



**PARADIPLMACY OF SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN  
INDONESIA: FOREIGN RESOURCES UTILIZATION AS WEST JAVA'S  
ENDEAVOR FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN POST PANDEMIC COVID-  
19**

**PARADIPLMACIA DOS GOVERNOS SUBNACIONAIS NA INDONÉSIA:  
UTILIZAÇÃO DE RECURSOS ESTRANGEIROS COMO O ESFORÇO DE  
WEST JAVA PARA RECUPERAÇÃO ECONÔMICA NO PÓS-PANDEMIA  
COVID-19**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** This research aims to identify the practice of paradiplomacy in Indonesia, on this case West Java, in dealing with concrete problems faced by the regions, especially in utilizing foreign resources in an effort to overcome crisis during the pandemic.

**Methods:** This research was conducted with the perspective of neoliberalism and paradiplomacy theory, using analytical descriptive qualitative research with data obtained through official government documents, interview, and literature studies from various sources.

**Results:** West Java intensively carried out paradiplomacy and established good relations with various foreign parties in an effort to recover its economy. West Java has 7 post-pandemic economic potentials, which are in investment, health, food security, green economy, industry, digital innovation and regional tourism. West Java is able to carry out various paradiplomacy during the pandemic due to solid cooperation from various parties. Where paradiplomacy holds a significant role in the economic recovery of West Java.





**Conclusion:** Paradiplomacy is an alternative instrument in achieving regional interests and needs which is the optimal solution in an effort to recover the economy during the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Economic Recovery, Paradiplomacy, West Java

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Esta pesquisa visa identificar a prática da paradiplomacia na Indonésia, neste caso Java Ocidental, no tratamento de problemas concretos enfrentados pelas regiões, especialmente na utilização de recursos estrangeiros em um esforço para superar a crise durante a pandemia.

**Métodos:** Esta pesquisa foi realizada na perspectiva do neoliberalismo e da teoria da paradiplomacia, utilizando-se de pesquisa qualitativa analítica descritiva com dados obtidos por meio de documentos oficiais do governo, entrevista e estudos bibliográficos de diversas fontes.

**Resultados:** West Java executou intensivamente a diplomacia regional e estabeleceu boas relações com várias partes estrangeiras em um esforço para recuperar sua economia. Java Ocidental tem 7 potenciais econômicos pós-pandemia, que estão em investimento, saúde, segurança alimentar, economia verde, indústria, inovação digital e turismo regional. Java Ocidental é capaz de realizar a diplomacia de várias regiões durante a pandemia devido à sólida cooperação de várias partes. Onde a paradiplomacia tem um papel significativo na recuperação econômica de Java Ocidental.

**Conclusão:** A paradiplomacia é um instrumento alternativo para atingir os interesses e necessidades regionais que é a solução ideal para o esforço de recuperação da economia durante a pandemia.

**Palavras-chave:** Covid-19, Recuperação Econômica, Paradiplomacia, Java Ocidental

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The first case of Covid-19 was discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China. Covid-19 continued to spread through high mobility to various countries until it finally turned into a global pandemic. One of the measures taken by the state to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is to carry out various limitation on mobility within the country. This directly and indirectly affects the interaction between countries, diplomatic activities, export and import activities, especially on the movement of global supply chains. Global trade growth itself has decreased to minus 8.3%. Indonesia economic growth itself contracted to 2.44 percent in 2020.





Mobility restrictions that applied on a national scale also limit supply and demand so that it has a direct effect on West Java's import and export activities. The decline in exports also resulted in a decline in domestic demand so that it was unable to support the economy. The poverty rate and unemployment in West Java have also increased along with the number of people who have contracted Covid-19 and lost their jobs. Therefore, proper handling is needed to be able to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, especially in efforts to recover its economy.

This research aims to identify the practice of paradiplomacy in Indonesia, on this case West Java, in dealing with concrete problems faced by the regions, especially in dealing with crisis during the pandemic. West Java's paradiplomacy endeavor towards regional economic recovery in utilizing foreign resources can be found through 7 post-pandemic economic potentials. This study will also analyze how West Java can gain international competence to carry out paradiplomacy and how West Java empowers its instruments to develop its diplomatic network, geopolitic, and its functional interests to maneuver their economic recession into potential opportunities on economic recovery.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "Neo-liberalism" denotes new forms of political-economic governance based on expanding market relations (Larner, 2000). Under the assumption that neoliberalism has now shaped into a non-destructive form, transforming from weapons to paper money and exports. This is based on a transition in the definition of 'power' from military capability to economic status. This transition constructs the need for greater and increased cooperation and collaboration. Therefore, states still accumulate power even under liberal systems, the key difference being the fact that power is now better gained if more cooperation is realized within the framework of international politics (Jumarang, 2011).

In this research, the paradigm used is neoliberalism or more specifically neoliberal governance. The main elements of neoliberal governance are the support for the free movement of goods, people and capital; redistribution of authority between government





and non-government entities; pro-market regulation; and an emphasis on social innovation that will promote individual freedom and responsibility (Cerny, Menz, & Soederberg, 2005). Jan Kooiman (2003) defines governing and governance as connected concepts. Governing is 'the totality of interactions, in which public and private actors participate and aim to solve social problems or create social opportunities, consider institutions as contexts for interactions that govern interactions and establish a normative foundation for all such activities' and governance is 'the totality of theoretical conceptions of government'. Where in the context of research, the West Java Provincial Government acts as a regulator and catalyst in cooperating with the private sector in conducting paradiplomacy.

In very general terms, diplomacy can be defined as the institutions and processes by which states and other people represent themselves and their interests to one another (Melissen & Sharp, 2006). By extrapolating the general definition of diplomacy to paradiplomacy, paradiplomacy can be defined as the institutions and processes by which regions, both provinces and districts/cities, engage in relations with actors on the international political scene with the aim of representing themselves and their interests with one another (Pluijm & Melissen, 2007). With such a definition, paradiplomacy can be considered as a form of decentralized management of international relations, by selecting provincial or district/city governments as key actors.

The complexity of interactions between actors in the international system has led to the development of the phenomenon of globalization (Pluijm & Melissen, 2007). This situation gives rise to non-traditional actors who increasingly dominate the development of cross-border activities in various fields. In addition, paradiplomacy is also considered effective because local actors have an understanding of the local community in a sub-country. Thus, international relations interactions and activities are focused on regional development from various aspects of people's lives.

Diplomatic means to achieve goals vary from mobilizing local resources, expressing solidarity, informing local communities and to funding efforts and partnering with civil society organizations in efforts to achieve the SDGs, as well as lobbying the central government. The 'diplomatic mode' used in the context of local government development is also different. Sometimes there is direct contact between the mayors of





the cities involved, while other times the contact can be through civil servants, organizations, or through citizens, who manage international contacts on behalf of local governments. In addition, diplomacy is sometimes also carried out through local government associations or civil servants stationed abroad who, on behalf of local governments, oversee projects in developing countries or crisis areas, as diplomats do in embassies. There is also an analysis of partnership agreements between local governments which shows that current culture still plays an important role in paradiplomacy.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant disruption to the dynamics of regional economy. Therefore, Ridwan Kamil as the Governor of West Java seeks economic recovery by emphasizing on economic adjustment on West Java's post-pandemic economic potentials. In West Java Investment Summit 2020, Ridwan Kamil presented seven new economic potentials of post-pandemic West Java which are expected to support the regional economy in the future (Kamil, 2020). Whereas paradiplomacy and foreign resources utilization can be found on West Java's endeavor in developing 7 post-pandemic economic potentials.

The first post-pandemic economic potential of West Java is investment. Along with the relocation of industry from the People's Republic of China to ASEAN countries, West Java perceived this phenomenon as a potential to posed as prioritized investment destination in ASEAN by preparing various sectors to support a healthy regional investment environment. Investment efficiency in West Java is higher than the national scale and manage to directly compete with various countries in Southeast Asia. The Government of West Java has systemized investment program which has 6 main objectives: increasing investment realization; optimizing investment promotion; improving the quality of investment services; implementing the investment ecosystem; increasing employment; and distributing investment growth across regions (Dinas PMPTSP Jabar, 2022).





The commitment given by West Java has succeeded in bringing West Java as the highest investment realization province in Indonesia. This achievement established by West Java's investment realization in 2021 that reached Rp136.1 trillion, equivalent to 15.1% of the total realization of national investment (Jabar Public Relations, 2022). West Java investment realization of IDR 136.1 trillion succeeded in producing 109,331 work force in several cross-sectoral investment projects in West Java. West Java provincial government has collaborated with Bank Indonesia and all related pentahelix components to encourage the increasing investment realization in West Java through establishment of investment ecosystem for all West Java business actors, both for large enterprise, medium enterprise, and MSMEs. There are also the effort of supporting connectivity infrastructure that connects the northern and southern regions of West Java. So, the investment sector is regarded as one of the economic motors of sustainable West Java economic acceleration through the establishment of an investment ecosystem that is supported by all pentahelix components in West Java.

There are several rationales why West Java could be the first investment destination in Indonesia. The first is because of the superior quality of its regional infrastructure. West Java emphasized infrastructure development in West Java because connectivity creates convenience in efforts to improve the economy (Kamil, 2021). West Java currently has Patimban Deep Sea Port, the first high-speed railway in ASEAN that connects Bandung-Jakarta, 10 toll roads, railroad lines across regions, and West Java is in the process of building West Java International Airport, Kertajati Airport. Improving the quality of infrastructure would have a direct effect on the distribution of the supply chain which will also affect the level of community productivity due to the absorption of local work forces. A complete and high quality infrastructure facilities in West Java is one of the main attractions for investors.

The second rationales is that West Java's human resources are the most productive human resource and the most competitive region in Indonesia (Kamil, 2020). West Java also has a total of 727 universities. West Java's digital competitiveness is the second highest in Indonesia after DKI Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. This shows that although West Java has the largest population, it maintained to have high productivity human resources and competitiveness as a promising basic capital in the future.





The third rationale is West Java's digital investment service which is accurate, fast, and with integrity (Jabar Public Relations, 2022). High-intensity investments also inseparable from the efforts of the Governor of West Java, as the first person in the regions, and related regional bureau to travel around marketing, promoting, and lobbying related parties actualizing the highest investment realization. Governor Ridwan Kamil also become a panelist at the 2021 US-Indonesia Investment Summit and promote West Java as an investment destination for entrepreneurs in the United States (Biro Pemerintahan dan Otonomi Daerah Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2021). There is also a webinar organized by the West Java Provincial Government, the EU-West Java Business Roundtable Webinar, which discusses investment potentials, significant reduction in tariffs, and other cooperation with the European Union. (West Java Partnership, 2021). Therefore, the high investment realization of West Java is mainly due to the proactive attitude of the local government in conducting diplomacy and establishing international relations.

The second post-pandemic economic potential in West Java is food security and food sovereignty due to the health crisis is predicted to shift into a food crisis because of the large number of unemployed land (Kamil, 2021). Food security also has a direct impact on the regional economy due to the grade, nutrition, and quality of food owned by a region will also affect the quality of its human resources. Therefore, West Java has a goal to suppress food imports and managed be self-sufficient in food sovereignty.

On the one hand, West Java has succeeded in achieving self-sufficiency in rice with a surplus of 1.5 million tons of rice annually (Kamil, 2021). However, on the other hand, it turns out that rice self-sufficiency alone can't be concluded into food sovereignty. Where there are necessities for self-sufficiency in spices, meat products, dairy products, and other nutritions to achieve full-scale food security (Jabar Public Relations, 2021). As an effort to sustain food security, in February 2022 West Java Governor also met with the United States Ambassador, Sung Y. Kim, and conveyed the aspirations of West Java tofu and tempeh traders so that soybean supplies are secured and the prices are lowered. This demand is also related to 86.4% of soybean supply in Indonesia imported from abroad and the United States is the largest soybean importer in West Java (Kamil, 2022).

West Java's third economic potentials focused on the health sector. Health is considered a substantial factor since the regional economy will not be able to function





without a healthy society. A healthy and well-nourished population is able to build a much more productive economy because the community itself is the actor who builds the economy. Meanwhile West Java still required 5,000 clinics in villages and 25 general hospitals to attain the requirement of West Java's public health facilities (Humas Jabar, 2021). Ridwan Kamil also intends to enact West Java as a destination for health investment and public health sector. Various large-scale pharmaceutical companies already concentrated in West Java such as Biofarma, Afiat Pharmaceutical Industry, Combiphar, Sanbe Farma, etc. West Java itself has collaborated with two pharmaceutical companies from Australia during the pandemic, Aspen Medical and Docta, to build West Java's health infrastructure of IDR 14 trillion (Saputra, 2020). This investment is expected to increase the health capacity of West Java and become a stimulus for economic growth.

The automotive and manufacturing industries in West Java are included as one of the focuses of post-pandemic economic recovery. There are approximately 60% of Indonesia's industry situated in West Java making West Java as a province with the most industrial area in Indonesia—with 42 industrial area—and also has the largest industrial area in Indonesia with a total industrial area of 19,600 hectares. The total exports of West Java in 2021 as much as 60% are commodities from the production of the manufacturing sector (Gunawan, 2022). This shows that the West Java manufacturing industry sector has export orientation. West Java manufacturing industry sector does not only dive on the domestic market but also the foreign market.

During Ridwan Kamil's overseas work visit to Glasgow, paradiplomacy implemented by West Java also resulted in cooperation regarding the establishment of a maritime polytechnic at Patimban Deep Sea Port with City College of Glasgow, the world-renowned maritime college in the world, using the English curriculum. The cooperation is expected to improve the quality of West Java's human resources so that it can balance the rapid physical development of the Patimban Port infrastructure with its human resources so that the community can be involved and enjoy the benefits of regional development (Kamil, 2021).

West Java's fifth post-pandemic economic potential is digital innovation. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 also affects management systems and requires actors to adapt into digital systems to relish maximum potential. West Java also cooperate with Amazon







Web Services, which invests up to IDR 40 trillion to build an integrated data center infrastructure related to all business activities (Kamil, 2020). This project aimed to be the Indonesia's data centre backbone and can also serve various digital companies throughout ASEAN. The provincial government is pursuing digital transformation to improve the lives quality of its citizens, optimize public services, and make data-driven decisions.

Green economy is also included in the sixth post-pandemic economic recovery. Masdar Company as a renewable energy company headquartered in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, will cooperate with PT Pembangkit Jawa Bali by building a Solar Power Plant on flat water surfaces in West Java lakes. In April 2022, the West Java had a courtesy call with British Ambassador. The meeting with the British Ambassador, Owen Jenkins, and his team in Jakarta discussed cooperation from the education sector to the energy sector for underdeveloped villages in West Java. This meeting was then followed up by West Java's Governor visitation to the UK in May 2022. The collaboration was attended by the Governor of West Java, the Minister for Asia at the Foreign, the Commonwealth & Development Office, Hon Amanda Milling, and representatives from the University of Lancaster related to various investments in the energy sector, renewable energy, and development of human resources in engineering and business. The pilot of this collaboration will start with the construction of wind power in Garut (Kamil, 2022). The West Java provincial government also collaborates with overseas partners in the education sector. One of them is the University of Nottingham regarding electric vehicles, electric vehicle charging stations, and the utilization of new and renewable energy.

Ridwan Kamil as Governor of West Java during one of his overseas working visits in November 2021 arrange a meeting between regional companies of West Java and foreign companies. The Warrior Group, which is a world-class adventurous tourism company based in Dubai, met and explored cooperation with UPC Renewables to develop the Wind Power Plant (PLTB) area in Sukabumi (CNN Indonesia, 2021). West Java itself has a very complete tourist attraction starting from waterfalls, beaches, mountains, and rivers. Sukabumi PLTB development project will be collaborated with outdoor sports tourism as an effort to develop new tourist destinations. In addition, this development is





also expected to integrate economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability for local communities.

The last post-pandemic economic potential of West Java focused on regional tourism and development. Local tourism in West Java itself has managed to stretch the economy 50 trillion rupiah in a year (Kamil, 2021). On the other hand, there are also efforts to develop Special Economic Zones (SEZs) such as Rebana Metropolitan Area and the southern part of West Java. This development is planned to involve the construction of 13 new futuristic and sustainable cities. Rebana Metropolitan Area is the future of West Java which will produce 4.39 million jobs and accelerate economic growth to 7.16 percent (Biro Komunikasi Kemenko Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi, 2021).

There is Perpres No. 87 th 2021 which is committed to accelerating the development of West Java in the Rebana and South Jabar Metropolitan projects (Humas Jabar, 2021). Hence this timely regulation becomes the legal protection for West Java to be more pro-active in the forage of investors. One of which is investors from the Middle East aimed in an effort to balance West Java geopolitics. West Java investors for FDI have mostly come from East Asia, so the Governor of West Java is targeting investors from the Middle East to be able to invest, especially in the Rebana and South Jabar Metropolitan projects (Nurraniusmana, 2021). During overseas work visit on November 2021, Ridwan Kamil had 3 agendas for concluding cooperation with Middle Eastern investors (Ramdhani, 2021).

As an effort to improve regional economy amidst the construction of Special Economic Zones for West Java, the Governor of West Java established a regulation whereby every investor who comes to West Java is required to partner with a local West Java company (Kamil, 2020). Where large projects such as developments in Kertajati, Patimban, and Indramayu required to utilize local workforces, local caterers, local bank, and partner with local companies such as BUMD so that the rapid economic development in the next 10 years can also be felt by the West Java's population.

In an interview with the Head of Foreign Cooperation Sub Division West Java Provincial Government, Taufiq Firdaus Al Muzaky, stated that West Java's paradiplomacy during pandemic has had impacts on efforts to recover the post-pandemic regional economy. However, the efforts also credited and not only limited at what is being done by





the Government. West Java Provincial Government now functions not as the main development actor as it used to be. On the contrary, government acts as a regulator and a catalyst—the impact of which could be perceived as a second and third multiplayer. West Java Provincial Government as a lever provides incentives for the community to become entrepreneurs through various government programs. There are ‘Petani Millennial’, One Pesantren One Product, an E-fishery incentive, then the West Java Government opens various opportunities for exports by almost including the scope of the economy and business in all their sister province cooperation. Thus almost every year West Java holds business meetings and business matching with overseas cooperation partners. The first meeting began with business matching which the West Java Provincial Government facilitated and then developed according to the business dynamics of business actors from the two countries.

In conducting paradiplomacy and utilizing foreign resources, West Java Provincial Government and its people applied a pro-active policy. Diplomacy and collaborations established by the West Java in Covid-19 Pandemic is carried out to improve the quality of life of the people of West Java by collaborating with provincial governments and non-government actors abroad. The collaboration realized through bilateral cooperation, investment, projects, resource exchange, knowledge transfer, and in the form of providing seminars and workshops. In terms of geopolitical considerations, the West Java Provincial Government strives for each continent to have a representative for cooperation. Previously, West Java’s paradiplomacy concentrated in Asia and rarely in Western countries. Recently, in Ridwan Kamil's era, West Java Provincial Government is trying to distribute more cooperation to areas that were previously unreachable and focus more on European and Arab countries. However, when pandemic occurs, interactions are limited and all parties concentrate on handling the pandemic. Along with the changes of West Java Regional Medium-Term Development Plan, West Java geopolitics also made proper adjustment. West Java prioritizing cooperation with unreachable area, but it also depends on the needs and capacity of cooperation in each regional apparatus.





## 4 SEVERAL PROVINCE BEST PARADIPLOMACY PRACTICES IN INDONESIA DURING PANDEMIC

Apart from West Java Province, several regions outside Java in Indonesia have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with various efforts. Lampung Province is trying to take advantage of foreign sources to recover its economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting diplomacy in overseas investment forums, namely Road to Investment Day 2020. West Sumatra Province optimizes excellence in agriculture, plantations, mining, fisheries, MSMEs, and trade as an effort to recover the post-covid-19 economy. The Aceh Provincial Government has done the same thing, in an effort to recover the economy, Aceh is developing sustainable investment, attracting foreign investors as one of the foreign sources by offering investment concepts that prioritize environmental (green investment), social, and governance aspects.

Meanwhile, the North Sumatra Provincial Government is trying to restore the economy due to COVID-19 by optimizing several industrial sectors, including the agricultural industry, processing and communication information through the use of foreign relations with foreign actors. Likewise with the Bali Provincial Government, where Bali is often a destination for tourism and international activities, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Digital Economy Working Group. This has become an instrument for Bali to re-promote as a safe, comfortable, and peaceful tourist destination and international gathering with the natural beauty, hospitality of the Balinese people, and unique culture that can be enjoyed by foreign tourists.

Based on the descriptions of some of the paradiplomacy practices of the subnational government in Indonesia, it can be concluded that regions in Indonesia utilize foreign sources for economic recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, the capacity and capability of local governments in Indonesia is tested, to what extent sub-state actors in Indonesia are able to rise and recover their economy more quickly. Based on this, it can be shown that paradiplomacy is an alternative instrument in achieving regional interests and needs, as well as assisting the central government in the context of development. Therefore, the Indonesian government should provide broad opportunities





and support for regions in Indonesia to take part abroad and explore foreign sources for regional and national potential development.

## 5 CONCLUSION

During the pandemic itself, the West Java regional economy originally contracted in 2020. The West Java Provincial Government then formed a regional economic recovery strategy by embracing the 7 economic potentials of post-pandemic West Java, namely investment, health sector, food security, automotive and manufacturing industry, green economy, digital innovation, and regional tourism. Many paradiplomacy activities and foreign resources utilization were found during the pandemic in an effort to recover the post-pandemic economy. Through intensive paradiplomacy, West Java itself has succeeded in becoming the province with the highest investment realization in Indonesia, constructing various regional mega infrastructures, developing two special economic zones, engaging foreign partnerships in various cooperation and collaboration, and successfully creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs in the midst of the pandemic. Paradiplomacy can be regarded as an alternative instrument in achieving regional interests and needs which is the optimal solution in an effort to recover the economy during the pandemic.

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