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## **The Interaction of Sub-state Actors with the Global Public: A Review of Aceh's Paradiplomacy through *The Light of Aceh***

Windy Dermawan<sup>1\*</sup>, Taufik Arrahman<sup>2</sup>, Gilang Nur Alam<sup>3</sup>, Henike Primawanti<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>*Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran*

<sup>4</sup>*Study Program of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Komputer Indonesia*

**Corresponding Author:** Windy Dermawan, E-mail: [windy.dermawan@unpad.ac.id](mailto:windy.dermawan@unpad.ac.id)

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

Received: 16-10-2024

Revised: 01-11-2024

Published: 05-11-2024

Volume: 7

Issue: 2

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33019/berumpun.v7i2.190>

### **KEYWORDS**

*Branding, Identity, Islamic, Paradiplomacy, Substate, The Light of Aceh*

### **ABSTRACT**

This article aims to explain the external persuasive actions of the Aceh Provincial Government in maintaining its Islamic identity through "The Light of Aceh" branding towards the global community. This action is referred to as paradiplomacy. As one of the subnational actors in Indonesia, Aceh Province is an area that has social and political dynamics from before independence to the present. Aceh has a distinctive identity and culture known as Serambi Mekah. Because of its efforts to maintain this identity, Aceh once fought for independence from Indonesia. Aceh's paradiplomacy certainly has different dynamics. However, the effort to maintain its identity has been a struggle from the past to the present. In the independence era, Aceh tried to fight for its identity with the struggle for independence, but in the post-independence era, Aceh fought for its regional interests through the framework of Regional Autonomy by establishing foreign relations and diplomacy to the global community. This research uses the theories of paradiplomacy and social identity to explain the persuasive actions taken by the Aceh Provincial Government through paradiplomacy to maintain its social identity. This research uses a qualitative method with data collection from interviews with relevant informants, documentation studies and internet-based studies. The results of this research show that the Aceh Provincial Government's paradiplomacy efforts to maintain its Islamic identity are carried out through branding "The Light of Aceh" by incorporating Islamic values in various components of the branding such as the main values of branding, logo philosophy, and branding commercial advertising videos. These values are socialised to the global community through various international activities by showcasing culture in dances, poems of clothing at international festivals, so that Aceh is better known by the global community with its Islamic identity.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

From pre-independence to the current reform era, Aceh is one of the Indonesian provinces that has experienced social and political change. Islam first entered Indonesia in Aceh. In Peureulak (East Aceh), brought directly from Arabia, Islam arrived in Indonesia in the first century Hijri. The Islamic Kingdom of Peureulak was established in 225 Hijri (840 AD) and became the first Islamic kingdom in the Archipelago (Hasjmy, 1983). During Islamic rule in Aceh, Islamic values and teachings were incorporated into their governance and state administration, such as the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, which adopted Islam as the 'foundation of the state' and made Islam the source of its laws. In addition, Islamic kingdoms had a significant influence on the structure of the kingdom (Hasjmy, 1983). So, it is fitting that Aceh earned the nickname as the "Porch of Mecca".

Religious values are very strong in the life of Aceh and its people. As shown by the nickname *Seuramoe Mekkah* (Serambi Mekkah) attached to Aceh, legal values and customary norms attached to Islamic religious principles and values are shown by the people of Aceh as a dominant element in shaping life guidance for the people of Aceh, and these values continue to evolve over time (Nurdin, 2013). After the teachings of Islam developed in Aceh, people began to absorb religious values, which resulted in a unique culture and religious identity in Aceh. In addition to practising the Islamic Shari'a that is recognised by the public, Acehnese people also practise various Islamic traditions that combine with Acehnese local wisdom values, such as *Khanduri Molod* (also known as *Kenduri Maulid*) and the *Peusijek* tradition. This combination of religious traditions and local wisdom forms the religious identity of the Acehnese people and distinguishes them from others.

As a consequence of the Helsinki Agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM), which sought the right to self-determination for the people of Aceh and independence from Indonesia, Aceh became one of the provinces granted Special Autonomy status. *Undang-Undang Pemerintahan Aceh Nomor 11 Tahun 2006* (UUPA) established this special authority. This legislation regulates the governance of Aceh, including the strengthening of customary institutions through the *Wali Nanggro* Institution, the authority to manage natural resources, the use of regional flags, emblems, and hymns, cooperation with other countries, and politics with local political parties (Ulya, 2014). One of the points contained in Aceh's Special Autonomy is about the Islamic identity that wants to be implemented but has faced various obstacles and challenges since the Dutch colonial period until the end of the New Order.

Acehnese cultural values influenced by Islamic values characterise Aceh. These values form Aceh's identity and are maintained as part of local cultural values, thus enriching national culture. In this research, "maintenance" refers to Aceh's efforts to protect Aceh's Islamic identity from threats, such as extinction, and to maintain certain qualities and values. One of the efforts made by the Aceh Provincial Government in maintaining the Islamic identity is to carry out persuasive actions in the form of paradiplomacy by forming something that can represent the values and identity adopted by the people of Aceh.

How the role of the Aceh Provincial Government as a sub-state actor in Indonesia in conducting paradiplomacy by advertising itself as "The Light of Aceh" is demonstrated in this

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paper. The Aceh Provincial Government, as one of the sub-state entities in Indonesia, has the ability to interact with the international community. Globalisation and the rapid growth of information and communication technologies are driving the presence of sub-state actors in today's international arena. The Aceh Provincial Government can conduct foreign relations with other parties in various fields, such as economic, socio-cultural, and political. At the socio-cultural level, Aceh's paradiplomacy aims to maximise the utilisation of foreign resources for subnational interests. The tools that can be used are diverse, but the issue raised in this research is The Light of Aceh brand as the medium. *The Light of Aceh can be interpreted as an instrument to achieve economic, social, cultural, and political interests. The Light of Aceh is not only associated with Aceh's significant Islamic identity in Aceh's local culture, but also helps Aceh optimise its economic benefits through the growth of the tourism sector.*

Some of the previous studies that researchers reviewed to map the position of this research include studies on Aceh's activities that are correlated with its religious identity. Studies by Duhuri (2017) and Fitriah (2020) show that several instruments in the development and maintenance of Aceh's identity can be diverse, including the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage and the curriculum and education system. In fact, Syarif (2019) found that even local political parties can be an instrument for strengthening political identity and the commodification agenda of Islamisation in Aceh. Studies by Salim (2004b) shows that the desire to maintain its Islamic identity encouraged Aceh to seek independence from Indonesia. Munhanif (2016) shows that GAM was born as a form of cultural mobilisation and an opportunity from Indonesia's institutional design at that time.

Studies on Aceh diplomacy have been conducted by Surwandono & Herningtyas (2019) and Novialdi & Rasanjani (2020) which show that natural disasters can be a momentum for Aceh as social capital to manage its paradiplomacy. Studies by Mukti (2019) shows that there are several problems that hinder Aceh's paradiplomacy in driving regional development. Furthermore, there are also several previous studies that focus on The Light of Aceh, but these studies are placed in the tourism sector (Fahlevi, 2018; Herizal et al., 2021), halal tourism and destination branding (Ihsanuddin et al., 2019; Maulida, 2019; Maulida et al., 2023), Aceh's re-branding efforts in its new identity (Husna, 2022), e-tourism which is linked to the context of sustainable tourism development (Ulfa et al., 2021). The Light of Aceh as an instrument of Aceh's paradiplomacy has yet to be studied, especially if researchers observe it in the context of regional foreign policy in the fields of socio-cultural and economic of the Aceh Provincial Government. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will be able to fill the empty academic space in this regard. Based on the above explanation, the researcher has an interest in discussing the Aceh Provincial Government's paradiplomacy efforts to maintain its Islamic identity with the branding "The Light of Aceh".

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper utilises concepts such as transgovernmentalism, paradiplomacy, and religious identity. The relevance of transgovernmentalism in this paper is shown by the fact that non-state actors are involved in global interactions and have an equally important role as state actors. Here, sub-state actors are crucial in international relations. In this case, the global community can be considered as paradiplomacy because of the actions taken by sub-state actors towards other actors. In the context of this paper, the sub-state actor seeks to maintain its Islamic identity as part of the interests of the Aceh region, which has a unique religious and cultural identity. The relevant literature review is thoroughly discussed below.

### 2.1 Transgovernmentalism

In the study of paradiplomacy and regional foreign relations, cooperation and other forms of diplomacy are conducted by sub-state actors such as local governments. Researchers use the theory of transgovernmentalism to explain the phenomenon of paradiplomacy conducted by the Aceh government. Keohane & Nye (1974) point to transgovernmentalism, a theory of intergovernmental relations that looks at direct interactions between various government subunits, which are not governed by the cabinet or executive of the government. In addition, the transgovernmental approach assumes that government sub-units have the ability to act autonomously from the central government. (Whytock, 2005). In the context of this research, Aceh as a sub-unit government actor can conduct paradiplomacy activities in accordance with Law No. 24/2000 on International Agreements and Law No. 32/2004 on Local Government. In this research, the concept of transgovernmentalism as a theory will help researchers to understand Aceh as a sub-state actor that conducts paradiplomacy in accordance with the Indonesian constitution. In relation to this research, the context of Aceh's paradiplomacy will be related to the maintenance of Aceh's Islamic identity.

### 2.2 Paradiplomacy

In international relations studies, paradiplomacy is a relatively new phenomenon and subject of study. Paradiplomacy refers to the capacity and behaviour of a sub-state actor in conducting foreign relations/policies to achieve their international interests (Wolff, 2007). According to Soldatos and Duchacek, paradiplomacy represents the international activities of sub-state entities. Soldatos describes paradiplomacy as "the direct continuation, and to varying degrees, of sub-state governments' foreign activities" (Soldatos, 1990). In other words, paradiplomacy is a regional foreign policy that is different from the central government policy or can also be called parallel diplomacy. Meanwhile, Chatterji & Saha (2017) point out that paradiplomacy is a process that allows constituent units within a sovereign state to organise their own diplomatic relations with other countries or constituent units to achieve their interests.

Duchacek (1990) states that paradiplomacy can be divided into three main categories based on its geopolitical dimension: regional cross-border paradiplomacy; transregional (or macroregional) and transregional paradiplomacy relations; and international paradiplomacy. In the context of this research, we consider the Aceh government's

paradiplomacy to maintain its Islamic identity to be global paradiplomacy because, based on its geopolitical dimension, the Aceh government's paradiplomacy is not limited to the public or actors directly related to Aceh province or Indonesia. However, in this research, the Aceh Government's paradiplomacy does not target one or more subnational actors (in the sense of formal government units), but rather the global public at large, which can be represented by people, communities, groups, or individuals.

### 2.3 Religious Identity

Identity is formed through a process of identity formation known as self-categorisation in social identity theory and identification in identity theory. Stets & Burke (2000) refer to social identity as a person's awareness that they belong to a particular social group and the values they accept as part of that membership. A person's self-identity is usually derived from a self-view resulting from self-categorisation or identification activities, which are reflective of membership in a particular group or role. In identity theory, however, self-identity is one's self-categorisation of a role and the incorporation of the meanings and effects that role brings to oneself. Those who share the same identity are called "in-group" and those who share a different identity are called "out-group" through the process of social comparison. Werbner (2010) points to religious identity as a concept of scope and inclusion, boundaries and similarities, and forces that are perceived as challenging, resisting, and maintaining unity. The relationship between religion and identity can be seen broadly in this religious identity. Identity can be seen as the locus of self and subjectivity, while religion can be seen as a way of life related to the sacred. Aceh's Islamic identity is a religious identity that reflects the teachings and values of Islam in the Acehese way of life. This identity emerges as a result of the long historical process of the entry and development of Islam in Indonesia, and these values are passed on to various aspects of Acehese life, such as culture, art, education, economy, law, governance, and so on.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method. It is intended to obtain an in-depth understanding of the social phenomena studied, namely the paradiplomacy of the Aceh Provincial Government through The Light of Aceh instrument to the global community. The data sources in this research are primary data sources obtained from in-depth interviews with several informants, and secondary data sources obtained from documentation studies and internet search studies. The determination of informants was carried out using purposive sampling technique, namely informants were selected based on subjects who were rich in research information. Data collection was carried out by interviewing several informants who understood the phenomenon studied, including the Aceh Provincial Government Cooperation Section, the Aceh Provincial Government Tourism and Culture Office, and paradiplomacy academics. In addition to interviews, researchers also collected data using documentation study techniques on several relevant documents and internet-based research. Limited observations were carried out in observing the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, where this research took place from the start of 2019 to the beginning

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of 2021. Data analysis was carried out by means of a flow model, namely flowing from the introduction, discussion and conclusion drawing. The triangulation technique was carried out to reduce data bias by cross-checking data collected from various sources, both primary and secondary sources.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1.1. *Aceh's Islamist identity*

According to Dutch anthropologist B.J. Bolla, "To be Acehnese is to be Muslim". The Islamic religion, customs and a widespread socio-cultural paradigm are the dominant components that exercise a controlling function on Acehnese society. Acehnese identity has been shaped from the beginning by Islam. Acehnese people use legal values and customary norms combined with Islamic values as a way of life (Berutu, 2016). Through the concept of Prang Sabil (fighting in the way of Allah), Islamic identity has played an important role in Aceh's struggle against Dutch colonialism. The Acehnese sense of religious and regional identity was reinforced by the important role Islam played in the Aceh war (Salim, 2004).

The Acehnese people's struggle to maintain their Islamic identity at the beginning of independence can also strengthen their sense of Islamic identity. One example is the attempt to maintain Aceh's provincial status when the central government merged it into North Sumatra province. Acehnese leaders opposed this merger because they believed that provincial status demonstrated Aceh's Islamist identity (Djumala, 2013). From the perspective of the Acehnese people, the struggle to implement Islamic law can be seen as the Acehnese people's awareness of their unique Islamic identity, so they want the privilege to implement it. Aceh is referred to as "Serambi Mekkah" or "Seuramoe Mekkah" by people around the world because of its ties to Islamic principles. The nickname first appeared in the 15th century when the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam implemented Islamic rule. Pilgrims from all over the archipelago (Indonesia) stopped in Aceh to quarantine on Rubiah Island, Sabang before travelling to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage (Fahlevi, 2018). However, today the nickname 'Serambi Mekkah' is more associated with the identity and culture of the Acehnese people who are very close to Islamic values.

Since the time of the Islamic kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, Aceh has established relations with many Islamic kingdoms around the world, such as the Ottoman Turkish empire. During the Islamic kingdom, Turkey became one of Aceh's closest partners, and both sent representatives to serve several times. Aceh's Islamist identity was even used as a political tool to encourage the Muslim community in Aceh to ask Turkey to help them confront Dutch colonialism (Kadi, 2020). The Kingdom of Aceh was also part of a co-operation framework called the "Islamic Big Five", which was a co-operation between five Islamic kingdoms covering in the fields of economic, political, military and cultural to stem the tide of western imperialism (Hasjmy, 1983). The relationship with several Islamic kingdoms and Aceh's joining of the Islamic kingdoms co-operation is seen by researchers as an awareness/recognition of Aceh's Islamist identity by actors outside the archipelago.

In the lives of Acehnese people, Islamic identity can be seen in various aspects, such as how Acehnese traditional house styles are influenced by Islamic principles and teachings;

Acehnese traditional dances that express Islamic values in their speech, movements, and clothing; and Acehnese traditions to celebrate religious days that are full of Islamic values. Therefore, Islamic identity can be identified as a religious expression that is manifested in the daily lives of Acehnese people. From the time of the kingdom of Aceh until today, when Aceh has autonomy, international relations have been built. They even recognise Aceh as the Porch of Mecca.

### **1.2. The Practice of Aceh's Paradiplomacy to the Global Community**

Aceh's paradiplomacy can be said to be a form of actionable communication from Aceh's societal and governmental elements to the global community. The societal and governmental elements here can be identified with all and all levels of Aceh society and the Aceh government. Aceh's paradiplomacy is conducted persuasively by conveying constructive messages to the global community so that the global community recognises Aceh through its foreign relations.

Since becoming an Islamic kingdom, Aceh has established relationships with other countries. Due to its strength and strong trading centre at that time, Aceh established foreign relations with many countries and empires, including the Ottoman Turkish Empire (Ottoman Turkey), the Dutch Empire, the British Empire, the United States, France, and Italy. It was only with the Ottoman Turkish Empire that Aceh cooperated in politics, military, and defence. In addition, the Kingdom of Aceh was involved in trade, especially the spice trade. Moreover, the Kingdom of Aceh was part of the "Islamic Big Five", which consisted of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the Islamic Kingdom of Morocco, the Islamic Kingdom of Isfahan in the Middle East, and the Islamic Kingdom of Agra in India. The aim of this co-operative framework was to halt Western Christian imperialist domination through co-operation in the fields of economic, political, military, and cultural (Hasjmy, 1983). Currently, the Aceh Provincial Government is also active in the implementation of foreign relations with various parties in various sectors such as economy, socio-culture, politics, human resource development, and others.

The Aceh Provincial Government's paradiplomacy occurs by interacting with people from various countries around the world, such as Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, China, Australia, Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States. In various fields, such as disaster relief, education, culture, health, tourism, human resource development, and investment, cooperation takes place. The Aceh Regional Secretariat said that the most important cooperation programme at the moment is the cooperation with the United Arab Emirates to increase Aceh Singkil's tourism potential and human resource development. Japan is one of Aceh's closest international partners. Close ties between Aceh and Japan began to form after the earthquake and tsunami that devastated Aceh in 2004. The provincial governments of Aceh and Japan have cooperated in many areas, including health, education, investment, and tourism (Pemerintah Provinsi Aceh, 2021). Thus, Aceh's paradiplomacy has created forms of interaction that provide benefits to the parties that are intertwined to achieve Aceh's development interests.

Even in 2021, the Aceh Provincial Government is working with Murban Energy Limited from the United Arab Emirates to increase tourism and investment in the Banyak

Islands, Aceh Singkil Regency. This cooperation is intended to improve Aceh's tourism and includes matters such as infrastructure development, investment in development, joint promotion, human resource development, and environmentally friendly and sustainable development (Pemerintah Provinsi Aceh, 2021). This cooperation is one of the priorities of the Aceh Provincial Government in 2021, where the actions produced by the Aceh Government can benefit the people of Aceh in the economic field by driving tourism in Aceh in order to increase global interest in Aceh's tourist destinations.

Currently, several foreign relations and cooperation projects of Aceh Province are in the process of being explored. However, most have already signed Letters of Intent (LoI) with relevant partners and are under consideration by the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRD Level I). Aceh Province's foreign relations have not always run smoothly. The data collected by researchers shows that some co-operations have previously reached the stage of signing MoUs. However, because the country or foreign partner did not respond quickly when the Aceh Provincial Government tried to follow up, the Aceh Provincial Government decided to postpone the MoU. In addition, changes in local leaders led to policy changes when agreements were resumed. For example, during the administration of Governor Zaini Abdullah, Aceh Province was more likely to have foreign relations with Scandinavian countries, while during the administration of Governor Irwandi Yusuf, foreign relations with European and American countries were more frequent. Nevertheless, it shows how Aceh acts and interacts with the global community, which can increase understanding and benefits for both parties.

### **1.3. "The Light of Aceh" as an Instrument of Aceh's Economic Paradiplomacy**

Sub-state actors use paradiplomacy to achieve their economic goals. Some overseas sub-state actors, such as Canada, the United States, Japan, and the People's Republic of China, are authorised to participate in overseas activities in an effort to achieve their economic goals. In terms of the economy, Aceh Province can use paradiplomacy as a way to promote its potential abroad. Establishing a brand is one of the elements that support such promotion. This brand becomes very important to shape people's perceptions and memories of the goods being sold or to increase brand awareness. During the current development of the cultural and tourism industry, cultural and tourism industry brands are very important to show the potential that a region has. In Indonesia, we recognise several brandings for the tourism industry such as *Wonderful Indonesia*, *Bali The Island of Gods* (Bali), *Enjoy Jakarta* (Jakarta), *Stunning Bandung* (Bandung), *Majestic Banyuwangi* (Banyuwangi), and others. This branding can form an initial impression of the area and become the identity of an area regarding its potential (Andy, 2021).

As an area that has various cultural and tourism potentials, Aceh Province also has a brand known as "*The Light of Aceh*". The Light of Aceh can be interpreted as a cultural and tourism industry brand owned by Aceh Province which was launched in 2016 and is still used today. The Light of Aceh brand was launched as an effort to introduce the tourism potential of Aceh Province initiated by Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Provinsi Aceh (Disbudpar Aceh) to replace the previous brand, namely "*Visit Aceh*". Based on the data obtained, this branding change has been used for quite a long time and to follow the trends

and dynamics of the development of the tourism industry in the region which is growing. In addition, the naming of The Light of Aceh is considered very important to adjust to the uniqueness and specificity of Aceh as a province that implements Islamic law (Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Aceh, 2016). Researchers argue that “The Light of Aceh” branding is the Aceh Provincial government's effort to promote its potential, which includes resources regarding Aceh's identity, culture, and regional potential that is thick with religious values. They hope this will form a positive image and impression and strengthen Aceh's Islamic identity.

#### **1.4. “The Light of Aceh” as an Instrument of Aceh's Socio-Cultural Paradiplomacy**

Aceh also uses “The Light of Aceh” as a tool for socio-cultural development. The video entitled “The Light of Aceh, a part of Wonderful Indonesia”, uploaded on the Disbudpar Aceh YouTube channel, shows that this is part of the Aceh Provincial Government's efforts to introduce “The Light of Aceh” branding. The video has been viewed more than 60,000 times, received 1,200 likes, 18 dislikes and 145 comments. Overall, the video showcases the various cultures and traditions of the Acehnese people, food, tourist attractions, and the natural beauty of Aceh Province. Examples include the Ranup Lampuan dance, Rapa'i, Didong Gayo, Aceh noodle food, Aceh coffee, the Aceh Tsunami Museum, Lake Laut Tawar in Central Aceh, and the underwater beauty of Pulau Banyak and Aceh Singkil. Throughout the video, narration in English accompanies. The cultural values and identity of Aceh are shown in several parts of the video, such as at the beginning of the story, which reads: *“Have you heard the story, about a beautiful place? A place that makes you feel restful in the midst of the people, who live in religious harmony.”*

The message conveyed in the story is that there is a place (Aceh) that can make a person feel calm in the midst of religious harmony. The people of Aceh show tolerance and hospitality, showing the world that Aceh is not a religiously radical place. This is inseparable from Aceh's history as a province that wanted to break away from the central government. Researchers argue that the narrative aims to convey the message that the people of Aceh are religious everyday people. In addition, the message is that Aceh is a heterogeneous society with various backgrounds of racial, ethnic, and religion. Although the majority of Acehnese are Muslim, the principle of tolerance is maintained to make people from different backgrounds acceptable and ensure interfaith harmony in Aceh Province. The Light of Aceh's branding philosophy, *Rahmatan lil ‘alamin*—Rahmat for all nature—is in line with the message at the beginning of the video. In addition, it can be used to build communication to correct unfavourable perceptions about the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh that have emerged over the past few years. Moreover, it can also convey the message that Aceh is a welcoming and hospitable place for people from different backgrounds.

Researchers argue that the video is part of an effort to promote The Light of Aceh brand. It conveys the brand values, values, and Islamic identity of the people of Aceh visually. The researcher argues that because “The Light of Aceh” branding depicts Aceh's values, philosophy, and culture, as well as the Islamic identity of the Acehnese people, the Aceh Provincial government uses this commercial advertising video as a means to conduct paradiplomacy activities with people around the world with the aim of strengthening Aceh's

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culture and Islamic identity. With the release of the video, the public around the world has the opportunity to recognise Aceh's Islamist identity.

Therefore, through the lens of Aceh, paradiplomacy is able to demonstrate Aceh's values in economic and socio-cultural aspects to the international community. Thus, Aceh is able to establish relationships with the international community for its own benefit and gain significant benefits from these relationships. In this sense, paradiplomacy, a relatively new concept in social science, especially diplomacy studies, can offer an alternative for regions to utilise their resources for both national and subnational interests. The concept of paradiplomacy has also provided space for subnational actors to expand and extend their networks abroad.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research found that the Aceh Provincial Government, as a sub-state actor, can optimise foreign resources by practising paradiplomacy. Through paradiplomacy, the Aceh Provincial Government can bring its subnational interests closer to foreign sources. Through this research, researchers also found that The Light of Aceh became an instrument for the Aceh Provincial Government to achieve economic and socio-cultural interests. As a branding, The Light of Aceh becomes a means for the Aceh Provincial Government to promote its economic potential, including the halal tourism industry that can bring foreign exchange to the local government. The Light of Aceh is also a means for introducing the socio-cultural distinctiveness of Aceh, which is full of religious values. This is reflected in the religious identity of the Acehnese people, which can be recognised from the pre-independence era to the present day. Through paradiplomacy, the Aceh Provincial Government has the opportunity to further optimise the achievement of its subnational interests, which are in line with national interests, namely aspects of development.

This research has limitations. Among them is that researchers focus on the practice of paradiplomacy of the Aceh Provincial Government, without involving how the sub-sub-state elements of the Aceh Provincial Government, namely cities and or districts in Aceh Province. The existence of cities and districts as sub-state actors in Indonesia has its own dynamics in carrying out its foreign relations. The Aceh Provincial Government's paradiplomacy is also not portrayed in terms of coordination with the Central Government and Centre-Region relations between the two of them. It is hoped that further research can complement this research from various perspectives and/or viewpoints.

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