

# Indonesia's Public Diplomacy

## Interfaith Meetings in the Netherlands

FRANS WIJSEN, RADBOUD UNIVERSITY, GADJAH MADA UNIVERSITY

### Abstract

This chapter addresses the question of what policy-makers in the Netherlands and Indonesia can learn from each other in safeguarding national unity. It analyses the Public Diplomacy program of the Indonesian government and bilateral Netherlands–Indonesia interfaith dialogues from the perspective of secularism and religion–state relationships. It uses public–private partnership between the Indonesian embassy in the Netherlands and two non-governmental organizations, namely the Netherlands–Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations and the Special Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama in the Netherlands, as cases. The chapter concludes that the governments and policy-makers in both countries advocate neutral engagement with religions, but that they not always practice what they preach. In the Netherlands the freedom to have a religion is under pressure. In Indonesia the rights of religious minorities and the right to be without religion is under pressure. The chapter concludes that what policy-makers in both countries can learn from each other is to balance extremes.

**Keywords:** Public Diplomacy Program; secularism and religion-state relationships; Pancasila Philosophy; interfaith dialogues; secular and pluralistic national unity

## Introduction

At the launch of the Indonesia-Netherlands Society in The Hague (22 March 2012), the then Indonesian Ambassador to the Netherlands, Her Excellency Retno Marsudi (2012) referred to how the Dutch picture Indonesia being an unstable and corrupt country. In reaction to this, she stated that Indonesia has an economic growth of more than 6 per cent, free media and gender balance. She added: “Today, Indonesia is registered among the 20 biggest economies in the world; Indonesia is the third largest democracy in the world; and Indonesia today is widely regarded as a living proof that democracy, Islam and modernity can thrive harmoniously together.” Quoting the United States’ Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, on her visit to Indonesia in 2009, she also stated that Indonesia is a shining example of “Woman empowerment”. She closed her remarks saying:

*We have a vision to promote peace and prosperity not only for the Indonesia people, but also for the rest of the world. It is a constitutional mandate for us to promote a world order based on freedom, peace and social justice.*

Similar statements were made by various government officials visiting the Netherlands, and the European Union. During an International Conference organized by the Netherlands Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama at Radboud University, on 19 June 2019, the then Minister of Religious Affairs, His Excellency Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (2019), said:

*The Indonesian government certainly does not want to be left behind in creating a peaceful world order. In accordance with the spirit of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, we have a great commitment to participate in creating a world order, based on freedom, eternal peace and social justice.*

As the Minister of Religious Affairs, he considered his statement to be based upon a moderate view of Islam. He said, “I would like to express my sincere hope that this International Conference can articulate Islamic *wasathiyah* [moderation] that could contribute to world peace”. And he continued, “the world Moslem population will increase rapidly from 23.2% to 29.7%. And, Indonesia will become one of the largest demographic bonus contributors, as the majority of its citizens are Moslem”.

Asking “can we imagine if the Indonesian citizens of productive age are not qualified and do not have moderate religious views?”, he answered:

*Since Indonesia is the fourth largest population in the world, of course that situation will automatically affect the condition of the world globally. As a result, there is no other choice. We must intervene in shaping perspectives, attitudes and religious behavior of our society so that this nation contributes positively to the world.*

These and similar statements of government officials show Indonesia’s confidence that it plays its part in the construction of the present world order, and that Indonesia’s view of Islam has an added value to the Western world, which sees Islam as basically undemocratic and women-unfriendly. Within the main question that guides this volume, that of what philosophy of national unity has succeeded in promoting peace and stability, secular or pluralistic, this chapter answers the question of what policy-makers in the Netherlands and Indonesia can learn from each other in this respect. This is relevant because of the long history that connected both countries – and it might be interesting for other countries as well.

As a theoretical and conceptual framework, I use literature on secularism (Norris, Inglehart, 2011) and religion–state relationships (Fox, 2008) asking if a strict separation of religion and state is necessary for the stability and unity of a nation. A secular state is a state that does not recognize nor support (institutional) religions, and suppresses expressions of religion in the public domain. In this sense, in this model there is no strict separation of religion and state, as the state suppresses religion in the public domain (of course, it recognizes religious freedom of its citizens as individuals). Usually, France and Turkey are mentioned as examples of secular states, although both countries are secular in theory, but not in practice. For example, France recognizes Catholic holidays as national holidays. Turkey supports Islamic organisations, in theory to control and limit them. By a neutral state we mean a state that does not suppress religions and treats them in equal manners.

According to Fox (2008), in distinction to the secular model that suppresses religion in the public domain and sees religion as a purely private matter, three forms of neutralism can be distinguished. First, the state does not suppress religion and does not support religion. In this sense there is a strict separation between religion and state. Second, the state supports religion, but has no preference for one or another religion. Third, in principle the state promotes equal treatment of religion, but in practice it favors one of them, for example because of historical reasons. The

United States of America are seen as an example of the first form of neutrality. Most countries within the European Union switch between the second and the third model of neutrality, depending on the preferences of the ruling government, or mix between these models, applying both of them in different situations.

	Suppressing religion	Supporting religion
<b>Strict separation</b>	The state does not suppress religion.	The state does not support religion.
<b>Neutral engagement</b>	The state may suppress religion as long as the result is the same for all religions.	The state may support religion as long as the result is the same for all religions.
<b>Equal treatment in principle</b>	The state does not have the intention to suppress one religion more than another, but in practice it does so.	The state does not have the intention to support one religion more than another, but in practice it does so.

Within the neutral engagement model, an example of suppressing religion as long as the result is the same for all religions is the norm of the liberal – a democratic rule of law that is adhered to in most European countries (Bader, 2007). Religions are free to express themselves as long as they respect the principles of democracy and liberalism. If they do not do so, freedom of religion may be limited. Thus, the state is not all that neutral, but has a clear preference for specific principles (Van Bijsterveld, 2018). An example of a state that has not the intention to suppress one religion more than another, but in practice it does so, is the Netherlands where religious communities have the right to start schools (under certain conditions), but in practice it is more difficult to start an Islamic school than a Protestant Christian one, because of a basic distrust of and suspicion against orthodox Islam among civil servants who administer the procedure to start schools. The same distrust and suspicion also applies to orthodox Christian schools that do not recognize gender equality or homosexuality (Wijsen, 2020).

We leave aside the notion of state religion, which exists in the Muslim world in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and in European countries such as the United Kingdom (Anglican Church), Sweden (Lutheran Church) and Greece (Orthodox Church). An interesting fact for our topic is that while the Netherlands Government promoted a pluralistic or “pillarized” (Lijphart, 1968) model at home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, recognizing religious differences particularly in the educational system, it promoted strict secularism in its colony, Indonesia, bypassing religious differences, and suppressing political Islam (Kennedy & Valenta, 2006, p. 344).

I first elaborate on the Pancasila philosophy and its contestation in contemporary Indonesia. Second, I introduce the public diplomacy program of the Indonesia government. Third, I analyse the application of this program in the Netherlands, in collaboration with two non-governmental organizations: the Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations and the Special Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama in the Netherlands. I end by drawing conclusions.

## 1. Pancasila Philosophy

The Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, to which the Minister of Religious Affairs whom I quoted in my introduction referred, is based on a short text known as the Jakarta Charter. This text was written by the members of a Committee that was established by the Japanese to prepare Indonesia's independence. The members were divided between those who opted for a secular state and those who advocated for an Islamic state.

At the last day of the first session, on June 1, 1945, the later president Sukarno formulated five principles (Pancasila) as the ideological foundation for the new state. These were monotheism or belief in the one Lordship; internationalism or just and civilized humanity; nationalism or the unity of Indonesia; democracy or the deliberation among representatives; and equality or social justice for all people of Indonesia.

A small committee was set up to draft the Constitution. The Islamists agreed to withdraw their proposal for an Islamic state, on condition that the Jakarta Charter included the five principles (Pancasila) and that "the obligation to implement Syariah for adherents of Islam" was added to the first principle. The Jakarta Charter was promulgated on 22 June 1945 and became the preamble of the constitution.

The day after independence, 18 August 1945, resistance to the Charter emerged. Christian areas in eastern Indonesia threatened to leave the new republic if the added words were not scrapped. And Balinese Hindus wanted the Arabic word "Allah" to be replaced by the Indonesian "Tuhan". The nationalist Muslim, Mohammad Hatta convinced the Muslim leaders to drop the obligation for Muslims to abide by Islamic law, for "the sake of national unity". Hatta's proposal was accepted, and the constitution was ratified. The above-mentioned obligation was replaced by the phrase '*Yang Maha Esa*', which means "One Divine Lordship". Therefore, the first principle became '*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*', that is "Belief in One Divine Lordship".

Soon after that, the first principle of Pancasila became a subject of controversy between Muslim and Christian theologians. Muslims interpreted *Yang Maha Esa* to be the Islamic concept of monotheism. For Christians, on the other hand, the word *Ketuhanan* (Lordship) permits the interpretation of the first pillar of Pancasila in terms of the religious pluralism of the country (Hidaya, 2010, 2012). Particularly after the resignation of president Muhammad Suharto, there have been various attempts to reinstall the obligation to implement Islamic law (*Syariah/shariah*) for adherents of Islam.

During the New Order era (1967-1998), characterized by Suharto's authoritarian rule, the government controlled the media and the philosophy of national unity was imposed on Indonesian citizens. During the Reformation era that started after Suharto's fall there has been more freedom of speech and decentralization gave space to radical groups to express themselves. An example is the Front Pembela Islam (FPI), Islamic Defenders Front which started in 1998 and was dissolved in 2019. But so far, these attempts failed. The willingness of the Muslim majority at independence in 1945 to drop their demand for an Islamic state, and the rejection of the added "the obligation to implement *Syariah* for adherents of Islam" to the preamble of the constitution, for the sake of the unity of the nation, is seen as a proof that Islam and democracy are compatible. And this opinion is still widely held by the majority of Muslims.

A survey conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) in May 2017 showed that 79.3% of the Indonesian population supports the current democratic system and that 9.2% of Indonesians think that the current system should be replaced by an Islamic state. 89.3% says that Islamic State (IS) is a threat to Indonesia and 92.9% says that IS should be banned from the country. 78.4% agreed that the government disband Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Indonesian branch of the pan-Islamic movement Hizbut Tahir, a radical Muslim organization that supports the idea of having an Islamic state and implementing Islamic law (Editorial, 2017).

Another survey conducted by the Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS) in September 2017 showed that 41% of the Muslims think that Indonesia's regions should be allowed to implement *shariah* law at local level and 39% think that *shariah* law should be implemented throughout the country.

The widely known case of Ahok and some other incidents show that there are tensions between majority and minority groups. Ahok, whose official name is Basuki Tjahajha Purnama, was a Jakarta governor of Christian-Chinese descent. He was doubtfully found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to prison for two years (News Desk, 2019, 6 January).

However this may be, during the 2019 presidential election, 42.7% of the Muslims supported president Joko Widodo, known as 'Jokowi', of the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), and 39.1% supported Prabowo Subianto who was supported by the Muslim clerics. 18.2% were undecided. A recent survey to explore who will be Jokowi's successor after presidential elections (Malik, 2021) shows that the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) remains the most popular party in Indonesia, and that support for democracy and pluralism will most probably remain.

## 2. Public Diplomacy

Pancasila Philosophy plays a significant role in Indonesia's foreign policy, or what is called the "soft power and public diplomacy" (Sukma, 2011). The Directorate of Information and Public Diplomacy was started in 2002 by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Hasan Wirajuda, and has been organising several regional, intercontinental and bilateral interfaith meetings since 2004. Its establishment was a reaction to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the subsequent attack in Bali in 2002.

Moreover, it was after Suharto's anti-democratic rule, and particularly, after Indonesia recognised East Timor's desire for independence in 1998 (Alles, 2015a, p. 15), that Indonesia could reclaim its role in the world order. It had shown that Indonesia is a democratic state and that it respects international law (Indonesia's occupation of East Timor in 1975 was condemned by the United Nations).

The *Reformasi* was a turning point in Indonesia's foreign policy. Sukma (2012, p. 85) says that "before 1998 Islam was never a determining factor in Indonesia's foreign policy, because neither Sukarno nor Suharto would allow foreign policy to be dictated by Islamic considerations. Islam became part of national identity only after Reformasi".

After the 2002 Bali bomb blasts, Western countries started to doubt whether the Indonesian government was able to control extremism. It was then that Indonesian diplomats started to spread the message of moderate Indonesian Islam.

The principle of Public Diplomacy uses "soft power" diplomacy in international relations (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 2). It invests in cultural exchange and shared political values, such as democracy. Among others, this is the case in the Bali Democracy Forum that has been held annually since 2008. In the beginning, it was attended by South-East Asian Countries only, but now it has members and observers from all over the world.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is itself secular. However, it collaborates with faith-based organisations, such as Nadhlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 7). This makes it also vulnerable due to controversies between Nadhlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, traditionalist and modernist Islam (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 12-13). Public Diplomacy applies not only to the Western world but also to Saudi Arabia. Being the biggest Muslim community, it strives for moderation of Arabic Islam (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 11). Since the Bali bombing there has been a “less optimistic tone” (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 16).

In the current Public Diplomacy program, there is a parallel with the Bandung Conference in 1955. The Bandung Conference was the first manifestation of Indonesia’s foreign policy. But, to a large extent, it responded to domestic problems such as the proclamation of an independent republic of South Moluccas and the unchanged status of New West Guinea.

### 3. Interfaith Dialogues in the Netherlands

In the speech of Her Excellency Retno Marsudi (2019), mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, she mentioned that when she came to the Netherlands to work at the Embassy (1997-2001) her superior, while briefing her, stated that Indonesia had “a special relationship with the Netherlands”. And when she became Ambassador herself, she strived to ensure that the relationship “remains special”. This was not always the case. At the end of 1991, diplomatic relationships between the Netherlands and Indonesia became problematic. The then Minister of Development Collaboration of the Netherlands, Mister Jan Pronk, accused Indonesia of human rights violations in East Timor. The Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs reminded the Dutch of their human rights violations during the colonial regime (Van Reybrouck, 2020). Development collaboration between the countries was stopped, but during the presidency of Bacharuddin Yusuf Habib, the first president after president Suharto’s fall, development collaboration resumed in 1998.

The first bilateral “Indonesia-Netherlands Interfaith Dialogue” was held in The Hague, from 28 February until 1 March 2006, initiated by the Indonesian embassy in The Netherlands. The theme was: ‘Peaceful Coexistence and Interfaith Cooperation’. The dialogue was attended by around 200 people (religious leaders, academicians and representatives of NGOs from the Netherlands and Indonesia). From the Indonesian side speakers were Ft. Ignatius Ismartono (KWI), I Nyoman Suwandha (Chair of Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia), Prof. Dr. Din Din Syamsudin (Chairperson of PP Muhammadiyah), Muhamad Ali (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah),



Dr. Tamrin Tomagola (UI), and Hamzah Haz (PPP, United Development Party, former vice-President of Indonesia).

Similar bilateral interfaith meetings were held in Canada, the Vatican, United Kingdom and Austria (Hoesterey, 2019, p. 8). Altogether, there have been more than thirty-five of these meetings.

The second interfaith meeting in the Netherlands was held in June 2008 in The Hague. In fact, it was an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) on Interfaith Dialogue, and it was the fourth of its kind. The first ASEM Interfaith Dialogue was in Bali on July 21-22, 2005. The second was in Larnaca, Cyprus, July 3-5, 2006, and the third in Nanjing, China on June 19-21, 2007. In fact, these meetings are not merely bilateral but inter-continental, between European and Asian countries.

Since then, the Public Diplomacy program in the Netherlands has been working more indirectly by sponsoring and participating in conferences organized by non-governmental organizations stimulating public-private partnership, also in this field of interfaith dialogue (Affandi & Assad, 2019). In the following section I give two examples of this: first the interfaith dialogues of the Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations, and second the biannual International Conferences of the Special Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama in the Netherlands.

#### **4. Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations**

The Netherlands-Indonesia Consortium for Muslim-Christian Relations was initiated in Yogyakarta in 2010, during a meeting on theological education from 6-8 October (Küster, Setio, 2014). It met for the second time in Kaliurang in 2012, on March 26-30. The third meeting on “Joint in Difference” was the first organized in collaboration with the Indonesia Embassy in The Hague on April 25, 2013, and a further interfaith dialogue (the fourth of the Consortium) was held in collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague on “Inclusive Religious Education” in Ambon, from 24-26 August, 2016.

On behalf of the Indonesian Government, the meeting in The Hague in 2013 was attended and addressed by Mr. Ibnu Wahyutomo, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, and Mr. Prof. Dr. H. Nur Syam, M.Si, Secretary General, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The meeting in Ambon in 2016 was attended and addressed by the Deputy Governor of Maluku, Dr. Zeth Sahuburua, S.H., M.H., and Dr. Amsal Bakhtiar MA, Director of Islamic Higher

Education, Directorate General of Islamic Education on behalf of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

One of the conclusions of the second bilateral Netherlands-Indonesia interfaith dialogue on “Inclusive Religious Education” in Ambon was that the educational system in Indonesia is too religious, promoting mono-religious education in schools, and that the educational system in the Netherlands is not religious enough, by not making the study of religion a mandatory subject in all schools despite it being part of the Netherlands’ cultural heritage and the basis of its civilization (Bagir et al., 2019). The educational system, or the right given to religious communities to educate their children according to their own world views, is seen as a litmus test of religion–state relationships.

Since then there have been such interfaith dialogues on “Diversity, Democracy, and Dialogue” (the 5<sup>th</sup>), held in Nijmegen, on 29 November, 2017, and another one on “promoting Costly Tolerance” (the 6<sup>th</sup>), held in The Hague, on 20 June, 2019, launching a book prepared by the Consortium on costly tolerance (Suhadi, 2018). In both cases, the welcome speech was given by the Indonesian ambassador to the Netherlands, His Excellency I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, MA. Keynote speaker at the latter interfaith dialogue was Prof. Syafiq A. Mughni, Special Envoy of the President of Indonesia for Interfaith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue and Cooperation. In his address, prof. Mughni stressed the middle path in Islam, balancing extremes (The Jakarta Message, 2018).

The 7<sup>th</sup> bilateral Interfaith Dialogue was held on 9 June, 2022 in The Hague. The topic was ‘Religion in Colonization and Decolonization. Indonesian-Dutch Confrontation, Confirmation, Transformation’. The welcome speech was given by the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency Drs. Mayerfas, and the keynote speaker at the 7<sup>th</sup> Interfaith Dialogue was Mohammad Mahfud Mahmodin, commonly known as Mahfud MD, an Indonesian politician and lawyer, who is currently serving as the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs of Indonesia.

The 8<sup>th</sup> bilateral Interfaith Dialogue took place on 20 July 2023 in Yogyakarta. Its topic was Decolonizing Religion, religion defined as both subject and object of decolonization. The Indonesian government was represented by the Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Teuku Faizasyah. On behalf of the Netherlands Government a welcome speech was delivered (online) by Karin Mossenlechner, the Director General for Asia and Oceania at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the Netherlands embassy in Jakarta was instrumental in organizing the event.

In mentioning the (keynote) speakers, I only mention the speakers who are relevant for the Public Diplomacy program of the Indonesian government.

## 5. Special Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama in the Netherlands

Another partner with whom the Indonesian Embassy in the Netherlands works is the Netherlands Special Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama. It spreads Islam Nusantara, claiming that Indonesian Islam is moderate and progressive.

The Netherlands branch of Nahdlatul Ulama started in 2014. So far, it has organized three biannual International Conferences, the first at Free University in Amsterdam in 2017, the second at Radboud University in Nijmegen in 2019, and the third again at the Free University of Amsterdam in 2022.

The topic of the first Conference in 2017 was “Rethinking Indonesia’s Islam Nusantara: From Local Relevance to Global Significance”, offering moderation against extremes in Islam (News Desk, 2019, 24 June). Apart from the then Indonesian ambassador to the Netherlands, His Excellency I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, four other ambassadors were present, namely Husnan Bey Fananie from Azerbaijan, Achmad Chozin Chumaiddy from Lebanon, Agus Maftuh Abegebriel from Saudi Arabia, and Safira Machrusah from Algeria. The Minister of Religious Affairs sent a video message and was represented by the Director General of Islamic Education, Dr. Phil. Kamaruddin Amin.

The second conference was held at Radboud University in Nijmegen on June 19. The topic was “Seeking the Middle Path. Articulations of moderate Islam”. The keynote speaker (from the perspective of Public Diplomacy) was His Excellency Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the then Minister of Religious Affairs. In his speech on “Religious Moderation Mainstreaming” he said that Indonesia is “a very religious country, with a polite, tolerant character. If we allow it to grow, extremism and radicalism will surely destroy our nation. Therefore, religious moderation becomes very important as our perspective”.

The third International Conference was again at the Free University of Amsterdam on 8 June 2022. Its topic was ‘Reimagining Religion and Values in Times of Crisis’. The vice-president of the Republic of Indonesia, Ma’ruf Amin, addressed the audience via a video-speech.

## 6. National Unity: Secular or Pluralistic?

The second International Conference of Nadhlatul Ulama at Radboud University raised critique from a right-wing action group called “Nijmegen Turn Right”. Members of the group put big banners near the entrance of the conference hall saying “If you sow Islam, you will harvest sharia”. On the walls they had painted in black “Islam = War”. In an article about the protest in the local newspaper, the leader of the group stated that moderate Islam does not exist, voicing a popular view in the Netherlands. He also said that Mister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin was minister of a country where sharia law is implemented, and that it was a shame that he spoke at a conference on moderate Islam. In an official reaction, the University spokesman said that the protest was unfair (Nietman & Friedrichs, 2019).

Although the statement of the leader of the action group was largely exaggerated, there is some truth in it, acknowledging that rights of religious minorities in Indonesia (e.g. Ahmadiyya, Shia) are not guaranteed under the present regulation, recognizing six ‘official’ religions. It is also not possible to have no religion in Indonesia (people must put a religion on their Identity Card). Since 2017 also ‘local beliefs’ have been officially recognized. They are not perceived of as religion, but sometimes referred to as ‘indigenous religion’.

However this may be, Pancasila is supported by the vast majority of Muslims, and a majority does not favor an Islamic state. For the past decades, overall the situation has been harmonious and stable (apart from civil wars in Maluku and Papua), and the Indonesian government has been quite successful in combating extremism.

From the perspective of theoretical and conceptual framework on secularism and religion–state relations with which I began, one may question the direct state intervention in religious affairs in Indonesia. Is it the task of a state to propagate moderate and progressive Islam? Moreover, is it wise for the Indonesian government to affiliate so closely with one religious organization, Nadhlatul Ulama? There were also times that the Indonesian government was close to Muhammadiyah. But from a Dutch perspective this could be considered to be a violation of the principle of neutral engagement, although in the Netherlands this is also a principle in theory but not always strictly applied in practice.

Is the secular model of suppressing religion from the public domain a better alternative, as some scholars and policy-makers in the Netherlands advocate (Van der Ham, 2022)? This would make one worldview dominant: the secular, religious-suppressing worldviews.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Addressing the question, what policy-makers in the Netherlands and Indonesia can learn from each other in safeguarding national unity, the Public Diplomacy program of the Indonesian government and the bilateral Netherlands–Indonesia interfaith dialogues show that the governments in both countries have one thing in common: they reject secularism and they promote some kind of neutrality.

The Indonesian government practices in its domestic policy a pluralistic model of religion–state relations and promotes it to the external world through its Public Diplomacy program. Based on past experiences, it does relatively well in maintaining national unity although it tends to violate the rights of religious minorities and limits inter-religious marriages and education, not in theory, but in practice. It also violates the right to have no religion.

In the Netherlands, the government engages with religions in a neutral way in principle; in practice it does not. It favors a liberal–democratic state, although public discourse and members of parliament in the Netherlands are moving more and more towards the secular model, suppressing religions. This violates the right of having a religion. This applies particularly to orthodox Muslim and Christian communities that do not accept ‘liberal’ values, such as gender equality and same-sex marriages.

The Public Diplomacy program of the Indonesian government promotes the middle path, religious moderation and balancing extremes. Quoting once again from Lukman Hakim Saifuddin’s speech at Radboud University, “Indonesia has agreed upon not becoming a religion-based country, but also not separating religion from its society’s daily life. Religious values are well-guarded, enriched with local wisdom and cultural values. Some religious laws are institutionalized by the state, religious rituals and cultures are intertwined harmoniously and peacefully”. This is what Dutch policy-makers can learn from the Indonesian Public Diplomacy program. But it is fair to say that the Indonesian government, in its domestic policy, does not always practice what it preaches.

## Bibliography

- Affandi, F. and Asad, M. (2019) 'Diaspora must promote peaceful Islam', *Jakarta Post*, March 22.
- Alles, D. (2015a) 'Interfaith dialogue in Indonesia: From the revival of tradition to its international projection', *Paris Papers*, 14/2015.
- (2015b) *Transnational Islamic actors and Indonesia's foreign policy*. Routledge.
- Bader, V. (2007) *Secularism or democracy? Associational governance of religious diversity*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bagir, Z. A., Bertram-Troost, G., and Vanderbilt, G., (Eds.) (2019) 'Inclusive religious education: Dutch and Indonesian experiences. Special Issue', *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*. 29(1).
- Editorial. (2017) 'Aspiring for an Islamic State', in *Jakarta Post*, June 6. Available at: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/06/06/aspiring-islamic-state.html> Accessed: 6 November 2022.
- Fox, J. (2008) *A world survey of religion and the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoesterey, J. (2019) 'Public Diplomacy on the Global Stage: The Soft Power of Indonesia's Islam Wasatiyyah', Speech Delivered at the 2nd Netherlands Special Branch of Nahdhatul Ulama International Conference. Nijmegen, 19 June.
- Hidayah, S. (2010) 'Translating "Ketuhanan yang maha esa". An amenable religious ideology', in F. Dhont, K. Ko, M. Hoadley, Th. Conners (Eds.), *Pancasila's contemporary appeal. Re-legitimizing Indonesia's founding ethos*. Yogyakarta: Indonesian History Studies Centre – Sanata Dharma University, pp. 239-253.
- (2012) 'The Politics of Religion. The Invention of 'Agama' in Indonesia', *Kawistara* 2/2, 105-224.
- Kennedy, J., and Valenta, M. (2006) 'Religious pluralism and the Dutch state', in W.B.H. van de Donk, A.P. Jonkers, G.J. Kronjee and R.J.J.M. Plum, (Eds.) *Geloven in het publieke domein*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Küster, V., and Setio, R. (2014) 'Introduction', in V. Küster, R. and Setio (Eds.) *Muslim-Christian relations observed: Comparative studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
- Lijphart, A. (1968) *The politics of accommodation. Pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Malik, A. (2021) 'Who will succeed Joko Widodo as Indonesia's president?', *The Diplomat*, 13 December. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/who-will-succeed-joko-widodo-as-indonesias-president/> Accessed: 6 November 2022.

- Marsudi, R. (2012) 'Indonesia and the Netherlands: A special relationship', *Jakarta Post*, April 2.
- Marzuqi, A. M. (2022), *PCINU Belanda Gelar Konferensi Internasional Promosikan Moderasi Beragama*. Available at: [https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/498296/pcinu-belanda-gelar-konferensi-internasional-promosikan-moderasi-beragama?fbclid=IwAR24ISGeg7dcFOyiflBcKsixuT1yrr9xKWBSq8NJV\\_FtFDHKPOz6gjpCKCI](https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/498296/pcinu-belanda-gelar-konferensi-internasional-promosikan-moderasi-beragama?fbclid=IwAR24ISGeg7dcFOyiflBcKsixuT1yrr9xKWBSq8NJV_FtFDHKPOz6gjpCKCI) Accessed: 6 November 2022.
- News Desk (2019) 'Indonesian Muslim figures help promote 'middle Islam' in the Netherlands', *Jakarta Post*, 24 June. Available at: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/06/24/indonesian-muslim-figures-help-promote-middle-islam-in-the-netherlands.html> Accessed: 6 November 2022.
- (2019) 'Ma'ruf Amin says he regrets testifying against Ahok', *Jakarta Post*. 6 January. Available at: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/01/06/maruf-amin-says-he-regrets-testifying-against-ahok.html> Accessed: 6 November 2022.
- Nietman, A., and Friedrichs, S. (2019) 'Protest islam-congres volgens RU misplaatst', *De Gelderlander*. 20 June, p. 5.
- Norris, P., and Inglehart, R. (2011) *Sacred and secular. Religion and politics worldwide*. 2nd Edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reis, A. (2012) 'Indonesia's new prominence in the world', in A. Reid (Ed.), *Indonesia rising: The repositioning of Asia's third giant*. Singapore: ISEAS, pp. 1-13.
- Saifuddin, L. (2019) 'Religious moderation mainstreaming: The Indonesian experience.' Keynote Speech Delivered at the 2nd Netherlands Special Branch of Nahdhatul Ulama International Conference. Nijmegen, 19 June.
- Suhadi (Ed.) (2018) *Costly tolerance: Tantangan Baru Dialog Muslim-Kristen di Indonesia dan Belanda*. Yogyakarta: ICRS.
- Sukma, R. (2011) 'Soft power and public diplomacy: The case of Indonesia', in S. Jong Lee and J. Melissen (Eds.), *Public diplomacy and soft power in East Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 91-116.
- (2012) 'Domestic politics and international posture: Constraints and possibilities', in A. Reid (Ed.), *Indonesia rising: The repositioning of Asia's third giant*. Singapore: ISEAS, pp. 77-92.
- The Jakarta Message (2018) *On the Middle Path for the World Civilization*. Jakarta: Office of the Special Envoy of the President of Indonesia for Interfaith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue and Cooperation.
- Van Bijsterveld, S. (2018) *State and religion: Re-assessing a mutual relationship*. The Hague: Eleven International Publishing.
- Van der Ham, B. (2022) *Wat vrije mensen bindt*. Amsterdam: Prometheus.

Van Reybrouck, D. (2020) *Revolusi. Indonesië en het ontstaan van de moderne wereld.*

Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij.

Wijsen, F. (2021) *De Multiculturele Uitdaging. Omgaan met religieuze diversiteit in Nederland.*

Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.