



Review

The Practice of Paradiplomacy in Indo-Pacific Region: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: This study discusses local governments' opportunities and challenges in practising paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region. A country's central government owns the authority to practice international relations, and local governments also own this authority through paradiplomacy practices. This study uses qualitative research methods by searching for theoretical references relevant to cases or problems found in various literature, mainly scientific journals, books, reports, and actual and trusted news on the internet. This paper aims to reveal local governments' opportunities and challenges in paradigmatic practice, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. From the analysis results, the practice of paradiplomacy in the Indo Pacific. This paper aims to reveal local governments' opportunities and challenges in paradiplomacy practice, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. From the analysis results, the practice of paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific is quite good but not maximised because many paradiplomacy practices reach the MoU stage. In contrast, they have not reached the program implementation frame. Generally, the Indo-Pacific region's opportunities for the practice of paradiplomacy are quite large because the regions in the Indo-Pacific region have many similarities, which is one of the crucial indicators in the practice of paradiplomacy.

Keywords: Paradiplomacy; Indo-Pacific region; Local Government; International Relation



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1. Introduction

There is nothing natural, timeless, or essential about regions. The idea of regions is necessarily a comparatively modern artefact of human history. While there is still debate about who discovered whom, the general point is clear: until advances in navigation and exploration made connections feasible between geographically remote places, the very idea of different, separate regions was impossible (Beeson & Wilson, 2018). However, it is important to realise that a region is crucial today because the bargaining power of countries or regions in an area is more significant. There are many regions in the world, such as the Asia Pacific, the European Union, Southeast Asia, and one of the most strategic regions currently, namely the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific emerged as a geographical concept covering the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean regions since Guurpet S. Kurana used the word "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in 2007 as a

Marine Strategist and Executive Director of The New Delhi National Marine Foundation (Herindrasti, 2019). In general, the Asia Pacific region is flanked by the Indian and Pacific oceans. Issues often discussed in the region (including Indo-Pacific) are geopolitics, security, international trade, and other high political issues. Then the main actor in this interaction is the state.

Along with the development of the knowledge and practice of diplomacy, so do the actors in diplomacy. Before 1990, diplomatic practice was dominated by state actors or international organisations. However, currently sub-states in a country, be it a province or a city, also can practice diplomacy or what is better known as paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy activities can be a strategic step in promoting an area (Cornago, 1999). In countries with a strategic region and a geographic, cultural, and demographic context, the practice of paradiplomacy will be more effective. The authority to practice international relations is not only owned by the central government in a country, but local governments also own this authority through Paradiplomacy practices. Therefore, provinces and cities also have the authority to develop their regions and fulfil their specific needs by cooperating with other provinces and cities abroad. The current political direction and influence of globalisation have made local governments inclined to want to carry out foreign cooperation (Cross, 2010).

In conjunction with the present issue, this paper explores the opportunities and challenges faced when the practice of paradiplomacy is carried out in the Indo-Pacific region. The discussion in this paper will be divided into 3 sections. The first will discuss the concept of paradiplomacy. Second, we will discuss opportunities for paradiplomacy practices in the Indo-Pacific region. The third will discuss the challenges that will be faced in the practice of paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. Literature Review

On the basis of the observations on the development of literacy in the field of International Relations, the Study of Paradiplomacy is still new. However, several pieces of literature have tried to raise the theme of paradiplomacy in their research. This section will explain the previous studies on paradiplomacy practice. Tidwell (2021) found that currently, countries in the Indo-Pacific region must involve regions in carrying out a program so that currently compete in the region is not only between State and State but between local governments (Province or City). So that local governments that are left behind will experience serious problems. In terms of paradiplomacy in the region, it will test the legislative strength and constitution of countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mohammed & Owtram (2014) explained that the practice of international cooperation in paradiplomacy practices carried out by Kurdistan shows no indication of separatism against the State of Iraq. The practise of paradiplomacy is carried out only for the economic progress of the Kurdistan region. In paradiplomacy practice, regions with conflictual relations with the central government will be suspected of all international relations activities. Paradiplomacy practices also affect international security. Rodrigues & Mattioli (2017) stated that local government networks play a role in spreading important regional values, including security. Mercocities practise an example in the Latin American region which has contributed significantly to spreading policies on a horizontal level.

Kossa et al., (2021) used the concept of paradiplomacy. They found that local governments in East Asia are multi active in paradiplomacy practices, especially in cooperation related to developing new transportation routes in the Arctic Ocean region. This fact shows that local governments have started to fight for their own economic needs for the advancement of their regions, especially in taking advantage of the geographic conditions in the region. (Dickson, 2014) investigated the relationship of a region with external parties. The concept of multi-level governance can be carried out in an activity, including paradiplomacy practice. Paradiplomacy practice enables a region to maximise regional autonomy policies to develop regional development. Based on the literature above, the author noted that no study had discussed paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region that focuses on challenges and opportunities. Alan Tidwell had already raised the theme of paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific. Still, Alan had not yet discussed the opportunities and challenges faced in practising paradiplomacy in the region. Therefore, this article will explain the concept of paradiplomacy and the opportunities and challenges of paradiplomacy practice in the Indo-Pacific region.

3. Materials and Methods

The author uses qualitative research methods with a focus on library studies through the search for sources of relevant reference to problems that can be found in literature, such as scientific journals, books, reports, and actual news on the internet. The theoretical references obtained through the study of research literature serve as the foundation and main analytical tool in the practice of research in this scientific article. The data sought relates to the practice of paradiplomacy and its application in a region. These data are analysed and then correlated with the practice of paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region, which is the main focus of this article.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Concept of Paradiplomacy

Along with the development of the knowledge and practice of diplomacy, so do the actors in diplomacy. Before 1990, diplomatic practice was dominated by state actors or international organisations. However, currently sub-states in a country, be it a province or a city, also can practice diplomacy or what is better known as paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy is a new phenomenon in the study of international relations. This practice refers to cross-country activities carried out by sub-state actors, both provincial and city (Wolff, 2007). The term paradiplomacy was first introduced in the academic debate of the Basque scientist Panayoyis Soldatos in the 1980s. Paradiplomacy is an amalgamation of the term 'parallel diplomacy' to 'paradiplomacy,' which correlates with the meaning of 'central non-governmental foreign policy' (Harakan et al., 2021). Another term put forward by Ivo Duchacek for this concept is 'Micro Diplomacy' (Criekemans, 2008).

Paradiplomacy, which is often the primary function of stateless nationalism, suggests that the process of nationalism (identity construction, political territoriality) logically leads to local governments pursuing the development of an international personality. In this way, paradiplomacy serves as a means for local identity and development, specifically by local governments (Lecours & Moreno, 2001). Paradiplomacy practice has often been carried out in industrialised countries, but it is still lacking in developing countries. Three things need to be understood in the concept of paradiplomacy; first, paradiplomacy can serve multiple purposes, including economic development, cultural preservation, technological advancement, and sub-state political affirmation. In this context, developing the capacity to act abroad can serve multiple interests in the long term. From a development perspective, regions in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America benefit greatly from relations with sub-state governments and regions abroad.

Second, the development of paradiplomacy must adapt to the domestic conditions of a country. At the state level, paradiplomacy means creating multiple channels with the central government to exchange information and coordinate action. The state does not necessarily welcome paradiplomacy, especially if it comes from groups that express different identities or have local nationalist aspirations as separatist actors.

Third, paradiplomacy presents an opportunity as well as a potential trap for democratic development, a problem that is very important for many regions in developing countries. On the plus side, relations with liberal democratic governance can spread these values, and implementing collaborative projects can encourage civic engagement and mobilisation at the local level. On the negative side, the decentralised aspects of international action can hinder public and international relations considerations as this is usually done in a national context. Sub-state units escape the easy categorisation as international actors because they are not sovereign states. However, their conceptualisation as agents in domestic politics and the international arena seems increasingly needed.

In general, the main thing that must be considered is the role of sub-countries which is currently very important in the context of international relations. Provinces and cities must be given the authority to regulate and manage their regions to meet their specific needs. However, the central government must continue to supervise this authority so that if the practice is too far from the stage of opportunities for conflict and separatism (Ababakr, 2020), the government can resolve it early.

Paradiplomacy practice in context is important, because the similarities that arise due to geographic, political, and cultural locations are supporting factors that support the practice of paradiplomacy. The Indo-Pacific region, which includes the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, has diverse countries and different backgrounds but is bound in a region that is one of the most strategic regions in the world, especially in terms of maritime prospects. Through the practice of paradiplomacy and sharing of power between the state government and sub-state actors within the state, the effectiveness and efficiency of international cooperation can be implemented, and even the foreign policy of a country will be easier to implement (Lecours & Moreno, 2001).

4.2. Opportunities for Paradiplomacy in Indo-Pacific

The regional concept is indeed something that is more identified with the geographical location. However, in the current international relations interaction, regions do not always have to do with geographic location. Still, they have developed into associations emphasising common interests, even though they are geographically far apart. Fawcett (2004) argued that the regional concept is currently understood as old regionalism and new regionalism. Old regionalism is a joint activity of countries that have the same level and is formed from a political process. New regionalism is a joint activity of countries with different levels formed from an economic process (Fawcett, 2004).

Regarding the Indo-Pacific region, the term new regionalism is more appropriate because the composition of the Indo-Pacific region consists of politically and economically countries at different levels. Nevertheless, the Indo-Pacific region still promises enormous opportunities for diplomatic activity. The Indo-Pacific has a maritime speciality centred in Southeast Asia (Medcalf, 2018). So, cooperation in the maritime sector will dominate cooperation between countries in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific regions also have large opportunities for the practice of paradiplomacy because the regions in the Indo-Pacific region have many similarities, which is one of the important indicators in the

practice of paradiplomacy. Geographically, cultural, and political equations along with changes in international relations actors, who have authority in international relations interactions, not only countries but also sub-state actors with their own specific needs. In the future, sub-state actors will have an important role in international governance (Hale, 2018).

In the context of paradiplomacy, Paradiplomacy practice can be applied in several activities: Sister Province, Sister City, and Twin City. Provinces or cities in the Indo-Pacific region can interact with each other - according to the authority given by their respective countries of origin - to establish international cooperation with other Provinces or cities abroad. More effective cooperation will be better if the sub-states of developing countries cooperate with the sub-states of industrialised countries (Lecours, 2008), so there will be more efficient growth.

4.3. Challenges For Paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region promises considerable opportunities for the practice of paradiplomacy. However, the challenges faced in realising this opportunity are quite large. Paradiplomacy practices that are not yet familiar in international relations interactions for provinces or cities in developing countries make it a little difficult to start international cooperation. Second, so far, states still dominate international relations, especially in a region such as the Indo-Pacific. Sub-state Actors Are Still Less Well-known Than State Actors. Even though at this time, the state must share tasks with sub-states for the whole country's progress (Chambers, 2012). Provinces and cities may also have different interests from the foreign policies made by the central state (Kenealy, 2012). Third, the practice of paradiplomacy in the Indo-Pacific is not maximised because many paradiplomacy practices reach the memorandum of understanding (MoU) stage without a real implementation program. Even if the cooperation can be realised, its implementation often fails and is limited to signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Mukti, 2019). This means that cooperation is still ineffective because the main objective of paradiplomacy practice, namely, to develop provinces and cities, remains unfulfilled.

5. Conclusions

The Indo-Pacific region is a very strategic area for international relations. However, currently, international relations activities in the Indo-Pacific region are still dominated by state actors. At the same time, sub-states still have a fairly small role in the Indo-Pacific region within the framework of paradiplomacy cooperation practices. Sub-states (Provinces and Cities) have specific needs and often differ from other Provinces or Cities. So, giving space to non-state actors to be involved in regional cooperation is very important. However, the central state still must supervise this paradigmatic activity to have a clear and implemented program, not just ceremonial or signing the MoU.

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