

Cuba's Foreign Policy During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Each country pursues a different foreign policy to overcome the spread of COVID-19. For example, The United States recruit medical staff from overseas, and exporting medical equipment is prohibited in Germany and China. Due to those policies, developing and poor countries have difficulty accessing medical equipment and medical doctors from other countries. In the middle of that situation, Cuba implemented a controversial foreign policy of sending its medical personnel and pharmaceuticals to other countries for free. Cuba faces a similar issue, a large number of COVID-19 patients in the country as well as economic challenges as a result of the US economic embargo. Using theories of health diplomacy, cultivated spill-over, and the concept of symbolic capital, this study argues that the purpose of Cuba's foreign policy of sending its medical personnel overseas is for recognition. International recognition is significant for Cuba as international recognition would encourage other countries to collaborate in the health sector or other sectors with Cuba. Furthermore, Cuba's foreign policy is projected to inspire compassion for countries throughout the world in international forums, which can assist Cuba in resolving international issues, particularly the US economic embargo.

Keywords

cuba's health diplomacy; foreign policy; covid-19 pandemic



I. Introduction

COVID-19 is an epidemic that attacks every country in the world. When the COVID-19 pandemic strikes, several countries have health issues, which can lead to political instability and economic crisis. The United States, India, and the European Union are among the countries experiencing political unrest and economic decline as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the US government, led by President Trump, received critics from the US community for its policy. That happened as a result of Trump's policy of blaming China for the spread of COVID-19 rather than focusing on its domestic policy to solve the problem (Aldalala'a, 2020). In terms of the economy, the United States is seeing a dip in initial per capita income from USD 65,279 in 2019 to USD 63,593 in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). In 2020, the United States has fallen to economic recession, with a reduction in private investment that will bankrupt numerous enterprises in the country (ECLAC, 2020). When encountered with the COVID-19 pandemic, a superpower country like the United States appears to be powerless. The world health agency (WHO) has also announced that the corona virus, also called COVID-19, is a global threat worldwide. The outbreak of this virus has an impact especially on the economy of a nation and globally. These unforeseen circumstances automatically revised a scenario that was arranged in predicting an increase in the global economy. (Ningrum, P. et al. 2020)

Not only the United States but India's government has also been criticized for its slow response to COVID-19. India's policy of not closing the border with China immediately after the outbreak of COVID-19 contributes to the high level of the spread of the virus. Moreover, political instability caused by the spread of Covid-19 has resulted in a decline in income per capita in India's economy. In 2019, India's per capita income was USD 2,100, the number decreased to USD 1,927 in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). The decline in India's per capita income is causing the country's economy to slow down.

Although not as terrible as the United States and India, the European Union also suffers from political instability as a result of the lock-down policy. This situation was marked by a lack of unity among EU countries in the months before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lock-down policy in several EU countries has slowed down income per capita and increased the unemployment rate in EU member countries (Zuleeg, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic contributes a significant impact on global politics and economies, as well as destroying healthcare systems in several countries. These situations occurred because of the difficulty to handle COVID-19 patients on the first wave of COVID-19 (Armocida et al., 2020). Italy's health system collapses at the beginning of 2020 due to the quick spread of the COVID-19 virus. Thousands of COVID-19 patients have to wait days for a hospital bed in Italy, many of them died before getting hospital services. On the other hand, the delta version of COVID-19 caused a spike in patient deaths in India (Bhumik et al., 2021). As a result, the health-assurance system is unable to serve a significant number of COVID-19 patients. Lack of ventilators and oxygen in hospitals, causes patients to have to be treated outside the hospital, this condition makes the situation even worse.

Health systems in some countries have collapsed, and almost all countries are struggling to get medical equipment to slow down the spread of COVID-19 or to cure patients with COVID-19. German issued a policy to prohibit the export of hazmat clothing, while China prohibits the export of masks (Bhaskar et al., 2020). Meanwhile, developing countries are facing a shortage of oxygen. The Indian government allowed companies involved in the textile or steel industries to produce oxygen after experiencing an increase of COVID-19 patients and difficulty importing oxygen from other countries (Behnam et al., 2020). Many countries, especially developing and poor countries, are currently suffering from a shortage of medical equipment due to their inability to manufacture their own.

These policies are exacerbated by competition from major countries for the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines. The United States, China, Russia, the UK and 30 other countries are competing against each other to develop a COVID-19 vaccine (Shameem & Mohammed, 2020). This competition between major countries has disrupted cooperation between countries in developing vaccines collectively. Without cooperation between countries, the lack of medical equipment and medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for medical personnel to treat COVID-19 patients.

While other countries compete for medical supplies and seek to import medical equipment from overseas to reduce the number of people infected by COVID-19, Cuba is taking a different approach. Cuba sends its medical personnel and medicines to help other countries. South Africa, Andorra, Brazil, Grenada, United Kingdom, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Qatar, Spain, Suriname, Togo, Venezuela and Vietnam are some of the countries where Cuba sends its medical personnel.

Cuba's policy of sending medical personnel to other countries is an uncommon policy and very dangerous for the country's health system and economy. Because Cuba is

also dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased in total domestic patients. Sending medical personnel to other countries for free isn't a good choice for Cuba's economy. Furthermore, the tourism industry in Cuba has been paralyzed by the policy of banning foreign visits from other countries such as the United States, Canada, and member countries of the European Union. Tourism is an important sector of the Cuban economy because it accounts for 10% of the country's overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Frank, 2022). Despite a variety of potential risks to the country's economic growth, Cuba maintains a strategy of providing medical services to people all over the world. Based on the foregoing, this study will investigate why Cuba has adopted an unpopular policy of sending medical personnel to other countries when the country's cases of COVID-19 have risen.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Health Diplomacy and Global Health Diplomacy

Health diplomacy is a term originated from public health science instead of political science or international relations (Fazal, 2020). Nevertheless, the concept of health diplomacy has been widely recognized in international relations since the first international sanitation conference held by European countries in 1851. This conference is a discussion forum to overcome cholera, bubonic plague, and yellow fever epidemics (Fidler, 2001).

Meanwhile, the concept of global health diplomacy was the idea of Peter Bourne, a doctor and anthropologist who had served as special advisor in the health sector to former US President Jimmy Carter. The concept of global health diplomacy was initiated by Bourne when he realized the importance of each country to pay attention to its country's diplomatic policies in the health sector because health issues are global contemporary issues (Fazal, 2020). Peter Bourne's idea in 1978 is in line with the increasing health issues that have coloured United Nations (UN) programs since the 1970s (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2018). At this point, health diplomacy and global health diplomacy are still seen as one unit because they do not have a striking difference.

Table 1. Health Diplomacy and Global Health Diplomacy

Distinguishing Aspect	Health Diplomacy	Global Health Diplomacy
Diplomacy Level Used	Generally, at the bilateral level, i.e., the actor country's Health Diplomacy and the receiving country's Health Diplomacy.	Multilateral with international institutions involved.
Actors Involved	Health Diplomacy is based on the arrangement of a country that is involved. It's possible to involve actors from the health sector only.	Multi-actor from a variety of fields.

Objective Use of Diplomacy	There is a clear goal that state actors in health diplomacy aspire to attain.	The goal is to deal with the global health crisis.
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Source: Fazal, TM (2020). *Health Diplomacy in Pandemic Times. International Organization*, p. 1–20.

The table above shows that there are differences in terms of the level of diplomacy used, the actors involved, and the purpose of using diplomacy in global health diplomacy and health diplomacy. Based on the explanation of the difference between health diplomacy and global health diplomacy, the definition of health diplomacy in this study is diplomacy that moves to intervene on health issues to achieve certain goals that a country wants to achieve. Meanwhile, although global health diplomacy is engaged in the health sector such as health diplomacy, global health diplomacy is generally used to emphasize the country's concern for global health issues by using diplomacy at the multilateral level.

2.2. Cultivated Spill-Over

In the late 1950s to early 1960s, Ernst B. Haas and Lindberg developed the concept of spill-over as a development of the theory of neo-functionalism. Spill-over is a phenomenon that occurs when countries that work together in one sector cooperate in other sectors or several sectors at once (Schmitter, 2005).

Haas and Lindberg introduce three types of spill-overs that are used as units of analysis on the integration of countries in Europe. The three types of spill-over are functional spill-over, political spill-over, and cultivated spill-over. Functional spill-over is cooperation between countries in one particular sector. One example of functional spill-over is the coal industry cooperation in Europe which later became the forerunner to the formation of economic integration in Europe. Meanwhile, political spill-over is described as an increase in the willingness of cooperating countries to seek solutions to problems through supranational 'institutions'. This institution is expected to help them to realize their interests. The emergence of the European Union organization is one form of political spill-over. Where countries in Europe have the same interest to form an organization to assist them in realizing their respective national interests.

2.3 Symbolic Capital

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, is the first to establish the concept of symbolic capital. Bourdieu explained the original concept of symbolic capital, which he used to classify social phenomena and explain social dominance in France. To accomplish social classification, Bourdieu proposed the concept of symbolic capital, which explains three forms of capital a person owns: economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Economic capital is defined as a resource that can be cashed. While cultural capital can be in the form of ownership of knowledge as evidenced through books, paintings, or educational qualifications. Finally, social capital is in the form of relationships with certain people to be known by the public. These three capitals will make a person have a certain advantage in society. The analogy is that if someone has close relationships with people in government circles, society will perceive them as having the same authority as people in government circles (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013).

The application of the concept of symbolic capital at the state level is described in detail in Basaran and Olsson's article (Basaran & Olsson, 2018). In their article, symbolic capital is defined as sources of capital in the form of economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital that form the capital of power. Economic capital is obtained from all state-

owned sources that can be exchanged for money (Molasy, 2012). Meanwhile, the source of culture and knowledge owned by the state is referred to as cultural capital. Then, social capital includes good quality of human resources. As a result, a combination of the three capitals will generate a power capital, which will eventually result in a country that is respected by other countries (Basaran & Olsson, 2018). Every country has the opportunity to deploy various types of symbolic capital by its capabilities.

III. Research Method

The purpose of this paper is to identify the phenomenon of Cuba foreign policy during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which in this case is sending Cuban medical personnel abroad. To explain this phenomenon, this article uses a qualitative approach. The data collection technique used by the author is literature study. In the literature study technique, the writer collects data through secondary sources that are relevant to the object of writing. Secondary sources that become the author's references are books, scientific journals, annual reports issued by international institutions, and domestic and foreign news pages. The author uses a correlation-qualitative analysis technique, where this technique works by connecting non-numeric data. The data becomes a single entity because of its ability to explain the cause and effect of the phenomenon under study. The narrative is presented through the use of theories and concepts that will be used to explain the phenomenon of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic in a coherent manner.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Cuba Foreign Policy: Sending Medical Personnel Abroad during The COVID-19 Pandemic

Diplomacy carried out by Cuba can be classified as health diplomacy. Health diplomacy is diplomacy that is engaged in the health/medical sector for certain purposes that are not related to the health sector (Fazal, 2020). The policy of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic is classified as health diplomacy for two reasons. The first reason is that Cuba intervened on the issue of the COVID-19 pandemic in 16 countries without involving multilateral diplomacy. Cuba does not involve other countries as third parties and international institutions, especially international institutions engaged in the health sector. The second reason, there are indications that the assistance provided by Cuba has a specific purpose. Cuba impressed all-out in fulfilling these three factors.

The policy of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad which is classified as health diplomacy strengthens the indicator that Cuba has certain goals to be achieved through this policy. To explore the purpose of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad, the author tries to implement the principle of cultivated spill-over to analyze the policy objectives of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cultivated spill-over is a concept that views that integration between countries can be observed through continuous cooperative relationships to produce spill-over effects in the future.

Due to the US economic embargo, Cuba has become a country ostracized by many nations. This has encouraged Cuba to slowly but steadily establish cooperation with other countries, such as the concept of cultivated spill-over. To get the spill-over effect, Cuba's first step is to adopt a policy of sending its medical personnel abroad. After the countries receiving Cuban medical assistance begin to open up, cooperation in the health sector will

be the next step. Sustainable cooperation in the health sector will open up cooperation in other sectors.

Opportunities that arise from the cooperation between countries will expand the scope of symbolic capital that can be achieved by Cuba. Symbolic capital requires sources of capital in the form of economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital that form the capital of power. Symbolic capital comes in a variety of forms. As a result, symbolic capital might be compared to savings that the government can use when it is in a grave circumstance (Basaran & Olsson, 2018). The scenario that occurred before the implementation of the cultivated spill-over on Cuba's foreign policy to deliver Cuban medical personnel abroad policy during the COVID-19 pandemic could erupt in many countries. This paper will exhibit the implementation of cultivated spill-over between Cuba and four countries, namely Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Vietnam.

a. Cuba - Italy Cooperation

Cuba sent its medical personnel to Lombardy, Italy after the Italian Government requested Cuban assistance (Nelson, 2020). The good performance of Cuban medical personnel in Lombardy has attracted the interest of the Government of the region of Sicily, Italy. The government of the region of Sicily is even willing to provide funds to pay for Cuban medical personnel (Sicilian News, 2020). Italy's opening of cooperation in the health sector with Cuba has led the two countries to cooperate in other sectors, including politics. Cuba-Italy cooperation in the political sector can be seen in the efforts of the two countries to establish inter-parliamentary relations (Cubasi, 2021). After talks about the desire of Cuba and Italy to establish inter-parliamentary relations, the Italian parliament voiced the opinion that the US should stop its economic embargo on Cuba (Prensa Latina, 2021). The step taken by the Italian parliament is unprecedented. Thus, Cuba's policy of sending medical personnel to help deal with COVID-19 in Italy has indirectly benefited Cuba, namely Italy's support for Cuba over the US economic embargo.

b. Cuba-Spain Cooperation

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened cooperation in the health sector between Cuba and Spain. Cuba is recorded to have sent 52 medical personnel to Spain (Euro Weekly News, 2020). The government of the Catalan region of Spain was then interested in hiring Cuban medical personnel and recruiting doctors who hold medical qualifications from Cuban medical schools (Telesur English, 2020). Cuba-Spain cooperation in the health sector is slowly expanding to other sectors, namely the political sector. The two countries agreed to hold political dialogue regularly (Cubasi, 2020). The Spanish government later supported the removal of the US economic embargo on Cuba at the UN General Assembly (AlJazeera, 2021). The Spanish government's political movement in the international forum was followed by the Spanish community at home who held demonstrations demanding the Spanish media's awareness of the lack of coverage of Cuban medical personnel. During the demonstration, the Spanish public raised funds to buy medical equipment for the Cuban people (Redwan, 2021). Through the policy of sending medical personnel to Spain, Cuba has received recognition for the quality of its medical personnel and has received sympathy from the Spanish public.

c. Cuba-Mexico Cooperation

The Mexican government recruited 500 Cuban medical workers whose living expenses were borne by the Mexican government as volunteers to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico (Betz, 2020). A year later, Mexico expressed interest in purchasing a Cuban-made COVID-19 vaccine (Telesur English, 2021). In the same year, the two

countries collaborated to establish a biotechnology factory called IncuBIO which produces medicines for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Ataxia (Prensa Latina, 2021). Not only Cooperation in the health deposit, Cuba and Mexico then established partnerships in other fields, namely the political field. The President of Mexico and the President of Cuba pay an official state visit in 2021. The President of Cuba, Diaz-Canel is the only Cuban President to be a guest of honour at Mexico's independence ceremony (Torres, 2021). This state visit was rewarded with a state visit by the Mexican President to Cuba. During a state visit to Cuba, the Mexican President stated that Mexico was against the US economic embargo on Cuba. In addition to political support, Mexico also sent three ships filled with diesel fuel, medical equipment, and food for the Cuban people (Verza, 2021). The continued cooperation in the health sector during the COVID-19 Pandemic has brought Cuba-Mexico relations closer politically, which is unique considering that Mexico is geographically close to US territory and has very close relations with the US.

d. Cuba -Vietnam Cooperation

Cuba and Vietnam are working together to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, Cuba sent medical personnel and COVID-19 medicines produced by Cuba Interferon Alpha-2B to Vietnam (Kiet, 2020). Then, the two agreed to transfer technology for the COVID-19 test kit made in Vietnam and the medicine by Cuba's biotechnology product called Interferon Alpha-2B. Not only that, Vietnam then signed an agreement to buy and at the same time obtain a technology transfer for the vaccine produced by Cuba, namely Abdala, for 10 million doses (Reuters, 2021). Thanks to continued cooperation in the health sector, Cuba and Vietnam have established several political dialogues aimed at supporting Cuba on the issue of the US economic embargo on Cuba (Prensa Latina, 2021). In addition to showing sympathy for the Cuban government, Vietnam has shown its concern for the Cuban people by sending aid in the form of 10,000 tons of rice (Nhan Dan, 2021). Vietnam also donated medical equipment worth USD 217,300 to meet the needs of the Cuban people during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Vietnam News Agency, 2021). Cuba's decision to send its medical personnel to Vietnam resulted in an unexpected collaboration between two developing countries in transferring technology to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Cuba has also received political support from Vietnam in international forums.

4.2 The objective of Sending Cuban Medical Personnel Cuba Abroad during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The implementation of cultivated spill-over on Cuba's relations with four countries: Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Vietnam demonstrate that Cuba has received indirect gain after sending Cuban medical personnel abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic. This indirect gain could be translated as a form of symbolic capital. An indirect gain is a form of symbolic capital. This paper argues that there are 3 types of symbolic capital that Cuba gets after sending its medical personnel abroad. The three symbolic capitals are the recognition from other countries for the ability of Cuban medical personnel; secondly, attracting interest from other countries to conduct intensive cooperation in the health sector or other sectors; and gaining sympathy and support from countries in the world in international forums, especially related to the US embargo policy which is very detrimental to Cuba. The three types of symbolic capital can be explained as follows.

a. The Recognition of Other Countries for The Ability of Cuban Medical Personnel and Health Products

Symbolic capital in the form of recognition of the quality of Cuban medical personnel and health products by other countries is shown by ignoring US pressure from countries receiving Cuban health assistance to refuse the assistance of Cuban medical personnel. One of the rejections of this US pressure was carried out by a small country such as Andorra (Escambray, 2020) and Grenada (Minrex, 2020). Moreover, the Spanish Government resisted US pressure and asked for additional medical personnel to help him deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic (Telesur English, 2020). The close neighbor of the US, Mexico also rejected the US's insistence, even requesting shipments of medicines to treat COVID-19 patients produced by Cuba (Bloomberg, 2021). The same thing was done by Vietnam, which asked Cuba to send Interferon Alpha-2B, a medicine that can be used to suppress the growth of the COVID-19 virus (Kiet, 2020). US alliance countries such as Italy even nominated Cuban medical personnel for the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize (Telesur English, 2020). Cuba is seen as having medical personnel who meet the 'qualifications' of developed countries like Italy. Finally, many other countries asked Cuban medical personnel for help even though the US put pressure on other countries not to use Cuban medical personnel.

b. Attract Other Countries Interest to do Cooperation in the Health Sector or Other Sectors

The policy of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad has attracted the interest of other countries to cooperate more intensively in the health sector or other sector. Cooperation in the health sector occurs between Cuba and 10 countries receiving Cuban medical assistance. Brazil, which once worked with Cuba on the Mais Medicos program, employs Cuban medical personnel to deal with COVID-19 (Reuters, 2020). Italy has also shown interest in hiring Cuban medical personnel (The Guardian, 2020). The government of the Catalonia region of Spain has entrusted the handling of COVID-19 in its territory to medical personnel from Cuba (Telesur English, 2020). Kenya even allocated USD 9.3 million to employ Cuban medical personnel (Telesur English, 2020). The South American country as well as Cuba's neighbor, Suriname wants Cuban medical personnel to extend the period of handling the COVID-19 pandemic in the Suriname region (Prensa Latina, 2021). The policy of sending Cuban medical personnel abroad can be used as an experimental arena for Cuba to map the medical needs of other countries as well as to know the standards of medical personnel needed by countries in the world during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to medical personnel, Cuba's biotechnology product in the form of a COVID-19 vaccine has received many positive responses. This is supported by the evidence that there are number of countries interested in the Abdala vaccine, produced by a Cuban biotechnology company. The Cuban Abdala vaccine is in demand in Jamaica (Bloomberg, 2021) and Venezuela. Even the country of Venezuela got the first shipment of the vaccine in 2021 (Reuters, 2021). Moreover, Cuba has received orders for 10 million vaccine doses from Vietnam (Hanoi Times, 2021) and Nicaragua for 7 million vaccines (Taiwan News, 2021). Cuban-made vaccine Abdala has even received a permit from the Mexican Ministry of Health to be used by the Mexican community (Prensa Latina, 2021). Cuban biotechnology products began to gain a place amid competition from big countries such as the United States, China, and Russia, which also launched similar products.

Cuba's decision to deploy medical personnel to other countries will put a strain on the country's economy. Cuba, in addition, is currently subject to an economic embargo by

the United States and is dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak. Although Cuba sent medical personnel for free, certain nations, such as Mexico, cover the cost of living for Cuban medical personnel (Diariodecuba, 2020). Even other countries, such as Kenya and Italy, request and want to pay for additional medical personnel from Cuba.

In addition to the health sector, sending Cuban medical personnel to many countries also opens up cooperation in other sectors. Italy is listed as a country that has increased cooperation in the political sector with Cuba (Cubasi, 2020). Another country following in Italy's footsteps is Vietnam (Tuoitrenews, 2021). After implementing the policy of sending medical personnel abroad, Cuba was able to increase the opportunity to establish closer bilateral relations with other countries. Cuba has succeeded in attracting the interest of other countries to conduct more intensive cooperation in the fields of health, biotechnology industry, politics, and other fields.

c. Gaining Sympathy from other Countries in International Forum

The symbolic capital that Cuba is trying to achieve in terms of sending its medical personnel abroad is the emergence of sympathy and support from countries in the world in international forums. Cuba uses international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly to gain support from other countries to end the US economic embargo, as well as resist US pressure on the program to send Cuban medical personnel abroad and the sale of vaccines and medicines from Cuba. As many as 15 out of 16 countries that received Cuban medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic voted in favour of Cuba in the annual delegate resolution at the United Nations General Assembly in 2021. Only Brazil abstained, the rest urged the lifting of the US embargo on Cuba (United Nations, 2021). This is understandable considering that diplomatic relations between Brazil and Cuba have deteriorated after the right-wing Brazilian President Bolsonaro criticized the Cuban government.

The sympathy that Cuba received from other countries was not only supported in international forums, but some countries even provided counter-aid to Cuba. The forms of aid given are varied, ranging from logistical materials such as food, medical equipment, and medicines. South Africa was recorded as donating medical equipment to Cuba (Minrex, 2020). Donations in the form of fuel, food, and medical equipment were sent from Mexico using three ships for the Cuban (Verza, 2021). Meanwhile, Qatar also assisted Cuba although it did not specify the type of assistance provided (Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Other countries such as Spain through humanitarian organizations have succeeded in raising funds for the Cuban (Redwan, 2021). Cuba's close partner, Vietnam, donated 10 thousand tons of rice for the Cuban (Nhan Dan, 2021). Vietnam also sent medical equipment to Cuba (Vietnam News Agency, 2021). The Italian community donated medical equipment such as ventilators, medicines, and others worth USD 1.6 million for the Cuban (Radio Angulo, 2021). From this description, it can be said that the aid given to Cuba are generally not in the form of money and not all of them are from the government. Some of the assistance is an initiative of the people of the countries being assisted. The policy of sending Cuban medical personnel is able to create emotional bonds between the people of Cuban aid recipient countries and the Cuban people.

V. Conclusion

Using Health Diplomacy theory, cultivated spillover concept and symbolic capital, Cuba's unique health diplomacy during COVID-19 to send medical personnel abroad is to achieve three goals. The first objective is to achieve recognition regarding the quality and capabilities of Cuban medical personnel, as well as their biotechnology products from other countries. Trust in Cuba's healthcare system, which serves as the personification of the country's future health diplomacy, requires recognition. Cuba hopes that its establishment will be able to achieve these goals, as well as the interests of other countries to cooperate in the health sector or other sectors. Partnering with other countries can help Cuba meet Cuba's national interests as Cuba has difficulty importing products due to the US economic embargo. Its unique health diplomacy creates an emotional bond between Cuba and the recipient country, Cuba hopes to gain sympathy and support from other countries in international forums. The sympathy and support that Cuba receives can be used to counter the destructive effects of the US economic embargo on Cuba. The emotional bond between Cuba and the recipient country came not only from the government but also from the people of the recipient countries who wanted to support Cuba during these difficult times when Cuba was under the US economic embargo.

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