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From Local to Global: Examining Sister City Cooperation as Paradiplomacy Practice in Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the sister city cooperation as paradiplomacy practice to establish international relations in Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia, through the multidisciplinary perspectives of Legal and International Relations studies. This research seeks to answer how Denpasar City, Bali conducts its paradiplomacy through sister cities to build international cooperation and the legal and social challenges. The implementation of three layers of paradiplomacy, according to Lecours (2008), which consists of the economic issue (first layer), cultural, educational, technological, and other multidimensional aspects (second layer), and political considerations (third layer), will be determined by using interview methods and International Relations literature studies. The legal corridor of conducting paradiplomacy, as it assesses the legal basis and limitation for local government to interact with international actors, will be explored using the data collected through legal instruments and legal literature studies. The research used a qualitative empirical approach to connect both disciplines. The results show that Denpasar's sister city cooperation can be classified as the first layer (economy) and the second layer (culture, education, and technology) of paradiplomacy practice, whereas the third layer (politics) is excluded from this cooperation. Denpasar faces several challenges in conducting its sister city plans of action, such as legal obstacle, continuity of the cooperation, human resources limitation, funding reallocation, and limited citizen participation. The COVID-19 pandemic affects the implementation of the planned sister city cooperation.

Keywords: Denpasar City; international law; international relations; paradiplomacy; sister city

OPEN ACCESS

Citation: Intentilia, A. A. M., & Surya Putra, A. A. B. N. A. (2021). From Local to Global: Examining Sister City Cooperation as Paradiplomacy Practice in Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia. *Jurnal Bina Praja*, 13(2), 357–367. https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.13.2021.357-367

Received: 30 June 2021 Accepted: 19 August 2021 Published: 31 August 2021

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1. Introduction

The inclusion of local actors within the State to participate in various international relations agendas has been widely discussed. This phenomenon, called "paradiplomacy," is used to accelerate the engagement of international cooperation by providing more access beside the State government. Previous studies mentioned that paradiplomacy is supported by the emerging roles of sub-state units, for instance, at the provincial or city level. These local actors establish interaction with local or national actors from other countries and with numerous international organizations. Tavares (2016, p. 8) notes that the term "paradiplomacy" means "parallel diplomacy," originally comes from the Greek word "para," which means, among others: "besides," "alongside," or "subsidiary." Hence, it explains that the international relations, conducted by subnational actors, support or complement the one managed by the State government. Furthermore, globalization and the advancement of technology enable these actors to shape the global agenda with their local perspectives. Thus, the dynamics of international relations have developed from 'elitist' matters, centered in high-level politics, towards the everyday dynamics of citizens, which covered more issues.

In international relations, States conduct their affairs with others through diplomacy to ensure their national interests, which could be seen in bilateral and multilateral settings. States appoint Ambassadors and diplomats to achieve diplomatic missions through negotiation. The diplomatic missions must be aligned with the States' foreign policies. Consequently, diplomacy can be seen as an instrument of foreign policy (Constantinou & Sharp, 2016). The development of diplomacy can be divided into the 'old diplomacy' and the 'new diplomacy.' Constantinou and Sharp (2016) wrote that the 'old diplomacy' focuses only on the 'intrigue' and political aspect, while the 'new diplomacy' counts trade as the central issue, along with the principle of openness and cooperation. Furthermore, among others, there are two definitions of diplomacy, namely: diplomacy as "four prisms, which consist of foreign policy, an instrument of foreign policy, international negotiations, and the activity of diplomats" (De Magalhaes, 1998, as cited in Hart & Siniver, 2020) and diplomacy as "statecraft, foreign policy, and international relations, as well as the making of foreign policy by practitioners" (Sharp, 2003, as cited in Hart & Siniver, 2020).

Its wide range of approaches supports the enlargement of the study of diplomacy. There are various examples of diplomacy, such as diplomacy and international law, diplomatic immunity, cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, and paradiplomacy. The latter is known as "the involvement of the constituent units (regions) of national states in international affairs" (Kuznetsov, 2014, p. 2). Various studies have been conducted in the context of paradiplomacy practices (Hubert et al., 2020; Lequesne & Paquin, 2017; Pajtinka, 2017; Rodrigues & Mattioli, 2017). Research by Liu and Song (2020) explores the development of paradiplomacy during the last three to four decades. Their work explains further the analytical framework of paradiplomacy and indicates the study of paradiplomacy from a non-Western case study. Another research by Lecours (2008) points out the three layers of paradiplomacy. The first layer focuses on economic issues, in which the local government conduct paradiplomacy to gain economic benefits, such as foreign investment and trade opportunities. The second layer stresses the multidimensional and extensive aspects of diplomacy, for instance, culture, technology, and education. The third layer emphasizes the political considerations of paradiplomacy.

This particular research aims to scrutinize the three layers of paradiplomacy according to Lecours (2008) with the case study of Denpasar City, Bali. This capital city of Bali has conducted several initiatives to connect with other cities abroad through the sister city cooperation. Aminah and Wardani's (2018) study emphasizes the significance of regional innovation by examining various factors, including leadership. This paper argues that the beginning of Denpasar's sister city cooperation is a form of

local government innovation. The former Mayor of Denpasar, Mr. Ida Bagus Rai Dharmawijaya Mantra, has attempted to broaden the international cooperation of Denpasar by creating a specific Cooperation Division in 2012. That step was followed by the initiation of sister city cooperation by the Head of the Sub-Division of Foreign Cooperation of Denpasar City (Kasubag Kerja Sama Luar Negeri). Denpasar expects long-term benefits from this cooperation to support its city branding as a "smart city." Pasande and Suhendra (2017) mentioned that city branding could provide an identity that will distinguish one city from the other. International cooperation aims to expand the network and learn from other cities' best practices to improve public service. The result is to make the citizen of Denpasar feel more satisfied with the public service and, therefore, shall improve the welfare of the society.

Previous studies have highlighted Lecours' ideas as the framework to examine the practice of paradiplomacy. A study by Dharmajaya and Raharyo (2019), for instance, noted that there are many opportunities and benefits from the sister province arrangement between West Java and South Australia. Their work concluded that their case study could be classified as the second layer of paradiplomacy. Aside from that, Maksum and Surwandono's (2018) paper emphasizes the implementation of paradiplomacy in Indonesia's frontier areas, particularly in Riau Island and West Kalimantan. His work noted a challenge in conducting paradiplomacy. He mentioned that albeit the practice of paradiplomacy in both places is relatively successful, it still faces a public controversy of "ceremonial paradiplomacy" proven by, for instance, an overseas visit. Several other research address different points of view, which illustrate that paradiplomacy is a growing subject in connecting local government in Indonesia with different cities abroad and therefore make it very intriguing to be analyzed (Alam & Sudirman, 2020; Hubert & Dermawan, 2020; Mukti et al., 2021; Surwandono & Maksum, 2020; Zulian & Sinambela, 2019).

Even though Bali is well-known as the pivot of international tourism and the venue of many prestigious bilateral and multilateral diplomatic events, research to analyze the implementation of paradiplomacy conducted by its capital city is very limited. Furthermore, albeit Denpasar has successfully established international relations through sister city cooperation, there is a very little academic discussion about this matter. Analysis using the concept of paradiplomacy has been used to examine various cities in Indonesia but has yet included Denpasar City. Therefore, this paper aims to fill the gap and provide an academic perspective on this matter. Apart from that, another significant aspect of paradiplomacy is its legal basis. The sovereign States have been the primary international legal personality that conducts relations with one another. Hence, paradiplomacy raises questions about the legality and limits of an international relation conducted by local governance.

In order to complement the literature from the International Relations field presented above, this paper also seeks several legal references. In international law, every relation that transcends national borders shall be conducted by States, as this is one of the elements of a sovereign State according to Article 1 of the 1933 Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (hereinafter "Montevideo Convention"). This ability to enter into relation with other States has been one of the distinguishing factors of sovereign States from that of local states in a federal country and in a country that does not consist of local States. This ability is a demonstration of sovereign power over a defined territory (Riyanto, 2012). However, as the existence of States cannot be separated from that of their governing authority, the way States conduct their international relations is left to public international law and the State's national law. In the Article on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts drafted by the International Law Commission (hereinafter "ARSIWA"), it is stated that States may delegate their authority to its agents, ranging from its governance staff members to private entities. Hence, regardless of which form of a government enters into relation with another State, should the link between the State and the one receiving a delegation of authority be present, it should be interpreted as the State acting in international fora.

This research will draw a simplified version of the legal corridor for paradiplomacy and study its implementation in Denpasar City's international relations and determine what challenges it might face. Therefore, this multidisciplinary research seeks to answer research questions and attain understanding from the International Relations and Legal studies, namely: (1) How does Denpasar City, Bali conduct its sister city cooperation as paradiplomacy practice? and (2) What are the challenges of paradiplomacy practice in Denpasar City, Bali? This research is expected to enrich the conversation regarding this matter in terms of government-to-government and people-to-people connections.

2. Methods

In answering the research questions of this research, a qualitative empirical approach methodology is used to bridge the two disciplines: legal and social science (Langbroek et al., 2017). This methodology combines the traditional research methodology of assessing the law in the books and the law in action with a familiar approach available to social science. Data for this research are gathered from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected by using the interview method. The secondary data is collected by using literature studies from (i) academic journals, ranging from international relations, legal, and governance studies; (ii) official websites, such as the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Denpasar government; and (iii) online local media. In addition, primary and secondary legal sources are also categorized as the secondary data in this research. The primary legal sources comprise written legal instruments, and the secondary sources comprise articles, journals, books on legal discipline, and comparative studies on foreign legal regimes.

To collect the primary data, this research conducted a semi-structured in-depth interview using online video teleconference Google Meet on April 7, 2021, with Mrs. Ida Ayu Ganda Yukti, S.H., M.AP. as the Head of the Sub-Division of Foreign Affairs Cooperation of Denpasar City (Kasubag Kerja Sama Luar Negeri). She provided information on behalf of Mrs. I Gusti Ayu Laxmy Saraswati, S.S., M.Hum. as the Head of Cooperation Division of Denpasar City (Kepala Bagian Kerja Sama). The semistructured in-depth interview allows the researcher to have control over the content and direction of the interview yet permits the respondent to freely elaborate the answers (Cook, 2008). This semi-structured in-depth interview is justifiable to provide correct information from a reliable source, which in this context is a local government official in charge of that matter. However, the authors acknowledge the limitation of this research, particularly in the scope of analysis. The implementation of Denpasar's sister city cooperation in this research is examined only from the government's point of view, as the primary data is collected by interviewing a local government official. Further research by including more data from various non-state actors' perspectives should be conducted in the future to enrich the discussion presented in this paper.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. An Overview of Denpasar's Sister City Cooperation

3.1.1.Legal Basis

From the perspective of the law of State administration, paradiplomacy is a direct consequence of the autonomy of local government and decentralization of governance (Pujayanti, 2016). As is regulated under Law Number 23 of 2014 on Local Government (hereinafter "Law on Local Government"), local government has shared authority with the central government, except on foreign policy, defense and national security, fiscal, and monetary matters, as well as religion. It should be noted that, as asserted by Said (2015, p. 582) on Decentralization of Central Government-Local Government Authorities in Complete Autonomy according to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, even though there are some shared authorities, local government does

not possess exclusive authority over any matter. It should then translate to the central government being ultimately present in every governance aspect in Indonesia.

Denpasar's legal corridor to sister city starts with diplomatic relations between Indonesia, and the governing State wherein the proposed city is located. This is according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs Regulation No. 25 of 2020 on the Procedure of Cooperation of Local Government with the Local Government in Foreign State and Local Cooperation with Foreign Institution (hereinafter "PM 25/2020"), particularly Article 5 paragraph (1). Further, the Article requires local government to stay within its scope of authority, refrain from establishing an overseas office, and adhere to national and local development plans. PM 25/2020 regulates in Article 4 that local government may conduct international cooperation that covers: (a) development of science and technology, (b) cultural exchange, (c) development of technical abilities and good governance, (d) promotion of regional potential, and (e) other matters that do not violate Indonesian laws and regulations. The government of Denpasar has used the basis of this rule as a guideline in implementing the sister city cooperation.

3.1.2. Stages in Establishing Sister City Cooperation

Based on the interview result with the Head of the Sub-Division of Foreign Cooperation of Denpasar, several stages should be conducted to have international cooperation. The first stage is the initiation process. Denpasar and any other cities abroad can propose an initiative. The second one is the exploration stage. This process is usually filled with institutional visits from both parties. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the exploration stage is conducted virtually. Afterward, the third stage is signing the Letter of Intent (LoI). The next stage of this process is arranging the plan of actions based on the scope, outputs, and benefits aimed. Mutual benefit has always been the core of this type of partnership. This shall be presented to the House of Representatives of Bali Province (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*) to get their approval and then shall be verified. The following stage is drafting and discussing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Following this approval, the MoU shall be verified by the central government of Indonesia. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia has provided standardized wordings for the LoI and MoU. Therefore, the local government of Denpasar City only needs to adjust the content of these drafts. The central government will then invite the local government of Denpasar City to have a meeting with related ministries. The Governor of Bali will send the request to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry will evaluate the plan of action by ensuring several details, such as the benefits, funding, and other aspects. Subsequently, a request for approval is proposed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia to proceed with the MoU signing. Upon the minister's approval, the location of the MoU signing can be conducted either in Denpasar City or abroad. Following the signing, both cities can implement the programs agreed upon on the MoU and the plan of action. As of April 7, 2021, Denpasar City has signed sister city MoU with Mossel Bay, South Africa, and Perth, Australia. Aside from that, Denpasar City has signed sister city LoI with Gyeongju, South Korea, and Bolgar, Russia. This city is also entering the initial assessment process to discuss the cooperation plan with Darwin, Australia, and Brighton, United Kingdom (UK). Other offers are coming from China and Viet Nam, yet these are still in the early discussion phase.

3.2. Three Layers of Paradiplomacy in Denpasar's Sister City Cooperation

3.2.1. First Layer: Economy

The first layer of paradiplomacy, according to Lecours (2008), is economy. A study by Sidauruk et al. (2019) concludes that a creative economy, mainly through analyzing

the regional best products, can contribute to the development of the national economy. The government of Denpasar also has an interest in developing this city's creative economy. One of the efforts is by including the creative economy aspect in its sister city cooperation with Mossel Bay (KJRI Cape Town, 2019). According to the interview result, since the MoU signing in 2019, both cities have planned to create a festival consisting of a business forum, tabletop, and entertainment, where the Mossel Bay government can bring their products to Bali in 2020. However, due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, this plan has been canceled. To continue implementing the action plan, they have conducted an online forum through three webinars that involved the local businessmen of Denpasar and Mossel Bay and tabletop tour operators of both cities. The webinars focused on empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises (Supartika, 2020). Although a real number of economic transactions through trade has not been achieved, those webinars enable business people from Denpasar and Mossel Bay to connect.

In addition to the creative economy planned with Mossel Bay, Denpasar has initiated another economic cooperation with Perth. The two cities have agreed to develop business incubators by start-up sharing (Suarna, 2020). This idea was coined by the former Mayor of Denpasar, Mr. Ida Bagus Rai Dharmawijaya Mantra. He believes that Bali needs other potential sectors to provide economic benefits, apart from the tourism industry. Denpasar considered that Perth has a promising start-up potential. Therefore, Denpasar would like to learn from them to generate more start-ups to set another economic pillar beside the tourism sector, especially with the involvement of young entrepreneurs. However, the implementation of entrepreneurs exchange has not been conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the interview result, both cities have planned to create virtual workshops involving start-ups, for instance, in the animation sector, from September until December 2021 and conduct a tourism hospitality webinar in 2022. From these two examples, the economic aspect has a prominent role in this matter.

3.2.2. Second Layer: Culture, Technology, and Education

The second layer of paradiplomacy focuses on multidimensional and extensive aspects of diplomacy, which can be seen from cultural, technological, and educational features (Lecours, 2008). In the case study of Denpasar, this city has included the second layer of paradiplomacy in its sister city's cooperation with Mossel Bay. Denpasar and Mossel Bay have agreed to promote the tourism and culture of both cities (KJRI Cape Town, 2019). The actual implementation of this part was by including Mossel Bay in Denpasar Festival 2020 virtually. Mossel Bay was involved in the "International Friendship City" program by participating in cultural performances through this festival. Previously, Denpasar participated in the Diaz Festival Mossel Bay in January 2019 by promoting the culture through dance performances. Another upcoming plan is to promote tourism and culture through a TV program, which is still in the discussion process.

Apart from the cultural feature, the two cities concur that knowledge sharing in educational and technical aspects is necessary. Therefore, Mossel Bay would like to consult on the development of human resources and hospitality. Based on the interview data, Denpasar has transformed a river called Tukad Bindu from a polluted river into an emerging eco-tourism area. This real example caught the attention of Mossel Bay's government. Therefore, the consultant of Tukad Bindu will share the best practices with Mossel Bay. In addition to that, Mossel Bay would also like to comprehend more about the hospitality routine in Denpasar. Balinese people's reputation in handling domestic and international visitors to enjoy their leisure time is highly acclaimed. Thus, this aspect is included in the sister city cooperation between both cities.

In its sister city cooperation with Perth, Denpasar emphasizes two elements related to the second layer of paradiplomacy, namely, education and technology.

Regarding the educational aspect, the two cities have decided to include the program and curriculum of a business incubator. By the interview result, before signing the MoU in 2020, Denpasar has been involved as a facilitator to share Perth's annual West Tech Festival. Denpasar attempted to connect several campuses in its area with a business incubator to participate in this event. The role of the Denpasar government is to bridge academics and students in this city to communicate with people in Perth to generate more creative entrepreneurs (Pemerintah Kota Denpasar, 2019). As a part of the exploration stage in education, Denpasar and Brighton, United Kingdom, conducted a webinar in November 2020 with over 300 Denpasar university students. The Denpasar government expects that in the future, they can conduct more people-to-people and business-to-business collaboration by having academics, students, and start-up entrepreneurs exchange so that both cities can learn from each other's best practices, especially in the context of the development of technology. To sum up, the scope of Denpasar sister city cooperation has covered the second layer of paradiplomacy.

3.2.3. Third Layer: Politics

Denpasar has never included political aspects in its sister city cooperation. The government of this city believes that it is the authority of the central government of Indonesia. They conduct all the processes of sister city cooperation according to the existing national law and regulations, that is, PM 25/2020. Article 4 of the regulation stipulates that the object of sister city conducted by local government in Indonesia can only cover: (a) development of education and technology, (b) exchange of culture, (c) advancement of technical skills and governance management, (d) promotion of local area potential, and (e) other cooperation objectives that do not violate laws and regulations of Indonesia. Thus, it can be concluded that Denpasar's sister city cooperation does not incorporate political matter, which is the third layer of paradiplomacy.

3.3. Challenges in Implementing the Sister City Cooperation

This research found that Denpasar's sister city cooperation possesses several challenges, namely: (i) legal obstacle; (ii) continuity of the cooperation; (iii) human resources limitation; (iv) funding reallocation, and (v) limited citizen's participation. It is worth noting that this research is conducted in January-August 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, this unexpected situation influences the implementation of sister city cooperation in Denpasar. The challenges explained in this section are derived from the data collected by using the interview method.

The legal obstacle in the sister city cooperation includes the regulation differences between Gyeongju and Denpasar. The official government in Gyeongju believes that a Letter of Intent (LoI) is sufficient to be the basis of implementing the plan of action. However, according to Denpasar's representative, regulation in Indonesia sees that LoI is insufficient and therefore requires an MoU signing as the base to implement the plan of action. Since 2017, the government of Denpasar has attempted to communicate the MoU signing process with Gyeongju city. However, up to the present day, the challenge remains unsolved. In order to follow up on this matter, the government of Denpasar has a plan to contact the upcoming Consulate General of South Korea in Bali once they officially open the office. Since 2016, this has been an ongoing issue. The Denpasar government is currently uncertain whether they have to repeat the overall process of making the LoI or continue to process it into an MoU.

Despite the acknowledgment that international agreement is one of the primary sources of international law in international legal studies, its existence may take many forms, ranging from convention, treaty, covenant, protocol, accord, declaration, exchange of notes, statute, pact, and so forth. The naming of such a legal source is less relevant than what it entails. One of Indonesia's legal scholars, Kusumaatmadja (1978, p. 109), defines an international agreement between international legal

subjects that results in a particular legal consequence. Schmalenbach (2018a, p. 56), in the commentary on the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, propose a similar conception on international agreement, in which they consider it as a generic term used to refer to "... agreements concluded between subjects of international law possessing internationally recognized agreement-making capacity."

The capacity to enter into relations, which includes making diplomatic agreements, is one of the rights entitled to a sovereign State, as mentioned in the introduction. The right is also regulated under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (hereinafter "VCDR") and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (hereinafter "VCCR"). VCDR codifies practices of international relations among sovereign nations to have diplomatic relations and send a diplomatic mission, carrying out, among other things, national interests, protection of nationals, cultural and economic cooperation, and so forth. Such relations, according to Article 2 VCDR, shall take place by mutual consent. On the commentary of the draft Article by the International Law Commission (1958), such consent is expressed by agreement between States, which is evident by establishing a permanent diplomatic mission, that is, an embassy (Schmalenbach, 2018b, p. 90).

Considering the above explanation, the establishment of Indonesia's embassy in the Republic of Korea and vice versa is evidence of an international agreement implemented between Indonesia and the Republic of Korea (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Seoul-Republic of Korea, n.d.; Kedutaan Besar Republik Korea untuk Republik Indonesia, n.d.). This would also demonstrate that the first requirement, the existence of diplomatic relations, has been met, allowing Denpasar and Gyeongju to cooperate via establishing a sister city agreement. This cooperation must be underlined with another international agreement between the cities as the basis of their "inter-city" relations (Sompotan, 2016, pp. 3–4). As discussed above, this international agreement, regardless of what name it may have, shall entail legal consequences agreed upon by both cities.

PM 25/2020, as lex specialis, substantiates under Article 9 that for any Indonesian city to establish cooperation with any city in another State, it must compose and draft a cooperation agreement ("Naskah Kerja Sama"). Article 1 paragraph (16) of the same regulation has defined that a cooperation agreement may take form in an MoU or any other form. Considering the wording of the Articles, it should pose no problem to differences of perspective between Denpasar and Gyeongiu. The important matter to draft the Naskah Kerja Sama, according to Article 20 paragraph (5) of PM 25/2020, should be making sure that it comprises: (i) a title, (ii) subject of cooperation, (iii) goals, (iv) scope of the agreement, (v) implementation, (vi) funding, (vii) group of cooperation, (viii) dispute settlement mechanism, (ix) amendment, (x) duration of the cooperation, (xi) date and place of the signing of the agreement. However, one provision that may complicate Denpasar's initiation, that is Article 1 paragraph (15) that defines the initiation statement ("Pernyataan Kehendak Kerja Sama") as a document commonly referred to as an LoI. This initiation statement is a previous step. which is later followed by the drafting of Naskah Kerja Sama. The problem is that Gyeongju considers the LoI is a sufficient legal document to implement a sister city cooperation. In contrast, Denpasar, constraint by Article 9 paragraph (c) of PM 25/2020, can only identify LoI as an initiation statement. Thus, this legal obstacle

The continuity of the existing cooperation is the second challenge faced by the Denpasar government. Previously, a preliminary step of sister city cooperation has been established between Denpasar and Bolgar, Russia, initiated by the latter, at the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) Euro Asia Conference in 2019. The two cities have agreed to sign an LoI. However, in 2020, when Denpasar City would like to expand the LoI into MoU signing, there was no further response from the government of Bolgar, Russia, on this matter. Hence, the process remains only until the LoI signing. There is no certainty in this particular case since the communication has come to a

halt. Therefore, the continuation of the existing LoI between Denpasar and Bolgar is now questionable.

Based on the interview result, human resources limitation is the third issue faced by the Denpasar government. The local government staff has different skills than the central government, especially in language fluency. Furthermore, the Foreign Cooperation Sub-Division of Denpasar City encounters a challenge in coordinating the sister city plans of action with the technical department involved, in this case, Organisasi Perangkat Daerah (OPD) or local bureaucracy. Although the real implementation of sister city plan of actions rely heavily on these technical departments, not all of the local bureaucracy staff fully understand the concept and application of sister city cooperation. Thus, Denpasar Foreign Cooperation Sub-Division should often conduct monitoring and evaluation to oversee the implementation of the programs in related technical departments. Apart from that, the intensity of workload contributes to the existing challenges. Denpasar government admit that they received some offers, such as from China and Viet Nam. They welcomed all cities to have a discussion and conduct an initial assessment process. However, due to the limitation of the human resources, they have to balance the focus in the implementation of the current sister city cooperation and in accepting new

As mentioned previously, the COVID-19 pandemic influences the implementation of sister city cooperation, particularly in funding reallocation and citizen participation. Before the pandemic, Denpasar has planned several visits and programs. However, according to the interview result, the programs must be shifted into the virtual format due to budget reallocation. Furthermore, this research found that the implementation of some programs lacks citizen engagement. The webinars held by Denpasar and Mossel Bay, for instance, were not open to the public because those events were limited to business people only. Public participation in the virtual Denpasar Festival can only be done by watching the cultural performance online on YouTube. The only opportunity for the public to actively engage was during a webinar with Brighton, UK. This paper argues that citizen participation is currently limited and has yet reached an intensive people-to-people engagement. Other opportunities that have been planned and might include active participation from the citizens are the exchange programs regarding start-ups, business incubators, and technology development. Nonetheless, those plans are being put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Conclusion

This research concentrates on sister city cooperation in Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia, as a case study of paradiplomacy practice. It illustrates a concrete implementation of local government involvement in international relations, particularly with other cities abroad. Denpasar has a wide range of potential to be explored in various aspects of the sister city cooperation with other cities, such as Mossel Bay, Perth, Gyeongju, Bolgar, Darwin, and Brighton. Based on the notion of three layers of paradiplomacy by Lecours (2008), this research found that Denpasar's sister city cooperation engages in the first layer (economy) and the second layer (culture, education, and technology). Since there are no political activities involved, thus, Denpasar's sister city cooperation does not cover the third layer.

The first layer of paradiplomacy highlights the economic sector. Denpasar emphasizes creative economy as the major theme of its economic pursuit, including the empowerment of micro, small, and medium enterprise, and start-ups through conducting several webinars. The second layer of paradiplomacy in Denpasar's sister city cooperation signifies several threads, namely, culture, education, and technology. Tourism and cultural promotion, as well as the improvement of business incubator curriculum and technological advancement for start-ups, are being prioritized. Apart from that, other technical programs involving human resources and hospitality are included in the plan of action. This paper argues that the second layer's practice will

eventually benefit the first layer, which is the economic aspect. Tourism and cultural promotion are aimed to generate more income. Additionally, business incubator curriculum and start-up development will also create more jobs and entrepreneurs expected to contribute to the economy. This research asserts that both the first and second layers of paradiplomacy can be conducted simultaneously.

Furthermore, this research also concludes that Denpasar's sister city cooperation encounters several challenges, such as legal obstacle, continuity of the cooperation, human resources limitation, funding reallocation, and limited citizen participation. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic affects the implementation of the sister city plan of action. This paper suggests that further research on paradiplomacy in Denpasar and other cities in Indonesia should be conducted to scrutinize each problem and provide some academic recommendations. In addition, more academic research on Denpasar's sister city cooperation from the perspective of non-state actors could enrich the conversation and therefore stimulate further thinking that will contribute to the improvement of its implementation.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express our gratitude to Universitas Pendidikan Nasional (UNDIKNAS) for providing financial support to fully fund this research through the University Internal Research Grant 2021. The authors appreciate the government of Denpasar City, particularly the Cooperation Division (Bagian Kerja Sama), for their cooperation during the data collection process of this study.

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