

THE CITY DIPLOMACY TO PUSH AHEAD AN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST DISASTER: CASE STUDY IN SEMARANG CITY

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ABSTRACT

Semarang, as the capital city of Central Java province, Indonesia, has been exercising its own diplomacy in pursuit of its interests related to economy and disaster. Under the leadership of mayor named Mr. Hendrar "Hendi" Prihadi, the city administration has been practicing city diplomacy as a means to attract both domestic and foreign investors by convening a business forum, called Semarang Business Forum (*Sembiz*), and to explore partnership in building the city's disaster resilience by joining a city network, called 100 Resilient Cities (100RC).

According to the argument by Keating (1999) in explaining Para diplomacy, this paper argues that Hendi administration's strategies in exercising city diplomacy were shaped by its motives, as reflected in Regional Long Term Development Plan (RPJMD), and the opportunity structure in terms of existing regimes where the city could observe suitable cooperation. This paper finds that Hendi administration benefited from city diplomacy in solving local urban issues, such as the tidal and flash flooding problem in the coastal area of Semarang.

Keywords: City Diplomacy, Economic Growth, Semarang City, Semarang Business Forum.

INTRODUCTION

Various Cities have been more and more involved in international relations as they exercise their own diplomacy and city leaders engage both regional and international forum. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), for example, has been convening an annual meeting of mayors from across the region. International forum for local governments is mostly comprised of representatives from capital cities. However, city leaders outside the capital have started to take part in such international forum addressing global issues. Semarang, the fifth largest cities in Indonesia, illustrates an example of how city administration outside the capital exercises its own diplomacy in pursuit of its interests.

For Semarang, city diplomacy is neither new nor unique. Hendi administration and its predecessors had signed sister city agreements with some

cities in Asia-Pacific and Europe. Under the leadership of the former mayor named Mr. Sukawi Sutarip, for example, the city administration signed in 2007 a letter of intention to form a sister city cooperation with Beihai, a Chinese port city in the Gulf of Tonkin. Hendi administration signed in 2018 a sister city agreement with another Chinese city, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. In addition, the administration works within Ter-governmental organizations (IGO), non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the private sector.

City diplomacy, as an academic subject, has yet to receive the attention it deserves from International Relations (IR) scholars despite the trend in practice. Some scholars began to publish exploratory works on the subject matter in the 1990s (Alger, 1990). According to this theory mentioned the growing body of literature on city diplomacy has yet to give sufficient attention to the Global South cities, especially non-capital cities like Semarang. Meanwhile, cities had practiced diplomacy far earlier than the Westphalian states, which have been the primary diplomatic actors only for less than two centuries (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2017). Ancient Mesopotamian cities, for example, exchanged envoys under mutual recognition and trade missions with their Anatolian counterparts (Constantinou, Kerr, & Sharp, 2016).

What does it mean when a city administration exercises its own diplomacy? This paper follows the theory by Constantinou et al. (2016) because the reason in defining a city administration's external relations as diplomacy, which is based on three assumptions. First, cities take part in international negotiations on behalf of political constituencies. Second, city diplomacy involves traditional institutions such as embassies and envoys. Third, it also involves mediation and agreement by cities both between third party actors and on their own behalf.

City administrations are getting more involved in international relations as global issues have impacts on their regions and constituencies. Hendi administration, for

example, has been involved in achieving the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as part of the Central Java administration's action plan in particular and the Indonesian government in general. Climate change, an issue the UN is trying to address through the SDGs, constitutes a global issue that exacerbate the urban challenges facing Semarang. As a coastal city with 1.7 million inhabitants, Semarang has a difficult relationship with its ocean due to flooding issues. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has called for more involvement of city administrations in addressing climate change issues.

Given the increasing importance of city administrations' roles in addressing global issues, analysts and scholars alike need to enrich the literature on city diplomacy. However, as Constantinou, et al., (2016), had pointed out, studying city diplomacy faces challenges from the "traditional views of international relations (as the domain of the 'international system')" and the "established diplomatic institutions (as the structure of mediated politics among nations)." To grow the literature on city diplomacy means challenging these traditional views of international relations and the diplomatic establishment by showing the evidence that city administrations' roles in addressing global issues is gaining more prominence.

This paper seeks explore the Semarang city administrations' diplomacy practice by focusing on why Hendi administrations — both his 2013–2015 term as successor to then mayor Soemarmo Hadi Saputro who was unseated due to corruption charges and his 2016–2020 term — utilize a business forum and a city network on urban resilience as a means to exercise its diplomacy. This paper is structured as follows. The second section delves deeper into the literature on city diplomacy. The third section shows how Hendi administration utilize its business forum, named Semarang Business Forum (*Sembiz*), as a means for diplomacy to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The fourth section shows how the city

administration utilize a city network on urban resilience, the 100RC, as a means for diplomacy to explore partnership which can help the administration solve the city's disaster-related issues, among other things. This paper concludes that the lesson learned from the study is that the city administration exercised its own diplomacy in order to address economic and disaster-related problems plaguing the city. It implies that the Indonesian government's one-size-fit-all diplomacy failed to accommodate regional problems.

MOTIVES, OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIES: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature on city diplomacy is scattered across different fields, as the scholars appreciating the importance of city administrations' roles in international relations are found not only in IR, but also in urban studies. In IR, the literature on city diplomacy has benefited from the debate on so-called Para diplomacy in the 1990s. Since then, studies on the roles of city administrations in international relations began to proliferate. Furthermore, the literature on city diplomacy have been introduced to yet another concept, namely city networks (Acuto, 2016, 510-520).

According to the theory of Keating, and Aldecoa (1999) that were participating in the 1990s Para diplomacy debate. They edited a book on para diplomacy which was published in 1999. According to Keating (1999) introduced an argument on the rise of Para diplomacy and explains how the motives of the regional administrations and the opportunity structure facing them shape their Para diplomacy strategies. As Para diplomacy and city diplomacy share many similar characteristics in terms of the aforementioned three assumptions, this paper follows Keating's argument, arguing that city administrations' motives and their opportunity structure shape their diplomacy strategies.

City administrations have at least three different sets of motives. According to Gengler (2021) explained that there are economic, cultural and political motives

driving regions diplomacy strategies. First, based on the economic motives, city administrations seek to attract "investment, markets for their products and technology for modernization" (Keating, 1999). Investment is important for city administrations to provide employment opportunities necessary to spur economic growth. Be that as it may, city administrations try to balance investment from foreign companies by building their local businesses. Second, city administrations want to penetrate overseas markets. In non-capital cities, much of their economies benefit from small and medium enterprises (SMEs). City administrations are supporting SMEs through export promotion. Third, city administrations seek investment for transfer of technology. The need for technology is not only present in large firms, but also in small firms. Fourth, city administrations rely on tourism and industrial districts, both of which need economic diplomacy to attract visitors and investment. It is important, however, to note that city administrations do not only seek inward investment, but also outward investment, encouraging local businesses to expand to overseas markets.

For diplomacy based on cultural motives, city administrations put emphasize on commonalities in language and culture (Keating, 1999). City administrations' culturally-motivated diplomacy aims at, as Keating explained, projecting and exporting their cultural products in overseas markets. This is in line with the city administrations' economic motives to boost their tourism industry, as it depends on the cultural products of local communities.

For diplomacy departing from political motives, it involves the desire for bigger autonomy. Keating (1999) said that city administrations might want to have a recognition and a legitimacy as something than mere regions. Political motives, more often than not, are identical to the city leaders' political agenda. They want to show their role and influence in international contexts. Some city leaders exercise diplomacy to build political influence among the diasporas and to

mobilize their resources. Political motives may overlap with the cultural ones, as in the case of city administrations seeking, as Keating described, rediscovery and revitalization of old connections and identities. Furthermore, city administrations exercise diplomacy to influence public or elite opinion in other countries they consider as key partners. The world has seen more and more this kind of diplomacy due to the extensive reach of social media platforms.

City diplomacy strategies are also shaped by the city administrations' opportunity structures. According to Keating (1999) city administrations operate alongside other actors within the international political system, comprised of firms, trade unions, social movements and transnational organizations. As international politics have involved more multi-track diplomacy through, among other things, transnational regimes, ASEAN provide a point of access for city administrations to exercise its diplomacy. However, the opportunity structure depends on the nature of the regimes, for example, whether the regional organizations adopt an open regionalism or the closed one. Another opportunity for cities to exercise its own diplomacy is linkages to other national governments through the inter-state system.

Links and partnerships between city administrations in different countries are more common in city diplomacy. These links and partnerships take forms not only in multi-purpose or general association of city administrations, but also in a cooperation between specific cities, such as the Council of Local Authorities and Regions of Europe, a European political assembly consisted of 47 members. In addition, city networks based on narrower geographical and sectoral focus provide opportunity for city administrations to exercise diplomacy in a forum with clearer common interests, as seen in the case of Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.

Cross-border initiatives provide another opportunity. Keating (1999)

explained that this was the most common type of cooperation between city administrations. There are two things to note from cross-border initiatives. First, cross-border initiative typically has "a functional basis, focused on common problems and opportunities, notably in economic development, promotion, infrastructure, environment or culture" (Keating, 1999, 1-16).

Second, complementary assets and resources on both sides, and common interests, will make cross-border initiative realize its full potential in helping city administrations address their problems.

City administrations develop its own strategies to pursue its interests. Keating (1999) remarked, "The strategies adopted by regions [or city administrations, for the purpose of this study] in their external relations are shaped by their motivations and the opportunity structures facing them." Furthermore, city diplomacy adopts strategies that are more functionally specific and targeted. Another characteristics of the strategies include opportunistic and experimental, both of which are found in the diplomacy of some city administrations with limited creativity and opportunity.

In the decision-making process of city diplomacy, political considerations play the main role in deciding which strategies to adopt. A city administration may see a strategy of building more industrial districts as the best way to attract more investment, but not necessarily favourable from the perspective of political considerations. Furthermore, as Keating noted, high degree of involvement of other actors such as civil society and the private sector characterizes city diplomacy. City diplomacy involves other actors as it is more decentralized and it provides an opening for multi-track diplomacy. However, the extent of the civil society and the private sector's involvements varies depending on political and institutional factors.

It is also important to note the relations between the city administration and the host state. The relations may vary based on constitutional and political factors (Keating, 1999). It is clear that the relations

between city administrations exercising politically-motivated diplomacy, seeking recognition and greater status, and the host state will likely be hostile. City administrations without that kind of motive may face difficult relationship with the host state too, as their conduct of diplomacy challenges the diplomatic establishment. It sees city diplomacy to be, as Keating (1999) put it, "a breach of the united diplomatic front." It is unclear whether this argument holds in the context of Semarang administration's relations with the Indonesian government, as the central government appears to be supporting the city administration's diplomacy to address its urban challenges.

SEMARANG BUSINESS FORUM: CITY DIPLOMACY TO SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The history of the Semarang administration's diplomacy goes as far back to the Dutch colonial era. As a major port city serving as a hub for trade, under the occupation of Dutch East India Company (VOC), the city was a melting pot where peoples of European, Chinese and the local descents met. Previous city administrations promoted slogan "The Port of Java" to attract investments and tourists to Semarang.

The Semarang administration's external relations extend beyond mere interactions with international actors. The city's Regional Development Planning Agency known as (Bappeda) said that the city administration has three types of cooperation (Dagilienè, Varaniütè, & Bruneckienè, 2021). First, a cooperation with other city or regional administrations. Second, a cooperation with a third party such as an IGO, NGO as well as the private sector. Third, a cooperation with foreign central governments. The three types of cooperation largely define the opportunity structure, which partly shape the city administration's diplomacy strategies.

The city administration gets to decide what strategies to adopt for its city diplomacy. Mayor Hendi has been leading the city administration from 2013 to 2019.

Hendi is carrying on much of the development agenda set by Saputro administration, namely to boost Semarang's economic growth through investment and trade. This paper defines the motives of Hendi administration's city diplomacy based on the RPJMD document. The motives are reflected in the visions and the directives in the development plan document.

Hendi administration has set a vision to make Semarang a services and trade city in the 2016–2020 development plan document. The administration has outlined the missions to realize the vision, such as to "strengthen people's prosperity based on local excellence" and "[develop] a good business climate." The development plan document also sets the objectives the city administration is trying to achieve, such as "improving the productivity of local economy." To that end, the city administration is seeking to grow the economy by 6.5 percent in 2021, up from 5.8 percent in 2015.

Hendi administration is planning to increase the value of trade and services. The indicator is attracting investment worth IDR. 21 trillion in 2021. In 2011, investment in Semarang was only close to Rp1 trillion. It began to pick up in 2012 and the city administration booked a record high investment in 2018 at Rp 27.5 trillion, higher than the 2021 target (Budi, & Hadi, 2020). The fastest growth of investment to the city was seen in 2017, which was up by around 100 percent to Rp 20.5 trillion from Rp 10.5 trillion in 2016 (Handriani, & Robiyanto, 2018). But out of the total investment to the city, the foreign direct investment actually had been decreasing to Rp 1.2 trillion in 2017 from Rp 5.4 trillion in 2015. As of June 2019, the city administration has booked a total investment of Rp 15.9 trillion, Rp 14.3 trillion of which was from 911 domestic investors and Rp 1.58 from 25 foreign investors (Budi, & Hadi, 2020).

Hendi administration is seeking to improve the city's employment and growth outlook. The administration determines its mission is to "realize a civilized and quality

life of the people" with an objective to "improve people's prosperity." This involves improving the competitiveness of the people. The indicators are comprised of reducing unemployment rate to 4.57 percent, increasing the labour force participation rate to 70.30 percent and increasing certified labours to reach 90 percent of the overall labour force.

Hendi administration is also seeking to boost the city's exports and trade and services sectors' contribution to the economy. First, the city administration seeks to source as much as 31.41 percent of the total gross regional domestic product (GRDP) from trade and services sectors. Trade sector, for example, accounted for 13.78 percent of the total GRDP in 2018, making it the third largest contributor of the city's economy — behind manufacturing and construction sectors — a continued trend at least since 2015 (Statistics Semarang 2019). However, services sectors accounted for a relatively small portion of the economy. Financial service sector, for example, contributed 4.43 percent to the total GRDP in 2018, the highest figure among the services sectors. Second, Mr. Hendi's administration has set a target of boosting export to \$1.5 billion in 2021. In other words, Semarang's export was expected to increase by 20 percent or \$304 million at the end of Hendi's second term in 2021 from \$1.2 billion in 2016.

Tourism provides another means to spur Semarang's economic growth. Hendi administration seeks to increase the number of Semarang's tourists by 9 percent to 6.8 million in 2021 from 4.3 million in 2015. To put in perspective, Semarang's tourists reached 4.6 million in 2016, doubled than the 2.1-million figure in 2011. To reach the target, the city administration not only considers the cultural products that may lure tourists, but also considers the infrastructures such as the number of five-star hotels and tourist attractions. In terms of local tourist attractions, foreign tourists commonly visit Kota Lama (Old City of Semarang), a nineteenth-century styled complex, and Lawang Sewu (Thousand Doors), former headquarters of the Dutch

East Indies Railway Company that turns into a museum famously known for its Dutchwoman-ghost urban legend (Meytasari, & Tisnawati, 2018). Furthermore, Hendi administration introduces industrial districts to develop the manufacturing sector and to boost the growth of local products. There are nine industrial districts, namely: Bugangan Baru, Terboyo and Terboyo Megah in Genuk district, Guna Mekar Indonesia and Candi in Ngaliyan district, Sinar Centra Cipta and Tanjung mas Export Processing Zone (TEPZ) in North Semarang district, Bukit Semarang Baru (BSB) in Mijen district and Wijaya kusuma in Tugu district.

Based on the above economic motives, Hendi administration had little option of the means to exercise city diplomacy due to its opportunity structure. In terms of transnational regimes, for example, the city administration cannot rely on the ASEAN mayors' forum because, according to information provided by the United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC) (n.d.), it is a platform for discussion on how the stakeholders can work together to implement SDGs under the regional framework (Trifita, & Amaliyah, 2020).

Hendi administration, therefore, utilized the long-running *Sembizas* its diplomacy strategy. Since 2007, Semarang city administrations have continued to convene the *Sembizas* which they promoted investment opportunities to the private sector. In 2018, Hendi's administration convened the 12th *Sembizas* collaboration with the Semarang chamber of commerce (Kadin), offering investment opportunities in development of a lightrail transit (LRT) project worth Rp 200 billion per kilometre (km), an underpass through the Simpang Lima traffic circle worth Rp 1.4 trillion, an integrated convention and exhibition centre worth Rp 37.8 billion and a landfill in Jatibarang (Adielyani, & Mawardi, 2020). The LRT project, stretching as long as 5.9 km from traditional market Pasar Bulu to the Ahmad Yani airport, would be integrated with eight lines of the city's bus rapid transit (BRT), called Trans Semarang.

The integrated convention and exhibition centre, called Expo Centre, would be located in Pedurungan district and, with an expected capacity of hosting up to 10,000 people, was expected to support meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) activities in the city. For the Simpang Lima underpass, Hendi administration was expecting to ease the congestion in the downtown Semarang. The Jatibarang landfill, which was expected to host a waste-to-energy plant (PLTSA), had been managed by waste-management company PT Narpati and was expecting a grant from the Danish government (Putranti, Windiani, Farabi, Amaliyah, & Rosyidin, 2020).

Based on the city potentials, another investment opportunities include the development of housing in the BSB complex, infrastructure in Pedurungan district known as City Region V (or BWK V), waste management plant (IPLT), hazardous and toxic waste (B3) management facility, infrastructure at tourist attraction Goa Kreo, agrotourism, the 500-hectare (ha) Candi, the 250-ha Wijayakusuma and the 112-ha BSB industrial districts, as well as bonded logistics center in Tanjungmas seaport — in addition to other investment opportunities in infrastructure, housing, real estate, tourism and entertainment sectors (Kadin 2018). At least 250 representatives from the private sector attended the forum and Hendi's administration managed to secure letter of intent (LOI) worth Rp 17 trillion from 22investors, some were domestic and some others were foreign (Ruhens, & Gunawan, 2018).

However, in the 13th *Sembiz*, attended by at least 400 representatives both from governments and the private sector, the total investments fell sharply to only IDR. 3.02 trillion from 12 investors — six companies investing in the property sector, two in the manufacturing sector, one in the healthcare sector, one in the construction sector, one in the trade sector and one in the real estate sector (Budi, & Hadi, 2020). The investment dropped largely because not much new projects were offered. Instead,

Hendi's administration offered investment opportunities in the ongoing projects with a new stage of development. The waste-to-power plant (PLTSA), for example, has progressed to detail engineering design (DED) stage in 2019 and amount IDR. 1.2 trillion LRT development project was also expected to finish its DED in 2019.

In 2017, Hendi's administration made agriculture, manufacturing and tourism as the priority sectors to be promoted in the 11th *Sembiz*. The administration set agriculture as a priority because 52 percent of the total land in Semarang was a green space (Ruhens, & Gunawan, 2018). The administration put tourism as a priority because the number of tourists coming to the city increased by two-fold to 4.6 million in 2016 from 2.1 million in 2011. For investment opportunities in the manufacturing sector, Hendi's administration promoted the nine industrial districts.

100 RESILIENT CITIES: DIPLOMACY ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In the 2010–2015 RPJMD, then mayor Saputro and Hendi outlined a policy objective related to the city's resilience against disasters, which reflected other motives for a city diplomacy. Soemarmo administration stressed the importance of, among other things, disaster mitigation in fulfilling people's basic needs and helping them to enjoy a decent life. More specifically, Soemarmo administration aimed at improving the city's mitigation efforts against potential disaster such as flooding by 75 percent. Hence, the administration sought to reform its management on disaster mitigation efforts. Soemarmo administration planned to make a development policy focusing on creating early disaster prevention, handling victims of disasters, rehabilitation and reconstruction of disaster victims, as well as developing a so-called people-based disaster mitigation management.

For disaster-related matters, the city administration actually had a wide range of opportunities in terms of international regimes to exercise its diplomacy. The

UCLG, for example, provides an opportunity for cities to explore partnerships in implementing an international framework on disaster mitigation efforts such as the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In the forum, cities can work together in encouraging the international community to provide support such as financial and technical assistance for their disaster mitigation efforts. The Rockefeller Foundation-backed regional network Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) and the 100RC provide other opportunities for the city administration to explore partnerships on city resilience in broad terms. The Bappeda said that ACCCRN was a cooperation between the city administration and an NGO to solve its flooding problem (Kristanti, et al., 2021).

Based on the given motives and the opportunity structure, Semarang joined 64 other cities from across the world in the 100RC in 2014. By joining the initiative, Hendi administration can collaborate with other cities and international organizations to enhance its knowledge and expertise in solving urban issues. In the mayor's letter expressing the background of Semarang's membership in the city network, Hendi highlighted the urgency of addressing tidal floods and flash floods, among other things, because the most vulnerable to these problems was the five-percent of the city's total population who was living in poverty (Sukesti, & Budiman, 2018). Semarang is prone to tidal flooding, a seawater inundating the coastal area caused by, among other things, the increase of seawater level and land subsidence, and flash floods, a sudden flood due to high precipitation that increases the river's water discharge. Tidal flooding, for example, is estimated to have an impact on around 300,000 people in the coastal area of the city comprising North Semarang, East Semarang sub-district and Gayamsari districts. In fact, 60 percent of the total member cities in the 100RC identified flooding as a major shock they're facing. For the lower parts of Semarang, the city faces challenges such as erosion, land

subsidence and rising sea levels and for the upper parts, the development of housing and other kinds of residence has decreased the tree coverage in the area, which in turn worsens the risk of landslides and floods. Climate change further exacerbates the flooding risk facing the city. The city's coastline in the 6th century, for example, was in the Borgota area, which was around 4 km from today's coastline (Sugiyo, Supriatna, & Afdhalia, 2020). The expansion of the coastline was due to continuous sedimentation of the city's upper area.

In 2016, Hendi administration and the 100RC launched the so-called Semarang City's Resilience Strategy document. The document, developed by government officials, academics, businesses and community representatives, outlined 53 initiatives under six pillars as a guideline to make Semarang a resilient city, which can function, recover, grow and develop despite in the face of various urban challenges. The Resilience Strategy document was developed in parallel with the drafting of the 2016–2021 RPJMD — the development is expected to follow the five-year cycle of the drafting of the city's medium-term development plan — so the strategies and initiatives were expected to complement both the city's medium-term and long-term development plan in general. According to the document, cities are facing challenges in the form of acute shock, a sudden and dangerous event threatening the city such as flash flooding, and chronic stress, a situation that weakens the daily functions of a city such as tidal flooding. Readiness for disasters and diseases is one of the pillars — the other pillars are sustainable water and energy, new economic opportunities, integrated mobility, transparent public information and governance, as well as competitive human resources — which has seven initiatives aimed at improving "information sharing, innovation and collaboration in disaster and disease outbreak preparedness" (Sugiyo, Supriatna, & Afdhalia, 2020).

To develop Semarang's preparedness against disasters, the Resilience Strategy

document suggested three strategies with seven initiatives. The first strategy is developing a technology for disaster management. The key initiative to support this strategy is raising public awareness on disaster-prone areas by providing updates on disasters, developing a messaging platform to deliver disaster-related information, called SMS gateway, providing signs for evacuation routes and emergency shelters in public areas and conducting participatory disaster mapping. Another initiative to support the first strategy is exploring new technology for disaster management by developing floating and stilted house in flood-prone areas, growing vetiver grass, building ponds, better manage the housing in disaster-prone area and applying new innovative technology. Hendi's administration worked with the Dutch Assen city administration to re-build a polder drainage system to mitigate both tidal and flash floods, called Polder Banger pilot project. In 2016, Hendi's met with then Assen mayor Roy Kraft van Ermel in Semarang to outline the plan. According to Van Ermel, the embankment was expected to ease the flooding risk facing East Semarang and Kemijen districts, as well as the Kota Lama (Prihanto, Koestoer, & Sutjiningsih, 2017).

The second strategy is enhancing the capacity of stakeholders in disaster management. The key initiative to support this strategy is increasing the number of the so-called disaster-prepared groups (KSB), whose members are representatives of local communities, in disaster-prone areas at the sub-district level. As of May 2016, Semarang had 22 KSB groups (Sugiyo, et al., 2020). As the groups are represented by local communities, they are expected to have better knowledge on local physical and social conditions. The initiative is aiming at establishing such groups in all sub-districts across the city and training the group members to develop disaster preparedness of their communities. Another initiative to support the second strategy is enhancing the capacity of the stakeholders by creating a forum for coordination on

disaster preparedness and developing a disaster preparedness system.

The third strategy is improving coordination in disaster-risk reduction. The key initiative to support this strategy is preparing participatory contingency plan, which serves a function as standard operating procedure if disaster happen. The process of preparing the plan would involve representatives both from the city level and the community unit level. The plan would describe the responsibility of each city agency and office in the event of disaster, which was expected to improve coordination between them.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown how the city administration's motives related to the economy and disaster risk reduction, as well as its opportunities structure for cooperation, shape its diplomacy strategies, which utilize a business forum and a city network. In so doing, this paper has presented the evidence of the Semarang city administration's diplomacy practice. Furthermore, this paper finds that city diplomacy, like other public policies, departs largely from the development agenda outlined in the city's medium-term development plan. Hence, this implies that city diplomacy is better suited in addressing urban challenges facing the region, compared with the central government's diplomacy.

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