

Strengthening The Gyeongsangbuk–West Java Sister Province Relationship Through Cultural Exchange at The 8th Global Youth Camp

Muthi Najwa Hanifa^{1*}, Windy Dermawan²

^{1,2}International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Padjadjaran University, Bandung City, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author:

Email: muthi22002@mail.unpad.ac.id

Abstract.

This study analyzes the subnational cooperation between West Java Province, Indonesia, and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Republic of Korea, through the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025. Held on August 17–23, 2025, in collaboration with Sangji Catholic University, the event gathered youth delegates from six Asian countries to promote intercultural understanding and regional collaboration. Using a descriptive–qualitative approach, the research explores how this program reflects West Java’s paradiplomacy efforts within Indonesia’s foreign policy framework. The findings show that West Java’s participation strengthens its international presence, enhances youth capacity, and expands global partnerships while aligning with Indonesia’s public diplomacy goals. The cooperation also demonstrates how subnational diplomacy can balance national interests with regional development needs. Overall, the West Java–Gyeongsangbuk-do partnership serves as a model for effective paradiplomacy that fosters mutual growth, people-to-people connections, and sustainable international engagement.

Keywords: Global Youth Camp; Gyeongsangbuk-do Relations; Paradiplomacy; Sister Province Cooperation and Subnational Diplomacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of international relations in the twenty-first century are characterized by profound structural transformations in which globalization and regionalization operate as major forces that shape political, economic, and cultural agendas in the modern world (Tavares, 2016). The central government as the nation-state no longer holds exclusive authority over decision-making in various state affairs. Significant roles are now also assumed by global supranational organizations and by provincial or regional governments as subnational entities, whose influence has grown increasingly prominent (Kuznetsov, 2014). The involvement of subnational entities such as regions or provinces in international activities is conceptually integrated within the theoretical framework of paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy can be understood as an extensive set of activities, ranging from the establishment of overseas trade and cultural missions to the signing of agreements with foreign actors and participation in international regional cooperation networks (Kuznetsov, 2014). Scholars now generally agree that cities and states, including provinces, have emerged as new international actors (Tavares, 2016). As defined by McHugh (2015), paradiplomacy constitutes a form of international interaction and negotiation undertaken by subnational entities operating under the authority of a sovereign state. Despite their involvement in the realm of international relations, these subnational entities possess a legal status that differs from states because they do not hold sovereignty under international law. As a consequence, paradiplomatic activities may be subject to restrictions or interventions from the central government of the sovereign state.

Paradiplomacy may be understood as the emergence of the capacity of non-state actors to engage in external relations and conduct activities that resemble foreign policy. The non-state actors in question include municipal governments, provincial governments, federated entities, and other subnational units that have been granted specific autonomous authority by the state (Alam, G. & Sudirman, A., 2020). In general, the scope of paradiplomacy is limited to issues that are directly relevant to the subnational entity, with primary emphasis often placed on economic and cultural sectors. Since they lack formal recognition through international legal instruments such as the Vienna Convention and do not prioritize stability or national security issues, the concept of paradiplomacy stands in clear contrast to traditional diplomacy (McHugh,

2015). Nevertheless, international cooperation conducted by local governments, including the Sister Province partnership between West Java Province and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, is supported by a clear legal foundation within Indonesia's regulatory framework. Normatively, Law Number 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, Article 37, states that regional governments may engage in foreign cooperation with institutions or local governments abroad with the approval of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the relevant minister or government agency in accordance with applicable regulations (BPK RI, 1999).

This provision serves as the principal legal basis for the implementation of paradiplomacy in Indonesia and ensures that international activities undertaken by local governments remain aligned with national sovereignty and foreign policy priorities. This legal foundation is further strengthened by Government Regulation Number 28 of 2018 on Regional Cooperation, which provides technical guidelines for regional governments in establishing international cooperation, including mechanisms for planning, approval, implementation, and reporting to the central government (BPK RI, 2018). Through this regulation, paradiplomatic activities are no longer viewed as sporadic initiatives but rather as an integral component of legally recognized regional development efforts. Paradiplomacy has increasingly attracted substantial interest in scholarly and policy arenas, and is commonly operationalised through instruments such as sister city partnerships, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), and engagement in global thematic networks (Hakim et al, 2025). All processes related to the signing of the Letter of Intent and the Memorandum of Understanding are carried out with reference to these provisions, through coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of State Secretariat. As a result, this Sister Province cooperation not only carries strategic value in enhancing regional capacity and reputation but is also grounded in a solid legal framework that ensures subnational diplomacy proceeds in alignment with Indonesia's foreign policy direction as a concrete expression of synergy between national interests and regional needs.

Subnational entities may also issue declarations or sign cooperation agreements, develop assistance programmes, share knowledge, observe and participate in (technical) committees, take part in other formal or informal networks, and develop their own public diplomacy initiatives (Putri, S., 2022). In Indonesia, the phenomenon of paradiplomacy has begun to receive greater attention, particularly since the implementation of regional autonomy (Mahadewi et al, 2024). From a national perspective, this initiative contributes to the implementation of Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy, broadens diplomatic networks, and promotes the expansion of economic and cultural cooperation across borders. From a regional standpoint, this partnership serves as a means to address local needs such as improving human resource quality, strengthening economic competitiveness, and expanding access to global markets and technologies. The alignment between these two levels of interest reflects a new paradigm in Indonesia's foreign relations governance, in which subnational diplomacy is positioned as a complementary instrument to national diplomacy that enables the articulation of regional needs while remaining within the framework of Indonesia's foreign policy. With a strong legal foundation and clear inter-agency coordination mechanisms, the implementation of this Sister Province cooperation ensures that every regional initiative in the international sphere is not only relevant to local priorities but also contributes directly to the achievement of national development objectives. Paradiplomatic cooperation in Indonesia is manifested in two principal forms, namely sister city and sister province partnerships (Faishal, A. & Yulianti, D., 2024). Sister city or sister province partnerships constitute one of the instruments used by subnational actors, such as cities and provinces, in conducting paradiplomatic activities.

Sister province or sister city relations function as a platform for interregional collaboration that aims to strengthen social, cultural, economic, and political ties between two subnational entities from different countries (Kuznetsov, 2014). Through this scheme, a province, after considering its strengths and potential, may establish cooperation with a province in another country for the purposes of regional development and the improvement of public welfare (Darmayadi, A., & Putri, S., 2022). These partnerships do not merely represent symbols of interregional friendship but also serve as paradiplomatic instruments that facilitate the expansion of international networks and the development of mutually beneficial cooperation at the local level. The implementation of sister province and sister city cooperation is supported by a legal basis outlined

in Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 3 of 2008 (BPK RI, 2008). This regulation states that the establishment of interregional partnerships may take place once mutual understanding between the involved parties has been achieved. In general, such partnerships are formed on the basis of similarities in administrative status, geographic characteristics, socio-economic conditions, cultural background, and shared development challenges, with the objective of complementing each region's respective potential.

The conduct of paradiplomacy of this kind remains within the framework of Indonesia's national diplomacy because its orientation is directed toward supporting the pursuit of national interests, particularly the strengthening of regional economic growth and the enhancement of overall societal welfare. Subnational diplomacy possesses characteristics and priorities that differ substantially from the foreign policy of the nation-state. In contrast to national diplomacy, which is dominated by high politics issues such as defense and security, regional diplomacy does not aim to represent broad general interests nor to cover comprehensive policy domains. Instead, subnational diplomacy tends to be more oriented toward the domestic base (inward to the domestic base) (Tavares, 2016). Its primary focus is on human-scale themes that are closely connected to citizens' needs, such as environmental issues, social concerns, cultural exchanges, infrastructure, education, and health. The Province of West Java is widely recognized as one of the largest provinces in Indonesia and as an active actor in the conduct of international cooperation (Suhendrik et al., 2021). In the case of West Java, paradiplomacy is implemented by the Provincial Government of West Java through a specific unit within the regional apparatus, namely the Subdivision for Foreign Cooperation, which is responsible for administering international partnership activities (Rahmawati, R., & Alam, G., 2023). The Sister Province relationship between West Java (Indonesia) and Gyeongsangbuk-do (South Korea) is an example of paradiplomacy that focuses on capacity building and regional development through inter-regional cooperation.

This partnership began with specific sectoral cooperation, initiated in 2010 in the field of sports through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Kinesthetic Support Gifted Scholarships between the Indonesian National Sports Committee (KONI) of West Java and the Gyeongsangbuk-do Sports Council (UPI, 2017). This initial collaboration aimed to increase the capacity of athletes and coaches, as well as develop a sustainable sports ecosystem (including community, recreational, and Paralympic sports) through training programs and coach exchanges. Recognition of the contributions of both parties was marked by the awarding of Doctor Honoris Causa degrees to the Governor of Gyeongsangbuk-do by UPI, and to the Governor of West Java by Kyungwoon University and Yeungnam University in 2018. A significant milestone in strengthening interprovincial relations occurred in May 2018 at Gedung Pakuan in Bandung, when Governor Kim Kwan Yong conducted an official visit to West Java and signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) as the initial step toward the establishment of a Sister Province relationship (Fajrin, N., 2022). The LoI signaled the formal intention of both parties to establish a legal framework for the Sister Province partnership aimed at building mutually beneficial cooperation. It also marked the expansion of collaboration into several strategic sectors, including education, economy and trade, tourism and culture, sports and youth empowerment, and science and technology. On 8 March 2023, the Governor of West Java visited Gyeongsangbuk-do to renew and expand the scope of cooperation through a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding that encompassed sports, human resource development, tourism and culture, as well as economy and trade.

The partnership, which originated in the sports sector, continued to progress and yielded tangible outcomes. On 18 December 2023, the West Java KONI and the Gyeongsangbuk-do Sports Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding at Orchid Forest Cikole, West Bandung Regency. This signing served as a continuation of collaboration in the deployment of sports coaches who played an important role in supporting the target of "West Java Hatrick Champion" at the 2024 National Sports Week (PON XXI) in North Sumatra and Aceh (RRI, 2023). During this period, relations between the two provinces were implemented through various exchange activities, one example being the participation of three West Java civil servants in the Korean Culture Language Program held online in 2022. This demonstrates that the cooperation extended beyond administrative arrangements and also fostered social and cultural connections between communities. The development of West Java–Gyeongsangbuk-do relations in the following period shows the growing

strength of people-to-people diplomacy within the broader framework of paradiplomacy. These developments not only reinforced commitments in the sports sector but also symbolized the continuity of interregional relations built on trust and mutual respect. The visit of the West Java KONI Chairperson to Gedung Sate on 23 December 2023 further strengthened this collaborative spirit. It can therefore be concluded that the cooperation between West Java and Gyeongsangbuk-do has evolved from a purely technical exchange into a concrete form of subnational diplomacy, in which local governments actively contribute to building cultural, economic, and social bridges across countries through sustainable partnership networks.

West Java Province now functions not only as an implementing arm of national foreign policy but also as an actor capable of independently initiating and managing cross-border relations based on its own regional interests. Through its partnership with Gyeongsangbuk-do, the cooperation illustrates how a local government can navigate the global arena by leveraging opportunities for economic, social, and cultural collaboration. The 8th Global Youth Camp 2025, organized by the Provincial Government of Gyeongsangbuk-do in the Republic of Korea, serves as an annual forum that brings together young people from various Sister Province partners. The program was officially held from 17 to 23 August 2025 in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province in collaboration with Sangji Catholic University (Bureau of Governance and Regional Autonomy, 2025). This year, the program brought together participants from five countries, namely China, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Japan, alongside host country South Korea. As an international youth exchange program, it aims to strengthen cooperation between Gyeongsangbuk-do and its partner provinces in Asia, expand international networks, and promote cultural exchange among younger generations. West Java's participation in this activity reflects the active involvement of the provincial government in informal diplomacy oriented toward human resource development and the enhancement of interregional relations at the global level. Through this forum, West Java positions its youth as representatives of local values as well as paradiplomatic actors who contribute to strengthening the province's image in the international arena.

II. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the dynamics of paradiplomatic cooperation between the West Java Provincial Government and the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Government through the implementation of the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025. The qualitative method enables researchers to understand the meanings, experiences, and social interpretations constructed by actors involved in a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This approach is relevant because the research examines subnational diplomatic processes that are deeply embedded in cultural experiences, social interactions, and interregional cooperation dynamics. Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis drawing from official government documents, reports on international activities, online news sources, and academic literature on paradiplomacy and cultural diplomacy.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Exchange as a Strategic to Strengthen the Sister Province Relations

Cultural exchange is one of the fundamental pillars in strengthening long-term partnerships between sister provinces. Indonesia and South Korea are actively engaged in bilateral cooperation, particularly in the fields of education and culture (Tisnakusumahnit, A. & Putri, S., 2024). In the West Java–Gyeongsangbuk-do relationship, cultural activities do not merely serve as complementary elements, but function as vital strategic instruments for achieving deeper and more sustainable cooperation (Nye, 2004). Keating (1999) emphasizes that when local governments enter the international arena, their actions are not driven solely by economic calculations, but also by the need to assert cultural identity and reinforce their symbolic position before international partners. Cultural exchange, whether conducted through arts, language, rituals, cuisine, or traditions, as demonstrated by the youth participants from West Java in the 8th Global Youth Camp, provides a space for expressing cultural identity directly and for fostering mutual appreciation. This is what makes cultural activities strategic instruments in building interregional solidarity. Keating (1999) further

notes that contemporary regional diplomacy increasingly shifts toward a people-centered approach, in which relationships between communities are considered as important as those between officials or institutions. Within this framework, cultural activities serve as bridges that enable communities across countries to understand one another's values, customs, and worldviews. Unlike formal diplomacy, which is often confined to elite-level interactions, cultural exchange allows for the direct participation of diverse societal groups, particularly youth, which in turn broadens the social base that supports the continuity of Sister Province relations. Keating (1999) also offers a deeper perspective by introducing the concept of cooperative identity, which refers to a shared identity that emerges through intensive and repeated cross-cultural interactions.

Cultural paradiplomacy enables two regions to develop a collective awareness of shared goals, values, and aspirations. This shared identity does not arise spontaneously, but forms through cultural contact that transcends administrative and geographical boundaries. When two provinces share cultural spaces, they do not only learn about their differences, but also discover common ground that generates a sense of closeness. This is what strengthens the social foundations of interregional cooperation. These concepts align with Nye's (2004) notion of soft power, which argues that cultural appeal, social values, and moral legitimacy often generate stronger influence than material or political power. Soft power seeks different ways of exerting influence in international affairs (Gallarotti, G., 2022). Public diplomacy is a form of soft diplomacy that has become one of the key instruments in contemporary international relations, through which states seek to introduce and promote their identity, culture, and attractiveness to external audiences (Lestari et al, 2025). In essence, the notion of soft power refers to a country's ability to shape the preferences and behaviour of others in accordance with its own interests, without resorting to military force or economic coercion (Zanella et al, 2024). In the West Java–Gyeongsangbuk-do partnership, this soft power approach is evident in the cultural activities of the 8th Global Youth Camp, which brought together young people from both regions in direct interactive settings. Such shared experiences create valuable social and symbolic capital, as they cultivate positive perceptions, a sense of closeness, and mutual trust, all of which are essential elements in subnational diplomacy. When a region is able to present a cultural character that is appealing and easily embraced, it generates soft power resources that strengthen its diplomatic position without relying on pressure or coercive instruments.

Implementation of Cultural Diplomacy in the 8th Global Youth Camp

The implementation of the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025 served as an important medium for advancing cultural diplomacy between West Java and Gyeongsangbuk-do. This program provided a space in which the cultural identity, social values, and artistic expressions of West Java could be presented directly to participants from several Asian countries, namely Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Japan. Cultural diplomacy in this context did not occur solely through formal performances, but also through interpersonal interactions that unfolded throughout the event. Together, these elements function as instruments that strengthen people-to-people relations, which the paradiplomacy literature identifies as the social foundation for sustaining interregional cooperation. The West Java delegates, as described in the Activity Report of the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025 submitted to the West Java Provincial Government, arranged a series of activities aimed at presenting a comprehensive representation of Sundanese and West Javanese identity. The initial segment of the performance focused on introducing West Java as a region marked by geographical richness, cultural diversity, and a strong historical heritage. This introduction served to provide basic context for international participants to understand the background behind the subsequent cultural expressions. Such narrative framing is essential because cultural diplomacy is not only about visual performances, but also about constructing a broader understanding of regional identity. The second component of the performance was a demonstration of pencak silat, one of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO. West Java, commonly known as Bumi Pasundan, is a province that is rich in Sundanese cultural heritage (Alfiani et al, 2024).

Sundanese is an ethnic group in West Java, Indonesia, characterized by the use of the Sundanese language and dialect, a distinct historical background, shared cultural values, and a primary concentration of residence in the West Java region (Sabaria et al, 2025). In Sundanese culture, pencak silat functions not only

as a martial art but also embodies philosophical values such as honor, harmony between body and mind, controlled courage, and mental discipline. The pencak silat demonstration showcased by the Indonesian delegates displayed a combination of rhythmic movement, agility, and bodily meditation, reflecting the character of Sundanese society as resilient while upholding ethics and respect. Through this martial art, participants from other countries could understand that West Javanese culture contains values that are not only aesthetic but also moral and spiritual. The cultural performance continued with the traditional dance Goyang Karawang, an iconic dance from the Karawang region that conveys joy, warmth, and the dynamism of everyday life in West Java. This dance is known for its graceful yet energetic movements, reflecting the character of northern coastal West Javanese communities, who are open, welcoming, and adaptive. The colorful costumes and expressive gestures offered insight into the vibrancy and creativity of local culture. Symbolically, the dance represents social values such as togetherness, collective work, and the celebration of life, values that are easily appreciated by participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby strengthening the appeal of cultural diplomacy.

Beyond formal performances, West Java's cultural diplomacy in the 8th Global Youth Camp also unfolded through informal interactions that were spontaneous and personal. The Indonesian delegates introduced traditional West Javanese snacks, demonstrated local games, and taught basic Sundanese phrases to participants from other countries. Such social practices constitute the essence of people-to-people diplomacy because they create direct experiences that foster emotional closeness, curiosity, and interpersonal connections that formal bureaucratic diplomacy often cannot achieve. The program was not unidirectional, as participants also had the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge about Korean culture. The activity of preparing Andong jjimdak, a traditional dish from the city of Andong, functioned as a cultural learning exercise that enabled participants to understand the values, techniques, and symbolism embedded in local culinary traditions. Participants' involvement in the cooking process provided a multisensory experience that yielded stronger cultural meaning, since food functions as a communicative medium that reflects community history, social practices, and collective habits in Korean society. The visit to Bulguksa Temple in Gyeongju provided insight into the historical and spiritual dimensions of Korean culture. Through observing the ancient architectural structures, spatial layout of the temple complex, and religious symbols, participants gained an understanding of the philosophical heritage and aesthetic values that shape Korean identity. Cultural heritage sites such as this often function as instruments of cultural diplomacy because they reveal the historical depth of a community, generating greater respect and appreciation from international visitors. The experience of wearing hanbok, the traditional Korean attire, further enriched the non-verbal dimension of cultural interaction within the program.

Hanbok functions not only as clothing but also as a symbol of identity and an expression of aesthetic values in Korean society. By wearing hanbok, participants directly experienced how a culture constructs modesty, elegance, and symbolism through its clothing traditions. Such interaction supports deeper cultural understanding through an embodied learning approach, which is particularly effective for fostering cross-cultural empathy. Another aspect of cultural diplomacy emerged through the formal communal meals offered to participants. These meals provided insight into table manners, social etiquette, and ceremonial traditions embedded in Korean dining practices. Overall, the series of cultural activities within the 8th Global Youth Camp fostered a form of cultural diplomacy that integrates culinary, historical, aesthetic, and symbolic dimensions into a single framework of cross-cultural interaction.

Youth Participation as a Catalyst in Subnational Diplomacy

Youth participation constitutes an essential element in the development of contemporary paradiplomacy, particularly as local governments increasingly rely on non-state actors to expand their international engagement capacities. Tavares (2016) emphasizes that paradiplomatic practices are not carried out solely by local government institutions, but also by other non-state actors such as civil society groups, including youth communities, who are capable of broadening regional representation within global networks. The participation of young delegates in the 8th Global Youth Camp can be understood as part of a strategy to strengthen the Gyeongsangbuk–West Java sister province relationship through the mobilization of actors who possess intercultural communication skills. First, youth contribute to reinforcing regional image and

identity through cultural diplomacy. Lachapelle and Paquin (2005) highlight that local identity is a key component in interactions between subnational entities, especially when regions seek to differentiate themselves and build visibility at the international level. The involvement of West Java youth delegates in cultural activities, cross-cultural dialogue, and the presentation of local values contributes to a more positive projection of the province's image. The cultural representations conveyed through youth interactions help strengthen West Java's position as an active and competent partner in subnational cooperation. Second, youth play a strategic role in expanding international cooperation networks. Tavares (2016) notes that modern paradiplomacy is increasingly characterized by networked interactions, in which personal and professional relationships established between individuals can develop into institutional networks that support interregional cooperation.

Through their participation in the 8th Global Youth Camp, West Java youth delegates built interpersonal relationships with young people from Gyeongsangbuk and other participating countries. The creation of such informal networks carries strategic value because it complements the formal diplomatic mechanisms of local governments. Third, youth involvement has long-term implications for the sustainability of international regional cooperation. Lachapelle and Paquin (2005) emphasize that the continuity of paradiplomacy depends significantly on the capacity of regions to instill values of collaboration and cross-cultural openness in the next generation. The international experiences gained by West Java youth through cultural activities and multilateral dialogue have the potential to foster cosmopolitan orientations that support the continuation of the sister province relationship. As these young individuals later enter public life as bureaucrats, community leaders, or creative actors, they will bring with them social capital and cross-cultural knowledge that will be relevant for strengthening the Gyeongsangbuk–West Java partnership in the future. Overall, youth participation in the 8th Global Youth Camp demonstrates that young people are not merely participants in international programs, but strategic actors who contribute meaningfully to paradiplomacy.

Harmonizing Regional Needs with National Interests

Paradiplomacy activities conducted by the West Java Provincial Government need to be situated within the broader framework of Indonesia's foreign relations to ensure that their implementation aligns with national interests and the country's foreign policy orientation. The 8th Global Youth Camp serves as an illustration of how local needs can be harmonized with national priorities, particularly in the areas of public diplomacy, the strengthening of Indonesia's image in the Asian region, and the expansion of community-based cooperation networks. Regulatively, this alignment is grounded primarily in Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, which grants local governments the authority to engage in foreign cooperation as long as it remains within the boundaries of national interests and is carried out through approval mechanisms established by the central government. This provision affirms that international engagement by local governments is not only permitted but is also expected to contribute to national development agendas (BPK RI, 2014). Furthermore, the coordination framework for the foreign relations of local governments is strengthened through Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation Number 25 of 2020 on Procedures for Regional Cooperation with Local Governments Abroad, which outlines administrative procedures and consultation mechanisms between regional governments and the central government. This regulation ensures that West Java's paradiplomatic activities proceed in a structured and coordinated manner, consistent with national interests (BPK RI, 2020). West Java's paradiplomacy through the Global Youth Camp contributes to Indonesia's public diplomacy efforts, particularly by enhancing communication with international communities through cultural approaches.

This program presents Indonesia as an open, inclusive country with rich cultural diversity. By placing youth as representatives of the region, the program broadens the reach of Indonesia's public diplomacy from elite-level state interactions to societal-level engagement, thereby fostering emotional affinity and cross-cultural understanding within the Asian region. In addition to strengthening Indonesia's image, West Java's paradiplomacy also supports national agendas related to expanding community-based cooperation networks. Through the interactions that occur during the Global Youth Camp, interpersonal and intercommunity relationships emerge that may develop into professional and institutional networks. These

networks possess strategic value because they complement the formal efforts of the central government in deepening Indonesia's bilateral relations with the Republic of Korea. Initiatives emerging from the regional level contribute to a more participatory and community-oriented form of diplomacy, while also creating opportunities for the central government to synchronize international policy with regional development needs. From the perspective of regional needs, West Java benefits from enhanced youth capacity, greater visibility of local culture, and expanded opportunities for cooperation across sectors. At the same time, for the central government, this activity supports national objectives to broaden Indonesia's influence in Asia through culturally grounded and community-based approaches. Thus, the paradiplomacy carried out by West Java not only addresses regional interests but also contributes to the advancement of national priorities and Indonesia's public diplomacy strategies.

Opportunities and Challenges in Cultural-Based Paradiplomacy

The involvement of youth in the 8th Global Youth Camp presents significant opportunities for the development of culturally based subnational cooperation. At the individual level, the program provides tangible benefits for enhancing participants' capacities. Through direct experiences in cross-cultural communication, the articulation of ideas in international forums, and collaboration with youth from various countries, participants acquire essential skills that can be applied upon returning to their home regions. In this sense, international exposure not only enriches participants' multicultural perspectives but also strengthens their adaptability and leadership capacities grounded in collaborative values. The program serves as a strategic platform for West Java to reinforce its partnership with Gyeongsangbuk (Biro Pemerintahan dan Otonomi Daerah, 2025). By affirming the region's position as an active subnational actor in international relations, the 8th Global Youth Camp provides an opportunity for the province to showcase its cultural richness and local wisdom to the global community.

The interregional interactions fostered through the program demonstrate that paradiplomacy can be carried out through mechanisms that are relatively simple yet have meaningful impacts, particularly through cultural exchange and intergenerational dialogue. In addition to strengthening West Java's image as an open, progressive, and dynamic region, the program highlights the province's readiness to engage in international collaboration that is inclusive and sustainable. Despite these opportunities, the implementation of culturally based paradiplomatic cooperation through the 8th Global Youth Camp continues to face several challenges. One of the primary challenges is the alignment of local interests with national policy directions, which often presents its own complexities, particularly when coordination mechanisms and jurisdictional boundaries are not fully clear. This condition may lead to policy overlap, bureaucratic inefficiency, and obstacles in implementing international cooperation programs. Program sustainability also remains an important issue that requires attention.

IV. CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that paradiplomacy has become an important instrument for expanding the role and capacity of local governments amid the dynamics of contemporary international relations. Through the case study of the Sister Province relationship between West Java Province and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, as well as the implementation of the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025, it is evident that subnational diplomacy is not merely a complement to state diplomacy but has developed into a strategic mechanism capable of bridging local needs with national interests. Supported by clear legal foundations, including Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government and other technical regulations governing foreign partnerships, international activities conducted by local governments can operate within the national interest framework while also providing space for regions to articulate their needs and aspirations more independently. In the West Java–Gyeongsangbuk-do partnership, cultural exchange through the Global Youth Camp program has proven to play a significant role as a medium of people-to-people diplomacy. The program demonstrates how cultural interaction, youth dialogue, and cross-border experiences can generate social capital that strengthens interregional relations in a sustainable manner. Through cultural activities such as pencak silat, traditional dance, culinary exchange, language, and visits to historical sites, subnational diplomacy offers a form of communication that is more intimate and effective than formal diplomacy. This approach not only

fosters a positive perception of West Java but also reinforces Indonesia's image as an inclusive and culturally rich nation in the eyes of the international community. In addition to strengthening regional and national image, this study underscores the importance of youth participation as strategic actors in paradiplomacy. Through the 8th Global Youth Camp program, it becomes evident that young people play a significant role in expanding international networks and contributing to regional identity-building.

Through their international experience in the Global Youth Camp, West Java's youth not only strengthen individual capacities but also become catalysts for the formation of social networks that have the potential to evolve into more formal institutional partnerships in the future. Nevertheless, this study also identifies several challenges that require attention. The alignment between regional interests and national policy remains a central issue affecting the effectiveness of paradiplomacy. Bureaucratic dynamics, jurisdictional boundaries, and coordination mechanisms that are not yet fully integrated may create obstacles in the implementation of international cooperation at the local level. Program sustainability also emerges as a critical issue, including post-event follow-ups such as youth training, academic cooperation, or other cultural initiatives that can serve as important components for ensuring that the Sister Province relationship does not remain merely ceremonial. Without a clear sustainability strategy, the potential of cultural paradiplomacy cannot be fully optimized. Overall, this study emphasizes that culturally based paradiplomacy holds strategic value in strengthening interregional relations, building a positive international image, and supporting Indonesia's public diplomacy. Synergy between regional needs and national interests can be achieved through clear coordination mechanisms, the strategic use of cultural soft power, and the engagement of young people as key actors in cross-border interaction. In this regard, subnational cooperation such as that carried out by West Java and Gyeongsangbuk-do through the 8th Global Youth Camp 2025 functions not only as a medium for cultural exchange but also as a model of contemporary diplomacy that is inclusive, adaptive, and community-based, and that remains relevant to the challenges and opportunities of international relations in the global era.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses sincere appreciation to Mr. Windy Dermawan for his academic guidance, encouragement, and consistent support throughout the preparation of this work. Gratitude is also conveyed to the Provincial Government of West Java and the West Java delegates of the 8th Global Youth Camp for the insights and cooperation that contributed to this study. The author further thanks colleagues and peers whose suggestions helped improve the writing process. The completion of this article was made possible through the support of all those acknowledged.

REFERENCES

- [1] F. Aldecoa and M. Keating, *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*. London, UK: Frank Cass, 1999.
- [2] J. W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE, 2014.
- [3] A. S. Kuznetsov, *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy: Subnational Governments in International Affairs*. New York, NY, USA: Routledge, 2014.
- [4] G. Lachapelle and S. Paquin, *Mastering Globalization: New Sub-States' Governance and Strategies*. London, UK: Routledge, 2005.
- [5] J. S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York, NY, USA: PublicAffairs, 2004.
- [6] N. D. Fajrin, "Sister Province Relations between West Java and Gyeongsangbuk-do (Hubungan Sister Province antara Jawa Barat dan Gyeongsangbuk-do)," 2022.
- [7] G. N. Alam and A. Sudirman, "Paradiplomacy Pemerintah Kota Bandung melalui kerja sama Sister City," *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 31-50, 2020.
- [8] R. Rahmawati and G. N. Alam, "Paradiplomasi Jawa Barat ke Asia Timur mengenai penanaman modal asing," *AEGIS: Journal of International Relations*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 42-58, 2023.
- [9] Suhendrik, R. M. T. N. Affandi, and D. S. Sari, "Paradiplomasi Provinsi Jawa Barat terhadap Provinsi Sichuan dalam menanggulangi pandemi Covid-19 di Jawa Barat," *Transborders*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 50-62, 2021.

- [10] S. S. Putri, "Mengulik Paradiplomasi Jawa Barat dengan Guangxi Zhuang," 2022. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366594501_Mengulik_Paradiplomasi_Jawa_Barat_dengan_Guangxi_Zhuang
- [11] Z. V. I. Lestari, R. Benarrivo, and T. H. Akbar, "Diplomasi budaya Korea Selatan di Indonesia tahun 2021–2023," *Global Insight Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 1–15, 2025. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36859/gij.v1i3.3333>
- [12] A. Darmayadi and S. O. Putri, "Paradiplomasi Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Barat melalui Sister Province dengan Republik Bashkortostan Rusia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Sosial*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 110–121, 2022. doi: <https://doi.org/10.34010/jipsi.v1i2i1.7433>
- [13] A. Tisnakusumahnita and S. O. Putri, "Implementasi diplomasi budaya Indonesia melalui kerja sama pendidikan terhadap Korea Selatan (2021–2023)," *Global Political Studies Journal (GPSJ)*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 261–273, 2024. doi: <https://doi.org/10.34010/gpsjournal.v8i2.15004>
- [14] A. Faishal and D. Yulianti, "Paradiplomasi Jawa Barat melalui kerja sama Sister Province antara Jawa Barat dan Souss-Massa," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 248–259, 2024. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20473/jhi.v17i1.54104>
- [15] C. Mahadewi, C. R. Gultom, and N. M. Tifani, "Analisis paradiplomasi Kota Bandung melalui program Sister City dalam meningkatkan kerjasama internasional dan pembangunan daerah," 2024. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385417378_ANALISIS_PARADIPLOMASI_KOTA_BANDUNG_MELALUI_PROGRAM_SISTER_CITY_DALAM_MENINGKATKAN_KERJASAMA_INTERNASIONAL
- [16] R. Sabaria, C. Sobarna, T. Muhtadin, and J. Masunah, "Sundanese classical dance as a representation of aesthetic values and noble culture in West Java," *Cogent Education*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 1–17, 2025. doi: <https://doi.org/10.58355/historical.v3i4.126>
- [17] C. K. Zanella, E. J. Neves Junior, and L. R. da Silva, "Cultural diplomacy and soft power: critical analysis and methodological application," *Brazilian Journal of International Politics*, vol. 67, no. 2, 2024. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329202400112>
- [18] D. Alfiani, M. Deskia, N. Tri, and T. Rustini, "Harmonisasi budaya Sunda dengan alat musik tradisional di Jawa Barat," *Historical*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 78–89, 2024. doi: <https://doi.org/10.58355/historical.v3i4.126>
- [19] G. M. Gallarotti, "Esteem and influence: soft power in international politics," *International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy*, vol. 8, no. 3/4, pp. 209–241, 2022.
- [20] L. Hakim, P. D. Negara, S. Sirajuddin, and Q. H. Melati, "Crisis diplomacy from below: subnational legitimacy, legal pluralism, and global multilevel governance dynamics," *Jurnal Manajemen Pemerintahan*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2025. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18196/jmh.v32i2.27501>
- [21] Berita UPI, "Pemprov Jabar bersama KONI Jabar dan UPI Jalin Kerja Sama dengan Provinsi Gyeongsangbuk, Korea Selatan," 2017. <https://berita.upi.edu/pemprov-jabar-bersama-koni-jabar-dan-upi-jalin-kerja-sama-dengan-provinsi-gyeongsangbuk-korea-selatan/>
- [22] Bureau of Government and Regional Autonomy, "8th Global Youth Camp 2025 Pererat Persahabatan Pemuda Asia di Korea Selatan," 2025. <https://biropemotda.jabarprov.go.id/postingan/8th-global-youth-camp-2025-pererat-persahabatan-pemuda-asia-di-korea-selatan-68b93175e6e566815ad48d8a>
- [23] Radio Republik Indonesia, "KONI Jabar MoU dengan Gyeongsangbuk Do, Budiana: Terbukti Hasilnya," 2023. <https://rri.co.id/olimpik/485748/koni-jabar-mou-dengan-gyeongsangbuk-do-budiana-terbukti-hasilnya>
- [24] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 37 Tahun 1999 tentang Hubungan Luar Negeri, 1999. <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Download/33858/UU%20Nomor%2037%20Tahun%201999.pdf>
- [25] Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor 3 Tahun 2008 tentang Pedoman Pelaksanaan Kerjasama Pemerintah Daerah dengan Pihak Luar Negeri, 2008. <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Download/117366/Permen%20No.03-2008.pdf>
- [26] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2014 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah, 2014.
- [27] Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 28 Tahun 2018 tentang Kerja Sama Daerah, 2018.
- [28] Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor 25 Tahun 2020 tentang Tata Cara Kerja Sama Daerah dengan Pemerintah Daerah di Luar Negeri dan Kerja Sama Daerah dengan Lembaga di Luar Negeri, 2020.
- [29] Pemerintahan Provinsi Jawa Barat, "Activity Report of 8th Global Youth Camp, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic Korea," 2025. (Dokumen internal, tidak diterbitkan). <https://biropemotda.jabarprov.go.id/postingan/8th-global-youth-camp-2025-pererat-persahabatan-pemuda-asia-di-korea-selatan-68b93175e6e566815ad48d8a>