



## Journal of Environmental and Development Studies - JEDS

Journal homepage: <https://talenta.usu.ac.id/jeds>



# Maritime Paradiplomacy in Fisheries Policy Advocacy in Border Areas: A Case Study of Berakit Village, Bintan Regency

Anastasia Wiwik Swastiwik<sup>1\*</sup>, Eki Darmawan<sup>1</sup>, Uly Sophia<sup>1</sup>, Rizqi Apriani Putri<sup>1</sup>, Nur Aslamaturrahmah Dwi Putri<sup>1</sup>, & Renaldi Afriansyah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Social Political Science, Maritim Raja Ali Haji University, Tanjungpinang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Independent Researcher, Batam, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [renaldi.afriansyah01@gmail.com](mailto:renaldi.afriansyah01@gmail.com)

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 19 Juni 2026

Revised 10 September 2026

Accepted 30 September 2026

Available online 01 October 2026

E-ISSN: [2745-4592](https://doi.org/10.32734/jeds.v7iSpecialIssue01.26020)

#### How to cite:

Swastiwiko, A. W., Darmawan, E., Sophia, U., Putri, R. A., Putri, N. A. D., & Afriansyah, R. (2026). Maritime Paradiplomacy in Fisheries Policy Advocacy in Border Areas: A Case Study of Berakit Village, Bintan Regency. *Journal of Environmental and Development Studies*, 07(Special Issue 01), 030-048



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

<http://doi.org/10.32734/jeds.v7iSpecialIssue01.26020>

### ABSTRACT

Indonesia's decentralized governance system allows subnational actors to engage in cross-border cooperation through paradiplomacy, particularly in maritime border regions where fisheries resources and coastal livelihoods are closely linked to transboundary ecological systems. While paradiplomacy studies have largely focused on economic promotion and city diplomacy, its role in environmental governance-especially in fisheries management-remains underexplored. Conversely, fisheries governance literature tends to prioritize national regulatory regimes and international cooperation frameworks, paying limited attention to the role of subnational actors in cross-border resource governance. This study examines the role of maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village, Bintan Regency, Indonesia, in supporting sustainable fisheries governance and marine ecosystem protection. Using a qualitative case study approach, the study collected data through in-depth interviews with local government officials, fisheries officers, community leaders, fishermen groups, and NGO representatives, complemented by field observations and policy document analysis. The findings indicate that maritime paradiplomacy contributes to several governance outcomes, including strengthened community-based surveillance against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, support for marine spatial planning under the Coastal and Small Islands Zoning Plan (RZWP3K), promotion of environmentally selective fishing gear, and mangrove conservation initiatives. These mechanisms strengthen compliance with ecosystem-based fisheries management and reduce the risk of fisheries overexploitation. Conceptually, the study expands paradiplomacy scholarship by introducing maritime environmental paradiplomacy, highlighting how subnational diplomacy can serve as a complementary governance mechanism linking local communities, regional authorities, and national institutions to advance sustainable marine resource management.

**Keywords:** Maritime Paradiplomacy, Fisheries Governance, Policy Advocacy, Marine Environmental Governance & Border Regions

## 1. Introduction

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using a case study design to examine the complex dynamics of maritime paradiplomacy within decentralized coastal governance systems. Qualitative case studies are particularly appropriate for investigating governance processes and institutional interactions within specific socio-ecological contexts (Yin, 2018). The research focuses on Berakit Village in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. This location was purposively selected because of its strategic position at the

northern tip of Bintan Island, an important maritime border area directly adjacent to the South China Sea—one of the most contested and resource-intensive maritime regions in Southeast Asia. Berakit Village is a critical case study because it faces significant challenges from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, marine environmental degradation, and overlapping spatial-use conflicts. Such challenges are common in transboundary marine regions where governance fragmentation and weak enforcement mechanisms often undermine sustainable fisheries management (Talib et al., 2022). In Indonesia, decentralizing marine and fisheries governance has created new opportunities for local participation, but it has also created coordination challenges between national and local authorities (Jaya et al., 2022). These conditions illustrate a clear governance and policy gap, making local advocacy and community-based initiatives essential to protecting traditional fishing rights and strengthening sustainable coastal resource management (Ramenzoni, 2021).

Paradiplomacy is an increasingly relevant phenomenon in modern governance, in which local governments play an active role in international relations. In the Indonesian context, paradiplomacy has developed alongside the implementation of regional autonomy, which provides space for local governments to establish cross-border cooperation. This term refers to subnational diplomacy conducted by entities below the nation-state level, such as provinces or districts/cities, to promote local interests through international cooperation mechanisms (Cornago, 2010). In the maritime context, paradiplomacy is an important instrument for coastal and island regions that directly border neighboring countries. Riau Islands Province, which consists of thousands of islands and borders Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam, holds a strategic position in maintaining sovereignty while optimizing maritime economic potential. In this region, traditional fishing activities are not only the backbone of the community's economy but also have geopolitical dimensions related to maritime boundary issues, cross-border fish resources, and food security (Sejarah Kepulauan Riau - Kepri News Lengkap & Aktual, n.d.).

Berakit Village in Bintan Regency is one example of a coastal area facing these challenges. The village sits at the northern tip of Bintan Island and is one of Indonesia's key maritime border points. The people of Berakit mostly work as traditional fishermen, and their economic activities depend on marine resources. However, they also face various pressures such as illegal fishing, environmental degradation, and limited access to national policies that favor small-scale fishermen (Irawan et al., 2024). Maritime paradiplomacy in regions such as Berakit matters because it creates space for local governments to act as non-state diplomatic actors. Through cooperation networks with international institutions, NGOs, and neighboring governments, regions can strengthen their bargaining position in advocating for fisheries policies. This approach allows regions to align local policies with global dynamics, particularly those related to sustainable marine resource management (Keating, n.d.). In addition, paradiplomacy has become a strategy for regions to pursue economic justice for coastal communities. In the context of maritime economic globalization, local communities are often marginalized. Through paradiplomacy, local governments can raise local issues such as fishermen's welfare, diversification of fishery products, and environmental protection on the national and even international agenda (Hadiyan & Maharani, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, this study draws on the multilevel governance paradigm, which emphasizes involving various actors at the local, national, and international levels in public policymaking. Maritime paradiplomacy is seen as a way to implement this paradigm in the maritime sector, where local governments act as policy-implementing agents and diplomatic actors (Ali Mukti, 2020; Tavares, 2016). Thus, this study has two main urgencies. First, to strengthen understanding of how Indonesia implements maritime paradiplomacy in its local context. Second, to identify how regional-level fisheries policy advocacy strategies can strengthen Indonesia's position in global maritime diplomacy. This study analyzes the forms, strategies, and implications of maritime paradiplomacy in fisheries policy advocacy in Berakit Village, Bintan Regency. This study also seeks to contribute empirically to the development of the concept of community-based maritime paradiplomacy.

Maritime paradiplomacy in border fisheries governance must be evaluated not only in institutional or political terms, but also in relation to measurable environmental outcomes. In the fisheries governance literature, sustainability indicators commonly include fish stock recovery rates, compliance with catch limits, reductions

in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, implementation of ecosystem-based management, and community-based conservation practices (FAO, 2022; Hilborn et al., 2020). Therefore, this study situates maritime paradiplomacy within the broader framework of sustainable fisheries governance and asks how local diplomatic initiatives contribute to ecological resilience and prevent resource overexploitation in transboundary waters (“Rebuilding Fisheries: The Way Forward,” 2012).

## 2. Literature Review

Paradiplomacy highlights the active role of local governments in international relations, particularly in promoting local interests at national and global levels. As noted in the previous section, border areas face challenges such as illegal fishing, environmental degradation, and conflicts of interest between countries. Therefore, local governments must advocate for fisheries policies through community empowerment, training, and collaboration with NGOs and the private sector.

Fisheries policy advocacy is a systematic effort to influence public policy in coastal communities' favor. These efforts include training in catch processing, product diversification, and capacity building to help fishers compete in national and international markets. Research shows that transnational advocacy strategies, such as those carried out by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) in Ghana, can effectively eradicate illegal fishing practices and strengthen fisheries governance. Local governments' role in maritime paradiplomacy is also strongly shaped by human resource capacity, authority, and coordination between central and regional governments. Limited authority is often a major obstacle, but with regional autonomy, local governments increasingly have the space to innovate in building cross-border cooperation and advocating for regional interests in national and international forums.

Previous studies have also discussed the role of policy advocacy in natural resource management, particularly fisheries in border areas. For example, Satria (2015) highlights the importance of collaboration among the government, communities, and international institutions in tackling IUU fishing. Meanwhile, research by Adi (2020) emphasizes the need for maritime diplomacy that empowers local communities to maintain sovereignty and the sustainability of fishery resources. In addition, Susanto (2018) shows that effective policy advocacy must involve active participation from coastal communities and be supported by clear regulations and consistent law enforcement.

Furthermore, Simarmata (2020) highlights the important role of local governments in maintaining maritime security and combating illegal fishing in border areas through Indonesia's maritime diplomacy in the Natuna Islands. Meanwhile, Kusuma (2021), in his study of the Riau Islands Provincial Government's paradiplomacy capacity at the Karang Singa Lighthouse, emphasizes that local governments play a strategic role in maritime border delimitation and marine resource management.

Ahmad and Yuliana's (2022) study discusses the role of local governments in developing maritime security in Indonesia, particularly in the Natuna Sea, emphasizing the importance of synergy between central and local governments in maritime management. Putra and Sari (2023) also examined fisheries policy advocacy strategies in coastal areas. They found that multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential to improve coastal communities' welfare and the sustainability of fishery resources. EJF's (2019) research in Ghana is an important reference on transnational advocacy strategies to eradicate illegal fishing practices and can be adapted to Indonesia in the context of maritime paradiplomacy.

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundations: Paradiplomacy as a Complementary Governance Mechanism

Paradiplomacy is commonly defined as the diplomatic activities undertaken by subnational governments—such as provinces, regions, or municipalities—to advance local interests through cross-border cooperation and international engagement. Traditionally, paradiplomacy was often perceived as a form of “mini-diplomacy,” implying limited authority and a largely symbolic role within international relations. However, recent scholarship increasingly recognizes paradiplomacy as a functional component of multi-level governance, where subnational actors actively participate in addressing global challenges that directly affect local communities. This shift reflects broader transformations in global governance, as local and regional

governments become more involved in international networks, development partnerships, and transnational policy initiatives (Sundqvist & Jerdén, 2024; Syuryansyah et al., 2025).

Within this evolving framework, paradiplomacy can be understood not as a replacement for national diplomacy but as a complementary governance mechanism that strengthens the interaction between local realities and international policy arenas. Subnational actors often possess detailed knowledge of local socio-ecological conditions, enabling them to articulate community-level concerns that may not be fully represented in national diplomatic agendas. Recent studies highlight that paradiplomatic initiatives allow local governments to build international partnerships, mobilize external resources, and advocate for local development priorities while operating within the central state's constitutional authority (Harakan & Taufik, 2023; Ramadhani & Mohammad Raihan Nadhir, 2025).

In this study, maritime paradiplomacy is conceptualized as a governance interface that connects local coastal communities with broader regional and international governance frameworks. Rather than transforming state authority or challenging national sovereignty, maritime paradiplomacy functions as an intermediary layer that translates local ecological realities—such as fisheries resource pressures, environmental degradation, and livelihood concerns—into policy advocacy within wider governance networks. This role becomes particularly relevant in maritime border regions where environmental challenges, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing or transboundary marine resource exploitation, require coordination across multiple levels of governance.

This conceptualization also distinguishes paradiplomacy from conventional decentralized policy implementation. In many decentralization systems, local governments primarily implement national policies without engaging directly in cross-border policy networks. Paradiplomacy, in contrast, involves proactive international engagement, including participation in transnational cooperation initiatives, city-to-city partnerships, and regional policy dialogues. Such activities enable local governments to expand their governance capacity and contribute to global policy processes while remaining aligned with national diplomatic strategies (Noormansyah et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, therefore, maritime paradiplomacy can be interpreted as an intermediary governance mechanism operating within multi-level governance structures. It bridges local ecological knowledge, community-based resource management, and international policy frameworks, thereby enhancing the responsiveness and effectiveness of governance in complex coastal and maritime systems. By facilitating cross-border dialogue and external advocacy, subnational actors help address governance gaps that often emerge in transboundary maritime spaces.

## *2.2 Fisheries Policy Advocacy and Transnational Networks*

Fisheries policy advocacy refers to organized efforts to influence governance processes to protect marine resources and the socio-economic interests of coastal communities. In recent years, fisheries governance has increasingly shifted toward multi-actor and multi-level arrangements involving governments, civil society organizations, and international institutions. Such collaborative governance structures are considered essential in addressing complex marine resource challenges that extend beyond national jurisdictions. Contemporary research highlights that effective fisheries governance depends on coordinated action among state institutions, regional organizations, and non-governmental actors that collectively shape policy frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. These networks play an important role in strengthening policy coherence and enhancing accountability in marine resource management (Auld et al., 2025; Sundqvist & Jerdén, 2024).

In transboundary maritime regions, fisheries policy advocacy is particularly significant because marine ecosystems are interconnected and jurisdictional claims overlap. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the most critical challenges to sustainable fisheries governance worldwide. IUU fishing undermines regulatory frameworks, accelerates fish stock depletion, and generates significant economic losses for coastal states and local fishing communities. Recent studies estimate that IUU fishing contributes substantially to marine ecosystem degradation and threatens global food security, highlighting the urgent need

for coordinated international responses and stronger monitoring, control, and surveillance mechanisms (Mozumder et al., 2023).

To address these challenges, transnational advocacy networks have emerged as important governance mechanisms that connect local communities with regional and global regulatory frameworks. These networks facilitate information exchange, policy coordination, and cross-border enforcement initiatives. Empirical studies show that collaborative surveillance systems, data sharing, and partnerships among governments, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), and NGOs can significantly strengthen states' capacity to combat IUU fishing. Regional cooperation initiatives, particularly in West Africa and the Asia-Pacific, show how shared monitoring systems and coordinated patrols can strengthen fisheries governance and improve compliance with international fisheries regulations (Auld et al., 2025).

Despite these developments, a key gap remains in the literature. Many studies examining fisheries governance networks primarily evaluate their effectiveness in terms of institutional cooperation, policy reform, or diplomatic coordination. While these dimensions are crucial for understanding governance dynamics, they often overlook the ecological outcomes of advocacy-driven governance interventions. In particular, the relationship between subnational policy advocacy and measurable ecological indicators—such as fish stock recovery, biomass stability, or ecosystem resilience—remains insufficiently explored. Recent scholarship therefore calls for more integrated analytical frameworks that connect governance mechanisms with ecological performance indicators better to assess the sustainability impacts of fisheries policy interventions (Melnichuk et al., 2021).

Understanding this relationship is particularly important in maritime border regions where governance fragmentation and cross-border resource exploitation frequently occur. By examining how local actors engage in fisheries policy advocacy within broader transnational governance networks, researchers can better understand how multi-level governance arrangements contribute to sustainable fisheries management. Such perspectives are increasingly recognized as critical for addressing complex marine governance challenges and ensuring the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources.

### *2.3 Conceptual Framework: Maritime Paradiplomacy and Sustainable Fisheries Governance*

This study conceptualizes maritime paradiplomacy as an intermediary governance layer between community-based resource management systems and national and transnational regulatory frameworks. Rather than viewing paradiplomacy solely as subnational diplomatic activism, it is more accurately understood as a functional governance interface that links local ecological practices with broader institutional commitments. As argued by Ronan Tavares (2016), paradiplomacy enables subnational governments to act as complementary actors within global governance structures, expanding their capacity to influence policy arenas traditionally monopolized by central states (Tavares, 2016). Similarly, Michael Keating emphasizes that regional networking enhances policy responsiveness by integrating territorial interests into multi-level governance systems. In the fisheries context, this intermediary function allows local governments to translate community-based monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and local zoning demands into formal regulatory processes, thereby reducing institutional fragmentation in shared maritime spaces.

From a sustainability governance perspective, this bridging role directly contributes to operationalizing SDG 14 (Life Below Water) under the United Nations framework (Goal 14 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.-a). By facilitating vertical coordination (community–local–national) and horizontal coordination (cross-border jurisdictions), maritime paradiplomacy enhances regulatory coherence, strengthens compliance incentives, and supports ecosystem resilience in transboundary fisheries systems. In doing so, paradiplomacy mitigates governance gaps that often undermine sustainable fisheries management, particularly in decentralized archipelagic contexts such as Indonesia. Therefore, maritime paradiplomacy should be theorized as an adaptive governance mechanism that integrates territorial autonomy with ecological stewardship, reinforcing the alignment between local extraction practices and global sustainability commitments.

To address the research gap identified in previous studies, this research situates maritime paradiplomacy within the broader framework of sustainable fisheries governance and the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water). SDG 14 emphasizes conserving and sustainably using marine resources through integrated governance mechanisms that can address ecological degradation, overfishing, and transboundary resource exploitation. Recent studies suggest that achieving sustainable fisheries governance requires coordination across multiple governance levels, including local communities, national regulatory institutions, and international policy frameworks (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019).

Within this context, maritime paradiplomacy is conceptualized as an intermediary governance mechanism that complements state-led diplomacy by facilitating interactions between local stakeholders and broader governance structures. In coastal and border regions, subnational actors often possess contextual knowledge of local ecological conditions and fishing practices. Integrating this local knowledge into broader policy processes can enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of fisheries governance (Bausero-Jorcin et al., 2024).

This framework aligns with the principles of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM), which emphasizes managing fisheries resources by considering ecological interactions, habitat protection, and the socio-economic conditions of coastal communities. EBFM requires governance arrangements that operate across multiple spatial and institutional scales, particularly in transboundary marine environments where fisheries resources are shared among multiple jurisdictions (Operationalizing Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management | Lenfest Ocean Program, n.d.).

Under this conceptual lens, maritime paradiplomacy contributes to sustainable fisheries governance through three interrelated functions. First, vertical coordination links community-based ecological knowledge with national regulatory processes, helping reduce institutional fragmentation. Second, horizontal coordination facilitates cooperation across jurisdictions in shared maritime spaces, strengthening regulatory coherence and compliance. Third, ecological stewardship supports sustainability initiatives such as promoting environmentally selective fishing gear and protecting critical habitats, including mangroves and coastal ecosystems, which are essential for maintaining fisheries productivity and marine biodiversity (Hilborn et al., 2023). Together, these functions position maritime paradiplomacy as a complementary governance mechanism that can bridge local ecological realities with broader regulatory frameworks, contributing to more effective and sustainable fisheries governance in maritime border regions (Hilborn et al., 2020).

Despite the growing literature on paradiplomacy and maritime governance, an important gap remains in understanding how subnational actors contribute to fisheries policy advocacy and marine environmental governance in maritime border areas. Existing studies on paradiplomacy have largely examined economic cooperation, investment promotion, cultural exchange, and city diplomacy, while paying less attention to the environmental and fisheries dimensions of subnational cross-border engagement. At the same time, fisheries governance studies have largely focused on national regulatory frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and international cooperation, with comparatively limited examination of how local and regional actors mediate between national policies and the everyday realities of coastal communities in border areas. This gap is particularly significant in maritime regions where fisheries resources, ecological systems, and fishing activities extend beyond administrative and national boundaries.

Berakit Village provides an important empirical setting for addressing this gap. As a maritime border community directly facing the South China Sea, Berakit experiences the interaction of local livelihood interests, fisheries governance, environmental pressures, and cross-border maritime dynamics. The study therefore moves beyond viewing paradiplomacy as merely an instrument of external relations. It examines it as a governance mechanism through which subnational actors participate in policy advocacy, community-based fisheries monitoring, marine spatial planning, and coastal environmental conservation. In this context, the study seeks to clarify how local-level initiatives complement national fisheries governance rather than replace the central government's authority.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is maritime paradiplomacy practiced in fisheries policy advocacy in Berakit Village? (2) What strategies are employed by subnational and local actors to strengthen fisheries governance and marine environmental protection in the border area? (3) How does maritime paradiplomacy contribute to multi-level fisheries governance and the protection of coastal

marine resources? By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the paradiplomacy literature by conceptualizing maritime environmental paradiplomacy as a complementary governance mechanism that connects local communities, regional authorities, and national institutions in addressing fisheries and marine environmental challenges in border regions.

### **3. Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative approach and a case study design to examine maritime paradiplomacy in fisheries policy advocacy in border regions. The research focuses on Berakit Village, located in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. This site was selected due to its strategic position in a maritime border area directly connected to transboundary fisheries activities. Such a geographical context makes Berakit a relevant case for analyzing how subnational actors engage in fisheries policy advocacy and marine resource monitoring within a multi-level maritime governance framework.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews explored the experiences and perspectives of actors involved in fisheries governance and coastal resource monitoring. Field observations examined fishing practices, community dynamics, and local monitoring mechanisms in coastal areas. In addition, document analysis covered fisheries regulations, local government reports, and policy documents related to coastal management and conservation.

The study selected informants using purposive sampling based on their involvement in local marine resource governance. The study also used snowball sampling to identify additional actors involved in fisheries policy advocacy and community-based monitoring networks. In total, the study involved 26 informants, including local government officials, village authorities, community leaders, small-scale fishers, members of community surveillance groups (Pokmaswas), and representatives of civil society organizations engaged in coastal conservation. This diversity of participants enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives on fisheries governance and the interaction between local communities and government institutions.

The researchers analyzed the collected data using thematic analysis. The researchers first open-coded interview transcripts and field notes to identify key concepts related to maritime paradiplomacy, fisheries policy advocacy, and marine resource monitoring. The researchers then grouped these initial codes into broader analytical categories, including community-based fisheries monitoring, multi-level policy coordination, and coastal ecosystem conservation. This process revealed key themes explaining how local actors strengthen fisheries policy implementation and marine resource governance in maritime border areas.

This research followed established ethical principles for qualitative social science research. Before data collection, all participants were informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and expected outcomes, and they provided informed consent to ensure voluntary participation. In qualitative research involving human subjects, informed consent is a fundamental ethical requirement that ensures participants fully understand the study's purpose, risks, and potential implications (Rajasegaram & Gani, 2025).

To protect the rights and safety of respondents-particularly small-scale fishers and local government officials-strict measures were implemented to ensure confidentiality and anonymity throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting stages. Maintaining anonymity and protecting personal information are critical ethical obligations in qualitative research because they prevent participant identification and reduce potential social or professional risks associated with participation (Scheytt & Pflüger, 2024). Furthermore, ethical transparency in qualitative research requires researchers to implement clear protocols for data handling and privacy protection, especially when dealing with sensitive community-based information (Zhang et al., 2024).

In addition, the team obtained formal authorization for field observations from relevant local authorities to ensure all research activities complied with administrative regulations and community norms governing research access. Adhering to institutional and community-level ethical governance frameworks is increasingly recognized as essential in contemporary social and environmental research (Zhu et al., 2024).

### 3.1 Analysis

Maritime paradiplomacy in border areas such as Berakit Village reflects local government adaptation to the dynamics of globalization, decentralization, and increasingly complex changes in maritime governance. Paradiplomacy is understood not only as “mini” diplomatic activities below the state level, but also as a political and economic strategy local governments use to advance local interests in a cross-border context (Ali Mukti, 2020; Keating, n.d.). In the context of Bintan Regency, the practice of paradiplomacy emerged as a response to three main pressures: (1) the limitations of central government policy in addressing the specific issues faced by border fishermen, (2) coastal economic challenges due to global competition and illegal fishing activities, and (3) opportunities for regional cooperation in the maritime sector. These three factors have encouraged the local government to develop a more independent and participatory form of diplomacy based on maritime potential.

The maritime paradiplomacy carried out by the Bintan Regency Government through activities in Berakit Village is a concrete manifestation of regional involvement in supporting national policies while responding to the needs of coastal communities in border areas. Berakit Village is in the northernmost part of Bintan Regency. It faces the South China Sea directly, giving it strong maritime potential but also exposing it to challenges such as limited economic infrastructure, dependence on fishing, and security threats.

## 4. Results & Discussions

### 4.1 Policy Advocacy and Fishermen Protection: A New Space for Local Diplomacy

Maritime governance in border regions such as Bintan reflects complex interactions between national policy frameworks and local socio-economic realities. Interviews with officials from the regional maritime affairs agency indicate that many fisheries regulations are formulated through top-down mechanisms that often overlook the needs and operational patterns of traditional fishermen. Restrictions on fishing zones, for example, have occasionally generated conflicts between local fishers and vessels originating from other Indonesian regions or neighboring countries operating near international waters.

In response, the Bintan local government has increasingly participated in interregional coordination forums on marine spatial planning, fisheries regulation, and livelihood protection for small-scale fishers. This shift indicates a growing role for subnational actors in policy negotiation and advocacy. Rather than merely implementing national policies, local governments increasingly act as intermediaries, articulating local concerns within broader governance frameworks. These dynamics align with contemporary scholarship on multilevel governance, which emphasizes interactions among actors across institutional levels in managing complex environmental resources.

Recent studies highlight that fisheries governance systems involving collaboration among national institutions, regional authorities, and local communities tend to produce more adaptive and inclusive policy outcomes. Research on small-scale fisheries governance shows that decentralized decision-making and stakeholder engagement can improve both compliance with and legitimacy of fisheries regulations. For instance, participatory governance models have been shown to strengthen policy implementation and reduce conflicts between small-scale and industrial fishing actors (Arthur et al., 2022).

In the Bintan case, policy advocacy has also strengthened the protection of traditional fishing grounds and improved support mechanisms for coastal communities. Local government engagement in policy discussions regarding marine zoning and fisheries subsidies has helped draw national attention to the welfare challenges faced by fishermen in maritime border areas. This demonstrates how regional actors can influence national policy agendas while remaining aligned with the broader framework of state sovereignty and maritime governance.

Local institutions have also expanded their role in fisheries monitoring through collaboration with coastal communities. Community-based surveillance groups, commonly known as Pokmaswas, help monitor fishing activities in coastal waters and report suspicious vessel movements. Such community participation is widely recognized as a key component of effective fisheries governance. Studies on small-scale fisheries management show that community-based monitoring improves regulatory compliance and strengthens governments'

capacity to address Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (Elías Ilosvay et al., 2024). Strengthened monitoring systems also help reduce conflicts over marine space between local fishermen and external fishing vessels. Improved coordination between communities and maritime enforcement institutions enables faster responses to potential violations. This collaborative monitoring model reflects broader trends in adaptive fisheries governance, where integrating local knowledge and institutional enforcement enhances the resilience of marine resource management systems.

#### *4.2 Cross-Border Economic Cooperation and Coastal Development*

Beyond policy advocacy, regional engagement also supports coastal economic development in maritime border areas. Bintan's geographical proximity to Singapore and Malaysia creates opportunities for cross-border interaction in fisheries trade, marine tourism, and coastal small-scale enterprises. Local government initiatives therefore increasingly focus on strengthening economic networks that support sustainable marine-based livelihoods.

Such initiatives align with the broader concept of the blue economy, which promotes the sustainable utilization of marine resources while supporting economic growth and community welfare. The blue economy framework emphasizes integrating ecological conservation with economic development in marine sectors. International development institutions have highlighted sustainable ocean-based economies as a pathway to achieving both environmental protection and poverty reduction in coastal regions. In Bintan, coastal economic programs include training in seafood processing, promoting sustainable fishery products, and supporting small-scale marine enterprises. These initiatives aim to diversify local livelihoods while reducing dependence on unsustainable fishing practices. Similar approaches have been observed in other coastal regions where local economic diversification strengthens resilience against fisheries resource fluctuations and environmental change.

Community participation remains central to these economic initiatives. Fishermen's groups, coastal women's associations, and small-scale entrepreneurs participate in activities such as marine product processing, eco-tourism development, and environmental conservation programs. Participatory development models have been shown to improve both economic outcomes and environmental stewardship in coastal communities. Research on coastal governance indicates that inclusive development strategies can enhance the adaptive capacity of communities facing environmental and economic pressures (Bennett et al., 2021)

Cross-border cooperation also strengthens social and economic networks among coastal communities. Informal knowledge exchanges, regional workshops, and fisheries product exhibitions create opportunities for collaboration between border regions. Such interactions support the diffusion of sustainable fishing practices and encourage innovation in marine-based economic activities. Through these mechanisms, coastal development initiatives strengthen the economic foundations of border communities while supporting sustainable resource management. By integrating livelihood development with marine conservation, these initiatives help align local economic activities with broader sustainability objectives.

#### *4.3 Paradiplomacy, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Fisheries Governance*

Maritime paradiplomacy in Bintan demonstrates how subnational diplomatic engagement can support sustainable coastal development while strengthening fisheries governance in border regions. In this context, paradiplomacy functions not only as a mechanism for cross-border cooperation but also as an instrument for implementing blue economy principles at the local level. The blue economy emphasizes the sustainable utilization of marine resources while balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social welfare (Yudha & Dina, 2020). Through international cooperation networks, local governments act as facilitators connecting fishermen, business actors, research institutions, and external partners to access technology, training, and market opportunities without compromising sustainability objectives.

In practice, several initiatives illustrate how paradiplomacy supports coastal economic transformation. Training in seafood processing, promotion of sustainable fishery products, and community capacity-building programs help shift coastal economies from extractive practices toward innovation-based and conservation-oriented activities. Cross-border cooperation with partners from Singapore and international organizations also

reflects people-to-people diplomacy that strengthens social and economic relations between border communities while contributing to regional stability (Bakker, 2022). Consequently, maritime paradiplomacy in Bintan serves a dual role: supporting regional economic diplomacy while advancing sustainable development through blue economy principles.

An important dimension of this process is the active involvement of coastal communities. Fishermen, coastal women's groups, and micro-enterprise actors participate directly in cross-border cooperation programs, illustrating the emergence of a participatory model of paradiplomacy. In this model, governmental actors do not drive strategic decisions alone; instead, they develop them through dialogue, public consultation, and community empowerment. This inclusive approach aligns with perspectives from Blue Criminology, which emphasize community participation in preventing cross-border marine crimes and protecting marine resources. Through such participation, diplomacy evolves from a predominantly elite-driven process into a form of grassroots diplomacy that reflects the interests and security concerns of coastal communities (Putu et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2022)

The strategic relevance of paradiplomacy is particularly evident in Berakit Village, located near international waters in the South China Sea and regularly interacting with transboundary fishing activities. In such border contexts, paradiplomacy provides an alternative strategy for addressing fisheries-related challenges, including cross-border fishing activities, limited economic opportunities, and socio-cultural interactions with neighboring countries. Subnational governments such as Bintan Regency and Riau Islands Province can leverage their proximity to Singapore and Malaysia to build cooperation networks in fisheries management, trade, tourism, and education. Through border cooperation forums, local governments may also facilitate regulated fishing arrangements, allowing fishermen to access certain fishing zones through controlled cross-border permit mechanisms, thereby transforming informal activities into regulated economic cooperation (Azhar, 2022).

Beyond fisheries governance, paradiplomacy also supports economic diversification in border communities. Berakit Village has considerable potential for marine tourism, mangrove ecosystems, and community-based ecotourism that can attract visitors from neighboring countries. Experiences from regional initiatives such as the Batam–Johor–Singapore (BJS) Growth Triangle demonstrate how geographical proximity can stimulate cross-border economic growth. Similar cooperation schemes could promote local products such as processed seafood, mangrove handicrafts, and conservation-based ecotourism as cross-border commodities, improving community welfare while reducing dependence on informal labor migration abroad (Kartika et al., 2023; Sartika, 2024).

The socio-cultural dimension also contributes to maritime paradiplomacy. Berakit Village retains a strong maritime heritage, particularly through the Sea Tribe community in Panglong Village, whose traditional knowledge reflects long-standing cultural connections with the marine environment ("Does Human Capital and Gender Equality Affect Economic Growth for Ten Province in Sumatera?," 2023). This cultural heritage can serve as cultural diplomacy, strengthening Berakit's identity as a border village defined by ecological sustainability and cultural resilience. Such initiatives align with Indonesia's broader maritime policy agenda, including the vision of the Global Maritime Fulcrum, which emphasizes empowering coastal communities as part of national maritime diplomacy.

Nevertheless, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit still faces several structural challenges. Limited transportation and communication infrastructure, relatively weak bureaucratic capacity at the village level, and low policy literacy among fishermen remain obstacles to expanding cross-border cooperation networks. Conflicts between national policy frameworks and local needs-particularly regarding fishing zone regulations and licensing systems in border waters-also create governance tensions. In this situation, local governments play a crucial mediating role by advocating for fishermen's interests and translating national maritime policies into locally relevant governance arrangements (Bintanku Indonesia, n.d.).

Despite these constraints, maritime paradiplomacy initiatives in Berakit have produced tangible improvements in fisheries governance and sustainability. One key development is strengthened protection of traditional

fishing zones through the Coastal and Small Islands Zoning Plan (RZWP3K), which helps reduce spatial conflicts and limits excessive entry of industrial fishing vessels into small-scale fishing grounds. In addition, promoting environmentally selective fishing gear supports habitat protection and reduces bycatch. Cooperation with conservation partners has also strengthened mangrove protection and coastal ecosystem monitoring, thereby improving the resilience of nursery habitats. Another significant mechanism involves the development of surveillance networks that combine community participation with national maritime security institutions, including the Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia. These collaborative monitoring systems help deter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in border waters. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, participatory governance, spatial regulation, and community-based monitoring significantly improve compliance and reduce overfishing risks in small-scale fisheries (FAO, 2022).

These governance mechanisms align closely with the principles of ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM), which emphasize habitat protection, adaptive governance, and multi-actor participation. Integrated management approaches that combine ecological thresholds with institutional enforcement capacity are essential for rebuilding and sustaining marine fisheries resources (Supriadi et al., 2024). Empirical global studies further demonstrate that fisheries governed under science-based management systems and collaborative compliance frameworks are significantly more likely to maintain fish stocks at sustainable levels (Hilborn et al., 2020). Within this framework, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit can be understood not merely as subnational diplomatic engagement but as a functional governance interface linking local communities, regional governments, and national institutions in managing transboundary marine ecosystems. By strengthening monitoring systems, supporting sustainable fishing practices, and promoting cross-border economic cooperation, paradiplomacy helps reduce extraction pressure on marine resources while enhancing long-term fisheries sustainability.

#### *4.4 Typologies of Paradiplomacy in Maritime Governance*

Paradiplomacy literature commonly categorizes subnational international engagement into several functional types, including instrumental, complementary, and transformative paradiplomacy. Instrumental paradiplomacy refers to subnational actions that primarily serve as operational tools for advancing national interests, often closely aligned with central government policy frameworks. Complementary paradiplomacy, by contrast, occurs when local governments undertake initiatives that reinforce or support national diplomatic agendas without formally replacing them. Meanwhile, transformative paradiplomacy emerges when subnational actors generate new governance arrangements that reshape policy practices or institutional coordination across multiple levels of government.

In the context of maritime governance, these typologies are particularly relevant in decentralized coastal states where local governments hold administrative responsibilities for fisheries management, coastal planning, and community empowerment. Subnational actors may therefore engage in cross-border networks, environmental advocacy, or collaborative monitoring mechanisms that extend beyond traditional diplomatic channels. The case of Berakit Village illustrates a form of complementary maritime paradiplomacy, where local governance initiatives—such as community-based surveillance against illegal fishing, mangrove conservation, and selective fishing gear promotion—support national fisheries sustainability objectives. Rather than replacing national diplomacy, these local initiatives strengthen policy implementation at the operational level and enhance environmental compliance among coastal communities.

#### *4.5 Discussion*

Maritime paradiplomacy implemented in Berakit Village, Bintan Regency, reflects the local government's efforts to build cross-border cooperation networks to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of coastal communities. Based on field research, paradiplomacy activities in this region focus on fisheries policy advocacy, coastal economic empowerment, and collaboration among local governments, communities, and foreign partners. Berakit Village's location along the South China Sea makes it strategic but vulnerable to global dynamics, including illegal fishing, declining marine environmental quality, and economic fluctuations among fishermen.

Berakit Village is a coastal area located in Teluk Sebong Subdistrict, Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province, with geographical and social characteristics typical of maritime border areas. Administratively, the area covers approximately 53.25 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of two hamlets, four neighborhood associations (RW), and eight community associations (RT). Berakit Village is lowland, with an average elevation of 13 meters above sea level, making it highly dependent on marine resources as the mainstay of the community's economy. Its strategic location facing the South China Sea places the village in an important context both in terms of maritime economy and the geopolitics of Indonesia's border regions (Irawan et al., 2024; Mukti, 2020).

The results show that implementing maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village reflects multilevel and collaborative governance principles adapted to the local context. The local government not only carries out instructions from the central government but also actively sets the agenda, advocates for the community's interests, and establishes partnerships with international actors (Alfarizi, 2024; Andriyana & Juwono, 2021). The paradiplomacy in Berakit shows the decentralization of diplomatic functions. As explained, Paradiplomacy enables subnational governments to develop limited foreign policies within their autonomous authority. In Bintan, this authority is manifested in cross-regional cooperation in maritime affairs, conservation, and the coastal economy (Keating, n.d.).

This approach aligns with the blue economy concept, which emphasizes balancing economic productivity with marine environmental sustainability (Alfarizi, 2024). The local government in Bintan facilitates the expansion of marketing networks and encourages innovation among coastal communities. The shift from fishing to processing and conservation reflects a broader maritime development transition from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

The findings also reinforce Satria's (2015) view that fisheries management involving local communities is more effective because it draws on empirical experience and environmental awareness. In this case, the Berakit community is the main actor in marine surveillance and mangrove ecosystem conservation. They are not only recipients of policy but also active subjects in coastal resource management. In addition, the paradiplomacy activities in Berakit Village show that cross-border cooperation can strengthen communities' position in the global economic chain. The results show that training in marine product processing conducted jointly by WWF Indonesia and foreign partners increases the added value of fishermen's products. This capacity supports the theory of policy advocacy that places communities as the main basis for fighting for structural change (Ari Atu Dewi, 2018).

Maritime paradiplomacy also helps strengthen maritime border security. Collaboration between Bakamla, local governments, and the coastal community of Berakit demonstrates participatory security-based diplomacy practices. As Wibowo (2022) states, local-level maritime security diplomacy strengthens the region's position in maintaining stability while supporting the national mission of maintaining sovereignty. Beyond structural and security aspects, the socio-cultural dimension of paradiplomacy also shapes the community's maritime identity. Local wisdom embedded in maritime traditions, such as bans on fishing in certain areas, strengthens ecological awareness. Through conservation activities, maritime education, and the involvement of coastal women, the local government has instilled new values that strengthen the community's role in maritime development. From a theoretical perspective, the practices in Berakit Village confirm that paradiplomacy is not merely a foreign activity but an integral part of global-oriented local development (glocalization).

Thus, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village can be seen as an innovative model of multi-actor collaborative coastal zone management. The local government acts as a catalyst, the community as a driving force, and external partners as supporters in strengthening local capacity. This entire process demonstrates the integration between the national goal of maintaining sovereignty and local efforts to strengthen the welfare of coastal communities.

#### *4.5.1 The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Maritime Paradiplomacy in Berakit*

Beyond economic and policy aspects, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit also has strong social and cultural dimensions. The results show that community participation in training and cross-border cooperation activities has helped raise awareness of local maritime identity. The Berakit community has begun to see the sea not only as an economic space, but also as a cultural space that is part of the community's identity. Local wisdom

values such as cooperation, restrictions on fishing in certain zones, and traditions of joint sea conservation have been adapted to the modern context through conservation-based training programs.

This process reinforces the concept of maritime cultural diplomacy, in which sea-based socio-economic activities also serve as a medium for cultural diplomacy. In this way, paradiplomacy in Berakit helps build the region's image as a maritime community that is empowered, inclusive, and open to cross-border cooperation (Cornago, 2010; Rahayu & Ozali, 2024). In addition, women's groups' involvement in blue economy training shows significant social transformation. They not only support their husbands' activities at sea, but also actively manage the catch and market the products. This confirms that paradiplomacy affects not only the inter-state dimension but also social dynamics within local communities.

#### *4.5.2 Multi-actor Synergy and Collaborative Diplomacy Model in Berakit Village.*

Maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village operates within a governance ecosystem involving many actors. The local government acts as a facilitator, the community as implementers, academics as providers of data and analysis, and international partners as providers of technical support and market networks. This model reflects the principle of collaborative governance, where policy success depends on collaboration among equal actors. In Berakit, the local government does not impose programs from above but builds understanding through dialogue and field assistance. With this synergy, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit shows how regional diplomacy can function without violating central authority while still providing ample space for local participation.

In border areas such as Berakit Village, Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province, maritime paradiplomacy is relevant because of its strategic location, directly facing the waters of Malaysia and Singapore. The majority of the Berakit community are traditional fishermen who depend on the sea for their livelihood. However, they face several challenges, including limited fishing equipment, dependence on weather conditions, limited markets for their catch, and the risk of being caught by neighboring countries' authorities. This situation requires the active role of the local government in advocating for fisheries policies that protect the rights of traditional fishermen and maintain the sustainability of marine resources (Rahayu & Ozali, 2024)

Local governments have three strategic roles in maritime paradiplomacy in border areas. First, an advocacy role, which involves advancing the aspirations and needs of coastal communities through local regulation, communication with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and participation in national policy forums. For example, the Riau Islands Provincial Government has proposed strengthening policies to protect border fishermen and traditional fishing zones in the Regional Maritime Spatial Plan. Second, a facilitative role, in which local governments build community capacity through training, provide environmentally friendly fishing equipment, and strengthen fishermen's institutions such as maritime cooperatives. Third, a representative (paradiplomatic) role, realized through involvement in cross-border cooperation forums such as the Johor-Riau-Singapore Economic Forum and the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), to advance the interests of local fishermen while promoting the region's blue economy potential.

In implementing its maritime paradiplomacy strategy, the Bintan local government has adopted several important approaches. First, cross-border collaborative diplomacy, which emphasizes cooperation among maritime authorities, local governments, and cross-border fishing communities to reduce fishing conflicts and combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices. Second, advocacy for sustainable fisheries policies, which focuses on preserving marine ecosystems by restricting destructive fishing gear and promoting local regulations on environmentally friendly fisheries. Third, empowering the fishing economy through programs that increase the value of catches, develop digital-based markets, and strengthen fisheries cooperatives.

However, implementing maritime paradiplomacy still faces several obstacles. Structurally, regional diplomatic authority is still limited because Indonesia's foreign relations system is centralized (Law No. 37 of 1999). In addition, coordination between regional governments, maritime security agencies, and ministries is often not synergistic. Regional human resources in maritime diplomacy also remain limited, compounded by weak supporting infrastructure such as fishing ports and fish processing facilities. Other obstacles include the community's strong economic dependence on intermediaries and low maritime literacy among fishermen.

To overcome these problems, several strategic steps can be taken. Local governments should integrate the maritime paradiplomacy agenda into the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and Regional Strategic Plan, and establish a regional maritime advocacy center to coordinate policy among the central government, local governments, academics, and coastal communities. In addition, strengthening local human resources through training in maritime diplomacy and coastal resource management is essential. Enhancing cross-border cooperation based on marine ecosystems is also important to ensure resource sustainability and reduce fishing conflicts.

Maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village shows how local governments can act as effective diplomatic actors, advocating local interests at national and regional levels. Through a collaborative, advocacy-based, and empowerment-based approach, this paradigm promotes fair, sustainable, and sovereign border-area governance. In this context, maritime paradiplomacy is not only an alternative foreign policy instrument, but also a regional development strategy that prioritizes the welfare of coastal communities and the protection of Indonesia's marine resources. The strategy, objectives, and implementation in Berakit Village are as follows.

Table 1. The strategy, objectives, and implementation in Berakit Village

| Strategy                                    | Objectives                                                   | Forms of Implementation in Berakit                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cross-country Collaborative Diplomacy       | Establishing maritime cooperation with neighboring countries | Border dialogue, joint fishing patrols, safe fishing zone agreements                         |
| Advocacy for Sustainable Fisheries Policy   | Fighting for pro-fisherman regulations                       | Proposal for a local regulation on coastal fisheries and protection of traditional fisherman |
| Empowering the Local Maritime Economy       | Reducing economic inequality among fishermen                 | Marine product downstreaming and maritime cooperative programs                               |
| Regional Maritime Data and Digitalization   | Strengthening the policy information base                    | Mapping marine potential and GIS-based fisheries information systems                         |
| Academic Cooperation and Maritime Community | Strengthening regional diplomatic capacity                   | Collaboration with Raja Ali Haji Maritime University and the Community                       |

#### 4.5.3 Multi-actor Synergy and Collaborative Diplomacy Model in Berakit Village.

The environmental implications of maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village extend beyond administrative coordination and policy advocacy. In transboundary marine contexts such as the northern waters of Bintan, cross-border interaction directly affects fish stock dynamics, habitat integrity, and ecosystem resilience. Strengthened coordination among local authorities, maritime security agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions helps mitigate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing risks, which remain a major driver of stock depletion in Southeast Asia. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022), effective multi-level governance and regional cooperation significantly improve compliance with fisheries regulations and enhance stock recovery outcomes. Empirical research further demonstrates that well-managed fisheries under cooperative governance frameworks are more likely to maintain biomass at biologically sustainable levels (Hilborn et al., 2020). In this respect, paradiplomacy serves as a bridging mechanism that aligns local enforcement realities with broader sustainability objectives.

Furthermore, paradiplomatic engagement reinforces compliance with spatial management instruments such as Indonesia's Coastal and Small Islands Zoning Plan (RZWP3K). Spatial governance is central to ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM), which emphasizes precautionary catch limits, habitat protection, and adaptive management across ecological boundaries. Studies on international environmental regimes highlight that cooperative governance arrangements significantly enhance ecological effectiveness, particularly in shared marine ecosystems where unilateral enforcement is insufficient (Young, 2011). (Osterblom et al., 2015) Similarly, show that coordinated action among multi-level actors—including subnational entities—can reshape marine resource exploitation patterns and reduce systemic overharvesting pressures. Within this framework, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit strengthens surveillance networks, promotes environmentally friendly fishing gear, and supports conservation-oriented dialogue between coastal communities and national regulators.

More broadly, maritime paradiplomacy functions as an enabling layer of ecological governance that reduces fragmentation between local extraction practices and national sustainability commitments, including SDG 14 (Life Below Water) under the United Nations framework (Goal 14 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.-b). By facilitating dialogue across governance levels, local governments can integrate community-based monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and ecosystem protection norms into formal regulatory processes. This integrative approach reflects core principles articulated in the OECD (2020) report *Rebuilding Fisheries: The Way Forward*, which emphasizes that inclusive and coordinated governance significantly increases the probability of long-term stock sustainability (OECD REVIEW OF FISHERIES 2020, 2020). Therefore, in the case of Berakit, paradiplomacy should not be viewed merely as subnational diplomatic activism, but as an operational mechanism that supports ecological threshold alignment, prevents overexploitation, and strengthens sustainable fisheries governance in transboundary maritime spaces.

Table 2. Sustainable Fisheries Policy Implementation

| Indicator                | Initial Conditions                                    | Observed Changes                    | Data source                                                            |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IUU Fishing Activities   | Illegal vessels frequently enter fishing areas        | Increased reporting and enforcement | Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries / Community Development Group |
| Local fishermen CPUE     | Fluctuating catches                                   | Catch stability                     | Fisherman Interviews                                                   |
| Maritime space conflicts | Conflicts between local fishermen and foreign vessels | Decreased conflict                  | Field Observations                                                     |
| Community monitoring     | Limited                                               | Active community monitoring groups  | Village Government                                                     |

Evidence from the Berakit case suggests that improvements in fisheries governance in maritime border regions are not limited to institutional adjustments but are also reflected in observable governance and ecological indicators. Strengthened monitoring of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the North Natuna Sea demonstrates enhanced enforcement capacity, supported by the active participation of coastal communities through community-based surveillance mechanisms such as Pokmaswas. In many instances, information provided by local fishers serves as an early warning mechanism for detecting suspicious fishing activities in border waters, indicating the increasing integration of community knowledge into marine governance systems. Ecological indicators also suggest gradual shifts toward more sustainable fisheries practices. Reports from local fishers and regional fisheries data indicate relative stability in Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE), a common proxy for fish stock availability. Although biomass levels were not directly measured, the consistency of these observations suggests potential improvements in fisheries resource conditions following stricter regulation of destructive fishing gear and tighter control of external fishing vessels. Similar patterns have been observed in fisheries governance studies highlighting the importance of community participation and multi-level coordination in improving fisheries sustainability (Hilborn et al., 2020).

Furthermore, reduced spatial conflicts between local fishers and external vessels reflect improved coordination in marine space governance. Collaborative monitoring and reporting mechanisms among fishers, village authorities, and community surveillance groups have enabled faster responses to illegal activities and strengthened compliance with fisheries regulations. Taken together, these findings indicate that maritime paradiplomacy—through interactions among local actors, regional institutions, and community monitoring networks—can serve as a complementary governance mechanism that enhances both policy implementation and ecological stewardship in transboundary fisheries systems.

## 5. Conclusions

Maritime paradiplomacy carried out by local governments in border areas such as Berakit Village, Bintan Regency, is a concrete manifestation of the paradigm shift in modern international relations that places regions as active actors in marine resource management. In Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, local governments

play a strategic role because they are at the forefront of addressing border challenges from economic, social, and maritime security perspectives. Through diplomacy grounded in local interests, local governments inclusively fight for fishermen's rights, strengthen Indonesia's position along its maritime borders, and encourage the formation of more inclusive and equitable cross-border cooperation mechanisms.

This study shows that maritime paradiplomacy is not merely an extension of regional authority, but also a development strategy based on maritime sovereignty. Local governments that carry out paradiplomacy functions, such as Bintan Regency, have succeeded in opening communication channels with various parties—the central government, international partners, research institutions, and fishing communities—to build policy synergies in fisheries management. This approach has produced local policies that are more participatory and better adapted to coastal areas' socio-ecological conditions. In this case, the Coastal Zone and Small Islands Zoning Plan (RZWP3K) has become an important instrument for balancing marine conservation and community economic activities.

However, maritime paradiplomacy still faces several challenges. First, not all local governments have sufficient diplomatic capacity and human resources to negotiate in cross-border forums. Second, disparities remain in access to and the sustainability of empowerment programs, especially between traditional fishermen and large businesses. Third, inter-agency coordination in maritime cross-jurisdiction still needs strengthening so regional policies do not overlap with national regulations. Therefore, efforts are needed to institutionalize paradiplomacy in regional planning documents such as the RPJMD and to strengthen coordination with relevant ministries.

Local governments in border areas need to reaffirm their strategic role in the framework of national maritime diplomacy. Establishing a Regional Maritime Advocacy Center (PAMD) involving government, academics, maritime authorities, and coastal communities can help coordinate and integrate local interests into national and regional policies. In addition, improving maritime literacy and coastal education for the younger generation is key to sustaining this paradiplomacy paradigm. Public awareness of the importance of preserving the sea as a source of life and cultural identity will strengthen coastal areas' socio-economic resilience. Thus, maritime paradiplomacy in Berakit Village is a local practice that reflects welfare- and sovereignty-based diplomacy. The local government acts as a bridge between national policies and coastal communities' aspirations, making diplomacy an instrument of empowerment rather than merely a foreign policy tool. This paradiplomacy contributes directly to sustainable fisheries management, improved community welfare, and a stronger Indonesian strategic position in the maritime border region.

This study contributes to paradiplomacy scholarship in three key ways. First, it broadens the analytical scope of paradiplomacy by situating subnational diplomatic engagement within marine environmental governance rather than limiting it to economic diplomacy and regional development. Recent studies highlight that Environmental Challenges, particularly in coastal and marine ecosystems, increasingly require multi-level governance involving both national and subnational actors (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019). Second, the study advances the concept of maritime environmental paradiplomacy, referring to cross-border engagement by subnational actors to strengthen sustainable fisheries management, marine conservation, and community-based resource governance. This perspective aligns with emerging literature emphasizing that effective marine governance depends on collaborative networks linking local communities, governments, and international institutions (Su et al., 2024).

Third, the research clarifies the functional role of subnational diplomacy in decentralized maritime states by examining whether paradiplomacy operates as an instrumental, complementary, or transformative extension of national diplomacy. Findings from the Berakit Village case indicate that subnational diplomacy primarily functions as a complementary governance mechanism, supporting policy implementation, community monitoring, and environmental stewardship at the local level. Such multi-level coordination is increasingly recognized as essential for improving fisheries governance outcomes and strengthening marine ecosystem resilience (Hilborn et al., 2020).

## 6. Acknowledgments

The authors received no specific funding for this research.

## 7. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Alfarizi, M. (2024). Ekonomi Biru Kepulauan Riau Berkelanjutan: Tantangan, Peluang dan Langkah Strategis Berbasis Kolaborasi Pentahelix. *Jurnal Archipelago*, 3(01). <https://doi.org/10.69853/ja.v3i01.85>
- Ali Mukti, T. (2020). Politik Paradiplomasi Dan Isu Kedaulatan di Indonesia. In *Sustainability (Switzerland)* (Vol. 11, Number 1).
- Andriyana, A., & Juwono, V. (2021). Analisis Implementasi Program Bantuan Sosial Dalam Penanganan Pandemi Covid-19 Di Indonesia Menggunakan Perspektif Multilevel Governance. In *Sosio Informa* (Vol. 7, Number 03).
- Ari Atu Dewi, A. A. I. (2018). Model Pengelolaan Wilayah Pesisir Berbasis Masyarakat: Community-Based Development. *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2018.v18.163-182>
- Arthur, R. I., Skeritt, D. J., Schuhbauer, A., Ebrahim, N., Friend, R. M., & Sumaila, U. R. (2022). Small-scale fisheries and local food systems: Transformations, threats and opportunities. *Fish and Fisheries*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12602>
- Auld, K., Okafor-Yarwood, I., Geymonat, S. J., Han, D. P., Blaha, F., Baumler, R., & Neat, F. (2025). Regional patterns in coordination and cooperation in the fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13437-025-00383-8>
- Azhar, M. A. (2022). Dinamika Urusan Konkuren Antar Pemerintah Pusat Dan Pemerintah Daerah Dalam Sistem Desentralisasi. *Jurnal Lex Renaissance*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.20885/jlr.vol7.iss3.art14>
- Bakker, F. F. (2022). Harmonisasi Kebijakan ASEAN dalam Merespon Fenomena Migrasi dan Pencegahan Kejahatan Transnasional. *Journal of Law and Border Protection Are*, 4(2).
- Bausero-Jorcín, S., Gelcich, S., Gianelli, I., Jorge-Romero, G., Lezama, C., & Defeo, O. (2024). Assessing the performance of a participatory governance transformation in small-scale fisheries: A case study from Uruguay. *Marine Policy*, 160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2023.105964>
- Bennett, N. J., Blythe, J., White, C. S., & Campero, C. (2021). Blue growth and blue justice: Ten risks and solutions for the ocean economy. *Marine Policy*, 125, 104387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104387>
- Bintanku Indonesia. (n.d.). Retrieved February 17, 2026, from <https://bintankuindonesia.bintankab.go.id/page/view/desa-berakit>
- Cisneros-Montemayor, A. M., Moreno-Báez, M., Voyer, M., Allison, E. H., Cheung, W. W. L., Hession-Lewis, M., Oyínola, M. A., Singh, G. G., Swartz, W., & Ota, Y. (2019). Social equity and benefits as the nexus of a transformative Blue Economy: A sectoral review of implications. *Marine Policy*, 109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103702>
- Cornago, N. (2010). On the normalization of sub-state diplomacy. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 5(1–2). <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191x-05010102>
- Does Human Capital and Gender Equality Affect Economic Growth for Ten Province in Sumatera? (2023). *International Journal of Business Economics (IJBE)*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.30596/ijbe.v5i1.16339>
- Elías Ilosvay, X. É., Kumagai, N. H., García Molinos, J., & Ojea, E. (2024). Coastal fisheries adaptations to increasing climate change exposure in Japan. *People and Nature*, 6(6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10727>
- FAO. (2022). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022. Towards Blue Transformation. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0461en>. In *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022*.
- Goal 14 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.-a). Retrieved February 17, 2026, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>
- Goal 14 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.-b). Retrieved February 17, 2026, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>

- Hadiyan, M. R., & Maharani, A. S. P. (2024). Redefining Paradiplomacy Strategy to Strengthen Island Governance Autonomy: The Case of Riau Islands, Indonesia. *Journal of Maritime Policy Science*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.31629/jmps.v1i3.6954>
- Harakan, A., & Taufik, A. (2023). Exploring Paradiplomacy Pathways: Local Government and Foreign Direct Investment Corporation Partnerships for Sustainable Development. *Journal of Government and Politics (JGOP)*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.31764/jgop.v5i1.15505>
- Hilborn, R., Amoroso, R. O., Anderson, C. M., Baum, J. K., Branch, T. A., Costello, C., De Moor, C. L., Faraj, A., Hively, D., Jensen, O. P., Kurota, H., Little, L. R., Mace, P., McClanahan, T., Melnychuk, M. C., Minto, C., Osio, G. C., Parma, A. M., Pons, M., ... Ye, Y. (2020). Effective fisheries management instrumental in improving fish stock status. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 117(4). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1909726116>
- Irawan, A., Silas Tanggu Redu, Ms., Lindon Pane, M. R., Jeremias Tuhumena, Ms., & Mukhtar Umakaapa, Ms. (2024). Wajah Baru Beranda Pesisir Perbatasan: Potret Reflektif Pembangunan. *Cv Widina Media Utama*.
- Jaya, I., Satria, F., Wudianto, Nugroho, D., Sadiyah, L., Buchary, E. A., White, A. T., Franklin, E. C., Courtney, C. A., Green, G., & Green, S. J. (2022). "Are the working principles of fisheries management at work in Indonesia?" *Marine Policy*, 140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105047>
- Kartika, A. A., Sitorus, A. M., Siagian, P. A., & Panjaitan, R. (2023). Pengimplementasian Kebijakan Desentralisasi dan Otonomi Daerah Terhadap Hubungan Keuangan Daerah Pusat dan Daerah. *Jurnal Sistem Informasi, Akuntansi Dan Manajemen*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.54951/sintama.v3i3.670>
- Keating, M. (n.d.). *Forum of Federations Forum des fédérations Paradiplomacy and Regional Networking*.
- Melnichuk, M. C., Kurota, H., Mace, P. M., Pons, M., Minto, C., Osio, G. C., Jensen, O. P., de Moor, C. L., Parma, A. M., Richard Little, L., Hively, D., Ashbrook, C. E., Baker, N., Amoroso, R. O., Branch, T. A., Anderson, C. M., Szuwalski, C. S., Baum, J. K., McClanahan, T. R., ... Hilborn, R. (2021). Identifying management actions that promote sustainable fisheries. *Nature Sustainability*, 4(5). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-020-00668-1>
- Mozumder, M. M. H., Uddin, M. M., Schneider, P., Deb, D., Hasan, M., Saif, S. B., & Nur, A. A. U. (2023). Governance of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Bangladesh: status, challenges, and potentials. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1150213>
- Mukti, T. A. (2020). POLITIK PARADIPLOMASI PEMERINTAH REPUBLIK INDONESIA. *Jurnal Majelis*, 06. [https://www.mpr.go.id/img/jurnal/file/1618379737\\_file\\_mpr.pdf#page=10](https://www.mpr.go.id/img/jurnal/file/1618379737_file_mpr.pdf#page=10)
- Noormansyah, R., Akhni, G. N., Widyantoro, S., & Saputra, H. L. (2024). PARADIPLOMACY AND THE FUTURE OF SMART CITY: THE CASE OF SISTER CITY COOPERATION BETWEEN MAGELANG CITY-TULA CITY. *Journal of Social Politics and Governance (JSPG)*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.24076/jspg.v6i1.1617>
- OECD REVIEW OF FISHERIES 2020. (2020). *OECD Review of Fisheries 2020*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/7946bc8a-en>
- Operationalizing Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management | Lenfest Ocean Program*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://www.lenfestocean.org/en/news-and-publications/cross-currents/2024/operationalizing-ecosystem-based-fisheries-management>
- Osterblom, H., Jouffray, J. B., Folke, C., Crona, B., Troell, M., Merrie, A., & Rockström, J. (2015). Transnational corporations as "keystone actors" in marine ecosystems. *PLoS ONE*, 10(5). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0127533>
- Putu, N., Sanjiwani, A., Mardialina, M., & Rizki, K. (2022). The Efforts of Maritime Diplomacy During Joko Widodo's Administration in Actualizing the Security Pillar of The Global Maritime Fulcrum. *Indonesian Journal of Global Discourse*, 4(1).
- Rahayu, I., & Ozali, I. (2024). Model Pengelolaan Wisata Bahari Berkelanjutan Di Kabupaten Bintan, Kepulauan Riau. *Intelektiva*, 6(1).
- Rajasegaram, A., & Gani, P. (2025). Ethical Considerations in Obtaining Informed Consent for Research Participation: A Review. *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.55197/qjssh.v6i2.1036>

- Ramadhani, E., & Mohammad Raihan Nadhir. (2025). Subnational Economic Diplomacy in Resource-Rich Regions: Tin-Based Paradiplomacy by the Bangka Belitung Provincial Government. *Journal of Paradiplomacy and City Networks*, 4(2), 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jpcn.v4i2.118>
- Ramenzoni, V. C. (2021). Co-governance, Transregional Maritime Conventions, and Indigenous Customary Practices Among Subsistence Fishermen in Ende, Indonesia. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.668586>
- Rebuilding fisheries: The way forward. (2012). In *Rebuilding Fisheries: The Way Forward* (Vol. 9789264176935). <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264176935>
- Sari, B. N., Arini, I., W, A. J., Sari, G. H., & Melati, R. (2022). Kerjasama Pembangunan Indonesia dengan Singapura Dalam Program 3 Jembatan. *Global and Policy Journal of International Relations*, 10(01). <https://doi.org/10.33005/jgp.v10i01.3576>
- Sartika, G. (2024). Peran Strategis Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia dalam Mendukung Keberlanjutan Organisasi melalui Penerapan Triple Bottom Line. *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.56145/ekonomibisnis.v4i1.155>
- Scheytt, C., & Pflüger, J. (2024). Ethical challenges in qualitative sociology: a systematic literature review. In *Frontiers in Sociology* (Vol. 9). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2024.1458423>
- Sejarah Kepulauan Riau - Kepri News Lengkap & Aktual. (n.d.). Retrieved February 17, 2026, from <https://www.keprinews.com/2014/08/sejarah-kepulauan-riau.html>
- Su, S., Zhao, C., Chen, Y., & Tang, Y. (2024). Unlocking sustainability in China's small-scale fisheries: A case study of livelihood analysis in the Bohai Region. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2024.107405>
- Sundqvist, G., & Jerdén, B. (2024). Paradiplomacy and international conflict: disengagement from China by Swedish local governments. *Asia Europe Journal*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-024-00703-2>
- Supriadi, I., Rahma Ulfa Maghfiroh, & Rukhul Abadi. (2024). Transformasi Ekonomi Kepulauan Riau: Pendekatan Multisektor Untuk Penciptaan Nilai Inklusif Dan Berkelanjutan. *Jurnal Archipelago*, 3(01). <https://doi.org/10.69853/ja.v3i01.115>
- Syuryansyah, S., Yunazwardi, M. I., & Nihayati, A. (2025). A Systematic Literature Review on Indonesian Paradiplomacy (2018-2024). *Journal of Islamic World and Politics*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiwp.v9i2.188>
- Talib, N. L., Utomo, A., Barnett, J., & Adhuri, D. S. (2022). Three centuries of marine governance in Indonesia: Path dependence impedes sustainability. *Marine Policy*, 143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105171>
- Tavares, R. (2016). Paradiplomacy: & nbsp;Cities and States as Global Players. In *Paradiplomacy*.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 30(1).
- Young, O. R. (2011). Effectiveness of international environmental regimes: Existing knowledge, cutting-edge themes, and research strategies. In *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (Vol. 108, Number 50). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1111690108>
- Yudha, E. P., & Dina, R. A. (2020). Pengembangan Potensi Wilayah Kawasan Perbatasan Negara Indonesia (Studi Kasus: Ranai-Natuna). *Tata Loka*, 22(3).
- Zhang, Y., Fu, J., Lai, J., Deng, S., Guo, Z., Zhong, C., Tang, J., Cao, W., & Wu, Y. (2024). Reporting of Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Research Utilizing Social Media Data on Public Health Care: Scoping Review. In *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (Vol. 26, Number 1). <https://doi.org/10.2196/51496>
- Zhu, M., Zhang, W., & Xu, C. (2024). Ethical governance and implementation paths for global marine science data sharing. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2024.1421252>