



Semarang City Diplomacy in Environmental Issues

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Abstract: *This article aims to analyze Semarang's city diplomacy in solving environmental problems. Cities have an increasingly large role to play in this globalization era due to complex global issues, especially environmental issues. Cities are also having difficulty dealing with globalization due to the speed of population growth, economic pressures, excessive land use, and the increasing use of motor vehicles that release pollutants into the air. To address these issues, cities around the world are doing their best to find cooperative solutions through diplomacy. In addition, many national capitals cannot handle multiple tasks and, therefore, need to delegate some of their burden to other cities. In line with these objectives, this study utilizes an exploratory and descriptive qualitative research method, focusing on Semarang's diplomacy efforts. This study found that the Semarang city government has been perceived as an institution with clear political objectives that is fully committed to the practice of city diplomacy to engage directly, albeit in a limited way, in multilateral and bilateral international cooperation to find solutions to its environmental problems. The city government is no longer seen as an object of implementation of program plans formulated at the central level but also has the opportunity to formulate strategic plans or bottom-up procedures based on the needs of local communities and the suitability of the model with environmentally sustainable urban development.*

Keywords: *City diplomacy, Bilateral, International cooperation, Multilateral.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's complex interdependencies between nations mean that states can no longer perform their functions comprehensively without involving other actors, including non-central actors. While states remain important actors, globalization is creating changes in the way states operate. Global relations are now characterized by polycentric, multi-layered governance, which in turn opens up the possibility for sub-state authorities to engage with external entities beyond the state. (Scholte, 2005) This kind of governance has shaped "globalization from below" as opposed to globalization from above through state-sponsored activities.

Globalization has changed the perspective in interpreting international reality. Not only has it created a conception that blurs the jurisdictional lines of territorial boundaries, but it has also actively encouraged non-state actors to be directly involved in political, economic, and socio-cultural activities in the international sphere. The openness of economic zones has led developing countries to optimize outward-looking policies for their economic development, a policy that allows foreign investment and leads to massive relocation of production bases of large multinational companies targeting major cities in developing countries, and this industrialization process has a direct impact on the socio-ecology of local communities. In fact, in modern life, as it is today, economic and social

aspects always go hand in hand in a causal relationship. Because many humans do not think about the environmental aspects of their lives, the natural urban ecosystem is increasingly being eroded and replaced by facilities and infrastructure to support human life in the name of development. The result of these developments that do not pay attention to the carrying capacity of the environment is what ultimately gives birth to environmental crises. The long-term project of environmentally sustainable city development is also inseparable from the phenomenon of urbanization. Entering 2030, it is estimated that 60% of the world's population will be in urban areas, compared to only 3% at the beginning of the 19th-century industrial revolution. Of this acceleration, more than 90% occurs in the developing world (Leitman, 2006). Indonesia, where most of the population initially lived in rural areas, now has 50% of the total population living in urban areas. The results of the last population census in 2010 showed that the proportion of the urban population was 49.7%. As a result of urban sprawl, Indonesia now has 93 autonomous cities and one Special Capital Region. Meanwhile, earlier cities experienced high population increases due to urbanization. In 1950, only Jakarta (the capital city) had a population of more than one million. Thirty years later, in 1980, three new cities had populations of more than one million: Surabaya, Bandung, and Medan. Then, in 1990, Semarang, Palembang, and Ujung Pandang (Makassar) had populations of more than one million (Katherina, 2018).

The phenomenon of urban sprawl has brought about a number of serious implications, including massive environmental degradation. This condition causes access to basic infrastructure facilities and services based on the availability of natural resources to become very competitive. Sheng (2011) states that the rapid urbanization of cities in the ASEAN region has resulted in a number of negative impacts: increasing inequality in access to basic social services such as water, sanitation, housing, education, and health care, and increasing environmental problems, including air and water pollution, and the challenge of coping with increasing amounts of solid waste. The 2018 Global Matrix Report (Environmental Performances Index), issued by Yale University (see Table 1), shows the performance status of ASEAN countries in prioritizing environmental sustainability is still low on a world scale. Until 2018, none of the Asian countries were ranked in the top 10 best in environmental management; the highest position was occupied by Japan (20) and followed by Taiwan (23). Indonesia itself is ranked 133 out of 180 countries in the world and is in the bottom four countries in ASEAN, even defeated by Vietnam and Thailand.

Table 1. Ranking Country Performance On High-Priority Environmental Issues

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	WORLD RANK
1	Japan	74,69	20
2	Taiwan	72,84	23
3	Singapore	64,23	49
4	Brunei Darussalam	63,57	53
5	South Korea	62,30	60
6	Sri Lanka	60,61	70
7	Malaysia	59,22	75
8	Philippines	57,65	82
9	Mongolia	57,51	83
10	Maldives	52,14	111
11	China	50,74	120
12	Thailand	49,88	121
13	Federated States of Micronesia	49,80	122
14	Timor-Leste	49,54	125
15	Bhutan	47,22	131
16	Vietnam	46,96	132
17	Indonesia	46,92	133
18	Myanmar	45,32	138
19	Cambodia	43,23	150
20	Laos	42,94	153
21	Papua New Guinea	39,35	164
22	Afghanistan	37,74	168
23	Pakistan	37,50	169
24	Nepal	31,44	176
25	ndia	30,57	177
26	Bangladesh	29,56	179

Source: Regional Asian Country, 2018, Environmental Performances Index:

epi.yale.edu

Environmentally sustainable urban development is important to be a priority agenda for local governments because the impact of development is related to the survival of local communities. The strategic role of city governments and capacity building as local entities to build international cooperation is also getting stronger because it is difficult to distinguish between international and local issue areas. According to Garesche (2007), the rapid growth and development of cities in various parts of the world in the last two decades have reinforced the old phenomenon of “paradiplomacy,” where cities and municipalities have an important role in influencing a country's international relations and usually include a variety of cooperation around urban issues. The complexity of international relations requires this shift, as the central government no longer has enough capacity to handle it. Nevertheless, Realists still insist that the state is

the only actor in international relations, while other variants of Realism, although they see the possibility of non-state actor involvement, are still within the corridor of the interests of state actors. Cities have an increasingly large role to play in this era of globalization due to complex global issues, especially environmental issues. Cities have difficulty dealing with globalization due to the speed of population growth, economic pressure, excessive land use, and the increasing use of motor vehicles that release pollutants into the air. This is not surprising, as economic development is anthropocentric, not ecocentric; that is, it favors people and not the environment (Eckersley, 2010). To address these issues, cities around the world are doing their best to find cooperative solutions through diplomacy. In addition, many national capitals cannot handle multiple tasks and, therefore, need to delegate some of their burden to other cities. Non-capital cities in different parts of the world are showing that they can handle their own problems. (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020).

Semarang is a good case in point, as it takes its problems very seriously. This is evident from its efforts in reducing carbon emissions, creating more public spaces, improving waste management, and creating green jobs. Semarang is a shining example of how a city can become a global actor in environmental diplomacy. Even so, there is still much work to be done, as there are many challenges ahead.

This article focuses on the role of non-capital cities, such as Semarang, in shaping international cooperation related to environmental issues. The author uses Semarang as an example and treats it as a non-state actor because: “cities, unlike regions, are not part of state power. Because of their distinct nature, they are part of the public power that can be considered as an intermediary force between the state and civil society” (Kuznetsov, 2015). We argue that as a non-central government, as a secondary city, and as a non-state actor, Semarang has managed to set a good example by proactively engaging in environmental diplomacy and doing all it can to create a greener living space for its citizens' lives. Since the 2000s, Semarang has increased its role as a global player in international relations by using environmental issues as a driving force.

In the last decade, the city of Semarang has reinvented itself through rapid green development. The rise of cities in diplomacy represents a multi-centric world amidst a state-centered world in a post-Westphalia diplomacy. Using Semarang as a case study and examining how the city tackles environmental challenges, we will show how a city can play an important role in realizing responsible development. We will focus on the mayor's efforts to decentralize Semarang by conducting down-to-earth, people-oriented city

diplomacy, especially on environmental issues. This reverses the notion that diplomacy is solely the work of diplomats and political elites, with little to do with the welfare of the people, especially those at the grassroots level. This article shows that Semarang, as a secondary city, has successfully created green living spaces and achieved SDG targets through active environmental diplomacy through multilateral engagement and bilateral partnerships.

Semarang, as a secondary city, plays an important role in Indonesia's economic structure. The fifth largest city in Indonesia, Lumpia City is the capital of Central Java and the fourth largest port city in Indonesia after Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan. A city of fascinating colonial traditions and architecture, friendly people, and pleasant Javanese speech, it is an important engine for national development. Although Jakarta is the capital, Semarang is a vibrant city.

By capitalizing on its uniqueness and strengths, Semarang can serve as a model for the development of other cities nationwide and inspire them to drive economic growth. As Semarang rapidly evolves into a people-friendly secondary city, it needs to ensure itself as an ecologically and socially healthy city. By maintaining its humanistic traits, Semarang can enhance its environmental standing and thereby generate economic development. Overcoming past experiences in poor waste management, flood management, and reducing air pollution, Semarang is now moving towards becoming a green city. Non-state actors have contributed to Semarang's success in addressing environmental issues. Environmental issues are becoming a global problem. Smart cities are innovative efforts by urban ecosystems to address issues and improve the quality of life for people and communities.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative case study method. Data collection focused on secondary data and open information presented through mass media and information sources from verified public institutions. In the initial stage, the author explored information related to cross-border activities carried out by the city government as an implementation of its role as an international relations actor.

This research explores two main variables of the role of sub-national actors (city governments) through international cooperation in environmental issues, namely the multilateral context, and bilateral context, which will then be investigated through the city diplomacy approach and the data obtained. Data analysis will answer how a number

of data is processed and interpreted, leading to hypotheses to answer the formulation of problems in this study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

City Diplomacy dan Glocal Governance

At the beginning of the development of international relations studies, the interaction pattern was in the form of diplomacy and cooperation in the nature of high politics, which only involved state actors and the main issues surrounding national defense and security. (Rana, 2013) However, as the dynamics of international relations develop, the actors involved and the issues that are of concern to the world also develop. The study of international relations today is not only high politics but also low politics. In addition, issues of concern in international relations have also developed, ranging from economic issues, public welfare, poverty, culture, gender, and the environment. (Chan, 2016) In relations between countries themselves, the communication medium used for negotiation is diplomacy.

Previous studies on diplomacy often interpret diplomacy as a regulated communication process. (Constantinou et al., 2016) Although it was originally only an activity of official state officials, diplomacy is now also carried out by non-state actors. This is in line with the need for communication between entities in the world. (Purwono, 2020) This view is in line with Hamilton and Langhorne's understanding that diplomacy actors are not only states but political entities. (Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, 1995). Even James Der Derian emphasizes the aspect of alienation by defining diplomacy as mediation between alienated individuals, groups, or entities (James Der Derian, 1987), especially if there is a boundary of identity and that boundary is crossed. (Constantinou et al., 2016).

The 20th century has presented the concept and practice of public diplomacy that encourages the presence of non-state actors to be able to play an active role in overcoming various problems faced at the local level by local governments or what is known as city diplomacy. This concept can be defined as institutions and processes where cities engage in cooperation with actors in the scope of international politics with the aim of representing their interests to each other (van der Pluijm, 2007). However, not all international activities of local governments can be categorized as city diplomacy. According to (La Porte, 2012), when defining public diplomacy activities, there are two conditions that must be met in city diplomacy activities: the actor that takes the initiative

of cooperation must at least be institutionalized and have clear political objectives. In other words, the actor must consciously have a desire to have a permanent influence on policies, procedures, and international relations. In fulfilling these conditions, local governments have indirectly contributed to blurring the line between national policy and international relations. This is illustrated in Koo-hong Chan's conception of city diplomacy as trans-municipal horizontal relations between sovereignty-free cities that work through peer-to-parties between municipal officials in solving specific problems or common challenges. (Dan Koo-hong Chan, 2016).

While the proliferation of inter-city cooperation initiatives across the world has further strengthened the network of cities around the world (Keiner & Kim n.d., 2000), it does not necessarily reflect a watered-down version of traditional international relations. Rather, this line of cooperation between cities across countries is intended as an effective way to strengthen the capacity of cities to solve social and environmental problems, provide more adequate public services to their citizens, and develop urban governance and management structures. The intensity of this cooperation network can even encourage the emergence of a new phenomenon called glocal governance. In line with this, Giddens suggests that there are three directions in the process of globalization: upward, downward, and sideward. The upward process means that globalization has the ability to eliminate the old conception of national borders toward a liberal and cosmopolitan world. Along with this process, globalization also has a downward pressure that motivates local entities to redefine their functions and roles after the disappearance of the traditional concept of the nation-state. Furthermore, the sideward stage presents economic zones and cooperation built by local entities through transnational channels. This concept accurately describes a condition why local entities begin to be taken into account in the world, which is then known as glocalization or the globalization of local actors. (Giddens, 2003).

On an international scale, there are three regimes that govern this, namely Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The discourse on the involvement of local authorities in sustainable development dates back to the Agenda 21 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992. The involvement of cities as supporters of sustainable development is based on the Agenda 21 sustainable development indicators (see Table 2). Subsequently, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development was discussed at the UN summit in New York in late 2015. Point 11 in the SDGs focuses on sustainable urban development, which aims to create cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable economically, socially, and

environmentally. Cities have a significant role to play in sustainable development. Most of the goals of the 2030 agenda can only be achieved if local governments mobilize and make efforts to make urban areas sustainable. Successful implementation of the SDGs requires synergy and empowerment of civil society, including different economic, social, and political actors. Collaboration and increased cooperation between different levels of government are also essential for the successful implementation of the SDGs (UN-Habitat, 2016). It is not surprising that, recently, many academics have conducted studies or research related to the application of green policy models initiated by certain agencies and implemented in ways determined by these agencies. In practical terms (green building practices) can then be interpreted as efficiently using energy, water, and other resources, protecting occupant health and improving employee productivity, and reducing waste, pollution, and environmental degradation (US EPA, 2012).

Table 2. Sustainable Development Indicators Based on Agenda 21 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 1992

Social and Economic Dimension	Resource Conservation and Management for Development	Strengthening the Role of Large Groups
Integrate environment and development in decision-making.	Atmospheric protection	Strengthening the role of nongovernmental organizations
	An integrated approach to land resource planning and management	Local authority initiatives in support of Agenda 21
	Managing fragile ecosystems: Combating desertification and drought	
	Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources: application of an integrated approach to the development, management, and use of water resources	

Source: processed from *Agenda 21 Contents* at sustainabledevelopment.un.org

Indicators are essential in sustainability planning efforts to see the potential targets of sustainable development to be achieved. Agenda 21 produced general commitments related to a comprehensive plan to build global cooperation on sustainable development to improve human life and the environment. These commitments were further developed

when member states made a millennium declaration at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 under the direct supervision of the United Nations. This summit eventually led to the elaboration of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have Indicators to monitor development goals and targets that focus on social development. The MDGs are more binding than Agenda 21 because progress on the MDGs is monitored globally through the United Nations Secretary-General's annual report to the General Assembly and through regular country reporting. Reports must be based on international indicators that are based on standardized concepts, definitions, and methodologies that are compatible with cross-country comparisons. Goal 7 of the MDGs on ensuring environmental sustainability also has several indicators that are more detailed according to the specific targets to be achieved.

Local governments, especially cities, as part of the central government, have political, technical, and financial resources, including access to technology that allows them to engage with actors from other countries (Gutiérrez-Camps, 2013). Although conducted by city governments and parallel institutions to achieve the goals of the city as a separate entity in international relations, the conduct of diplomacy itself cannot be separated from its relationship to achieving national interests. City diplomacy can be considered a decentralized form of international relations management where the actor is the city.

The mayor or regent is often the representative of city diplomacy, but this does not rule out the involvement of council members and other city officials. Unions or community groups cannot be said to be actors who carry out city diplomacy unless their movements represent the city as a whole. These actors can carry out city diplomacy with other actors in the realm of international politics through two-way or multi-directional interactions. Two-way city diplomacy is a diplomatic process that involves two parties with at least one city representative. The purpose of this process can be focused on gaining benefits or achieving the interests of one party or both parties. Whereas multidirectional city diplomacy is a diplomatic process that involves more than two parties to represent various cities (van der Pluijm, 2007).

Establishing Multilateral Cooperation

Semarang City builds international networks through its membership in the international organization UCLG ASPAC (United and Local Government Asia Pacific), which consists of around 155 city governments in Asia and Pacific countries. City

governments in several countries in the Asia Pacific Region are involved in the Climate Resilience Inclusive Cities (CRIC) project. The activity took place on January 29-30, 2020, in Jakarta and was attended by 19 invited regions, some of which were attended by Mayors, such as the Mayors of Pekanbaru, Pangkalpinang, Banjarmasin, Samarinda, Salatiga, Palu, Gorontalo, and Ternate. The nineteen invited regions that attended included the cities of Banda Aceh, Pekanbaru, Bandar Lampung, Pangkalpinang, Cirebon, Semarang, Salatiga, Yogyakarta, Mataram, Kupang, Banjarmasin, Samarinda, Palu, Gorontalo, Ternate, Tual, Jayapura, DKI Jakarta Province, and Cilacap Regency. All regional participants are asked to provide program exposure in the region, which is divided into four thematic sectors. Thematic-1 is about Climate Change Management, Thematic-2 is about City Resilience Management, Thematic-3 is about Waste Management, Thematic-4 is about Air Quality Management, and Thematic-5 sector is about Smart City Management. Semarang City took part in this event by choosing the fourth theme, which is air quality management.

Besides being a member of UCLG-ASPAC, Semarang City is also active in the IUCCE (Initiative for Urban Climate Change and Environment) organization. In 2018, in order to be more easily remembered by local partners, IUCCE changed its name to IKUPI, which stands for City Initiative for Climate Change. The organization is located in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Semarang's location as a central city in the Indonesian context has inspired our organizational values and mission. Within the city itself, IUCCE has a relationship with stakeholders representing academia, government, civil society, and the private sector to promote sustainability in urban areas, especially in the environmental context. IUCCE provides a space for those concerned with enhancing the adaptive capacity of urban areas to address climate change and environmental change. Establishing partners for funding and collaboration partners, such as USAID, The Rockefeller Foundations, Wetlands International, GIZ, iied, and IGES, as well as collaboration partners with several universities, such as Diponegoro University, University of Hawaii, and INGO Save The Children further strengthens the position of Semarang city as a place for these organizations. In this case, Semarang City is making collaborative efforts to anticipate climate change that will affect the condition of the city.

Related to climate change. Semarang City is classified as an area that is vulnerable to climate change. As stated in the vulnerability assessment conducted by ISET et al. (2010), Semarang has experienced significant flooding and sea level rise. The Semarang

city government, in collaboration with several stakeholders, conducted a Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) with a focus on the Bringin drainage sub-system in 2012-2014. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team was one element of the project.

Establishing Bilateral Cooperation

Indonesia-Japan cooperation in the JCM scheme is also formed in the concept of sister city or city-to-city collaboration, one of which is between Semarang City, Indonesia, and Toyama City, Japan. As stated in the *Letter of Intent* (LoI), the sister city cooperation between Semarang City, Indonesia, and Toyama City, Japan, focuses on renewable energy management and public transportation in the JCM scheme. This cooperation was agreed on December 14, 2017, in Toyama by the Mayor of Semarang, Hendrar Prihadi, and the Mayor of Toyama, Masashi Mori.

The cooperation between Semarang City, Indonesia, and Toyama City, Japan, is expected to bring changes and developments related to emission reduction figures for Indonesia. In return, Japan will assist Indonesia in the application of technology, especially in the energy sector, in order to create a sustainable city and environment, which will also indirectly help increase the development and absorption of human resources in Semarang City, Indonesia. This cooperation was launched by the Semarang City Government because it wanted to build the image of Semarang City as a smart city. To achieve this image, there needs to be a new program movement and renewal in several fields such as government, economy, social, branding, and environment. Especially in building the image of a smart environment, the Semarang City Government has programs for building the environment, such as roads, rivers, towers, and public transportation. The programs and processes carried out by the Semarang City Government to build a smart city image can be accessed directly by the public through the Official Website provided by the Semarang City Government specifically.

Therefore, Semarang needs other cities, especially from developed countries, to support the change of its environmental degradation. Semarang City Government's decision to collaborate with Toyama City Government was motivated by Toyama City's success as an eco-friendly technology industry city with many advanced technologies produced by local companies. Toyama itself is known as one of the most populous cities in Japan that successfully balances industrial activities with environmental sustainability.

Toyama's success comes on the back of several international environmental awards given to Toyama City. With an estimated population of 417,878 as of February 2018, Toyama has been recognized as an *Eco Model City*(2008), *Future City* (2011), and *SDGs Future City* (2018). The Toyama City government has also been very consistent with the implementation of the main policy for the environment, which is a city with a developed environment in terms of transportation and renewable energy. The Toyama City government has also cooperated with many international organizations and institutions, as well as with inter-city cooperation schemes. This is why we believe Toyama City can serve as a good example and cooperation partner for Semarang City to implement environmentally friendly development, especially in the transportation sector, which is effective for the city's development.

The technical cooperation between Semarang City, Indonesia, and Toyama City, Japan, is also expected to result in emission reduction through the public transportation sector, as well as in building and improving the quality of human resources in Semarang City. It is common knowledge that Japanese people work on the basis of the word “consistent,” as well as the people of Toyama City. In the 2017-2018 period, the technical cooperation between Semarang City, Indonesia, and Toyama City, Japan moved linearly and quickly. One of the programs that have been implemented is the implementation of Trans Semarang Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) public transportation with its basic fuel, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) instead of fuel oil. The implementation of this CNG-based public transportation program is under the JCM scheme, where this public transportation is expected to reduce carbon emissions and contribute to Indonesia's obligation to reduce emissions.

The Semarang City Government's decision to collaborate with the Toyama City Government was motivated by Toyama City's success as an environmentally friendly technology industry city with various sophisticated technological achievements produced by local companies. Toyama itself is known as one of the most populous cities in Japan that successfully balances industrial activities with environmental sustainability. The output of the technical cooperation between Semarang City, Indonesia and Toyama City, Japan, is the basic foundation for the Semarang City Government to build a *smart city with a smart environment*. To strengthen this cooperation, the Mayor of Semarang, Hendrar Prihadi went to Toyama on December 14, 2018 with the aim of strengthening the Semarang-Toyama City technical cooperation programs at the *Inter-City Collaboration Forum* meeting. This meeting discussed the next program, as stated in

the Semarang-Toyama LoI, which is related to the development of new renewable energy in Semarang City.

4. CONCLUSION

In Indonesia, the occurrence of paradiplomacy is inseparable from the support of the central government with the granting of regional autonomy. In addition, the existence of Law No. 24 of 2000 on International Agreements and Law No. 32 of 2004 on Local Government provides more opportunities for movement and authority for local governments to develop potential and resources in international cooperative relations. The role of cities in diplomacy today is increasingly significant, both in the context of promoting potential as well as supporting the achievement of national interests. This reverses the notion that diplomacy is solely the work of diplomats and political elites, which has little to do with the welfare of the people, especially those at the grassroots level. It is the city that is closer to the people, the place where problems arise, and the place that provides solutions.

The background to this collaboration is Semarang's environmental problems. Like most large cities, Semarang is also a densely populated city. Problems that commonly occur in big cities like Semarang are environmental problems, especially high pollution levels. Semarang City has made various efforts to improve its air quality through multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

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