

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS ACTOR IN IMPLEMENTING JAPANESE GASTRODIPLOMACY: THE CASE OF AWKITCHEN RESTAURANT IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Business actors as one of the non-state actors play a role in implementing a country's foreign policy, especially in introducing a national image or identity through public diplomacy, which is known as gastrodiplomacy. This article aims to identify and examine the role of a fusion cuisine restaurant in carrying out Japanese gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia. The article is developed from qualitative research applying a case study method. Based on data collecting from interviews, observations, and library research, the Japanese restaurant under investigation is not just a business actor serving fusion cuisine in Indonesia. The restaurant has contributed to showing the positive side of globalization or taming westernization, and its business activities can be categorized as unrecognized gastrodiplomacy. The restaurant has participated in implementing the function of gastrodiplomacy even though without any formal affinity and official recognition from the Japanese government agencies. The fusion cuisine restaurant has succeeded in helping carry out the mission of the Japanese state in introducing its image or identity.

Keywords: Gastrodiplomacy, Globalization, Soft Power, Business Actor, Japan-Indonesia.

1. Introduction

The idea of using national cuisine as an element in diplomacy and international relations has a very long history (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 109). Over the centuries, food ingredients, such as spices, especially salt, have been used for significant economic and diplomatic missions, either as currency or gifts in building and strengthening relationships (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 109). The government initiative to explain to foreign citizens the nuances of the food and culture of a country is known as gastrodiplomacy. Thailand, Taiwan, Peru, and South Korea are among countries that have implemented gastrodiplomacy to create a bigger nation image for themselves while increasing understanding of their culture (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10-11). Following these countries is Japan. As a soft power superpower, in addition to manga and anime, Japan also uses food to introduce the identity and image of its country (Watanabe & McConnell, 2018).

According to Reynolds (2012), the soft power generated through food has enabled Japan to increase its global appeal, achieving "democratic change", such as adopting Japanese knowledge or problem-solving skills in countries where *washoku* (Japanese Food) is most widespread. Generally, gastrodiplomacy is always associated with state actors. However, in Japan, non-state actors such as business people can also play an essential role in carrying out gastrodiplomacy. Some business, such as Ochiai Shuzojyo Co., Ltd. (which produces shochu from sweet potatoes and unusual ingredients like ginger and pumpkin) (JETRO, n.d.), directly involves under government's auspices while some others unintentionally implement it. This article wants to examine the role of business actors in gastrodiplomacy by observing the indirect participation of the fusion cuisine restaurant in implementing Japanese gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia.

This article will be divided into three main parts. It begins with an exploration of literature to gain an understanding of gastrodiplomacy. Then, the article will discuss the participation of the fusion cuisine restaurant in implementing Japanese gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia and describe findings related to the role of business actors in gastrodiplomacy. In the final section, a lesson learned will be discussed before ending with the conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gastrodiplomacy

The use of food for political purposes, in the sense of binding, persuading, convincing, and at the same time creating international understanding and cooperation is known as gastrodiplomacy. This practice has been carried out for centuries since Biblical times, the Roman Empire, the Italian Renaissance, to the beginning of Nineteenth-century France (Flammang, 2016: 213; Sonenshine et al., 2016: 6). However, the term gastrodiplomacy was only widely known when it appeared for the first time in *The Economist* in 2002. The magazine discussed the Thai government's efforts to promote Thai food through its "Global Thai" plan (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 108).

As the food reflects the culture and is increasingly becoming an essential tool for diplomatic engagement (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 23), gastrodiplomacy is also becoming widely known. Diplomats define gastrodiplomacy as winning hearts and minds through the stomach, building emotional connections through food, showing common ground, and creating 'a safe common space where conversation can begin' (Flammang, 2016: 212-213). This is because food is able to stir emotion, trigger memories, explore the history, and define who we are (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10). Sam Chapple-Sokol explained that the use of national food and cuisine as part of cultural diplomacy is intended to "create cross-cultural understanding with the hope of increasing interaction and cooperation" between

communities and countries (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 108; Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10).

Several author, such as Paul Rockower, also explains that gastrodiplomacy is the relationship between food and foreign policy, and how countries communicate their culture through food (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10). According to him, gastrodiplomacy is our way of communicating our culture, reaching foreign citizens, and sharing culture, history and heritage through food (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10). Rockower uses the term gastrodiplomacy to refer to track three diplomacy and the interactions between actors below the state level (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 108). The beauty of gastrodiplomacy is to be a medium that inspires many people and empowers the diaspora community to share their traditions and culture (Sonenshine et al., 2016: 10). Unlike the traditional symbols of the country in general, namely the flag, currency and national anthem, food has the power to attract and can be desired by many individuals, thereby increasing the attractiveness and dignity of the country (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 108). National cuisine can unite society, promote the image of a country, and enhance cultural diplomacy, as well as promote economic and trade growth while supporting the tourism industry at the global level (Ichijo & Ranta, 2016: 108-109; Flammang, 2016: 213).

Based on the studies above, gastrodiplomacy has four essential roles, including: (1) communicating culture, (2) encouraging community interaction and understanding, (3) inspire many people, and (4) empowering the diaspora community. Communicating culture here means sharing culture and heritage through food, referring to the third track of diplomacy carried out by actors below the state level. Not only by business actors, but the third track of diplomacy can also be carried out by individuals and groups, thus encouraging interaction and community. Gastrodiplomacy, also inspires many people as well as empowers the diaspora community. Food can

be an inspiration for anyone who has eaten it, including those in the diaspora community who want to share their traditions and culture.

2.2. Gastrodiplomacy by Non-State Actors

As part of public diplomacy, gastrodiplomacy is seen as an innovation in diplomacy through the culinary world and is also seen as an effective way to attract many countries to develop it (Dewi & Priadarsini, 2018). For example, Japan is carrying out its gastrodiplomacy practice through non-state actors, namely The Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO). Founded in July 2007, JRO's purpose is to "support Japanese restaurants around the world and increase the number of Japanese restaurants in order to convey the appeal of Japanese food to the world, improve the technology of Japanese restaurants, and contribute to the development of overseas markets for Japanese food and ingredients" (JRO, n.d.). Furthermore, there are six activities carried out by JRO, including: (1) Business related to support for establishing local organizations overseas; (2) Business related to the publication of magazines and creation of teaching materials for improving cooking skills; (3) Business related to human resource development through seminars; (4) Business related to understanding overseas Japanese food needs and local PR activities; (5) Business related to information exchange through exchanges between overseas members; and (6) Business related to research on the export promotion of Japanese ingredients (JRO, n.d.).

Additionally, Peru also involves non-state actors in implementing gastrodiplomacy strategies and linking them to the tourism sector (Putri, 2019). According to Putri (2019), the private sector has a significant role in developing gastronomic tourism. The commercialization of tourism products, especially gastronomic tourism, is a task that needs to be carried out by the private sector. In her research, Putri (2019) also explained that the academic sector (represented by the

academic group consisted of gastronomic experts and critics, journalists, The Pachacútec Culinary Institute, universities, and other types of non-formal education units) contributing to knowledge resources in the form of scientific research and publications, as well as human resource training. The findings in Putri's research (2019) explain that the implementation of gastrodiplomacy in Peru is a form of public diplomacy through people-to-people diplomacy. This diplomatic interaction is not only carried out by government officials but also by non-state actors such as academics, chefs, entrepreneurs, to NGOs (Putri, 2019).

As one of the countries with various culinary delights, Indonesia also develops its culture as part of diplomacy (Dewi & Priadarsini, 2018). Not only developed abroad, but Indonesia also develops domestic gastrodiplomacy through the formal and informal sectors, such as the role of non-state actors in the Ubud Food Festival (UFF) (Dewi & Priadarsini, 2018). Not only limited to a culinary festival, but UFF is also a place to preserve and promote Indonesia's culinary heritage, which directly contributes to the tourism sector and Indonesia's economic growth (Dewi & Priadarsini, 2018).

Dewi & Priadarsini's research (2018) aims to identify non-state actors who play a role in Indonesian gastrodiplomacy through UFF and analyze them using descriptive qualitative research methods. The findings explain that gastrodiplomacy is included in the second track of diplomacy, which is no longer aimed at the government and state levels, but shifts to non-state actors such as individuals, business actors, media, or interest groups. If it involves the role of non-state actors, the gastrodiplomacy process can be readily accepted compared to formal or official channels from the government (Dewi & Priadarsini, 2018). Dewi & Priadarsini (2018) believe that the steps taken through the UFF can support the tourism sector and an opportunity to increase economic growth, especially in boosting people's income.

Next is Sinaga & Sukandar's research (2019), which discusses how Turkish gastrodiplomacy is carried out in Indonesia by Zahra Turkish Ice Cream, who acts as a non-state actor introducing and spreading Turkish culture by selling Turkish ice cream, known as Dondurma. The findings in Sinaga & Sukandar (2019) research results are that Zahra Turkish Ice Cream has indeed been shown to play a role as a non-state actor conducting gastrodiplomacy to introduce and disseminate the uniqueness of the Turkish state. Starting with introducing a typical Turkish dance, then the uniform used by the ice-cream seller is typical Turkish clothing, Turkish nuance decorations, to the typical Turkish ice cream, namely Dondurma (Sinaga & Sukandar, 2019).

This study also found the reason for the establishment of Zahra Turkish Ice Cream, namely the sense of pride that the company owners have for their own country to bring Turkey's uniqueness to the international arena, especially in Indonesia. Seeing this phenomenon, the Turkish Embassy finally decided to make Zahra Turkish Ice Cream an embassy icon. This company indirectly succeeded in helping the Turkish state realize cooperation with Indonesia, especially in the economic sector. Zahra Turkish Ice Cream received positive responses and was accepted by the Indonesian public for its unique and friendly way of selling. It is not surprising that many Indonesian buyers are ultimately interested in learning more about Turkish culture (Sinaga & Sukandar, 2019).

3. Research Method

The research was conducted in 2021 using a qualitative approach with a case study research method. The investigation focused on a Japanese fusion cuisine restaurant in Jakarta, the AWKitchen by Akira Watanabe (AWK). This study used interviews and observations to collect primary data, and library research for secondary data. Thematic analysis was applied to infer meaning from data and to construct a narrative according to the analytical framework.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Japanese Gastrodiplomacy

Japanese gastrodiplomacy began to develop in 2004 when The Japan Brand Working Group (JBWG) conducted an in-depth discussion on nation branding. They released a report entitled Promotion of Japan Brand Strategy in 2005, where culinary culture was identified as one of the three most important contents in cultural diplomacy along with local Japanese fashion and products. The report also emphasized the need to develop strategies to improve food education at home and promote washoku abroad (JBWG, 2005).

In the same year, the Committee for the Promotion of Research on Food Culture (in Japanese: Shoku Bunka Kenkyū Kondankai) formed within the Strategic Council on Intellectual Property reaffirmed the importance of food as a tool for promoting a positive image of Japan as well as describing the situation of Japanese restaurants abroad in terms of quantity, preparation techniques, and customers by forming a report entitled Promotion of Japanese Food Culture (日本食文化の推進) (Committee for the Promotion of Research on Food Culture, 2005). The report also recommends several practical actions to be taken by the Japanese government, including the creation of relevant texts on Japanese cuisine standards, the establishment of culinary training courses for foreign chefs, strengthening collaboration between farmers and restaurants, and introducing traditional Japanese cuisine to foreign tourists in Japan (Committee for the Promotion of Research on Food Culture, 2005). Japan also launched The Washoku-Try Japan's Good Food Business campaign in October 2006, a joint project between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). This project introduces Japanese cuisine, especially at events organized by Japanese diplomatic missions abroad, and creates consumer demand through the media (MOFA, 2011).

In Indonesia, according to Adam, Iqbal, and Trihartono (2017), Japanese gastrodiplomacy is a form of public diplomacy that combines diplomacy with culture, food, and nation branding. It combines elements and concepts of cultural diplomacy, building a national reputation, and Halal principles to elevate a positive image of a country. Through the implementation of The Japan Halal Food Project from 2013-2015, Japan has used its gastrodiplomacy strategy in Indonesia to elaborate on the process and the idea of creating an image of Japan as a Muslim-friendly country (Adam, Iqbal, & Trihartono, 2017). Gastrodiplomacy emerged as a tangible form of Japanese diplomacy to form a new identity to realize its national interests after the Cold War. Japan's new identity aims to establish Japan's image as a Muslim-friendly country. Gastrodiplomacy through The Japan Halal Food Project in Indonesia involves state actors and non-state actors as a logical implication of public involvement in the diplomacy process (Adam, Iqbal, & Trihartono, 2017).

Dewi's (2019) study also discusses The Japan Halal Food Project as one of Japan's efforts to form new relationships with Muslim countries, for example, Indonesia. Japan's efforts in The Japan Halal Food Project are aimed at increasing Muslim tourists visiting Japan. Besides receiving much information about Islam and Halal products, Japan can also reduce doubts about the Muslim community, especially the perception of terrorism. On the other hand, Indonesia got many lessons from Japan, especially regarding the strength of Japanese products to be implemented into Indonesian culinary products. Through the Japan Halal Food Project, Indonesia can learn from Japan by holding events, leader opinions, product marketing, and building relationships through the media. Dewi (2019) closes her research by explaining the purpose of Japanese gastrodiplomacy to make it easier for Japan to carry out a communication strategy with Indonesia. Japan sees

gastrodiplomacy as a "more holistic approach to raise international awareness of the image of an edible country through the promotion of its culinary and cultural heritage" (Dewi, 2019). This program proves that anyone can become a diplomatic actor, from the government, society, well-known figures, to the internet media (Dewi, 2019).

4.2. Globalization and Fusion Cuisine Restaurant: The Case of AWKitchen Restaurants in Indonesia

Through The Japan Halal Food Project, Japanese gastrodiplomacy is still limited to projects for creating an image of Japan as a Muslim-friendly country. It cannot officially provide endorsements to other business actors who also want to develop the image of Japan through food. Business actors also play an important role because their presence indirectly helps to benefit Japan's image. The phenomenon of globalization has succeeded in helping business actors continue developing themselves without government support outside of The Japan Halal Food Project scheme. The globalization facilitates ease for business actors, including restaurants, to develop their business overseas while promoting Japan's image as in the case of AWK.

The establishment of the AWK restaurant in Indonesia began with the owner of JADDI Foods. They tasted food directly from the AWK restaurant in Japan. The owner of JADDI Foods was then interested and wanted to meet Chef Akira Watanabe in person to establish a cooperative relationship to open a branch in Indonesia (franchise) (J. Megijet & T. Yomoda, personal communication, 04 April 2021). Then in 2014, the AWK restaurant finally opened its first outlet at Plaza Senayan, to be precise at Jalan Asia Afrika number 8. Doni Wanandi, as CEO of JADDI Foods, revealed that it took him two years to attract Chef Akira Watanabe to be interested in opening his restaurant in Indonesia (Setyanti, 2016). The difference between the AWK restaurant in Japan and

Indonesia lies in the concept. Each outlet of the AWK restaurant in Japan has its uniqueness. For example, one outlet only sells pasta, and another outlet sells pizza, so it is divided into formal, casual, bar, and resort. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, both pasta and pizza are combined into one (J. Megijet & T. Yomoda, personal communication, 04 April 2021).

The ease of doing business in the era of globalization has dramatically helped the presence of the AWK restaurant in Jakarta. Following the meeting in Japan, the two sides finally responded to each other, giving commencement to a form of cooperation and agreeing to open a branch in Indonesia. In short, globalization helps and make it easier for JADDI Foods and Chef Akira Watanabe to do business. In light of globalization, it can be also inferred that the AWK restaurant has taken advantage of globalization to create a shared social space while at the same time forming a new perception of Japan through food.

Creating a shared social space refers to how the food initially only produced in Japan and consumed by local Japanese residents, now can be produced in Indonesia and consumed directly by many Indonesian individuals and groups. We observe that this point is essential because many things can be explored deeper with a shared social space. For example, these foods have succeeded in uniting consumers from different backgrounds by having the same interest in the culinary world. Simmel (1997) explains that of all the things that everyone has in common, the most common thing is that they eat and drink. As a result, a sociological structure of eating is formed where food can connect each individual and unite the frequency even though initially, they have absolutely no special interest in gathering together (Simmel, 1997). Simmel (1997) wants to emphasize that food has an immeasurable sociological significance. Some interviewees even directly stated, "I think this can be concluded as Japanizing western food, or introducing the taste or

culture of Japanese to European culture connoisseurs with a culinary touch" (I. Nicholas, personal communication, 28 March 2021).

Another example is that food is an inspiration for researchers like the authors to dig deeper into its meaning than just eating it. We mention both examples because of the attractiveness that arises from the menu served by this restaurant, as will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Fusion Cuisine as Soft Power

Fusion cuisine, as a new menu developed by the AWK restaurant, is an appeal for this restaurant showing a unique Japanese image and remain in accordance with the policies of the Japanese Government. Fusion cuisine that will be discussed in this research is the signature dish from the AWK restaurant. A signature dish is commonly used to describe a meal associated with a particular restaurant or chef, referring to a chef's "homemade" specialty. This specialization can serve several purposes, such as helping to give a restaurant a specific identity or turning someone into a loyal customer (Dye, 2021). Signature dishes are emotional, by using the right ingredients, a chef will have a work that is usually characteristic, viscous, and can be a reason for many people to visit a restaurant (Femina, 2018). However, a signature dish can also help reflect the image of a country, for example, when a restaurant wants to introduce its country's specialties adapted to local tastes. As a result, the signature dish gives identity and gives an impact in the form of a taste that has been adapted to the taste of the people in a certain country.

One of the signature dishes of the AWK restaurant that can attract attention and can be a reason for many people to come, namely Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil. When interviewing Chef Toru Yomoda, he explained that Nori, Shiso Herb, and Japanese Mushroom showed distinctive Japanese flavors in Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe

and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil (J. Megijet & T. Yomoda, personal communication, 04 April 2021). These three ingredients attract visitors who want to enjoy fusion cuisine or pasta mixed with Japanese ingredients.



Picture 4.3.1. Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil

The soft power of the dishes cooked by Chef Akira Watanabe makes diners who eat them feel the image or feel of Japan without having to go directly to Japan. To find out whether visitors feel Japanese images or nuances, the authors interviewed five interviewees. Few of them did not like Japanese food because it was raw and smelled fishy. Some say personally, "I do not like Japanese food because I thought Japanese food is mostly served raw" (S. Andreas, personal communication, 26 March 2021). Meanwhile, the others like Japanese food and become loyal customers (customers who returned even once or twice) of the AWK restaurant.

Several interviewees who have eaten Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil felt the nuances of Japan. Some stated that because of "the fresh taste of fish eggs" (N. Rachel, personal communication, 26 March 2021), there were who suspect "using Japanese sauce for cooking" it (D. Henley, personal communication, 23 March 2021), and some

conclude that this "food is part of Japanization" (I. Nicholas, personal communication, 28 March 2021). One of the interviewees who felt Japanese nuances described in detail that "Japanese nuances were felt even before eating the food" (G. Ivan, personal communication, 13 April 2021). This is because the pungent aroma of seaweed has been inhaled at the beginning due to the humid air of the spaghetti underneath, including when the spaghetti is stirred so that all the components are evenly mixed. He admitted that his guess was wrong because this food was delicious and tasty, especially with "the combination of fish, eggs, and seaweed" (G. Ivan, personal communication, 13 April 2021). On the other hand, there was also interviewees who did not feel the nuances of Japan when eating it, and he still felt this food as food that came from the West (S. Andreas, personal communication, 26 March 2021).

If explored more profound, the concept of soft power plays an important role, especially the point of the power of attraction or how the AWK restaurant attracts so that visitors who would love Japanese cuisine that is combined with contemporary food. Fan (2008) stated that the effectiveness of soft power depends on the perceptions and responses of the target country formed by the host country, and the target country determines what is attractive and what is not. Like this research, to find out how effective the steps that the AWK restaurant has taken, the authors conducted interviews with five interviewees who had tasted Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil. The views of several interviewees changed, and they admitted that they felt the nuances of images of Japan. Moreover, some even concluded that this food was part of "Japanization" (I. Nicholas, personal communication, 28 March 2021). The responses show that it is effective in generating soft power, particularly in promoting the flexible appeal of Japan through fusion cuisine. This also indicates that the AWK restaurant is also conducting

gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia, which will be discussed more in the next section.

4.4. Reading AWK Restaurant in Implementing Unrecognized Gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia

Seeing that both Indonesian and Japanese people have the same interest in Cod Roe, the AWK restaurant as a Japanese Italian restaurant innovated to create food that has never been found anywhere else, known as Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil. The AWK restaurant uses ingredients made directly by Japanese chefs (homemade), for example, in 2014 by Chef Tanaka, in 2016 by Chef Nakamura, and in 2018 by Chef Toru Yomoda (J. Megijet & T. Yomoda, personal communication, 04 April 2021).

With the change of chefs, the food menu will also change according to the innovations produced by each chef. Changing chefs indirectly affects the durability of AWK restaurants in Indonesia because they will always upgrade with new menus or, in other words, continue to innovate. AWK restaurant dares to call it 'pasta house' because Chef Akira Watanabe has never taken any outside ideas but instead developed his menu concept since 2004. This restaurant also collaborates with PT Masuya Graha Trikenca as one of the ingredients suppliers of local cuisine from Indonesia. The workers are dominated by people from Japan (J. Megijet & T. Yomoda, personal communication, 04 April 2021).

This section will explore four essential points from the concept of gastrodiplomacy, including the points of communicating culture, encouraging community interaction and understanding, inspiring many people, and empowering the diaspora community. Through food, Chef Akira Watanabe seems desirous to communicate Japanese culture and at the same time prove that Japanese identity can be maintained even though it is mixed with contemporary food. The Japanese culture that he wants to show is not limited to spices and

ingredients such as Nori, Shiso Herb, and Japanese Mushroom, which truly reflect the image of Japan. When Jejet, as Operational Manager, revealed that the AWK restaurant uses ingredients from Japan, another culture that he wants to show is how this restaurant always serves food with fresh and high-quality ingredients using Japanese standards, even though this restaurant has opened a branch in Indonesia. This means, that from the preparation stage to the process of serving the food, the AWK restaurant is meticulous and disciplined, as is the case with Japanese society in general.

Another cultural aspect is revealed when it is discovered that the ingredients used in the AWK restaurant are made directly by a Japanese chef or, in other words, homemade. This shows the Japanese culture, especially in the preparation of spices or cooking, that highly upholds authenticity and may even use old recipes that have been taught from generation to generation. The exciting thing is that globalization does not become a stumbling block to make Japanese people switch to fast food. On the contrary, they can still maintain their culture while continuing to innovate.

The interviewees who had tasted Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil succeeded in helping to explore the following two points of gastrodiplomacy, namely points to encourage interaction and form understanding in the community and inspire many people. These two points are related and cannot be separated, and this was proven when one of the interviewees directly stated:

“The savory taste of the combination of fish eggs and seaweed and spaghetti turned out to be delicious, I admit my guess was wrong. This food tastes delicious, savory, and salty; giving it a Japanese feel but thick from the sauce from mushrooms and the oily taste from garlic oil confirms that this is not pure Japanese food, at least 70% Japanese and 30% Western food maybe Italian considering this is spaghetti” (G. Ivan, personal communication, 13 April 2021).

In other words, inspiration and images about Japan can encourage interaction and form an understanding in the community, not only for the Japanese community but also for Indonesian. Inspiration or images of Japan, which initially saw Japan as a less attractive country, but after eating Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil, finally imagined a positive Japanese image. They began to be interested in digging deeper into Japan, culinary delights, and other cultures such as anime or manga, even fashion, and many more. Some interviewees said that the dish has succeeded in giving a new unique taste to Spaghetti, especially with the texture of the Cod Roe, which after mixing with the Spaghetti and mushrooms, adds a soft texture and Japanese feel to Italian cuisine, "definitely be interested in exploring more another fusion cuisine, especially with fresh Japanese ingredients" (N. Rachel, personal communication, 26 March 2021).

Finally, empowering the diaspora community can be seen from cooperation with one of the suppliers of local cooking ingredients from Indonesia, where the workers are dominated by people from Japan, namely PT Masuya Graha Trikenca. In this case, the diaspora community can share their traditions and culture, for example, Japanese cooking spices, with people in Indonesia. Of course, the goal is for the Indonesian people to understand the use of Japanese cooking spices. Through the Japanese diaspora community in Indonesia, the Indonesian people are expected to know, for example, the types of Japanese soy sauce and understand the differences and their uses in cooking because each soy sauce has its advantages and functions.

In light of the four points of gastrodiplomacy as described above, it can be inferred that the AWK restaurant has proven to play its role in practicing Japanese gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia. Especially in terms of communicating culture, encouraging community interaction and understanding, inspiring many people, and empowering the

Japanese diaspora community. Hopefully, those who have tasted Spaghetti Spicy Cod Roe and Japanese Mushrooms in Garlic Oil will enjoy it and find interesting things, and appreciate the idea of fusion cuisine between Japan and Italy that was coined directly by Chef Akira Watanabe.

4.5. Lesson Learned

The effectiveness of the AWK restaurant in carrying out its gastrodiplomacy mission proves that non-state actors can also play a role in helping achieve a country's foreign policy. Through this research, the authors learned that the Japanese government's initiative to involve non-state actors to help promote the country's image succeeded in encouraging them to express the image of Japan, in this case, AWK restaurant through food in a unique way. This finding is certainly very useful for countries that are promoting gastrodiplomacy, including Indonesia. The work of non-state actors such as the AWK Restaurant can also be source of inspiration for Indonesian gastrodiplomacy.

Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has emphasized that "Food is a national identity, gastro-diplomacy will support the Indonesian economic diplomacy" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The Indonesian government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Indonesian Gastronomy Association (IGA) has organized the National Seminar on Economic Diplomacy: "Gastro-diplomacy to Strengthen the Indonesian Economy" on October 2019 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019), this event provided an opportunity to share knowledge and experience to each other regarding strategies in performing culinary business, especially Indonesian signature foods abroad.

In connection with the above efforts, the Indonesian government can take a role by encouraging Indonesian restaurants to carry out their gastrodiplomacy mission. Furthermore, the Indonesian government is expected to pay more attention, especially in

increasing the promotion of Indonesian culinary, seeing the role of non-state actors that are still not recognized even though they are the spearhead in carrying out gastrodiplomacy. While serving as Head of Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Policy Research and Development Agency, Dr. Siswo Pramono once conveyed that Indonesia should focus on expanding its food industry overseas, collaborating with diasporas, creating a signature tradition, and considering the sensitivity of particular dishes in other parts of the world, for example, the consumption of beef in India (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). The Indonesian government needs to encourage restaurants and support these restaurants by providing guidance and training in line with its goals in introducing its identity and image, seeing diplomatic affairs is not only related to cooperation between countries and investment, but also how to foster business actors to continue innovating. Finally, the Indonesian government is also expected to hold inter-ministerial cooperation, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Ministry of Trade or the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economic, regarding promoting local restaurants at the global level.

5. Conclusion

In order to achieve a country's foreign policy objectives through public diplomacy, business actors as one of the non-state actors plays an important role. Non-state actors indirectly contribute to driving public opinion and shaping views on the country. This article has examined the role of business actors, the AWK restaurant, as a case study when carrying out Japanese gastrodiplomacy in Indonesia. By leveraging the globalization phenomenon, the AWK restaurant has

proven to be successful in carrying out its gastrodiplomacy role and producing dishes that have soft power.

The role played by the AWK restaurant can be categorized as unrecognized gastrodiplomacy, which is a vague role that is not recognized by the state but still manages to help carry out the country's mission in introducing its image or identity. AWK restaurant has played a subtle role in Japanese gastrodiplomacy through its menu. Their fusion cuisine menu has presented the new power of attraction towards Japan. AWK restaurant also plays a role in communicating culture. The Japanese culture and nuances communicated through the food by Chef Akira Watanabe are conveyed effectively. This restaurant also plays a role in encouraging community interaction and understanding, inspiring many people, and empowering the Japanese diaspora community. It is also important to emphasize that inspiration and images about Japan can encourage interaction and shape understanding in the community, not only among the Japanese community but also with Indonesian. Through this research, the authors found a symbolic function where the AWK restaurant has carried out its purpose as a business actor who accomplished gastrodiplomacy mission but has no affinity with the state.

There are many things that have not been explored regarding the unrecognized gastrodiplomacy. One suggestion is to further examine unrecognized gastrodiplomacy at the individual level, for example, by a diaspora in a particular country. Gastrodiplomacy is an activity that anyone can do and is not limited to government and business actors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the management of AWKitchen by Akira Watanabe restaurant for their valuable support on this project by providing some information. We also would like to extend our thankfulness to all interviewees who have taken the time and are willing to be interviewed.

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