Unveiling the Implementation of Bandung-Cuenca Sister City Relationship on Indonesian Cultural Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the paradiplomatic engagement between Bandung, Indonesia, and Cuenca, Ecuador, to enhance the global recognition of Indonesian culture, with a special focus on Bandung’s batik and traditional angklung music. Employing a descriptive methodology, this research drew on literature reviews, official governmental documents, and theories to underscore the nuanced dynamics of sister city collaborations in fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding beyond conventional diplomatic channels. Findings indicated that the partnership had pioneered the creation of Ecuadorian-inspired batik designs and the international promotion of angklung and contributed to a broader dialogue on the world’s cultural preservation and innovation. However, challenges remain in achieving substantial advancements for strategic development. This study contributes to the understanding of how local governments can leverage cultural assets to strengthen international relationships, suggesting that the agreements serve as valuable platforms for cultural diplomacy and international outreach. Recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of such partnerships include a greater emphasis on measurable outcomes and reciprocal cultural exchanges.

Keywords: Sister City, Cultural Diplomacy, Paradiplomacy, Bandung, Cuenca, Indonesian Culture

ABSTRAK

Penelitian kualitatif ini meneliti keterlibatan paradiplomatik antara Bandung, Indonesia, dan Cuenca, Ekuador, untuk meningkatkan pengakuan global terhadap budaya Indonesia, dengan fokus khusus pada batik Bandung dan musik tradisional angklung. Dengan menggunakan metodologi deskriptif, penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur, dokumen resmi pemerintah, dan teori-teori untuk menggarisbawahi dinamika kolaborasi kota kembar yang bernuansa dalam mendorong pertukaran budaya dan saling pengertian di luar jalur diplomatik konvensional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kemitraan ini telah memelopori penciptaan desain batik yang terinspirasi oleh Ekuador dan promosi angklung internasional serta berkontribusi pada dialog yang lebih luas tentang pelestarian dan inovasi budaya dunia. Namun, masih ada tantangan dalam mencapai kemajuan substansial untuk pengembangan strategis. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang bagaimana pemerintah daerah dapat memanfaatkan aset budaya untuk memperkuat hubungan internasional, dan menunjukkan bahwa peranannya sebagai platform yang berharga untuk diplomasi budaya dan penjagaan budaya internasional. Rekomendasi untuk meningkatkan efektivitas kemitraan semacam itu mencakup penekanan yang lebih besar pada hasil yang terukur dan pertukaran budaya timbal balik.

Kata Kunci: Kota Kembar, Diplomasi Budaya, Paradiplomasi, Bandung, Cuenca, Budaya Indonesia

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1. Introduction

Sister city relationships, established as strategic alliances between urban centers across the globe, serve as vital platforms for fostering cultural exchange, economic development, and mutual understanding. These partnerships, which often span different countries, extend the reach of collaboration beyond conventional diplomatic avenues, offering cities a unique opportunity for cross-border cooperation (Keating, 2000). This study delves into the nuances of these relationships, particularly their role in facilitating international cooperation through a lens that transcends traditional diplomacy.

Historically, diplomacy has been viewed as a tool for states to extend their foreign policy (Keating, 2000). This perception, however, has evolved with the dynamic shifts in global politics and the emergence of new ideas, challenging the notion that states are the sole actors in diplomatic endeavors. In the contemporary landscape, a diverse array of actors, including non-state and sub-state entities, engage in international relations, illustrating a complex web of interdependence among nations (BJ Tina Rosaliana, Dyah Estu Kurniawati, & Deva Joshua Kamisi, 2022). This interdependence underscores the multifaceted nature of diplomacy, where countries rely on external resources, products, and cooperation to meet their needs.

Indonesia exemplifies this modern approach to diplomacy, recognizing the potential of sub-national government actors in conducting diplomatic activities. The legal framework provided by Law No. 24 of 2000 enables local governments to forge agreements with foreign counterparts, facilitating a diverse range of international engagements (Mukti, 2013). Within this context, the term "paradiplomacy" emerges to describe the diplomatic endeavors of non-state or local government actors, underscoring their role in advancing mutual interests across various domains, including economic and cultural fields through initiatives like sister city programs (Kuznetsov, 2014).

The concept of sister cities, in particular, offers a compelling response to global challenges, empowering government sectors to address critical issues spanning economics, culture, politics, technology, and the environment by engaging entire metropolitan regions (Siregar & Syafiq Rizqullah, 2022). Bandung, distinguished as one of Indonesia's major cities with a vibrant cultural landscape, has embraced this concept, establishing multifaceted relationships with cities worldwide to achieve its strategic objectives. These partnerships encompass a wide array of collaborations, from investment and infrastructure projects to cultural exchanges and environmental sustainability efforts (Alam & Sudirman, 2020).

As a cultural hub in West Java, Bandung is uniquely positioned to promote local cultures on the global stage, fostering greater recognition and appreciation. The city's partnership with Cuenca, Ecuador, exemplifies this strategy, aiming to safeguard cultural heritage in the face of globalization's challenges. Through their sister city relationship, Bandung and Cuenca endeavor to create a shared vision for cultural preservation, leveraging their cultural assets to enhance global understanding and appreciation (B. K. S. K. Bandung, 2023).

This article aims to analyze the international relations efforts of regional governments, focusing on the collaboration between the Bandung City Government and...
the City of Cuenca in Ecuador, to promote Indonesian culture. It explores the sister city concept from a paradiplomacy perspective, highlighting Bandung's initiatives in the international arena within the legal frameworks of Indonesian law (Law no. 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government and Law No. 24 of 2000 concerning International Agreements). By examining the implementation of paradiplomacy by the Bandung City government and its impact on fostering international cooperation, this study addresses research gaps and enriches the discourse on sub-national diplomatic efforts.

2. Theoretical Framework

In recent years, the understanding of International Relations has been evolving to explain the emergence of new actors in diplomacy. Stateless nations and regions across the globe are now participating directly in international cooperation. The sister city relationship between Bandung and Cuenca represents a form of stateless nations and is a phenomenon that is well-qualified to be analyzed using a sub-state government perspective. This article explores several concepts from different viewpoints, considering existing perspectives in international relations, such as paradiplomacy and sister cities. These concepts will be elucidated by examining how Bandung and Cuenca collaborate to advance cultural promotion.

2.1. Paradiplomacy

Relatively new in the study of International Relations, paradiplomacy refers to the activities and capacity of sub-state entities to conduct International Cooperation in pursuit of specific interests (Wolff, 2007). In this era of transnationalism, regional governments not only interact with domestic actors but also engage with parties beyond national borders, formulating foreign cooperation policies based on their interests (Mukti, 2013). Stefan Wolff observes:

“The participation of autonomous entities in the international arena indicates that the very notion of sovereignty has fundamentally changed. It can no longer be conceptualized exclusively in the state-centric terms of the Westphalian system. For states to enjoy sovereignty to its fullest extent and for their populations to benefit from it, states have to share their powers with other players in the international arena. The example of paradiplomacy, however, clearly indicates that states remain the ultimate bearers of sovereignty: paradiplomacy is, at best, a competence devolved to autonomous entities, and hence it is the sovereign state that decides how much of its power it shares” (Wolff, 2007).

This transnational nature of international relations has indeed become a global trend, emerging from the era of globalization. Q. Wright noted that international relations involve many actors, including various types of groups—countries or groups of countries, governments, citizens, alliances, international organizations, and industrial/trade organizations, among others. According to Grandi, city diplomacy aims to promote international deployment and adoption goals relevant to local populations, addressing conflicts, development assistance, global challenges, and regional integration (Siregar & Syafiq Rizqullah, 2022).
Paradiplomacy emerges as a concept that can be elucidated as a response by the City Government to address globalization and the perceived limitations of the state in safeguarding local interests during the globalization process. The City Government of Bandung, for instance, recognizes the opportunity to participate as a sub-state actor in the international arena (Alam & Sudirman, 2020). Local governments, such as the City Government of Bandung, execute paradiplomacy through cooperation agreements with twin or sister cities to focus on building a regional image and community relations, adapting new technology and city development, strengthening the economy, and promoting social culture as well. International relations have indeed evolved.

2.2. Sister City

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th president of the United States, was the initiator of the Twin-City or Sister City partnership in 1956. President Eisenhower aimed to engage people and community organizations from diverse backgrounds in diplomatic endeavors, envisioning that the interpersonal connections forged via sister cities would contribute to mitigating future international conflicts. This initiative also aimed to promote people-to-people diplomacy, fostering connections between communities that could serve as a bridge between urban areas in different countries, facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, friendship, and cultural understanding. Sister Cities International, an organization focusing on sister city cooperation programs, emphasizes that sister city partnerships should have a mission inherently understood by every city government worldwide. Their mission is to “promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.” Activities often involve people-to-people interactions through cultural programs, education, trade projects, and other initiatives contributing to peace (Alam & Sudirman, 2020).

Sister cities possess distinctive features that can be categorized into three structures, facilitating the recognition of a sister city. The initial structure, known as Associative, centers on "international friendship," cultural interchange, and a comprehensive commitment to global issues. The Reciproactive aspect entails establishing an educational exchange system. The Commercial dimension is concerned with harnessing the advantages stemming from both the Associative and Reciproactive processes to promote local economic development (O'Toole, 2000). Based on these arguments, the Bandung City Government is concerned with enhancing its international network by fostering broad international friendship aimed at cultural exposure benefits from sister city activities. This article's scope includes how the Bandung City government collaborates with the city of Cuenca in Ecuador to promote Indonesian culture. Ridwan Kamil, as the Mayor of Bandung City, signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Mayor of Cuenca, witnessed by the Indonesian Ambassador to Ecuador, Diennaryati Tjokrosuprihatono, in 2017 to expand their cities’ effective and mutually beneficial cooperation under the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 3 of 2008 Concerning Guidelines for Regional Government Cooperation with Foreign Parties (B. K. K. Bandung, 2017).

3. Research Method

This research aims to delve into the nuances of paradiplomacy within the Indonesian context, highlighting the Bandung City Government's diplomatic endeavors as a pivotal
case study. In pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, the study adopts a qualitative descriptive methodology, emphasizing the detailed examination and interpretation of paradiplomacy practices by sub-state actors in Indonesia (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This methodological approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the subject matter, facilitating the uncovering of new insights into the mechanisms and implications of local government involvement in international relations.

Data collection for this research is primarily centered around secondary sources, including an extensive review of scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and official documentation available on the Bandung City Government's website. This literature review serves as the cornerstone of our investigative process, enabling the synthesis of a rich body of knowledge pertaining to the practice of paradiplomacy by the Bandung City Government (Bowen, 2009). By meticulously analyzing these secondary sources, the study constructs a narrative summary that captures the critical dimensions and dynamics of paradiplomacy as exercised by the Bandung City Government.

To uphold the integrity of the research findings, the study places a strong emphasis on the validity and reliability of the data. Conclusions are meticulously drawn from the secondary data, employing rigorous inferential processes to ensure that the research outcomes accurately reflect the realities of paradiplomacy practices in Bandung (Krippendorff, 2018). This methodological rigor is instrumental in crafting a reliable narrative that contributes to the broader academic discourse on paradiplomacy and the evolving role of sub-state entities in the global diplomatic landscape.

4. Findings and Analysis

The subsequent sections of this document are dedicated to an in-depth examination of the innovative paradiplomacy initiatives undertaken by the governments of Bandung, Indonesia, and Cuenca, Ecuador. A particular focus is directed towards their concerted efforts to honor and proliferate the cherished tradition of Indonesian batik, all the while endeavoring to weave in distinctive Ecuadorian motifs. This endeavor is not merely a celebration of artistic heritage but a deliberate attempt to craft a unique cultural synthesis that reflects the quintessence of both Indonesian and Ecuadorian identities. By exploring these collaborative efforts, this analysis aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of cultural promotion within the framework of international cooperation. The narrative underscores the significant potential of such paradiplomatic engagements to foster deeper diplomatic ties, facilitate rich cultural exchanges, and bolster mutual understanding across borders. This exploration ventures beyond the mere aesthetics of batik, delving into the strategic implications these cultural initiatives hold for enhancing diplomatic relations, enriching the tapestry of international cultural dialogue, and strengthening the bonds of friendship and comprehension between the peoples of Indonesia and Ecuador.

4.1. Promoting Batik with Ecuadorian Motif

Examining the sister city concept between Bandung and Cuenca reveals a fresh perspective within the Indonesian context, framed through the prism of paradiplomacy. This viewpoint elucidates the engagement of subnational entities, like cities, in international relations autonomously, bypassing central government oversight. In the instance of Bandung and Cuenca, this paradiplomacy involves cultural interactions
focused on batik, embodying the essence of Indonesian heritage and nurturing mutual understanding among diverse communities. This partnership between sister cities goes beyond conventional diplomatic avenues, illustrating the pivotal role cities play in shaping global connectivity and advancing cultural diplomacy. Through collaborative endeavors such as joint batik workshops, exhibitions, and cultural festivities, Bandung and Cuenca not only strengthen their bond but also contribute to broader endeavors promoting peace, dialogue, and cultural exchange on the world stage.

Batik known as original Indonesian handmade fabrics which legally acknowledged by UNESCO as Indonesian heritage for Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity since October 2nd 2009 as the result through Presidential Decree Number 33 of 2009 Indonesian government declared October 2nd as National Batik Day (Galih, 2017). According to UNESCO, the techniques, symbolism, and culture related to batik are considered inherent to Indonesian culture. In fact, UNESCO assesses that Indonesian people interpret batik from the procession of birth to death. Batik is also a reflection of cultural diversity in Indonesia, which can be seen from a few motifs. Arab influence in the decorative motifs commonly found in calligraphy art, European influence in the form of floral motifs, Chinese influence in the phoenix (fire bird) motif, and Indian and Persian influence in the peacock motif.

UNESCO recognizes batik as world heritage because it meets the criteria, including being rich in symbols and meaning in the philosophy of life of the Indonesian people. Dutch archaeologist, JLA Brandes, stated that batik is one of the 10 original cultures of the Indonesian people. Meanwhile, the batik motifs that existed at that time were not the raya motifs known today, but were simple decorative patterns. This tradition has also been found in Toraja, Flores, Halmahera and Papua, areas that are minimally influenced by Hinduism or Buddhism from India (Galih, 2017).

As part of Indonesia, Bandung is also known as the center of Batik fabrics which rich of cultural and historical factors. Geographically, Bandung was in the heart of West Java which also as the capital city of the province. Usually, Bandung’s motif is influenced by the “Priangan Culture” which cultural mapping based on historical geographical location in Sundanese cultural history (Yan, Biranul, & Syarief, 2016). Based on (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Law No.3 2009 Chapter III Foreign Relations by Local Government Point D Verse 24) cultural exchange is one of the objects of sister city cooperation.

As cultural heritage, Batik is one of the instruments for Bandung City Government to promote local culture and heritage. One of the implementations of the Bandung city government in promoting batik in Cuenca Ecuador is by making Bandung batik with Ecuadorian motifs to be promoted as Indonesian Batik across Cuenca and Ecuador (B. K. S. K. Bandung, 2023). The city of Cuenca is known as a city that has rich Spanish culture because it was influenced by Spanish colonization in Ecuador. Even though Eastern Indonesia was also colonialized by Spain, but Bandung and West Java did not influence by Spanish culture but influenced by Dutch culture, that is why the sister city between Bandung and Cuenca can be a great cultural exchange to enriching culture, especially in developing batik with special motifs that are more modern and following cultural developments, both Indonesian and Ecuador, in the context of this partnership.
The sister city established by Bandung and Cuenca in promoting culture is also motivated by the close diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Ecuador which established diplomatic relationship since 1980 following Bandung and Cuenca established sister city in 2017.

Generally, Indonesian batik have more than 5000 motifs scattered throughout Indonesia. Despite its firm adherence to a noble philosophy, batik motifs have proven adaptable to intriguing global symbols, exemplified by the initiative known as "Batik for The World." spearheaded by Garuda Kencana Batik. Through this program, the enchanting patterns of Indonesian batik motifs are harmonized with iconic representations from Europe to Africa. Designers from Garuda Kencana Batik collaborated with 17 ambassadors from partner nations, including Ecuador, in this creative endeavor. “Batik Semenan Venus Valdivia” is the special motif for the Ambassador of Ecuador, H.E Fabian Valdivieso. This batik is made by combining the truntum motif as a symbol of sincere unconditional love, eternal and fertile, with the Ecuadorian cultural icon, namely the female statue of Venus of Valdivia as a symbol of fertility in Ecuador which is considered to complement the truntum motif which is identical to Indonesian philosophy (Yuniar, 2021). The batik motifs resulting from the collaboration between Indonesian and Ecuadorian cultures serve as tangible evidence that cultural exchange can serve as a potent means of strengthening international relationships.

Apart from introducing Indonesian batik, the sister city established by Bandung and Cuenca is a form of strengthening diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Ecuador in the field of culture which is implemented by sub-state government actors as an advancement of cooperation between actors in international relations. Unfortunately, this partnership failed to yield substantial advancements or notable accomplishments in the realm of cultural promotion. The Bandung City Government merely indicated that within the framework of this sister city collaboration, they managed to produce batik in the Ecuadorian style in 2017, as part of their participation in CIDAP 2017. It could also be a consideration to continue the sister city between Bandung and Cuenca because it could be a big opportunity for expansion of the batik market in Ecuador and Latin America. Apart from that, in the context of promoting culture, the sister city between the cities of Bandung and Cuenca will have a great opportunity in efforts to develop friendly relations and mutual understanding between different nations if it continues.

4.2. Angklung Robots as a form of promotion of West Java Arts

The increasingly rapid development of science and technology has had an impact on the existence of traditional arts in Indonesia. In this modern era, the existence of traditional arts is increasingly marginalized, some even receive no attention at all, either from the perpetrators or from the supporting community.

Angklung as a traditional Indonesian art product cannot be separated from the influence of these conditions. However, there are situations and conditions that make people aware of the importance of cultural values in Angklung. With the inauguration of the Indonesian Angklung by UNESCO as one of the representative lists of the intangible world cultural heritage (intangible cultural heritage belonging to the world) on November 16 2010. This shows that the angklung is one of the traditional musical instruments that can go global without abandoning its values and characteristics. its cultural traditions
Angklung is a traditional musical instrument originating from Bandung, West Java. Which is made from bamboo base material. It was formed so that it can provide melodic angklung music resulting from collaboration between the players (Murpratama, Sunarya, & Novianti, 2020).

Since the UNESCO inauguration of the angklung as a native artistic musical instrument from Indonesia, it seems to encourage people to work together to involve the angklung in various activities. The community organizes various activities involving small numbers of people to thousands of people (Upaja Budi, 2017). The Indonesian government also needs to take preventive action to maintain the existence of angklung as a national cultural asset and expand it to a global scale. The government acts as a facilitator, especially regional governments, to be able to promote every traditional art from their region. Angklung as a cultural asset needs to be handled seriously and immediately, because as a cultural asset of the nation, angklung has a meaningful role for the nation and for its supporting communities.

In line with this, one of the regional government cooperation programs in the international realm is in the form of sister cities. Sister city cooperation in Indonesia was first carried out by the cities of Bandung and Braunschweig Germany in 1960 (Safitri, Syafira, & Kurniawati, 2023). This was a result of the acceleration of globalization which encouraged the involvement of non-state actors in the international world. To be actively involved in the sustainability of relations between cities across countries. Several non-state actors who have this capacity include local governments, international organizations, multinational companies, interest groups, and even individuals. This is because the state is no longer able to protect its subordinate entities without the participation of these actors (Alam & Sudirman, 2020).

The Bandung government is taking advantage of the potential and opportunities for cooperation between cities in various countries. By opening paths for cooperation in various sectors, for example the economic, touristic, scientific, educational, cultural, social, environmental, industrial, and investment cooperation sectors are all areas in which these nations work together (Siregar & Syafiq Rizqullah, 2022). In order to promote angklung artistic products internationally, the Bandung government has collaborated with one of the cities in Ecuador, namely the city of Cuenca, Azuay Province. Starting on 9 – 11 August 2017. Mayor of Bandung, Ridwan Kamil visited Cuenca to sign a Letter of Intent. As a statement of intent for cooperation signed on August 10 2017. With the scope of cooperation as follows: Arts; Culture and Tourism; Creative Economy; Economy and Trade; Social and Educational Cooperation; and Waste Management. Based on previous identification from the Indonesian Embassy in Quito, these two cities are very appropriate partners, considering that they are one of the creative cultural centers of their respective countries (Diennaryati Tjokrosprihatono, 2018). There are several work programs between the cities of Bandung and Cuenca that have been successfully implemented, including: Making typical Batik/Ecuador patterns as a form of promotion for Bandung Batik; Delivery of Angklung Robots as a form of promotion of West Java Arts, especially Bandung; Involvement of Cuenca students in Bandung in curating Bandung UKM products which will be displayed in Cidap 2017 activities; and Bandung City's participation in 2017 Cidap activities (B. K. S. K. Bandung, 2023).
Point 2 shows the seriousness of the Bandung city government’s efforts to expand the existence of angklung to the international realm. Angklung Robot (Klungbot) is a type of automatic angklung that is connected to a computer program so that it can play music automatically. From Sudanese songs, hero songs, to Western songs, they are available in the program. Developed by Eko Mursito, a physics lecturer at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) since 2010 (Siswadi, 2023).

The Angklung Robot is produced for commercial purposes with most consumers being restaurant owners/managers. This type of angklung is an innovation created by the Indonesian people. Who can play like a professional angklung player (Upaja Budi, 2017). The angklung innovation that was successfully created by the people of Bandung was immediately demonstrated by the Bandung city government in the international arena, by sending robotic angklungs to Cuenca as a form of international promotion of Bandung culture. This cooperative relationship between the Bandung City government and cities abroad is carried out partly as an effort to introduce products from Bandung abroad.

4.3. Bandung’s Participation in Cidap 2017 to Promote Indonesian Culture

CIDAP (Centro Interamericano de Artesanias y Artes Populares) is an institution founded in 1975 through an agreement between the Ecuadorian government and the Organization of American States (OAS), under the Ecuadorian Ministry of Economy and Finance. This institution is dedicated as a center for popular crafts and arts for the safeguarding, promotion, development and improvement of popular crafts and arts in Ecuador and other South American countries. By actively contributing to increasing artisanal activities and sustainability of craftsmen through promotion, development, and improvement activities in the craft sector. One of them is that CIDAP has a regular exhibition festival agenda which is held every year by inviting various national craftsmen to promote their work. In 2017, the 15th CIDAP Festival was held in Cuenca, Ecuador and lasted for 1 month from 1 November – 1 December 2023. This exhibition is not only intended for national craftsmen are only from Ecuador, but there is also a large room with 28 handicraft stands given to delegates from various other South American countries including Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela.

The CIDAP exhibition in 2017 was the first time Indonesia participated in the CIDAP exhibition through an honorary invitation as a guest country in the largest cultural and handicraft exhibition festival in the Americas. Indonesia participated as an exhibition participant with the theme "Wonderful Indonesia, explore the beauty of Indonesia" showcases Indonesian cooking, dance, music, and crafts. One rendition of Indonesian fabric makes a standout impression, made with techniques very similar to those used at Gualaceo for stick production (Festival, 2017).

Various handicraft products from Indonesian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were the favorites at the Exhibition. These MSME products are imported with craftsmen from Indonesia from various regions (Finance, 2017).

There were 17 delegates from Indonesia, 11 of whom came from Pemalang, Pekalongan, Batang, Central Java, and 6 from Bandung, West Java. This craftsman from Indonesia was given an exhibition space of 190 M2 consisting of 2 floors. As a space to provide all information about art and culture from all regions of Indonesia. Apart from
that, it also sells art items such as batik cloth, woven cloth, goyor sarongs, wooden statues, wayang golek and others as well as typical Indonesian food such as fried rice and meatballs. The Bandung City Government as one of the delegates from Indonesia who participated in the CIDAP exhibition displayed the theme "The Tales of Bandung" at its stand. In front of 400 thousand visitors to the 2017 CIDAP exhibition, they exhibited works of art such as antique keris that were 80-200 years old, and various cultural information typical of the city of Bandung (Media Indonesia, 2017b).

The Bandung City Government also invited students from Ecuador who are currently studying for a master’s degree at the Bandung Institute of Technology, Santiago Erazo, to fill the bazaar with their handicrafts in the form of paintings made using batik techniques. Promotion is carried out not only through art objects but also through works of art in the form of traditional dances performed by Pemalang dancers and dancers from the Indonesian Embassy in Quito who perform the Selendang Pemalang, Rombyong, Zapin dances, the Legong Bapang Saba dance and the Hornbill dance from Kalimantan, and songs- Sundanese regional songs performed live by Santiago Erazo. This is an effort by the Indonesian government, especially the Bandung City government, to promote Indonesian culture in Cuenca, Ecuador. Through this exhibition, the potential of MSME products, art and especially Indonesian culture can be better known internationally. This opens opportunities to collaborate with the Indonesian Embassy in Quito to disseminate Indonesian arts and culture in Ecuador (Media Indonesia, 2017a).

Based on above, the paradiplomacy initiatives between Bandung and Cuenca stand as a testament to the power of cultural diplomacy and the enduring value of international collaboration. Through their joint efforts to celebrate and expand the tradition of batik, incorporating motifs that capture the spirit of both Indonesian and Ecuadorian cultures, these cities have embarked on a journey that transcends conventional diplomatic endeavors. This collaboration not only pays homage to the rich artistic legacies of both nations but also paves the way for a new era of cultural interconnectivity that promises to enrich the global community. As this research has illustrated, the synthesis of Indonesian and Ecuadorian cultural elements through batik serves as a vibrant medium for dialogue, fostering an environment where mutual respect and understanding can flourish. The partnership between Bandung and Cuenca exemplifies the profound impact that thoughtful, culturally focused diplomacy can have in drawing nations closer, highlighting the significance of nurturing such relationships for the betterment of global harmony and cultural appreciation. As the world continues to navigate the complexities of international relations, the story of Bandung and Cuenca offers inspiration and a blueprint for future endeavors aimed at uniting diverse cultures through the universal language of art and heritage.

5. Conclusion

The collaboration between the cities of Bandung, Indonesia, and Cuenca, Ecuador, inaugurated in 2017, stands as a landmark initiative to promulgate the rich tapestry of Indonesian culture, with a special emphasis on the unique cultural offerings of Bandung. This sister city agreement is emblematic of a broader strategy aimed at reinforcing diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Ecuador through the medium of culture, orchestrated by sub-state government actors. This innovative approach to international relations heralds a new chapter in cooperative engagements, yielding tangible outputs
such as the promotion of Bandung’s batik adorned with Ecuadorian motifs, the international showcase of West Java’s traditional musical instrument, the Angklung Robot, and Bandung City's active participation in CIDAP 2017.

This partnership has undeniably played a pivotal role in elevating the profile of Indonesian culture within Ecuador, supplementing the Indonesian government’s prior endeavors in cultural diplomacy facilitated by the Indonesian Embassy in Quito. The initiative serves not just as a testament to the successful collaboration between Bandung and Cuenca but also as an inspirational model for other Indonesian cities. It underscores the potential of sister city agreements as a strategic conduit for cultural promotion and international outreach, encouraging other regions to pursue similar diplomatic ventures to spotlight their unique cultural heritages on the global stage.

Despite the initial success and realization of its foundational objectives, the partnership, however, has encountered limitations in propelling significant breakthroughs or achieving notable milestones in cultural promotion. The Bandung City Government’s contribution to CIDAP 2017, specifically the creation of batik featuring Ecuadorian motifs, represents a modest accomplishment within the ambit of this collaboration. This observation underscores a compelling argument for the continuity and further exploration of the Bandung-Cuenca sister city relationship. It suggests an expansive horizon for the batik market in Ecuador and Latin America at large. More importantly, this alliance harbors immense promise for knitting closer ties of friendship and understanding between diverse cultures and nations. Continuing this partnership could catalyze a deeper, more meaningful exchange and appreciation of cultural values, thereby fostering an enriched dialogue and mutual respect between Indonesia and Ecuador, and by extension, their respective regions.

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bandung-dengan-pihak-luar-negeri-tahun-2017


