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## Global Creative Economy Development: Study of West Java's Efforts through Para diplomacy Instruments

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### **Abstract**

*The limited ability of the central government to meet regional needs has encouraged regional governments to establish foreign relations through paradiplomacy with other actors in a competitive manner in the era of globalization. The unlimited opportunities from foreign sources also attract local governments to optimally utilize them to meet regional needs. One of the leading regional governments in Indonesia that is actively carrying out paradiplomacy is the West Java Provincial Government. In the midst of the disruption of Covid-19 and the Digital Revolution, the creative economy has emerged as a factual potential for strong and sustainable economic growth as well as disclosure opportunities for innovation and new jobs availabilities. West Java, as the largest GDP contributor to the national creative economy, is committed to making the creative economy as one of the future prospects for the regional economic sector. This research aims to examine the efforts of the West Java Provincial Government in developing the creative economy through Paradiplomacy practices. This research uses qualitative methods by collecting data through interviews with a number of relevant informants, documentation studies, literature studies and internet-based studies. By using the concepts of paradiplomacy and creative economy. This research found that the West Java Provincial Government's paradiplomacy in developing the creative economy was carried out through visits, bilateral meetings and international forums as an important forum for representatives of West Java Province to interact with various foreign actors, as well as explore opportunities collaboration and cooperation that can accelerate regional development, especially in the creative economy in the fashion, craft and culinary sectors as advantages of the creative economy for West Java. This research also shows that paradiplomacy is an instrument to achieving the economic interests of the national government in a unitary state like Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** Creative economy, Paradiplomacy, West Java Province, region needs, foreign sources.

### **Introduction**

The presence of sub-state actors in the international arena is increasingly prominent along with efforts to optimize the achievement of sub-national interests & needs and the utilization of foreign resources. The limited ability of the national government to fulfill regional needs and interests has also encouraged subnational governments to establish foreign relations with other actors by competitively competing in the era of globalization (Keating, 2013). Urge the utilization of foreign sources competitively through cross-border activities is an opportunity for sub-state actors to take part in international arena as to achieve their regional interests (El-Dessouki, 2018; Mukti, 2015; Thontowi, 2009). The activities of substate actors abroad or interactions with other actors abroad is what we know as paradiplomacy (Kuznetsov, 2015). The aim of these subnational actors is to attract global resources such as investment, knowledge or skilled labor (Kaiser, 2005).

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In European countries, the presence of state sub-state actors has been going on since the 1980's where they implement foreign initiatives in order to gain economic and cultural benefits (Grydehøj, 2014). In fact, sub-state actors have been involved in multilateral agreements to participate in various issues, such as sustainable development, climate change, and urban development, and assistance programs have even been performed in various specific fields (Pietrasiak et al., 2018). However, although the involvement phenomenon of sub-state actors abroad was born and developed in America, Europe and regions with federal state systems that are categorized as advanced economies, various developing countries with diverse political systems are also adapting to take advantage of this pattern, including unitary states such as Indonesia.

One of the sub-state actors in Indonesia whose effort to achieve their interests, carries out foreign activities is the West Java Provincial Government. Achieving regional development and efforts to equalize welfare is not only concern of the central government in Indonesia, but also a concern of regional governments. To embody the vision and mission of regional development, the West Java Provincial Government adopted a number of strategies. This includes strengthening the attraction and promotion of tourism, increasing trade both domestically and internationally, making industry more competitive, attracting regional investment, and designing regional arrangements to stimulate new economic growth (Bappeda West Java Province, 2019).

There are various foreign activities conducted by the West Java Provincial Government, which include the economic, social and cultural fields, education, human resource development, and so forth. In the economic sector, the West Java Provincial Government is developing several sources of strategic potential for regional development. One potential sector that is currently developing and has a significant role in the regional economy is the creative economy sector. The creative economy sector is currently a new economic source and strength for Indonesia. This sector contributes to the Indonesian economy to the national economy with a total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) up around IDR 1,134.9 trillion in 2022. As the province with the largest GRDP contribution to the national creative economy sector, West Java is one of the main pillars of growth and sustainability creative industry in Indonesia. West Java Province also plays a central role in the context of the export sector of the creative economy, with the contribution of national creative economy exports reaching 33.64% in 2022 (Kemenparekraf RI, 2023). This shows that West Java not solely plays a role at the national level but also has a significant impact in building its image and economic relations through diplomacy. The success of creative economy exports has become precious capital in strengthening West Java's position at the national and international levels, involving active involvement in paradiplomacy in the creative economy sector.

Researchers conducted recitation for several previous studies that were relevant to this theme. Several previous studies showed paradiplomacy can open up opportunities for a country to promote its economic interests by indirectly support the country's economy, but the involvement of sub-state actors in international arena in trade and investment missions helps accelerate regional economic development which cumulatively contributes to national economic development ( Aguirre & Bojórquez, 2018; Mendes & Figueira, 2017). Furthermore, several studies have found that the creative economy sector has great potential for the advancement of regional economic development which opens up opportunities for economic growth and the creation of new jobs, in addition to being a trigger for regional competitiveness (Alam et al., 2021; Doyle, 2015; Kakiuchi & Takeuchi, 2014; Karamy, 2020; M.-E. Lee et al., 2015; Moon, 2017; Djuyandi, Solihah, Witianti, 2020). Other studies have found that the creative economy sector can contribute to increase people's income so that it can ultimately support regional economic development. In developing the creative economy, human resource factors are the main element (Avilés Ochoa & Canizalez Ramírez, 2018; Fahmi & Koster, 2017; Tao et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2016).

The results of the previous studies above indicate that paradiplomacy is an instrument for substate actors to be able to exist in international arena. The previous studies scoop of substate actors' paradiplomacy narrowed in aspects of economic development, especially in the creative economy sector. Even studies on the dynamics of paradiplomacy in Indonesia, in West Java alone, are still limited. However, data shows that this province has an important role in driving the national creative economy.

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested to learn the efforts of the West Java Provincial Government in developing the creative economy through paradiplomacy practices. More specifically, researchers want to analyze the efforts of the West Java Provincial Government in developing the creative economy through its paradiplomacy activities and the driving dynamics for the West Java Provincial Government's paradiplomacy in developing the creative economy. This research aims to confirm the existence of paradiplomacy activities in the development of the creative economy in Indonesia through a study of the paradiplomacy of the West Java Provincial Government. This research is expected to develop the concept of economic paradiplomacy and its driving dynamics based on the foreign activities of the West Java Provincial Government in the field of creative economy as well as open up opportunities for the participation of regional actors to play an active role in regional and national development through their support for regional government activities abroad from economic aspect. This research is also expected to contribute to the development of Diplomacy Studies in International Relations, especially the sub-study of paradiplomacy (economics).

## **Conceptual Framework**

This research uses several relevant concepts/theories, including paradiplomacy and creative economy. Paradiplomacy is a term that arised around the 1980s and comes from the word parallel diplomacy. This term first appeared in the work of Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos. Soldatos (1990) shows that paradiplomacy is a direct manifestation of a country's subentity to carry out international activities (Lequesne & Paquin, 2017). The aim of this international activity is to promote various issues of a social, economic and cultural nature within the dimensions of their foreign constitutional competence (Noé Cornago, 1999). There is a motivation for sub-state actors to carry out paradiplomacy. Keating (2013) divides these motivations into 3, namely economic, political and cultural interests. In the same vein, Lecours (2008) shows that paradiplomacy consists of 3 layers, the first layer on economic aspects, the second layer on cultural, educational and technological aspects and the third layer on political aspects related to international expressions and identities that are different from what has been established by the central government. In the context of practice in a unitary state, regional governments must be in line with policies from the central government (Mukti, 2013). Furthermore, legally, activities related to regional foreign relations in the international realm will still refer to the legal basis of each country (van der Pluijm, 2007). As a consequence, international relations no longer focus on state actors and state interests in various dimensions. This has an impact on the division of work, authority and responsibility of the parties involved, in this case the central government and subnational actors or regional governments.

Regarding the involvement of sub-state actors in foreign relations, Cohn and Smith (1996) provide an analytical framework when they want to explain the factors that influence sub-state actors in carrying out international relations activities, including the dynamics of global, national, subnational and individual drivers, although there was overlap. overlap in these four factors. These factors remind us of the work of Waltz (1954) and Singer (1951) who explained international behavior in terms of levels of analysis in international relations.

The dynamics stimulant at the global level are related to technological advances that encourage much

greater interdependence of local, national and international communities than previously experienced. This has resulted in subnational government leaders becoming acutely aware of the influence that international actors can exert on the economic well-being of their constituents. The success of leaders in attracting investment, trade and tourism contributes to the economic revival of their sub-country actors and their countries. According to Cohn and Smith, subnational governments have engaged internationally for both defensive and proactive reasons. Provincial policies that were previously domestic have now become a concern for the international public. Provincial actors sometimes respond to globalization by conducting global paradiplomacy or engaging in regional paradiplomacy related to regionally relevant issues with communities participate in subnational activities. Soldatos (in Michelmann and Soldatos, 1990) identifies two types of regional paradiplomacy; macroregional, which involves sub-state actors or communities that do not have direct borders, and microregional paradiplomacy, which involves actors with geographic proximity, or actors who have direct borders.

The dynamic stimulant at the national level of sub-state actors' paradiplomacy is the decreasing ability of the central government to find adequate solutions to various problems. The inability largely stems from the growing importance of new international and domestic issues that are not fully within the scope of a state's jurisdiction. It can be recognized in part that domestic issues are increasingly linked to international elements. When the central government is deemed to have failed in meeting regional needs and interests, sub-state actors are encouraged to adopt their responsibilities and functions in optimizing the interests and needs of their citizens. This trend contrasts with the centralized nature of the state.

The next dynamic stimulant of paradiplomacy as shown by Cohn and Smith (1996) is the driving dynamic at the subnational level. These factors are political, economic, and/or cultural. Subnational units may aspire to a greater degree of autonomy. In this context, subnational actors have the interest and need to carry out active foreign activities. In certain cases, these factors even encourage substate actors to assume full sovereignty, as what we can see in Quebec. However, this subnational driving dynamic can be built on the basis of regional interests and necessities to advance regional development. Other subnational dynamics stimulant are driven by the skills and experience of sub-state actors in conducting international relations (transgovernmental relations) which helps them to take part globally, and the involvement of sub-national actors in global activities. This in turn has instilled the desire and confidence in subnational actors to engage more widely in the international arena.

The final dynamic stimulant is at the individual level. This level has a significant impact on the international behavior of subnational governments. Individuals at the head of state level in this case influence the level and nature of international involvement of subnational actors. Likewise, individual leaders at the sub-country level have an important role in the international involvement of sub-national actors. Substate actors can focus their energies on international issues of particular concern to them.

Furthermore, regarding the concept of creative economy in this research. Based on the understanding that the creative economy has cultural value and contains commercial potential, governments around the world have invested in increasing their soft power through local culture and creative industries (Gupta, 2020). The creative economy is a business idea in which the creator's ideas are incorporated into a product. This creative economy also connects economic aspects and creativity so that these two aspects can create value and wealth (Suciu, 2008). In the creative economy element, there are not only economic aspects but also cultural and social aspects. These three aspects do not stand alone but interact with intellectual property, tourist attractions and technology.

The creative economy is an option for good regional development and of course requires innovation from related parties, multidisciplinary policies, and action between ministries/institutions (UNCTAD, 2008). Products from creative and cultural industries include two things, namely processed results from

forms of creativity and having economic value (Howkins, 2007). In the cultural aspect, the creative economy does not only cover the narrow meaning of culture, but also includes goods and services produced from a culture which is called a cultural area. Creative and cultural industries shape production and consumption which is central to symbolic or expressive elements with aspects of music, media industry, fashion and design, and art (Boccella & Salerno, 2016; UNESCO, 2013). These creative and cultural industries are considered to have significant economic value and still have social and cultural meaning that is derived from a region.

## **Research Methods**

This research uses qualitative methods. The use of qualitative methods is to obtain non-numerical research data regarding concepts, meanings, symbols, definitions, metaphors, characteristics and descriptions of conditions that cannot be counted, quantified or measured based on a numerical scale (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Lamont (2015) shows that in International Relations Studies, a qualitative approach is used to better understand the significance and mechanisms that shape international relations. This approach involves in-depth analysis of specific situations such as prominent events, geographic regions, countries, organizational entities, and even individuals. In the context of this research, an in-depth study was on diplomacy ran by substate actors to identify foreign relations phenomena carried out by regions.

The choice of qualitative research method was based on; first, the data collected was qualitative data, namely various forms of sub-state actor activity which could be viewed as foreign activity by also reviewing paradiplomacy theory. Second, the data processing and analysis process in this research was carried out qualitatively, that is, data was obtained from direct and indirect sources, both from interviews, documentation searches, literature studies and limited observations. Third, the data presentation in this research is descriptive narrative. The aim of qualitative research methods is to understand how a phenomenon occurs, compared to the tendency of how often the phenomenon occurs (Berg & Lune, 2017). There are three phenomena or issues raised from this research, including the activities of the West Java Provincial Government as a sub-state actor abroad which can be seen as paradiplomacy. Based on these efforts, researchers identified West Java's type of paradiplomacy in the development of the creative economy. Then, the factors that encourage the paradiplomacy of the West Java Provincial Government in developing the creative economy. Lamont (2015) shows four research data collection techniques, namely archival and document-based research, interviews, internet-based research, and focus group discussions. For the purposes of this research, the data collection techniques used were interviews, document and archive-based studies, and internet-based studies.

Based on that, this research uses various data collection techniques, both direct and indirect. Directly, this research collects data through interviews with a number of informants, both at the academic level, national and subnational policy holders, the creative economy community, and the level of business actors from the creative economy. Indirectly, data collection is operated by compiling a number of official documents, statistical data and internet studies that were relevant to the research theme. This was done to attain a deeper understanding regarding the identification of paradiplomacy governance of the West Java Provincial Government. This is achieved by placing the researcher in the position of a separate research instrument; which determines the scope and focus of the research discussion, selects and determines informants as sources, collects and sorts data based on its quality, and carries out analysis of the data that has been collected, then interprets it into a temporary conclusion from the research results. In relation to data validation, this research triangulates data from various sources by cross-checking one data with another to ensure its validity and correctness; both primary and secondary data.

## **Results And Discussion**

### **West Java Government Paradiplomacy Practices in Creative Economy Development**

In facing global dynamics that continue to develop, West Java Province shows resilience in adapting and innovating in diplomatic strategies. Various visiting activities, bilateral meetings and international forums have become important platforms for representatives of West Java Province to interact with national and international leaders, as well as to explore opportunities for collaboration and cooperation that can accelerate regional development. One of the activities performed was a courtesy call with the British Council, Singapore, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, India, and many other countries that have good relations with the West Java Provincial Government. With increasingly honed diplomatic skills, West Java Province consistently strives to secure investment, technology and trade opportunities that can make a positive contribution to West Java's economic development.

To bring out intensive paradiplomacy efforts, the West Java Provincial Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to establishing good relations with various stakeholders. One of the important points in these paradiplomacy efforts is cooperation with the pentahelix group, involves elements of academics, entrepreneurs, communities, government and media. This cross-sector collaboration not only provides benefits in terms of exchanging knowledge and information, but also adding up opportunities for the development of joint projects aimed at spurring regional economic growth and community well-being.

There are also geopolitical considerations of the West Java Provincial Government encouraging efforts to increase foreign cooperation across continents (Muzaky, 2022). In the previous era, under Mr. Ahmad Heriawan's leadership, the West Java Provincial Government's international partnerships were mostly focused on the Asian region. However, in the era of Pak Ridwan Kamil's leadership, the 2018 - 2023 leadership period, a more inclusive approach was adopted by allocating cooperation to previously unreached areas, including European countries and the Middle East region, especially the United Arab Emirates, at a level higher intensity. In the internal context of the West Java Provincial Government, optimal efforts are made to ensure the presence of cooperation representatives from every continent. A uniform approach is applied in providing treatment to all continents, prioritizing areas that are still unreached. This decision is based on an evaluation of regional needs, existing potential/opportunities, and the capacity of each regional apparatus of the West Java Provincial Government, in order to produce optimal benefits from the cross-continental cooperation that has been carried out.

On the other hand, the creative economy is one of the largest contributors to Indonesia's GDP with an estimate of USD \$76.3 billion and West Java is the largest contributor to Indonesia's creative economy GDP. West Java contributes 20.73% to the GDP of the national creative economy (West Java Public Relations, 2023), and reaches 34% of the total national creative economy (West Java KUK Service, 2021). The West Java Provincial Government itself has designed various programs to develop MSMEs in this region, including the Champion MSME Program, One Village One Product (OVOP), One Islamic Boarding School One Product (OPOP), and Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). The successful implementation of this program can be attributed to the strong synergy and collaboration between various related parties. The existence of policies in the development of the creative economy in West Java plays a very important role in maximizing the potential of the regional creative economy by synergizing with various actors in a legitimate creative economy ecosystem. The creative economy sector has a major contribution to employment absorption and has a positive effect on national export activity. Therefore, the existence of regulations and systemization can create situations and conditions

that are more conducive to the growth and development of the creative economy in West Java. Overall, creative economy programs in West Java show a serious commitment to raising the potential of MSMEs. With the support of investors, effective promotions, and real initiatives in providing a platform for MSMEs, the West Java Provincial Government has succeeded in creating a conducive environment for the growth of the creative economy in the region.

Out of 16 existing creative economy sectors-fashion, culinary and crafts have significant creative economic development and are the focus of West Java diplomacy. These three sectors have strong appeal and large global market potential. Fashion as a manifestation of cultural identity, culinary as an integral part of local heritage, and crafts as an expression of creativity and traditional craftsmanship, all attract the attention of an international market that increasingly appreciates its uniqueness. Therefore, focusing on these sectors can have a significant economic impact. West Java fashion, culinary and crafts also reflect the richness of local culture and creativity that can differentiate West Java from other regions. In effort to build the province's image as a center for creative innovation, the selection of the fashion, culinary and craft sectors is strategic because it is able to present the uniqueness and richness of West Java's culture. Hence, paradiplomacy in these sectors is not just about economic expansion, but also about identity formation and the creation of a strong narrative at the international level.

The success of paradiplomacy in these sectors can also have a broad positive impact on the local economy and society. By increasing exports of local products and attracting foreign investment, these sectors can make a substantial economic contribution. In addition, this paradiplomacy creates new job opportunities and supports the growth of local industry. Therefore, selecting these sectors can be seen as a smart strategy to build economic sustainability and community welfare in West Java.

### **Creative Economy in the Fashion Sector**

The fashion sector as one of the main focuses of West Java's paradiplomacy, indicate the great strength and potential of the clothing and fashion industry in the region. Fashion is the highest contributor to export revenues in the creative economy sector in West Java. In the January-March 2023 period, West Java apparel exports account for 39.14% of national apparel exports worth USD 784.25 million (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2023). Through introducing unique designs that reflect West Java's cultural heritage, this province is able to position itself as a center for creative fashion at the national level and expand to the international stage. Through participation in international fashion exhibitions and export of local fashion products, West Java can promote a wealth of traditional and contemporary designs that attract the attention of the global market. Paradiplomacy in the fashion sector not only creates economic opportunities by marketing local products, but also acts as an agent for maintaining and developing cultural identity through the medium of clothing. West Javanese clothing is also popular with Southeast Asian countries, Middle Eastern countries and Europe.

West Java is encouraging the fashion industry, one of which is through the West Java Regional National Crafts Council (Dekranasda), which stimulates local MSMEs to digitalize so as to provide easy access for consumers to find. Apart from that, digitalization also plays an important role in promoting creative products not only outside the city, but also abroad. Tokopedia is also collaborating with the West Java Provincial Government through the West Java Dekranasda to hold the West Java Local Fashion Festival. West Java is partnering with Tokopedia in holding this festival to encourage regional economic growth and it is hoped that local fashion will become the number one choice in national market share so that it can dominate its own country (Budianto, 2021). An example in this context is Frida Aulia, an Indonesian fashion designer from Bogor, West Java, who was selected to be participant in the 2023 New York Indonesia Fashion Week (NYIFW) which will be held on 6-10 September 2023. Apart from New York, the products were also displayed at the Indonesian Night Fashion Show at the Victorian State Library,

Melbourne. The exhibitions he held were successfully sold all of the clothes displayed and have gotten two resellers in Pittsburg and New York (Saroh, 2023).

The creative economy potential in West Java stands out when it is actively involved in international exhibitions and festivals. With a variety of creative industries rapidly grow, including fine arts, design, fashion and handicrafts, West Java has succeeded in expressing its cultural richness and creative power on the world stage. Through presence on international platforms, creative economy actors in West Java have the opportunity to explore global markets, attract foreign investment and strengthen the competitiveness of local products. By participating in these events, creative industry players can showcase the latest innovations, get inspiration from global trends, and build relationships with fellow industry players from various countries. For example, an international fashion exhibition can be a forum for West Java designers to explore their unique works, and an international fashion festival can be a golden opportunity for local fashion designers to showcase their talents on the global stage. This kind of international collaboration do not only enriches creativity, but also opens the door to new opportunities.

The importance of government support to encourage the participant of West Java's creative economy in the international arena cannot be ignored. The government's role is key in creating an environment that supports the growth of creative industries, both through infrastructure development and the formulation of relevant policies. Government support does not only cover financial aspects, by providing funds and incentives for creative economy actors who wish to participate in international exhibitions and festivals, but also involves assistance in marketing, logistics and licensing. Having strong support from the government will provide additional confidence for West Java's creative economy actors to compete effectively on the global stage.

Not only does it provide direct economic benefits, participation in international exhibitions and festivals also has a positive impact on the image and branding of West Java as a whole. The success of creative economy actors at the international level will have a positive impact on the world's view of the potential and quality of creative products from West Java. International exhibitions and festivals can be considered as effective promotional tools to create a positive image regarding the cultural diversity and creativity that blooms in West Java. Therefore, government investment in supporting participation in international events not only provides economic benefits, but is also a strategic step to build a positive reputation that can open up more opportunities in the future.

Digitalization plays a crucial role in raising the potential of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the fashion sector, opening up new opportunities and encouraging the growth of the creative economy. MSMEs in the fashion sector have uniqueness and creativity that can be found in local products, however, major challenges such as market access and technology often hinder their full potential. By understanding the importance of digitalization, MSMEs in the fashion sector can achieve extraordinary benefits, from increasing visibility to expanding market share, thus making a positive contribution to the growth of the creative economy sector as a whole. The importance of digitalization in the context of MSMEs in the fashion sector can be seen from the marketing and sales aspects. By utilizing digital platforms, MSME players have the opportunity to reach a wider market without geographical limitations. Various e-commerce and social media platforms enable fashion sector MSMEs to present their products to potential consumers efficiently. In other words, digitalization not only makes access to global markets easier, but also allows MSMEs to compete effectively with big brands. Digitalization also adds up opportunities for integration with larger supply chains, speeding up the raw material procurement process, and minimizing the risk of disruption in production.

In the context of the creative economy, digitalization of MSMEs in the fashion sector is not just an



individual business strategy, but also an important factor in supporting the growth of the sector as a whole. Through digitalization, MSMEs in the fashion sector can become a driving force for innovation and creativity in the industry. Increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs collectively will have a positive impact on the creative economic ecosystem, creating an environment that supports sustainable development. Therefore, support from the government and related institutions to facilitate the adoption of digital technology by MSMEs in the fashion sector is the key to unlocking the full potential of the creative economy sector and increasing its contribution to national economic growth.

### **Creative Economy in the Craft Sector**

The craft sector reflects the traditional richness and innovation in arts and crafts that is growing in the province. By participating in international arts and crafts exhibitions, as well as exploring the export potential of local craft products, West Java can accommodate the needs of the global market which increasingly appreciates works of art and products that have cultural value. Through paradiplomacy in the craft/handicraft sector, West Java Province can promote the uniqueness and beauty of local products, support the sustainability of local craftsmen, and create new markets for creative products.

One important aspect of innovation in the handicrafts sector is the ability to see opportunities amidst materials that are considered waste. Many materials that are often ignored or thrown away have great potential when processed with creative ideas. Innovators in this sector can turn used fabric, recycled paper, or other materials that were initially considered worthless into high-value products. This not only contributes to reduced waste and a positive environmental impact, but also creates products that have a story and added value that consumers can enjoy. In this context, seashells are often considered waste without significant value. Thus, innovation in the handicraft sector is not just about creating different goods, but also about creating unique brand value and image in the market.

Large economic benefits are also a positive impact of innovation in the handicraft sector. Goods produced through an innovative approach tend to have a higher selling price because of the added value they bring. This provides an opportunity for business actors to gain significant profits, creating a positive cycle in the creative economy ecosystem. In this way, innovation is not only a boost to creativity, but also a driver of economic growth in the handicrafts sector. Innovation in this sector not only creates beautiful goods, but also forms a solid foundation for a sustainable and growing creative economy.

However, there are chunks of challenges faced amidst the sluggish export market, especially related to regulations that are considered unfavorable. The annual increase in the MSE of 8-10% is one of the main obstacles, while the complex and expensive licensing process is also a serious obstacle (Astutik, 2019). Entrepreneurs want simple and economical licensing, but in reality, the costs are too high. Therefore, policies and regulations that support business actors need to be updated to provide a positive impetus for the growth of the export industry and the creative economy as a whole.

The important role of institutions in supporting the creative economy, especially in the handicrafts sector, is the key to achieving optimal export potential. Strong institutions are able to provide protection, guidance and assistance to industry players, overcoming barriers to licensing, foreign regulations and costs that can hamper the export potential of handicrafts. Institutions that support the creative economy can play a role in simplifying the licensing process, providing clear information, and reducing burdensome bureaucracy. With good guidance and support, business actors can more easily understand and fulfill the requirements needed to export their products. Foreign regulations are also an aspect that needs to be considered, especially in the context of handicraft exports. Institutions can help business actors understand and comply with regulations that apply in international markets. They can provide the latest information regarding standards and requirements that must be met, so that exported products can meet international standards and gain the trust of consumers abroad.

Overall, the role of institutions that support the creative economy not only helps create a conducive environment for business growth, but also provides an important impetus for entering international markets. Institutional support in overcoming licensing obstacles, providing guidance regarding foreign regulations, and reducing cost burdens are crucial steps to ensure that the handicrafts sector can achieve greater export potential and compete globally. Through collaboration between business actors and institutions, the creative economy can grow sustainably, making a positive contribution to national economic growth.

One of the successes of West Java's paradiplomacy in the creative economy sector is that the provincial government has delivered Kriya Nusantara & Gloya which has succeeded in developing its export company to more than 13 countries, with the largest market share, especially in the Middle East, the United States and Europe. Qatar is the main contributor, accounting for as much as 80% of products exported. Even though it is faced with competition from large companies from France, Germany, England, and even Italy, Kriya Nusantara & Gloya has managed to maintain its competitiveness thanks to the implementation of international product quality standards (detikFinance, 2021). By maintaining high quality standards, Kriya Nusantara & Gloya has succeeded in winning the hearts of international consumers, proving that loyalty to quality is the main key to building a strong reputation in the global market.

The importance of MSMEs having international standard products in the export context cannot be underestimated. International standards offer a number of significant benefits to MSMEs aspiring to enter global markets. First of all, international standards provide guarantees regarding product quality. When MSMEs implement globally recognized standards, they automatically create consumer trust in international markets. This helps overcome any doubts that may arise regarding product reliability and quality, providing a crucial competitive advantage in entering a tight global market.

Other than that, compliance with international standards also helps MSMEs to meet regulatory and legal requirements in export destination countries. Each country has different rules and regulations regarding imported products, and international standards are often the most widely accepted guidelines. By understanding and implementing these standards, MSMEs can avoid entry barriers that may arise due to differences in regulations. This not only makes the export process easier, but also enhances MSME's reputation as a global player committed to integrity and compliance.

In facing the challenges of globalization, MSMEs need to understand that international standards are not an obstacle, but a milestone to develop. By utilizing international standards, MSMEs can create added value to their products, differentiate themselves from competitors, and build a strong reputation in the global market. MSMEs must view international standards as a tool that allows them to compete effectively and sustainably. In this case, collaboration with certification bodies and international standards organizations is key. Participating in training and obtaining certification from these institutions not only helps MSMEs understand and meet international standards, but also provides official recognition that can increase the trust of customers and business partners at a global level. By having international standard products, MSMEs can expand their markets, increase competitiveness and achieve long-term success at the global level. Therefore, investing time, resources and commitment to understand and apply international standards is a strategic and important step for MSMEs who want to open the door to opportunities in international markets.

### **Creative Economy in the Culinary Sector**

The culinary sector has also become a significant focus in West Java's creative economy paradiplomacy. The cultural diversity of this province is reflected in the richness of local culinary delights highlighted as

the main attraction. Through promotion and participation in international culinary festivals, West Java can export its authentic flavors, attract interest from the global community, and open up new business opportunities. In this effort, paradiplomacy in the culinary sector not only encourages economic growth through increasing exports of culinary products, but also builds a positive image of the province as a unique and cultural culinary destination.

Currently, only 2% of MSMEs able to export, and this still involves exporter services that charge high fees, reducing MSME profits. By continuing to encourage MSMEs to get involved in exports, it is hoped that the number can increase to 3-4% in the future in the West Java region (West Java Public Relations, 2022). Regional diplomacy of the West Java Provincial Government through the West Java Industry and Trade Service (Disperindag Jabar) has held training in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade through the "Export Coaching Program".

In the process of execution, the West Java Department of Industry and Trade actively fosters and collaborates with other regional apparatus, such as the Plantation Service and related agencies. Financing support has also been obtained through collaboration with Bank BJB. This collaboration covers the entire chain, from upstream to downstream, with the aim of encouraging increased exports. All of these elements work together to strengthen the MSME sector in West Java and optimize export potential, creating comprehensive synergy to increase competitiveness and regional economic contribution.

The successful expansion of the food production market to international markets is a brilliant achievement that reflects the resilience and innovation of the culinary industry. This strategy often begins with active participation in international exhibitions, places where food producers can introduce their products to the global market. These exhibitions provide an invaluable platform for industry players to connect with international buyers, distributors and even direct consumers. In a dynamic exhibition atmosphere, food companies have the opportunity to showcase product excellence, respond directly to feedback and build a strong brand image.

Participation in international exhibitions is not solely a promotional action, but also a strategic step that can open the door to access to new markets. The success of this expansion lies in the ability of food manufacturers to highlight the uniqueness of their products and respond to global consumer trends. In the era of globalization, consumers are increasingly open to culinary exploration from various parts of the world. Therefore, actively promoting food products abroad through international exhibitions is key in building a strong presence in the international market.

In a business world that continues to develop and globalization is increasingly widespread, business relationships are the main key in facilitating effective communication and bridging the gap between international producers and consumers. The importance of having strong relationships between businesses not only creates a harmonious work environment but also becomes the foundation for long-term growth and success. Apart from that, good business relationships can also bridge the gap between international producers and consumers. By having open and transparent communication channels between both parties, manufacturers can more quickly capture consumer feedback and adapt their products or services according to market needs. This not only increases consumer satisfaction but also strengthens trust between producers and consumers.

The West Java Provincial Government's forms of diplomacy in developing the creative economy include participating in the 2021 Gulfood International Exhibition in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. This exhibition was attended by participants from 120 countries and visited by 92,902 visitors from 186 countries (Indonesian Ministry of Trade, 2021). Hofland Coffee, from the Subang area, has received a lot of attention from abroad and received orders from Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Apart from that, products from Kuningan Region, West Java, are popular with consumers from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the

United Arab Emirates with transaction values reaching IDR 50 billion (Nilawati, 2021).

West Java also participated in the World of Coffee Exhibition which was held in Milan, Italy, on 23 – 25 June 2022 by bringing 10 of the best coffees from West Java. World of Coffee is held in various European cities every June and is one of Europe's most important coffee trade fairs attracting a loyal audience from the coffee community on a global scale. World of Coffee designed features that aim to build sustainable trade partnerships connecting sellers and buyers and facilitating the introduction of coffee to the global realm and opening up opportunities for sellers to reach audiences on an international scale regardless of language and cultural barriers (Ralph, 2022). This exhibition is one of the doors for the West Java Provincial Government which has a vision of promoting coffee as one of the best culinary tourism attractions in West Java by introducing it on a global scale. During the World of Coffee Exhibition in Milan, Italy, the West Java coffee stand "West Java Coffee" succeeded in providing 1,200 cups of coffee which were enjoyed by coffee fans from various countries and attracted more than 30 potential buyers from Europe, Africa and Arabia. Apart from that, West Java coffee stands also received various offers to participate in similar exhibitions from London, Dubai, Korea and Switzerland (West Java Tourism and Culture Public Relations, 2022).

Researchers found that the West Java Provincial Government's paradiplomacy in developing the creative economy in the culinary sector was carried out by developing the capacity of MSME actors in the culinary sector, building domestic and international partnerships for the purpose of developing culinary businesses, and promoting West Java culinary products through international exhibition instruments.

## **Conclusion**

Researchers can conclude that in the context of regional economic development, the creative economy sector was identified as having factual potential for West Java's economic growth. Researchers found that the West Java Provincial Government has taken an important role by carrying out paradiplomacy in an effort to develop the regional creative economy by taking the initiative to hold international conferences related to the creative economy which produces policy recommendations and forms a more conducive and optimal creative economic ecosystem, educates creative economic actors and provides assistance. business until it is ready to become an export player, to look for trade and investment opportunities by actively participating in various international exhibitions. Through attendance at these events, this province not only exposes its products and creative works of art, but also opens the door to establish partnerships and collaboration with global stakeholders. Within the scope of the creative economy, international exhibitions often become a platform for sharing ideas, discussing the latest trends, and opening up opportunities for cooperation that can have a positive impact on the growth of the creative industry. By actively participating in these international forums, West Java is proactively building strong networks with foreign parties, creating a climate of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Researchers also found that the West Java Government's paradiplomacy in the creative economy sector has improved the regional economy and the province's image. In an economic context, exporting creative economy products opens the door to earning income from international markets, increasing the scale of production, and increasing the competitiveness of local products. In addition, through participation in international exhibitions, West Java can obtain investment opportunities, introduce innovation and increase the growth of creative industries at the local level. This also creates opportunities for creative economy actors to learn and collaborate with global actors, stimulating the exchange of ideas and experiences that can support the sustainable development of the creative economy. Exports and participation in international exhibitions help create a positive identity for West Java in the eyes of the world. Exported creative products and works of art reflect the rich culture and creativity of local people,

creating a positive impression of the province among global consumers. Involvement in international exhibitions or festivals also provides opportunities for West Java to promote cultural and artistic diversity, strengthen its position as a creative destination, and strengthen the province's role in the global economic arena. Exports and participation in international exhibitions are effective paradiplomacy strategies adopted by West Java in supporting the development of its creative economy. By utilizing international platforms, West Java province not only expands market share for its products and creative works of art, but also builds close relationships with global stakeholders. Through these paradiplomacy efforts, West Java has succeeded in creating a positive impact on economic development and strengthening its positive image on a global scale, creating a strong foundation for sustainable creative economic growth.

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