

# Regional Diplomacy and the International Dimension of *Da'wah*: Analyzing *English for Ulama* in West Java

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**Abstract:** There is a current massive activity of local actors in the international arena. It is carried out in the diplomatic framework which is also called regional diplomacy. West Java, the region with the largest percentage of Muslim populations in Indonesia, is actively involved in making regional diplomacy. This article aims to identify the *English for Ulama* program that was formulated under Ridwan Kamil and Uu Ruzhanul Ulum (2018-2023). *English for Ulama* is a form of collaboration between the West Java government, the British Embassy in Indonesia, British Council, and West Java local actors. This program aims to train selected ulama in West Java to do *da'wah* in Europe. This also coincides with the eradication of Islamophobia that had previously been embedded in the Blue Continent, specifically in the United Kingdom. This research utilizes Publish or Perish, VOSviewer to find previous literature data and see new gaps for novelty. By using qualitative research methods, this research also utilizes Atlas.ti software which helps codify data from various sources and interviews. The output of this article finds that: 1) The strong Islamic identity in West Java society encourages the formation of these Islamic policies. On a global scale, it rides the rapid scheme of *da'wah*. English language training for Ulama has encouraged several Interfaith Dialogues that uphold the principle of religious tolerance. 2) This program is in line with West Java's development plan to increase the percentage of religious harmony and promote regional superior values. During this leadership period, West Java emphasized Islamic cultural philosophy by riding diplomatic doors. 3) From a diplomatic perspective, this program is an instrument for achieving the multidimensional interests of West Java from the promotion objective to economic benefits. This article is expected to contribute usefulness and concrete evidence of massive *da'wah* activities in the era of globalization from sub-national governments.

**Keywords:** *Da'wah*, *English for Ulama*, Regional Diplomacy, West Java

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## 1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, local entities of one's national states, especially in the European Region, have been rife in carrying out foreign relations initiatives to gain economic benefits or to promote their cultural identity abroad [7]. The international order which was originally always oriented to the concept of the nation-state by the Westphalia Agreement is now adapting to the interdependent pattern between all entities. The phenomenon of regional diplomacy is increasingly globalized along with the many multilateral agreements involving regional (local) actors to discuss various issues such as sustainable development, climate change, urban development,

or even various assistance programs (sharing know-how) were born in many specific fields [12].

Globalization has become a stimulus for regional actors to play a centrifugal role and tend to be more vocal about their interests. In this early period, local entities' participation in international arena always led to disorder or conflict [15]. This stems from the scepticism of International Relations scholars who have long adhered to the central government's sovereignty. Regional actors in this study are certain areas under state administration. Which usually also has a local government level depending on which form of the state is (unity or federal).

One of the most populous provinces in Indonesia is West Java. West Java has a total population of more than 48 million

people as of 2021. In terms of demography, the majority of the people of West Java are Muslim with a percentage of 97.22% or around 42.6 million people. The capital city of West Java Province is Bandung City. This city was the first local entity to pioneer regional diplomacy activities in Indonesia: Sister City between Bandung City and Braunschweig City in Germany. West Java is a province that has a rapid contribution to the National Gross Domestic Product, which is 14.33%. Its characteristics make West Java have a superior profile in the national arena [1].

Not only classified as a superior region on a national scale, West Java has historically also interacted with foreign entities on a world scale. In the nearest regions, West Java has established investment cooperation with Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. In East Asia, West Java has been involved in several collaborations, including with Shizuoka (Japan) and Chungcheongnam (South Korea). In the Asia Pacific regions, West Java is connected under a Sister Province scheme with South Australia. On the African continent, West Java has responded to the Moroccan Ambassador's proposal for mapping relations with Sous Massa. In Europe, West Java has been intertwined with the Netherlands and Belgium. In America, West Java has established various cooperations with Mexico. In the Middle East Region, countries like Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Kazakhstan have close interactions with West Java [11].

Legitimacy regarding the potency of West Java does not only come from fellow regions or state actors. West Java has a track record of collaboration with several non-state institutions, such as IOM in dealing with people smuggling, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the United Nations. In the period 2018-2023 under Ridwan Kamil and Uu Ruzhanul Ulum's vision, West Java has an objective proclaimed in the terminology of "*Jabar Juara*" (re: West Java Champion). This is described in 5 points, including Efforts to form its people to be *taqwa*, an aim to achieve high cultured humans, and the realization of collaborative-innovative governance between local and central governments. In this period, the value of West Java's cultural philosophy was emphasized with the touch of Islam in a very central position [14].

Under the leadership of Ridwan Kamil and UU Ruzhanul Ulum, West Java Province launched the *English for Ulama* program. A form of adaptive *da'wah* in the era of merging national boundaries. This program aims to train selected *ulama* to be fluent in speaking English and convey the peaceful image of Islam to the public global. Moreover, to eliminate anti-Islam sentiment in the Western world caused by the conflictual stigma of Islam in the Middle East region [13].

This article aims to analyze the *English for Ulama* program in the context of West Java entities' regional diplomacy. This research aims to identify elements of Islamic identity and *Priangan* culture for the potential of *da'wah* to the public global and its relation to the peace agenda. The usefulness of this paper will also contribute to the richness of regional diplomacy or para-diplomacy literature. It will also be practical evidence of subnational freedom in unitary states like Indonesia.

This study uses a qualitative approach. The author uses documents, archives, interviews, and previous literature studies to be used as data sources. The author codified and divided the data into 4 typologies with the aim of a meeting point of novelty. The four typologies are; (1) Regional Diplomacy Studies, (2) West Java foreign cooperation, (3) The potential of *da'wah* to the global public, and (4) *English for Ulama* Program. The researcher utilized the Publish or Perish software to search the literature and mapped the bibliometric results in VOSViewer.

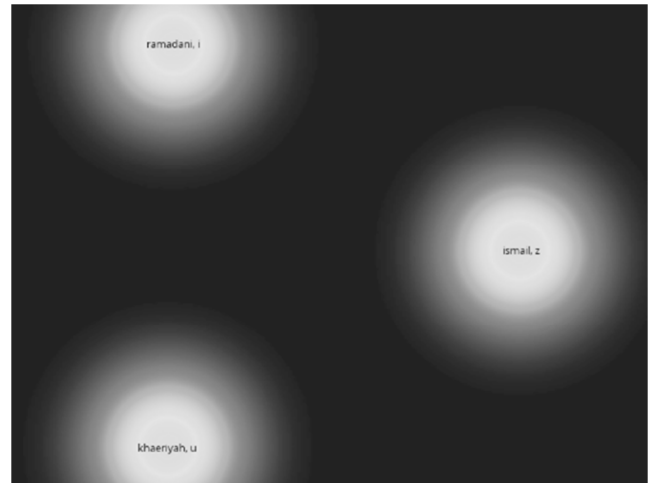


Figure 1. VOSViewer Bibliometric Analysis Results.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Regional Diplomacy

Several terms are referred to foreign activities of sub-national actors. This paper will use the concept of regional diplomacy which is juxtaposed with the central government. Indeed, regional diplomacy is a local entities' instrument to achieve symbolic objectives. Regional diplomacy scholars often orient their studies to the cases in the field.

The concept of regional diplomacy initially reaped a lot of sentiments because of its conflictual perception with central sovereignty. The majority of scholars describe regional diplomacy as 'incompatible interests' between the central and local governments. Subnational independence, both in terms of economic and political strength (if there are differences in political parties between central and non-central levels), tends to have a more conflictual relationship.

Some call regional diplomacy the "nature of the beast" which tends to be agonistic. In this case, subnational jurisdictions are viewed as entities that do not have substantial experience on the world stage. With this capacity, they got a lack of legitimacy from external parties and were called "unequal partners". International rules and regulations are also labelled "not friendly" to non-central governments. Another pessimism is related to the lack of an analytical framework to guide future studies of regional diplomacy [4].

Regions that need more central roles will be reflected as cooperative regions. A central government may have an

agenda of distributing national economic welfare and avoiding inter-regional inequality. It can be said that the more responsive a country is, the more likely it is to act "against" the interests of its subnational entities [6].

Referring to Duchacek's categorization, there are 3 forms of regional diplomacy activity: (1) Cross-boundary, (2) Transregional, (3) Global. In the contemporary era, there is a massive flow of diplomatic activity at the local level which represents the third stage: Global regional diplomacy, which is a form of direct interaction between non-central governments and other actors outside national borders (both central and non-central governments or private sector in another country). Regional diplomacy thus maps out more than just bilateral policies, but also potentially multilateral initiatives [5].

The success of regional diplomacy is measured in the balance of political structure and regions' achievement. The articulation of voices from local actors also needs to be emphasized. Although the phenomenon of regional diplomacy has been massive in the international arena, awareness of the opportunities within this activity is still limited in academic circles. Voters or the people (especially in democratic countries) have not been equipped with an understanding of the importance of high competence (world standard) leader for local governments. In the era of economic interdependence, local actors need to be seen as an integral part of foreign relations.

Although the concept of regional diplomacy is more prominent in the case of federal countries such as the United States, Germany, (because the majority of research literature is oriented from and to the West), this phenomenon has been globalized. Hundreds of multilateral forums bring together sub-national governments from countries such as China, Brazil, and India to discuss the issues such as sustainable development goals, climate change or urban development which were originally classified as "low policy issues" by Keohane and Nye. Sub-national governments from any form of state, especially those with high cultural identity strength, tend to choose this regional diplomacy instrument [12].

Thus, this article intends to apply the theory of regional diplomacy as a framework that can legitimize West Java's activities on the *English for Ulama* program in collaboration with British Council and British Embassy. Unlike the conflictual sentiments of previous scholars, in this case, West Java is indicated to be independent, cooperative, and innovative local actors especially in achieving its religious vision. Indicators of achievement in the practice of West Java diplomacy will also be analyzed referring to Bolewski's mapping (2008).

## 2.2. Religious Identity

The obsolete Westphalian Treaty is a driving factor for the rise of religious issues in global realm. According to Hallinan (2007) in his writing titled *Religion and Foreign Policy*, International Relations academics have given more thorough review of religion. These are significant changes from studies that originally subvert religion. Author intends to explain the implications of growing influence of religion in international relations and the feasibility of religion as a basis developed for

inter-entity diplomacy activities. In this case, the *English for Ulama* program launched by West Java Provincial Government in collaboration with the British Council is very closely related to religiosity (specifically Islamic religious scholars), generally all religious leaders.

Since the birth of international relations as an independent discipline in the West, religion as an object of study has long been neglected, marginalized, and even "thrown" in the Western version of international relations theory. The concept of national sovereignty has been deemed "sacred" under the Treaty of Westphalia. For a long time, religion no longer had a place. However, in recent decades, the global revival of religion and the trend of desecularization around the world, especially after the events of September 11, have changed the views of IR scholars on religion.

This emphasizes the premise of Samuel Huntington which has been carried for a long time. This premise illustrates that religious identity will be the basis for future conflicts, this is given the name 'Clash of Civilization'. World geopolitics is predicted to be divided into two camps: the West and the East (specifically referring to Islam). Huntington identified that the issue of trust would be the source of all world instability. Political action and economic problems are the only events that contribute to a crisis. Huntington provides the premise that it is the basis of differences in belief that underlies it all.

Samuel Huntington's thesis is a reference for author to see the urgency of identity in the global realm (that needs to be heeded to maintain peace). According to Huntington, Islam is one of the nine great civilizations and the religion with the most massive growth in contemporary times. Islam has a bad impression of the rampant conflict in the Middle East. In this case, Indonesia, especially West Java with a moderate Islamic style, is believed to be more tolerant of utilizing regional diplomacy in *English for Ulama* program to present a good representation of Islam. According to Huntington, differences in religious views have become a dangerous conflict record because they resulted in many casualties through bloodshed. Not only that, but conflicts based on religious differences are also recorded as the longest crisis in history, for centuries [10].

The essence of religion is the goodness it upholds. In this case, it includes regulation, peace, and even the value of tolerance. The end of World War II, made the world continue to passionately maintain peace. This is reflected in the creation of the United Nations as a multilateral institution whose decisions are universal and should be followed. However, this has also been refuted by various low political empirical events which have more or less caused a world crisis; such as genocide, terrorism, intervention, and others.

With the vision and mission of the West Java in the *English for Ulama* program, the presence of religion becomes concrete evidence of a shift in a more complex order. Apart from being an identity, religion has been embedded as a philosophy and has brought together various entities (state actors, sub-state actors, non-state actors, communities) to carry out a sacred goal in the deradicalism agenda. Therefore, the conception of religion in International Relations becomes a significant driver that cannot be ruled out in this research.

In Islam, the basis for the realization of the vision of *English for Ulama* program is a term called *Da'wah*. *Da'wah* means an invitation or a call to people to know Islam. As a Muslim, you are encouraged to be active in *da'wah* activities. There is an expansion of the form of *da'wah* in the contemporary era. In the past, *da'wah* was limited to small and narrow public spaces. Now, the merging of spatial boundaries has encouraged the expansion of *da'wah* to international level. In the publication of Albrecht Hauser (2012), the latest *da'wah* involves various thoughts and strategies with a global direction that accompany local implementation. This is what drives Islam to have an increasing number of prominent Muslims [9].

This international *da'wah* strategic effort is implemented from the many interfaith dialogue activities and interaction opportunities that are beneficial for the Muslim community. This is a grand stand for Muslims amid a massive Islamophobia. There are various countries on the European continent such as Germany, France, England which have disputes over the Muslim's obligation to dress and do the worship in Mosque. These cases shove massive Islamophobia itself. The concept of Islamophobia was developed in the late 1990s by political activists. This term is widely used for analytical purposes by researchers to see anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments [2]. This concept calls for the practice of international *da'wah* for local actors to be proactive in responding to issues that are spatially distant from their geographical location. In this research, international *da'wah* is discussed as a form of effort by West Java regional actors in implementing the *English for Ulama* program.

### 3. English for Ulama

#### 3.1. West Java Collaboration Strategies

The election of Ridwan Kamil and UU Ruzhanul Ulum as Governor and Deputy Governor of West Java requires a form of realization of the promises that have been carried out in election process. The principle of "Innovative-Collaborative" is the gateway to establishing cooperation with various non-government partners. In the *English for Ulama* program, the West Java Provincial Government involves the West Java branch of the Indonesian Ulema Council organization. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of West Java acts as the leading sector of the *English for Ulama* program. In principle, this program runs in parallel with the Ulama Cadre Education (PKU) program which has been going on for a long time at the West Java MUI.

MUI held a professional selection in coordination with the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati. In the first stage, of the 265 total registrants selected 30 scholars (percentage of 10%) who need to get a period of guidance in quarantine. The Indonesian Ulema Council carries out several indicators that need to be met for elected scholars. The first, is related to mastery of English. The English capacity requirement for MUI is not a grammatical issue as is commonly encountered as a requirement, but rather the ability

to engage in conversations both formally and informally. Second, the most important indicator for the West Java Indonesian Ulema Council is the knowledge and understanding of selected scholars regarding the concept of Islamic moderation. The recruitment scheme carried out by the West Java MUI in the *English for Ulama* program is open accessible for public. The West Java Indonesian Ulema Council cooperates with Islamic community. As a gathering place for ulama as well as leaders of religious organizations, it is not difficult for MUI to involve other societal actors.

Another entity that engaged in this collaboration scheme is British Council. The British Council's role is to select the Ulama. The indicator or requirement to pass the second stage of selection for registered ulamas is mastery of the language (with a TOEFL score). At this stage, figure who are not really fluent in English begin to be eliminated. The next stage, British Council has a role to train English in a quarantine centre for 2 weeks. In *English for Ulama* Batch I, quarantine was held from 28 March to 11 April 2019. In addition to concerns about language skills, the British Council also made a presentation about the community culture that Ulama in Europe would face. As a partner who is considered to have facilitated the realization of the West Java Provincial Government's ideas, the British Council received superior appreciation from Ridwan Kamil. British Council has a significant role in the flow of the *English for Ulama* program implementation. The cooperation between the West Java Provincial Government and the British Council is covered by a formal agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The signing of the MoU was held in an open ceremony in early 2019 (4 months after the Ridwan Kamil Couple and UU Ruzhanul Ulum were inaugurated as the elected Governor-Vice Governor), specifically on January 8, 2019.

#### 3.2. Program Flow of the English for Ulama

The socialization of the *English for Ulama* program is carried out by direct interaction and utilizing digital technology developments. Ulama Wifni Yusifa from Garut received information on the Batch 1 *English for Ulama* program from the official Instagram account of the Governor of West Java, @ridwankamil which was uploaded at the end of 2018. In that post, registration information opened in early 2019 (Interview with Ulama Wifni Yusifa, 2021). The composition of the selected ulama who were dispatched in the first wave was 4 male and 1 female ulama. The table is as follows:

Table 1. The City of Placement for Selected Ulamas.

Name	City in the UK
Ridwan Subagja	Bristol
Beni Safitri	Manchester
Wifni Yusifa	Birmingham
Ihya Ulumudin	Glasgow
Hasan Al-Bana	Manchester

In the first batch of *English for Ulama*, the selected ulama departed early November 2019 just when it was winter in

England. The West Java government has dispatched several assistant staff from the provincial government who also take care of every activity of selected ulama on the European continent [16]. The arrival of Ulama in England was described as a representation of Indonesia, which is not an Islamic law-based country and has a high multicultural tolerance country. Indonesia is described as a “Pancasila state” with peaceful Islam (*rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*). The ceremonial opening by England also involved the Indonesian Education and Culture Consular in London [19].

Each ulema is scheduled to attend interfaith dialogues or Muslim recitations held in their respective cities referring to Table 1. The selected Ulama conveyed the objectives of *English for Ulama* program to the public to achieve a message of peace. In addition to delivering the substance of *da'wah*, the scholars also visited various iconic destinations to see the historical aspects of British culture. They were also invited by city leaders (Mayors) and parliament to visit and see the dynamics of the discussions taking place.

### 3.3. International Dimension of Da'wah

In a substantial understanding, West Java Ulamas have been able to understand various concepts of moderation/*Islam washatiah*. The urgency of international *da'wah* is sparked by West Java's proactive attitude on global issues. Among them is Islamophobia which is still entrenched in British society. To support the success of the goal of international *da'wah*, the Ulama are provided with English. English is the key to communication for socializing in the international stage.

In explaining *tauheed*, a high level of understanding is needed. In this program, the scholars who are expected to be selected are those who study Islam (with all its limitations). The Ulamas are expected to have teachers in studying religion because interpreting *tauheed* without a teacher will lead to misinterpretation and far from the Islamic context [16].

A Muslim is also subject to the obligation to *Ballighu 'Anni Walaw Ayah* (Tell from the Prophet even if it's only one verse). This encourages the enthusiasm of program organizers to preach abroad. Parties such as the West Java Indonesian Ulema Council and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati have made the goal of international *da'wah* a sacred agenda, both of which contribute optimally to the delivery of *da'wah* material to selected ulama [18].

Abdullah Syafe'i is an educator from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung from the *da'wah* faculty. He delivered material and worked individually on this program. Although it has not yet been established in a formal such as a memorandum of understanding, UIN Bandung fully supports *English for Ulama* in this collaborative action. As an Islamic higher education institution, UIN believes that the world needs the latest design of *da'wah*. Contemporary approaches need to prioritize conventional models and *English for Ulama* diplomacy actors need to be highly committed to carrying comprehensive indicators for Ulama who are worthy of representing West Java preaching at the international level. UIN also pays attention to gender composition by not making women as second people in this program [20].

## 4. West Java Regional Diplomacy

*English for Ulama* is a form of regional diplomacy in West Java. This diplomacy was initiated with the terminology of international *da'wah*. West Java in this case represents the region as a diplomatic actor. Although there are many biases in regional labelling, in this case, the researcher defines the term region as a collective form, not only referring rigidly to governmental actors but also involving various societal actors who contribute to the implementation of diplomacy. This is also a distinguishing factor from paradiplomacy, which in practice tends to only be involved in governmental actors. The implementation of regional diplomacy in the *English for Ulama* program not only identifies the efforts of West Java Provincial Government but also takes into account the role of informal civil actors who contribute to the realization of diplomacy.

The formulation of *English for Ulama* program is a form of innovation for West Java for achieving objectives to be recognized on the international stage. The interaction and active presence of West Java is a concrete form of the trajectory of global governance. It reflects the new complex form of latest diplomacy. The presence of West Java outside national borders in the *English for Ulama* program is a phenomenon of optimism in the form of subnational diplomacy. Previously, the activities of regional (local) actors were always interpreted as threatening to the centre. With the implementation of 2 stages of *English for Ulama*, it can be mapped that the Republic of Indonesia is also permissive and provides space for nationalist regional leaders to carry out regional promotion as widely as possible. Since promotion is one of the diplomatic functions listed formally in the 1961 Vienna Convention.

West Java as a region takes advantage of a new space in the international order which also opens the door for 3 things: regional involvement, the region to make commitments (engagement), and the active role of the region (participation). In the *English for Ulama* program, West Java is based on various Islamic philosophies. West Java aims to counteract various massive issues beyond national borders, namely Islamophobia by promoting the Priangan version of peaceful Muslims.

In this case, West Java is involved in being present in distant global issues (geographically and in other aspects). West Java is bound by commitments and memorandums of understanding with various other parties such as the British Council and the British Embassy. West Java participates in global *da'wah* with various forms of activities, including Selected Ulamas participating in television programs in peace dialogue, Selected Ulamas participating in interfaith dialogues held with the British community from various religious figures, Selected Ulamas participating in recitations/*da'wah* in British Muslim assemblies, and other forms of active participation.

West Java's intention, referring to the West Java Provincial Government in particular to make formal statements, generally to the West Java Indonesian Ulema Council, Sunan

Gunung Djati State Islamic University in promoting the Priangan Muslim form is one form of the birth of regional nationalism. In the contemporary era, the identity attached to an entity can be the basis of the behaviour and policies it takes. In the formal scheme of diplomacy, the Indonesian nation needs to be promoted with a single representation, now West Java is constructing its new nationalism with its ethnicity, namely Sundanese.

West Java has the intention that the Sundanese Muslims (Priangan) with their various philosophical values have an advantage that needs to be offered to the world. The emergence of new nationalism that is more specific to primordial identity is a new form that this diplomacy does not lead to protodiplomacy or separatism. In this case, West Java in parallel coordinated and adjusted with the centre. The *English for Ulama* program also involves the official representative of the Republic of Indonesia, namely the Indonesian Embassy in London. Referring to the definition of Andre Lecourse (2002), the form of regional nationalism that has the potential to threaten the centre can be seen from the form of regional political territorial mobilization. In the results of observations and chronological mapping of the *English for Ulama* program, a form of political contestation was found at the beginning of the formulation of ideas. However, there is no form of threat to sovereignty. This program is an instrument for achieving goals and fulfilling political campaign promises which will then be developed as a diplomacy scheme.

*English for Ulama* is a program initiated to carry the mission of "Ulama champions" in the outline of education and religious issues. The majority of the vortex of regional diplomacy issues are in the sectors of economic cooperation, environmental issues or climate change, and sustainable development issues. The regions' massive diplomacy is centred on the types of issues at hand. In this case, the issue of religion or (Muslim) identity is one of the principles or focus which is also classified as low politics to underlie the West Java regional diplomacy.

With innovative and collaborative principles, the implementation of regional diplomacy in the *English for Ulama* program becomes more massive. Although each party is still biased by the limitations of its role, the involvement of the West Java Indonesian Ulama Council and the Higher Education Institution of UIN Bandung is a solid form that is better welcomed. The foreign community (in this context refers to the British community) is more cheerful in welcoming the involvement of non-governmental actors whose roles are more empirically acceptable and independent of various agendas for achieving the interests of the government [17].

The *English for Ulama* program involves various Ulama cadres who are then substantially selected and trained in communication techniques to represent West Java in the international arena. The selected ulamas here are defined as diplomats (on the function of representing regions). In the contemporary era, diplomacy carried out by non-state actors (referring to selected individuals/clerics), has a more significant effect. Moreover, the people and the British

Government welcome the Ulama openly.

Referring to Bolewski's mapping of the components that could create diplomacy, 3 things need to be analyzed. First, participants. The *English for Ulama* program concretely reflects non-traditional forms of diplomacy involving various non-governmental parties, even individual actors are actors in the diplomacy. However, the role of the government remains principally as a guide in the practice of diplomacy. In this case, the West Java Provincial Government is at the forefront of starting from the initiator of the program, assistants, providers of facilities, and budgets to the person in charge of program coordination and implementation.

The *English for Ulama* program is defined as the realization of *da'wah* diplomacy. In general, when drawn into the two objectives of diplomacy, this program fulfils these two objectives. First, regional diplomacy is carried out to protect and guide regional interests. Second, diplomacy is an instrument to promote norms and values that characterize the growing sense of unity in the global sphere. The *English for Ulama* program is structured to achieve multidimensional interests (not only religion), but also having a form of value that wants to be marketed to the global market that leads to international peace. This program has become a means to achieve external recognition and increase internal competitiveness in the framework of the 2018-2023 development plan.

Second, a significant component of diplomacy is the process/practice of diplomacy. Diplomatic interactions in the *English for Ulama* program involve the identities of the participants or actors who are bound by an international agreement. This identity has a religious nuance that specifically represents Islam. The process of diplomatic interactions will merge two meetings of interest that require compromise and language.

The actors involved in *English for Ulama* are involved in a willingness to compromise. Compromise is essential in the diplomatic process. The British Council's willingness to compromise, the West Java Provincial Government, UIN, West Java MUI, and so on pushed for a strong consensus that ultimately led to the outcome of the negotiations. The implementation of *English for Ulama* is the result of negotiations based on mutual interests. This program is a form of regional diplomacy with a win-win solution that underlies the vision of the entities that accompanies it: the champion of the West Java version of the Ulama, the British Council's version of English for West Java, and the MUI's version of Ulama Education.

One of the most significant aspects of the diplomatic process is language. In the *English for Ulama* program, language is not involved as an indicator of the progress of communication in regional diplomacy but also becomes the principle of the program's success. This program, "English" for Ulama is intended to train and master *English for Ulama* in West Java. This is one of the orientations to increase the competitiveness of Human Resources for the superiority of the West Java Region on the international stage.

The third component of implementing diplomacy is a factor

in negotiations. The first factor is the nature of the decision. Bolewski (2008) said that there is an interdependence between the importance of decision-making in the diplomatic negotiation process and the public interest. In this program, *English for Ulama* becomes a massive form of diplomacy (*da'wah*) because the majority of the local West Java public feels bound to the issue of Islamic *da'wah* that it brings. With it, the parties involved are cooperative in every negotiation process [3].

The second negotiation factor that can also be identified in *English for Ulama* as Regional Diplomacy in West Java is the behaviour of actors. *English for Ulama* is a program that involves many parties. Although this collaborative principle complements the innovations of the West Java Provincial Government, in the diplomatic process this becomes a concern to consider each participant's agreement. Especially *English for Ulama* program is made annually with a long pre-departure process.

Finally, the factor of negotiation in the practice of diplomacy is time and place. Schedules and deadlines are important aspects of the implementation of diplomacy. In the *English for Ulama* program, timing is also an important decision. From the government's point of view, this program is held within 100 working days for the realization of political promises during the campaign period. Pegged in a matter of one year, the time of departure of the ulama is the target for the implementation of diplomacy.

The location or place of the implementation of diplomacy is another factor that cannot be underestimated. In traditional diplomacy, the process is attached by a meeting of two diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the location tends to be arranged with insufficient space for the number of participants. In the *English for Ulama* program, locations are held in England with a variety of ambiances and atmospheres. When the selected Ulama arrived on the Blue Continent, they were formally welcomed by the government, ministers, and society. However, the majority of diplomatic interactions occur in informal meetings. This is represented by dialogues that are held without ceremonial needs.

## 5. Conclusion

The *English for Ulama* program is an effort of West Java Regional Diplomacy to achieve the symbolic objectives of religious philosophy and the realization of foreign policy. West Java in this case represents a collective identity that includes the provincial and societal dimensions. *English for Ulama* is dubbed as West Java *Da'wah* Diplomacy. This program was formulated with a target to increase the competitiveness of West Java Ulama in preaching on the international stage. The *English for Ulama* program has a priority to carry out the functions of promotion, image building, relationship building, and negotiation in the diplomatic process.

There are various actors involved in the implementation of West Java Regional Diplomacy. *English for Ulama* is the realization of a government program that has received great

enthusiasm from various parties. The Indonesian Ulama Council agreed in a memorandum of understanding to be the supervisor and the leading sector in this program. The involvement of other actors came from the higher education institution, Sunan Gunung Djati Islamic University, Bandung, which also contributed to the provision of the substance of the selected Ulama. *English for Ulama* is an implementation of the English for West Java collaboration between the British Council (English Language Education Institute) and the West Java Provincial Government.

As an actor, West Java is believed to have interests and goals that construct every action. The Regional Diplomacy of West Java in the *English for Ulama* program fulfils the interests of *da'wah*. It also manifests other domino effects for the fulfilment of the interests of West Java. The interests or targets of authors are interpreted in the publication of the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan which is then validated by the West Java Provincial Government. The implementation of *English for Ulama* program supports the interests of West Java to increase regional competitiveness, gain the widest cultural recognition (to cross national borders), promote the moderate image of Priangan Muslims, and encourage the escalation of the religious harmony index within West Java.

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