



Indonesia's City Diplomacy in Promoting Global Sustainability Context through Urban Networks

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Abstract

The present research investigates the function of urban diplomacy in promoting sustainable initiatives in the swiftly urbanising setting of Indonesia. The study concentrates on the way urban networks facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, resources, and optimal practises among local administrations. Through the examination of diverse urban networks, including inter-city partnerships, cross-border municipal networks, and regional programmes, this study underscores their role in bolstering local capabilities and advancing sustainable urban development strategies in domains such as waste disposal, ecological infrastructure, and climate change resilience. Furthermore, the research investigates the supportive function of the national government of Indonesia in urban networks and city diplomacy endeavours, showcasing its dedication to urban sustainability via policies and international collaborative endeavours. The study highlights the capacity of urban networks and city diplomacy to promote global sustainability in Indonesia. It proposes that cultivating strong urban networks and efficient city diplomacy can substantially aid in achieving a sustainable future for both the country and the regional.

Keywords: Urban Networks; Global Sustainability; City Diplomacy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menginvestigasi fungsi diplomasi perkotaan dalam mempromosikan inisiatif berkelanjutan di tengah pesatnya urbanisasi di Indonesia. Studi ini berkonsentrasi pada cara jaringan perkotaan memfasilitasi penyebaran pengetahuan, sumber daya, dan praktik optimal di antara jaringan perkotaan. Melalui pemeriksaan jaringan perkotaan yang beragam, termasuk kemitraan antar kota, jaringan kota lintas batas, dan program regional, studi ini menggarisbawahi peran pemerintah kota dalam memperkuat kemampuan lokal dan memajukan strategi pembangunan perkotaan yang berkelanjutan dalam domain seperti pembuangan limbah, infrastruktur ekologi, dan ketahanan perubahan iklim. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyelidiki fungsi pendukung pemerintah pusat Indonesia dalam jaringan perkotaan dan upaya diplomasi kota, menunjukkan dedikasinya terhadap keberlanjutan perkotaan melalui kebijakan dan upaya kolaboratif internasional. Studi ini menyoroti kapasitas jaringan perkotaan dan diplomasi kota untuk mempromosikan keberlanjutan global di Indonesia. Ini mengusulkan bahwa mengembangkan jaringan perkotaan yang kuat dan diplomasi kota yang efisien dapat secara substansial membantu dalam mencapai masa depan yang berkelanjutan baik untuk negara maupun kawasan.

Kata Kunci: Jaringan Perkotaan; Keberlanjutan Global; Diplomasi Kota

Introduction

The trend of rapid urbanisation has become a prominent global phenomenon in recent times, with the majority of the world's populace currently residing in urban locales

(Jones, 1997, 2002; Rana & Ji, 2020; Zhang, 2016). Indonesia, being among the most densely populated nations globally and possessing the most substantial economy in Southeast Asia, has undergone a remarkable rate of urbanisation (Arfanuzzaman & Dahiya, 2019; Jones, 2016; Lewis, 2014; Mardiansjah, Rahayu, & Rukmana, 2021; Pribadi & Pauleit, 2015). The swift expansion of urban areas has given rise to a multitude of environmental, social, and economic issues (Biamonte, Sandoval, Chacón, & Barrantes, 2011; Boadi, Kuitunen, Raheem, & Hanninen, 2005; Kark, Iwaniuk, Schalimtzek, & Banker, 2007; Sovacool & Brown, 2010). These challenges encompass deficient infrastructure, ineffective waste disposal practises, and heightened susceptibility to the consequences of climate change (da Silva, Kernaghan, & Luque, 2012; Mansur, Brondizio, Roy, de Miranda Araújo Soares, & Newton, 2018; McCormick, Anderberg, Coenen, & Neij, 2013). The notion of sustainable urban development has garnered significant attention on worldwide and regional policy agendas as a reaction. This highlights the importance of cities in achieving a balance between economic expansion, environmental conservation, and social fairness.

The significance of urban networks in promoting sustainable development objectives at the local level has been on the rise. These networks comprise both formal and informal associations between cities and local governments (Acuto, Parnell, & Seto, 2018; Rigon, Walker, & Koroma, 2020). According to Bontenbal (2009), these networks facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practises, thereby enhancing local capacities to address urban challenges and promoting the implementation of innovative solutions. In the Indonesian context, there has been a proliferation of city-to-city partnerships and transnational municipal networks (Putri, 2022). The networks in question have played a significant role in advancing sustainable urban development policies in Indonesia, with a particular focus on waste management, green infrastructure, and climate resilience (Fitriana, Ba'adilla Nesya Nur Hakiki, & Rubiyanto, 2022; Lee, 2019).

Table 1. Common Challenges Faced by Cities

City Challenges	Description
Urbanisation	Rapid population growth and urbanisation in many cities
Affordable housing	High cost of housing and lack of affordable options
Traffic congestion	Heavy traffic and long commutes lead to air pollution
Transportation	Limited transportation options and a lack of infrastructure
Infrastructure	Ageing or inadequate infrastructure for basic services
Public health	Air pollution, access to healthcare, and disease outbreaks
Crime and safety	Crime rates and public safety concerns in some areas
Social inequality	Unequal access to resources, education, and opportunities
Climate change	Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and natural disasters
Environmental degradation	Pollution, waste management, and biodiversity loss

Source: Processed by Author (2022)

The notion of city diplomacy is a recent addition to the domain of international relations, denoting the involvement of cities and local administrations in worldwide governance and diplomacy (Curtis & Acuto, 2018). According to Acuto & Leffel (2021), cities are becoming more active in tackling global issues by participating in diplomatic endeavours and establishing international collaborations. The Indonesian government has demonstrated its endorsement of city diplomacy endeavours through its dedication to urban sustainability in both its domestic policies and international collaborative endeavours. The provision of governmental aid has resulted in the heightened participation of Indonesian cities in worldwide environmental agreements and initiatives,

thereby emphasising the significance of city diplomacy in promoting sustainable development (Aisyah, Supli, & Tarigan, 2020).

Notwithstanding the increasing body of literature concerning urban networks and city diplomacy, a dearth of all-encompassing investigations exists regarding the contribution of these notions towards promoting worldwide sustainability in Indonesia. The objective of this research is to fill the existing void by analysing the configuration and efficacy of metropolitan networks within the nation, along with the significance of municipal diplomacy in promoting sustainable urban growth. In order to accomplish this objective, an initial step involves presenting a comprehensive outline of the patterns of urbanisation in Indonesia and the corresponding obstacles to sustainability. Subsequently, the notion of urban networks and city diplomacy is deliberated within the framework of sustainable development. This is followed by an examination of diverse urban networks and city diplomacy endeavours in Indonesia. Ultimately, an analysis is conducted to assess the involvement of the national government in endorsing these endeavours and their prospective impact on worldwide sustainability.

The present study makes a scholarly contribution to the existing body of knowledge on urban networks and city diplomacy through a comprehensive examination of their function in promoting sustainable urban development in Indonesia. The aforementioned text provides significant perspectives for policymakers and professionals involved in the domains of urban governance and global affairs. Additionally, it is of interest to researchers who seek to explore the correlation between urbanisation, sustainability, and diplomacy. This study emphasises the significance of promoting strong urban networks and efficient city diplomacy in attaining a sustainable future for Indonesia and the world by showcasing their potential in addressing global sustainability challenges.

The significant perspectives for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars who are keen on urban governance, international relations, and the interconnection between urbanisation, sustainability, and diplomacy. This will be achieved by analysing the function of city diplomacy in promoting sustainable urban development in Indonesia. The results emphasise the significance of promoting strong urban networks and efficient city diplomacy to attain a sustainable future for both Indonesia and the world. Furthermore, these findings add to the expanding literature on urban networks and city diplomacy concerning global sustainability issues.

Methods

In order to thoroughly examine the impact of urban networks and city diplomacy on promoting global sustainability in Indonesia, a qualitative method research approach is utilised. The initial step in our qualitative data analysis involves conducting a thorough examination of the extant literature pertaining to urban networks, city diplomacy, and sustainable urban development. Through a comprehensive analysis of academic literature, policy papers, and reports issued by both global institutions and regional authorities, we have identified the principal patterns, obstacles, and prospects within this particular domain. The present analysis facilitates the construction of a theoretical framework that enables comprehension of the function of urban networks and city diplomacy in tackling sustainability issues in Indonesia. Data from diverse sources, such as policy documents, project reports, and latest news, is gathered for each information. Subsequently, the data is subjected to analysis to evaluate the influence of urban networks and city diplomacy programmes on sustainable urban development in Indonesia. The analysis primarily concentrates on dimensions such as knowledge transfer, skill enhancement, and policy execution. Our research methodology employs a multi-faceted approach that integrates qualitative data analysis and online sources to gain a holistic comprehension of the

function of urban networks and city diplomacy in promoting global sustainability in Indonesia. This methodology additionally allows for the identification of the determinants that influence the efficacy or inefficacy of these undertakings, thereby furnishing significant perspectives for policymakers and practitioners operating within the realm of urban governance and global affairs.

Results and Discussion

The phenomenon of urbanisation is currently considered a critical and urgent challenge that the world is confronting. With the ongoing growth of populations, urban areas are progressively emerging as crucial hubs of economic activity, innovation, and cultural development. Nevertheless, the process of urbanisation presents noteworthy environmental, social, and economic obstacles, including but not limited to climate change, social inequality, and the expansion of urban areas. In order to tackle these obstacles, urban areas are progressively participating in global affairs by means of municipal diplomacy.

The concept of city diplomacy pertains to the practise of cities engaging in international relations with the aim of advancing their interests, exchanging knowledge, and gaining insights from other urban centres. Various manifestations of urban diplomacy include sister city accords, commercial expeditions, and cultural interchange. City diplomacy enables municipalities to establish connections with other urban centres, exchange optimal methodologies, and gain insights from one another's encounters.

1. Engagement in Global Urban Networks

The significance of urban networks in promoting global sustainability has gained momentum owing to the efforts of cities in addressing critical environmental, social, and economic issues (Kosovac, Hartley, Acuto, & Gunning, 2021). The involvement of Indonesian cities in global urban networks has been identified as a significant contributor to the promotion of worldwide sustainability through the practise of city diplomacy (Wu, 2020).

The findings of our analysis suggest that there has been a notable rise in the involvement of Indonesian cities in global urban networks during the last twenty years. Some networks comprising Indonesian cities were identified, including but not limited to the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. The networks in question prioritise a diverse range of concerns, encompassing topics such as climate change and preservation of the environment alongside urban planning and socio-economic advancement (refer to Table 2).

Table 2. Main Focus of City Network Groups

Networks	Main Focus
C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)	Local governance, urban planning
ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability	Environmental sustainability
ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)	Sustainable urban development

Source: Processed by Author (2022)

The involvement of Indonesian cities in these networks has resulted in the implementation of various policy measures that are geared towards advancing sustainable development. Cities have formulated comprehensive strategies to address climate change,

executed effective waste management initiatives, and advocated for environmentally friendly urban transportation. According to Acuto & Leffel (2021), the dissemination of optimal practises and the exchange of knowledge via urban networks have played a role in enhancing the efficacy and originality of policy solutions, leading to concrete enhancements in sustainability results. In addition, participation in global urban networks has enabled the gathering of resources for initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development (Arfanuzzaman & Dahiya, 2019). International partnerships and collaborations have facilitated the acquisition of financial and technical aid for Indonesian cities, thereby enabling the execution of collaborative projects with other urban centres. The implementation of effective measures, such as the waste management programme established between Surabaya and Kitakyushu, has resulted in favourable outcomes.

Furthermore, the involvement of Indonesian urban centres in urban networks has augmented indigenous capabilities towards the attainment of sustainable development (Wu, 2020). The provision of capacity-building initiatives and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning has facilitated the acquisition of novel skills and expertise by local government officials in diverse sustainability-related domains. This has resulted in the formulation of more efficacious and knowledgeable policies at the local level.

2. Policy Initiatives in Urban Networks of City Diplomacy

The involvement of Indonesian cities in global urban networks has resulted in the implementation of various policy measures that are geared towards advancing sustainable development. This section aims to examine the principal policy initiatives that have arisen from Indonesia's involvement in urban networks and their role in promoting worldwide sustainability via city diplomacy. Climate action plans are strategic documents that outline specific measures and actions aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change (Moraci, Errigo, Fazia, Campisi, & Castelli, 2020). These plans typically involve a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the environment as well as an analysis of the potential risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change. Based on this analysis, climate action plans propose a range of policy interventions and initiatives designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable development.

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, of which Jakarta is a member, has formulated ambitious climate action plans aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing resilience to the impacts of climate change (Heikkinen, Ylä-Anttila, & Juhola, 2019; Sancino, Stafford, Braga, & Budd, 2022). The plans specify specific goals, strategies, and actions that urban areas must take, such as promoting low-emission transportation, increasing the production of renewable energy, and enhancing green spaces within the city (Nguyen, Davidson, & Coenen, 2020; Román, 2010). The formulation and execution of these strategies evince the dedication of Indonesian urban areas towards tackling worldwide climate predicaments and aiding the wider objectives of the Paris Accord.

The involvement of Indonesian urban centres in urban networks has resulted in the execution of inventive waste management initiatives with the objective of diminishing waste production and enhancing waste management methodologies. An instance of waste management collaboration is the Surabaya-Kitakyushu partnership. The collaboration between the two cities has facilitated the exchange of optimal methodologies and technologies, leading to the creation of enhanced waste management tactics, and supporting worldwide sustainability objectives.

The concept of sustainable urban mobility pertains to the development and implementation of transport systems and services that are environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and economically viable in urban areas.

Table 3. Policy Initiatives in Urban Networks of City Diplomacy

Policy Area	Initiatives
Environmental Sustainability	Climate action plans, waste management programs, green building regulations
Social Equity	Affordable housing programs, social inclusion policies, gender equality initiatives
Economic Development	Sustainable urban mobility, green economy strategies, infrastructure development
Cross-cutting Initiatives	Integrated urban planning, multi-stakeholder partnerships, capacity-building programs

Source: Processed by Author (2022)

Indonesian urban centres have implemented policy measures with the objective of advancing sustainable urban mobility, as evidenced by their involvement in urban networks. The aforementioned measures encompass advocacy for the utilisation of mass transit, the establishment of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and the execution of designated days without vehicular traffic (Acuto & Leffel, 2021; Acuto et al., 2018; Curtis & Acuto, 2018). Indonesian cities are making a significant contribution towards mitigating air pollution, traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously enhancing the public health and quality of life of their inhabitants by giving precedence to sustainable urban mobility.

The concept of social equity and inclusive development is a critical aspect of contemporary discourse in various fields (Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2010). It refers to the idea of creating a society that is fair, where everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their social status, race, gender, or other factors. Claims related to the existence of community groups that are marginalised and excluded from social, political, and economic activities are of concern. So inclusive development is needed to address inequality and promote social justice by creating policies and programmes that empower marginalised groups and encourage their participation in decision-making processes (Chibba, 2009).

Cross-country urban networks have facilitated the implementation of various policy initiatives that promote social justice and inclusive development in cities, including cities in Indonesia. According to M. Bontenbal & van Lindert (2009), The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) have implemented the promotion of social inclusion, gender equality, and poverty alleviation in their urban planning and policy-making processes. By actively engaging in urban networks and implementing relevant policy initiatives, cities in Indonesia are opening up opportunities to promote social justice, inclusive development, and relevant issues to make significant strides towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The Impact of City Diplomacy and Urban Networks Dynamics

The existence of urban networks has a tremendous impact in the realm of city diplomacy and can serve as an important factor in providing opportunities for cooperation between cities to promote sustainability goals around the world (Acuto & Rayner, 2016). Efforts in city diplomacy in Indonesia have proven effective in encouraging urban networks that carry out and advance sustainability issues. This activity has facilitated the exchange of knowledge, best practises, and resources between cities.

The practise of cities involved in international relations to advance their interests, communicate information, and gain insight from other cities is an indicator of city diplomacy (Amiri & Sevin, 2020). The implementation of various activities within the

urban diplomacy landscape has facilitated the formation of urban networks intended to promote sustainability. The ASEAN Smart Cities Network in Southeast Asian countries is an important example of best practise for an effective urban network. Founded in 2018 with the main objective of promoting sustainable urban development in ASEAN member cities with various current problems. Various urban centres form the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (Tan, Taihagh, & Sha, 2021).

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is a growing urban network consisting of a global coalition of cities committed to tackling the challenge of climate change (Lee & van de Meene, 2012). The C40 network consists of individuals who have implemented sustainable development initiatives, such as low-emission bus rapid transit systems, waste-to-energy programmes, and other smart initiatives. The practise of city diplomacy has exerted a noteworthy influence on the urban networks of Indonesia, enabling the exchange of optimal methodologies, information, and assets between cities to promote worldwide sustainability objectives. City diplomacy can facilitate knowledge sharing among Indonesian cities regarding the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. This exchange of information can enable cities to learn from each other's experiences, both successes and failures, and apply these insights to their respective contexts (Wu, 2020).

The ASCN has provided an avenue for Indonesian municipalities to acquire knowledge from the sustainable development endeavours of other ASEAN cities. The ASCN has facilitated knowledge exchange among Indonesian municipalities regarding optimal strategies for implementing intelligent transportation systems and water resource management, among other pertinent subjects. The act of sharing knowledge has expedited the advancement towards sustainability objectives, thereby facilitating the implementation of sustainable development endeavours in Indonesian urban areas that may have been unattainable otherwise (Tan et al., 2021).

Table 4. Impact of City Diplomacy on Urban Networks in Advancing Global Sustainability

City Diplomacy Impacts	Description
Knowledge sharing	City diplomacy has facilitated the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and resources among cities to advance global sustainability goals. Through urban networks, Indonesian cities have been able to learn from each other's successes and failures in implementing sustainable development initiatives, accelerating progress towards sustainability goals.
Collaboration	City diplomacy has enabled collaboration among cities, allowing among cities to pool resources and expertise to tackle sustainability challenges collectively. Through urban networks, Indonesian cities have been able to form partnerships to implement large-scale sustainable development projects, accelerating progress towards sustainability goals.
Platform for partnerships	City diplomacy has provided a platform for Indonesian cities to form partnerships with other cities and the private sector to implement sustainable development projects. Through urban networks, Indonesian cities have been able to collaborate on renewable energy projects, such as wind farms and solar power plants, that would be difficult to achieve individually.

Source: Processed by Author (2022)

The C40 network has played a pivotal role in fostering collaborations between Indonesian cities and other international cities, thereby enabling the execution of extensive sustainable development initiatives. A number of urban areas have adopted a bus rapid transit system that is designed to minimise emissions. The C40 network has played a pivotal role in fostering collaborations between urban centres and private enterprises to execute sustainable energy initiatives, including the establishment of wind farms and solar power facilities (Román, 2010).

The influence of urban diplomacy on urban networks in Indonesia transcends the mere exchange of optimal methodologies and resources. City diplomacy practices play an important role in encouraging cooperation between city centers, enabling the consolidation of resources and knowledge to address sustainability issues collaboratively. Cities in Indonesia have utilised the practice of urban diplomacy to build collaborative relationships and implement sustainable development initiatives that are difficult to achieve independently.

The practice of urban diplomacy has exerted an important influence on urban networks in Indonesia, promoting sustainability goals around the world through the optimal exchange of methodologies, information and assets among city governments. Indonesian city governments have leveraged the ASCN and C40 networks to exchange knowledge on implementing sustainable development initiatives and engage in joint efforts to advance sustainable development projects on a significant scale. City diplomacy practices have facilitated forums for cities in Indonesia to build collaborative partnerships and address sustainability issues together, thus accelerating the realisation of sustainability goals. Considering the ongoing sustainability challenges that the world is confronting, the significance of city diplomacy and urban networks in promoting global sustainability is expected to persist.

Conclusion

The city diplomacy of Indonesia has been instrumental in promoting global sustainability through the utilisation of urban networks. The promotion of sustainable development in Indonesian cities has been facilitated by successful urban networks such as the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, and others. The practise of city diplomacy has facilitated the exchange of optimal strategies, information, and assets between urban centres, resulting in the execution of sustainable development programmes that would have been unfeasible otherwise. Urban networks have facilitated a forum for cities to engage in collaborative efforts and establish alliances, resulting in increased joint endeavours towards sustainability concerns. By means of city diplomacy, Indonesian municipalities have effectively exchanged knowledge on the triumphs and shortcomings of their respective sustainable development initiatives, thereby expediting advancements towards sustainability objectives. In light of the persistent sustainability challenges confronting the world, the significance of urban networks and city diplomacy in promoting global sustainability will remain pivotal.

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