

Indonesia's Foreign Relations through Regional Autonomy: Evaluation Study of *the Sister City of Medan and Penang in 2010-2022*

Addarsyah Dhia Putra¹, Sidik Jatmika²

^{1,2} International Relations Studies Department,

Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University, Indonesia

¹ addarsyah.dhia.psc22@mail.umy.co.id, ² sidikjatkika@umy.ac.id

Abstract

The autonomous cooperation policy between the cities of Medan and Penang was established in 1984. Since its inception, this cooperation has resulted in various mutually beneficial cooperation for both parties involved. The purpose of this study is to assess previous examples of cooperation to identify shortcomings in the programs that have been implemented. By addressing these shortcomings, future efforts can aim to limit mistakes and reduce gaps in benefits achieved. This study utilized a qualitative research approach and used Publish or Perish 8 software to identify relevant data sources for the purpose of this paper. International cooperation theory serves as a framework to assess the effectiveness of existing cooperation efforts. The findings of this research will shed light on the extent of the collaboration that has been developed such as modifying the way sister cities are around as one of the foundations in evaluating the cooperation that has been established and then analyzing and interpreting these findings in the discussion section.

Keywords: sister city, evaluation, Medan, Penang.

Abstrak

Kebijakan kerjasama otonom antara kota Medan dan Penang dibentuk pada tahun 1984. Sejak awal, kerjasama ini telah menghasilkan berbagai kerjasama yang saling menguntungkan bagi kedua belah pihak yang terlibat. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai contoh-contoh kerjasama yang telah dilakukan sebelumnya untuk mengidentifikasi kekurangan-kekurangan dalam program-program yang telah dilaksanakan. Dengan mengatasi kekurangan-kekurangan ini, upaya-upaya di masa depan dapat bertujuan untuk membatasi kesalahan dan mengurangi kesenjangan dalam keuntungan yang dicapai. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dan menggunakan perangkat lunak Publish or Perish 8 untuk mengidentifikasi sumber data yang relevan untuk tujuan penyusunan makalah ini. Teori kerja sama internasional berfungsi sebagai kerangka kerja untuk menilai efektivitas upaya kerja sama yang ada. Temuan penelitian ini akan menjelaskan sejauh mana kolaborasi yang telah dikembangkan seperti memodifikasi cara dari hunungan sister city disekitar sebagai salah satu landasan dalam mengevaluasi kerjasama yang telah terjalin dan kemudian menganalisis dan menginterpretasikan temuan-temuan ini dibagian pembahasan.

Kata kunci: sister city, evaluasi, Medan, Penang

Introduction

Existing research has explicitly
recognized the importance of

compatible environments in the context
of globalization. Twin city partnerships
have long been developed to create an

enabling environment to facilitate international investment (Han et al., 2022). In the midst of the current flow of globalization, local governments are no longer new players in the international arena, marked by the many interrelated international agreements signed between municipal and local governments in various countries. It was from here that several twin city networks developed. The number of sister city networks, which are networks between cities and provinces in developed, developing and even small countries, is always increasing. One of them is the sister city collaboration between the Medan city government and the city of George Town, or better known as Penang Island, Malaysia (Hari Sabarno, 2007).

The concept of a national project that seeks greater growth and greater autonomy for the constituent regions can be reaffirmed with the help of paradiplomacy. In this context, the existing institutional and legal framework for governments which are sub-national actors to develop their regions without relying on central government authority, but in accordance with applicable national rules and laws,

is very important. This creates a synergy between the central government and local governments (Hans J. Morgenthau, 2010).

The aim of the partnership that has been created between the Medan and Penang governments is to strengthen the long-standing good relations between the two cities. The Malacca Strait is the only physical barrier between the two cities, which is why they share many characteristics in common. The two cities have had a formal sister city cooperation agreement since October 10, 1984, based on friendship and comparable cultural relations. The current cooperative relationship will continue to develop to produce points of agreement in the MoU relating to cooperation in the fields of economy and trade, tourism, education and training, culture, as well as advances in technology and human resources. However, after being formed for some time, the cooperative relationship is still not ideal, especially in the investment sector it is not optimal yet (Sinambela, 2020).

All international players are increasingly involved in the transnational relations that shape the

global system of interaction after the Westphalian regime. For all international players, including at the state and city, institutional and individual levels, the Westphalian system has a more participatory character. Relations The basic pillar of "sovereignty" of a country is not always eliminated by transnational relations, but these relations raise the need for greater control over the sovereignty of a country. As a result, there is a need for stricter regulations regarding the state's constitutionally mandated obligation to "share" sovereignty (Takdir Ali Mukti, 2013).

Regional autonomy is the result of the central government's decentralization strategy. According to Jatmika (Sidik Jatmika, 2001), the regional need to have independence in conducting foreign interactions is one of the impacts of the implementation of regional autonomy. This is a factor that is taken into account by decision makers and is one of the solutions to the pressures generated by internal and external demands. Therefore, local governments have a huge opportunity to work together with the external environment, namely the global

community, to encourage regional growth and development as a result of this regional autonomy.

The Indonesian government has given permission to local governments to establish sister city relationships as a means of international collaboration, which aims to maximize the potential of each region and prepare them to compete globally. However, the role played by the city government in fostering relations with other countries through Sister City collaboration is a type of bilateral relationship that aims to uphold national interests, maintain peace, and also increase economic welfare in developing regions. However, local governments do not act on their own behalf, but instead represent the national government, ensuring that the state does not lose its sovereignty (Kansil, 2004). Globalization and economic liberalization have led to local governments engaging in overseas cooperative ties, such as sister cities, which foster economic development, national culture dissemination, and official cooperation across various domains. However, establishing a successful sister city relationship can be

challenging due to internal factors like deficient communication channels, inadequate human resource capacity, and limited involvement from both central and local communities. Exogenous factors, such as global-level policies and the Covid-19 pandemic, also need consideration. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of local governments in fostering collaboration within sister cities and enhancing future cooperation (Safitri et al., 2023).

This study will utilize a selection of previously published works as references in order to identify and explore novelty. The author has identified two studies from prior literature that serve as the foundation for the exploration of uniqueness in this research. These two research publications are presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

The first article is entitled ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN MEDAN CITY (Case study: Medan and Penang). Where the contents of this article explain how international cooperation is carried out. Implemented by the Medan City Government in the implementation of Sister City cooperation with Penang

in 2010-2014. The survey method used by the author is the analytical description method which aims to explain facts that are relevant to the problem being investigated. And the result of writing the article was in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding signed on October 10, 1984 by Datuk Haji Mohamed Bin Yeop Abdulraof, the mayor of Pulau Pinang, and Mr. Agus Salim Rangkuti, the mayor of Medan, so the cooperation between the City of Brothers began between the two cities. Through the MoU which discusses cooperation in the fields of business and trade, tourism, education and training, and culture, these cooperative relations are now continuing to develop to produce points of agreement. The community must take an active role in organizing this collaboration so that the sister city relationship between the cities of Medan and Penang can run well (Frianto, 2021).

The second article is entitled INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BY REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS (CASE STUDY: MEDAN-PENANG), in which this article contains the Sister City Cooperation between Medan and

Penang City Governments (Georgetown) in Malaysia formed from the similarity of culture and ethnicity of the population which was signed in October 1984 with the hope of developing cooperation in all fields. This research is intended to find out how International Cooperation was carried out by the Medan City Government in carrying out Sister City cooperation with Penang in 2010-2014, and the results of the study indicate that the implementation of the authority of the Medan City Government in carrying out foreign relations, Sister City collaboration with the City Penang is an MoU that has been mutually agreed upon and has not been renewed since 1984, this shows that there is stagnation in the cooperative relationship between the Medan City Government and Penang. Apart from the MoU which has not changed since it was agreed by both parties, there are several obstacles which are divided into two, namely External Government Issues and Internal Government Issues (Sinambela, 2020) .

The author's research offers a unique contribution by evaluating various aspects of cooperation between

two sister cities, specifically Medan and Penang. This study retrospectively examines the positive outcomes that have been achieved and provides an assessment with the aim of enhancing the future benefits derived from the established sister city relationship. This study exclusively concentrates on four specific areas, which are also explicitly referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These areas encompass cooperation in the economic domain, including commerce; collaboration in the sphere of education; joint efforts to promote tourism; and initiatives pertaining to youth and sports. The research primarily focuses on global or general concerns that have been often seen in recent years. Consequently, it excludes issues that are specific or localized in nature. Following the evaluation of the current collaboration and the subsequent identification of its outcomes, this study now shifts its focus towards enhancing the existing cooperation through the provision of recommendations aimed at facilitating mutual success between the two sister towns.

Methods

This research was written using a qualitative methodological approach, and Harzing's Publish or Perish program was used to help find sources for this research. In addition, this study took data from books, journals and other literature through library research. In addition, the author also uses a descriptive methodology in this study. By focusing on the policies adopted by the Medan city government to find out how the cooperation between the City of Medan and Penang is carried out, the descriptive technique seeks to describe the reality of sister city cooperation between the City of Medan and Penang, as well as the constraints experienced by both parties in implementing the sister relationship. city between the two cities.

Data analysis is considered an important and active act when using qualitative research methodology to discover and organize core ideas, connotation-based aspects, or main body of academic writing. Thorne (Thorne, 2000) stated this. Although it has not received much attention, data analysis is perhaps the most challenging component of qualitative research

methods and academic discourse. The amount of data collected, the need for the researcher to dissect thoroughly, and the clarity of the conclusions presented all influence how difficult qualitative content analysis is. Open-ended question transcripts, structured and semi-structured interviews, observation, and focus groups are some of the methods for collecting qualitative data (Olasile Babatunde Adedoyin, n.d.).

Result and Discussion

In the analysis of this research, the author employs the theory of international collaboration, specifically focusing on the theory of international cooperation itself. According to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (year), collaboration can arise either from individuals recognizing the collective welfare of the group or from their evaluation of their personal self-interests. The fundamental problem resulting from this behavior is the national interest of each country. Behavior that leads to cooperation lies in the assumption of each party from each country that the other party will also cooperate. The intended cooperation will be achieved if it results in equality of national interests. This is

supported by the notion that comes from the implementation of foreign policy, which states that some problems or objectives cannot be resolved by force alone. If it is anticipated that the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages, then cooperation will be sought (de Kerckhove, 1973).

International cooperation according to KJ Holsti, is a perspective on how two or more interests, values, or goals produce something. about how two or more parties support and satisfy each other's interests, aspirations or goals to produce something in a kind of meeting. in the form of meetings organized and attended by all parties. The state decides its goals or objectives in a joint policy with other countries with their assistance. collaborative strategy with other countries, with assistance from other countries, according to goals, principles, and agreements, and considering the existing challenges (Holsti, 2005).

The formulation of the Strategic Plan arose within a context characterized by the exploration and cultivation of novel methodologies for addressing the requirements of local communities, as ascertained by relevant

stakeholders. The stakeholders exhibited a positive response by adopting a methodology that promoted inclusivity, thereby accommodating a wide range of perspectives and interpretations (Sykes, 2002).

There are several points of sister city cooperation between the city of Medan and the city of Penang, namely cooperation in the fields of trade economy, education, tourism, and youth and sports.

1. The first is cooperation in the field of trade economy, in which part of this collaboration the Cooperation Relations Section and the Medan City Association of Sister Cities support the Medan City Government's program to promote Medan City as a trade and investment destination for cooperation partners of sister cities through the trade economic sector. This initiative is manifested in two ways: a commitment to promote locally made goods (folk crafts) and providing open market access to the best goods from both cities. The Pulau Pinang City Council provides a permanent promotion

arena facility in the form of a house near Pulau Tikus for the City of Medan. The "Wisma Kota Kembar" building, which is still used by the City of Medan, is currently managed by the Provincial Government of North Sumatra to promote handicraft items at a very low rental cost. In consultation with the management and the Cooperation Relations Section of the Medan City Regional Secretariat, the general public can use this facility.

The results of this cooperation in the economic field have had a positive impact both on both cities and also on each country, where the cooperation between the two sister cities Medan and Penang has been a bit of a lubricant for Indonesian commodity export activities in the Penang market (Antara, 2022 (Antara, 2022). This was also strengthened because the Indonesian Consul General in Penang, Bambang Suharto, received the results of research on Indonesia and Malaysia's economic relations which were considered to be still bright, supported by several factors, including the comparative advantage of Indonesian products and the positive

reception of the Malaysian people towards Indonesian products. In the field of cooperation in the field of trade, this has produced a positive impact in the form of increasing closeness between the two countries, in this cooperation it can be increased in terms of promotion of superior goods or products from each city with advertising instruments on social media or holding cultural events with hope this can boost the economy of each city.

2. The two collaborations in the Medan City Education sector have consistently implemented Student Exchange programs in the education sector. The city of Medan has sent around 300 children to Penang, Malaysia, to take part in this program. Students and young people in Medan City can gain experience, learn new perspectives, and make friends with young people in destination countries through this program. On the other hand, there are many Malaysian students studying in the city of Medan, for example at the University of North Sumatra. In particular, there were 569 Malaysian students studying

medicine from 2007 to 2014 there. In the coming years, when the torch for nation-building is in the hands of the next generation, it is hoped that the relationships that have been established between these young people will result in intimacy.

The sister city collaboration between Medan and Penang in the field of education resulted in an agenda in the form of student exchange activities between the two cities, which became a gateway in making it easier for students from each country to study transborder between the two countries. It can be seen from the previous paragraph which shows the number of student exchanges between the two countries, especially between the city of Medan and the city of Penang, the student exchange program between the two sister cities is classified as a positive successful program in increasing the scientific standards of students from each side. However, in this case there are suggestions for student exchange activities that have been established until now, namely in the form of publication of documentation regarding student exchange programs that have

been established to make it easier for researchers to obtain data regarding this student exchange program, by posting data and pictures. regarding student exchange can also be expected to be a means of promotion regarding this program to further improve the quality of education in each city.

3. The three collaborations in the field of tourism the most ethnically diverse city in all of Indonesia is Medan. Because of its cultural richness, the city of Medan is a paradise for foodies offering a wide variety of culinary styles.

The Medan City Food Festival, which took place in Penang, Malaysia, helped raise awareness of this potential. One of the aims of the festival is to attract visitors from neighboring Malaysia to Medan so they can experience the city's culinary diversity first-hand. Areas that directly affect society are also very important in this regard. Given the value of reference and sharing of knowledge and experience in areas where twin city cooperation is possible the significance is increasing Still need to expand and pursue cooperation in areas such as flood management (rioling), environment

(environment), green and clean city campaigns, development of twin ports (sister ports), information technology, investment, energy sources from waste materials (waste-based management), education and medical management, and other fields related to the welfare of urban communities. It is hoped that this program will continue to receive support from all Medan City stakeholders. The results of the cooperation in the field of tourism

4. The four collaborations in the field of youth and sports The Medan City Government is working with the Medan City KONI in the fields of children and sports. The "Penang Cycling Association's Mountain Bike Challenge" was followed by the City of Medan. Twelve high school students from Medan City have also departed for Penang, Malaysia, to participate in the Pearl Challenge Program. The youth camp was attended by young people from Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia as the hosts, in addition to representatives from the City of Medan.

There have been several collaborations that have been carried out between the city and Medan and Penang in the form of holding friendly matches which are also a sign of the 35th anniversary of Sister City between Medan and Penang. This match was held at the MBPP stadium, George Town, Penang, Malaysia in 2019. This match is a form of solidarity between the cities of Medan and Penang because the purpose of this match is not only to find a winner but to develop a sense of togetherness and cohesiveness between the two cities (Tobasatu (Tobasatu, 2019). In the field of cooperation in the field and sports from the results of the author's research it has not been carried out as well as collaboration in other fields, it is estimated that this has occurred due to the small amount of government attention in focusing cooperation in this field, it is also estimated that geographical factors will spend the budget on a large scale if activities friendly matches or joint training/matches are rarely scheduled. However, this is not entirely seen as a shortcoming with the holding of friendly matches in 2019 as a form of cooperation in the field of youth and

sports which of course cooperation is still ongoing.

In this section, the author examines a collection of interconnected sources that have been discussed previously, with the aim of increasing the potential of sister city cooperation between Medan and Penang. The main objective of this study is to contribute towards the optimization of this cooperative relationship. In the initial aspect, particularly in the area of collaborative efforts in the trade economy, the author utilized previous research sources as valuable references and resources to facilitate sister city collaboration between Medan and Penang.

1. Economic trade cooperation the author employs the example of commercial collaboration between Denpasar and Mossel to illustrate economic trade cooperation.

The Denpasar and Mossel Bay governments have initiated sister city cooperation to enhance the market demand for their creative economy products and boost economic growth. The collaboration is reminiscent of Heritage Tourism, which the Denpasar

government shares with Mossel Bay. The cooperation aims to establish an identity and empower human resources in the Tukad Bindu area, mitigating unemployment and promoting economic prospects. Both governments are classified as municipal entities, and the collaboration serves as a continuation of bilateral ties between Indonesia and South Africa. The Indonesian government prioritizes economic ties with African nations, particularly South Africa, and the Denpasar government's acceptance of the Mossel Bay collaboration demonstrates the complementary nature of the relationship between local governments (Kencana Putri & Elvianti, 2021).

2. Collaboration in the field of education the author utilizes the case study of the commercial collaboration between Denpasar and Perth as an illustrative illustration of the cooperation between education and technology.

Denpasar and Perth are collaborating on education and technology, with Denpasar prioritizing education and technology. Both cities

have incorporated business incubator programs and curriculum, and Denpasar has been a facilitator in Perth's annual West TechFestival. The Denpasar government aims to facilitate effective communication between professors, students, and individuals, fostering the development of innovative entrepreneurs. In November 2020, a seminar was conducted in Denpasar, Indonesia, and Brighton, UK, attracting over 300 students from Denpasar. The Denpasar City Government aims to enhance collaboration through academic exchanges, student programs, and entrepreneurial initiatives, focusing on technological advancements and best practices (Intentilia & Surya Putra, 2021).

3. Collaboration in tourism the author uses a case study of the city of Bandung's commercial collaboration with its partners as an illustrative picture of cooperation between tourism.

The cooperation between the City of Bandung and its partners in the tourism sector involves the establishment of a mutual agreement between the City of Bandung and its partners to jointly enhance the

promotion of tourism destinations in their respective cities. This will be achieved through various means such as organizing cultural events or exhibition bazaars to directly promote each city. In addition, the promotion of tourism centers is facilitated by sharing digital content such as brochures, photos and videos through their respective social media accounts (Affandi et al., 2021).

4. cooperation in the field of youth the author uses an agenda study conducted by the city of Bandung by participating in the International Leadership Academy (ILA) program. In the youth cooperation sector, the Bandung City Government believes that the International Leadership Academy (ILA) program can improve leadership skills, expand higher education opportunities, and foster cross-cultural friendships. Representatives from Bandung City showcase their cultural heritage through the ILA platform, which organizes sessions to showcase aspects of regional culture. The ILA program is implemented through

the Virtual International Leadership Academy (VILA) held in Nagaoka, Japan, which offers online application-based platforms such as Zoom and Facebook for academic activities at no cost. Participants must dedicate many hours each week for preparation. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the lives of individuals, causing reduced social engagement, economic downturn, and a shift towards remote workforce and online education (Mandala Putra, 2022).

Conclusion

From the results and discussion in this article it can be concluded regarding the evaluation of the sister city of Medan Panang City in the fields of trade cooperation, education, tourism, and youth and sports. In the field of trade, in the form of commodity exchanges between the two cities which mutually boosted the economies of the two cities, in the field of education, namely the establishment of cooperation in the form of student exchanges, in the

field of youth and sports, the establishment of friendly matches between the cities of Medan and Penang, and finally in the field of tourism, in the form of culinary which share information in various sectors that can be used to collaborate with partner cities. Cooperation in areas such as floods (rioting), Neighborhood (environment), development of clean city campaigns (clean city), port development (sister port), information technology (information technology), investment, energy sources from waste materials (waste-based management), education and health (medical and education management), as well as other related fields of management and other disciplines related to the welfare of urban communities. Even so, there are still several evaluations for the two sister cities as described in order to achieve better and more successful sister city cooperation.

Potential Collaborative Initiatives between the Sister City Governments of Medan and Penang to Foster Market Demand for Creative Economy Products and Stimulate Economic Growth in the Future. In the realm of education, both cities can

incorporate business and cultural incubator programs and curricula. Additionally, they can offer resources like as the West TeachFestifal, which seeks to enhance contact among professors, students, and industry professionals. In the realm of tourist development, it is imperative to collaborate with partners in order to enhance the efficacy of extending tourism promotion through both online and offline channels. Lastly, it is recommended that the municipal administrations of Medan and Penang coordinate the organization of international seminars aimed at enhancing the educational standards and skillsets of the youth population within their respective cities.

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