

Book Review

Trihartono, A., Patriadi, H. B., & Hara, A. E. (2023). *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia*. Pandiva. 300 pp.

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Abstract

Gastrodiplomacy is gaining considerable attention as an emerging issue of diplomacy due to its practicality, economic viability, and cross-cutting themes with other impending global social issues, including global society and digital culture. The development and prospective construction of Indonesia's Gastrodiplomacy are the focuses of a book titled *Gastrodiplomacy Indonesia*, which is authored by Agus Trihartono, Abubakar Eby Hara, and Himawan Bayu Patriadi. This review finds the book highly persuasive due to its provision of an architecture for Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy and its prognostication of forthcoming challenges. This scrutiny identifies areas where the book falls short, such as the narrative of historical facets of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy and the missing link concerning the adoption of new global norms by Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy.

Keywords: *gastrodiplomacy; public diplomacy; Indonesia*

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Introduction

In the study of international relations, Gastrodiplomacy emerges as a new and refreshing sub-study of diplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy explores the power and influence potentials of using food as a tool of culinary diplomacy (Chapple-Sokol, 2013); food becomes the instrument to captivate and retain the heart of the global public, which has the potential to exert soft power over them. The term Gastrodiplomacy was first mentioned by *The Economist*, a British weekly newspaper, on February 21, 2002. Gastrodiplomacy was first used to describe the efforts of the Thai government and diaspora to popularize its cuisine around the world (*The Economist*, 2002). Rockower (2014) suggests that Gastrodiplomacy calls for the integration of diplomatic relationships and culture. Integration aims to shape the national image or perception of a country on the global stage. Suntikul (2019) explains that Gastrodiplomacy shows the collective efforts of the government and non-state actors to enhance the country's reputation overseas by exposing foreign tourists and visitors to their traditional cuisine. In substance, Gastrodiplomacy tries to promote a country's cuisines and culinary traditions to enhance trans-cultural understanding, boost their global image, and develop the country's tourism and trade.

In line with the rising popularity of the term Gastrodiplomacy, studies to understand its notions and practices are on the rise, particularly in Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, and Thailand. Studies confirm that Gastrodiplomacy has a big impact on the national image, tourism, and diplomatic relations of the country employing it (Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kimura, 2016; Rockower, 2012, 2014; Suntikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015). However, research on Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy is rare. Therefore, the book "Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia" by Trihartono et al. (2023) comes at the right time and is relevant. The book thoroughly analyzes

Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy and its development over time. The book is a continuation of a book titled *Gastrodiplomasi Asia* by the same authors that was published in 2021. The *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia* book critically analyzes the economic challenges, identity discourse, and pragmatic policies of the Indonesian government concerning Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy. The book offers a new perspective regarding the application of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy, particularly on the implementation of the program "Indonesia Spice Up The World" (ISUTW). Additionally, the book also explores the concept of Gastrodiplomacy and its operation in Indonesia's foreign policy.

Body

The book *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia* consists of nine chapters. The first chapter introduces the Gastrodiplomacy concept as a part of diplomacy study in international relations (p. 29) and examines instruments and actors in Gastrodiplomacy (pp. 30–33). Chapter 2 explores previous studies on several aspects of Gastrodiplomacy in general and Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy in particular, as well as mapping the published previous studies, assorted seminars, and podcasts on Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy (pp. 47–52). Chapter 3 describes the attempt of the first Indonesian President, Soekarno, to promote Indonesian cuisine on international occasions and at state events (pp. 56–59) and his initiative to compile Indonesian culinary heritages in a book titled *Mustikarasa* (pp. 60–65). Chapter 3 argues that even though the formal development of Gastrodiplomacy started around the last decade (Rockower, 2012), Indonesia has incidentally practiced Gastrodiplomacy since the Sukarno presidency.

Chapter 4 discusses the exertion of Gastrodiplomacy under the tourism program during the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono presidency (p. 69), including the government's

process in selecting and promoting the 30 Icons of Indonesian Culinary (*30 Ikon Kuliner Nusantara*) to attract tourists under the Wonderful Indonesia program in 2011 (pp. 75-82). Chapter 5 examines the launching of Gastrodiplomacy programs that focused on the so-called brand power, under the banner of the Five Indonesian Culinary Icons (*5 Ikon Kuliner Indonesia*), during the administration of President Joko Widodo (pp. 95–113). Chapter 5 also highlights the role of the Indonesian Creative Economic Agency (*Badan Ekonomi Kreatif; Bekraf*), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism as the main actors in the Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy (pp. 97-113). Chapter 6 delves into the Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program, which specifically explores spices, cuisines, and overseas restaurants in the second term of Joko Widodo's presidency. The ISUTW program during the Joko Widodo presidency is different from the similar program under the Yudhoyono presidency in that instead of being dominated by the government body, it integrates 95 actors, both state and non-state. ISUTW is orchestrated by the Coordinating Minister of Maritime and Investment (*Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi; Kemenko Marves*) (pp. 128–162).

Chapter 7 identifies the global norms in international communities in relation to Gastrodiplomacy. The authors suggest several global norms for Indonesia to pay attention to, such as healthy, safe, and sustainable food; equity; people's empowerment; labor's human rights; and Fair Trade (pp. 167–185). Chapter 8 explains the current issues and challenges of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy such as how Indonesian cuisine is relatively less popular in comparison with other Asian cuisines on international stages (pp. 188–201), despite its significant popularity on social media (pp. 201–202). The chapter also focuses on the development of cloud kitchens as an alternative to traditional restaurants based on the

compatibility of the cloud kitchen with the growing digital lifestyle (pp. 202–212). Finally, Chapter 9 deals with two notions that are rarely discussed in Indonesia Gastrodiplomacy, identity and the alternative construction of Indonesia Gastrodiplomacy. Chapter 9 discusses that even though Indonesia has long claimed its identity as a maritime country (pp. 216-219), in fact, the promotion of Indonesian cuisines is still very much dominated by agrarian-based cuisine (pp. 225–232).

As the only book that comprehensively and profoundly discusses Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy, the book is very influential. The book's strength is on its thorough analysis of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy that covers topics from the conceptual framework of Gastrodiplomacy to history and the practice of Gastrodiplomacy as Indonesian foreign policy tools. In addition, the in-depth analysis of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy over time and the offered opinion on how to balance the domestic and international contexts in Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy are also highlights of the book. Also, the authors underline the need to understand global norms and foreign audiences when constructing the framework.

Nevertheless, despite its comprehensive exploration, this book is not free from shortcomings. One of those is in Chapter 7. Chapter 7 lacks an explanation of the link between global norms and Gastrodiplomacy. The identified global norms mentioned in the book are not followed by an effective explanation of their relevance to Gastrodiplomacy. As a result, readers might wonder about how global norms shape and influence Gastrodiplomacy. Adaptation or adoption of global norm remains an important topic in the international relations discipline because norm change is a factor in the transformation of domestic social systems. If the book could explain the process of global norm adoption in Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy, it would cast light not only on the social process of transformation of kitchen culture and

gastronomy, which are the foundation of Gastrodiplomacy, but also the confirmation of the dynamic nature of culture and heritage.

Another shortcoming is in Chapter 3. The analysis of the Gastrodiplomacy strategy under President Sukarno misses the details in comparison with the comprehensive analysis of the Gastrodiplomacy strategy under President Yudhoyono and President Jokowi in chapters 4–6. The explanation for this historical analysis shortcoming may be attributable to the book's focus on international relations rather than the history discipline. To enhance the rationale for pursuing Gastrodiplomacy as an Indonesian soft power strategy among other strains of public diplomacy, further research on the history of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy will be an intriguing topic to explore.

Conclusion

As an academic publication, *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia* is a valuable resource that offers a comprehensive exploration of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy. With its extensive and detailed research, the book will leave the readers with vast knowledge of Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy. The book is an important reference for university students, academics, researchers, and policymakers who want to understand Indonesian Gastrodiplomacy. The book also opens the pathway for further research that can contribute to a broader understanding of Gastrodiplomacy and international relations.

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