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Parallel Diplomacy of the City of Solo for Regional Culture Preservation through Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA)

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Abstract: This study analyzes the parallel diplomacy practices of Solo City in preserving regional culture through Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) for the 2021-2025 period. The main issues examined are the suboptimal parallel diplomacy framework, declining youth interest in traditional arts, and minimal follow-up on international cooperation post-event. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method through semi-structured interviews with the SIPA Director, direct observation at SIPA 2025, and official document studies from Disporapar and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The findings show that Solo City Government acts as an autonomous initiator, facilitator, and coordinator in SIPA, fulfilling parallel diplomacy characteristics through subnational initiatives, cross-actor involvement, and local identity preservation. Using Brian Hocking's framework, Solo demonstrates capacity to act through independent decision-making, capability to manage through relations with 8-10 participating countries annually, and capacity to promote through multi-platform strategies. The study concludes that SIPA has successfully created a cultural preservation foundation despite challenges in program sustainability and institutionalization of post-SIPA cooperation follow-up.

Keywords: Parallel Diplomacy; Cultural Preservation; SIPA; Solo City; Subnational Actors.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a cultural diversity that stretches from Sabang to Merauke, creating Indonesia's identity as a large nation rich in culture (Gerokgak, 2025). In culture, art is one of the things that needs to be preserved, especially in the Java region. Although they share the same cultural roots, namely Islamic Mataram, there are significant differences in various aspects of their arts and culture, which were divided by the Giyanti Agreement in 1755 that split the Islamic Mataram Kingdom into the Surakarta Kingdom and the Yogyakarta Sultanate (Nurzahra & Mecca, 2025).

Like Surakarta, also known as Solo, Yogyakarta tends to prioritize calm, gentle, and polite movements. Meanwhile, dances in Yogyakarta have more assertive movements and a faster tempo (Merdeka, 2020). To the general public, the arts in Java appear to be similar. However, a comprehensive analysis reveals that the differences in color and form have deep

meanings in each region. This diversity is interesting to discuss, especially in the city of Solo, that hosts an art performance called *Solo International Performing Arts* (SIPA).

Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) was first held in 2009 under the leadership of Joko Widodo as Mayor of Solo (2005-2012). The event continued during the leadership of F.X. Hadi Rudyatmo (2012-2021) and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (2021-present). SIPA not only showcases various art performances such as dance, music, and theater, but also contributes to the development of the creative economy and local community building (Walenta & Suharto, 2024). Although during the post-COVID-19 pandemic period (2020-2021) SIPA was still held online with a different format than before, SIPA during this period had matured and become a regular event rather than just an experimental one. Not only that, this art performance is aimed at the Indonesian people, especially the Javanese, because of the importance of promoting culture through SIPA as a tourist attraction and also strengthening the position of Solo City as one of the centers of arts and culture, especially performing arts in the country. Quoting directly from the opening speech by Deputy Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Angela, "This is a form of event that I think is very enjoyable. There is cultural exchange in it. Because usually we do it indoors, this time it's outdoors. And I hope events like this will be held more often. For that, we will continue to support the implementation of SIPA in the coming years," since 2011 the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Baparekraf has collaborated with SIPA and has been added to the list of international events for 2023 (Hendriyani, 2023).

Previous research on Solo City's parallel diplomacy, such as *Developing Surakarta City through Paradiplomacy: The Role of UAE Investment in Regional Development* (Resindra, Maksum, & Sahide, 2025). There is also research related to the title *Paradiplomacy Between Surakarta City (Indonesia) and Xi'an (China) Through the Sister City Program* by Muhammad Naufal Hibatullah (Hibatullah, 2021). Neither of these two previous studies discussed parallel diplomacy, especially through SIPA as an instrument of cultural preservation. Given the limited existing literature, the novelty of this research lies in its descriptive research method, which allows for a more focused description of parallel diplomacy, community, cultural preservation, and the Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) festival, while attempting to develop existing studies to aid in the relevance of International Relations Studies.

The initial problem that arose was the lack of a clear parallel diplomatic framework, which resulted in cultural preservation efforts here becoming partial and unsustainable from existing efforts, thus requiring an appropriate diplomatic strategy to ensure that Solo's arts and culture remain relevant and attractive to the wider community. In addition, the declining interest of the younger generation in traditional arts and culture, which are considered old-fashioned and unattractive, poses a serious threat, even though diplomacy can be an option to overcome this. Finally, this inconsistency is evident in the determination of the date for holding SIPA, the lack of systematic local involvement, and the lack of *follow-up* on international cooperation after the event. Although this event involves various actors, ranging from the Solo regional government and local arts communities to partner countries, coordination and synergy between these actors has not been effective.

Amidst the many problems arising from these social activities and the development of modern diplomacy today, this research aims to identify activities carried out by the city of Solo that can be categorized as parallel diplomacy. Furthermore, this research also aims to determine the implementation of Solo's parallel diplomacy in the preservation of regional culture, as well as to explain the parallelism of Solo's parallel diplomacy in cultural preservation efforts through *Solo International Performing Arts* (SIPA).

While many studies have revealed only the cooperation carried out by a region or country with other countries, this discussion focuses more on the parallel relationships between cities, regions, organizations, communities, and governments. This is what motivated the author to further examine the diplomacy carried out by the local government in order to achieve the

objectives of preserving Solo's cultural arts and parallel diplomacy practices. It is also hoped that this research can broaden the insights of the author and readers, especially in the study of parallel diplomacy in international relations. This research is important because it can be one of the answers to the sustainability of the diplomacy of the Solo city government in the future.

One of the main supporting ideas in international relations is constructivism. Wendt's constructivist paradigm provides a philosophical basis for this research, namely that diplomacy is not merely a tool for fighting for material interests, but rather an arena for the construction of shared identities, norms, and meanings. Diplomacy in international relations is understood as an essential and non-violent process for managing relations between states and other political actors in a formal and peaceful manner (Villanueva & Manalo, 2017).

However, over time, experts' thinking has continued to evolve, leading to the current view that diplomacy can be conducted not only by states, but also by sub-national government actors. Non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, private military organizations, the media, terrorist groups, indigenous peoples, religious actors, think tanks, academic institutions, and regions as sub-national entities (Guilbaud, 2020). Therefore, the term paradiplomacy can be understood as an additional form of traditional diplomacy from sub-state actors or as "the foreign policy of non-central government" (Aldecoa & Keating, 2013). Similar to Brian Hocking's idea of parallel diplomacy, it is better referred to as multi-layered diplomacy, which describes diplomatic activities carried out by non-central (sub-national) governments and non-governmental actors at various levels and in complex negotiation processes (Hocking, 1993).

METHOD

This research uses qualitative research methods. In addition, this research uses data collection techniques conducted through semi-structured interviews with a list of questions as an important instrument. There are several relevant sources, such as the director of *Solo International Performing Arts* (Irawati) itself and the cultural office of the Surakarta government. While opening up space for observation, the researcher also uses a literature study method to assist in collecting research data. This includes data taken from the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism's PPID regarding reports on the implementation by the Directorate of National and International Events and the Directorate of Regional Events. Direct observation was carried out by the researcher at SIPA 2025 (September 4-6, 2025) at Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran, Surakarta, to observe coordination mechanisms between actors, community involvement, and interactions between local and international artists. After all the data has been collected, the validity and reliability of the data will be tested using triangulation. Data triangulation is used to analyze that the truth can be achieved based on several points of view obtained from several sources and can be accounted for.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Involvement of Societal Actors in the Practice of Parallel Diplomacy in Solo

The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly places foreign affairs under the domain of the central government, as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, reinforced by Law Number 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations, that was later updated by Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Foreign Relations and International Agreements. Inside of this regulatory framework, local governments have the space to engage in international activities as long as they do not conflict by national interests and remain in coordination by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government provides a legal basis for regions to establish cooperation with foreign parties in order to improve the welfare of the people and

regional development, with clear reporting and approval mechanisms from the central government (Law No. 37 of 1999).

Solo's position within the national regulatory framework, more specifically with a focus on parallel diplomacy, has led to it becoming an area that actively promotes its regional culture. The city is often a destination for many tourists, both domestic and foreign, who want to learn about the history and traditional culture inherent to the Java region. More specifically, in the context of Solo's parallel diplomacy, the initiator for the implementation of events is the city government based on Mayor Gibran's 2021-2026 RPJMD (Regional Medium-Term Development Plan) related to three things:

1. Cultural Solo (2021-2026): One of the priorities in the RPJMD is to make Solo a city rich in culture. SIPA plays an important role in this by inviting artists by various countries and strengthening local cultural identity.
2. Interregional Collaboration: Gibran emphasizes the importance of collaboration by surrounding regions to create a multiplier effect, that can also include organizing international events such as SIPA, so that the benefits can be felt by the surrounding areas.
3. Human Resource Development: The RPJMD will prioritize human resource development, that includes training and skills development in the arts and culture, supporting the implementation of SIPA and other arts activities (RPJMD 2021-2026, 2021).

In today's modern era, Solo is increasingly clarifying its position as a cultural center that not only preserves traditional values but also provides space for innovation and the development of elegant and classy tourist destinations. The city government, together by various elements of society, has helped to revitalize new public spaces, revitalize historic areas, and encourage various cultural *events* on both a national and international scale, such as the Solo Batik Carnival (SBC), the Indonesian Umbrella Festival, *Solo International Performing Arts*, etc.

As the initiator for the advancement of Solo City and the Java region, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), as the ministry in charge of central and regional affairs, and the Central Java Disporapar Office are at the forefront, one of their roles being to ensure that this event continues to be held annually with the Solo City Government playing a central role as the initiator in parallel diplomacy through the implementation of SIPA. Based on an interview with Bunda Irawati, Director of SIPA, the implementation of SIPA began with an initiative from the Mayor of Solo during Joko Widodo's leadership (2005-2012) and was approved by him as an effort to revive the glory of Solo's performing arts, which had faded. This role as initiator confirms that the city of Solo did not wait for directives by the central government, but proactively identified local needs for cultural preservation and translated them into an international cultural diplomacy program. Official documentation by the Solo City Tourism and Creative Economy Agency notes that from 2021 to 2025, the Solo City Government has initiated at least eight editions of SIPA, involving an average of 8-10 participating countries each year (Disporapar Kota Surakarta, Laporan SIPA 2021-2025).

In addition to being the initiator, the Solo City Government also acts as a facilitator that creates a supportive ecosystem for the implementation of SIPA. Based on data from the Solo City Government Cooperation Division, the facilitation provided includes the provision of *venues* at Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran, allocation of the regional budget for each year of SIPA implementation, as well as infrastructure support such as stages, *sound systems*, and promotion through local government media. Furthermore, the Solo City Government acts as a mediator connecting local artists from dance studios such as Semarak CandraKirana with partner countries, facilitating the process of inviting international art delegations, and bridging local creative economic interests with international market opportunities presented by SIPA. Finally, to connect all of this with higher authorities, the Solo City Government acts as a

coordinator for Disporapar and Kemenparekraf as part of the executive branch run by the state so that it remains registered as a regional activity of international scale.

The working mechanism employed by the Solo City Government in conducting parallel diplomacy through SIPA involves structured and systematic cross-departmental coordination. Based on a review of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan of the Surakarta Tourism Agency and interviews with the Head of Cooperation of the Solo City Government, the SIPA planning process began six months before implementation with the formation of a working team consisting of the Youth, Sports, and Tourism Agency (Disporapar) as *the leading sector*, the Cooperation Division as the coordinator of foreign relations, the Trade Agency to facilitate creative economic actors, and the Public Relations Division for publication and documentation. This internal coordination mechanism is carried out through monthly coordination meetings involving all relevant Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), where each regional apparatus has specific tasks and functions in the SIPA cycle, from planning and implementation to evaluation. This cross-OPD coordination is crucial because SIPA is not just an art festival, but a comprehensive program that touches on aspects of tourism, trade, foreign relations, and cultural promotion simultaneously.

The Solo City Government's external coordination in SIPA demonstrates the duality of parallel diplomacy: on the one hand, establishing direct relations with foreign partners, and on the other hand, remaining within the coordination corridor with the central government. Based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Solo City Government has established cooperation with eight countries through various schemes, including sister city cooperation with Xi'an (China), cultural cooperation with South Korea through the Korean Cultural Center, and *memoranda of understanding* (MoUs) with Malaysia and Australia for performing arts exchanges. The selection process for SIPA participating countries is carried out through two channels: first, through official diplomatic channels by submitting a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which then forwards the invitation to the embassy of the target country; second, through people-to-people contact by utilizing the existing diaspora and artist networks (SIPA 2023 Report, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2023).

Interestingly, correspondence between the Solo City Government and Kemenparekraf shows that since SIPA was included in the national Calendar of Events (COE) in 2011 and Kharisma Event Nusantara (KEN), the central government no longer provides technical guidance on which countries to invite, but instead provides legitimacy and promotional support through official Indonesian government channels abroad. This consultative yet autonomous pattern of cooperation illustrates the essence of parallel diplomacy as conceptualized by Aldecoa & Keating, in which local government international activities run parallel to or complement central government foreign policy rather than contradicting it, creating synergy between local and national interests within a complementary diplomatic framework.

The practice of parallel diplomacy by the City of Solo through SIPA marks a fundamental shift in the position of local governments by being mere objects of central government policy to active subjects in the arena of international relations. This shift can be traced back to the pre-decentralization period when foreign relations were entirely the exclusive domain of the central government in accordance by Law Number 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, to the post-reform era of the , that opened up space for local governments to engage in international activities through Law Number 32 of 2004 (later revised to Law Number 23 of 2014) on Regional Government.

Data shows that prior to 2009, Solo City was merely a passive recipient of cultural diplomacy programs designed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, in that Solo was chosen as the location for events devoid of having the capacity to determine the format, participants, or orientation of the program. However, since the initiation of SIPA in 2009, Solo

has demonstrated its ability to design its own cultural diplomacy agenda: determining the annual theme of SIPA, selecting partner countries that are relevant to the preservation of local culture, and constructing the narrative of "*The Spirit of Java*" as a diplomatic identity originating from Solo itself. This transformation was made possible by a combination of strong *political will* from local leaders, continuously developed institutional capacity, and the exploitation of regulatory loopholes that gave regions the authority to establish foreign cooperation in the fields of tourism and culture. This shift in roles confirms Hocking's (1993) thesis that in the context of parallel diplomacy, non-central governments are no longer merely agents implementing national policies, but rather international actors with their own interests, identities, and diplomatic strategies that may differ from, yet remain parallel to, the central government's agenda.

Solo City's Parallel Diplomacy Activities in Regional Cultural Preservation

The cultural preservation strategy implemented by the Solo City Government through SIPA demonstrates a comprehensive approach that goes beyond simply exhibiting traditional arts, but rather creates a participatory ecosystem that involves various generations and communities. Based on data by the Solo City Disporapar, SIPA for the 2021-2025 period consistently features an average of 17 traditional Javanese art performances each year, including classical Surakarta dances such as Bedhaya Ketawang and Gambyong, wayang kulit performances by stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana, and gamelan ensembles performing classical keraton songs (SIPA Report 2023-2025).

Based on interviews with the Director of SIPA, the outcomes show that SIPA not only features senior artists by the older generation, but also deliberately allocates 40 percent of performance slots to young dancers and musicians by local studios such as Semarak CandraKirana and students by the Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI) Surakarta. The strategy of involving students from all over Indonesia as *volunteers* in this event also has two objectives: first, to provide an international stage that can increase their motivation and pride in traditional arts; second, to create intergenerational knowledge transfer where senior artists mentor the younger generation in preparing for the performance during the three months leading up to SIPA. This preparation process itself is an effective preservation mechanism because it involves intensive learning of dance techniques, movement philosophy, and performance ethics that cannot be obtained through formal education alone. This strategy confirms UNESCO's (2003) argument in *the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* that the most effective preservation of intangible culture is through *continuous practice* and active intergenerational transmission, not merely through the documentation of performances.

The second dimension of the cultural preservation strategy through SIPA is the creation of systematic and sustainable mechanisms for documentation, promotion, and the establishment of appreciation spaces. Researchers' observations at SIPA 2025 show that each performance is professionally documented through high-resolution video and photography, that is then uploaded to the Solo City Government's digital platform and SIPA's official YouTube channel by English subtitles for international audiences. Data by the SIPA YouTube channel shows that the video of the Bedhaya Ketawang dance performance at SIPA 2023 has been viewed more than 150,000 times, by the majority of viewers coming from Japan, South Korea, and the United States, indicating a cultural promotion reach that transcends the geographical boundaries of Solo (YouTube Analytics SIPA, 2024). More than just digital documentation, SIPA also creates a physical space for appreciation through open workshops for the public, where international and local artists share their artistic techniques and philosophies. In the context of parallel diplomacy, this strategy shows that the city of Solo not only uses SIPA to "sell" Javanese culture, but also to build a global network of culture

appreciators and practitioners who can become agents of preservation in their respective locations, expanding the impact of preservation far beyond Solo's territorial boundaries.

Indicators of success by a qualitative perspective, in-depth interviews by local art studio managers revealed that after SIPA, there was an increase in parents' enthusiasm to enroll their children in traditional dance classes, by Sanggar Semarak CandraKirana reporting a 45 percent increase in new students in the months following SIPA 2023 compared to the previous period (interviewed with the manager of Sanggar Semarak CandraKirana). SIPA has succeeded in creating a foundation for cultural preservation through increased participation, appreciation, and regeneration of artists, but its long-term effectiveness still requires strengthening in terms of program sustainability and institutionalization of more systematic *follow-up* mechanisms. In the context of parallel diplomacy, these findings suggest that the success of subnational governments' international activities cannot be measured solely by the grandeur of *events* or the number of international participants, but rather by their ability to transform diplomatic momentum into structural and sustainable change in the local cultural ecosystem that is the object of preservation.

Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) as an Arena for Parallel Diplomacy

The evolution of SIPA in the 2021-2025 period shows high adaptability to contextual dynamics, especially in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, that required the transformation of the event format by offline to online in 2019-2020, then back to hybrid in 2021-2022, and fully offline again in 2023-2025. Despite facing various concepts and international mobility issues, SIPA 2021 still involved 17 countries, including Indonesia, and a total of 61 art delegations by a *drive-in* concept where the audience watched the performances live but remained in their respective vehicles due to the post-pandemic situation. The transition to a hybrid format demonstrated parallel diplomatic innovation, where the physical performance at Pamedan Mangkunegaran was attended by 200 people, while the live broadcast on the SIPA YouTube channel reached 30,000 viewers globally. This shows that a regional art performance can create a dual audience that expands diplomatic events (Septiyani & Pertiwi, 2021).

SIPA, with its unique annual performances, embraces themes with deep meanings, such as the 2025 theme of "Nifty, Artful, and Visionary," to bring a fresh perspective to international art performances in Indonesia. This finding confirms Hocking's (1993) argument that parallel diplomacy involves dense and layered networks, where local governments are not only objects but also active subjects in international relations. An in-depth analysis based on Hocking's principles was also conducted regarding *Capacity to Act*, *Capability to Manage*, and *Capacity to Promote*.

Solo City's capacity to act autonomously in parallel diplomacy is evident from its independent initiative to organize SIPA without explicit direction from the central government. Strategic decisions such as the selection of annual themes, the determination of participating countries, and the curation of performances are entirely in the hands of the Solo City Government through the SIPA organizing team. The most concrete evidence of this is the decision to continue the event, even in an online format, in 2020-2021 amid the pandemic. This was an initiative of Solo Mayor F.X. Hadi Rudyatmo, who did not wait for instructions by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In fact, it became a *pilot project* for , which was later followed by other cities in Indonesia for their culture-based events. This demonstrates the *capacity to act* independently and respond to specific local needs and identities, in the context of Solo, to continue holding SIPA as an effort to preserve culture.

Furthermore, Solo has the ability to manage its limitations into another major effort. According to an interview with SIPA Director Bunda Irawati, Solo is a small city that does not have natural resources to rely on, so it relies more on human resources. One of the creative

human resources is directed towards organizing events, because events accelerate the economy and bring in many elements that make the economy grow faster. Therefore, Solo has many events, not only because the multiplier effect continues to increase, but also because it is hoped that the welfare of the people of Solo will improve. In addition, it is also to brand Solo as a city of performing arts and a cultural center that attracts foreign art delegations to come to Solo. Thus, the economic cycle will accelerate and the multiplier effect on the community will increase in accordance with the principle of *capability to manage*. The ability to manage is also evident in Solo's capacity to handle the complexity of logistics and protocols for organizing international events, ranging from facilitating artist visas, providing accommodation that meets international standards, to providing interpreters and cultural liaisons who ensure effective communication between local and international artists.

The assertiveness of Solo City's promotional efforts through SIPA is not only about promoting the event itself, but more fundamentally about building Solo's brand as a city of performing arts. This promotional capacity is reinforced by a multi-platform communication strategy that integrates traditional media (national and international press coverage), digital media (social media, YouTube, official website), and word-of-mouth through the diaspora network and SIPA alumni who serve as informal ambassadors of Solo's culture in their respective countries. Not only that, SIPA itself already has a large network with foreign countries, such as the Korean Culture Center in Indonesia, Bunko International Performing Arts Market in Bangkok, Performing Art Network in New Zealand, Taiwan Dance Platform in Taiwan, Yokohama Meeting in Japan, CPU Performing Art Market in Romania, and Seoul Performing Art Market in Korea. Many of these connections are with Korea and Indonesia's neighboring countries, and more relationships have been established over the past 15 years. With the Sipah Festival, it is evident that we are invited to their events every year and mutually respect each other.

The parallel pattern between Solo's diplomacy through SIPA and the central government's cultural diplomacy shows a complementary and mutually reinforcing relationship, rather than a competitive or contradictory one. On one hand, the city of Solo carries out a specific agenda of preserving Javanese culture with a focus on classical palace performing arts that represent a very particular local identity; on the other hand, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy runs the "Wonderful Indonesia" campaign, which promotes the diversity of Indonesian culture in aggregate to attract global tourists. The two run parallel in the sense that SIPA does not require content direction from the center regarding what should be displayed or how cultural narratives should be constructed, but at the same time receives legitimacy and amplification from the center through inclusion in the COE and promotion through the Indonesia Tourism Board abroad.

SIPA fulfills the key characteristics of parallel diplomacy as conceptualized by Hocking and Aldecoa & Keating: first, it is an autonomous subnational initiative in which the Solo City Government is the originator and main decision-maker without instructions from the center; second, it is cross-actor, involving not only the government but also the arts community, creative economy actors, academics, and the community in planning and implementation; third, it has a specific local interest and identity orientation towards the preservation of Javanese culture and the construction of *the "Spirit of Java"* brand, which is particular to Solo; fourth, the involvement of international non-state actors such as art communities, universities, and cultural organizations from partner countries that interact directly with local *counterparts* without full mediation from formal diplomatic channels; and fifth, parallel to national policy in the sense that SIPA runs concurrently with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy's cultural diplomacy program but has a different agenda, methods, and target *audience*, although not contradictory. The convergence of these five characteristics in one platform confirms that SIPA is not just an ordinary international art event, but a systematic and consolidated parallel

diplomacy practice, providing empirical contributions to the study of parallel diplomacy by demonstrating how this theoretical concept is realized in the Indonesian context.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Solo International Performing Arts (SIPA) is a concrete manifestation of the parallel diplomacy practiced by the Solo City Government for the preservation of regional culture for the period 2021-2025. The main findings show that Solo City has successfully transformed its position from a passive object of central government policy to an active subject in the arena of international relations through three key roles: as an initiator that autonomously designs a cultural diplomacy agenda without waiting for central government directives, as a facilitator that provides a supporting ecosystem in the form of venues, local government budgets, and infrastructure, and as a coordinator connecting various actors from local governments, local art communities, to partner countries. Analysis using Brian Hocking's framework confirms that Solo has full capacity in parallel diplomacy: *capacity to act* is evident from its independence in strategic decision-making, including continuing SIPA in an online format amid the pandemic without instructions from the central government; *capability to manage* is evident from the consistent involvement of 8-10 participating countries annually and the management of the logistical and protocol complexities of international events; as well as the *capacity to promote*, manifested in a multi-platform communication strategy that has successfully increased foreign tourist visits by 12 percent per year (Department of Culture and Tourism of Surakarta Municipality, 2024) and built a global network with the Korean Culture Center, Bunko International Performing Arts Market, and other international platforms (Director of SIPA, 2025).

However, this study also identifies limitations that require attention for long-term sustainability. The lack of a systematic follow-up mechanism is reflected in the fact that only 4 of the 15 MoUs with partner countries for the 2021-2025 period have progressed to concrete programs such as artist residencies or arts student exchanges. Dependence on regional leaders and the lack of institutionalization of SIPA in regional regulations pose the risk of discontinuity in the event of a change in leadership that does not have a similar commitment to cultural diplomacy. Limited promotion of events in outdoor media and direct promotion, such as the use of billboards around the venue, are shortcomings of the event that continue to be improved so that the performances are better known and receive a positive image from the surrounding community.

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