through economic remittances. Peggy Levitt has observed that migrants remit not only money from sending countries, but also ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending countries’ communities. This means that the diaspora can contribute to ideas and social capital that can also indirectly benefit their place of origin. Opening restaurants in the host countries can be considered part of the socially contributed remittance that the diaspora can bring home with benefits offered directly and indirectly. Strengthened identity formations and nation brands through restaurant openings in host countries could potentially impact the acceleration of economic development for home countries.

In this context, Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands are also seen as possible non-state actors of gastrodiplomacy. With the sense of culinary nostalgia and longstanding historical links, Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands could be a potential anchor of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy to showcase the richness of foods and cultures of Indonesia. Nicholas J. Cull points out that diasporas are also increasingly acknowledged as an asset in cultural diplomacy, particularly with the development of soft power as a central idea in international relations debate. Several nations have sought to strengthen their soft power by improving the quality of diaspora cultural activities. The most well-known form is gastrodiplomacy. Furthermore, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) dataset, international migrant stocks by the destination and origin in 2020, Indonesians residing in the Netherlands reached 118,098 persons. Based on Eurostat, up to 17,407,585 persons resided in the Netherlands in 2020. Many of them start up a culinary business for economic purposes, but also to retain their identities and express nostalgia for the dishes that they grew up with.

4 Historical Context of Indonesian Restaurants in the Netherlands

Although Indonesian restaurants have been established abroad, they are not as numerous as other Asian restaurants (Chinese, Thai or Vietnamese). Historically, Indonesian dining establishments in the Netherlands first

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31 Levitt 1998, 926–948.
32 Cull 2022, 12.
33 Cull 2022, 12–13.
34 UNDESA 2020.
35 Eurostat 2022.
appeared before the Second World War. In the early 1900s in The Hague, an *Indisch* (Indonesian) eating establishment was first set up. The *Vereeniging Oost en West* (East and West Association), a society for individuals who wished to popularise the Dutch East Indies among the Dutch public, began serving *rijsttafel* (a combination of rice and other dishes from the Indonesian and *Indisch* kitchen, adapted to European tastes) to affiliates and guests. Soon after, the association’s gallery eventually enlarged into an eating venue. Twenty years later, several *Indisch* eating places were launched. The Dutch term *Indisch* describes anything linked to the Dutch East Indies in colonial eras, featuring Javanese, Sumatran, Dutch, and Indisch-Dutch or Eurasian people.36

Between Indonesian Independence in 1945 and the decade that followed, some 300,000 persons left Indonesia for the Netherlands.37 Many were Dutch citizens who had previously lived in colonial Indonesia as well as Indonesians affiliated with the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger, KNIL). Nonetheless, following these repatriations, the Dutch began to encounter Indonesian dining practices more frequently. Many Indonesian immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands, although underprivileged, were excellent cooks, and regularly ate several hot, spicy meals a day, with highly diverse and carefully prepared ingredients.38 In the host society, the diaspora community — an ethnic group with few options — was willing to open small businesses in order to make a living. At first this was challenging, as the necessary preconditions for such businesses were lacking. However, a demand for specific ethnic goods and services gradually developed.39 Nevertheless, business founders mainly relied on shared skills and resources, trust-based networks, and family labour to run their new ventures. In Amsterdam, the number of Chinese-Indonesian dining establishments increased from two in 1945 to 44 in 1960. In a similar period, Indonesian dining establishments escalated from zero to six.40 As Dutch interest in eating in ethnic restaurants increased, several Chinese individuals sought their fortune in the dining establishment industry, adapting their own culinary traditions to meet the demand for Indonesian dishes. They therefore promoted their eating-houses as Chinese Indonesian, which indicated that they served Indonesian meals in addition to Chinese cooking. *Bami* (noodles), *satay* (grilled meat on skewers), and *nasi*
goreng (fried rice) came to be the most preferred Indonesian dishes in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{41}

In the 1970s, as the Netherlands economy prospered, the Dutch enjoyed eating out more than ever. Throughout the 1970s, Indonesian dining establishments in the Netherlands were the most popular amongst international cuisines in the nation.\textsuperscript{42} Indonesian food became increasingly recognised in Dutch society, as it was reported throughout that decade some 60\% of the Dutch population were regular visitors to Chinese and Indonesian restaurants.\textsuperscript{43} Although French cuisine is known to have been long established in the Netherlands, it is costly; Chinese Indonesian foods thus became the preferred cuisine among the Dutch.\textsuperscript{44} A song entitled ‘Geef mij maar nasi goreng’ (Just give me nasi goreng) sung by Wieteke van Dort was hugely popular in the country in the late 1970s. A depiction by the Dutch-Indonesian cookbook writer and journalist Beb Vuyk of Indonesian people, running food service throughout the 1970s in the Netherlands,\textsuperscript{45} was discussed in Anneke H. Van Otterloo’s book, \textit{Eten en Eetlust in Nederland (1840–1990)}.\textsuperscript{46}

The experience of colonialism and repatriation has placed Indonesian food as one of the most sought-after cuisines among foreign foods in the Netherlands. Although other international cuisines are popular in the Netherlands now, Indonesian food still has a place in Dutch society because it has a rich history and makes people feel nostalgic.

5 Indonesian Restaurants: A Showcase for Gastrodiplomacy

5.1 \textbf{Number of Indonesian Restaurants in the World: The Netherlands Takes the Lead}

There are more than 1,100 Indonesian restaurants across the world. The number is significant and shows the potential for supporting the implementation of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. According to the Public Diplomacy Directorate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Indonesia’s survey in 2021, from 117 Indonesian representative offices in the world, either embassies or consulate generals, West Europe and South Europe are the regions with the highest

\textsuperscript{41} Van Otterloo 2002, 153–166.
\textsuperscript{42} Van Otterloo 2002, 153–166.
\textsuperscript{43} Haian 2019.
\textsuperscript{44} Cwiertka 2002, 133–152.
\textsuperscript{45} Vuyk 1973.
\textsuperscript{46} Van Otterloo 1990.
number of Indonesian restaurants, amounting to 392 in total.\textsuperscript{47} Southeast Asia is the second-ranked region with the most Indonesian restaurants (177 restaurants). The third and fourth ranked are East Asia and Pacific (164 restaurants) and Australia (151 restaurants). The fifth place goes to the Middle East region (107 restaurants).\textsuperscript{48} States with many Indonesian diasporas and visits from Indonesia tend to show a higher number of Indonesian restaurants.\textsuperscript{49}

Fig. 1 shows the spread of Indonesian restaurants based on the official survey conducted by the Public Diplomacy Directorate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in mid-2021. The division of regions for the survey is based on the official decision of the relevant ministry.

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\caption{Number of Indonesian restaurants in the world}
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Note: Public Diplomacy Directorate, Directorate General of Public Diplomacy and Information, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021
\end{flushleft}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{47} Public Diplomacy Directorate, Directorate General of Public Diplomacy and Information, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021.
\textsuperscript{48} Public Diplomacy Directorate, Directorate General of Public Diplomacy and Information, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021.
\textsuperscript{49} Ambary 2021.
Of the 392 Indonesian restaurants located in West and South Europe, most are in the Netherlands (295 restaurants). The restaurants can be in the form of fine dining, takeaways or warung [small restaurants]. They include Ron Gastrobar Indonesia, The Poentjak, Pempek Elysha, Selera Anda, Warung Barokah, Waroeng Padang Lapek Jo, Desa Restaurant, Iboe Tjilik, Waroeng Adji, Sarinande Indonesian Cuisine and many more. Many are located in Amsterdam (the main tourism centre), The Hague, Leiden, Utrecht and Rotterdam, but they are also found in other cities, such as Groningen, Nijmegen and Maastricht. Many Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands were established by Indonesian descendants, Indonesian diasporas and those who have lived in Indonesia or married Indonesians. The high number of Indonesian restaurants across the Netherlands and the presence of the Indonesian diasporas are markers for the Indonesian government to consider the Netherlands as the leading targeted country for the gastrodiplomacy strategy.

Establishing Indonesian restaurants abroad can have many purposes, not only economic. Culinary nostalgia, representing a sense of belonging to and longing for Indonesia is one of the motivating forces that induce people to create a home in their new country and eventually promote Indonesian foods. As Anita Mannur has stated, food from the home country can offer migrants a sense of comfort.\textsuperscript{50} Other scholars add that food offers both tangible and imaginative links to places, times and people of importance.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, food has a story or a meaning behind it related to place and culture.\textsuperscript{52} Erita Lubeek, the owner of Salero Minang, who transformed her restaurant into a catering business, says that Indonesian descendants, Dutch people married to Indonesians and people who have lived in Indonesia often visit the restaurants to order Indonesian food.\textsuperscript{53} To attract customers, restaurant owners and chefs thus try to marry authentic Indonesian foods with local tastes and expectations. Agus Hermawan, the Indonesian-born executive chef of Ron Gastrobar Indonesia, indicated the need to find innovative ways to cook Indonesian foods without compromising authenticity. He observed that the concept should be to attract all, Dutch and Indonesians alike.\textsuperscript{54} In this way, Indonesian diasporas, as restaurant owners or top-level management can function as an anchor for gastroduplomacy, with the public at large as the target.

\textsuperscript{50} Mannur 2009.
\textsuperscript{51} Shum 2020, 298.
\textsuperscript{52} Sims 2009, 321–336.
\textsuperscript{53} Interview, Erita Lubeek, 16 March 2019.
\textsuperscript{54} Hermawan 2021.
5.2 Wonderful Indonesia Co-Branding Programme: Initial Step for Branding Indonesia via Restaurants

In the first Joko Widodo administration, Indonesia considered national cuisine an asset, since it was discussed at the Limited Working Meeting in 2016 and 2017.55 Furthermore, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism (in 2019 transformed into the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy) has also recognised the importance of Indonesian foods to attract tourism primarily. In early 2018 the Ministry of Tourism created a programme to support Indonesian culinary promotion.56 One aspect involved partnering with 100 restaurants abroad founded by Indonesian diasporas through the Co-branding Wonderful Indonesia Programme.57 The programme was designed to support the Indonesian diaspora abroad by promoting Indonesian cuisine in various ways. In return, the Ministry of Tourism would benefit from the promotion of Indonesian tourism.

According to Vita Datau, there are three main criteria for this programme according to which Indonesian restaurants can apply and participate.58 First, a restaurant must be located in a major city, be easy to reach and have been established for more than three years — except for restaurants with an outstanding concept representing Indonesian cuisine. Second, a restaurant must serve at least two out of five national foods promoted by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economics: nasi goreng, satay, gado-gado, rendang and soto. Third, the owners are allowed to be an official promotion partner of Wonderful Indonesia. Vita Datau noted that it is important for the Indonesian government to partner with an Indonesian restaurant that attracts local customers or non-Indonesians and that already has branches in other places to support the objective of gastrodiplomacy.59

As an initial stage, the Ministry of Tourism chose and partnered with ten Indonesian restaurants abroad, namely (1) Ron Gastrobar Indonesia (Amsterdam, The Netherlands); (2) Djakarta Bali (Paris, France); (3) Yono’s Restaurant (Albany, New York, United States); (4) Kasih Restaurant (Los Angeles, California, United States); (5) Fluffy Lamb (Perth, Australia); (6) Sendok Garpu (Brisbane, Australia); (7) Ubud Restaurant (Sydney, Australia); (8) Sari Ratu (Singapore); (9) Bumbu Desa (Malaysia); and (10) Indonesia Grill & Gastrobar (Houston, Texas, United States).60 Vita Datau stated that: ‘Ron Gastrobar Indonesia was an excellent example for Indonesian

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55 Interview, Thanon Aria Dewangga, 1 July 2019; Arifi Saiman, 1 July 2019.
56 Trihartono et al. 2020, 4.
57 Datau 2020.
58 Datau 2018.
59 Datau 2020.
60 Trihartono et al. 2020.
restaurants abroad that can also be a benchmark for other restaurants. It has some branches, poses an excellent concept to promote Indonesian foods, and attracts many customers. The fact that Ron Gastrobar Indonesia has been considered a benchmark, shows that attention to targeting the Netherlands for the promotion of Indonesian foods has emerged.

Co-branding Wonderful Indonesia can be perceived as an initial step for Indonesian culinary promotion. Nonetheless, today’s Indonesian gastrodiplo-macy project has been developed more widely and comprehensively under the co-ordination of the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs, embracing state and non-state actors. Some initiatives that cover broader aims, including strengthened branding, culinary promotion, tourism and economic development, have been well represented under the umbrella of Indonesia Spice Up the World.

6 Targeting the Netherlands for Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy: SWOT Analysis

Europe has long been aware of the importance of food for nation branding and strengthening cultural identity. Many European countries have formulated gastrodiplomacy programmes to promote their national foods to the world. For instance, under the Ministry of Food, Farming, and Forestry coordination, Italy has unveiled a unique trademark for Italian food and agricultural productions entitled ‘The Extraordinary Italian Taste’. This programme promotes Made in Italy cuisine under a single umbrella. A subsequent initiative, ‘The True Italian Taste’, as a part of ‘The Extraordinary Italian Taste’ campaign, aims to promote and conserve the value of original Italian food products globally. The project, which is being led by Assocamerestero (Association of the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad), initially began in 2016 in the United States, Canada, and Mexico and has expanded to include Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Similarly, New Nordic Cuisine (NNC) was launched in 2004 as a culinary innovation in Scandinavian countries. It was conceived as an identity movement, triggered by the active involvement of entrepreneurial culinary leaders, high-profile political supporters, acknowledging scientists, disseminating media and interpreting audiences, principally to promote a cuisine solely

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61 Datau 2020.
62 Quinale 2016, 36.
based on commodities from the Nordic local food. For many years, NNC has been viewed as a new culinary repertory attempting to counter the conventional culinary capital in European society that has been closely identified with French food and eating culture. The aim to distinguish itself from Mediterranean cuisine, particularly French cuisine, is also visible in the aesthetics of the New Nordic movement’s cookbooks and restaurants. Both Italian and Nordic gastrodiplomacy campaigns have shown how nation branding can be strengthened through food promotion. The established programmes also show the interest of many European countries in food innovation and promotion. Targeting Europe, and specifically the Netherlands, could be full of potential for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy.

A SWOT Analysis conducted to analyse the value of targeting the Netherlands for the Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy revealed that culinary diasporas may be considered a primary strength. Internal and external factors are examined to investigate potential strengths and opportunities as well as possible weaknesses and threats while targeting the Netherlands. Many establishments utilise SWOT analysis for strategic planning and quality control while formulating government policies and regulations. Therefore, this approach is arguably beneficial for strategy formulation. We have identified three strengths, three opportunities, three weaknesses and four threats for targeting Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy implementation in the Netherlands (see Table 1).

Due to the historical colonialist epoch, Indonesia and the Netherlands have strong ties. Soon after the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch colonial administration to the new Republic in 1949, Dutch colonials were obliged to clear the colonised area and leave Indonesia. Simultaneously, many Indonesians, particularly Moluccans (up to 12,500 persons), were transferred to the Netherlands to relinquish their military status in the KNIL. Under Dutch law, they could only detach from their military status in the area of Dutch sovereignty, but in the end, it was difficult for them to return home. As mentioned earlier, Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands reached up to 118,098 persons in 2020. Compared with other Southeast Asians such as Thai and Vietnamese, the population of Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands are the largest. In 2020, there were only approximately 15,753 Thai people in the Netherlands, and no more than 14,712 Vietnamese people.

63 Byrkjeflot, Pedersen and Svejenova, 2013, 37–47.
64 Leer 2016.
65 Namugenyi, Nimmagadda and Reiners, 2019, 1145.
67 UNDESA 2020.
68 UNDESA 2020.
In addition, as we have seen, the Indonesian government has recently strengthened its gastrodiplomacy policy through ISUTW and designed four pillars that have become the main principles for implementing ISUTW. These are 1) Spices, seasonings, and proceed foods; 2) Indonesian restaurants; 3) Culinary promotion; 4) Culinary destinations in Indonesia. The goal is to increase the presence of Indonesian restaurants worldwide by up to 4,000 by 2024 and increase export values of spices up to USD 2 billion. These are some strengths of the internal environment of Indonesia that could support the implementation of the Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy in the Netherlands. Indonesia has many human resources that could be a potential anchor of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy, ranging from permanent residents and professionals to students.

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Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia 2021.

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<th>Strengths</th>
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<td>Strong historical tie.</td>
<td>Have no concrete mechanism, roadmap, or initiative for gastrodiplomacy strategy in Europe.</td>
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<td>Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands accounted for 118,098 people.</td>
<td>Only five Indonesian food menus were prioritised in the strategy.</td>
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<td>The new initiative of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy, Indonesia Spice up the World (ISUTW).</td>
<td>Considerably low food safety standards.</td>
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<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<td>Up to 295 Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands.</td>
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<td>Popularity of Indonesian food in the Netherlands.</td>
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<td>Indonesian food consumers in the Netherlands are mostly senior people with historical relations with Indonesia.</td>
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Thanks to the strong historical ties between both countries, many Dutch people befriend Indonesian people and are also familiar with Indonesian food. Furthermore, the development of ISUTW as a newly launched programme may become a concrete framework to map out a further strategy for establishing the Netherlands as the primary target of the Indonesian gastrodiplomacy trajectory.

As stated earlier, there were up to 295 Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands in 2021. These numbers are high compared with the presence of Indonesian restaurants in other countries. A strong sense of culinary nostalgia may become another opportunity for Indonesia to implement better the notion of ISUTW with some provisions and spirits that Indonesian people in the Netherlands have. If it is linked to diasporas, culinary nostalgia might be one of the profound reasons Indonesian diasporas started their culinary business. As Mannur stated, food from the home country can offer migrants a sense of comfort. Some scholars also agree with this statement, adding that food offers the comfort of home and both tangible and imaginative links to places, times and people of importance. Moreover, food has a story or a meaning behind it related to place and culture. This may also be what Indonesian diasporas search to remember the place, times, and people and seek comfort as another articulation beyond economic reasons. The spirit of culinary nostalgia encouraged them to cook Indonesian food, and some of them opened restaurants and other culinary businesses. Moreover, many Indonesian foods have already become popular in the Netherlands. In early 1954, advertisements for Indonesian canned food varieties of fried rice and noodles, known as nasi goreng and bami, first appeared. In 1962, households had the option of purchasing nasi goreng and bami appetisers that were previously prepared but frozen and then reheated. In 1980, over 55% of all households in the Netherlands ate at least sometimes in a Chinese-Indonesian restaurant, but only 21% of Dutch families ate in other types of foreign restaurants. These existing conditions in the Netherlands are identified as opportunities for further implementation of Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. The resources and popularity have been there, and now it is the task of the Indonesian government to tap these opportunities. The expansion of Indonesian restaurants in

71 Mannur 2009.
72 Shum 2020, 298.
74 Salzman 1986, 617.
75 Salzman 1986, 616.
the Netherlands may become an entry gate to expanding the business to other European countries. It is worth noting that Indonesia aspires to have 4,000 restaurants in 2024. Considering the Netherlands and its diasporas’ potential may open wider opportunities to accelerate the establishment of Indonesian restaurants globally, especially in Europe. The country has had precious assets such as human resources, the spirit of culinary nostalgia, and Indonesian food popularity. Renu Lubis, the co-ordinator of the Food and Beverage Division of the Indonesian Entrepreneur Association in the Netherlands (ASPIN A) and the owner of the Leiden’s oldest Indonesian restaurant, Iboe Tjilik, also asserted that creating gastrodiplomacy through restaurants will be facilitated if the Netherlands becomes a hub, so that, from the Netherlands, the programme can expand to other European nations — building on the Netherlands’ existing firm basis. These strengths and opportunities can be a foundation that should be used to maximum advantage to convince the government and other stakeholders involved that targeting the Netherlands for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy by harnessing existing resources, primarily diasporas and restaurants, is pivotal.

Some weaknesses and projected threats were also identified in the SWOT analysis. Indonesia has no current mechanism, roadmap, or official initiative on strategising gastrodiplomacy in Europe. The Indonesian government currently has a broad strategy for executing gastrodiplomacy strategy globally without any specific mechanism for each region. Early discussion regarding ISUTW decided that Indonesia only prioritised Africa and Australian continents for the initial implementation of ISUTW, while Europe, and specifically the Netherlands, were not at the top of the list. In addition, unfortunately, only five Indonesian food menus are the priorities of Indonesia’s food promotion, namely gado-gado, nasi goreng, rendang, satay and soto. As a maritime country, Indonesia has an opportunity to showcase its maritime-based foods, such as lempah kuning [yellow fish soup] and pempek [fish cake]. The inclusion of maritime-based foods for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy promotion is essential as it represents Indonesia’s identity as an archipelagic country. In addition, some problems regarding food safety and food quality standards in Indonesia remain a concern. Dutch people typically love to eat fresh food, and some try to follow a healthy lifestyle. However, sometimes one of the most famous Indonesian foods in the world, rendang, is not fresh when it is served. It is cooked for a long time, so chefs sometimes cook it in large amounts and keep it for a week. Kusnanto, a chef at one Indonesian restaurant in the Netherlands,

76 Interview, Rene Lubis, 17 May 2022.
77 Datau 2020.
also stated that he cooked up to 20 kgs of beef to make rendang, and it can be stored for from three days to a week. It is quite normal to store rendang for a longer period in Indonesia and the taste is still delicious. However, different standards may apply in relation to Dutch food preferences. The same goes for the Dutch government, which has a relatively high standard for food safety and quality.

External threats are also apparent. Related to food safety, Europe and the Netherlands have high standards for protecting their citizens from any food scandals. Food safety is a salient issue in the European Union (EU) and its Member States, including the Netherlands. Indonesian gastrodiplomacy will not be successfully implemented if the Indonesian government and diaspora are not aware of this and do not adjust to the standards established in the host country. On the other hand, although Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands are numerous, and Indonesian foods are well known, the emergence of Thai and Vietnamese restaurants in the Netherlands cannot be ignored. In early 2022, up to 312 Thai restaurants were located in the provinces of North Holland (147), South Holland (93), Gelderland (24) and North Brabant (48). Meanwhile, there are approximately 96 Vietnamese restaurants in the Netherlands founded in the provinces of North Holland (47), South Holland (33), Gelderland (6) and North Brabant (10) in early 2022. The high number of Thai restaurants is not surprising, because the Thai government has been committed to its gastrodiplomacy project since early 2001 in the ‘Global Thai Campaign’ framework. Initially, the programme was intended to create a positive image of Thailand abroad and diminish negative stereotypes associated with Thailand’s sex tourism. The presence of Thai restaurants is widespread, and although there are many Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands, the growth of competitors should be borne in mind. Generally speaking, Asian restaurants provide rather similar foods, and some Thai or Vietnamese restaurants also offer Indonesian foods on their food menu.

78 Interview, Ari Kusnanto, 10 May 2022.
79 Young 2014, 904–905.
80 Tripadvisor 2022a.
81 Tripadvisor 2022b.
82 Tripadvisor 2022c.
83 Tripadvisor 2022d.
84 Tripadvisor 2022e.
85 Tripadvisor 2022f.
86 Tripadvisor 2022g.
87 Tripadvisor 2022h.
Changes in eating patterns have raised concerns about overly processed food and obesity, food allergies, food additives and pollutants. As a result, vegetarianism and other movements advocating for specific dietary guidelines have received increasing attention and recognition in the Netherlands. In this case, Indonesian foods, such as rendang, soto, and nasi goreng, which take a long time to prepare and cook, and tend to be oily and without vegetables, are being challenged by traditional cuisines from other countries. Other nations sometimes offer fresher, healthier and perhaps, trendier dishes, for example, Vietnamese pho, Korean BBQ, Japanese sushi, and Thai tom yum. The shifting culinary culture in the Netherlands may further threaten Indonesia if the country does not adjust to current market needs and respond appropriately. Furthermore, Indonesian food consumers are mostly senior people with a solid historical relationship with Indonesia and a sense of romanticism in remembering the beautiful old days involving Indonesia. As Kusnanto has said, many of his restaurant customers are former KNIL soldiers. Before the pandemic, they often gathered and requested that Indonesian food be delivered to their gathering. This situation becomes a threat when Indonesia does not fully implement its gastrodipломacy project in the Netherlands. The strong potential and existence could slowly disappear if no continued and robust action plan is put in place to promote and preserve Indonesian food there. The next generation, especially the young, should also be considered in any further development of the Indonesian gastrodipломacy trajectory.

By mapping out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, we hope that the negative impact of the weaknesses and threats can be minimised. The strengths and opportunities identified above could be a springboard for policy-makers, not limited to Indonesia, to develop gastrodipломacy in their country. Moreover, the implementation of Indonesian gastrodipломacy targeting the Netherlands can be considered a further step of ISUTW without forgetting the culinary diaspora and their desire to strengthen Indonesia’s nation brand across the world.

7 Conclusion

In the euphoria of strengthening Indonesian gastrodipломacy, the Indonesian government has taken a great leap to strengthen its nation’s brand abroad through food. Gastrodipломacy, by utilising food and cuisine as a tool of dipломacy, should consider how non-state actors can be deployed to further the

89 Van Otterloo 2000, 1239.
90 Interview, Ari Kusnanto, 10 May 2022.
strategy. Culinary diaspora, which focuses on introducing foods to the host country, is an asset that tends to be overlooked in the making of gastrodiplomacy strategy. Yet, the role of the diaspora is of the utmost importance and has the potential for significant impact on the ground as a ‘frontline messenger’ to the public in the targeted country. Co-branding Wonderful Indonesia has become an effective step to engaging the diaspora and Indonesian restaurants abroad to promote food. The programme has contributed to the newly established gastrodiplomacy strategy, ISUTW, with no specific targeted country for implementation.

We also argue that Europe is an important continent when considering piloting Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. The Indonesian government should look at the potential of the Netherlands, in particular. Indonesian diasporas and Indonesian restaurants are relatively widespread in the country and can be an asset for food promotion. If this study sees the importance of harnessing the role of non-state actors — namely Indonesian diasporas abroad — the current circumstances are favourable due to their considerable number in the Netherlands. While Indonesian restaurants offer Indonesian foods, Indonesian diasporas could be a frontline anchor for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy. The SWOT analysis presented above shows that targeting the Netherlands is one of the best options for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy strategy, building on Indonesian diasporas and solid historical ties. Further studies on the possible implementation of ISUTW in other countries are recommended. A study on the Javanese diaspora, which has spread in Suriname in the Caribbean and New Caledonia in the Pacific Islands since the colonial period, should also be conducted to enrich Indonesian gastrodiplomacy.

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