



The creative industry in promoting the tradition of Croatian-Chinese cooperation: The *Vilijun* project

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ABSTRACT

The efficiency of economic cooperation is based on its cultural understanding as well as on a tradition that is expressed through business effects promoted by products from the creative industry domain. Since the creative industry relies on project activities in a large number of sectors, it is possible to predict that one creative product can be realized in a number of creative sectors (e.g., in publishing, architecture, music, audiovisual arts, etc.). The Croatian-Chinese cultural and economic tradition is built on multi-year cooperation globally remembered by the contribution of Marco Polo, and the creative industry is an opportunity to design creative products promoting the Silk Road and the role of Marco Polo, which aims to connect the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Croatia. This paper analyzes the contributions of the Vilijun project and its products within the creative industry and its twelve sectors. Such approach has demonstrated and analyzed the strategies of connecting the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Croatia as the preconditions for achieving mutual economic effects and is on the trail of the 2012 "China's Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries".

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Introduction

Reflecting on the contemporary economic and cultural context requires the confrontation of *globalization* and *culture* - two multidimensional phenomena of dynamic reciprocity. The inability to uniquely define globalization and culture does not diminish research interests, quite the opposite, it encourages new views on both of these concepts from the perspective of as many professions as possible.

Galović (2017) offered one of the views: "Globalization is an economic, political and cultural process that, in the first place, marks the creation and establishment of rules of a single world market with free competition, and implies opening towards the external market. Globalization also implies an economy characterized by faster development of international trade, i.e., opening up of borders and smooth exchange of goods, the expansion of foreign capital, the growing importance of trade in services and foreign direct investment, the abolition of customs barriers, investment-related mergers and other entrepreneurial rules."

The great, global "federation of nations", already mentioned by Immanuel Kant in his *Political Writings*, is not a utopia but a serious federation with all its advantages and consequences. The multidimensionality of globalization is manifested in the contradictions of its definition, as well as in its own contradictions, where globalization is a process that both links and separates, that fosters peace among network members, simultaneously implementing conquests. The underlying goal of transcontinental connectivity integrated into the complex network of stakeholders and their relations is profit-making, or – expressed in the language of natural legitimacy - the goal is to conquer new markets, raw materials, and workforce, where big capital owners have the leading role. On the other hand, the multidimensionality of culture is an integral part of the multidimensional notion of globalization, because culture is one of the five dimensions of globalization (in addition to economy, technology, politics and information). Therefore, research interest in studying the impact of globalization on cultural diversity as the leverage of innovation and technological progress is not unjustified

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(Hassi and Storti, 2012; Gamage, 2010). Similarity to such attitudes can also be found in the document “China’s Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries”, which was published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China on 26 April 2012.¹

If we take into account that the creative industry has been growing since the beginning of the third millennium, there is a possibility of establishing direct collaborative and research activities between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Croatia in the field of the creative industry. It is important to emphasize that the creative industry uses cultural resources of local communities as its “raw material” and promotes local culture with new products. Global market entry differentiates the highly developed products of the creative industry according to the rules of modern technology dominance.

The question arises as to whether there is a way in which the cultures of a large number of communities can successfully gather around a creative industry project that will jointly represent them on the global market and whether such cultural branding can ensure economic recognition of all its stakeholders in the global market as well as in the internal markets of all stakeholders.

It is important to emphasize that the Republic of Croatia became a Member State of the European Union in 2013, and that its cooperation with the People’s Republic of China is assessed as follows: “Croatia, as one of the Balkan states and the newest EU member serves here as an example of a country from Balkan region as well as creator and popularizer of the “Three Seas Initiative”, a one infrastructural and development initiative in CEE with many possible links to EU-China cooperation.” (Przychodniak 2018: 162)

The creative industry in promoting cultural and economic cooperation

Globalization has brought new forms of market competition in which cultural recognition brings benefits particularly to well-branded state and economic systems. On the other hand, globalization is a threat to small cultural and economic communities because of their uncompetitive market position. The diversity of market cultures enriches all cultures present in the global market as such impulses intensify investment in technology, innovation of economic activities and adaptation in the field of business cooperation. In this context, knowledge of and information on the tradition of cultural and economic cooperation contributes to the preservation of traditional technologies, cultural heritage and the entire production/cultural systems. In other words, in order to participate in the global market, it is necessary to have technological and manufacturing efficiency, cultural and economic recognition and the desire to identify, participate and cooperate. Given that technological and manufacturing efficiency is an indispensable precondition for participation in the global market game, their positive returns can also be used in the *creative industry*, with the aim of promoting cultural and economic recognition.

The creative industry is a concept that came to life at the beginning of this millennium; there have been numerous attempts aimed at defining it, and according to one of them: “The creative industry implies copyrighted production covered by the projects generating non-material products and services intended for market exchange.” (Horvat, Mijoč, Zrnić 2018). The creative industry in the Republic of Croatia is presented in Figure 1, which shows that the creative industry is made up of the following 12 sectors: architecture; film; museum, libraries and heritage; design; music and performing arts; art; publishing; electronic media; advertising and marketing communications; crafts; computer games and new media; and photography.

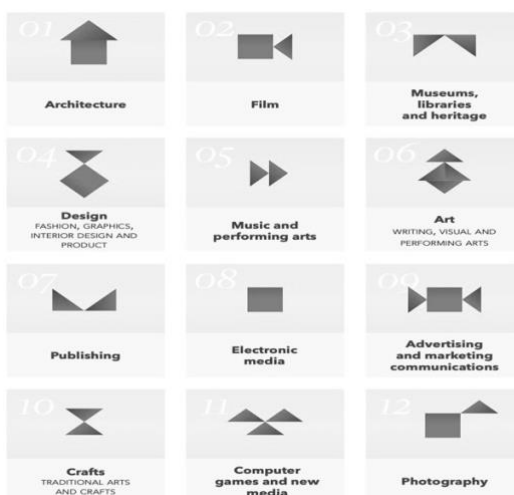


Figure 1: Creative industry sectors in the Republic of Croatia; *Source:* Horvat, Mijoč, Zrnić (2018)

The key assumption in this paper is the possibility of merging all 12 sectors of the creative industry with the aim of promoting or branding the local community, cultural tradition, a business idea, and tradition in cooperation, or some other phenomenon. By

¹ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/wjbispg_665714/t928567.shtml, Accessed 7 March 2019.

combining all 12 sectors of the creative industry for the purpose of promoting or branding e.g. the tradition of Croatia's cultural cooperation requires a project approach, that is, the definition of the project goal, mission and vision and the appointment of project participants, their obligations and responsibilities. The production of the same creative product in all 12 sectors of the creative industry and their joint use in the global market will contribute to a harmonized strategy.

The hypothesis in this paper is clarified by means of the *Vilijun* project, which has been implemented by the Andizet Institute and its scientists, experts and creative workers since 2016.

The fact that the creative industry is the next step in collaboration is confirmed by point 4 of the document known as "The Sofia Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries", drafted on 5 July 2018. "(4) The Participants support the implementation of the Hangzhou Declaration on Cultural Cooperation (2018-2019) and the Cultural Cooperation Plan between China and Central Eastern European Countries for the years 2018-2019 and actively cooperate with the Cultural Coordination Center. The 4th China-CEEC Ministers' Forum on Culture Cooperation will be held in the Republic of Macedonia in 2019. The 5th Summer Dance Camp, Field-trip to China by CEEC Painters and the 3rd China-CEEC Dance Masters Workshop will be held in China. The 4th 16+1 Cultural and Creative Industry Forum will be held in Hungary. The 2nd 16+1 Summer Music Camp will be held in CEEC. The Participants encourage in-depth exchanges and practical cooperation among the members of the China-CEEC Dance Culture Union, Music Academy Union, China-CEEC Arts Creation Research Center, China-CEEC Youth Center for Arts Training and Practice and China-CEEC Center for Cultural and Creative Industries Exchanges and Cooperation to conduct in-depth exchanges and cooperation. The Participants support establishing a 16+1 Cooperation People-to-People Exchange Experience Center in China.²"

Methodology of the *Vilijun* project

The *Vilijun* project is the result of many years of work of the Andizet Institute that has been focused on questioning theoretical knowledge in the field of the creative industry. The starting point of the Institute point is: "Culture is a capital resource multiplied by the local community, which creates its own brand based on cultural recognition". Since 2016, the Andizet Institute has been implementing the *Silk Road* project, whose integral part is the *Vilijun* project. The economic and cultural link between Europe and the remote market of the People's Republic of China was considered in the popularization symposium on the creative industry, i.e., the 2016 Creative Treasury. In other words, the Andizet Institute questions the cultural and economic revival of the *Silk Road* by producing cultural products of the creative industry subsumed under the umbrella of *Vilijun* and based upon a piece of literature sharing the same title. Project methodology is based on the definition of the creative industry (Horvat, Mijoč, Zrnić 2018) and a review of 12 sectors of the creative industry (Figure 2), where publishing represents one of the twelve sectors. The literary text *Vilijun* (Horvat 2016) is considered in this paper as a product of the publishing sector and a prototype for the remaining 11 sectors of the creative industry. According to the UNESCO creative industries model (2013), text, music, visual and performing arts are considered to be the starting point of all creative products.

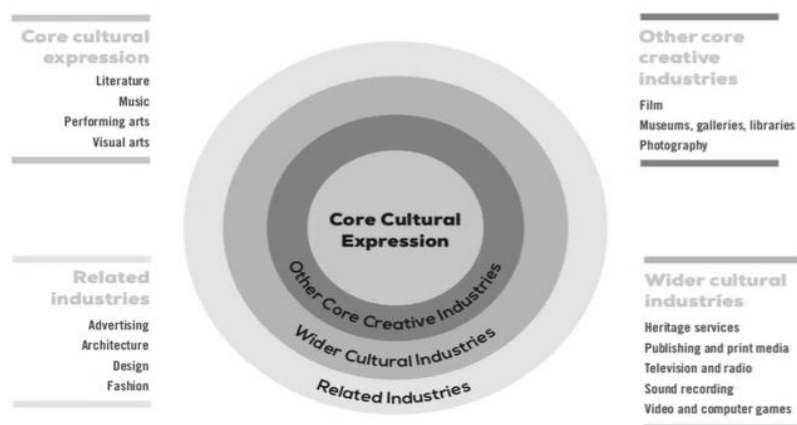


Figure 2: Modelling the cultural and creative industries: The concentric circles model; *Source:* Throsby, D., (2008)

Publishing as the starting sector of the *Vilijun* project

The *Vilijun* project rests on the literary text with the same title, which was authored by Jasna Horvat in 2016 and published by Naklada Ljevak as a product of the publishing sector, one of the 12 creative industry sectors. The Andizet Institute has analyzed and promoted

² (https://ceec-china-bulgaria.org/upload/84/180707_The_Sofia_Guidelines.pdf, Accessed 15 March 2019)

³ Andizet - the Institute for Scientific and Art Research in the Creative Industry was founded in 2014 with the aim of combining research procedures in science and art. Andizet members direct their research efforts toward the field of the (creative) industry that is still in the process of formalization. They have received three awards for their work, i.e., the Volunteering Award in 2016, the National Science Award in 2016, and the Ful kulturno Award in 2018, which was presented to them by Superbrands for the *Vilijun* happening as the best branding low-budget project in culture. (www.andizet.hr, Accessed 7 March 2019)

this project many times,⁴ and its cultural and promotion potential has also been tested multiple times. This literary text possesses the features of a cultural identity card, and its characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Goal, mission and vision of the *Vilijun* project

<i>Vilijun</i> project	Identification guidelines	Brand symbols
Goal	Establish cultural links between the Republic of Croatia and the People's Republic of China.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marco Polo • Kublai Khan
Mission	Promotion of Croatian-Chinese cultural and economic cooperation, based on the creative industry products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vilijun</i> • <i>Silk Road</i> • cities - stations • tradition in terms of cooperation and trade
Vision	Future use of the <i>Vilijun</i> project products as means of cultural and economic understanding and links.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative industry products • video games • music content • performing arts • etc. (other creative industry products) • Croatian checkerboard, Croatian interlace, name Croat, Glagolitic script • tea and spices, silk, porcelain, cashmere, paper, compass • golden tablet, salt, fairy tales, world map, number <i>million</i>

As shown in Table 1, the *Vilijun* project is based on the literary link between the two cultures and in its project plan, it has to accomplish the following: a) the **goal** (to link the Republic of Croatia with the People's Republic of China), b) the **mission** (to promote Croatian-Chinese cultural and economic cooperation on the Silk Road, based on the creative industry products); and (c) the **vision** (to contribute to cultural and economic understanding and links by using the *Vilijun* project products in the future).

Academician Dubravka Oraić Tolić (2016) stated the basic characteristic of the *Vilijun* novel as follows: "After 20 years of service in Kublai Khan's Mongol Empire, Marco [Polo] makes up for his return to Croatia by telling Kublai Khan stories in the form of lexicon entries." Thirty-six lexicon entries in the *Vilijun* novel were used to promote the tradition of Croatian-Chinese cooperation. The novel introduces a story of Marco Polo's and Kublai Khan's dialogue, and informs the readers about the key determinants of these two cultures (Table 2).

Table 2: Information on Croatian-Chinese cooperation offered in the *Vilijun* novel

<i>Vilijun</i>	Sub-chapters	Lexicon entries	
a) Chapter 1	To Marco's homeland on the Adriatic Sea	1 The City of Korčula	
		2 The City of Šibenik	
		3 The City of Venice	
	Silk Road routes	4 Land route	
		5 Sea route	
	Silk Road sea route (the road that leads to Marco's homeland - the Kingdom of Croatia)	6 Bagan	
		7 Chengdu	
		8 Camblau	
		9 Hormuz	
		10 Arbil	
		11 Trabzon	
		12 Constantinople	
b) Chapter 2	Silk Road land route	13 Jerusalem	
		14 Mosul	
		15 Bagdad	
		16 Samarkand	
		17 Baktra	
		18 Kashgar	
		19 Lanzhou	
		20 Karahorum	
		Four values of the Kingdom of Croatia	21 Croatian checkerboard
			22 Croatian interlace
	23 Name Croat		
	24 Glagolitic script		
	Marco's return to the Kingdom of Croatia - not mentioned	• No lexicon entry	
	<i>Song Names of Cities along the Silk Road</i>	25 Cities along the Silk Road	
Miracles of the Great Empire	26 Tea and spices		

⁴ "In its sections and chapters, the *Vilijun* novel awakens the stations along the Silk Road and becomes a cultural identity card of Croatia and many other countries along the Silk Road. Through identification with Marco Polo, the first global traveler and ancient explorer, the reader is invited to use this toy book interactively and read it in many different ways and directions." (Horvat, Mijoč and Zrnić 2018: 38)

Table 2 : Cont'd	
c) Chapter 3	27 Silk
	28 Porcelain
	29 Cashmere
	30 Paper
	31 Compass
	Gift exchange between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan
	32 Golden tablet
	33 Salt
	34 Fairy tales
	35 World map
36 Number <i>million</i>	

In order to make the information as accessible as possible, the *Vilijun* novel is enriched with QR codes and the novel is read by using smartphones.⁶ Such convergence of technology resulted in multimedia, printed text, and with the help of printed text, readers are also referred to the internet links promoting Croatian-Chinese economic cooperation. Embedded QR codes connect the readers with the documentary *Marco Polo*, scientific and professional papers on the Silk Road, as well as the presentation of the *Vilijun* novel that took place in 2016 at the Faculty of Economics in Osijek. The list of QR codes and websites they are connected to can be found in the appendix to this paper.

Kos-Lajtman calls the *Vilijun* novel a QR novel (Kos-Lajtman 2016) because it is a novel impregnated with QR codes and read by the end by using smartphones, and this enables “the convergence of print to digital content, which changes the perspective in literary texts, complements it and makes it more accessible to the reader in the digital age” (Buljubašić 2018). According to Horvat, Mijoč, Zrnić 2018, “in its sections, the novel *Vilijun* awakens the stations along the Silk Road and becomes a cultural identity card of Croatia and many other countries along the Silk Road. Through identification with Marco Polo, the first global traveler and ancient explorer, the reader is invited to use this toy book interactively and read it in many different ways and directions.”


The *Vilijun* novel was twice presented in China (at the Beijing International Book Fair 2016 and the EU-China International Literary Festival in 2017 held in Beijing and Chengdu), then in Subotica (2017), Vienna (2017), the United States (Atlanta, 2019), and several times in the Republic of Croatia.

Research results of the *Vilijun* project achieved in the creative industry

Empirical presentation of the *Vilijun* project is based on the use of literary texts for the production of diversified creative industry products. As the goal of the *Vilijun* project is international promotion of cultural and economic cooperation between the Republic of Croatia and the People’s Republic of China and other countries located in the area of the ancient Silk Road, project results are presented in this chapter.






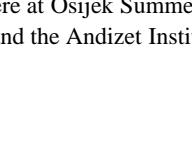

The *Vilijun* project has been successfully developed and well accepted at the national level, which is the first condition for the project to survive on the global market. The current (multilingual) results of the *Vilijun* project are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Diversified products of the *Vilijun* Project

Sector of the creative industry	Project results / Product	QR code
Architecture	Buildings, roads and other architectural monuments on the Silk Road (historical legacy)	
Publishing	Novel <i>Vilijun</i> , by Jasna Horvat, Naklada Ljevak (Zagreb, 2016)	
Design	Interior design (Creative Treasury 2016, Faculty of Economics in Osijek, Republic of Croatia) Production: Andizet Institute	

⁵ A quick response code (QR code) was developed by the Japanese automotive corporation Denso Wave (1994) for monitoring product parts within the manufacturing process. The code can contain alphanumeric, numeric, binary, or Kanji characters, images, sounds, and URL links. QR codes are verified with a number of different standards (including AIM, JIS X 0510, ISO/IEC 18004: 2015). QR codes are free for anyone to use without any special authorization or license.

⁶ Mobile phones connected to the internet.

Table 3: Cont'd		
Music	<p>“Milijun” poem by Matija Dedić (Šibenik, 2015, International Conference <i>Marco Polo and his influence on the Silk Road, then and now</i>, organized by the international association <i>Marco Polo Travels</i>)</p>	
	<p>“Cloud Fairy” by Tamara Šarlija. (Creative Treasury 2016, Faculty of Economics in Osijek, Republic of Croatia) Production: Andizet Institute</p>	
Art	<p><i>Vilijun</i> performance (Osijek Summer of Culture 2017)</p> <p><i>The Vilijun happening won the FUL KUTLURNO 2018 award given by Superbrands Croatia for the best branding low-budget event in culture</i></p>	
Film	<p><i>Vilijun</i> film with Chinese titles. (Osijek, 2017) Production: Andizet Institute</p>	
Museum	<p>The <i>Vilijun</i> Topotheque⁷ Production: Andizet Institute</p>	
Photography	<p>The cover of the <i>Vilijun</i> novel features a photo taken by Jeff Fuchs, the award-winning photographer for photos made on the Silk Road</p>	
Electronic media	<p>Newspaper articles and radio shows⁸</p>	
Advertising and marketing communications	<p>Ful kulturno Marketing Award</p>	
	<p>EU – China International Literary Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peking (23 November 2017) • Chengdu (26 November 2017) 	
	<p>Facebook page</p>	

The *Vilijun* happening, based on the novel written by Jasna Horvat that shares the same title, had its premiere at Osijek Summer of Culture 2017, with the Andizet Institute being in charge. A year later, the *Vilijun* happening was rewarded and the Andizet Institute

⁷ Digital Archives of the European Union, <http://vilijun.topotheque.eu>, (Accessed 18 March 2019)

⁸ Available at the Andizet Institute's website: www.andizet.hr

won the *Ful kulturno* award given by Superbrands Croatia for the best branding low-budget event in culture. This has confirmed successful branding of *Vilijun* as a creative link between the Republic of Croatia and the People's Republic of China.

In order for the *Vilijun* project to become a cultural link between the Republic of Croatia, the People's Republic of China and other countries along the Silk Road, it is necessary to overcome the linguistic barrier and translate the literary text into Chinese. Another prerequisite is to make diversified creative industry products that derive from the same literary text (music, video games, performing arts, photography, etc.), which are linguistically adapted to the global market. In all of this, it is absolutely imperative to check intelligibility of messages that creative products should pass on to global market players. Finally, the third precondition is to link the *Vilijun* project with other related projects (such as the documentary "*Looking for Marco Polo*")⁹ in the field of the creative industry. The results of this approach, where the literary text (publishing - a sector of the creative industry) links two distant cultures, have shown that the *Vilijun* project represents a successful form of both linking two cultures and branding the Republic of Croatia.

Conclusions

Globalization is a multidimensional process whose fundamental dimensions are economics, politics, culture, information and technology. Success in a global market game is achieved with the cooperation of all these dimensions and their strategic management, orientation and adaptation to individual components of the global market

The paper presents the unification of key dimensions of the *Vilijun* project, which popularizes the historical role of Marco Polo, which he achieved on the Silk Road as the first marketing and global nomad.

The goal of the *Vilijun* project is to diversify one author's idea through a literary text (the *Vilijun* novel) into new creative products of the remaining 11 sectors of the creative industry. The mission of the *Vilijun* Project is to promote Croatian-Chinese cultural and economic cooperation based on creative industry products, while the vision of the *Vilijun* project is focused on the future, in which the *Vilijun* project products would be used as means of cultural and economic understanding and links.

The first positive effects of the *Vilijun* project have been demonstrated by making nine diversified products derived from the *Vilijun* novel by Jasna Horvat, by holding many presentations of the *Vilijun* novel as well as by winning the *Ful kulturno* Award as one of creative products. Such positive effects are on the trail of the project mission, which foresees the promotion of Croatian-Chinese cultural and economic cooperation based on the creative industry products.

Project results presented the creative industry products, which brand the tradition of cultural and economic links between the Republic of Croatia and the People's Republic of China.

The Silk Road project and the *Vilijun* project therein make the basis for experimental and theoretical research on creative industry products, possibilities of diversifying the project goal into products falling within the scope of 12 creative industry sectors and simultaneous use for the purpose of achieving cultural and economic links between the Republic of Croatia, the People's Republic of China and countries along the Silk Road to jointly enter the global market.

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⁹ This is a documentary series, a three-year Croatian Radiotelevision project premiered in 2013. The project *Looking for Marco Polo* won a series of awards at various television festivals: the second prize at the 10th European Arts&Film Festival held in 2014 in the Czech Republic, three awards at the 2nd International Zagreb Tourfilm Festival, and the Silver Dolphin Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Miro Branković, Boris Harmić, Zdravko Borko, and Dragan Ruljančić were the screenwriter and director, the sound mixer, the film editor and the director of photography, respectively.

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