Development of Sister City Cooperation Between Semarang and Jung-gu in 2009 – 2017

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ABSTRACT

Located in Central Java Province, Semarang City is one of Indonesia’s major urban centers. As a type of paradiplomacy, the Regional Government of Semarang City has established sister city relationships with the governments of Brisbane (Australia), Beihai, Nanjing, and Fuzhou (China), Split (Croatia), and Jung-gu, Ulsan Metropolitan City (South Korea). At the office of the Mayor of Jung-gu in Ulsan Metropolitan City, South Korea, the Governments of Semarang and Jung-gu signed a point of cooperation formalizing their sister city relationship. Shared interests, exchanging potentials, reciprocal relationships, being actively oriented toward the community, the existence of short- and long-term strategic benefits, exclusivity and closeness in the sense of not having a sister city relationship with other cities, and stable political conditions in the country where the sister city was located were all principles that should be prioritized in carrying out this cooperation. The historical foundations of the diplomatic relationships between Semarang and Jung-gu were bolstered by infrastructure and natural resources facilitating and encouraging further development of the two cities’ previously substantial relations.

Keywords: Cooperation, Paradiplomacy, Sister City, Improvement Efforts, Bilateral Relations

ABSTRAK

Kota Semarang merupakan salah satu kota besar di Indonesia yang berada di Provinsi Jawa Tengah. Pemerintah daerah Kota Semarang telah melakukan paradiplomasi berupa sister city dengan Pemerintah Kota Brisbane (Australia), Pemerintah Kota Beihai, Nanjing, Fuzhou (China), Pemerintah Kota Split (Kroasia), dan bermitra pada Pemerintah Kota Jung-gu, Ulsan Metropolitan city (Korea Selatan). Kota Semarang melakukan kerja sama sister city dengan Pemerintah Kota Jung-gu, Ulsan Metropolitan city, Korea Selatan yang ditandai dengan penandatanganan poin kerja sama yang dilakukan di kantor walikota Jung-gu, Ulsan Metropolitan city, Korea Selatan. Dalam menjalankan kerja sama sister city terdapat beberapa prinsip yang harus diutamakan yaitu; kepentingan bersama, pertukaran potensi, hubungan timbal balik, berorientasi pada masyarakat secara aktif, adanya manfaat strategis jangka pendek dan jangka panjang, eksklusivitas dan kedekatan dalam artian tidak memiliki hubungan sister city dengan kota lainnya, dan adanya kondisi politik yang stabil di negara tempat sister city berada. Hubungan Kota Semarang dan Kota Jung-Gu semakin meningkat dengan adanya fasilitas yang mendukung dan sumber daya alam yang ada bertujuan untuk mempererat hubungan diplomasi yang sudah ada berdasarkan sejarah.

Kata Kunci: Kerjasama, Paradiplomasi, Sister City, Upaya Peningkatan, Hubungan Bilateral

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1. Introduction

Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government, Law No. 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, and Government Regulation No. 25 of 2000 on Government Authorities and Authority Provinces as Autonomous Regions govern the execution of bilateral relations. Democratic ideals and consideration of regional riches are still adhered to in actualizing regional autonomy. There are still obstacles and restrictions on the effective execution of cooperation, notwithstanding the decentralization of power (Indriyati 2010).

The Indonesian Government has recently begun practicing paradiplomacy. Sub-state entities and regional governments can cooperate with their international counterparts. The regional government’s efforts to foster international friendship and collaboration take the shape of “sister cities” and “sister provinces” (Mukti 2020). The goal of sister-city cooperation is to advance the well-being of the community and the interests of both cities involved (Damayanti 2018). Indonesia’s President reauthorized the country’s sister city rules on July 12th, 2018, dictating that they should be included in Government Regulation No. 28 of 2018 concerning Regional Government. Cooperation shall be aimed at the previously mentioned goals, including but not limited to the following: advancing regional potential; extending science and technology; expanding culture; enhancing government technical and management capabilities; and accomplishing other mutually agreeable goals that do not violate any laws or the terms of this agreement (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 28 2018).

Both Minister of Foreign Affairs Regulation No. 3 of 2019 on General Guidelines for Foreign Relations by Regional Governments and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 25 of 2020 on Procedures for Regional Government Foreign Cooperation with Regional Governments in Overseas contain amendments that modernize the rules governing sister-city cooperation. To enforce this regulation, the local government engages in paradiplomacy (Mukti 2020).

Indonesia and South Korea have possessed a diplomatic relationship since September 1973, albeit it dates back to August 1966 and the opening of a consulate in each country. Indonesia and South Korea have been committed to enhancing their bilateral, regional, and global cooperation partnerships. Several variables, including the resources, economics, and politics of the two countries, stimulate the emergence of opportunities for collaboration across a wide range of fields, strengthening the already solid bilateral relations. Both countries are involved in regional and global forums where they can help one another (Kemlu 2018).

As a result of globalization, regional governments have emerged as new players in the international arena, fostering widespread collaboration across countries. The Government of Semarang is one of several involved in a movement toward sister-city relationships with other governments of comparable standing throughout the world. Establishing diplomatic relations between countries is a necessary but insufficient requirement for regional government cooperation actions with international parties. In recent years, Indonesia and South Korea have collaborated to build and strengthen their
A bilateral relationship is the most common type of partnership in international cooperation. For both parties involved, advantages are exchanged, and needs are communicated through bilateral collaboration (Hadiwinata 2017). The system of bilateral collaboration is one of the most frequent types of international cooperation. This form of cooperation is preferred since it requires only two countries to share common interests, making it simpler to establish shared objectives. Political and cultural ties between two countries lay the groundwork for collaboration. Signing agreements, sending ambassadors to each other’s countries, and hosting dignitaries are all examples of such collaboration.

Governments are considered cooperating when they collaborate to discover a solution to a problem, share information about the problem in the form of technical evidence, and engage in honest negotiations to reach a mutually acceptable outcome (Betsill dan Corell, 2008: 21). The bilateral pattern usually covers some of the following processes.

1. The actual policy of the country of origin
2. Recognition of responses by host country decision-makers
3. Partner country management
4. Perception by decision-makers from the initiating country

To what degree the advantages gained through bilateral procedures lend credence to the concept of unilateral and competing interests is the central question in international cooperation. It is due to the multifaceted nature of international life, encompassing not only politics and ideology but also social and cultural issues, the environment, and even national defense and security (Perwita and Yani, 2005).
2.2. Paradiplomacy

In 1980, a Basque scientist named Panayotis Soldatos created the concept of paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy is a phrase derived from the combination of the terms “parallel” and “diplomacy,” which can be traced back to the early 20th century. Paradiplomacy refers to “the foreign policy of non-central governments,” as Aldecoa and Keating defined it. This concept also means “micro-diplomacy,” as Ivo Duchacek (1990) noted. In paradiplomacy, regional governments, including cities and provinces, are involved in state-level foreign relations work.

Paradiplomacy refers to the actions of, or the ability of, non-state actors to engage in diplomacy with states. The state is no longer the sole actor in international affairs; rather, it must share power with other actors, especially sub-state governments. It has led to a fundamental shift in the idea of sovereignty. In the Westphalian system, where the federal government holds ultimate power, the notion of an exclusive state is no longer viable. Despite paradiplomacy’s claims to the contrary, the state is still the ultimate arbiter of sovereignty, with significant powers delegated to regional governments by the state. Paradiplomatic politics are government actions taken within the bounds of the law to further the interests of the state (Mukti 2020).

Paradiplomacy seeks to advance private interests within the bounds of legitimate government action. Even if the actor is the regional government, the state continues to oversee the execution of diplomacy. Paradiplomatic actors are allowed leeway in determining how sister-city initiatives would ultimately contribute to regional development. Through this paradiplomatic channel, the state assumes the role of liaison actor, constituting the relationship’s bedrock (Muktí 2013).

In most situations, regional government plays a vital role. The growth of globalization in many areas, including politics, economics, society, and contacts between nations, has inspired the idea of establishing a sister-city collaboration.

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative method. An issue of a descriptive character requiring investigation became the subject of this study. Books, magazines, newspapers, and online journals and articles were all employed as part of this method. Primary data sources included in-person and online interviews with key informants, as well as the official websites. Moreover, secondary data encompassed articles published, government records, archive materials, previously conducted studies, and related news articles.

Interviews with key informants and a systematic examination of relevant literature were the primary data-gathering methods for this study. The literature review entailed reading published works in various formats (books, journals, documents or articles, newspapers, the internet, and papers) with topics relevant to the study’s subject. Data reduction was the method of analysis employed for this investigation. The term “data reduction” refers to an approach utilized to compile information from numerous sources.
Subsequently, a narrative summary was established, emphasizing the most crucial aspects of the topic. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study data, inferences from the secondary data were drawn.

4. Discussion

Indonesia and South Korea have worked together for quite some time. The two nations identified areas of cooperation based on their shared priorities. Several examples of areas of collaboration highlighted the efforts made by both Indonesia and South Korea to create cooperative relationships. The sister-city relationship has become an emerging collaboration between Indonesia and South Korea.

Because of globalization and decentralization, emerging countries, especially cities within such countries, have better access to information than ever before. The municipal and national governments’ good working relationship has created a favorable setting for cross-border collaboration between communities. Efforts to improve bilateral relations, such as those between Indonesia and South Korea, can be reflected in developing a solid cooperative connection between their sister cities.

Paradiplomacy’s guiding premise is maintaining open channels of communication. There have been previously established diplomatic relations between Indonesia and South Korea. The regional government was the target of efforts to foster greater collaboration. Indonesia and South Korea attempted to broaden connections encompassing their nations’ interests. The collaboration between the Governments of Semarang and the Jung-gu, Ulsan, is a prime example.

Ulsan is located in the southeastern part of South Korea. Located on the easternmost point of the Taebaek mountain range, Ulsan looks out over the East Sea (also known as the Sea of Japan). In 1997, Ulsan gained the status of a Metropolitan Municipality. Administratively, Ulsan is on par with a province but falls directly under the national government’s jurisdiction. Jung-gu City is a part of Ulsan. City of culture and tourism, Jung-gu has everything. Jung-gu has been set as a place where people from all walks of life, both in Korea and outside, wish to come and stay. Keeping its Korean cultural and economic identity intact, Jung-gu has much promise with the hope of making it a city full of sights, stories, human warmth, future employment, and new opportunities for everyone (Naver, 2022).

Jung-gu aspires to become a cultural tourist city, and quality improvement initiatives have been implemented. As the administrative center of Ulsan Province, Jung-gu City has taken great pride in its status (Jung-gu Ulsan Metropolitan City, 2020). Several of Jung-gu’s primary policies aim to make the city a better cultural place for tourists. These include the provision of a wide range of cultural and artistic performances, exhibitions, and educational courses; the construction of tourism infrastructure; the provision of welfare services for its people; the realization of urban regeneration and the creative economy; the construction of safe cities through the provision of safety training;
the creation of a green environment; and the implementation of tailored administration to better reflect the needs of its people.

Semarang, as a metropolitan city, boasts a wide range of facilities (Anon 2019). This city is located on the coast of the Java Sea and has borders with the Regencies of Kendal, Demak, and Semarang. As a lowland and a highland, Semarang’s topography naturally creates two distinct regions: the lower and the higher. Alluvium, a sedimentary rock formed from river deposits rich in sand and clay, is characteristic of the lowlands. In contrast, igneous rock is characteristic of the highlands (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah 2002).

The Tanjung Mas Port, Terboyo Bus Station, Tawang and Poncol Train Stations, and Ahmad Yani Airport all have played a part in the area’s function as a development corridor. A significant number of people have traveled to Semarang since it is the center of Indonesia’s commercial, industrial, and educational sectors. Semarang City’s strategy for development in 2016 and 2020 could be discovered in the regional medium-term development plan, governed by Regional Regulation No. 11 of 2017. Toward making Semarang City’s dream a reality, a plan for regional growth was devised. Several goals have been arranged for the area’s development, including the establishment of a more responsible government to serve the public better, the development of a metropolitan city being both dynamic and environmentally aware, and the fortification of the people’s economy based on local excellence and the creation of a hospitable business climate (LKPJ Walikota Semarang 2020).

According to the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 25 of 2020 concerning Procedures for Regional Cooperation with Regional Governments Abroad and Regional Cooperation with Institutions Abroad, regional cooperation with regional governments abroad is a joint effort carried out by regions with regional governments abroad in administering governmental affairs, which are the authority of the regions to improve people’s welfare and accelerate the fulfillment of public services. Specifically, the notion of a “sister city,” wherein two cities that are physically, administratively, and politically distinct couple up to build social relations between communities and cultures, was suggested (Setda 2021).

The principles prioritized and implemented as guidelines in carrying out the sister-city collaboration comprised (1) common interests, (2) exchange of potential, (3) reciprocity, (4) oriented to society actively both through organizations and businesses, (5) the existence of short-term and long-term strategic benefits derived from the relationship, (6) having exclusivity and closeness in the sense of not having sister city relationships with other cities in the same country or locations that are adjacent to the location of the prospective sister city, and (7) the presence of a stable political condition in the country where the sister city is located (Nuralam 2018).

The study identified the Government of Semarang, Indonesia; the Government of Jung-gu, South Korea; and non-state actors carried out by entrepreneurs from Indonesia and South Korea as initiatives having a role in establishing sister cities. Several Korean
businesses have set up shops in Indonesia; some played an intermediary role in paradiplomatic negotiations between the two countries.

Dhamayantie Savitri spoke for the Jung-gu Government in an interview with municipal government staff on April 7th, 2022, at the Semarang City Hall office. The interview was conducted by the foreign cooperation section for the years 2009-2017.

“…Jung-gu wishes to form sister city relationships with cities in Indonesia. Then, through Lee, a South Korean businessman who has resided in Indonesia for a long time, a forceful call was made to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and invitations were extended to major cities around Indonesia.”

Kang Chan Hoon and Lee were entrepreneurs; they manufactured Light Emitting Diode (LED) lamps. The Governments of Semarang, Indonesia, and Jung-gu, Ulsan, South Korea, communicated with one other through a Korean LED lighting entrepreneur headquartered in Jakarta. The businessman visited Semarang to assess the city’s prospects and considered investing there.

South Korean business people interested in collaborating with Indonesian counterparts and establishing operations were among the paradiplomatic players with stakes in the sister-city development process outside the Governments of Semarang and Jung-gu. An example of this could be observed in the proliferation of Korean restaurants and food stands across Indonesia. To increase the dominance of collaboration between Indonesian and Korean actors in the investment business, Jung-gu designated Semarang as a sister city for its excellent market value and strategic position. Cooperation in other fields covered education, culture and tourism, and infrastructure development.

Relationships between Semarang and Jung-gu have been strengthened with assistance from different existing facilities and sources to improve diplomatic relations built based on the history of Indonesia and South Korea. Adequate facilities and resources became the strategy and planning for sister-city development to benefit both cities. The development was undoubtedly a lengthy process, requiring multiple agreements to meet the two cities’ goals. The following is the procedure of sister city paradiplomacy carried out by Semarang and Jung-gu.

5. Establishment of “Sister City” Cooperation between Semarang and Jung-Gu in 2012

Beginning with the Jung-gu Government of Ulsan Metropolitan City in South Korea, which submitted an application to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through an intermediary, a businessman from South Korea who had long lived and worked in Jakarta, to partner with a sister city from one of Indonesia’s cities. The Ministry of Home Affairs sent invitations to numerous Indonesian cities, including Semarang. Jung-gu selected Semarang City as a cooperation partner after conducting presentations for its government among numerous cities invited (Setda 2021). The reason for selecting Semarang as a cooperation partner was mentioned in the interview on April
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7th, 2022, at the Semarang City Hall with Dhamayantie Savitri as regional autonomy staff for the 2009-2019 foreign cooperation division.

“...The main goal is for the economy. Semarang has several Korean culinary businesses. We can see it in urban growth and creation technologies for Semarang. It (the Government of Jung-gu) is likewise engaged in culture. According to its statement, among other cities, Semarang is indeed pleasant, feels homely, and is welcoming.”

According to the interview findings, the goal of Jung-gu was to collaborate with Semarang, owing to the warm sense of being welcomed by both the administration and the people. Semarang is strategically located as an economical transportation corridor on Java Island. Obviously, Semarang expected this partnership to attract much investment, particularly from South Korean companies. Semarang also collaborated on the infrastructure implemented within the city, including development in urban development planning and infrastructure development, particularly roads, bridges, and associated factors.

The introduction of cities aims to discover resources between cities that can be developed through cooperation agreements to gain advantages and accomplish certain goals. On one occasion, the representatives of the Semarang Government visited Jung-gu from November 3rd to 5th, 2013, to investigate or introduce the two cities for sister city cooperation. This investigation resulted in an agreement between the two cities that they were both interested in cooperating. The visit was favorably greeted by the Mayor of Jung-gu, who instantly replied a week later, on November 13th of the same year, by signing a Letter of Intent (LoI).

Until 2014, the two cities continued to collaborate through intensive contact by e-mail, mediators, or visits by both parties alternately. The two cities then decided to change their relationship status from LoI to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Semarang Government has followed the processes established with the permission of the Regional House of Representatives.

The Jung-gu Government of Ulsan Metropolitan City welcomed the Semarang Government in August 2015. The primary goal of this invitation, among other things, was to experience firsthand the rapid advancements, notably in urban planning and infrastructure development. The Mayor of Semarang and his team came to visit due to the invitation of the Mayor of Jung-gu. In addition to analyzing progress in Jung-gu, a follow-up plan for a higher-level cooperation agreement was negotiated.

From an initial LoI, an MoU was drafted to formalize the cooperation between the two cities. The Legislative Body, the Highways Department, the Planning and Development Agency, the Regional Research and Development, and the Government Cooperation Section all made up the Semarang Government delegation. Considering the delegates present, it was not surprising that the focus was on the infrastructure. The visit’s activities from August 9th to 14th, 2015, were designed to promote education, personal growth, and mutual understanding. Akin to urban planning focused on constructing roads, bridges, and other physical infrastructure. For the benefit of Semarang, the two cities’ Legislative Bodies conferred on how to coordinate better and harmonize their operations.
Allocation of resources and tracking public agencies’ successes were among the topics under discussion (LKPJ Walikota Semarang 2015)

Furthermore, the Highways Departments of the two cities discussed the work plan agreement (action plan) during the visit. Following the completion of the research and the expression of interest in cooperating, the action plan outlining the cooperation strategy was drafted. The following elements were included in the action plan: the cooperation implementation unit; the scope of cooperation; the programs to be undertaken; the expected outcomes; the beneficiaries; the funding sources; and the time frame in which the plan was put into effect. This discussion aimed to lead to something concrete and mutually beneficial. The two departments created and discussed the work plan right after the meeting ended.

The Highways Department of Jung-gu visited Semarang on September 23rd, 2015, demonstrating the strong communication between the two Highways Departments. The action plan was signed in different fields with various processes till the end of 2015. The purpose of the trip was to discuss progress on the action plan and the ongoing implementation of the program. The first stage was for the two cities’ Highway Departments to share what they had learned about road and pedestrian design with one another. The Director of Jung-gu’s Highways Department in Ulsan visited Semarang in December 2015 to inspect the DI Panjaitan - Mayjen Sutoyo route and the Pedestrian of MT. Haryono, two sections of road serving as the prototype project (Pemkot Semarang 2015).

In this regard, the Ulsan Metropolitan City’s Jung-gu Government reached out to the Semarang Government, particularly the Highways Department, to dialogue and provide training on the city’s road infrastructure, bridges, pedestrians, and road fittings. This event was scheduled from March 28th to April 3rd, 2016 (Setda 2021). In response, the Semarang Government immediately consulted with the state government. On June 2nd, 2016, the Governments of Semarang and Jung-gu met as part of an inter-ministerial group to discuss drafting an MoU between the two cities and to seek permission for the plan from the central government. Therefore, the central government approved moving from an LoI to an MoU, with the draft MoU appended. The proposed MoU was subsequently presented to the Government of Jung-gu for discussion. It was ultimately determined that the parties from both jurisdictions had reached an agreement on its contents (Setda 2021).

The Mayor of Semarang, together with representatives of his administration and Semarang’s Regional House of Representatives, was invited by the Mayor of Jung-gu to participate in a signing ceremony in conjunction with the signing of the MoU between the two cities for the sister-city cooperation. The cooperation agreement was signed on November 25th, 2016. After the MoU was signed, the two Regional Apparatus Work Units of each city met to discuss potential action plans for program activities that could be carried out jointly between the two cities, including but not limited to those related to urban planning and infrastructure, tourism, and culture, trade and investment economics, education, sports, and capacity building, and other mutually agreed upon fields. A cooperation agreement was signed by both Regional Apparatus Work Units as soon as
possible once negotiations took place. The representatives of the Semarang Government traveled to Jung-gu to learn about advancements in the arts and crafts industry and woman empowerment that they could bring back to Semarang (Setda 2021).

6. Conclusion

It could be inferred from the findings that the efforts to strengthen bilateral relations between Indonesia and South Korea have led to the formation of sister-city cooperation between the two countries. South Korean business people acted as the initiative’s founder and liaison, and the Governments of Semarang and Jung-gu carried out the paradiplomacy action. Not to mention learning what role paradiplomacy has in international relations. Therefore, it is clear that Semarang and Jung-gu had formed a sister-city relationship to tighten the ties between Indonesia and South Korea. More research is required to shed light on the process by which Semarang and Jung-gu came to establish their sister-city relationship.

References


