

## **The City of Padang's Challenges in Paradiplomacy**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Kegiatan internasional pemerintah daerah atau juga dikenal dalam sebagai paradiplomacy, telah meningkat secara signifikan dalam beberapa tahun terakhir. Di Indonesia, pemerintah daerah diizinkan untuk melakukan hubungan internasional atau diplomasi kota dalam mendukung pemerintah pusat. Dalam melakukan hal itu, beberapa perjanjian internasional telah ditandatangani oleh pemerintah daerah Indonesia, sebagian besar dalam bentuk membangun hubungan saudara kota atau "sister city". Di Indonesia, aktor daerah paling aktif di panggung internasional adalah kota-kota besar, seperti Jakarta, Yogyakarta, dan Bandung, yang semuanya terletak di Jawa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi oleh kota kecil, dalam hal ini Kota Padang dalam melakukan diplomasi kota. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus dengan Teknik pengumpulan data berupa studi pustaka dan wawancara. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa kota-kota kecil memiliki tantangan tersendiri dalam melakukan paradiplomacy. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa kota kecil tidak dapat melakukan diplomasi kota seperti kota-kota besar karena faktor-faktor berikut: kurangnya kesadaran akan diplomasi kota, sejumlah kecil staf dengan pengetahuan yang cukup tentang hubungan internasional, dan kurangnya informasi dan ide tentang penerapan sister city. MoU kota atau rencana aksi dan prosedur birokrasi yang rumit dalam melakukan perjanjian yang membuat penurunan motivasi bagi petugas yang akan melaksanakan hubungan luar negeri. Artikel ini berkesimpulan bahwa, kota Padang, dengan segala tantangan yang dimiliki masih terus mengembangkan beberapa kerjasama luar negeri dan mengefektifkan kerjasama yang sudah dibuat.

**Kata Kunci:** Paradiplomacy, Kota Kecil, Padang, Tantangan, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

International activities of local governments, also known in the literature as paradiplomacy, has significantly increased in the recent years. In Indonesia, local governments can conduct city-to-city diplomacy in supporting of central government. In doing so, multiple international agreements have been signed by Indonesian local governments, mostly by establishing sister city relations. The most active actors are big cities, such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, all situated in Java. This research aims to explore challenges faced by small cities, particularly the city of Padang in conducting city diplomacy. The authors interviewed public officers in city of Padang and collected secondary data on the topic based on literature study. This article argues that small city has challenges that are not faced by big cities. The study found that small city cannot conduct city diplomacy as well as big cities due to the following factors: lack of awareness of city diplomacy, small number of staff with sufficient knowledge about international relations, and lack of information and idea about the implementation of sister city MoU or action plan and complex bureaucracy procedure in conducting an agreement which potentially less motivate staff in doing paradiplomacy. This article concludes that city of Padang is still working to obtain many agreements in term of sister city while creating many action plans to effectively the agreements.

**Key Words:** Paradiplomacy, Small City, Padang, Challenges, Indonesia

### 1. Introduction

As one of the most populous countries in the world, Indonesia has four hundred and sixteen regencies and ninety-six cities (BPS Statistik Indonesia, 2018). Those consist of small, medium, and large cities. This number is the biggest in Southeast Asia (United Nations, 2019; UP, 2017). Indonesia has many large growing cities with a more dynamic trend of urbanization marked by increasing economic growth and activity, rapid population growth, and dense populations such as Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Surabaya, and Balikpapan (Sitinjak, Sagala, & Rianawati, 2014).

In Southeast Asia, many cities have prospered. Singapore is a major commercial and financial centre, the location of regional company headquarters and a prime shopping destination. Foreign direct investment has made Bangkok into a global centre for the production of commercial vehicles, a tourist destination, and a transport hub. Filipino cities are global centres for business process outsourcing. Looking at these success stories, there is no reason for cities in Indonesia to not develop and go global. Some of the cities in Indonesia are categorized as megacities

or large cities. Therefore, many cities going global in Indonesia can make another success story in Southeast Asia cities' development.

Yet, like big cities, small cities also need to go globally. The development of big cities sometimes come with drawbacks. Limited land for settlements, pollution, competition for job opportunities and others, force people to live in small cities. This means that small cities must create a better economy, in terms of structure and development as well as socially so that people are more comfortable living in small cities. The emergence of globalization means a lot for small cities. On one hand, many industrial factories establish operations in small cities to avoid overcrowded in big cities. This situation nudges small cities to prepare for new economic development. On the other hand, many foreigners or non-small cities citizens come to live, allocate for job and others. In this situation, small cities should maintain the local culture while providing liveable situation for the newcomers. To adapt to the situation small cities, need to go global to learn the best practices and develop the network.

Despite these pressures, small cities often lack experience in going global. In addition, unlike big cities who can directly propose Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to assist them to do city diplomacy, small cities often face bureaucratic hurdles. Small cities diplomacy in Indonesia mostly do it not on out of their own willingness at the first stage. In the preliminary stage, the Indonesian MOFA approaches small cities to do city diplomacy. The MOFA provides a list of foreign cities which can collaborate with small cities. Meanwhile, for big cities, the proposal and objective and the future sister city they chose will be initiated by them, then deliver the idea to MOFA. Meanwhile, a small city is not like that. Small cities doing city diplomacy are mostly because of the initiative of Indonesian MOFA. It asks the city if they want to participate or not, whether they enable doing the agenda or not. So usually, for a small city, Indonesian MOFA will contact the city whether they want to conduct cooperation with a city in a state that has diplomatic ties with Indonesia. In addition, most planning the agenda, the initiation, finding information, formal meetings will be done mostly by MOFA. Local government or small city is only responsible for finding permission from the city council to do the agreement and inform the province government, while MOFA will assist other essential responsibilities. MOFA's prominent roles in city diplomacy also become another challenge for a small city to be self-sufficient and able to do foreign affairs. Thus, it is important to explore small city challenges in doing paradiplomacy for making a better action of the cities in the future.

The city of Padang is located in West Sumatera, a province in west coast Indonesia. This city has 11 sub municipalities, 19 islands, and it covers 694.93 km<sup>2</sup> (BPS Kota Padang, 2018). As of 2018, Padang's population was 939,112 people. While this pales in comparison to Jakarta and Surabaya, Padang is the most populous city in West Sumatera. Padang has significant economic potential, especially in agriculture, fisheries as well as tourism. There are 178 tourism objects: 19 islands,

28 natural attractions, 37 nautical tourism, 71 historical sites, one culture tourism, 32 shop destination, and nine culinary sites (BPS Kota Padang, 2018). In terms of international connections, Padang is adequately connected. The city of Padang is the main gate for West Sumatera, hosting an international airport and harbour of West Sumatera. Per 2018, Padang had international flights around 1,183 arrivals and 1,288 departures. It also had a high number of international passengers around 143,814 arrival passengers, 145,301 departures, with 67,286 being foreign visitors (BPS Statistik Indonesia, 2018).

Most people come for international events like participating or watching Tour de Singkarak, which is held every year in West Sumatera and other international events. Padang is also a popular tourist destination. Tourists also often come here for tourism purposes or buying traditional clothes. Padang is also renowned for its cuisine, culture and nature observing. However, the most favourite tourism objects in the city of Padang is historical tourism where tourism can visit some places comprises the history of city of Padang like the Adityawarman cultural museum (BPS, 2020). Rendang has been nominated as one of the best foods in the world, which make people come to West Sumatera to taste it (CNN Travel, 2017). Therefore, although people do not go to the city of Padang, they know, Padang is known by rendang, tourism, and others.

Talking about the city of Padang achievement and story in paradiplomacy, the city of Padang first diplomacy record was in 1988 as can be seen from Indonesian MOFA record. It made a city-to-city cooperation agreement with city of Hildesheim, Lower Saxony, Federal Republic of Germany. Although the city was invited to participate in international event, like sending delegations to perform traditional arts, and participate in major world forums, Padang's paradiplomacy has been dormant for many years. After its initial sister city agreement in 1988, Padang did not sign another sister city agreement until 2016, when Padang signed another sister agreement with the province of Ba ria Vung Tau, Vietnam. This agreement had been initiated since 2013 by the city government.

The development of the city of Padang paradiplomacy from its first step until 2016 took a long time. A city with high international exposure, high demand for the dwellers to go international to get a better life, are good reasons for the city of Padang to have foreign affairs that also support the central government. However, there is a big question why does it take so long for the city to develop its paradiplomacy? Therefore, this article argues that in this case, a small city in Indonesia, the city of Padang, has its challenges that could not be faced by big cities in doing paradiplomacy. Some of the challenges are neglected agreement after signing, less collaboration between local institution to implement the agreement, limited skilled and specialized staff in handling foreign affairs, long process and procedure to initiate an agreement and less support from local assembly.

Connecting cities will enhance cities' efforts to coordinate and develop their customized urbanization strategies. Driven by connectivity, both physical and digital, urbanization is changing the face of cities. This phenomenon is worth the attention is given that cities are centers of economic activities and attract investment (Tay & Tijaja, 2017). More than half of the population are urban. This urbanization flow also brings much demand for the city (Indonesia Habitat National Team, 2016). These factors drive city officials to expand globally to fulfil their city dwellers needs. As the urban population increases, they require high education quality, better health care service, and others. Sometimes, they compare with cities in other countries that have better education and health care service.

The small city in Indonesia is not like a big city in doing city paradiplomacy. A big city can quickly point and formulate international cooperation with a clear agenda or goals that they want to achieve and supported by long experience in doing multilayer diplomacy. The majority of paradiplomacy agreements in Indonesia dominated by big cities such as Bandung, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta. This data can be found on <https://treaty.kemlu.go.id/>. Other cities in Indonesia engage in paradiplomacy due to special circumstances such as natural disaster like Aceh and Lombok. In terms of academic literature, analyses of paradiplomacy tend to gravitate towards big cities as data is more readily available (Alam & Sudirman, 2020; Issundari, 2018; Surwandono & Maksum, 2020). Scholars have also analysed small city paradiplomacy, but they tend to focus on problems and challenges rather than advantages gained by small cities from paradiplomacy (Fathun, 2016; Surwandono, 2019).

## **2. Analytical Framework**

Paradiplomacy comes from parallel diplomacy (Duchacek, 1990). It can be defined as activities, contacts, relations, and local governments' actions in international systems, which are coherent with national government activities (Schiavon, 2018). These activities are mainly conducted with other international actors at the same level as local governments such as other local governments, civil society organizations. The prefix "para" indicates the actions parallel with the foreign policy of the national government. Paradiplomacy can benefit local governments to seek greater autonomy or recognition of their distinctiveness from other local governments within the state internationally.

Sometimes paradiplomacy can be conflictual with a term of multilayer diplomacy. In multilayer diplomacy, the role of the local government or substate is less prominent. Local government only participate in complex diplomacy network that initiated by national government (Crieckemans, 2010). Usually, the national government has designed cooperation and plan everything, but when it comes to actions, local governments do or at least participate in it. Meanwhile, in

paradiplomacy, the local governments become prominent. While the national government continues to play a role, the role is usually limited to assisting local government in preparing agreements based on national law, evaluating the diplomatic performance of the local government, and ensuring consistency with the objectives of foreign policy.

Paradiplomacy is expected to promote local development and local values. This goal is mostly achieved by leveraging the unique strengths of local governments, which may include the promotion of tourism, economic opportunities, and technological transfers (H. Michelmann, 2009). Local governments conduct paradiplomacy with this aim to highlight the local values and accelerate economic development, mainly through the promotion of local businesses and culture.

Paradiplomacy also aims to improve local government performance in particular issues such as, climate change, human rights, and sustainable development. Here, local governments are expected to learn best practices from the partner of the issues through the transfer of knowledge. Local governments generally create agreements like friendship, city, and sister city to exchange knowledge and practices to improve their local life as can be seen in term and condition of the agreement (Isnarti, Fhadly, & Irawan, 2019). Paradiplomacy may also serve to provide better citizen services (Kuznetsov, 2020). Due to high urbanization and city dwellers' demand for a better life, cities have to provide many good aspects for its citizens. Sometimes, it becomes less developed if cities only rely on national government services. The cities cannot develop its potential and learn from other cities to develop more. The cities only rely on national policies for their development. Through paradiplomacy, local governments have alternatives to provide better services for their citizens. For example, cities doing sister city and has agreement on education can do student exchange for their students to improve international exposure and increase their knowledge and skills from other cities (Chow & Loo, 2015).

In addition, cities need to be more resilient and learn best practices from others. Resilience reflects a city's ability to persevere in the face of an emergency to continue its core mission despite daunting challenges. Resilience is increasingly being a criterion that companies consider when determining where to invest or locate operations. Also, building Resilience is a critical economic development strategy (Sitinjak et al., 2014). A city's resilience can become one of the city's selling points like they promote their livability scores, new kind of transportation, art, natural scene, and others. Some cities have built well resilience and take advantage of it as economic development and make city dwellers feel safer and secure. For example, Surabaya's green practices were gained from city diplomacy (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020), improving education and cultural in city of Flanders (Tavares, 2016) and Jakarta by building better flood management from Rotterdam (Sitinjak et al., 2014). Sister city agreements provide a way to learn best practices. Sister City is a cooperation between cities that can be widespread, formally agreed, and built on a

long-term basis. The most familiar form of interaction that cities do while going global is making or finding a sister city or friendship city (Sitinjak et al., 2014). In Indonesia, commonly, partnered cities will create a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This scheme enables each other to manage the city and meet the needs through sharing knowledge, resources, technology, and expertise between cities that signed the MoU. For example, Jakarta has Rotterdam as its sister city. One of the focuses on this cooperation is flooding management. Cooperation in flood management aims to get feedback on how the Dutch managed to deal with flooding (Sitinjak et al., 2014). The agreement comes under the Jakarta-Rotterdam Minutes of Agreement (MoA) in the water management sector from 2013 to 2015. The agreement includes the operational management of mud-dredging equipment and knowledge exchange in flood handling master plan preparations. The cooperation focused on human resources capacity building in the management of integrated urban water resources management through training programs and the exchange of information and knowledge about threats and strategic issues faced by delta cities (Michell, 2013).

Paradiplomacy may also be used to engage with the diaspora in other countries (Tavares, 2016). It is expected that building relations with diaspora can help cities' development. Diaspora that lives overseas expecting can contribute to their region through cooperation build by paradiplomacy without having to come back to their origins. Therefore, paradiplomacy can be a bridge and arena for people living outside to contribute directly to its city and strength relations with its origins. In addition to tapping into the resources of diaspora, paradiplomacy may also serve to strengthen nationalism in border cities. Paradiplomacy cannot be separated from the geographic location. Therefore, for cities located in the border country, doing paradiplomacy is much more recommended than other cities. Paradiplomacy for border cities may provide an alternative source of revenue, particularly if it is located far from the capital city and does not get much support from the national government (Kuznetsov, 2020). Border cities also can do paradiplomacy to clarify national borders and enhance nationalism for its people. Border cities can do more intense relations as their citizen interact quite frequently. Paradiplomacy by border cities may result in cultural exchanges and expose where the culture belongs, further, the practice will promote values, identities and promotion of daily activity that part of nationalism. When two border cities collaborate, they will show each other cultures and custom and where the culture belongs. This practice that will enhance the nationalism (Rioux Ouimet, 2015). Tavares (2016) also adds some other paradiplomacy objectives such as electoral opportunism and personal interests related to local leaders' interest in paradiplomacy and doing foreign affairs. Kuznetsov (2020) also adds some sub-state motivation and opportunities in doing paradiplomacy such as globalization and regionalization, democratization, domestication of foreign policy, the role of political party or leader, outside stimulus and soon.

There are also some problems in doing paradiplomacy. In some cases, paradiplomacy agreements may outpace actual implementation of programs. Usually, it occurs when a public leader aggressively pursues paradiplomacy in a bid to win the popular vote without plans for following up on the implementation. As a result, the local government fails to create activities or programs based on the agreements. Other reasons may include limited financial resources to implement the programs in agreement due to many reasons such as overlapping financial resources, ignorance responsibility from the institution, or a lack of political will from city officers to approve the programs. Tavares (2016) also argues that the national government's domination in diplomacy and the complicated procedures involved in paradiplomacy may discourage the local government from pursuing paradiplomacy. Hence, the local governments may prefer to implement national government actions, relying on multilayer diplomacy, instead of actively pursuing paradiplomacy.

In Indonesia, paradiplomacy is regulated under Law No. 24/2000 regarding International Agreements, Law no. 37/1999 regarding Foreign Affairs, and Law no. 32/2004 regarding decentralization. These laws enable the local government to conduct foreign affairs as well as paradiplomacy. However, it does not mean they are independent of or separate from the national government. The national government still has roles in assisting local government in conducting paradiplomacy. The national government under the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MOFA) roles in paradiplomacy are coordinator, initiator, information, mediator, promotor, facilitator, protector, and supervisor (Mukti, 2013). The coordinating role refers to the function of the MOFA in advising about the legal and political implications of a program or an agreement that would be conducted by a city in Indonesia. As initiator and informant, MOFA provides the information needed by the city to conduct paradiplomacy, such as the potential partner's information and potential areas for cooperation. The mediating role refers to MOFA's function in mediating the cities that would like to have an agreement, and it also can promote Indonesian cities overseas so other cities would like to create an agreement. After signing the MOU, MOFA can supervise the agreement and evaluate which program has been done to check whether it is coherent with Indonesian foreign policy.

### **3. Research Method**

This article uses qualitative research methods. Lamont (2015) argues that the qualitative method is used to focus on meaning and process about particular events, phenomena, and others. Further, qualitative methods collect and analyze data that comes in the form of the spoken or written language and commonly not in the form of numbers. Besides, Gerring (2011) states that the case study approach could be defined as an intensive study of a single unit to understand a large class of (similar units). Therefore, this article analyses the meaning of a particular unit to understand



large units. It analyses the challenges and benefits of small cities' paradiplomacy explicitly.

This article collects data from the city of Padang official documents and archives about sister city agreements and interviews in the form of structured interviews as primary data collection and library research from internet-based research as secondary data collection. Structured interviews can define as interviews which participant has been selected, and pre-written interview questions have been prepared. Therefore, the interview is conducting to stay on script, and data collection will be accessible to categories and structured. This research interviewed staff from the cooperation bureau section of the city of Padang. It uses discourse analysis to analyse the data. It means that the article analyses the interpretation through intersubjective understandings (Phillips, Phillips, & Hardy, 2002). It identifies and justifies selection sources from data collection to build arguments about why and how the city.

#### **4. Discussion**

In 2017, the city of Padang officially had a sub-bureau of foreign affairs that would handle the city's international cooperation. This sub-bureau is under the bureau of local cooperation. This sub-bureau has ten officers, one division head, two sub-division heads, and seven regular officers. However, these officers do not have specialized competencies related to conducting international affairs. They know how to translate English documents, although they have little specialized knowledge of international affairs. Therefore, international affairs business is handled by the sub bureau chief. After establishing the sub-bureau, it initiated cooperation with Fremantle, a city in Perth, Western Australia, and got a Letter of Intention with the city in 2018. However, both cities have yet to sign a Memorandum of understanding. The city of Padang officer cannot go to Fremantle to discuss more the cooperation due to Indonesia's election which limited official travel overseas for state-sponsored affairs. Padang also has other two sister agreements with Ba Ria Vung Tau, signing in 2016 and city of Hildesheim signing in 1988 (kementerian luar negeri indonesia, 2020).

Since its establishment, the sub-bureau of foreign affairs of the city of Padang actively creates action plans for the agreement that has been signed. Particularly the one with Ba Ria Vung Tau Province. Several programs related to the action have been conducted. First, both the parties agreed to hold Vietnamese traditional music performance in Padang in 2018. Second, visiting higher education institutions in Vietnam by Padang city officials to learn about the Vietnamese higher education system and initiate collaboration in the higher education sector. Third, sending some of Padang's farmers to learn about agriculture in Vietnam. The excursion was funded by the Agriculture Ministry of Indonesia through its department in the city of Padang.

The activity consists of best practice of irrigation, management of paddy field and organic agriculture. Then, initiate tourism corners in each city and many more (Trisni S., personal communication, 22 June 2019).

However, in terms of cooperation with Hildesheim city, there is no significant action had been done under this collaboration. There was only a work visit from the city of Padang a long time ago in 1988 to Hildesheim. Thus, agreement with Hildesheim's city can be assumed as a dormant agreement as it does not produce any significant action in terms of cooperation between the cities. Reactivating dormant agreements has been the main agenda for the sub-bureau. As stated by the chief of the sub bureau, the city of Padang is currently trying to re-establish the agreement with Hildesheim and design future collaboration with the city. This plan is also supported by the Indonesian MOFA. Padang has been communicating intensively with the Indonesian Embassy in Germany to achieve this goal.

So far, it can be concluded that Padang has a limited number of international cooperation agreements. There are only three forms of cooperation, consisting of two memoranda of understandings and one a letter of intent. There have been no significant developments of these agreements. It was only in the last five years, 2015-2019 the city reform and put concern on its international affairs. This city only has ten officers, two agreements that signed before the sub bureau established, and a low number of implementations after signing the agreement or action plans. It can be seen that Padang has one agenda per year to implement the agreement that has been agreed upon. This condition is in stark contrast to Surabaya, which has around thirty officers under bureau of cooperation and administration and around 6 officers that specifically handle foreign relations (pemerintah kota surabaya, 2019.). Further, the city of Surabaya has implemented many cooperation's or activities from its sister city agreement for example environment-related cooperative relationship with Kitakyushu (in Japan) through their waste management program and also the city has around nineteen sister city agreement (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020).

#### **4.1. Padang's Opportunities in Conducting Paradiplomacy**

In the case of the city of Padang, achieving resilience from paradiplomacy is essential. Natural disasters are pressing concerns for the city. Therefore, the local government needs to learn something from other cities that face the same problem. The city of Padang needs to learn to be resilient from natural disasters and other kinds of disasters. It can make an agreement or collaboration with other cities to make the city more resilient through cooperation in natural disaster mitigation (Sitinjak et al., 2014). Second, cities need to be a global actor because it will strengthen local competences and local programs like healthcare, education, public safety, and many more (Oosterlynck et al., 2018). The more people live in the city, the more complicated their demand becomes. People will need a better education program,

better healthcare service, and others. Sometimes, mayors, governors, and its staff do not know how to fulfill all of these demands. Therefore, they need to learn from other cities how to do and serve those facilities to its citizen (Hellmann, Fahrmeir, & Vec, 2016). In addition, city-to-city collaboration may have a positive effect on quality of services in specified sectors. This may take form of student exchanges or skills training in health. This situation also happens in the city of Padang. More Padang people go outside the city because of obtaining better education and health care service. For example, many Padang citizens go to Penang and Melaka to obtain health care services in Malaysia that they think provides better health care services than the city of Padang. Looking from this situation, it assumes that the city can learn how to provide better health care services for the citizen.

Third, cities need to promote their local values, identity, and culture (UN-Habitat, 2010). Every region has its specification. A big country like Indonesia will sometimes face obstacles to promote all of its region's uniqueness as each of them has different values. Sumatera, Sulawesi, and other cities in Indonesia have unique cultural traits which ought to be promoted. If the local government has wait for the central government to promote it for them, of course, it will take time, and it could be value and identity, culture and custom that they want to promote will be decreased. Due to the effects of globalization, cities have a big chance of promoting themselves globally, whether to attract investment, tourism, or to make themselves popular at the international level. Padang is known for its culinary, , diaspora, tourism, and others. However, this situation is not optimized yet by the city of Padang. There are many identities, values, and local wisdom that Padang needs to promote internationally.

In terms of geography, some cities in Indonesia have a direct border with other foreign cities. For example, Batam in Sumatera has a border with Singapore, Nunukan, in Kalimantan with Malaysia. Sometimes these cities share the same values with its border. These cities' lifestyles and daily life cannot be said far from their border expansion (Oosterlynck et al., 2018). Having said that, their lifestyle could be the same. A far distance from the capital city sometimes makes them less developed. Therefore, if those cities still cover themselves and do not want to go internationally, they will face drawbacks by themself, isolation, and less nationalism. The city of Padang does not directly have a border with foreign countries of cities. However, this city has the same identity and culture as Malay people, particularly Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia. Like a point above, if the city of Padang does not start to promote the city seriously, some of their local culture and others maybe will be known by people as Malaysian culture and customs. Therefore, it is a drawback for the west Sumatera and the city of Padang specifically.

#### **4.2. Challenges faced by Padang in Paradiplomacy**

Generally, there are some problems in a small city like the city of Padang in doing paradiplomacy. Problems like bureaucracy, officers' skills, mindset or political will, and action program as a form of implementation from the MOU are the most common problems for a small city in doing paradiplomacy. First, the bureaucratic procedures tend to be time-consuming. Creating an agreement for a small city, especially the city in the second tier, like the Padang city, requires a long process in public administration for example to sign an agreement or MoU from the initiation until the inked. In a condition that all parties agree and ready to cooperate, the shortest period of second-tier cities is one year. That only counts after a final proposal, and all parties agree to create an agreement or be ready to sign it. Another time-consuming procedure would be getting permission from the city council to approve of a proposal for international cooperation. Usually, it takes 45 working days for the city council to pass the bill of international cooperation; in practice, the actual time needed is more or less 60 days for the approval (Trisni, S., personal communication from interview, 22 June 2019). For the city of Padang case, from recently sister city agreement, two international cooperation, the city council does not give legalization. So, it has to wait for 45 days, as it will automatically be permitted to do international cooperation. The entire process, from initiating until signing the MoU or other forms of agreement, takes at least two years. Another time-consuming procedure would be writing a proposal. The city of Padang cannot directly contact a city overseas. Indonesian MOFA has to act as a mediator between the two cities. The additional inter-ministerial meetings further add to the bureaucratic procedures needed to begin discussions on cooperation.

Second, even if agreements are inked, there is the probability of agreements becoming dormant. Sometimes after signing an agreement, city officials may not seek to implement the agreements. The agreements then become archive files in their office and treaty room in Indonesian MOFA. There are many reasons why MoU or any agreement about sister city becomes dormant. From interviews with city officers, it said that sometimes when it comes to following up the MoU, and they need cooperation with other institutions, other institutions cannot do much. For example, when the city of Padang has a sister city agreement with Baria Vung Tau and some delegations from the Baria visit Padang, to know more about investment in Padang and others, the office of investment in Padang could not provide the visiting delegation with the necessary information. They cannot guarantee and give a clear explanation that foreign investment can do some business in Padang, and several areas in Padang cannot be used to do so. Here, we learn that regional government agencies are responsible for agreeing, but to do action plans, they need other offices to assist with the program such as government office for tourism, investment,

education, and others. On the other hand, the offices sometimes lack the experience to work with international agencies and sometimes do not allocated a budget to do the collaboration program internationally. As a result, they are incapable of doing some programs to support sister agreement initiated by government agencies previously.

Third, a lack of skilled and specialised human resources. When going internationally, of course, the mayor or governor staff need to be able to adapt to the international environment (Isnarti et al., 2019). The most basic skills they need to have are English as a way to communicate internationally. English communication skills will make city officers easier to communicate with foreign city officers. However, some city staff said that they could not interact with foreign city staff as their staff lack spoken or written English proficiency. Those who can converse in English may lack confidence while talking with others (Personal communication; interview 22 June 2019). Some of them lack international exposure, especially in facing formal situations like a business meeting, official summit, and others. Although some of them were able to go overseas many times in a year; however, they said their English use is limited to daily conversations. They are not confident of using their English in formal situations. As a result, some cities do not have a bureau or part that manages international affairs and tend to avoid formal international meetings. Sometimes, they have to wait to be assisted with staff from Indonesian MOFA for all kinds of their needs, such as drafting MoU, communicate their needs, writing city profiles, and much more (Mukti, 2013). Lack of English skills as a basic need for communication causes a lack of intention from the staff to build international cooperation to support paradiplomacy. City officers worry that they have to write reports in English, present in English, and provide anything while they think they will not be capable of doing so. So, they tend to 'play safe' by doing simple things (and in some cases, doing nothing) to avoid work which requires the use of English. In the case of the City of Padang, there are ten officers in the foreign affairs bureau. It consists of one officer as head of the division, two officers as head of sub-division, and the rest as regular officers. The regular officers can do the English translation. Nevertheless, they never train to write a foreign relations draft, negotiate, or write documents to initiate a sister city agreement. In addition, some of them do not have confidence with their English. Therefore, foreign relations are handled by the subdivision head due to her international experience, overseas credentials, and experience in seminars and training about sub-state diplomacy conducted by Indonesian MOFA. In conclusion, the officers in this bureau cannot work effectively, which results in an unbalanced work distribution.

To overcome this problem, MOFA or other epistemic communities that concern about city diplomacy should do more training or seminars with the targeted audience from government officers related to foreign affairs. It is expected that these plans will encourage them to do city diplomacy and boost their confidence to go global with

their city as well as their skills to do so. Although we cannot deny MOFA's role in assisting city-to-city diplomacy, empowering local officers could help them to be more independent and minimize MOFA role in small stuff for preparing city diplomacy as they can focus on big stuff for success of the city diplomacy (Mukti, 2013). This challenge also can be addressed in several ways. First, city governance has to recruit officers or staff with international relations background. It is assumed that they will have some knowledge about how to make foreign relations with others and be able to deliver ideas internationally as they learn about the subject. There are seventy-two International Relations Department in Indonesia (Aihii, 2020). Their graduates can be source from local government to recruit knowledgeable staff in international relations. Therefore, city governance can recruit them. However, from the last several recruitments at the local government level, few cities recruit graduates from International Relations. Some of the cities said that they do not know about this graduate school, while others said that they do not have bureau for foreign affairs that why they do not need those skills, even in tourism and promotion agencies (personal communication, 22 June 2019).

Another challenge faced by small cities is the perception of doing foreign affairs or related to political will. Some officers and city senators assume that doing foreign affairs should bring a high number of investments to the city. However, city to city diplomacy is not only aimed for investment. Cities well known, promotion, resilience can be calculated as city diplomacy purposes (Trisni, Isnarti, Sinulingga, & Ferdian, 2018). However, some elites do not count it as the benefit of city diplomacy. Therefore, if the city wants to do foreign affairs or conduct a sister city agreement if it does not directly benefit economic and investment, they would not count it as a necessary action. Further, the city's proposal to conduct foreign affairs only counts as an action by some city officers and senators as an opportunity for sightseeing, not as a business or formal meetings or trips.

To overcome this problem, MOFA or other epistemic communities that concern about city diplomacy should do many training or seminars with the targeted audience from government officers whose responsibility is to do foreign affairs. It is expected that these plans will encourage them to do city diplomacy and boost their confidence to go global with their city as well as their skills to do so.

In terms of agreement efficiency, from the city of Padang in paradiplomacy, an action plan is significant homework in paradiplomacy. So far, sister city agreement with Baria Vung Tau is the youngest agreement but the most effective one as it results in many programs after signing. There were two programs that have been conducted from the agreement—first, culture performance, and second agriculture training for Padang's farmers. At the time, cultural performance was conducted in Padang. Vietnamese artists and performances from Baria Vung Tau, came to Padang, and performed their traditional music and dance. This event aims to introduce some of the Vietnamese traditional culture to people in Indonesia, especially Padang's

citizens (Calva, 2016). This event is coherent with the agreement that one of the points concerned about tourism.

Meanwhile, in agriculture, some farmers had training in Vietnam about how to do organic agriculture (Hendra, 2017). It can be said that the city of Padang agreement with Baria Vung Tau, is a valid agreement. Sister city agreement with Hildesheim does not result in many programs like the one with Baria Vung Tau. When the agreement was signed, there was no special bureau in the city of Padang to handle and manage foreign affairs. Therefore, at the time, the purpose of signing the agreement only to promote the city going internationally without specific programs forward. Another challenge to do paradiplomacy with Hildesheim is the distance. A great distance between Padang and Hildesheim will consume a high budget to send delegations for any purposes from Padang to there. Although the city of Padang has a small number of sister city agreements, it tries to efficiently the agreement signed. If we compare to big cities in Indonesia that are often doing paradiplomacy like Jakarta, East Java, West Java, of course, the city of Padang will seem as less active in paradiplomacy. However, the city of Padang is a second-tier city. It is not a capital city for west Sumatera but only for a region, Padang. Therefore, to compare it with the city as the capital city for the province would be unequal.

Besides, inter-institution relations and allocated budget from other departments or agencies become another challenge for the city of Padang to implement programs from sister city agreement. As a unit below the ministry of home affairs, the city of Padang government could facilitate the agreement as a legal basis for other agencies to do the programs. For example, the city of the Padang government can create the MoU or the agreement. However, when it comes to the action plan, it needs other agencies, let us say the city tourism agency or city agricultural agency to do the programs. However, those institution cannot do many activities or programs to support the sister city agreement. They should plan or allocate some budgets at the beginning of the financial year before can execute the activities from the agreement. So, although in the agreement it is stated that it will cooperate in some sectors like tourism, agriculture or others, if the city agency or institution handled those fields do not aware of the sister city agreement and do not plan the program to support it as well as budget, it would not result in programs for the paradiplomacy. For example government of tourism office of the city cannot do tourism attraction based on the sister city agreement if at the beginning of financial year they do not plan the budget for the activity and has been permitted by central government.

Until recently, this situation, the absence or lack of implementation activities from paradiplomacy, does not mean the city of Padang gives up with paradiplomacy and only creates many sister city agreements without action plans forward. The city still learns how to do best practice in paradiplomacy, manage its bureau in foreign affairs, collaborate with intra-department in home affairs to implement the program

and communicate intensively with MOFA for better performance in the city paradiplomacy to support its citizen needs.

## **5. Conclusion**

Cities today play a core role in social, demographic, economic, and ecologic. There are many reasons why cities in Indonesia need to go global. Cities are hubs for economic flow, goods, and people. A high number of cities in Indonesia and the demand of Indonesia to achieve and increase its economic ask cities to go globally. Further, a large population lives in the city, making cities demand more sophisticated than in rural areas. Cities mayor or governors need to go global to fulfill their needs. Cities in Indonesia will gain some benefits if they can go globally like resilience and promote local values, identity, and culture. However, going global is not an easy step for many cities in Indonesia. We cannot deny that some cities, especially big cities in Indonesia, have known globally and taken advantage of it while some others try their first step to go global and face many difficulties. The challenges to go global outweigh the opportunities has by cities; it does not mean cities stop their steps to global. Some cities in Indonesia do need to take it first step to go overseas by making strong relations with its neighbor cities that happen to be border city.

Further, most of the challenges faced by cities are from the internal sectors, like willingness, mindset about paradiplomacy that should benefit to investment, lack of knowledge to conduct paradiplomacy, and human resources. However, these challenges can be overcome and come with a solution such as preparing some human resources and recruiting graduates from International Relations school, doing seminars and training by MOFA, change the mindset of the elites by doing some cultural programs to make the city famous, has clear vision and objective to go overseas and more.

The city of Padang, like other small cities in Indonesia, needs to conduct paradiplomacy to overcome and develop the new city demand of their people who tend to go global. However, this is not an easy task for the city of Padang. Reform bureaucracy management and procedure, making a sufficient amount of time in doing paradiplomacy, planning and implementing action plans, improving officer skills, and changing their mindset are crucial tasks that need to be solved soon for better and many city cooperation in the future.

Further, doing city diplomacy is about making an agreement and making it a sleep agreement after, but also design and propose an action plan after signing an agreement is an essential part of doing paradiplomacy. Thus, a small city that conducts city diplomacy should think about the importance of city diplomacy and what goals should be achieved before proposing a city agreement. A small city has to conduct paradiplomacy with its uniqueness and its own goals, not just follow other



cities' steps that are going global before them or follow a trend. So, an old agreement without action plans can be minimized.

Although not like big cities that are most active in paradiplomacy, small cities can still do better performance from MOFA assistance. Nevertheless, recently, MOFA still the main actor for small cities in doing paradiplomacy such as MOFA decision or recommendation, which overseas cities would be suite for the cities in Indonesia to collaborate, facilitating making MoU, coordination, and even doing an evaluation.

There are some lessons we can learn from what the city of Padang does so far in paradiplomacy. First, before going global, the city government agencies must have robust coordination with other institutions within the city. So, once it comes to do paradiplomacy other agencies will be ready to support and implement the programs. It also means that before going global, the city should have clear goals, and what kind of specific objective should be achieved from the agreement will be signed. Empowering local staff to do foreign affairs is a must as many cities will tend to go global and start their first step. It is recommended to do an agreement with other cities that located not too far from the city. Alternatively, both of them are situated in the same region to create a more efficient sister city. It will save much budget for official trips. It also has a similar culture, so, there would be many potential agendas to turn to action plans. In addition, people to people exchange will be more accommodating with the sister agreement create within the region as people tend to move and learn from their region first rather than go too far away.

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