

**NATION BRANDING IN INDONESIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY (2021-2022)
THROUGH IDENTITY FORMATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION,
AND NATION BRAND IMAGE**

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS



**UNIVERSITAS
ISLAM
INDONESIA**

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**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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Proposed to the Department of International Relations
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As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn:

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Indonesia utilized its 2021–2022 G20 Presidency as a strategic platform for nation branding. Drawing on Keith Dinnie’s Nation Branding Framework, the research analyzes the alignment between Indonesia’s prioritized identity, the strategic communicators employed, and the resulting image formed among external audiences. The central argument is that Indonesia adopted a planned and focused approach in formulating its brand, strategically emphasizing four core identity elements (namely History, Political Regime, Religion, and Landscape) to construct a narrative of the country as a resilient, pluralistic democracy, and a stable, investment-ready middle power in a polarized global system. These identities were transmitted through a series of communicators, including Government Foreign Policy, Marketing Communications, Prominent Actors, Artifacts, and The Diaspora. The findings demonstrate the strategy’s effectiveness: the resulting image was marked by diplomatic acknowledgment, positive international media reception, and tangible outcomes. Indonesia was widely perceived as an effective bridge-builder and a credible economic partner. This success was realized through the convergence of political recognition and substantial investment commitments, affirming that when rooted in a strong identity, nation branding can generate political credibility and economic gains.

Keywords: Nation Branding, Indonesia, G20 Presidency, National Identity, Global Governance

Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana Indonesia memanfaatkan Presidensi G20 tahun 2021-2022 sebagai platform strategis untuk *nation branding*. Dengan mengacu pada Kerangka *Nation Branding* Keith Dinnie, penelitian ini menganalisis keselarasan antara identitas Indonesia yang diprioritaskan, komunikator strategis yang digunakan, dan citra yang tertanam di mata publik eksternal. Argumen sentral penelitian ini adalah bahwa Indonesia mengadopsi pendekatan terencana dan terokus dalam merumuskan citranya, dengan secara strategis menekankan empat elemen identitas inti (yaitu *History, Political Regime, Religion, and Landscape*) guna membangun narasi negara sebagai demokrasi pluralis yang tangguh, sekaligus kekuatan menengah yang stabil dan menarik bagi investasi di tengah ketegangan global. Identitas-identitas ini ditransmisikan melalui serangkaian komunikator, termasuk *Government Foreign Policy, Marketing Communications, Prominent Actors, Artifacts, and The Diaspora*. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan efektivitas strategi ini: Citra yang terbentuk ditandai oleh pengakuan diplomatik, ulasan positif media internasional, dan dampak hasil yang nyata. Indonesia secara luas dipandang sebagai penengah (*bridge-builder*) yang efektif dan mitra ekonomi yang kredibel. Keberhasilan ini terwujud melalui kesatuan antara pengakuan politik dan komitmen investasi yang besar, yang menegaskan bahwa *nation branding*, jika didasarkan pada identitas yang kuat, mampu menghasilkan kredibilitas politik sekaligus keuntungan ekonomi yang nyata.

Kata Kunci: Nation Branding, Indonesia, Presidensi G20, Identitas Nasional, Tata Kelola Global

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In an era of globalization marked by increasing interconnectedness, nation branding has emerged as a pivotal strategy for shaping and managing a country's global image. Dinnie (2008) argues that nation branding functions not only as an external communication instrument, but also as a crucial mechanism for consolidating national identity (Dinnie 2008). The process of nation branding gives rise to the formation of symbolic representations, which serve to facilitate the identification and emotional connection of citizens to the national narrative that is thereby constructed. Therefore, nation branding is a multidimensional practice that reflects a country's strategic position in the international system while providing a means to build domestic legitimacy (Kaneva 2011).

Nation branding also carries significant pragmatic and economic implications. A robust country image can serve as a catalyst for foreign direct investment (FDI), exports, tourism, and labor mobility (Fetscherin and Toncar 2010). Kaneva (2011) further emphasized that nation branding can increase the credibility of the country in the eyes of international investors and increase opportunities for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In this sense, nation branding functions not merely as a symbolic or cultural project, but also as a pragmatic tool that can unlock tangible economic benefits and strengthen international competitiveness.

These findings remain relevant today, as demonstrated by the research conducted by Dineri et al. (2024), who, through a panel data study, demonstrated a positive correlation between nation branding and macroeconomic indicators, including FDI, exports, human capital, and tourism sector spending (Dineri et al. 2024). Moreover, nations implementing robust nation brand strategies tend to achieve greater success in enhancing their global reputation and cultivating market preferences for their products and services (Tijani et al. 2024). Building on these findings, the author contends that Indonesia cannot afford to neglect nation branding.

Amid growing awareness of the importance of nation branding, Indonesia, as a developing country with the largest population and economy in Southeast Asia, continues to face reputational challenges. Economically, Indonesia experienced its first recession since the 1998 Asian financial crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a 3.49% year-on-year GDP contraction in the third quarter of 2020. (BBC Indonesia 2020). Key sectors suffered steep declines, including household consumption (-4%), investment (-6.5%), and exports (-10.8%). The unemployment rate surged to its highest in nine years, reaching 7.07%, with 2.6 million jobs lost. Meanwhile, the number of international tourists in 2020 dropped drastically to just 4.05 million or only 25% of the previous year's total, which resulted in revenue losses amounting to IDR 20.7 trillion. (Kompas.id 2020).

Beyond economic stability, the country faces significant environmental image challenges. International media frequently link Indonesia with the negative environmental impact of its heavy reliance on raw commodity exports, particularly coal and palm oil (Adharsyah, 2019). According to Mongabay, Indonesia has lost millions

of hectares of rainforest in recent decades, making it one of the main drivers of tropical deforestation (Jacobson 2021). BBC emphasized the recurring forest and peatland fires, describing them as environmental and health disasters due to the transboundary haze they created (BBC 2019). CNN World drew attention to the 2020 Omnibus Law, which was criticized for weakening environmental safeguards and prioritizing economic growth over forest protection (Regan 2020). These media used strong wording, such as "weakening safeguards," "fueling destruction," and "the world's third-largest emitter from deforestation," to stress the seriousness of the issue.

Other international media also connected deforestation to Indonesia's dependence on fossil fuels. Reuters emphasized Indonesia's status as the world's leading coal exporter and reported that the government intends to phase out coal by 2056, a goal that many consider insufficient to meet international climate targets (Ungku 2021). Al Jazeera criticized Indonesia's change of position at COP26, where officials rejected the idea of ending deforestation by 2030, calling the goal "unfair." Meanwhile, the government was increasing coal production, raising doubts about its climate commitments. Environmental groups quoted by Al Jazeera accused Jakarta of "paying lip service" to climate action while supporting big companies over local communities (Aljazeera 2021). Through this language and framing, international media portrayed Indonesia as struggling or unwilling to balance economic ambitions with environmental commitments.

Geopolitically, geopolitical positioning presents an opportunity gap. According to the Asia Power Index 2021, Indonesia ranked 8th in the category of diplomatic influence. This category is based on country's diplomacy network, multilateral power,

and foreign policy (Lowy Institute 2021). This positioning reflects a persistent gap between Indonesia's strategic potential (demographic weight, growing economy, moderate political identity) and its actual diplomatic projection. These multifaceted challenges, when combined, underscore the urgent necessity for an integrated strategy to elevate the country's international standing and reputation. Indonesia possesses a powerful blend of assets, anchored by Southeast Asia's largest economy and its soft power as a diverse and moderate Muslim-majority democracy, which presents a strong foundation for aggressively leveraging its influence.

A critical turning point emerged in May 2021, when the Indonesian government officially began preparations to host the G20 Presidency. This was marked by the issuance of Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No. 12 of 2021 on the National Committee for the Implementation of Indonesia's G20 Presidency (Presiden RI 2021). The author argues that this Presidency was not solely a function of policy-setting but was primarily adopted as a strategic political instrument driven by the urgent need to recover from the pandemic and reposition itself within a competitive global economy with the fundamental objective was to leverage the G20 as an unparalleled platform for prestige and image enhancement.

Moreover, the Presidency was intended to function as a strategic global showcase, specifically targeting foreign direct investment (FDI) and increasing investor confidence by communicating political and economic stability (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2021). As Economist Fithra Faisal Hastiadi affirmed, the highest hope was that the G20 meeting would bring 'significant impact for the medium-to-long term with the entry of investment into Indonesia as the G20 Presidency provided a

crucial 'momentum for proof' to showcase Indonesia's political capacity and market readiness, directly challenging rival nations in the global race for capital (Junida 2022).

Acting as the agenda-setter in the G20, a forum representing 80% of global GDP and 75% of international trade, throughout 2021–2022, provided unparalleled visibility for Indonesia (Hermawan 2022). Indonesia sought to rebrand its global narrative, moving beyond its current reputational struggles to showcase its leadership capacity, policy priorities, and dedication to global cooperation. This goal aligned directly with the operationalization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strategic Plan 2020–2024, particularly its mission to "advance Indonesia's leadership and influential role in the international arena" (Kemenlu RI 2020). This emphasis was echoed by the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, in CNBC Indonesia's Power Lunch, where he stated that the G20 Presidency was a crucial opportunity for Indonesia to enhance its global branding efforts (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2021).

In line with this, Indonesia's foreign policy under President Joko Widodo continued to prioritize increasing the country's international contributions and leadership, as reflected in the 4+1 foreign policy priorities, namely: (1) economic diplomacy; (2) protection; (3) sovereignty and nationality; (4) leadership in the region and the world, and; (5) diplomatic infrastructure: human resources, bureaucratic reform, and digitalization (Djumala 2020). For that reason, Indonesia's G20 presidency stands as one of the most strategic moments for the articulation of nation branding and opportunity to enhance both its bargaining position and its global image.

The combination of Indonesia's high strategic potential, persistent reputational challenges, and the unparalleled visibility of the G20 Presidency creates a compelling

research problem that can be effectively analyzed through the lens of nation branding theory. The G20 provided the state with the chance to selectively emphasize certain Nation-Brand Identity elements while strategically deploying a diverse array of Communicators. However, the ultimate Nation-Brand Image resulting from these efforts is subject to the uncontrollable interpretation of external agents. This dynamic perfectly mirrors the central tension within the nation-branding conceptual model. Therefore, this study examines how Indonesia utilized its national identity and communicators during the G20 Presidency, seeking to provide a structured analysis of the strategic choices made and their influence on the nation's projected global image.

1.2 Research Question

How did Indonesia utilize its nation-brand identity and communicators to shape the nation-brand image during its G20 Presidency (2021-2022)?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To identify the specific components of Indonesia's nation-brand identity that were prioritized and integrated into the G20 Presidency.
2. To analyze the mechanisms and channels employed by the Indonesian Government to convey the selected nation-brand identity.
3. To assess the impact of communication efforts on Indonesia's resulting nation-brand image during the G20 period.

1.4 Research Scope

This study examines Indonesia's nation branding strategy as manifested through its G20 Presidency, covering the period from mid-2021 (following the issuance

of Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2021) through to the conclusion of the Summit in late 2022. The scope of this research is strictly defined by the three core, interconnected constructs of the nation-brand conceptual model. First, the research addresses Nation-Brand Identity by focusing on the specific components of Indonesia's enduring identity that were strategically prioritized and utilized to define its leadership narrative within the presidency. Second, the research analyzes Communicators through the deployment of selected channels that acted as the vehicle for projecting the prioritized identity to global audiences. Finally, the study assesses the resulting Nation-Brand Image formed by external audiences, focusing on how the communicated identity influenced the global perception of Indonesia's credibility, capacity, and standing. By capturing the full strategic process from preparatory agenda-setting to the final outcomes, this analysis aims to assess how Indonesia strategically utilized its identity and communicators to shape its global image within the evolving landscape of global politics and economic recovery.

1.5 Literature Review

Laura Angelina Rotua Datubara and A. Arifin, explored the involvement of various actors in Indonesia's nation branding strategy through the hosting of the G20 Presidency in 2022. Datubara and Arifin describe two main categories of actors: state and non-state actors. State actors included the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, thirty-four ministries, and The Nusa Dua Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) as a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE). Non-state actors encompass entities such as Satu Collective, Celsius Creative Lab, PT Royalindo

Expoduta, PT Dyandra Media International Tbk, along with individuals like Maudy Ayunda and William Wongso (Datubara and Arifin 2023).

Anak Agung Mia Intetilia discussed how Indonesia utilized culture as a source of soft power in the 2022 G20 Presidency and Indonesia's digital diplomacy practices on Instagram during the G20 Presidency in 2022. Intetilia discussed how Indonesia leveraged cultural aspects to enhance its soft power projection on the international platform during its G20 Presidency. It combined strategic cultural themes with performances to highlight the diversity of Indonesian entities and cultural communities. Additionally, digital diplomacy through the Instagram account @indonesia.g20 also engaged non-state actors (Intetilia 2022).

Bambang Yuniarto, et al., discussed Indonesia's role in the G20 and its impact on the reputation and position of the country on the global stage. The focus of this journal is on how Indonesia's active participation in the G20 enhanced its ability to influence global economic policies and promote fair and inclusive economic practices. As a member of the G20, Indonesia has the opportunity to shape the global economic landscape, advocating for the interests of developing nations and ensuring that international economic systems uphold the dignity and well-being of all countries. Indonesia's involvement in the G20 contributes to global stability and peace and boosts Indonesia's international standing. The nation's robust economic growth, strong diplomatic ties, and engagement in regional security initiatives further solidify its reputation as a key player in the international community. Indonesia's role in organizations like ASEAN and the United Nations, along with its participation in the

G20, underscores its importance in global affairs and highlights its commitment to fostering a stable and prosperous world (Yuniarto et al. 2023).

Putu Nia Purnama Santi, et al., discussed the influence of the G20 Presidency as an instrument for marketing and branding Indonesia's tourism and its impact on increasing tourist visits, especially at the Melia Bali Hotel, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of this journal was to analyze how Indonesia's leadership in the G20 forum served as a strategic platform to enhance the country's international image and promote its tourism sector during a challenging period. The study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing observation and questionnaires to gather data from 100 purposely sampled tourists who visited or stayed at the Melia Bali Hotel. Data analysis was then conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS) techniques. The findings indicate that the G20 Presidency positively and significantly influenced marketing and branding efforts, leading to an increase in tourist visits during the pandemic era. This underscores the potential of leveraging high-profile international events to boost tourism and improve hotel occupancy rates, providing valuable insights for hotel management and policymakers in maximizing promotional strategies to attract more visitors (Santi et al. 2022).

Among the four literature sources cited, the first review examined the roles of both state and non-state actors in Indonesia's nation branding strategy during its G20 Presidency in 2022. The second review explored how Indonesia leveraged culture as a soft power tool and engaged in digital diplomacy, particularly on Instagram, during its G20 Presidency. The third review underscores the significance of Indonesia's participation in the G20 for promoting global economic fairness and enhancing the

nation's international reputation and standing. The fourth review examined how the G20 Presidency served as a marketing and branding instrument for Indonesian tourism, particularly focusing on its influence in increasing tourist visits to the Melia Bali Hotel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From these literature sources, it is evident that a gap in the existing research remains, despite their shared focus on Indonesia's G20 Presidency. None of the reviewed studies provide a comprehensive analytical link between the prioritization of Indonesia's nation-brand identity, the strategic role of communicators in transmitting this identity, and the resulting nation-brand image. Existing research tends to focus on fragmented elements, such as the involvement of specific actors, the application of cultural diplomacy, or the economic impact on tourism, without holistically analyzing how Indonesia's nation branding efforts during the G20 Presidency formed a unified strategic narrative. This research seeks to fill that gap by systematically analyzing how Indonesia utilized its existing national identity, deployed communicators to amplify the prioritized identity, and ultimately shaped its perceived image on the global stage, grounded in the conceptual model of nation branding.

1.6 Research Framework

Nation-brand identity and nation-brand image represent two interconnected dimensions in the construction of a nation brand. Nation-brand identity embodies the enduring core characteristics of a nation, while the nation-brand image emerges as the perceived result of how this identity is communicated and perceived externally. As the conceptual model suggests, countries adopt selective strategies in deciding which components to emphasize and which communicators to utilize. These elements,

whether tangible or intangible, act as the channels through which identity is projected and ultimately shape how the nation is viewed globally.

To aid a better understanding of this research topic, the author employed the concept model outlined by Keith Dinnie in his book titled "Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice." According to Dinnie, nation branding is the endeavor to build, measure, and manage the reputation of a country. The brand image of a country significantly influences its success in international competition with other nations (Dinnie 2008). Therefore, Dinnie provides an explanation in which there are three components of nation branding, detailed as follows:

1. Nation Brand Identity

Nation-brand identity refers to the core, enduring characteristics that define a nation. These elements encompass its history, language, territory, political regime, architecture, sport, literature, art, religion, education system, icons, landscape, music, food and drink, and folklore. They form the foundation upon which a nation's brand is built and remain relatively stable over time, representing the enduring of the nation (Dinnie 2008, 49–50).

2. Communicators of Nations-Brand Identity

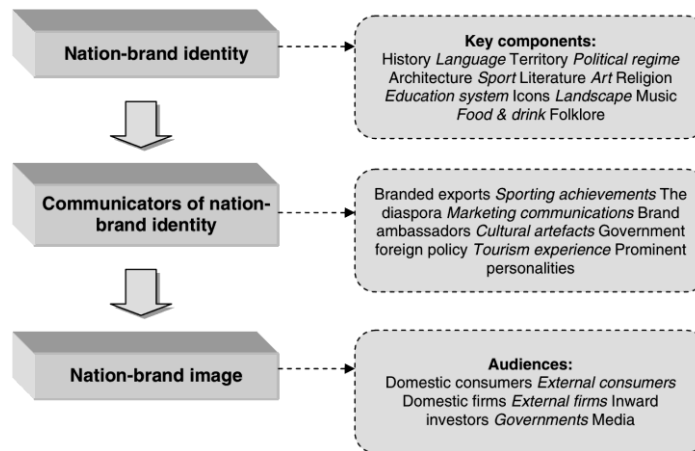
Communicators of nation-brand identity are the channels and methods through which the nation's core identity is conveyed to internal and external audiences. These can be both tangible and intangible, ranging from branded exports, sporting achievements, the diaspora, marketing communications, brand ambassadors, cultural artifacts, government foreign policy, tourism experience, and prominent personalities. These communicators project and reinforce the

nation's identity, making it recognizable and relatable across global audiences (Dinnie 2008, 49–50).

3. Nation Brand Image

Nation-brand image is the perception and reputation that external audiences form about a nation as a consequence of its communicated identity. It is shaped by how effectively the nation's core identity has been presented and received. Importantly, while a nation can aspire to a particular brand image, it has only partial control over its perception, as the uncontrollability of external agents (such as consumers, investors, media, and foreign publics) play a significant role in interpreting and responding to the nation's branding efforts (Dinnie 2008, 49–50).

Figure 1. Conceptual model of nation brand identity and image



Source: (Dinnie 2008, 49)

In line with Keith Dinnie's concept of nation branding, this research utilizes the framework to analyze Indonesia's G20 Presidency. First, to address the Nation-Brand Identity component, the author focused on history, political regime, religion, and landscape as core elements. These four elements were selected for their deep-rooted and symbolic significance within Indonesia's identity, their consistent presence in the international arena, and their strong representational power in defining Indonesia on the global stage during the Presidency.

Second, to explore how this identity was communicated (the Communicators), the author examined selected channels, namely government foreign policy, marketing communications initiatives, prominent personalities and actors, cultural artifacts, and the diaspora. These were chosen due to their high visibility, strategic function, and demonstrable ability to project and influence both domestic and international perceptions of Indonesia.

Finally, the analysis assesses the resulting Nation-Brand Image formed by the target audience, which is defined as the global community, including domestic and external consumers, companies, foreign investors, and the media, who collectively interpreted and responded to the brand image being projected by Indonesia during the G20 Presidency.

1.7 Provisional Argument

Implementing the conceptual model of Nation Brand Identity as an effort to construct a national image serves as the strategic framework. This framework was built upon four essential identity components: History, Political Regime, Religion, and Landscape. These dimensions were strategically mobilized during the 2022 G20

Presidency to construct a coherent narrative. Under the theme “Recover Together, Recover Stronger,” this narrative portrayed Indonesia as a resilient and pluralistic democracy committed to global recovery, a nation capable of acting as a stable, investment-ready middle power in a polarized global system.

These identities were coherently articulated and transmitted through a diverse array of Communicators. Government foreign policy was manifested through diplomatic strategies aimed at building global consensus amid geopolitical tensions. Marketing communication utilized the theme, logo, side events, and social media to amplify the Presidency’s messages. Artifacts were prominently featured through the GWK icon, batik, cultural expressions, and culinary diplomacy. Prominent personalities, particularly President Joko Widodo and several ministries, served as the face of Indonesia’s diplomacy. Meanwhile, the Diaspora contributed by acting as cultural bridges and informal ambassadors, reinforcing Indonesia’s international image within global communities.

Subsequently, the Nation Brand Image emerged based on the perception formed by international actors, including external consumers, inward investors, and the international media. The Presidency successfully positioned Indonesia as the host of a major multilateral forum and as an emerging economic power with visible leadership in global health, digital transformation, and the energy transition. The final image was marked by significant diplomatic acknowledgment, positive international media reception, and tangible outcomes. Indonesia was widely perceived as an effective bridge-builder and a credible economic partner. This success, evidenced by the convergence of political recognition and substantial investment commitments, affirms

that nation branding, when rooted in a strong identity, can generate political credibility and real economic gains.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Type of Research

This research employed a descriptive method, aimed at depicting Indonesia's efforts to enhance nation branding through its presidency of the G20.

1.8.2 Subject and Object of the Research

The subject of this research is the Government of Indonesia's Nation Branding strategy and its implementation during the G20 Presidency (2021–2022). The object of the research is the relationship and dynamic interplay between the three key theoretical constructs of the nation-brand model: the chosen Nation-Brand Identity, the applied Communicators, and the resulting Nation-Brand Image in the context of Indonesia's G20 presidency.

1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

The research method used in this study was qualitative, involving the collection of data from various sources such as international relations journals, tourism journals, geopolitical-economic journals, government websites, and other related books. These sources serve as the main references for the author to conduct research and find answers to the research questions.

1.8.4 Process of the Research

The data collection technique employed by the author when compiling this research involved literature review by gathering data from various written sources such as books, scholarly journals, official documents, reports, and the like.

1.9 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 commences with an introduction, including background, problem statement, research objectives, and scope. It also presents a literature review encompassing previous relevant research on the topic. In addition, this chapter addresses the theoretical framework, initial arguments, and the research methodology approach utilized.

Chapter 2 focuses on the analysis of the nation brand identity possessed by Indonesia during its G20 presidency.

Chapter 3 presents the analysis of the communicators of the nation brand identity utilized and explores the country brand image emerging from the nation branding strategies implemented by Indonesia.

Chapter 4 concludes this research by summarizing the findings from all preceding chapters. In the bibliography section, all references used, including sources from the internet, journals, books, and articles, are presented.

CHAPTER 2

INDONESIA’S NATION BRAND IDENTITY COMPONENTS

The discussion in this chapter focuses on several key components of the nation's brand identity. As highlighted by Keith Dinnie (2008), nation-brand identity is inherently multidimensional construct, representing the enduring essence of the nation across elements. In the context of nation branding strategy, this identity serves as the stable source material that a nation selectively utilizes to project a desired image. Within the context of Indonesia’s G20 Presidency, four of these dimensions, namely history, political regime, religion, and landscape, were strategically prioritized because they provided Indonesia with the greatest leverage to project a narrative of bridge-building and inclusive global leadership, directly addressing both the G20 theme and its existing reputational challenges. The following section explores how these dimensions were utilized and mobilized to articulate Indonesia’s desired brand narrative during its leadership of the G20.

2.1 History

The historical dimension of Indonesia’s identity is inseparable from its struggle for independence and its commitment to unity amidst diversity. After more than three centuries under Dutch colonial rule, Indonesia proclaimed independence on August 17, 1945, a pivotal moment that produced both political sovereignty and a collective narrative of resilience. This foundational experience of anti-colonial struggle continues to shape Indonesia’s national identity as a nation forged through sacrifice and solidarity (Pursika 2009).

Central to this historical identity is the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which originates from the 14th-century Javanese text *Sutasoma* by Mpu Tantular. Initially referring to harmony between Hinduism and Buddhism, the phrase was reinterpreted during the independence era to become a broader principle of national unity across ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences. Enshrined in Article 36A of the 1945 Constitution and reaffirmed in Law No. 24 of 2009 on the State Symbols, the motto provides a philosophical safeguard against fragmentation and continues to serve as the normative foundation of Indonesia's pluralist identity (Pursika 2009).

Indonesia's historical identity also shaped its early diplomacy. These values were clearly expressed at the 1955 Bandung Conference which was initiated by Indonesia together with India, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Bringing together twenty-nine newly independent Asian and African states, the conference produced the *Dasasila Bandung*, ten principles that emphasized sovereignty, mutual respect, non-intervention, and peaceful coexistence. The Bandung Conference projected Indonesia's identity as a nation born of anti-colonial struggle and as a leader advocating solidarity and justice in a world still shaped by imperialism (Putri 2020; Akbar et al. 2020).

The Bandung Spirit became the foundation for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) established in 1961, with Indonesia as one of its principal initiators. Through NAM, Indonesia advanced its values of independence and unity into a global movement that resisted Cold War bipolarity. This trajectory demonstrates how Indonesia's historical identity, grounded in its fight for sovereignty and its pluralist

philosophy, evolved into a diplomatic posture that emphasizes non-alignment, solidarity, and leadership among the Global South (Akbar et al. 2020).

Figure 2. Documentation of the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, 1955



Source: (Antara News 2015)

This long narrative continues to influence Indonesia's foreign policy. At the 2020 G20 Summit hosted virtually by Saudi Arabia, President Joko Widodo urged that COVID-19 vaccines be made accessible to all nations, reflecting Indonesia's enduring commitment to equality and solidarity in confronting global crises (Kemsetneg RI 2020). These principles continued to shape Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022, which unfolded amidst the pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions, including the Russia–Ukraine conflict and widening vaccine disparities.

During the G20 Presidency in 2022, these historical values were woven into the theme *“Recover Together, Recover Stronger”*. By invoking *gotong royong* (mutual

cooperation) and designing a logo based on the gunung from Javanese wayang, Indonesia embedded cultural-historical elements into its global branding (Wisnubroto 2021; Reditya 2022; D. Putra 2022). The author argues that these choices strategically reinforced Indonesia's nation-brand identity as a mediator between the Global North and South, a role consistent with its historical legacy of bridging divides, thereby positioning it to lead consensus-building efforts during the presidency.

2.2 Political Regime

Indonesia's political identity is deeply rooted in Pancasila, the state philosophy and foundational ideology. Formulated in 1945 and enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution, Pancasila encapsulates five fundamental principles: belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy through deliberation, and social justice. These values function as both the philosophical basis of the state and the normative compass guiding governance. As Handayani and Anggraeni (2021) emphasized, Pancasila is not merely a constitutional doctrine but as a unifying framework that legitimizes Indonesia's political system and sustains cohesion within a highly plural society (Handayani and Dewi 2021).

Building on this foundation, Pancasila institutionalizes a distinctive democratic framework often referred to as "Pancasila Democracy." Unlike liberal democracies that prioritize individual autonomy or authoritarian systems that suppress participation, this model underscores consensus (*musyawarah*), representation, and harmony between individual rights and collective welfare (Handayani and Dewi 2021). In this sense, Pancasila Democracy reflects the Indonesian ethos of communalism while offering

safeguards against both authoritarian excess and majoritarian domination (Dewi and Dewi 2021).

The adaptability of this political framework has been demonstrated across Indonesia's historical regime shifts. During the Guided Democracy period under Sukarno, Pancasila was mobilized to justify centralized decision-making, while under Suharto's New Order it became a tool for authoritarian consolidation. In the Reformasi era, however, Pancasila has been reinterpreted to support democratic decentralization and participatory governance. Despite these shifting interpretations, scholars argue that Pancasila has consistently served as an ideological anchor that preserves legitimacy and unity across political transitions (Dewi and Dewi 2021).

Pancasila is also closely linked to Indonesia's constitutional mandate in the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution, which affirms the state's duty to contribute to a world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. This constitutional clause provides the normative basis for Indonesia's engagement in international cooperation and frames its role as both an independent and responsible actor. It also underpins the *politik luar negeri bebas aktif*, or the "free and active" foreign policy, which has become a defining feature of Indonesia's international identity (Abdi 2021).

The principle of *bebas aktif* operationalizes this mandate by ensuring Indonesia remains free from alignment with major power blocs while actively engaging in global diplomacy and peacebuilding. Mila, Vida, and Adi (2020) note that *bebas* protects national independence by rejecting external domination, whereas *aktif* obligates Indonesia to participate in shaping a just and peaceful international order (Mila et al. 2020). This doctrine then links Indonesia's domestic political ethos of prioritizing

independence and justice with its external parties. Its interpretation, however, has evolved over time. Under President Joko Widodo, the principle has taken on a more pragmatic orientation, focusing on securing developmental gains, particularly through infrastructure and economic partnerships, while still preserving Indonesia's role in multilateral diplomacy (Yeremia et al. 2021).

The G20 Presidency was a significant arena where Indonesia's political identity, rooted in Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the *bebas aktif* foreign policy, was projected on the global stage. Guided by the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," Indonesia prioritized three agendas: global health, digital transformation, and energy transition, that reflected its core values of humanitarianism, consensus, and social justice. The health agenda highlighted Indonesia's commitment to fairness and solidarity in addressing vaccine inequality. The digital transformation priority expressed the principle of representation by promoting inclusivity and equal access to technological change. Meanwhile, the energy transition agenda embodied the balance between sustainability and developmental justice (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2022a). In this way, Indonesia translated its domestic priority into a global agenda, affirming its role as an advocate of equity and social justice.

During the Russia–Ukraine war, which coincided with Indonesia's G20 Presidency, the nation's free and active foreign policy was also tested. In the midst of appeals from Western states to exclude Russia and pressure from non-Western actors to minimize the conflict, Indonesia maintained an impartial stance by consistently inviting all G20 members without exception, while also extending an invitation to Ukraine as a guest country (China Daily 2022; Strangio 2022). President Joko Widodo

further demonstrated Indonesia's mediating role by visiting Kyiv and Moscow to meet President Zelenskyy and President Putin, respectively, signaling Indonesia's commitment to global peace and food security (Lamb and Widiyanto 2022).

This approach is consistent with Indonesia's constitutional mandate to foster world peace and embodies the spirit of *bebas aktif*, strategically positioning the country not merely as a host but also as a credible peace broker amid great-power rivalries, while simultaneously leveraging its political model as an asset to counter economic uncertainty narratives and strengthen its nation-brand image of stability and credibility necessary for global investment. This strategic positioning was further reinforced by analysts who linked Indonesia's successful pandemic recovery and diplomatic engagement to its growing appeal as an investment destination (Junida 2022).

2.3 Religion

Religion is a fundamental dimension of Indonesia's national identity, firmly enshrined in the first principle of Pancasila, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in One Supreme God). This principal functions both as a moral guide and a constitutional foundation, reflecting the importance of religious values in public life while recognizing the plurality of faiths in society. This principle is not intended to privilege one religion but to affirm that all officially recognized religions (such as Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) constitute integral elements of the nation's cultural and moral foundation (Sadzali 2020).

This pluralist framework provides Indonesia with a moral vocabulary that informs its diplomacy. The emphasis on *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* has often been

associated with justice, peace, and tolerance—values that strengthen Indonesia’s credibility in international forums. By drawing from religious ethics, Indonesia projects itself as a nation that embodies harmony and inclusivity, presenting religion not as a source of division but as a bridge in global discussions on peace and culture (Sadzali 2020).

Islamic civil society organizations, particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, embody this ethos at both domestic and global levels. Domestically, they have been pivotal in maintaining interfaith harmony, preventing sectarian conflict, and promoting democratic values. Globally, through interfaith dialogue, education, and humanitarian initiatives, they have projected an image of Islam that is peaceful, tolerant, and compatible with democracy, contributing to Indonesia’s reputation as a moderate Muslim-majority country (Sucahyo 2019; UGM 2019).

Despite this strong foundation, Indonesia has faced recurring challenges of intolerance, sectarianism, and radicalism. These issues have occasionally tested the resilience of pluralism. However, state institutions and civil society actors have consistently reaffirmed inclusivity through constitutional guarantees, dialogue initiatives, and peacebuilding efforts. Rather than weakening Indonesia’s identity, these challenges have reinforced the importance of religious tolerance as a core national principle (Lestari 2020).

Religion also plays a central role in shaping Indonesia’s diplomatic outlook. The principle of *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* connects foreign policy with values of morality, justice, and peace, enabling Indonesia to present itself as a credible advocate of tolerance and dialogue. This inclusive religious foundation strengthens Indonesia’s

role as a bridge-builder in international forums, particularly in debates intersecting religion, culture, and peace (Sadzali 2020).

This religious dimension gained global visibility during Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022 with the establishment of the Religion of Twenty (R20). The R20, initiated by the Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) in cooperation with the Muslim World League as an official G20 engagement group, is a forum that has emphasized the role of religion as a constructive force for peace and democracy. By positioning religious diversity as a model for global governance, Indonesia has projected its domestic capabilities on the international stage (Suaedy 2022; Kemenko Polhukam RI 2022c).

2.4 Landscape

Bali's landscape plays a central role in shaping Indonesia's identity as both a nation of cultural diversity and a global tourism hub. The island has long been celebrated for its natural beauty and spiritual atmosphere, which are closely tied to Balinese Hindu philosophy and cultural practices. The landscape of Bali cannot be separated from its cultural traditions, since rice terraces, temples, and ritual spaces represent the harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. These tangible and intangible elements reinforce Indonesia's broader identity as a nation that embodies unity in diversity through territory and culture (Anak Agung Gde Raka et al. 2017).

Critically, Bali's landscape functions as Indonesia's primary economic Communicator for tourism and hospitality, a sector that was severely damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. The island's visible recovery and its selection as the G20 host thus provided a strategic opportunity to project an identity of resilience, demonstrating

Indonesia's capacity to restore a major economic engine. The island's environment and cultural spaces function as a symbolic ground where national and local identities intersect, reinforcing the notion of national integration.

The island's global visibility has been reinforced through monumental projects that merge landscape, culture, and nation branding. One of the most prominent examples is the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park, which houses a colossal statue of the Hindu god Wisnu on the mythical bird Garuda. Although the project initially faced local resistance, it gradually became accepted as a symbol of Balinese pride and Indonesian cultural identity. The park exemplifies how landscape-based cultural markers can be reinterpreted as national icons in response to global tourism (Verheijen and Darma Putra 2020).

The development of Bali as a global stage for cultural and political events further illustrates its significance in shaping Indonesia's identity. International gatherings, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings in 2018, highlight how the island's landscape is mobilized to represent Indonesia's openness and hospitality. This demonstrated capacity is not only cultural but highly economic; Bali's track record of securely hosting large, sensitive financial and political gatherings positions it as a low-risk, high-return destination for international events. By using the Balinese landscape, Indonesia strategically communicated the physical safety and institutional stability required to safeguard global agenda.

Beyond monument projects, the integration of everyday cultural practices within the Balinese landscape reinforces its symbolic power. Rituals tied to agricultural cycles, such as those involving rice terraces, illustrate how the physical environment

sustains both livelihoods and cultural continuity. These practices shape the perception of Bali not only as a tourist destination but also as a living cultural landscape that represents Indonesian identity in harmony with nature (Anak Agung Gde Raka et al. 2017).

The selection of Bali as the host of the G20 Summit in November 2022 exemplified the island's dual role as a cultural symbol and a platform for nation branding. However, the selection was also consistent with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Regulation No. 5 of 2017 concerning MICE destination standards. Bali's long-standing reputation for its world-class facilities and its history of successfully hosting international events made it the most logical venue (Jannah 2021). Therefore, the selection of Bali strategically maximized the nation's Return on Image Investment. It affirmed Indonesia's global economic opening, showcasing the successful revitalization of its tourism and MICE infrastructure (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) to the global elite.

The island's visibility on the G20 stage further conveyed the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. As the only Hindu-majority province in a predominantly Muslim nation, Bali symbolized inclusiveness and diversity in Indonesia's nation branding, functionally utilizing the landscape identity to counteract negative perceptions of religious intolerance. By projecting a resilient, stable, and economically recovering Bali, Indonesia effectively communicated that its major economic assets were fully operational and ready for international capital and commerce.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATORS OF INDONESIA'S BRAND IDENTITY AND THE NATION BRAND IMAGE IN THE G20 PRESIDENCY

Building on the discussion of the utilized nation-brand identity components, this section examines the strategic communicators that serve as channels through which a nation's prioritized identity is projected to global audiences. In line with Dinnie's (2008) framework, this analysis highlights the communicators most relevant to Indonesia's G20 Presidency, namely government foreign policy, marketing communications, prominent personalities and actors, cultural artifacts, and the diaspora, all of which played a central role in shaping Indonesia's international image during the presidency. Other elements such as branded exports, sporting achievements, and tourism experience are not addressed here, as their influence in the G20 context was limited.

3.1 Nation Brand Communicators

In the context of nation branding, communicators function as the actors and channels responsible for projecting a country's identity and values to diverse audiences. According to Dinnie (2008), national identity is defined as the enduring essence of the nation, which is expressed through various communicators. These communicators include government, foreign policy, marketing communication, cultural artifacts, prominent personalities, and diaspora. During Indonesia's G20 Presidency, these communicators were evident across multiple sectors, forming a multifaceted strategy to reinforce Indonesia's presence in global governance.

3.1.1 Government Foreign Policy

In a post-pandemic global landscape shaped by inequality, fragility, and climate risk, Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022 demonstrated how foreign policy can serve as a strategic communicator of national identity. Guided by the theme "*Recover Together, Recover Stronger*", Indonesia advanced three priorities, global health architecture, digital transformation, and just energy transition, as both policy priorities and instruments of identity projection (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2022d). By framing these agendas as collective responsibilities, Indonesia used its government foreign policy to address global challenges and showcase its role as a bridging actor between the Global North and South.

The first priority, strengthening global health architecture, highlighted the communicative dimension of Indonesia's foreign policy in response to systemic weaknesses exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia drew attention to vaccine inequality and inadequate health financing that disproportionately affected developing nations. By advocating stronger coordination, equitable financing, and preparedness mechanisms, Indonesia advanced a foreign policy narrative centered on solidarity and justice. The creation of the Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF), which mobilized over USD 1.4 billion from G20 and non-G20 members (Firdaus 2022), illustrated Indonesia's capacity to translate its domestic identity into global leadership. Although still below the estimated annual need, the initiative itself communicated Indonesia's humanitarian stance and commitment to global cooperation (The Conversation 2022a).

The second agenda focused on advancing an inclusive digital transformation. Through the establishment of the Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG),

Indonesia elevated the former Digital Economy Task Force into a permanent working group under the G20 structure. This institutional upgrade reflected the growing importance of the digital agenda and Indonesia's success in positioning digital economy issues as a long-term priority within the G20. Specifically, under this framework, Indonesia advanced discussions on cross-border data governance, interoperability, and digital inclusion (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2022a). These priorities were not framed solely as technical issues, but as matters of justice, accessibility for marginalized groups and MSMEs (Brodjonegoro 2022). By doing so, Indonesia positioned its foreign policy as a communicative tool that reflects Pancasila's principles of inclusivity and social justice, while simultaneously mediating between advanced economies and countries still building digital capacity.

The third agenda, promoting a just energy transition, revealed another dimension of identity communication through foreign policy. Indonesia emphasized that transitions toward renewable energy must be fair and development-sensitive, acknowledging the limited capacity of many Global South nations to decarbonize rapidly (Kumorotomo and Baiquni 2022). This framing allowed Indonesia to project itself as a responsible yet empathetic actor, balancing climate commitments with development needs. The announcement of the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), which mobilized USD 20 billion in funding (PT PLN 2022), underscored how Indonesia leveraged the G20 stage to communicate a vision of sustainable justice.

By situating these three agendas within the broader principles of inclusivity, cooperation, and justice. The health priority communicated inclusivity and solidarity, the digital priority conveyed representation and equality of opportunity, and the energy

transition priority reflected justice and sustainability. Each initiative communicated Indonesia's consistent political identity, rooted in Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the *bebas aktif* foreign policy, adapted to contemporary global challenges. Moreover, the efficacy of the government foreign policy extended beyond multilateral consensus to securing economic wins. Analysts highlighted Indonesia's success in intensifying 'bilateral meetings not only with the G7 but also with other potential partners' during the Summit week, influencing investors' final decisions (Junida 2022). This demonstrates that diplomacy was strategically utilized as a direct channel to translate the projected nation-brand image into tangible investment commitments.

3.1.2 Marketing Communications

While foreign policy is reflective of a state's official position through formal agenda and policy frameworks, marketing communication provides a more flexible channel through which to deliver similar objectives to wider audiences. Both approaches serve to advance national interests; however, marketing communication does so by utilizing narratives and symbols that transcend the conventional boundaries of formal diplomacy. During Indonesia's G20 Presidency, the priorities of global health architecture, digital transformation, and energy transition were deliberated at the diplomatic level. These priorities were also promoted through branding strategies designed to increase visibility and engagement. Marketing communication therefore complemented foreign policy by extending its impact through the official theme and logo, side events, and the use of social media platforms to project Indonesia's image internationally.

3.1.2.1 Theme and G20 Logo

As the communicative tool of Indonesia's presidency, the G20 theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" functioned as both a diplomatic message and a reflection of Indonesian identity. The theme conveyed values of solidarity, inclusivity, and resilience at a time when the world faced multiple crises. President Joko Widodo's repeated emphasis on collective action underscored Indonesia's position as a bridge between advanced and developing nations. By linking the theme to urgent issues such as vaccine equity, Indonesia underscored its moral leadership in global health governance while grounding this stance in the nation's cultural ethos of *gotong royong*, or mutual cooperation (Kemensetneg RI 2020; Reditya 2022). This formulation of theme suggests that Indonesia, historically, has played a role in mediating between different blocs.

The communicative dimension of the theme was further reinforced through inclusivity in practice. Indonesia organized 438 meetings across 25 cities, allowing regional diversity to be showcased within the G20 presidency (Sekretariat Kabinet RI 2022a). This decentralized approach translated the idea of "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" into visible participation from various localities, integrating cultural, economic, and social narratives into the international forum. The theme was not only a rhetorical device but also a form of strategic marketing communication that projected Indonesia's political regime identity, rooted in Pancasila and its inclusive governance philosophy. Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi explained that the spirit of solidarity in the theme was "*Indonesia banget*," a reflection of values long embedded in Indonesian culture (Reditya 2022).

Alongside the theme, the G20 logo served as a visual communicator of Indonesia's identity and leadership vision. Designed by Satu Collective and curated through the Indonesian Association of Graphic Designers, the logo drew inspiration from the wayang tradition, a central symbol of Indonesian cultural heritage (D. Putra 2022). By selecting wayang, the design communicated Indonesia's historical and cultural identity, situating it within a global forum that had previously emphasized national symbols in visual branding. The incorporation of the *gunungan*, *kawung* batik motifs, and foliage collectively presented a narrative of renewal, justice, and sustainability (Kemenkum DIY 2022). Each element of the design reinforced Indonesia's aspiration to position itself as a nation capable of leading the conversation on post-pandemic recovery.

Figure 3. Indonesia's official G20 logo and theme



Source: (Kompas.com 2022)

The logo's communicative role represents strategic messaging. Its color palette combined the red of the Indonesian flag with maritime blue, signaling both nationalism

and Indonesia's archipelagic identity. This visual identity resonated with the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," which the government explicitly tied to the logo at its official launch (Wisnubroto 2021). The incorporation of traditional motifs into a contemporary graphic design also exemplifies the integration of historical and contemporary identities, aligning cultural symbolism with the future-oriented agenda of the G20 Presidency. In this manner, the logo reinforced the same values carried by the theme, ensuring coherence across Indonesia's diplomatic and branding strategies.

3.1.2.2 Side Events

As extensions of the communicator component in nation branding, the G20 Side Events enabled multiple actors to represent and promote Indonesia's identity through localized and thematic forums. Spread across more than twenty cities, including priority tourism destinations such as Borobudur, Mandalika, and Labuan Bajo, the 121 side events held between December 2021 to October 2022 communicated Indonesia's historical identity rooted in diversity and solidarity (Gareta 2022; Wahyudi 2022). These forums ranged from seminars, trade forums, cultural exhibitions, and field visits, providing G20 stakeholders with opportunities to directly experience the richness of Indonesian local cultures and creative economies (Kurniawan 2022). By situating the events across the archipelago, the presidency highlighted Indonesia's identity as an inclusive and geographically expansive nation rather than one defined solely by Jakarta or Bali.

In both design and execution, the side events were infused with Indonesia's cultural values and economic aspirations. As Trade Minister Muhammad Lutfi explained, they were intended to showcase "Indonesia's progress and cultural

advancement,” reinforcing the nation’s identity as modern and adaptive while rooted in local wisdom (Gareta 2022; Septyaningsih 2022). The side events within Indonesia’s G20 Presidency could be categorized into two types: substantive and non-substantive. Substantive side events were aligned with and directly related to the issues discussed in the Tourism Working Group. In contrast, non-substantive side events were designed primarily to promote Indonesia’s tourism destinations (Detik 2022).

The G20 Side Events were strategically categorized into two main types to maximize their substantive and promotional impact. Substantive side events served as critical collaborative platforms and policy drivers focused on specific global issues. For instance, the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) transcended a simple knowledge-sharing forum; it facilitated the development of strategic partnerships and concrete funding commitments, aiming to generate new and sustainable investment models for pressing socio-economic challenges. Similarly, the World Conference on Creative Economy operated beyond mere awareness-raising on creative economy, it functioned as a high-level negotiation arena to strengthen international frameworks and devise integrated strategies, thereby ensuring the creative economy sector is recognized and supported as a robust engine for global growth (Detik 2022).

Furthermore, the International Wellness Tourism Conference and Festival fulfilled a dual role: substantively as a *business-to-business* platform to attract investment, and strategically as a showcase for Indonesia to promote its products and destinations to a global audience, specifically G20 stakeholders or visitors. Conversely, the non-substantive side events, primarily taking the form of tourism packages (including excursions and pre- or post-tour programs for G20 delegates)

represented a deliberate act of public and economic diplomacy. These activities were designed to enhance the Indonesia's image and provide a direct stimulus to the local tourism sector and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). (Detik 2022).

Beyond promoting tourism and creative industries through a series of side events, Indonesia also sought to promote its religious values and commitment to dialogue. The significance of Religion-20 (R20) lies not merely in its status as an official G20 engagement group but in its role as a strategic communicator of Indonesia's nation brand. Established under Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022 and spearheaded by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), R20 convened more than 400 delegates from various faith traditions, including senior representatives from the Muslim World League, the World Evangelical Alliance, and even the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Robby 2022; Savitri 2022a). Unlike conventional diplomatic forums, R20 communicated Indonesia's identity not only through speeches but through symbolic content and experiential diplomacy.

After the main summit in Bali, Indonesia extended R20 into a curated cultural immersion journey across Yogyakarta and Central Java. Delegates visited Candi Kimpulan—an ancient Hindu temple preserved within the campus of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII)—alongside the Keraton Yogyakarta, Candi Prambanan (Hindu), Vihara Mendut, and Candi Borobudur (Buddhist), and Pondok Pesantren Pandanaran (UII 2022; Padmaratri 2022). These visits transformed diplomatic messaging into lived experience: rather than being demolished upon discovery, Candi Kimpulan was architecturally integrated into a modern Islamic institution. As UII Rector Fathul Wahid asserted, this preservation embodies the principle that “majorities must provide

space for minorities to grow,” reinforcing equality and coexistence as core Indonesian values (UII 2022).

Figure 4. Religion forum (R20) and delegations



Source: (G20 Religion Forum 2022)

Through these curated encounters, Indonesia transformed abstract diplomatic rhetoric into tangible narratives of coexistence. NU Chairman Yahya Cholil Staquf repeatedly framed R20 not as a one-off conference but as a global movement to reorient religion from a source of conflict into a source of peace (Savitri 2022a). Likewise, World Evangelical Alliance Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher praised Indonesia as a model showing that strong religious identity can coexist with high tolerance (UII 2022). These statements functioned as brand validation, positioning Indonesia’s projected identity as a moral bridge-builder between civilizations.

Such messaging aligns with Indonesia’s broader “Unity in Diversity” (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) brand narrative. By foregrounding reconciliation, theological recontextualization, and shared spiritual responsibility (Savitri 2022b), R20 did not

only convene leaders—it communicated a value proposition: Indonesia positions itself as a nation where religious plurality is not merely tolerated but systemically cultivated. This content-driven diplomacy allowed Indonesia to transcend its role as host and assume the position of norm entrepreneur in global religious diplomacy.

In nation branding terms, R20 served as a live demonstration platform through which Indonesia projected stability, inclusivity, and spiritual leadership—qualities that underpin both diplomatic credibility and economic attractiveness. Analysts have linked Indonesia's post-pandemic recovery and diplomatic engagement to rising investor confidence, suggesting that moral branding and economic branding are mutually reinforcing (Komdigi RI 2022b; Robby 2022). Thus, R20 functioned as a communicative mechanism that operationalized Indonesia's brand not merely through discourse but through narrative, symbolism, and lived experience.

3.1.2.3 Social Media Platform

During Indonesia's G20 Presidency, social media platforms became central communicators of the nation's identity, functioning as marketing communication tools that projected Indonesia's historical, political, and cultural narratives. The official Instagram account, @indonesia.g20, emerged as the most influential platform with over 121,000 followers and more than 750 posts. According to Intentionalia (2022), the account employed three primary strategies: the delivery of technical information, the dissemination of substantive G20 priority issues, and the promotion of interactive engagement through quizzes and games (Intentionalia 2022). This approach demonstrated Indonesia's effort to present itself as both transparent and participatory.

While Instagram was the dominant platform, the content was consistently cross posted on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). Facebook recorded approximately 840 followers, while X had around 2,974 followers with 2,839 posts. The consistency of messaging across these platforms allowed Indonesia to maintain a unified digital narrative while also tailoring formats to platform-specific audiences, such as reels on Instagram and threads on X (Intentilia 2022).

The Presidential Secretariat's official YouTube channel, with over 3.07 million subscribers, further expanded the communicative reach of Indonesia's G20 Presidency. By broadcasting summit events, speeches, and bilateral meetings, the Presidential Secretariat's official YouTube channel offered transparency and allowed the public to observe Indonesia's leadership in action. These broadcasts reinforced Indonesia's identity as an open and collaborative nation, bridging the gap between diplomatic processes and public audiences.

3.1.3 Prominent Personalities and Actors

Prominent personalities and actors play a role as strategic messengers in nation branding, as their authority and visibility enable them to shape narratives more effectively. In the context of the G20, Indonesia relied on the President, key ministries, and related institutions to articulate policy priorities, represent leadership, and demonstrate credibility. Their synchronized visibility in policy discussion, event organization, and cultural showcases served to strengthen Indonesia's image as a dedicated global actor.

3.1.3.1 The President

As the highest political leader and symbolic figure of the nation, President Joko Widodo played a central role in communicating Indonesia's national identity during the G20 presidency. From the official launch on 1 December 2021, he positioned Indonesia as the host country and proactive contributor to global recovery and governance transformation. In his address, Widodo framed the presidency as both a "trust" and an "honor," presenting it as an opportunity to advance a more just, sustainable, and inclusive international order (Kemensetneg RI 2021).

He emphasized three key priorities: inclusive health architecture, digital transformation, and sustainable energy transition, while highlighting Indonesia's commitment to concrete progress for the Global South, particularly in climate action and reducing the global development gap (Kemensetneg RI 2021). This communicative role was further strengthened at the G20 Leaders' Summit on 15 November 2022, when Widodo urged world leaders to rise above polarization and adhere to international law during global crises. He called for unity, peace, and shared responsibility, stressing that the G20 could not afford to fail in addressing common challenges.

In a notable act of cultural diplomacy, Widodo invoked Indonesia's diversity, referring to the archipelago's 17,000 islands, 1,300 ethnic groups, and over 700 languages as a foundation for democratic values and inclusive dialogue (Times Indonesia 2022). Through this narrative, he communicated Indonesia's historical identity as a diverse and united nation, capable of translating domestic pluralism into a constructive role on the global stage.

Widodo's speech also conveyed Indonesia's political philosophy rooted in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, which emphasize collaboration, peace, and shared development. By consistently framing Indonesia as a bridge-builder, he projected the country as a leader of inclusive multilateralism and a mediator between developed and developing nations. This identity was reinforced in his speeches, where he invited global actors to view Indonesia as both a partner in addressing pressing global issues and as a nation that embodies harmony, resilience, and solidarity (Hardianto and Anwar 2022).

3.1.3.2 The Ministries and Related Institutions

Building on the President's central narrative, ministerial-level institutions assumed operational roles in conveying Indonesia's key messages across different sectors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu) stood as one of the most prominent communicators of Indonesia's nation brand during the presidency. As co-chair of the Sherpa Track, with Minister Retno Marsudi serving as Chair II (Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2021, Article 6, Section 2), Kemlu was directly responsible for articulating Indonesia's global positioning and leading substantial negotiations. Minister Retno Marsudi consistently promoted narratives of inclusive multilateralism, peace-building, and development partnerships through press briefings and multilateral meetings (Michaela 2022; Pramudyani 2022b).

For instance, during the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali (July 7–8, 2022), Kemlu succeeded in bringing together U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in the same forum despite escalating political tensions. Furthermore, Kemlu amplified Indonesia's presidency

theme “Recover Together, Recover Stronger” at the Global Governance Group Ministerial Meeting in New York (September 2022) and extended inclusivity by inviting representatives of developing states for the first time in G20 history (Michaela 2022). Through such strategic initiatives, Kemlu not only positioned Indonesia as a moral voice for the Global South but also reinforced the international perception of its leadership capability.

In the economic sectors, the Ministry of Finance (Kemenkeu), led by Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, served as Chair I of the Finance Track (Presidential Decree No. 12 year 2021, Article 6, Section 3), which made the ministry a direct voice in positioning Indonesia as a credible nation in global financial governance. Through the Finance Track, Kemenkeu strategically communicated Indonesia’s global economic vision by promoting key priorities such as pandemic recovery, central bank digital currency (CBDC), sustainable finance, international taxation, and financial inclusion (Hidranto 2021; Wildan 2022; Kemenkeu RI 2021). These priorities resonated with Indonesia’s political identity of collaborative development and global governance. Kemenkeu articulated this vision through a series of high-level engagements, including the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meetings and official communications. By positioning Indonesia as a credible country in fiscal innovation and stability, Kemenkeu projected Indonesia’s image as a competent and reliable actor in global economic governance.

At the strategic level, the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (Kemenko Perekonomian), led by Minister Airlangga Hartarto, served as Chair I of the Sherpa Track (Presidential Decree, Article 6, Section 2). This position was central to

overseeing the planning, policy alignment, and inter-ministerial coordination throughout the presidency. Minister Airlangga frequently emphasized Indonesia's focus on inclusive and sustainable recovery, which was tied to both its historical identity of collective solidarity and its political regime identity based on Pancasila (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2022c). In addition to spearheading inter-ministerial coordination, the ministry was entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the alignment and continuity of programs and deliberations. The promotion of consensus-building amid geopolitical tensions, in conjunction with the introduction of concrete deliverables as tangible solutions, has been identified as a key strategy (Kemenko Perekonomian RI 2022b; Habibah 2022). Thus, the ministry reinforced Indonesia's standing as an action-oriented global leader.

Ensuring that these messages reached broader audiences, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo) acted as the central coordinating institution for public communication, serving as the Head of the Communication and Media Division (Presidential Decree, Article 8, Section 3). This mandate placed Kominfo at the forefront of shaping the G20 narrative and Indonesia's nation brand. Kominfo was tasked with preparing, managing, and coordinating all public information, media relations, and journalist services across every G20 event (Article 10). Under Minister Johnny G. Plate, Kominfo built robust media infrastructure by establishing the Bali Media Center during the G20 Summit in November 2022, which hosted over 2,000 international journalists. This center not only provided advanced connectivity and multilingual support but also served as a showcase of Indonesia's digital readiness to the world (Kemenko Polhukam RI 2022b).

Furthermore, Kominfo strategically partnered with global media outlets such as Al Jazeera, South China Morning Post, and The Economist, amplifying Indonesia's G20 narrative to international audiences, while the Digital Transformation Expo in Bali further projected Indonesia's image as a dynamic player in global digital innovation (Komdigi RI 2022a). Through these initiatives, Kominfo went beyond logistical coordination and actively contributed to nation branding by positioning Indonesia as a digitally capable and globally connected nation.

Complementing official and media narratives, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) advanced Indonesia's soft power through substantive and promotional side events across different G20 events in 2022. For instance, the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) Conference in Bali (20-25 June 2022), the International Wellness Tourism Conference & Festival in Solo (5-7 August 2022), and the World Conference on Creative Economy (WCCE) in Bali (5-7 October 2022) showcased Indonesia's creative economy, wellness tourism, and cultural pluralism to global stakeholders (Nurisnaeny et al. 2024). During the G20 Summit in Bali (November 2022), curated cultural excursions for delegates further highlighted Indonesia's diverse heritage and landscape identity. These initiatives were not only promotional events but also deliberate nation branding strategies, positioning Indonesia as a culturally rich and welcoming global nation for investment, wellness, and creative collaboration.

Beyond the ministerial level, other institutions also contributed to shaping Indonesia's nation brand. Bank Indonesia (BI) acted as a crucial voice for Indonesia's economic stability and credibility. As co-chair of the Finance Track, together with the

Ministry of Finance, BI was at the center of global financial discussions, directly influencing the G20's key monetary and financial priorities. Governor Perry Warjiyo communicated BI's five policy priorities, including: (1) cross-border monetary coordination; (2) fostering stronger economic growth; (3) digital payment infrastructure; (4) promotion of sustainable finance, and; (4) MSMEs empowerment (Riswan 2021). Through official statements and direct participation in the finance minister and central bank governor meetings, BI presented Indonesia as a responsible and innovative economic actor.

Within the local level, the Bali Provincial Government played a strategically pivotal role in enhancing Indonesia's image as the G20 host through symbolic and logistical endeavors. These preparations encompassed a range of measures, including upgrades to airport infrastructure, enhancements to facilities, particularly health care facilities, and a comprehensive security coordination effort.

3.1.4 Cultural Artifacts

During the G20 Summit, cultural artifacts functioned as both tangible and intangible mediums of communication, showcasing Indonesia's identity to the world. Among the most prominent was the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) monument, chosen as the venue for the Gala Dinner on November 15, 2022. Rising to 121 meters, the monument depicts the Hindu god Vishnu riding Garuda, symbolizing protection, responsibility, and the preservation of the world. President Joko Widodo emphasized that the monument reflects the duties of global leaders to safeguard humanity and devotion (Sekretariat Kabinet RI 2022b; Setyawan 2022). The choice of GWK highlighted Bali's landscape identity as a global tourism hub and underscored

Indonesia's cultural richness, where heritage and spiritual values are a part of diplomatic representation (Setiawan 2022) (Kemensetneg RI 2022).

Another cultural artifact central to the Summit was batik, worn by world leaders at the Welcoming Dinner. Leaders such as Xi Jinping, Rishi Sunak, Justin Trudeau, and Narendra Modi appeared wearing batik with various motifs and colors, with the dominant colors being red, purple, and blue, as a sign of respect to the host country. These were also souvenirs from Indonesia (CNN Indonesia 2022a). President Jokowi explained that batik is not only a UNESCO-recognized intangible heritage but also a living tradition rooted in Indonesia's natural resources, with dyes from indigo in Pekalongan, soja in Solo, and mengkudu in Lasem (Firmansyah 2022). By transforming batik into diplomatic attire, Indonesia elevated a domestic cultural practice into a global symbol of identity.

Figure 5. President Widodo and his wife welcome the UK Prime Minister



Source: (Detik.com 2022b)

Indonesia further highlighted its identity through culinary diplomacy at the G20 Gala Dinner, offering a menu that represented the nation's rich regional diversity. Appetizers, main courses, and desserts featured flavors from across the archipelago, combining traditional ingredients and dishes to reflect Indonesia's cultural and culinary heritage while accommodating diverse tastes and preferences (Nugraheny and Santosa 2022). This approach turned cuisine into a medium of diplomacy, where leaders could experience Indonesia's pluralism through food. As Wahyuni and Indrawati (2024) highlighted, this culinary gastronomy presents Indonesia as hospitable and innovative in accommodating global guests.

Traditional performances added another dimension to Indonesia's cultural diplomacy. At the welcoming of delegations, the Tari Pendet was performed at Bali's Ngurah Rai Airport and in other ceremonial spaces, mesmerizing leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden (Kemenko Polhukam RI 2022a). Originally a sacred dance, Pendet has evolved into a performance of hospitality and respect, symbolizing harmony and togetherness. Beyond this, Indonesia also showcased a rich variety of cultural performances drawn from across the archipelago. With layered themes such as Challenge, Nature, Recover Together, and Recover Stronger, delegations were presented with traditional dances like Garuda Paksi, Kecak, Bujang Ganong, Topeng Betawi, Randai, and Papuan dances, alongside distinctive musical traditions including Kendang Sunda, Beleg, and Dol. Complemented by songs such as Damai and Malam Indah, these performances highlighted Indonesia's cultural diversity and harmonized with the broader message of unity and global recovery (CNBC Indonesia 2022).

3.1.5 The Diaspora

The Indonesian diaspora played a meaningful role in supporting the international communication of Indonesia's nation brand during its G20 Presidency. With over eight million Indonesians living abroad, diaspora communities acted as ambassadors who introduced Indonesia's priorities to international audiences and strengthened narratives of recovery and collaboration (Fitriyanto 2022). According to Usman Kansong, who served as the Director General of Public Information and Communication at the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, the government encouraged diaspora participation in a variety of ways. These included the circulation of official G20 content, the initiation of discussions in their host communities, and the amplification of Indonesia's key messages within their professional and social networks (Fahlevi 2022).

The contribution of the diaspora was also evident through their professional achievements and cultural presence. Many Indonesians abroad have established themselves as academics, scientists, entrepreneurs, and cultural leaders, which made them credible representatives of Indonesia in the eyes of their host communities. By linking their achievements with Indonesia's G20 Presidency, they reinforced an image of Indonesia as a nation capable of both contributing to global solutions and nurturing talent that thrives internationally. For example, Indonesian scientist Sastia Pramaputri, based in Japan, emphasized that the G20 Presidency offered a source of national pride and also a platform for diaspora members to participate in shaping Indonesia's global reputation (Kedaulatan Rakyat 2022).

Additionally, the diaspora engagement involved a charity donation campaign initiated by the Indonesian Diaspora Network (IDN) Canada during Indonesia's G20 Presidency. The network organized fundraising events in Vancouver, Toronto, and Los Angeles, with the proceeds distributed to six regions in Indonesia, including Denpasar, Banyumas, Bogor, Surabaya, Pulau Alor, and Tangerang. The first distribution took place in Bali on 7 November 2022, when IDN Canada President Tunggul Hendra Tobing handed over donations to the Bali Street Mums and Kids Foundation (Detik.com 2022a). Timed to coincide with the G20 Summit in Bali and the tenth anniversary of the diaspora movement, this initiative highlighted the cultural value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) while projecting Indonesia's image as a compassionate and socially responsible nation in line with the G20's theme of inclusive recovery.

Similarly, the Indonesian Student Association in Japan (PPI Jepang) contributed to Indonesia's nation branding through intellectual and cultural diplomacy. On 3–4 September 2022, PPI Japan organized the 5th Annual Scientific Symposium of Indonesian Collegians in Japan (ASSIGN 2022) under the theme "Filling the Gap: Indonesian Contribution and Reflection on G20 Priority Issues." The symposium, held online, featured prominent policymakers such as Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Erick Thohir and Vice Minister of Health Dante Saksono Harbuwono, alongside representatives from Bank Indonesia, Bappenas, and the private sector. Discussions addressed health reforms, digital transformation, and energy transition (Irianto 2022). By aligning Indonesia's policy agenda with academic discourse and highlighting the

contributions of young Indonesian scholars, PPI Japan contributed to the dissemination of the G20 Indonesia message abroad.

The acknowledgment of diaspora soft power has also become a formal part of Indonesia's diplomatic practice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs underscored that modern diplomacy depends on working with diaspora communities to expand outreach and strengthen public diplomacy (Fitriyanto 2022). In this context, diaspora communities helped communicate the values of inclusivity, pluralism, and cooperation. By doing so, they contributed to shaping international perceptions of Indonesia as a constructive and collaborative leader during G20 Presidency.

3.2 Nation Brand Image

According to Dinnies' framework (2008), the final component of country branding is the country's brand image, which is influenced by external consumers, domestic firms, external firms, inward investors, and media. The subsequent sections will examine the outcomes of the images on each respective audience.

3.2.1 Domestic Consumers

Domestic consumers during Indonesia's G20 Presidency can be understood as those who directly benefited from the event as well as those indirectly influenced by its communication and media outreach. They include economic actors, workers, and entrepreneurs whose livelihoods were affected, alongside citizens whose awareness and knowledge of international diplomacy increased through exposure to G20 coverage. Their participation and experiences provided a crucial domestic dimension

to Indonesia's nation-brand image, showing how global diplomacy translated into tangible outcomes domestically.

One of the most important groups of domestic consumers were micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These businesses gained directly from the surge in economic activity triggered by the summit. Spending from international and domestic visitors in Bali reached US\$575 million, or around IDR 9 trillion, with a significant portion flowing to MSMEs in hospitality, food, crafts, and transportation (Litha 2022). The government further elevated their role by involving several MSMEs as official souvenir producers for the G20 Summit (D. A. Putra 2022).

Another major beneficiary group was hospitality workers in Bali, who saw their welfare significantly improve because of the event. Around 30,000 hotel employees were mobilized across 24 hotels in Nusa Dua, Jimbaran, and Kuta to serve G20 delegations. After facing 30–50 percent wage cuts during the pandemic, these workers regained full salaries plus incentives, with average earnings above the local minimum wage of IDR 2,961,285 (D. A. Putra 2022). At the same time, hotel occupancy rates climbed dramatically, from 9.46 percent in September 2021 to 46.45 percent in September 2022, an increase of 36.99 percentage points (BPS, 2022). These developments reflected Indonesia's capacity to restore livelihoods and position itself as a resilient and service-oriented economy.

The Provincial Government of Bali (Pemprov Bali) also represented an important domestic consumer, as it directly benefited from the economic spillovers of the G20 Presidency. As the host region, Bali not only functioned as a stage for international diplomacy but also as a recipient of its economic spillovers. International

arrivals at I Gusti Ngurah Rai Airport averaged 12,281 per day in December 2022, up from 9,809 per day in November, contributing to more than 2.1 million foreign visitors that year. Pemprov Bali estimated that these flows generated IDR 7.4 trillion in local economic benefits, concentrated in hospitality, transport, and the creative sector (Love Bali 2023). This outcome shows how the G20 narrative translated into measurable fiscal advantages for local authorities.

The G20 Presidency also brought visible benefits to female-led MSMEs, a vital segment of the domestic consumer base. A study on Bali-based enterprises reported that women entrepreneurs received improved access to financing, training, and digital adaptation programs. Ibu Dewa Ayu Kartika Dewi, owner of *Pertenunan Pelangi*, explained: *“I hope the G20 Presidency will bring even greater benefits for MSME players like myself. As a woman entrepreneur, I have experienced many improvements, particularly in terms of access to funding, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has helped us to survive.”* (Muna et al. 2022). Her testimony illustrates how women entrepreneurs were simultaneously producers and consumers of empowerment initiatives.

Beyond economic actors, the G20 also shaped domestic consumers in the realm of civic knowledge and awareness. A survey of university students in human relations programs recorded a 76.2 percent increase in knowledge about the G20 after engaging with social media coverage of the summit (Hkikmat and Komara 2024). This outcome indicates that communication strategies succeeded in translating elite-level diplomacy into civic learning and broadening public knowledge.

3.2.2 External Consumers

In this context, external consumers are defined as political leaders, global institutions, and international think tanks which participated in the presidency agendas and engaged with Indonesia's nation brand at an analytical and policy level, thereby shaping international narratives. Many world leaders commended Indonesia's diplomatic leadership and its ability to foster dialogue in a polarized global environment. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres praised Indonesia for “encouraging dialogue among the G20 countries amid geopolitical tensions and economic volatility,” expressing admiration for President Joko Widodo's efforts. Similarly, U.S. President Joe Biden described Indonesia as “an active and crucial partner,” highlighting its role in advancing global conversations. His remarks, reinforced by warm gestures and appreciation for Indonesia's hospitality, underscored the country's growing stature as a diplomatic actor (Kemenko PMK RI 2022)

French President Emmanuel Macron characterized Indonesia's presidency as “full of messages of unity and solidarity,” particularly for developing nations, and acknowledged the extensive effort required to deliver substantive outcomes. This recognition was also echoed by non-Western leaders; Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the strategic importance of Indonesia–China cooperation as a model for other developing countries, while Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova lauded Indonesia's “constructive leadership” and “unifying message.” Leaders from Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and others shared similar sentiments, with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak crediting President Widodo and his

team for leading a “substantive, comprehensive, and action-oriented” summit despite complex global challenges (Pramudyani 2022a).

Beyond heads of state, leaders of global institutions also praised Indonesia’s G20 presidency. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, noted that the theme “Recover Together, Recover Stronger” resonated strongly with the Olympic motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger, Together.” Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, described President Widodo as “a global visionary who promotes peace and prosperity.” Likewise, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva highlighted Indonesia’s contribution in “facilitating dialogue and synergy during a period of global uncertainty” (Jelita 2022). These endorsements indicate that Indonesia’s presidency was both diplomatically effective and symbolically meaningful across diverse global agendas.

Think tanks further reinforced this perception. The Atlantic Council commended President Widodo’s “strong leadership amid global challenges” and his role in advancing peace through the G20 platform. Chatham House emphasized Indonesia’s identity as an advocate of multilateralism, peace, and stability, noting its success in embedding inclusive diplomatic language into the Bali Declaration. Although the summit did not resolve the Ukraine conflict, Indonesia played a key role in ensuring that “major powers kept talking” (Bland 2022).

Symbolic gestures and widely circulated visuals also shaped global perceptions, such as G20 leaders wearing Indonesian batik at the Gala Dinner or engaging in informal exchanges during the summit. These cultural and diplomatic symbols, amplified through international media and social platforms, projected Indonesia as a

culturally rich and diplomatically mature host nation, consistent with its identity rooted in history and as a democratic yet pluralist political regime.

Reactions from foreign audiences during the G20 Summit in Bali further illustrate how Indonesia's nation brand image was positively reinforced through cultural diplomacy. The Gala Dinner, broadcast live on the Presidential Secretariat's YouTube channel with over 2.5 million views and thousands of comments, attracted significant attention from international viewers. Many foreign netizens expressed admiration for Indonesia's hospitality and cultural presentation, with an Indian citizen appreciating the country's respect toward Hindu traditions, and a Swedish viewer praising both Indonesia and Bali as hosts. Similarly, reactions from Nigerian and European YouTubers highlighted the extraordinary quality of the cultural performances and traditional attire worn by President Joko Widodo, describing the event as "world-class" and "spectacular" (Wahyuni and Indrawati 2023). These responses reflect how external audiences consumed the event as entertainment and associated Indonesia with cultural richness, professionalism in hosting, and global relevance, thereby strengthening its positive image on the international stage.

3.2.3 Inward Investors and External Firms

Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022 was a strategic opportunity to establish credibility and earn the trust of the international community. This effort was centered on influencing critical external audiences, specifically investors and firms, who, as Dinnie (2008) argued, ultimately shape a country's brand image. Indonesia's ability to secure high-level investment commitments and multilateral cooperation during its presidency demonstrated the success of its nation-branding efforts, translating

symbolic political leadership into tangible developmental gains (Sekretariat Kabinet RI 2022a; Ashri 2022). These outcomes reflected growing global confidence in Indonesia's governance and long-term potential.

The nation branding strategy aimed at securing investment showed significant results: During the third quarter of 2022, coinciding with the culmination of the Presidency, Indonesia's total investment realization grew by 42.1% year-on-year, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) contributing a dominant 54.9% of the nominal total. This robust performance, which made investment the second-largest contributor to GDP growth (BPS 2022), provides strong evidence that the nation-brand image of stability and credibility projected through its communicators was successfully received by the global investment community (Kemenko Polhukam 2022).

In the infrastructure sector, one of the most notable achievements was Indonesia's inclusion in the G7-led Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). The PGII aims to mobilize USD 600 billion by 2027 to support sustainable development in low- and middle-income countries. Indonesia was identified as a priority country, with initial commitments focused on clean energy and logistics corridors (Theodora 2022b). Furthermore, a bilateral agreement was established with Turkey to facilitate the advancement of the Trans-Sumatra Toll Road project, thereby enhancing connectivity throughout western Indonesia (Kominfo RI 2022). These partnerships reinforce Indonesia's appeal as an investable and institutionally ready economy.

Indonesia's ability to attract large-scale foreign commitments was further demonstrated through high-level bilateral investment deals secured during the G20

Presidency. The United States (US) announced a USD 2.5 billion agreement between ExxonMobil and Pertamina to develop a regional carbon capture and storage hub that would reduce emissions while generating new economic opportunities for Indonesian workers. The partnership aligns with Indonesia's ambition to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060 or earlier. Additionally, the two countries launched a USD 698 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) program to support climate-resilient transportation infrastructure across five Indonesian provinces (CNN Indonesia 2022b).

China followed with a USD 5 billion cooperation framework between CNGR Advanced Material Co. Ltd. and the Indonesian Ministry of Investment to develop precursor production for the electric vehicle ecosystem. During the B20 Investment Forum, 18 companies from 11 countries signed further Memoranda of Understanding in the field of renewable and clean energy, representing a total investment value of approximately USD 4.8 billion. These developments underscore Indonesia's success in translating diplomatic positioning into tangible industrial partnerships provinces (CNN Indonesia 2022b).

In urban transportation, Indonesia successfully attracted investment from Japan, the United Kingdom, and South Korea to continue developing Jakarta's Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system. Japan reaffirmed its commitment to providing financial and technical support for Phase 2 through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the UK and South Korea expressed interest in future phases and related smart infrastructure (MRT Jakarta 2022). These partnerships underscores Indonesia's

strategic role as a connector between developed economies and urbanizing nations in the Global South.

In the energy and environment sector, Indonesia secured a landmark USD 20 billion agreement through the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), which involves the US, Japan, and multilateral development banks. The agreement aims to accelerate the transition away from coal and increase the use of renewable energy, targeting a cap on power sector emissions of 290 MtCO₂ by 2030 (Theodora 2022a). Another key achievement was the launch of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), which Indonesia co-initiated with Japan during the Bali Summit. Through this initiative, Indonesia received a \$500 million allocation for energy transition and decarbonization programs with a regional focus on developing affordable, inclusive, and secure energy (Kementerian ESDM RI 2022).

Additionally, Indonesia formed a high-level partnership with Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power to develop hydrogen and ammonia production facilities and utilities infrastructure for the Tuban Grass Root Refinery and Petrochemical (GRR&P) project (Sopiah 2022). This collaboration will support domestic energy security and contribute to green industrial innovation, further reinforcing Indonesia's image as a future-oriented emerging economy. Furthermore, Indonesia supported the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal power plant through the Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM) in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This initiative provides financing for scalable sustainable energy projects, demonstrating Indonesia's dedication to collaborative, multilateral solutions to global climate challenges (Asian Development Bank 2022).

It is evident that the investments and partnerships that were secured during the G20 Presidency serve as a testament to Indonesia's ability to translate symbolic leadership into tangible developmental gains. In this regard, these initiatives strengthened the country's image as an investable economy, a connector between developed and developing nations, and a credible international actor. This reputational shift was further evidenced by the 2023 Lowy Institute annual report, which recorded Indonesia's rise by one global rank from 2021, and its consolidation as the leading power within ASEAN (Lowy Institute 2023). The author argues that these outcomes exemplify the impact of Indonesia's nation branding efforts, wherein political credibility has been adeptly transformed into economic gains and international trust.

3.2.4 International Media Coverage

In the context of nation brand image, media here refers to international media that covered Indonesia's presidency of the G20. International media outlets offered supplementary insights into the reception and interpretation of Indonesia's presidency on the global stage. Coverage from Deutsche Welle highlighted Indonesia's ability to sustain the G20 despite deep divisions over the war in Ukraine. By keeping all parties engaged and managing expectations in the absence of President Putin, Indonesia was portrayed as a bridge builder, navigating one of the most challenging geopolitical moments in recent history. At the same time, DW emphasized Bali's cultural setting as a vibrant stage for the summit, where traditional performances and art were showcased to the world (Pandey 2022).

Reuters centered its reporting on the launch of the Pandemic Fund, a concrete outcome of Indonesia's presidency. The fund was presented as an innovative

mechanism to strengthen preparedness in developing countries, responding to the unequal access to vaccines and health infrastructure during COVID-19. The emphasis was on how Indonesia spearheaded a multilateral solution to a global problem. In this coverage, Indonesia's identity as a promoter of solidarity and fairness was implicitly mentioned (Reuters 2022).

Think China underlined Indonesia's ability to secure consensus in the Bali Leaders' Declaration, even when the Russia-Ukraine conflict risked derailing the talks. The article noted that Indonesia played host to a crucial Biden–Xi meeting, which helped defuse tensions between these two major powers. The coverage portrayed Jakarta as an important regional player capable of keeping dialogue open in a polarized world (Suryadinata 2022). PBS focused on the \$20 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership, describing it as the largest deal of its kind to date. The agreement was framed as a significant step in helping Indonesia reduce coal dependency while creating a pathway for renewable energy development. Their article detailed both the opportunities and the challenges of such a transition, given Indonesia's status as a major coal exporter (Karmini and Arasu 2022).

ABC Australia emphasized the summit's logistical and symbolic dimensions. Indonesia kept proceedings smooth despite global tensions, even using cloud seeding to ensure favorable weather, while gestures like mangrove planting signaled environmental awareness and international cooperation. The coverage projected Indonesia as both an effective organizer and a climate-conscious actor (Barker and Doran 2022). Al Jazeera focused on the Ukraine conflict and Jakarta's response. Indonesia's refusal to exclude Russia, coupled with calls for dialogue and compromise,

was framed as evidence of its inclusive stance. President Joko Widodo's appeal to avoid "zero-sum situations" was highlighted as part of efforts to preserve unity among divided leaders (Power 2022).

When considered collectively, the international media consistently portrayed Indonesia's G20 Presidency in three ways: as a diplomatic bridge-builder, as a promoter of fairness and solidarity, and as an emerging climate-conscious actor. The coverage also underscored the cultural richness of Indonesia, exemplified by Bali's traditions and symbols, which have gained prominence on the global stage.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

This research set out to examine how Indonesia utilized its nation-brand identity and communicators to shape its nation-brand image during the G20 Presidency of 2021–2022. Drawing on Keith Dinnie’s nation branding framework, the study analyzed three interconnected dimensions: the prioritized nation-brand identity components, the strategic communicators employed to project this identity, and the resulting image formed among external audiences.

The findings demonstrate that Indonesia adopted a selective and intentional approach in defining its nation-brand identity. Rather than presenting an expansive or ambiguous portrayal of national character, Indonesia strategically emphasized four core elements with high symbolic and diplomatic value: history, political regime, religion, and landscape. These identity components were mobilized to construct a narrative of Indonesia as a resilient and pluralistic democracy rooted in unity, capable of mediating between competing blocs in a polarized international system. The historical legacy of anti-colonial struggle and the Bandung Spirit reinforced Indonesia’s longstanding role as a bridge-builder. The political regime identity, grounded in Pancasila and constitutional democracy, projected perceived stability and inclusiveness. Religion was articulated through interfaith plurality, most notably via the R20 forum, which positioned Indonesia as a moral convener in global religious

diplomacy. The landscape identity, embodied particularly by Bali, visually anchored Indonesia's brand in cultural richness and post-pandemic recovery.

These identity elements were transmitted through a diverse yet coordinated array of communicators. Government foreign policy acted as the primary formal channel, operationalizing identity through the G20 agenda of health architecture, digital transformation, and energy transition. Marketing communications amplified this identity via the theme and visual branding of "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," as well as through extensive side events and digital campaigns. Prominent personalities, including President Joko Widodo and leading ministers, served as high-visibility messengers who embodied Indonesia's leadership posture. Cultural artifacts and performances reinforced symbolic resonance, while the diaspora extended communication beyond state-controlled channels and embedded Indonesia's messaging into international civil society networks.

The resulting nation-brand image was shaped through both policy outcomes and symbolic reception. External endorsements from international leaders, positive media coverage, investment commitments, and high levels of social media engagement suggest that Indonesia was widely perceived as an effective bridge-builder, a credible economic partner, and a culturally confident host nation. While image formation remains ultimately contingent upon external interpretation, the convergence of diplomatic acknowledgment and public sentiment indicates that Indonesia succeeded in repositioning itself from a peripheral actor to a proactive convener in global governance.

In conclusion, Indonesia's G20 Presidency functioned not merely as a policy platform but as a deliberate nation branding instrument. By aligning identity, communicators, and image within a coherent strategic framework, Indonesia expanded its reputational capital and reinforced its legitimacy as an emerging middle power. The findings affirm that nation branding, when rooted in substantive identity and supported by multi-channel communication, is a powerful strategic tool for reinforcing political credibility and generating tangible economic gains.

4.2 Recommendation

This study has demonstrated how Indonesia utilized its G20 Presidency as a strategic platform for nation branding. However, further research could employ additional methodologies to capture a broader and deeper perspective. Direct interviews with government officials, ministry representatives, or staff members involved in the G20 National Committee would provide firsthand perspectives on the utilization and communication of Indonesia's brand identity. Surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) with domestic and international audiences could also assist in evaluating the extent to which Indonesia's branding messages were comprehended and received by different stakeholders. Furthermore, the execution of longitudinal and comparative studies with other middle powers, including Turkey, Brazil, and South Korea, is recommended to assess the long-term sustainability of Indonesia's branding outcomes and its positioning within global diplomacy.

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