

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18170171

TOWARD A POLICY ROADMAP FOR LEVERAGING TUMPENG IN INDONESIA'S SUSTAINABLE GASTRODIPLOMACY

Setya Ambar Pertiwi^{1*}, Nazariah Osman², Muhammad Bin Muda³, Kesi Yovana⁴

¹*School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia; Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama), Jakarta, Indonesia*

^{2,3}*School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia*

⁴*Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama), Jakarta, Indonesia*

Received: 02/11/2025
Accepted: 15/12/2025

Corresponding Author: Setya Ambar Pertiwi
(ambar.pertiwi@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

While nations like Thailand, South Korea, and Japan have successfully leveraged their cuisines for international branding, their gastrodiploacy models often prioritize economic and reputational gains. This paper argues for an evolution toward a more holistic paradigm: sustainable gastrodiploacy. Using Indonesia's quintessential ritual dish, Tumpeng, as a case study, we examine how culinary heritage can be integrated with sustainable development objectives. The analysis identifies a critical "dual track" impediment in Indonesia's current strategy, where the commercial Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program operates separately from the deep, symbolic power of its food rituals. To bridge this gap, this study develops a synthesized theoretical framework: drawing on Constructivism, Nation Branding, Soft Power, and Heritage Politics; and proposes an integrated policy roadmap. This roadmap structures a virtuous cycle where domestic economic and food security development (Pillars 1 & 2) generates the authentic foundation for credible international soft power (Pillar 3). The study concludes that by fusing cultural heritage with sustainable development strategy, Indonesia can forge a gastrodiploacy that is as committed to internal well-being as it is to external appeal.

KEYWORDS: Gastrodiploacy, Sustainable Development, Soft Power, Indonesia, Policy Roadmap.

1. INTRODUCTION

Food speaks a universal language, yet its dialects remain profoundly local, serving as a strategic resource in the toolkit of modern diplomacy. In the evolving arena of international relations, what is served at the table can be as consequential as what is negotiated across it. This study contributes to International Relations discourse by examining how culinary heritage operates as a significant instrument of soft power in an increasingly multipolar world (Nye, 2004). As noted by Chapple-Sokol (2013) and Rockower (2012), cuisine has become a strategic medium for preserving memory, fostering community, and expressing culture on the global stage. Recognizing this, states, particularly in Asia, have increasingly integrated culinary heritage into the foreign policy strategies. The celebrated campaigns of Thailand, South Korea, and Japan illustrate a deliberate effort to elevate national dishes from everyday sustenance to instruments of diplomatic engagement and national image-making (Anholt, 2007).

These initiatives, however, have primarily operated within a paradigm focused on international reputation and economic gain through tourism and exports. This paper argues for an evolution in this practice towards a more holistic model: sustainable gastrodiploamacy. This approach integrates the external projection of cultural appeal with tangible domestic benefits, linking culinary heritage to community resilience, inclusive economic development, and cultural safeguarding. Using Indonesia's quintessential ritual dish, Tumpeng, as a case study, this article examines the potential of gastrodiploamacy that is as committed to internal strengthening as it is to external promotion. We ask: How can Indonesia leverage a profound cultural symbol like Tumpeng in a way that supports regional development, food security, and national identity, while simultaneously enhancing its soft power?

To explore this, the introduction proceeds in four parts. First, it situates gastrodiploamacy within the broader fields of public diplomacy and soft power, distinguishing it from related concepts. Second, it reviews the seminal Asian cases that have defined the field, extracted their strengths and identifying the limitations that a sustainable model could address. Third, it introduces Indonesia's context and the symbolic richness of Tumpeng, highlighting the current gap between commercial initiatives and underutilized ritual heritage. Finally, it presents the synthesized theoretical framework, drawing on Constructivism, Nation Branding, Soft Power, and Heritage Politics, that will guide the analysis and

inform the subsequent policy roadmap.

1.1. Conceptualizing Gastrodiploamacy

The use of food in international relations spans a spectrum, from basic nourishment to high symbolism. It is crucial to distinguish between three overlapping but distinct concepts: food diplomacy, culinary diplomacy, and gastrodiploamacy.

At its most fundamental, food diplomacy is often associated with humanitarian aid and food security initiatives. Deployed by states and international organizations, it addresses crises of hunger and poverty, functioning both as a developmental tool and a diplomatic signal (Luša & Jakešević, 2017). While its primary aim is immediate need, it also projects an image of the donor as a responsible and solidaristic global actor, thereby generating a form of indirect soft power.

Moving towards cultural exchange, culinary diplomacy narrows the focus to the use of cuisine in fostering cross-cultural understanding. As Chapple-Sokol (2013) defines it, it is "the use of food and cuisine as an instrument to create cross-cultural understanding in the hope of improving interactions and cooperation." This often involves shared meals, cooking demonstrations, and chef exchanges primarily in elite, state-to-state settings. It is about building rapport and facilitating communication across cultural boundaries (Spence, 2016).

This study focuses on gastrodiploamacy, a term popularized by Rockower (2012) to describe a government-led, public diplomacy strategy that systematically employs national culinary heritage to cultivate a positive national image and build affinity among foreign publics. The aim is to "win hearts and minds through stomachs." Unlike culinary diplomacy's focus on elite engagement, gastrodiploamacy targets the masses through restaurant promotions, global culinary campaigns, and heritage recognition, positioning cuisine as a central pillar of national identity and distinctiveness. It is an identity-driven project of persuasion aimed at managing a nation's brand on the global stage. To summarize the distinction, food diplomacy addresses humanitarian needs, culinary diplomacy facilitates state-to-state dialogue, and gastrodiploamacy strategically projects national identity to foreign publics.

This paper's analysis focuses on how Indonesia can leverage gastrodiploamacy, through the symbolic dish Tumpeng, as part of sustainable development strategy to build genuine soft power.

1.2. Lessons from Thailand, South Korea, and Japan

Within global gastrodiploamacy, three Asian

countries stand out for their distinct approaches to success. Thailand's "Global Thai" initiative, launched in 2002, was a pioneer. It strategically supported the expansion of Thai restaurants worldwide, positioning dishes like Tomyum Kung as one of its edible ambassadors (Suntikul, 2019). This framed Thai cuisine as a marker of hospitality, exotic flavours, and health. The strategy's success was recently cemented by the inscription of Tomyum Kung on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2024, recognizing it as a cultural practice embodying Thai Buddhist values and ecological knowledge (UNESCO, 2024).

South Korea's "Global Hansik" campaign, initiated in 2009, leveraged the country's most iconic staple: Kimchi. The campaign effectively framed Kimchi as a symbol of cultural resilience and family cooperation, a message that gained wider resonance through the global reach of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). This was institutionally validated in 2013 with the inscription of Kimjang, the communal practice of making and sharing Kimchi, on

UNESCO's list, highlighting its role in strengthening family ties and transmitting regional knowledge (Surya & Lee, 2022; UNESCO, 2013a).

Japan's promotion of Washoku represents a masterclass in heritage framing. Japan focused on the UNESCO recognition of its traditional dietary culture as a whole, achieved in 2013. The nomination dossier strategically presented Washoku as a social practice rooted in respect for nature, sustainable resource use, and intergenerational transmission through family rituals (Farina, 2018; UNESCO, 2013b). This moved beyond promoting a single dish to branding an entire culinary philosophy, asserting cultural authority and sophistication.

Collectively, these cases demonstrate the power of integrating cultural symbolism with strategic branding and institutional recognition (Table 1). However, their primary metrics of success often revolve around restaurant counts, tourism arrivals, and export figures. This paper suggests that the next step for the field is to integrate these external goals with a more deliberate focus on internal, sustainable development.

Table 1: Key Features of Established Gastrodiplomacy Models in Asia: Thailand, South Korea, and Japan.

This table summarizes the core programs, strategic features, and heritage recognition of three leading national gastrodiplomacy campaigns, providing a comparative baseline for analyzing Indonesia's approach.

| Country | Program/Initiative | Key Features |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|
| Thailand | "Global Thai" Initiative | Expanded Thai restaurants abroad and promoted national dishes as culinary ambassadors; <i>Tomyum Kung</i> inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2024, integrating Thai Buddhist values with ecological knowledge grounded in local resources (Suntikul, 2019; UNESCO, 2024). |
| South Korea | "Global Hansik" Campaign | Promoted <i>Kimchi</i> as a cultural symbol and staple; integrated with the Korean Wave (<i>Hallyu</i>); <i>Kimjang</i> (making and sharing <i>Kimchi</i>) inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013, expressing resilience, family cooperation, harmony with nature, and the transmission of regional and familial tradition (Surya & Nugroho, 2023; UNESCO, 2013a). |
| Japan | <i>Washoku</i> Promotion | Advanced <i>Washoku</i> as a national heritage; inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013, framed as a social practice rooted in respect for nature, sustainable use of resources, and communal traditions, transmitted through family rituals and seasonal celebrations (Farina, 2018; UNESCO, 2013b). |

1.3. The "Dual Track" and the Symbolism of Tumpeng

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago, possesses a culinary diversity that mirrors its cultural richness. The government's official foray into gastrodiplomacy, the "Indonesia Spice Up the World" (ISUTW) program launched in 2021, aims to increase the number of Indonesian restaurants abroad and boost spice exports (Trihartono *et al.*, 2023). However, reports indicate challenges in implementation, with fewer than half of the targeted

restaurants fully aligned with the program's goals (Kriswanditanaya & Dermawan, 2025; Tiofani & Prasetya, 2024).

Alongside this commercially driven program lies a rich tradition of ritual heritage, with Tumpeng as one of its most prominent expressions. A cone-shaped rice dish surrounded by an array of side dishes, Tumpeng is central to Javanese and many other Indonesian communal ceremonies, from birthday to national celebrations. It is not merely a meal but a philosophical performance, incorporating core values of harmony, gratitude, humility, and

social solidarity (Jati, 2014; Pertiwi et al., 2023). Its cultural significance is nationally recognized, with Tumpeng Sewu (the communal tradition of preparing and sharing multiple Tumpeng) being inscribed on Indonesia's National Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2014 (Dirjen Kebudayaan, 2015).

This reflects a kind of "dual track": on one side, a commercially-oriented, export-focused ISUTW program, and on the other, a symbolic, community-rooted food tradition like Tumpeng, which is so far received little attention in formal diplomatic strategies. This duality reveals a critical gap and a significant opportunity. This study posits that Tumpeng can serve as the symbolic core of gastrodiploamacy strategy that is both culturally authentic and sustainably oriented, generating benefits that ripple from the local village to the global stage.

1.4. Synthesizing a Theoretical Lens for Sustainable Gastrodiploamacy

To analyze Tumpeng's potential and construct a viable policy roadmap, we draw upon four interconnected theoretical perspectives. Combined, they provide a solid framework for understanding the mechanics and imperatives of a sustainable gastrodiploamacy. Our constructivist approach examines how Tumpeng performs Indonesian identity both domestically and internationally, addressing broader International Relations questions about how shared cultural practices constitute state interests and social identities (Wendt, 1999).

Constructivism reminds us that identity shapes how states see themselves and others. From this view, state interests and international relations are not pre-ordained but grow out of shared ideas, norms and identities (Wendt, 1999). Food becomes one of the most vivid ways of doing this "identity work." Brulotte & Di Giovine (2016) speak of "edible identities," showing how food carries cultural heritage and expresses who we are. Ichijo & Ranta (2016) also stress the performative side of food in articulating national identity. Seen this way, national dishes act as performances that communicate who a nation is, both to itself and to the world. A sustainable gastrodiploamacy must, therefore, draw on cultural practices that feel genuine and meaningful at home.

Nation Branding offers the strategic toolkit for projection. Anholt (2007) argues that in a crowded global marketplace, countries must actively manage their reputation. Cuisine serves as a highly accessible and experiential medium for this branding, allowing foreign publics to engage with intangible aspects of a

nation's culture. The cases of Thailand, South Korea, and Japan are quintessential examples of this strategic projection.

Soft Power explains the ultimate goal: influence through attraction (Nye, 2004). An appealing culinary culture generates goodwill, "fosters familiarity, and can make a country's policies seem more legitimate in the eyes of others. Gastrodiploamacy is, in essence, the operationalization of culinary soft power, creating positive feedback loop where cultural appeal translates into political and economic capital.

Heritage Politics introduces the crucial element of power and contestation. Heritage is not simply inherited; it is actively constructed, negotiated, and often politicized (Harrison, 2010). The pursuit of UNESCO recognition, for instance, is a form of symbolic politics that asserts cultural authority and authenticity on a global scale. This lens alerts us to the risks of a gastrodiploamacy strategy: over-commercialization, cultural dilution, and internal contestation over whose version of "authentic" culture is being promoted.

The integration of these theories provides a basis for conceptualizing a sustainable gastrodiploamacy model (Figure 1). Constructivism ensures the strategy is identity-driven, grounded in a credible cultural story like that of Tumpeng. Nation Branding and Soft Power provide the rationale and methods for its international projection. Finally, Heritage Politics acts as the essential critical check, ensuring that the strategy preserves authenticity, manages risks, and delivers domestic legitimacy and benefit. This research ultimately speaks to International Relations core about how middle powers like Indonesia navigate global culture flows while maintaining authentic national identity in their foreign policy practice. It is this integrated framework that guides our analysis of Tumpeng and informs the policy roadmap presented in subsequent sections.

This framework posits a tripartite model for analyzing state-led gastrodiploamacy, using Indonesia's Tumpeng as an exemplar. It proposes that gastrodiploamacy operates at the confluence of three interdependent domains: Constructivism establishes the foundational source of authenticity and cultural legitimacy. This authentic capital is then operationalized through Nation Branding, with the strategic objective of accruing Soft Power and international influence. The process is moderated and circumscribed by Heritage Politics, which functions as a critical mechanism for managing risks related to representation and appropriation. The model illustrates the synthesis of cultural substance,

strategic communication, and political stewardship in the instrumentalization of national cuisine.

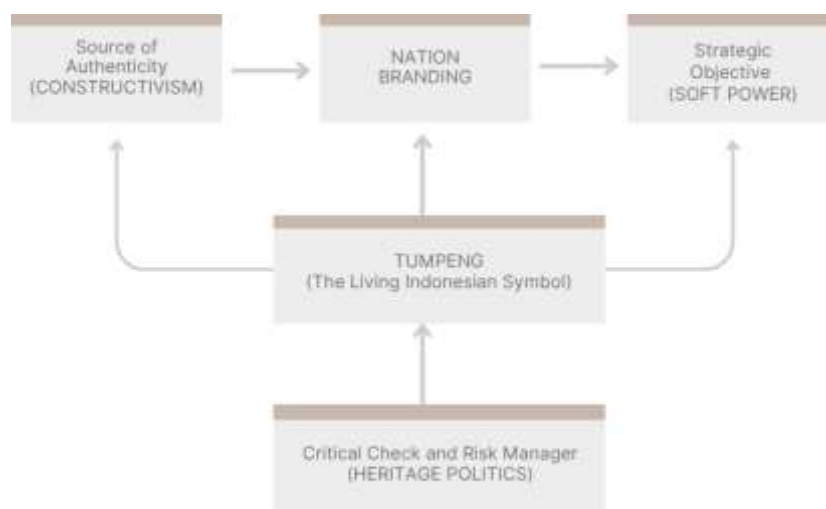


Figure 1: An Integrated Theoretical Framework for Analyzing Gastrodiplomacy as Statecraft.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach based on document analysis to examine Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy and the potential role of Tumpeng. The analysis focuses on the period from 2014, when Tumpeng Sewu was inscribed on Indonesia's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List, to the present.

Data were collected from a purposefully selected range of documents. The final analyzed corpus consisted of 48 documents, detailed in Table 2. This selection was designed to ensure comprehensive and triangulated analysis across policy, media, academic, and heritage domains. A focused review of secondary literature on gastrodiplomacy in Thailand, South Korea, and Japan provided comparative insights.

Table 2: Document Sources for Qualitative Analysis (Final Corpus: N=48).

This table details the final qualitative document corpus, which was constructed through a purposive sampling strategy to ensure analytical rigor and theoretical saturation. It catalogs the four distinct source types, providing the number of documents per type, specific examples, and the analytical purpose each type was intended to serve. The corpus was designed to provide a robust and triangulated empirical foundation for the analysis.

| Document Type | Number of Documents | Specific Sources & Examples | Analytical Purpose |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Policy Documents | 12 | ISUTW launch and progress reports; Ministry press releases (Kemlu, Kemenparekraf); UNESCO Nomination Dossiers (Thailand, Japan, South Korea). | To identify the stated objectives, strategic rationale, and institutional frameworks of official state-led gastrodiplomacy initiatives. |
| Media Analysis | 15 | Leading national newspapers and news agencies (e.g., <i>Kompas</i> , <i>The Jakarta Post</i> , <i>Antara News</i>). | To trace the public narrative, monitor program implementation, and identify societal discourse and challenges related to <i>Tumpeng</i> and ISUTW campaign. |
| Academic Literature | 18 | Foundational theoretical texts (Constructivism, Soft Power, Heritage Politics); context-specific studies on <i>Tumpeng</i> and ISUTW; analyses of comparative national models (Thailand, South Korea, Japan). | To establish the integrated theoretical framework (Figure 1) and provide a scholarly context for analyzing Indonesia's gastrodiplomacy within a global landscape. |
| Cultural Heritage Records | 3 | Official registrations (e.g., National Registry for <i>Tumpeng Sewu</i>); related regional heritage documentation. | To corroborate the formal cultural status, sanctioned meanings, and symbolic value of <i>Tumpeng</i> as a designated national cultural asset. |

A thematic analysis was conducted on this corpus, following established qualitative methods (Bowen, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved an iterative process of systematic coding to identify

recurring patterns and themes. To ensure analytical rigor, themes were prioritized based on their frequency across document types and their salience in addressing the research objectives. The validation

of the coding scheme and thematic structure was achieved through constant comparative analysis within and across the four document domains, which served as a form of triangulation. Discrepancies or divergent interpretations were resolved by revisiting the source documents and the theoretical framework. The emergent themes were then interpreted through a theoretical lens combining Constructivism, Nation Branding, Soft Power, and Heritage Politics.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the principal findings derived from our systematic document analysis. The analysis proceeds in four parts to comprehensively address the research question. First, it examines the multi-dimensional significance of Tumpeng as a political and cultural resource. Second, it diagnoses the core strategic flaw in Indonesia's current approach, which we term the "dual track" impediment. Third, it distills actionable insights from comparative gastrodiploamacy in Asia. Finally, it synthesizes these findings into an integrated policy roadmap, analysing its theoretical logic, its alignment with global development frameworks and the practical challenges of its implementation.

3.1. *Tumpeng as Multi-Dimensional Resource for Statecraft*

To appreciate Tumpeng's potential in Indonesia's foreign policy arsenal, one must analyse it not as a mere of dish but as a core socio-political institution. Our analysis identifies three interconnected dimensions that collectively underpin its value as a vehicle for soft power and sustainable development, reflecting the dynamic relationship between domestic identity and international image central to Constructivist thought (Wendt, 1999).

First, Tumpeng is defined by its deep philosophical and cosmological meaning, which can form the foundation of a compelling national story. Its very form is a product of syncretic worldviews; the cone of rice, or *gunungan* (mountain), represents the cosmic axis *Mahameru*, connecting the meal to foundational Austronesian and Hindu-Buddhist ideas of divinity and cosmic order (Jati, 2014). This is not a static symbol. The communal preparation and the subsequent act of collectively sharing the dish are performative rituals that actively reinforce social harmony (*gotong royong*) and gratitude (*syukur*), effectively transforming the meal into a story about an individual's place within the cosmos and society (Pertiwi et al., 2023). This pre-existing cultural narrative offers a natural foundation for a values-driven approach to diplomacy, setting it apart from

purely commercial branding efforts.

Second, Tumpeng plays a discernible and active role in modern Indonesian nation building. Its consistent and strategic adoption in official national celebrations like Independence Day has elevated it from primarily Javanese custom to a potent pan-Indonesian symbol. This process helps to form what Anderson (2006) termed an "imagined community," using a shared culinary ritual to strengthen national cohesion. However, this unifying process is inherently fraught with the tensions central to heritage politics (Harrison, 2010). The promotion of a symbol that is historically Javanese-centric risks marginalizing the rich culinary traditions of other regions in the archipelago, such as *Rendang* from West Sumatra or *Papeda* from Papua. This presents a critical challenge for policymakers: how to position Tumpeng as a unifying national emblem while simultaneously respecting and incorporating Indonesia's profound cultural diversity, thereby avoiding internal contestation that could undermine its soft power efficacy.

Third, an examination of Tumpeng's political economy reveals a fundamentally decentralized and resilient production system. Unlike a standardized, mass-producible commodity, its authentic preparation is typically reliant on a distributed network of local cooks, small-scale farmers, and community-based small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This localized, often artisanal model inherently supports community economic resilience and sustainable livelihoods. It strongly suggests that any promotional strategy would be most effective, and most authentic, if it focused on strengthening these existing grassroots networks and supply chains, rather than imposing a uniform, top-down, and potentially homogenizing industrial approach. This alignment between cultural practice and economic structure is a crucial asset for a sustainable gastrodiploamacy model.

3.2. *The "Dual Track" Policy Misalignment*

Our analysis of policy documents and program evaluations reveals a clear and consequential strategic fragmentation in Indonesia's gastrodiploamacy, which we term the "dual track" impediment. This represents a classic issue of policy incoherence, where state instruments work at cross-purposes, thereby diluting their overall effectiveness. Track One is the official Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program, a state-led gastrodiploamacy initiative launched in 2021 with clear commercial objectives, including the expansion of Indonesian restaurants abroad and boosting spice exports (Trihartono et al., 2023). However, the

program's implementation has faced significant difficulties. Media reports indicate the ISUTW program has faced implementation challenges, including difficulties with standardization and brand alignment (Tiofani & Prasetya, 2024). One analysis further suggests that the program has struggled to achieve its initial restaurant targets in its early phase (Kriswandwitanaya & Dermawan, 2025). Such operational hurdles risk undermining the program's effectiveness and could potentially promote a fragmented image of Indonesian cuisine on the global stage. Track Two consists of Indonesia's community-anchored ritual heritage, perfectly exemplified by Tumpeng. Although it has been formally recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage item since 2014 (Dirjen Kebudayaan, 2015), it remains largely disconnected from the economic and diplomatic mandates that drive the ISUTW program. It thrives in domestic contexts as a symbol of identity and community but is not leveraged as a strategic asset in the nation's international engagement. This duality represents a significant strategic misalignment. It reflects a missed opportunity to integrate the economic instruments of gastrodiploacy with the nation's most resonant cultural assets. Consequently, the current approach weakens Indonesia's overall soft power strategy: the ISUTW program struggles to project a distinctive and compelling brand narrative, while the considerable symbolic power of Tumpeng remains a largely untapped resource. This gap between cultural substance and diplomatic-commercial strategy creates a "credibility deficit" that Nye (2004) identifies as a primary limiter of soft power.

3.3. *Insights from Comparative Gastrodiploacy*

A careful comparison with other Asian nations provides carefully tailored and practical lessons for developing a more sustainable and holistic model, illustrating different solutions to the challenge of integrating culture and diplomacy.

Japan demonstrated the strategic power of a master narrative over product promotion. Its successful UNESCO nomination for Washoku did not focus on a single dish but instead expertly framed the entire culinary culture as a valuable "social practice" rooted in "respect for nature" and sustainable resource use (UNESCO, 2013b). The clear lesson for Indonesia is that promoting the underlying philosophy of Tumpeng (harmony, balance, and community) is likely to be more powerful, durable, and less susceptible to commodification in the long term than promoting any single recipe or standardized form.

South Korea clearly highlighted the critical role of non-state actors and diaspora networks. Its "Global Hansik" campaign was significantly amplified by overseas Korean communities who acted as credible, grassroots cultural ambassadors, providing a layer of organic authenticity that state-led programs cannot replicate (Pham, 2013). This strongly suggests that Indonesia would benefit from proactively collaborating with its global diaspora, treating them as essential partners and co-creators in gastrodiploacy rather than as passive targets for messaging. This leverages a key soft power asset that operates outside formal state channels.

Thailand effectively showcased the potential of culinary proliferation but also faced subsequent scholarly and public critiques regarding its environmental footprint and the inequitable distribution of benefits to smallholder farmers (Suntikul, 2019). This experience reveals a common gap in first-generation gastrodiploacy and presents a clear opportunity for Indonesia: to explicitly design its strategy for domestic co-benefits, ensuring that international promotion also directly strengthens local supply chains, promotes agroecological practices, and contributes meaningfully to national food system resilience. This aligns diplomatic objectives with developmental goals.

3.4. *Toward an Integrated Policy Roadmap*

The proposed roadmap (Table 3) is designed to overcome the "dual track" impediment through a synergistic framework where domestic development and international projection are mutually reinforcing. Its core logic, illustrated in Figure 2, demonstrates that the Domestic Foundation (Pillars 1 & 2) generates the authenticity for International Soft Power (Pillar 3), which in turn creates a feedback loop of demand that strengthens the domestic economy. The Cross-Cutting Enablers bind this system together, while the pursuit of UNESCO recognition acts as a Unifying Outcome for the entire strategy.

This integrated approach transforms the roadmap from a cultural strategy into a direct contribution to Indonesia's international commitments. Its design aligns with key UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): it supports SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by leveraging Tumpeng's model of a balanced diet in public health and education (WHO, 2020); drives SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through MSME-focused growth in Pillar 1; advances SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) via "Tumpeng Heritage Trails"; applies SDG 12 (Responsible

Consumption and Production) through agroecological sourcing in Pillar 2; and embodies SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through the

cross-ministerial task force, directly resolving the “dual track” failure.

Table 3: A Proposed Integrated Policy Roadmap for Tumpeng's Sustainable Gastrodiplomacy.

This table outlines a comprehensive, multi-pillar policy framework designated to operationalize the theoretical model presented in

Figure 1. It moves from strategic intent to actionable interventions, detailing for each pillar the corresponding policy domains, responsible stakeholders, specific policy instruments, and intended sustainable development outcomes. The final column explicitly anchors each component in its foundational theoretical and normative concepts, demonstrating the translation of theory into practice.

| Strategic Pillars & Policy Domains | Key Stakeholders & Implementing Agencies | Policy Interventions & Instruments | Expected Outcomes & Sustainability Impact | Theoretical & Normative Foundations |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Pillar 1: Economic & Regional Development | Ministry of Tourism & Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf); Ministry of Cooperatives & SMEs (Kemenkop UKM); Local Governments; MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises); Farmer Groups. | Develop “Tumpeng Heritage Trails” as culinary tourism routes. Provide entrepreneurial & culinary skills training for MSMEs. Create digital platforms linking Tumpeng MSMEs to local agricultural supply chains. | - Job creation and sustainable MSME growth in rural and urban areas. Enhanced regional culinary branding and competitiveness. Stronger rural-urban economic integration. | Constructivism (local identity), Nation Branding (destination branding), SDGs 8 & 11. |
| Pillar 2: Food Security & Resilience | Ministry of Agriculture (Kementan); Ministry of Health (Kemenkes); Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen); Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology (Kemdiktisaintek); Women's Family Welfare (PKK); Schools; Village Institutions. | Promote agroecological sourcing of Tumpeng ingredients. Integrate Tumpeng's balanced diet model into school meal programmes and nutrition education. Launch community health campaigns using Tumpeng as a model for diverse food consumption. | - Improved dietary diversity & nutrition outcomes. Strengthened resilience of local farmers and food systems. Increased public awareness of food culture as integral to health and identity. | Constructivism (food as identity), Resilience Theory, SDGs 2 & 3. |
| Pillar 3: Soft Power & Nation Branding | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu); Embassies; Ministry of Culture (Kemenbud); Diaspora Networks. | Feature Tumpeng in diplomatic receptions and international summits, accompanied by cultural narrations. Support diaspora-led Tumpeng events and culinary pop-ups abroad. Strategically pursue UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) recognition for Tumpeng's philosophy and practice. | Expanded global cultural visibility and recognition. Strengthened nation branding anchored in values of harmony and community. Enhanced symbolic soft power in global relations. | Soft Power, Nation Branding, Gastrodiplomacy, SDG 17. |
| Cross-Cutting Enablers | Digital & Media Strategy: Social media platforms, content creators, embassies. Institutional Coordination & Sequencing: National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Cross-ministerial Task Force, Cultural Attachés. | Produce high-quality digital storytelling on Tumpeng's cultural meaning. Establish a cross-ministerial task force; implement a phased plan (e.g., Short-term: guidelines/pilots; Medium-term: scaling; | Broadens audience reach and contextualises cultural meaning. Ensures policy coherence, sustainable scaling, and institutional memory. Preserves authenticity, ensures inclusivity, and manages international perceptions. | Heritage Politics (safeguarding, authenticity), Policy Implementation Theory |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Risk Mitigation: Ministry of Culture (Kemenbud), Cultural NGOs, Media. | Long-term: UNESCO bid). Develop clear guidelines to prevent over-commercialization; promote inclusive narratives representing Indonesia's diversity. | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

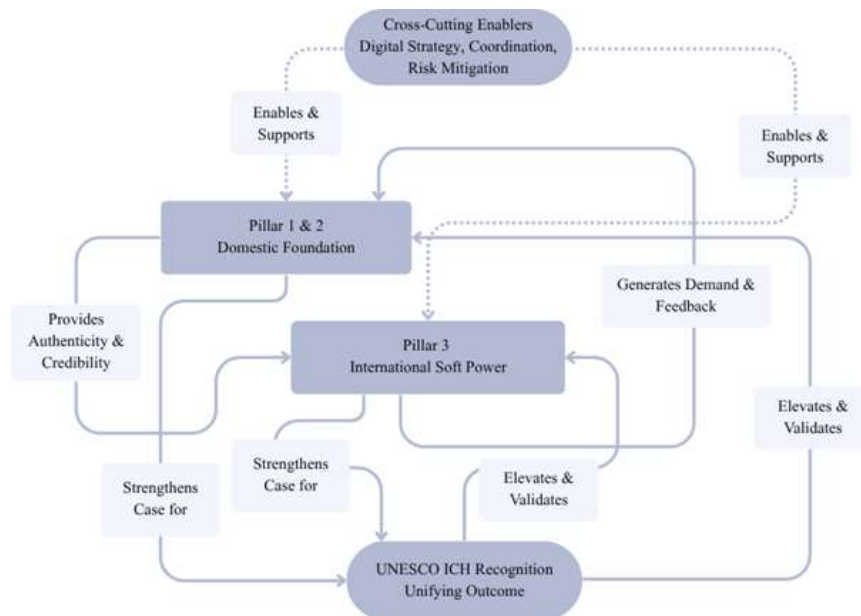


Figure 2: The Virtuous Cycle of Sustainable Gastrodiploacy.

This diagram models the dynamic, self-reinforcing logic of the proposed three-pillar policy roadmap. The Domestic Foundation (Pillars 1 & 2) and International Soft Power (Pillar 3) form the core virtuous cycle, connected by solid arrows indicating primary, reciprocal causality. Dotted arrows illustrate how the Cross-Cutting Enablers (Digital Strategy, Coordination, Risk Mitigation) support and enable both pillars. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) recognition is positioned as the unifying outcome of the system, a goal that both results from a successful cycle and, once achieved, validates and elevates all components.

The roadmap's theoretical power lies in its operationalization of Constructivism. The domestic interventions in Pillars 1 and 2 function as "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995), where every day acts like preparing Tumpeng continually re-create and internalize values of gotong royong and harmony. This continuous "identity work" (Wendt, 1999) provides the essential raw material for soft power. The international actions in Pillar 3 are the logical extension; the Tumpeng presented diplomatically is powerful because it reflects a living domestic reality, thereby closing the theoretical loop between domestic identity construction and international attraction (Nye, 2004).

The roadmap's viability is demonstrated by its proactive approach to two key challenges: environmental adaptation and bureaucratic coordination. First, while Tumpeng's traditional composition is not inherently low-impact, its philosophical principle of balance (*keseimbangan*) provides a framework for evolution (Jati, 2014). The "Risk Mitigation" enabler guides this by encouraging

practices like local sourcing and plant-based accompaniments, aligning Tumpeng's presentation with modern sustainability priorities and preventing a resource-intensive, standardized global model. Second, the proposed cross-ministerial task force will inevitably face competing priorities. For instance, the Ministry of Tourism's desire for easily marketable "Tumpeng experiences" may conflict with the Ministry of Culture's mandate to protect ritual authenticity, while the Ministry of Trade's export focus could clash with the Ministry of Agriculture's goal of local food sovereignty. The roadmap's credibility is enhanced by its anticipation of these obstacles, suggesting the task force's mandate include a formal conflict resolution mechanism and a shared metric of success, such as a composite index measuring cultural vitality, MSME resilience, and positive international media sentiment.

A key test of this governance model will be the pursuit of UNESCO status for "The Philosophy and Social Practice of Tumpeng," a process that both requires and reinforces the roadmap's collaborative

framework. Anticipating these practical challenges enables the roadmap to serve as a grounded guide for managing the political and economic dimensions of cultural promotion.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study argues for reorienting Indonesia's gastrodiploacy from a fragmented, promotional model toward an integrated and sustainable one. We identify a strategic disconnect in the current "dual track" approach, which separates the commercial "Indonesia Spice Up the World (ISUTW) program from the cultural stewardship of foods like Tumpeng. To bridge this divide, we propose a policy roadmap that aligns domestic cultural-economic development with credible international soft power, creating a self-reinforcing cycle.

4.1. Toward an Integrated Approach

The central challenge is not a shortage of cultural assets, but their disjointed application. While ISUTW risks promoting a commercialized, fragmented image, treating Tumpeng merely as a heritage may reduce its contemporary relevance. Our model demonstrates how domestic and international objectives can be mutually reinforcing

- Pillar 1 (Economic Development) gains distinctiveness and ethical standing when anchored in authentic cultural narratives and sustainable practices.
- Pillar 2 (Food Security) is strengthened by using Tumpeng's dietary model to improve nutrition and support local food systems.
- Pillar 3 (Soft power) becomes credible when the identity projected internationally reflects genuinely valued domestic practices.

This perspective extends existing frameworks by elevating the purpose of gastrodiploacy beyond economic metrics to include cultural vitality, community well-being, and ecological health.

4.2. Contributions and Policy Implications

Theoretically, we offer an integrated framework synthesizing Constructivism, Nation Branding, Soft Power, and Heritage Politics. This conceptualizes gastrodiploacy as a dynamic interplay of internal identity work, external image projection, and political negotiation over meaning. We also advance the concept of "sustainable gastrodiploacy" by embedding UN Sustainable Development Goals into

culinary statecraft.

For policy, the roadmap is a practical tool for overcoming ministerial silos. It shows how cultural depth enhances tourism, domestic authenticity strengthens diplomatic appeal, and cultural demand can support sustainable agriculture. Success depends on robust governance, particularly a cross-ministerial task force with a clear mandate and conflict-resolution mechanisms, to manage tensions between commercialization and authenticity, and between national symbolism and regional diversity.

4.3. Forward Directions: Implementation and Research

Effective implementation must navigate key risks: the commodification of heritage, ensuring inclusivity beyond Javanese traditions, and overcoming bureaucratic inertia. Mitigation requires contextualized international narration, inclusive framing alongside other regional cuisines, and political commitment to pilot projects and phased scaling. Future research should prioritize: (1) Empirical evaluation of pilot outcomes (economic impact, cultural pride, perception shifts); (2) Sub-national comparisons of Indonesian regional cuisines to inform a multi-symbol national framework; (3) The role of the diaspora as cultural mediators; and (4) Cross-country learning from other Global South contexts (e.g., Peru, which links cuisine with rural development; Mexico, which integrates heritage protection through UNESCO; and Nigeria, which is beginning to institutionalize gastrodiploacy).

4.4. Concluding Perspective

This article proposes that integrating cultural heritage with sustainable development offers a more substantive pathway for Indonesia's gastrodiploacy. Tumpeng, with its philosophical depth and communal symbolism, provides a compelling anchor. The roadmap outlines a virtuous cycle in which cultural promotion supports domestic well-being, which in turn generates a more authentic and resilient international appeal.

While adapting Tumpeng for global diplomacy presents significant challenges, the pursuit of a national identity that is both culturally authentic and broadly beneficial warrants committed, nuanced effort. This study serves not as a final blueprint, but as a structured foundation for further dialogue, research, and policy innovation.

Acknowledgments: The authors wish to express their sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Rudy Harjanto (LSPR Communication and Business Institute, Jakarta, Indonesia) and Dr. M. Syafi'i Anwar (President University, Jakarta, Indonesia) for their valuable guidance and critical insights during the development of this study. We

also extend our appreciation to Prof. Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani (Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia) for his constructive feedback and support. This research received no specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The views expressed and any remaining errors are solely those of the authors.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. R. O. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). Verso.
- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brulotte, R. L., & Di Giovine, M. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Edible identities: Food as cultural heritage* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315578781>
- Chapple-Sokol, S. (2013). Culinary diplomacy: Breaking bread to win hearts and minds. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 8(2), 161–183. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191X-12341244>
- Di Giovine, M. A. (2009). *The heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and tourism*. Lexington Books.
- Dirjen Kebudayaan. (2015, January 19). *Penetapan warisan budaya takbenda Indonesia 2014*. Kementerian Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. <https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/penetapan-warisan-budaya-takbenda-indonesia-2014/>
- Farina, F. (2018). Japan's gastrodiploamacy as soft power: Global washoku and national food security. *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, 17(1), 153–146. <https://doi.org/10.17477/jcea.2018.17.1.152>
- Harrison, R. (Ed.). (2010). The politics of heritage. In *Understanding the politics of heritage* (pp. 154–196). Manchester University Press in association with the Open University.
- Ichijo, A., & Ranta, R. (2016). *Food, national identity and nationalism: From everyday to global politics*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137483133>
- Jati, I. R. A. P. (2014). Local wisdom behind tumpeng as an icon of Indonesian traditional cuisine. *Nutrition & Food Science*, 44(4), 324–334. <https://doi.org/10.1108/NFS-11-2013-0141>
- Kriswandwitanaya, M. F., & Dermawan, W. (2025). The potential of the spice route as an instrument of nation branding and promotion for Indonesia: A SWOT analysis, 10(1).
- Luša, Đ., & Jakešević, R. (2017). The role of food in diplomacy: Communicating and “winning hearts and minds” through food. *Medijske Studije*, 8(16), 99–119. <https://doi.org/10.20901/ms.8.16.7>
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics* (1st ed.). Public Affairs.
- Pertiwi, S. A., Harjanto, R., Damayanti, N., Sari, Y., & Akib, S. (2023). Decoding the meaning of tumpeng in Roland Barthes's semiology perspective. *Wacana Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.32509/wacana.v22i2.3553>
- Pham, M. J. (2013). Food as communication: A case study of South Korea's gastrodiploamacy. *Journal of International Service*, 22(1), 1–22.
- Rockower, P. S. (2012). Recipes for gastrodiploamacy. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 8(3), 235–246. <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2012.17>
- Rockower, P. S. (2020). A guide to gastrodiploamacy. In N. Snow & N. J. Cull (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy* (2nd ed., pp. 205–212). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429465543-25>
- Spence, C. (2016). Gastrodiploamacy: Assessing the role of food in decision-making. *Flavour*, 5(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13411-016-0050-8>
- Suntikul, W. (2019). Gastrodiploamacy in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(9), 1076–1094. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1363723>
- Surya, R., & Lee, A. G.-Y. (2022). Exploring the philosophical values of kimchi and kimjang culture. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 9(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-022-00136-5>
- Surya, R., & Nugroho, D. (2023). Kimchi throughout millennia: A narrative review on the early and modern history of kimchi. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 10(1), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00171-w>

- Tiofani, K., & Prasetya, A. W. (2024, December 27). *Kemenekraf tegaskan program Indonesia Spice Up the World masih berlanjut*. KOMPAS.com. <https://www.kompas.com/food/read/2024/12/27/153100475/kemenekraf-tegaskan-program-indonesia-spice-up-the-world-masih-berlanjut>
- Trihartono, A., Patriadi, H. B., & Hara, A. E. (2023). *Gastrodiplomasi Indonesia*. Pandiva Buku.
- UNESCO. (2013a). *Kimjang, making and sharing kimchi in the Republic of Korea*. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/kimjang-making-and-sharing-kimchi-in-the-republic-of-korea-00881>
- UNESCO. (2013b). *Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year*. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/washoku-traditional-dietary-cultures-of-the-japanese-notably-for-the-celebration-of-new-year-00869>
- UNESCO. (2024). *Tomyum Kung – UNESCO intangible cultural heritage*. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/tomyum-kung-01879>
- Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- WHO. (2020, April 29). *Healthy diet*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>