

The Involvement of Surabaya and Semarang as Subnational Actors in Diplomacy

Anna Yulia Hartati¹, Yuwanto², Teguh Yuwono³, Muhammad Adnan⁴
{annayulia@unwahas.ac.id¹}

Universitas Wahid Hasyim, Indonesia¹
Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia^{2,3,4}

Abstract. The current article aims to gain a deeper understanding of the involvement of the city of Surabaya and the city of Semarang as subnational actors in implementing diplomacy. The role of cities in diplomacy has recently shown greater significance, in terms of both promoting their own potentials and supporting the achievement of national interests. This challenges the assumption that diplomacy is exclusively the work of diplomats and political elites, who are not much associated with the welfare of the people, particularly those at the grassroots level. Cities have a more intimate relationship with the people and serve as a place where problems not only begin but are resolved as well. By using a city diplomacy approach, we analyzed variables of municipal governments in international interactions. The present study employed qualitative case study methodology by collecting secondary data through literature study. Findings of the research show that cities like Surabaya and Semarang have been successful in fostering international cooperation and helping achieve national interests through global partnerships. Surabaya and Semarang municipalities as subnational actors in international relations have leveraged city diplomacy for the sake of improving the prosperity of its local citizens and supporting the development of their city.

Keywords: Subnational Actors, City Diplomacy, International Cooperation, National Interest

1 Introduction

Today's complex international interdependence has resulted in states no longer able to run their functions comprehensively without the involvement of other actors, including non-central government actors. Although the state remains to be a key actor, globalization has led to changes in the way states work. Global relations today are indicated by polycentric, layered governance that in turn opens up possibilities for subnational authorities to be involved with external entities outside the state [1]. This type of governance has established what is dubbed as "globalization from below" and it challenges globalization from above with its state-sponsored activities.

The role of cities will gain greater significance in the future, even more so than what had been imagined by analysts, practitioners, and policy makers. In fact, the 21st century will not be dominated by America or China, Brazil or India, but by cities [2]. This view is based on the fact that cities have currently become centers of governance where the future world will be shaped. Technological advancements and change in population distribution patterns have contributed substantially to this future. In the traditional study of international relations,

international interactions were mostly dominated by states as the main actor. At a certain level, this role is irreplaceable. The state has a unique attribute of representing the interests of the entire nation, i.e., national interests. This is described by various theories on diplomacy that tend to position the state as the center. The role of non-state actors has significantly increased, and it is driven by at least two factors, which are: advancement of information and telecommunication technology and the spread of democracy.

In Indonesia, the involvement of subnational units has rapidly progressed in the last twenty years, particularly since the advent of Indonesia's reform era. In 1999, Indonesia began implementing regional autonomy in the government system, which ended the centralistic era. Since then, regional governments have been allowed greater authority, particularly in matters that directly concern public services and economic development at the local level, including foreign relations. The government issued Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations and Law No. 24/2000 on International Agreement. In the Regional Government Law, issues concerning regional involvement in foreign relations are also stipulated, which specifically regulates foreign cooperation. Municipal/regional governments have the authority to engage in international cooperation, but there are several requirements that need to be fulfilled. Indonesia oversees 98 cities and 416 regencies [3] that have the potential to represent national interests in foreign relations with a relatively greater significance compared to other countries, particularly in the Southeast Asian region.

In this article, refer 2 (two) cities, namely Semarang and Surabaya. as an example of a city that provides inspiration in the success of establishing foreign cooperation. On the basis of uniqueness and the diversity it has, Semarang has a variety of names that quite attractive and worthy and worthy of being marketed for "sale", like Venice Van Java, Java Harbor, Asian Beauty, Little Netherland, ATLAS City, Lumpia City, and Herb City. Likewise, Surabaya as a secondary city plays an important role in the structure of the Indonesian economy. As the second largest city in Indonesia, Surabaya is an important engine for national development. Although Jakarta is the capital city, Surabaya is the fastest growing city in Indonesia. Surabaya has established trade relations with many other cities in the world, large labor market, many centers of excellence, high concentration of knowledge, various socio-economic and educational institutions, and offers a better quality of life than other third-tier national cities. This article aims to illustrate what the involvement of Surabaya and Semarang as regional government units called "city" in international relations is like.

2 Methodology

The current research used the qualitative case study method. Data collection was focused on secondary data and open information available via mass media and sources of information acquired from verified public institutions. In the initial stage, we sought information relating to cross-border activities carried out by city governments to fulfill their role as actors in international relations.

Documents on regulations and policies taken by the city governments were then analyzed to illustrate their commitment and consistency to their role as actors in international relations. Subsequently, we analyzed the city governments' activities and practices in relation to government policies, which are manifestations of the development vision.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 City Involvement in Diplomacy

City diplomacy is generally understood as a form of diplomacy conducted by subnational actors, an interplay between “diplomatic and urban practice” that seeks to influence the international environment for the purpose of safety, security, and prosperity of local citizens as well as the advancement of global interest and identity. As one of the subnational actors, cities can also help to promote national interest and the nation’s image in international world [4].

The involvement of actors at this level is known as paradiplomacy, which is defined simply as the involvement of subnational governments through the establishment of formal or informal ties with foreign public or private entities, permanent or temporary (ad hoc), with the objective of promoting social, economic, cultural or political dimensions of development [5]. One of the variations of paradiplomacy is city diplomacy. In the 2000s, an approach, in the field of international relations and regional government studies, which more specifically observes the role of cities emerged.

In 2006, there was a working conference held by the City Diplomacy Committee in Perugia, Italy [6]. This event, which became known as the Perugia Meeting, was a mutual sharing forum among 40 participants that consisted of local authorities from various countries, they discussed about how local governments can play a role in global issues such as conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post conflict reconstruction. In 2008, The 1st World Conference of city diplomacy was arranged by the City Government of Den Haag, the Netherlands and resulted in a more comprehensive academic article on city diplomacy, in terms of definition and description on the limitation of roles that local authorities can actually perform.

The established assumption is that there are many cross-national conflicts occurring at the local level, or conflicts that are geographically located in cities. Meanwhile, there seems to be a more extensive argumentation in academic studies, wherein local authorities can play a greater role, particularly by collaborating with global actors, or with similar-level local actors in other countries that are reputable or have a global reach. This terminology led to the view that city diplomacy is achieved by involving cities with other “glocal” actors and conducting various joint activities, such as “facilitating communication, negotiating agreements, gathering information, preventing conflicts, and symbolizing the existence of an international community”

Based on this perspective, the practice of city involvement in international relations is nothing new at all. What can be considered new is the nature and scope of city diplomacy that have developed more intensely and extensively. Its intensity relates to issues included in the city’s area of involvement and its extensiveness relates to the extent of authority that the city has, in accordance with the mandate given by the central government.

International studies have long restricted the role of cities, based on assumptions of “separateness, discontinuity, and exclusivity”, cities are positioned as part of the national authority [7]. Such perspective has been a restricting factor for cities when they carry out their role as a diplomatic actor, this has accordingly led to differences in understanding city-based diplomacy activities and traditional foreign politics [8].

3.2 The Role Of Indonesian Cities In Diplomacy

Regulations relating to Indonesian diplomacy allow cities and the government to function as actors of diplomacy. The implementation of the macro-level regulation is observed from the several technical rules issued at the ministerial level, e.g., Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs No. 03/2019 on the Guideline for the Foreign Relations of Regional

Governments or Ministerial Regulation No. 03/2008 on the Guideline for Regional Governments in Engaging in Foreign Cooperation. These technical regulations emphasize the fields of cooperation that subnational governments can engage in with foreign entities. Both of these subsidiary regulations provide clear directions regarding the importance of municipal/regional governments' role in foreign relations. This need gains even greater significance when it is correlated with the geographical and geopolitical constructions of the Republic of Indonesia, where there are tens of thousands of islands. Indonesia maintains its land borders with three countries (Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor Leste), and it shares marine boundaries with seven countries (Thailand, Vietnam, India, Singapore, the Philippines, Australia, and the Republic of Palau). This position has heightened the strategic role of cities/localities in implementing national interest, particularly regions situated in border areas. Actually, the city/local governments are those standing at the forefront of Indonesia's borders.

In addition to the geographical and geopolitical factors, the regional dynamics of Southeast Asia is also affected by regional mechanism such as ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Community (AC). These dynamics have influenced the role and contribution of autonomous regions throughout Indonesia. On numerous occasions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accentuated the need for Indonesian regions, particularly urban areas to revamp various aspects to confront regional dynamics, which are full of new opportunities and challenges.

3.3 The Role Of Cities In Establishing International Cooperation

According to bilateral relation standards, foreign missions are generally found in the state capital. Friendly states will open missions/diplomatic offices in cities other than the capital based on several considerations, depending on how the individual state defines its national interest in the host country. Nonetheless, cities can be involved in various international activities held by the City Government or other entities in the city. One of the indicators we can use to understand a city's significance in international relations is the number of foreign missions/diplomatic offices, international organizations, or foreign companies there are in a given city. Regarding this matter, the city of Surabaya seems to have a relatively greater significance, as there are 23 (twenty three) foreign representative offices in the city. As for the city of Semarang, no foreign mission/office can be found in the city.

Surabaya and Semarang have differing characteristics, although both are autonomous regions with a status as the provincial capital. The city of Surabaya is the capital of East Java and the largest metropolitan in the province. Surabaya is the second largest city in Indonesia after Jakarta, and it is a center of business, trade, industry, and education in the eastern part of Indonesia. This city is located 789 kilometers to the east of Jakarta, or 426 kilometers northwest of Denpasar, Bali. Surabaya is situated on the north coast of Java adjacent to the Madura strait and the Sea of Java. Surabaya has a total area of approximately 333.063 km² with a population of 2,813,847 (2014). The Surabaya metropolitan area, otherwise known as Gerbang Kertosusil (an abbreviation for Gresik-Bangkalan-Mojokerto-Surabaya-Sidoarjo-Lamongan), with a population of about 10 million, is the second largest metropolitan area in Indonesia after Jabodetabek (an abbreviation for Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi). Aside from land transport, people can get to Surabaya via the Juanda International Airport, Tanjung Perak Seaport, and Ujung Port.

The city of Semarang is one of the key cities located along Java's northern coastline and it connects Jakarta and Surabaya as well as inland cities in the southern part of Java central (Surakarta and Yogyakarta), and it is also the fifth largest metropolitan area in Indonesia

following Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, and Medan. As one of the most developing cities in the island of Java, Semarang has a population of nearly 2 million, which can reach up to 2.5 million in the daytime. The metropolitan area known as Kedungsapur (Kendal-Demak-Ungaran-Semarang(Regency)-Salatiga(Municipality)-Purwodadi-Grobogan(Regency)) with a total population of 6 million is deemed the fourth most densely populated metropolitan area after Jabodetabek (Jakarta), Gerbang Kertosusilo (Surabaya), and the Greater Bandung area. In the last several years, Semarang's development has been marked with the emergence of several skyscrapers observed in the urban landscape. Rapid population growth has resulted in traffic congestions throughout the city of Semarang. The support in transportation access provided by the Achmad Yani International Airport and Tanjung Mas Seaport have further enhanced the city's significant position.

Local citizens in Surabaya and Semarang have high level of access to global issues. This has quite an effect on how the community reflects those global values in their daily life. In Surabaya, social movements responding to global issues (plastic waste, environmental conservation, human rights, protection and equality of minority groups, discrimination, green living, and so forth) have been rising progressively. There are numerous emerging and developing community-based organizations that maintain good synergy with the city government.

In terms of establishing international cooperation, the city of Surabaya has been engaged in a number of sister city cooperation with the city of Seattle (United States), Busan (South Korea), GuangZhou, Xiamen, and Jiangmen (China), Kochi and Kitakyushu (Japan), Liverpool (UK), Varna (Bulgaria), Ismir and Gaziantep (Turkey), Marseille (France), Monterrey (Mexico), and Syah Alam (Malaysia). This indicates that Surabaya is very active in establishing international cooperation. It was truly a prestigious honor for the city of Surabaya to be under the leadership of the former mayor Tri Rismaharini, who was elected President of the United Cities Local Government Asia Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC) for the 2018-2020 period, in which she visited several cities in Asia Pacific countries. As President of UCLG-ASPAC, Risma focused on issues of global warming, poverty alleviation, women and children, and good governance. It was, undoubtedly, an extremely strategic position for developing foreign cooperation or Surabaya's diplomacy in the future.

Meanwhile, the city of Semarang has engaged in foreign cooperation and serve as a best practice model for cooperation between foreign and local city governments. Examples include the Trans Semarang bus transportation CO2 emission reduction assistance program, which is a technical cooperation with the city government of Toyama, Japan. This program was initiated by Mayor Hendrar Prihadi, who also initiated a sister city cooperation with Jung-Gu, Ulsan South Korea, which led to a technical assistance for the construction of pedestrian walk and bridge. Some other notable cooperation have been fostered with the city of Brisbane and Griffith University Queensland (Australia), Beihai, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Nanjing city and Fuzhou city (China), Split (Croatia), Schieland and Krimpenerwaard Water Board (the Netherlands), and the city of Tripoli (Lebanon). These foreign cooperation were initiated by Semarang's Municipal Government because it intends to develop its image as a smart city. In order to achieve its image, new programs and innovations in various fields like government, economy, branding, and environment need to carried out with foreign partners via diplomatic efforts.

3.4 The Role Of Cities In Achieving National Interest

Legal basis on foreign relations is an opportunity widely leveraged by city/regional governments to engage in foreign relations and cooperation. The national interest remains to

be the main focus of international cooperation, although it is being carried out by city/regional governments. The cooperation fostered are aimed at achieving development progress and prosperity for all citizens, wherein national interests are brought about by the country's needs. These interests can be observed from their internal conditions, be it political-economic, military, or socio-cultural conditions. According to K. J. Holsti, a country's national interest refers to a set of ideals from the goals of a nation that should be founded as the basis in conducting the country's foreign relations. National interest refers to a number of national goals that the nation intends to achieve within a certain period of time [9].

Surabaya and Semarang as metropolitans hold a substantial role in Indonesia's economic structure. Both cities are also crucial machines in national development, given the support that the two major seaports in those cities provide. Although Jakarta is the state's capital, the cities of Surabaya and Semarang have the fastest growth throughout Indonesia. The two cities have fostered trade relations with many other cities the world over, they have huge labor markets, many centers of excellence, high concentration of knowledge, various education and social economic institutions, and they offer better quality of life compared to other cities in Indonesia. Municipal Government of Semarang with authority expanded by decentralization uses paradiplomacy as a mean to achieve economic interest, especially to expand market and attract foreign investment, with its environmental issue that remains left-behind [10].

By utilizing their uniqueness and advantages, Surabaya and Semarang can serve as a model of development for other cities at the national level and inspire other cities to stimulate economic growth. Both cities are also rapidly growing into people friendly metropolitan cities, and they have asserted themselves as a socially and ecologically healthy city. By maintaining the city's humanistic features, Surabaya and Semarang can improve their environmental status, which will consequently be able to generate economic development.

Surabaya and Semarang's appointment as hosts of international events indicates that both cities are vital to the international community. Those international events can be an opportunity for achieving the national interest of boosting Indonesia's prestige before the international world. Examples of international events that were recently held in the two cities, among others, are: Surabaya hosted the Global Commemoration of World Habitat Day on October 5, 2020. This event was held through cooperation between the city of Surabaya and UN-Habitat, which is a UN body working in the field of human settlement and sustainable urban development. Surabaya's appointment to host this prestigious event was inseparable from the prestige of its mayor in the field of settlement and urban development. In the 2018 World Habitat Day, Risma was awarded the Scroll of Honour by UN-Habitat at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya for Surabaya's all-encompassing urban planning policy, so that no low-income citizens feel left behind. Some of Risma's other achievements acknowledged by UN-Habitat include her policy in solid waste management and her success in encouraging citizens to reduce and recycle household waste. The city of Semarang was also selected to host the MXGP of Asia 13th Round international competition on July 6-8, 2018. It was also chosen as the venue for the 2019 ASEAN School Games (ASG), which is an international sporting event with as many as 2,000 participants from the 10 ASEAN countries, i.e., Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia. Both cities can help achieve national interests by showing a positive image as cities that are comfortable as venues for international events.

4 Conclusion

The involvement of city/regional governments in diplomacy is a relatively new discourse in international relations practice and literature. While in actuality, advancements in telecommunication and information technology has brought about internet based model of interactions, which has disrupted various old systems, which include the tendency of the state and central government's crumbling role in diplomacy. The city diplomacy approach has increasingly gained ground, in terms of practice at the very least. This, accordingly, leads to some states needing to adjust their regulations. In the Indonesian context, the presence of such regulation was sluggish in responding to global dynamics.

The phenomenon of diplomatic practices performed by the city of Surabaya and the city of Semarang provide a lesson that, generally speaking, there is an increase in community level capacity to urge cities to take an active role in diplomacy. There are at least two key issues that require further elaborations, namely: how can dimensions of national interest be identified with a new perspective; and how does bureaucratic capacity at the local level adjust with the new reality. Based on learnings from the observations on the cities of Surabaya and Semarang, we would like to suggest the following for future considerations: strengthening civil society, which serves as the closest basis of interaction with the regional (particularly city) government bureaucracy; revision (or even renewal if necessary) of regulations at the national and regional levels; and the need to create enabling environment that can encourage the participation of cities throughout Indonesia to become a part of international interaction that continues to promote national interests.

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