Enhancing Halal Tourism through Paradiplomacy: Institutional Challenges and Opportunities in the NTB-Bukhara Collaboration

Nadiyah Kholilah Yahya\textsuperscript{1}, Rizki Dian Nursita\textsuperscript{2*}, Halilintar Yusuf Kohar\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Strategic Public Relations Management, London School of Public Relations, Indonesia
\textsuperscript{2}Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia
\textsuperscript{3}Master of Social Justice (Peace and Conflict Studies), The University of Sydney, Australia

*Corresponding author, e-mail: rizki.dian.nursita@uii.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The enactment of Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Local Government in Indonesia has paved the way for increased international engagement by local authorities, a practice known as paradiplomacy. In this context, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) has sought to expand its international cooperation, notably with Bukhara Province, focusing on developing the halal tourism sector. This study critically examines the process and challenges of institutionalizing paradiplomacy between NTB and Bukhara, with a particular focus on halal tourism development. However, the institutionalization of this international cooperation has encountered significant obstacles. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this investigation analyzed a variety of primary and secondary sources to uncover the underlying factors impeding the process. The study identified several key barriers to the institutionalization of NTB-Bukhara paradiplomacy, including shifts in leadership and policy priorities within NTB's government, delays in formalizing cooperation agreements, a lack of expertise in international relations among local government officials, restrictive central government regulations, and cultural and conceptual discrepancies in the understanding of halal tourism between the two regions. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, involving not only policy reform and capacity building at the local government level but also a deeper cultural and conceptual alignment between cooperating entities.

Keywords: Paradiplomacy, Halal Tourism, International Cooperation, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), Bukhara

ABSTRAK

Berlakunya UU No 23 Tahun 2014 tentang Pemerintah Daerah telah membuka kesempatan yang lebih puas bagi Pemda untuk terlibat dalam kerja sama internasional, atau yang sering kali disebut sebagai paradiplomasi. Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat dalam beberapa tahun terakhir telah melaksanakan sejumlah kerja sama internasional, salah satunya kerja sama dengan Provinsi Bukhara dalam pariwisata halal yang merupakan sektor unggulan NTB. Walaupun inisiasi kerja sama dengan Provinsi Bukhara telah dimulai sejak tahun 2019, namun proses institusionalisasi paradiplomasi antara NTB dengan Bukhara cenderung lamban bahkan mengalami stagnansi. Penelitian ini mencoba untuk menjawab faktor penyebab terhambatnya institusionalisasi paradiplomasi antara NTB dengan Bukhara. Hasil penelusuran terhadap sejumlah sumber primer maupun sekunder menunjukkan bahwa proses institusionalisasi paradiplomasi antara NTB dengan Bukhara terhambat disebabkan oleh perubahan kepemimpinan dan arah kebijakan pemerintah NTB, lambatnya formalisasi kerja sama, kurangnya pemahaman pemda mengenai kerja sama internasional, regulasi pemerintah pusat yang belum akomodatif, serta perbedaan nilai antara NTB dengan Bukhara dalam memahami konsep Pariwisata Halal.

Kata Kunci: Paradiplomasi, Wisata Halal, kerjasama Internasional, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB), Bukhara
1. Introduction

The rapid development of globalization has spurred advancements across various sectors, including economic, political, social, and cultural domains. These changes, aimed at creating a world without geographical and informational boundaries, have led to the emergence of numerous new phenomena. A significant outcome of globalization is the formation of new types and patterns of international cooperation. This cooperation is not limited to nation-states as the primary actors; subnational entities, such as local governments, now also possess substantial opportunities to engage in international cooperation, leveraging their regional potential to achieve specific interests. This form of international cooperation, conducted by subnational or regional governments, is known as 'paradiplomacy.' Paradiplomacy involves cooperation established by local governments and is not confined to interactions between regional governments of different nationalities; it also includes cooperation with various international institutions and organizations (Aldecoa & Keating, 2013).

The first instance of paradiplomacy cooperation by local governments in Indonesia was initiated in 1960 when the Bandung Government collaborated with the Braunschweig Government (Germany). This Bandung-Braunschweig partnership marked the first international cooperation by a local government in Indonesia (Mukti, 2020, p. 69). In 2014, significant changes were made to the laws governing regional autonomy and the implementation of foreign cooperation by local governments in Indonesia. The previous regulations, found in Law Number 32 of 2004, were replaced with Law Number 23 of 2014. The new legislation grants regional governments the autonomy to establish international cooperation agreements to pursue their interests and harness regional potential more effectively. With these new provisions, regional governments in Indonesia can now leverage international cooperation to achieve their regional goals and unlock previously untapped potentials. Further guidelines regarding the execution of foreign cooperation by regional governments are detailed in the Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Home Affairs Number 25 of 2020, which outlines the procedures and conditions for foreign cooperation, and the Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Number 09/A/KP/XII/2006/01, providing specific directions that regional governments must follow before engaging in international cooperation (Thontowi, 2019, p. 159).

Several provinces and local regions are actively participating in paradiplomacy cooperation in Indonesia, including DI Yogyakarta, DKI Jakarta, Gorontalo, and several districts or cities such as Makassar and Bandung (Surwandono & Maksum, 2020, p. 94). Recently, there has been increased attention to the formulation of sister-city and sister-province cooperation. West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) has begun cooperating with some foreign local governments in the last decade, notably with Zhejiang Province in China, to develop halal tourism (Sibawaihi, 2016, p. 128).

Halal tourism is a pivotal sector for West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), underscored by its remarkable natural beauty and strong Muslim cultural heritage. The evolution of NTB's halal tourism industry has been notable since the tenure of Governor Muhammad Zainul Majdi, also known as Tuan Guru Bajang (TGB). Recognized as the "Island of a Thousand Mosques," NTB has garnered global recognition. In 2015, it was nominated...
as the World's Best Halal Destination by the Global Muslim Travel Index and received accolades for the Best Halal Honeymoon Destination and World's Best Halal Destination at the World Halal Travel Awards in Abu Dhabi (Suharko, 2017). Furthermore, the increasing number of foreign tourists visiting NTB highlights the significant potential for the development of halal tourism (Halal Tourism Development: The Case Study of West Nusa Tenggara [NTB]).

The success of NTB in developing the halal tourism sector by maximizing its regional potential has been further enhanced through the initiation of paradiplomacy cooperation with Bukhara, focusing specifically on the halal tourism sector. NTB strategically employs paradiplomacy cooperation with foreign provinces to attract investments and promote its halal tourism sector (Pratama, 2020). Bukhara, a province in Uzbekistan, holds considerable potential for halal tourism, especially in religious tourism. It offers Muslims the opportunity to visit historical sites, such as the tomb of Imam Bukhari, the Ark Fortress, and the Kalon Mosque. These Islamic heritage sites position Bukhara as one of the premier religious tourist attractions (Aniqoh & Hanik, 2021, p. 117).

The substantial potential for halal tourism in Bukhara has prompted the provincial government to propose a paradiplomatic partnership with NTB. NTB is viewed as a formidable partner for Bukhara, given its achievements in the halal tourism sector. When regions engage in paradiplomacy cooperation, recognizing regional similarities across various sectors is crucial to ensure the success of the process and its implementation. NTB and Bukhara share many commonalities, including the potential to become major halal tourist destinations and a robust Muslim community culture, with the majority of their populations adhering to Islam.

The shared backgrounds and objectives between NTB and Bukhara have been pivotal in driving the signing of the Letter of Intent (LoI) for paradiplomacy cooperation on June 24, 2019. This LoI encapsulates an agreement for both regions to collaborate on various fronts supporting the development of halal tourism, encompassing investment, infrastructure development, and promotional activities. Despite the agreement in 2019, the progression of paradiplomacy cooperation between NTB and Bukhara has stalled at the LoI stage, indicating challenges in the effective implementation of the cooperation.

A review of the literature reveals a scarcity of discourse on the paradiplomacy between NTB and Bukhara. The article "Paradiplomacy Practice in Indonesia: a Lesson from West Nusa Tenggara Province in 2013-2019" delves into the factors propelling West Nusa Tenggara Province's engagement in paradiplomacy with foreign provinces. It highlights both external factors, such as the evolving landscape of international cooperation, and internal factors, including the impact of leadership changes within the province on paradiplomacy cooperation policies (Pratama, 2020, p. 76). Another study, "Proses Pengambilan Keputusan Pemprov NTB Membangun Kerjasama Sister Province dengan Pemprov Zhejiang RRT 2014-2015," examines the decision-making process within the West Nusa Tenggara Province government for establishing sister province cooperation with Zhejiang between 2014 and 2015. It identifies challenges in cooperation, such as a shortage of human resources in West Nusa Tenggara for executing paradiplomacy cooperation and issues like insufficient infrastructure development that dampen investor interest (Sibawaihi, 2016, p. 128).
Furthermore, the article "The Implementation of Sister Province between the Government of West Nusa Tenggara Province (Indonesia) and Kujawsko-Promorskie (Poland) in the Development of the Education Sector" discusses the paradiplomacy cooperation between West Nusa Tenggara and Kujawsko-Promorskie, focusing on the education sector. This study outlines four key success factors: effective communication, competent human resources in international cooperation and education, government commitment as evidenced by supportive policies, and a well-structured bureaucratic system for program implementation (Wiswayana et al., 2019, p. 229). The limited publications on NTB-Bukhara paradiplomacy and the challenges in institutionalizing their cooperation have necessitated further research into the institutionalization process. Consequently, this article aims to explore the constraints affecting the institutionalization of paradiplomacy between NTB and Bukhara.

2. Conceptual Framework

Building upon Kuznetsov's foundational framework for institutionalizing paradiplomacy, this enhanced research framework is tailored to address the unique challenges and leverage the opportunities identified in the collaboration between West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and Bukhara, with a specific focus on developing the halal tourism sector. Recognizing the nuanced dynamics of international cooperation, this revised framework proposes strategic enhancements across six pathways, each crucial for bolstering the international cooperation capabilities of regional governments.

The first strategic enhancement involves the establishment of a specialized management entity within the regional government dedicated to overseeing foreign cooperation affairs. This entity should not only be staffed with individuals possessing a robust educational background in international economics and political science but also with experts in cultural diplomacy and sustainable development. Such a composition ensures a deep understanding of international relations while fostering an appreciation for the cultural and religious nuances vital for the success of halal tourism initiatives.

Secondly, the framework recommends the establishment of permanent regional representative offices abroad, with a specific mandate to specialize in sectors relevant to their regional development goals, such as halal tourism. These offices are envisioned to strengthen diplomatic ties, actively participate in international halal tourism forums, and serve as conduits between regional assets and global opportunities, thereby emphasizing the region's commitment to engaging in sustained sector-focused international diplomacy.

The third strategic pathway focuses on the importance of official visits by regional representatives, which should be strategically planned with thematic agendas that align with the region’s priorities, like halal tourism promotion. These visits aim to cultivate deep partnerships based on mutual interests and shared values, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the partner region's social, economic, political, and cultural landscapes. Additionally, the creation of thematic forums and exhibitions represents a vital strategy for promoting international collaboration and understanding. By focusing on halal tourism and related sectors, these events offer unique platforms for regions to showcase their cultural and religious heritage, enhancing their attractiveness.
as premier halal tourism destinations on the global stage. Furthermore, the formation of global cross-border networks with a sectoral focus is advocated. Such networks would not only facilitate broader diplomatic relations but also concentrate on sharing best practices, challenges, and opportunities within the halal tourism sector, thereby strengthening global outreach and innovation in this field.

Lastly, the framework underscores the significance of reciprocal engagement in sector-specific international activities. This approach promotes active participation in events that foster knowledge exchange on sustainable tourism practices and enhance the visibility of halal tourism as a cornerstone of regional development strategies. Underpinning these strategic pathways are considerations for cultural sensitivity, capacity building, and the active engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, tourism operators, and religious leaders. This ensures that the strategies not only align with local values and community needs but also leverage international cooperation for sustainable development. Moreover, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of these strategies, with specific metrics tailored to the development of the halal tourism sector. In summary, this enhanced framework offers a comprehensive approach to institutionalizing paradiplomacy, emphasizing sector-specific strategies alongside Kuznetsov's original pathways. By integrating these enhancements, regional governments can more effectively harness international cooperation to promote sustainable and culturally aligned tourism development, particularly within the halal tourism sector.

3. Research Method

This research employed a qualitative methodology and leveraged descriptive approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. This methodology is grounded in data analysis, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources (Sofaer, 1999). The data collection process included a thorough literature review and interviews with key stakeholders involved in paradiplomacy cooperation. By combining the insights gained from reputable sources with the firsthand perspectives of those directly involved in paradiplomacy, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of how regional governments can effectively engage in international relations and cooperation.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. NTB-Bukhara Cooperations

NTB and Bukhara are two provinces situated in distinct countries yet share notable similarities. Bukhara, located in Uzbekistan, boasts a predominantly Muslim population (Kadirov et al., 2020, p. 40), while in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province, 97% of the populace adheres devoutly to Islam (Halal Tourism Development, 2020). This shared religious demographic underscores significant opportunities for halal tourism, propelled by each region's tourism potential and the majority Muslim population, thereby fostering their cooperation.
NTB Province is rich in halal tourism potential. This potential has been enhanced by the recognition of Lombok Island as the "Thousand Mosques Island" and the establishment of the Islamic Center, which stands as one of the most beautiful mosques in Southeast Asia and a hub for Islamic studies in NTB (Hidayah, 2021, p. 3). The potential for halal tourism in NTB was also recognized by the Bukhara delegation during their official visit. A Development Destination Staff member of the NTB Tourism Office reported, "Upon arriving in Lombok, the Bukhara delegation was impressed by the abundance of mosques across the island and noted the communal recitation of the Quran before the Maghrib prayer" (M.A. Adi, personal communication, March 9, 2022).

The legal framework supporting the development of NTB's halal tourism is delineated by Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2016, which focuses on enhancing safety and comfort for tourists, and Governor Regulation Number 51 of 2015, which outlines the essential components supporting halal tourism development. These components include the availability of supporting facilities such as halal hotels and mosques; the provision of clean, halal food products, from production to ingredient selection; the availability of comfortable services like saunas and spas with gender segregation; and the presence of tourism agencies dedicated to promoting halal destinations (Maryanti et al., 2020, p. 475).

Halal tourism in NTB is governed by Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2016 and Governor Regulation Number 51 of 2015, which focus on the development of halal tourism destinations in NTB. These regulations are in line with the core values of Islamic consumption as described by Rodrigo & Turnbull (2019), including the availability of halal and alcohol-free food, Muslim-friendly facilities such as spas and mosques, easy access to places of worship, clear indications of qibla direction at worship locations, gender-separated facilities, and cleanliness free from impurities considered haram, as well as the provision of halal entertainment.

The number of foreign tourists visiting NTB has seen a significant increase from 2008 to 2017, with a temporary decline in 2018 due to natural disasters and in 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as stated by the Secretary of the NTB Tourism Office, "Since 2008 until 2017, the number of foreign tourists coming to NTB has experienced a significant increase, temporarily declining in 2018 due to natural disasters and in 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic" (L. Hasbulwadi, personal communication, June 10, 2021).

This increase in foreign tourists also highlights the opportunity for developing halal tourism in NTB, which focuses on providing and constructing facilities that support tourism and offer services friendly to Muslims. However, these halal tourism facilities are designed to be inclusive, allowing enjoyment by all foreign tourists, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds. In recognition of its efforts, West Nusa Tenggara Province was awarded the World's Best Halal Destination by the Global Muslim Travel Index 2015 and received accolades for Best Halal Honeymoon Destination and World's Best Halal Destination at the 2015 World Halal Travel Award in Abu Dhabi (Suharko et al., 2019).
Similarly, halal tourism in Bukhara holds significant potential, endowed with numerous Islamic heritages that serve as primary attractions, such as the Arc Fortress, Ismail Samani Mausoleum, and Kalon Mosque (Aniqoh & Hanik, 2021, p. 115). Bukhara is also renowned as the "Land of Pilgrimage" due to the resting places of many Muslim leaders, including Imam Bukhari (Aniqoh & Hanik, 2021, p. 117). The cultural importance of visiting tombs in Islamic tradition underscores the vast potential for halal tourism in Uzbekistan. At the 9th conference of member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on December 18, 2019, Bukhara was designated as the capital of Islamic and cultural heritage (Kadirov et al., 2020, p. 39), positioning it as a province poised for significant advancements in halal tourism. The pronounced potential of halal tourism in both NTB and Bukhara lays the foundation for prospective collaboration between the two provinces.

On June 24, 2019, NTB and Bukhara formalized their commitment to paradiplomacy cooperation by signing a Letter of Intent (LoI). This agreement was spurred by Bukhara Province's interest in studying NTB Province's halal tourism management system, recognizing NTB as a pioneering region that was honored with the World Best Halal Destination award in 2015. Concurrently, NTB Province aimed to attract foreign investment and extend its halal tourism market reach to other Muslim-majority countries. Consequently, the parties agreed to collaborate in four key areas: investment, promotion of halal tourism, market expansion for halal tourism, and the establishment of a Sister Province relationship. The cooperation agreement encompasses four primary points: increasing visits from Muslim tourists, investing in the development of infrastructure that supports halal tourism, and promoting and marketing the halal tourism offerings of both NTB and Bukhara. This partnership signifies a strategic effort to leverage their shared cultural and religious heritage, aiming to enhance the halal tourism sector's appeal and infrastructure in both provinces.

4.2. Constraints Impeding the Institutionalization of NTB-Bukhara Cooperation

NTB and Bukhara have committed to four primary areas of cooperation, as follows: jointly working to increase visits by Muslim tourists, investing in the development of infrastructure supportive of halal tourism (with Bukhara investing in NTB), initiatives to promote and market halal tourism in both regions and an agreement to establish a sister-province or twin-province relationship (M.A. Adi, personal communication, March 9, 2022). Despite these agreed points, the process of institutionalizing paradiplomacy cooperation between NTB and Bukhara faced several constraints, and all was discussed in the following.

4.2.1. Changes in Administration and Policy of the Provincial Government

The shifts in administration have profoundly impacted the implementation of paradiplomacy policies in NTB. Variations in policies and working plans under each governor have influenced the ongoing paradiplomacy agreements, which are still in the signing phase. Changes in NTB’s paradiplomacy policy significantly affect the execution of agreed-upon work programs (Bukhari et al., 2021, p. 202).

Over the span of 14 years, from 2008 to 2022, NTB has been led by two governors, each with distinct policy focuses and backgrounds. These leadership
transitions have notably influenced policy formulation and paradiplomacy practices in the region. During Governor Muhammad Zainul Majdi’s tenure, from 2008 to 2018, paradiplomacy cooperation was primarily centered around the development of halal tourism in NTB.

The focus on halal tourism in paradiplomacy can be attributed to Governor TGB’s background as an Islamic religious leader in Lombok and his education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. His commitment to integrating Islamic values into the community's daily life influenced policymaking in international cooperation. Governor TGB’s background was instrumental in establishing halal tourism as a foundational element of NTB’s paradiplomacy (Pratama, 2020, p. 69). A significant initiative by Governor TGB to optimize halal tourism potential in NTB was the initiation of paradiplomacy between NTB and Zhejiang in 2014 (Sibawaihi, 2016, p. 128).

In contrast, Governor Zulkieflimansyah's tenure, which began in 2018, marked a departure from his predecessor's focus by not including halal tourism as a foundational element in the Regional Mid-Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah), diverging from the approach taken by Governor TGB (M.A. Adi, personal communication, March 9, 2022). During his administration, Governor Zulkieflimansyah introduced a vision and mission centered around the "1000 Cendikia" (1000 Scholars) program, aiming to send a thousand NTB students abroad for education (Bukhari et al., 2021, p. 203).

The shift in policy focus between the administrations of different governors has noticeably impacted the paradiplomacy relations between NTB and Bukhara. Despite the initiation of cooperation during Governor Zulkieflimansyah's term, significant follow-up actions have yet to materialize, and the initiative remains relatively unknown among the current government apparatus. According to the Halal Tourism Marketing Division of NTB, there has been a decline in enthusiasm for paradiplomacy cooperation with Bukhara in developing the halal tourism sector despite the initiative being a core program of the Tourism Department (I. Agrianti, personal communication, February 14, 2022).

4.2.2. Slow Formalization of the Cooperation

The NTB government’s approach to formalizing cooperation up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing stage has been marked by a lack of urgency. This observation is supported by the fact that many international collaborations initiated by the NTB provincial government have not advanced beyond the Letter of Intent (LoI) phase (Ismiyati, interview, February 9, 2022). A Letter of Intent serves as a preliminary document that outlines a memorandum of understanding with general, non-binding agreements. In contrast, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) represents an official signing stage that includes specific and legally binding agreements between collaborating parties (PERMENDAGRI, 2020).

As of 2019, NTB’s paradiplomacy initiative with Bukhara in the halal tourism sector remains at the LoI stage. This situation is consistent across NTB’s collaborations, including those with Kujawsko and 18 Malaysian universities. Despite initiating actions outlined in the LoIs, these collaborations have not progressed to the MoU signing stage.
(Wiswayana et al., 2019, p. 229). The failure to transition from LoI to MoU stages presents a significant barrier in the institutionalization process of paradiplomacy, as the non-binding nature of LoIs could threaten the continuity of these collaborations.

The slow formalization of NTB and Bukhara's paradiplomacy cooperation is further compounded by a lack of follow-up actions, such as the absence of international forums or exhibitions and limited involvement of regional governments in activities organized by partner regions (Kuznetsov, 2015, p. 112). Active participation by regional governments in international events is crucial for enhancing their global presence and strengthening cooperative relationships with partner provinces. Such engagement provides opportunities for local governments to broaden their communication networks and forge connections with other provincial governments (Kuznetsov, 2015, p. 112). However, since the signing of the international cooperation document with Bukhara in 2019, the NTB government has not actively engaged in any international or national activities organized by the Bukhara provincial government (M.A. Adi, personal communication, March 9, 2022) as Kuznetsov (2015) notes, active participation in the activities of partner provinces is pivotal for local governments aiming to expand their communication networks and establish relations with other provincial governments.

4.2.3. Limited Understanding of International Cooperation

Human resources and the availability of facilities to support international cooperation are fundamental pillars for fostering successful international engagements by regional governments. These elements are critical in enhancing regional governments' understanding of international cooperation and equipping the international cooperation department to facilitate paradiplomacy effectively.

Kuznetsov emphasizes that departments dedicated to managing foreign cooperation affairs of regional governments must have a profound understanding of economics and international relations (Kuznetsov, 2015). The establishment of a specialized foreign affairs department within regional governments, mirroring the central government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is crucial for efficiently regulating regional government foreign cooperation activities. Such a department is instrumental in streamlining the preparation and facilitation of international provincial cooperation (Kuznetsov, 2015, p. 111).

In 2016, the Cooperation and Natural Resources Bureau managed NTB's provincial cooperation affairs. This bureau was disbanded in 2017 and replaced by the Cooperation Administration Bureau in 2018 (NTB Cooperation Administration Bureau Profile, 2019). NTB's international cooperation efforts are overseen by the Sub-Division for Facilitating Regional Government Cooperation with Foreign Regional Governments within the Cooperation Administration Bureau. This sub-division is responsible for all aspects of international cooperation, including analyzing potential partner regions, drafting agreements, and facilitating cooperation implementation, as outlined by Governor Regulation Number 38 of 2018. The paradiplomacy cooperation between NTB and Bukhara for the development of the halal tourism sector was facilitated by this sub-section.
In 2020, the NTB Provincial Government restructured its organizational setup, dissolving the Cooperation Administration Bureau and integrating cooperation affairs into the NTB Provincial Government and Regional Autonomy Bureau, as per Governor Regulation Number 56 of 2020. This organizational shift has significantly affected NTB’s approach to international cooperation, including the dissolution of the dedicated sub-division. The lack of a department exclusively focused on international cooperation suggests a limited understanding by the current local government of the significance of such endeavors. This change has had profound implications, especially on the efficiency of international cooperation implementation, leading to prolonged bureaucratic processes and budget reductions.

Another consequence of the structural changes within NTB’s sphere of international cooperation is the notable shortage of human resources equipped with a comprehensive understanding of inter-governmental international cooperation. Personnel within the regional government's foreign cooperation department are required to possess the necessary expertise to facilitate international cooperation, maintain communication with foreign counterparts, and understand international norms and laws (Mukti, 2020, p. 30). In practice, however, there is a discernible lack of staff within the Government Bureau of Cooperation and Regional Autonomy who have educational backgrounds in economics or international relations.

Furthermore, the reassignment of State Civil Apparatus (Aparat Sipil Negara), who previously worked in the Cooperation Administration Bureau, has led to a deficit of human resources experienced in managing paradiplomacy. This issue, compounded by the absence of a dedicated department for international cooperation, poses fundamental challenges that are often underestimated by provincial governments.

4.2.4. Central Government Regulation on Paradiplomacy

The authority of regional governments to engage in paradiplomacy cooperation is governed by Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Autonomy. Since the adoption of regional autonomy, regional governments have been empowered to leverage their regional potential through international cooperation. To facilitate this, specific regulations have been established by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, outlining the conditions and procedures regional governments must adhere to when engaging in international cooperation.

The Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Number 25 of 2020 mandates that regional government international cooperation must align with regional interests and be harmonious with national-level development plans. Importantly, this regulation underscores the prohibition of establishing regional representative offices abroad (PERMENDAGRI, 2020).

In the theory of paradiplomacy institutionalization, regional representative offices abroad are termed paraconsulates (Kuznetsov, 2015, p. 112). Analogous to how countries maintain embassies and consulates in other nations, local governments would benefit from establishing such offices abroad to strengthen cooperative relationships with partner provinces. However, as per the Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 5 of 2020, the NTB provincial government is precluded from maintaining a regional
representative office in Bukhara province. While regional representative offices abroad are crucial for facilitating communication, executing programs, and reinforcing inter-provincial relations, the Indonesian government views their establishment as potentially undermining national stability (Mukti, 2013, p. 46).

The prohibition against the establishment of regional representative offices abroad by the Indonesian government serves as a preventive measure to deter any entities that might exploit these offices to seek foreign support with the intent of politically or security-wise undermining the territorial sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Consequently, under the current regulatory framework, no province in Indonesia is authorized to establish paraconsulates abroad.

Meanwhile, the Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Number 09/A/KP/XII/2006/01 specifies that foreign cooperation by regional governments is permissible only with foreign regional governments that maintain diplomatic relations with Indonesia. This regulation also requires approval from the DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council), stipulates that such cooperation must not threaten national security and stability, and insists that agreements must be entered into voluntarily, without coercion (Thontowi, 2019, p. 159). Furthermore, regional governments are obliged to issue notification letters and secure permits from the central government, specifically the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prior to initiating international cooperation (Mukti, 2013, p. 195).

As for the procedures to conduct international cooperation, Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Number 09/A/KP/XII/2006/01 delineates that regional governments should submit an application letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to acquire a power of attorney (Full Power) for executing the programs outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This action is necessitated when both cooperation parties agree to proceed to the MoU signing stage (Mukti, 2013, p. 203). However, the existence of a mechanism for requesting a power of attorney from the central government at the MoU signing phase does not fully resolve the issues related to the clarity of regulations and the legal framework governing regional governments, such as NTB, which might already be implementing agreed-upon programs while the formal signing process of cooperation remains at the Letter of Intent (LoI) stage.

4.2.5. NTB-Bukhara Perspectives on Halal Tourism

NTB and Bukhara both hold significant potential for halal tourism, with each province boasting a majority Muslim population and unique, attractive tourism resources. However, their perspectives on the concept of halal tourism diverge. NTB focuses on enhancing facilities to support halal tourism, aiming to ensure safety and comfort for all tourists, especially Muslim visitors. According to the Halal Tourism Marketing Staff at the NTB Tourism Office, NTB’s development efforts in halal tourism include increasing the number of amenities like mosques or prayer rooms near tourist attractions, ensuring separate facilities for men and women, providing restaurants with halal-certified food, and offering segregated spa facilities (I. Agrianti, personal communication, February 14, 2022).
The differences in perspectives between NTB and Bukhara on halal tourism became apparent following a visit by the Bukhara delegation to NTB on June 23, 2019. An official visit by a regional government abroad, particularly in the context of paradiplomacy, is a vital step for governments to understand the conditions and practices of partner regions (Kuznetsov, 2015, p. 112).

Following the governor’s directives, the Bukhara delegation visited several key halal tourist sites in NTB. They expressed admiration for how well the Muslim community's culture in NTB aligns with Islamic values and the widespread availability of worship facilities across Lombok Island. However, their enthusiasm diminished upon visiting Gili Meno, a prominent halal destination in NTB. The delegation was disheartened by the lack of regulations at the halal tourist site that would adhere to Islamic values and teachings. Their disappointment was fueled by the sight of many tourists in revealing attire, the widespread availability of alcoholic beverages, and loud music playing on the beach throughout the night. They observed that despite NTB being awarded the World Best Halal Destination in 2015, the provincial government had not fully capitalized on its halal tourism potential, continuing to rely heavily on conventional tourism without establishing a dedicated area for the development and execution of the halal tourism concept (M.A. Adi, personal communication, March 9, 2022).

The contrasting views between NTB, which prioritizes enhancing supportive facilities for halal tourism, and Bukhara, which seeks a more explicit application of Islamic teachings in the regulations and advancement of the halal tourism sector, led to the Bukhara Provincial Government’s decision to halt their pursuit of paradiplomacy cooperation with NTB. Despite Bukhara's initial move to start the cooperation, these differing perspectives impeded the advancement of the cooperation to the Memorandum of Understanding signing stage.

4.2.6. The Pandemic (Covid-19)

The SARS-CoV-2 virus, widely known as COVID-19, was first identified in Wuhan, a city in a Chinese province, in late 2019. Originating from this location, the virus quickly spread globally, escalating into a pandemic within a few months (Srimulyani et al., 2021, p. 274). Since March 2020, the escalating prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia led to the imposition of restrictions on community movements, significantly affecting various sectors, including a marked impact on international collaborations and delivering a severe blow to the tourism industry. The Secretary of the NTB Provincial Tourism Office noted a substantial decrease in foreign tourist visits to NTB during the pandemic period (L. Hasbulwadi, personal communication, June 10, 2021).

In response to the pandemic, regional governments enforced measures to curb the spread of the virus, including mobility restrictions and reallocating regional budgets to pandemic-related efforts (Wahyuni, 2021, p. 134). These actions impacted the institutionalization of paradiplomacy cooperation. Specifically, the cooperation between NTB and Bukhara was affected, as the pandemic disrupted international travel, hindering regional governments from conducting official visits to Bukhara. It also posed
challenges in obtaining various permits required for submitting cooperation proposals to the central government (M. Zainuddin, personal communication, February 9, 2022).

5. Conclusion

In short, the institutionalization of paradiplomacy cooperation between West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and Bukhara encountered multifaceted challenges, which underscore the intricacies involved in sustaining international cooperation at the regional government level. These challenges can be distilled into six primary factors, each contributing to the complexities of paradiplomacy efforts.

The first significant challenge was the impact of changes in administration and policy within NTB. Leadership transitions and shifts in policy focus notably influenced the trajectory of paradiplomacy initiatives. The move from a halal tourism-centric approach under Governor TGB to an education-oriented focus under Governor Zulkieflimansyah led to strategic discontinuity, affecting the cohesion and implementation of the cooperation with Bukhara.

Secondly, the pace at which paradiplomacy cooperation progressed from the Letter of Intent (LoI) to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage was notably slow. This sluggish advancement, coupled with the non-binding nature of LoIs and a lack of engagement in international events, significantly impeded the formalization and institutionalization of the cooperation.

Thirdly, the limited understanding of international cooperation within the NTB government posed a substantial barrier. The absence of a specialized department for international cooperation and a lack of personnel with expertise in international relations complicated the execution of paradiplomacy initiatives. A profound comprehension of international economics and relations is essential for the effectiveness of such cooperation.

Fourthly, the challenge stemmed from the central government's regulatory framework, which restricts the establishment of regional representative offices abroad and mandates permits for international cooperation. While these regulations aim to protect national sovereignty, they present additional hurdles for regional governments seeking to engage in international collaborations.

Fifthly, divergent perspectives on halal tourism between NTB and Bukhara led to difficulties in cooperation. NTB's emphasis on improving facilities for halal tourism contrasted with Bukhara's preference for a more explicit alignment with Islamic values, contributing to the cessation of their cooperative efforts.

Lastly, the global COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented disruptions to international travel, official visits, and the submission of cooperation proposals, further diverting regional governments' attention and resources from paradiplomacy initiatives.

These challenges elucidate the complexities and hurdles that regional governments encounter in paradiplomacy cooperation. They highlight the necessity for clear, consistent policies, dedicated resources, and an in-depth understanding of
international relations for the success of such endeavors. While the NTB-Bukhara cooperation commenced with mutual benefits in mind, it exemplifies how various factors can obstruct the institutionalization of paradiplomacy efforts. This case study accentuates the importance of meticulous planning, adaptability, and sustained commitment to nurturing international cooperation at the subnational level.

References


**Interview**

Agrianti, I. (2022, 14 Februari). Interview with the Tourism Promotion Staff of the NTB Tourism Office [Personal Interview].
Adi, M.A. (2022, 9 Maret). Interview with the Destination Development Staff of the NTB Tourism Office [Personal Interview].

Hasbulwadi, L. (2021, 10 Juni). Interview with the Secretary of the NTB Tourism Office [Personal Interview].

Ismiyati. (2022, 9 Februari). Interview with the Analyst of Cooperation at the NTB Governance and Regional Autonomy Bureau [Personal Interview].

Zainuddin, M. (2022, 9 Februari). Interview with the Evaluation Division of the Cooperation at the NTB Governance and Regional Autonomy Bureau [Personal Interview]