

CITY IN GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS: A CONSTRUCTIVIST STUDY OF JAKARTA'S PARA-DIPLOMACY AND REGIONAL LEADER'S INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

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Abstract

Para-diplomacy has been the agenda of many mega-cities through which they can express their capacity as well as creativity to pursue specific interests beyond borders. To cities, para-diplomacy can be conducted in many forms starting from merely ceremonial activities to the transnational municipal networks (TMNs). The city's active engagement in global forums which mostly belong to the TMNs' agenda is often associated with the regional leader's international visibility in global conversations. This paper aims to explain the determinant driving the regional leader's international visibility within para-diplomacy practice, choosing Jakarta as a case study. This research applied the qualitative method and constructivist approach to investigate the role of ideational factors. The research found that the idea of a global city embraced by the regional leader – constructing the city's identity and interests – encouraged the leader to be active in global forums. The city's international visibility which was represented by the leader paved Jakarta to be an active global city through which it would be able to promote its local development and enhance its global role in responding to borderless global issues. This paper suggests that the internal determinants like the regional leaders (governor, mayor) with certain values matter to direct city para-diplomacy whether to project its leadership or merely to prioritize its bilateral para-diplomacy.

Keywords: global conversations, idea, international visibility, Jakarta, constructivist approach.

Introduction

Jakarta is one of the regions in Indonesia which has been actively conducting its international relations through para-diplomacy. The city currently has existing cooperation with 21 foreign regions in the form of twinning or sister cities, starting with Jeddah in 1979 and then followed by other world cities, such as Tokyo, Rotterdam, Jerusalem, and other prominent mega-cities (Hasan, 2022). In addition to bilateral relations between cities, it belongs to 14 multilateral organizations of cities or transnational municipal networks (TMNs), such as C40 Cities Leadership Group (C40 Cities), United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, and others (Jakarta Regional Government, 2022a).

Jakarta has maintained beneficial relations with its twinning city partners and developed cooperation in various fields. Unfortunately, despite its membership in the TMNs, the city did not strive to enforce its leadership in the networks. Meanwhile, not only do the TMNs facilitate city-to-city learning (Haupt et al., 2020), but they could facilitate its para-diplomacy to pursue specific interests that cannot be achieved through twinning city para-diplomacy.

Jakarta used to be passive in global forums – mainly initiated by the TMNs – instead of demonstrating its active engagement. In other words, such restrained para-diplomacy operated in an administrative role, including receiving international delegations, and raising funds and investments (Stren & Friendly, 2019). Furthermore, at the global forums, the city was often represented by delegates instead of its top regional leader. The latter indicated that the city used to heighten its bilateral para-diplomacy rather than multilateral para-diplomacy.

Jakarta under the leadership of Governor Anies Baswedan (2018-2022) changed the city's international relations culture, demonstrating its interest in global conversations while maintaining the existing twinning city scheme. His participation in global forums – not limited to the TMNs' agendas – increased the city's visibility as well as his visibility as the most responsible actor in the city. The city's international visibility represented by the leader's participation in global conversations meant that it was looking for opportunities to maximize its goals beyond the national border.

This paper seeks to provide a causal explanation between the driver and the international visibility of the city's leader. The paper is expected to benefit those who are studying para-diplomacy, especially in the cases of cities in Indonesia and developing countries by looking at internal variables and the correlation with leadership.

Literature Review

As a sub-study in international relations and an interdisciplinary study, para-diplomacy has been a rising interest among scholars. That para-diplomatic practices are no longer demonstrated by the more developed world like the European and the northern American sub-nationals, but also those in Latin America and Asia have enriched the study by stretching several foci, such as actions, policies, and strategies.

Para-diplomacy, especially, in cities in Latin America is getting growing attention among scholars (Bustamante & Cañas, 2017; de Macedo et al., 2023; Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022;

Mendes & Figueira, 2017). Those studies vary in issues, such as climate (de Macedo et al., 2023), peace (Bustamante & Cañas, 2017), and international competitiveness (Mendes & Figueira, 2017).

Both studies by de Macedo et al., (2023) and Fantoni and Avellaneda (2022) suggest the importance of transnational municipal networks (TMNs) in cities' para-diplomacy. While para-diplomatic practices by cities portray roles in multilevel governance or TMNs to shape municipal and national agendas (de Macedo et al., 2023), local determinants like pro-international structures matter for their actions, such as enhancing international projects and projecting participation in international networks (Fantoni & Avellaneda, 2022).

Cities, especially global cities have been pursuing international competitiveness through para-diplomacy. Mendes and Figueira (2017) attempt to investigate the action, policy, and international integration strategy for such interest. The study suggests that hosting a global sporting event has led the city to more international involvement (Mendes & Figueira, 2017). A different study Bustamante and Cañas (2017) noted that city para-diplomacy as a non-violent strategy was effective in bringing peaceful cross-border relations despite nations' differentiated identity construction.

A comparative study of city para-diplomacy between the Latin American and northern American cities was conducted by Stren and Friendly (2019). The study investigated local political dynamics and regional leadership shaping various para-diplomacy forms under different regional leaders. Meanwhile, Chan (2019) studied the Asian city's soft power in correlation with para-diplomacy and policy instruments under the framework of "one country two systems."

Para-diplomacy of the European cities within the framework of supranational structure has also been studied by a few scholars (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022; Kurczewska, 2021). Both studies highlight the role of lobbying and networking as channels of influence (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022; Kurczewska, 2021). Those channels have enabled cities to extend financial and regulatory mobilization (Kurczewska, 2021) and affect foreign policy (Ciesielska-Klikowska & Kamiński, 2022). The studies attempt to see the representation of cities' interests at the supranational level.

The studies by Fantoni and Avellaneda (2022) and Stren and Friendly (2019) are slightly similar to this research as both attempt to see local variables of city para-diplomacy. Furthermore, Chan (2019) notes the necessity for the insertion of values attached to civil society to improve city para-diplomacy. However, none of the literature explains how an idea that is embraced by the

regional leader drives the city's active internationalism identified by the visibility of the leader in global forums. The research aimed to narrow the gap by using the constructivist approach as a tool of analysis on the case of Jakarta's para-diplomacy during the leadership of Governor Anies Baswedan. This paper contributes to enriching the study of para-diplomacy by investigating the role of regional leaders and strengthening the growing potential of leadership theory in the study.

Theoretical Framework

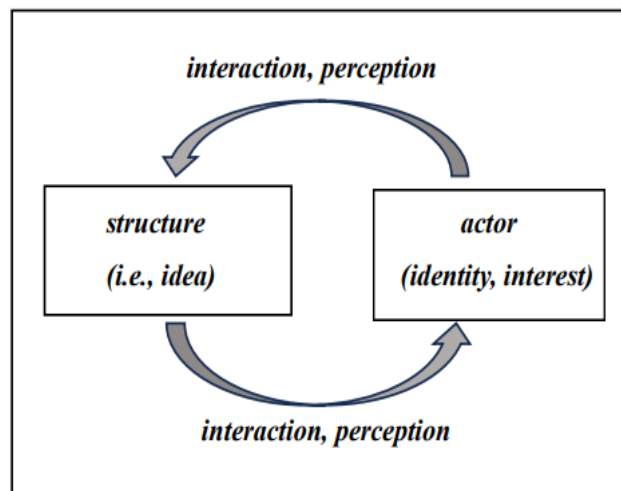
As a growing sub-discipline in the international relations realm, there has been a consensus on neither definition nor research foci in the para-diplomacy study. Para-diplomacy can be defined, of which, as the “international activity” (Lecours, 2002), the “foreign policy capacity and participation” (Wolff, 2007), a “form of political communication” (Kuznetsov, 2015), and the “engagement in foreign relations” (Tubilewicz & Omond, 2021) of actors other than state or national governments. Despite differences, scholars likely refer to sub-national governments as the main actors in para-diplomatic practices to pursue their specific interests. The theories and concepts that scholars use to analyze para-diplomacy are developing as well.

This research applied the unit-level constructivist approach – emphasizing seeking internal or local variables – to explain Jakarta's regional leader's international visibility within city para-diplomacy. Little does literature see the actors of para-diplomacy in the constructivist approach as regular sub-units posing no threats to their national governments much of which sees their struggles for secessionism through identity-seeking (Utomo, 2020). Meanwhile, this research sought to see the role of ideas embraced by the regional leader contributing to the city's identity creation in the context of the parallel harmony para-diplomacy pattern. Such para-diplomacy can be associated with the actions of regions supported by the capacity for seeking specific interests – relatively less dependent on national governments – without harming state foreign policy or national interests (Soldatos cited in Kuznetsov, 2015).

The constructivist approach believes in non-material (ideational) factors as the drivers of actors' behavior instead of material factors or material reality, such as power and resources (Hurd, 2009). Those ideational factors can be in the form of ideas, norms, culture, historical legacy, or values that construct the actors' perceptions and identities. The latter contributes to the construction of actors' interests which can be seen through their behavior. In other words, the identity prescribes the actors' proper behavior to pursue the interest.

Since the approach embraces the argument that the world is socially constructed relying on the web of meanings and practices among actors, normative structure and actors (agents) mutually constitute (Hurd, 2009). Similarly, Adler (1997) notes that international reality is “socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world.” The constructivist scholars, therefore, believe that structure, identity, and interest can be redefined and actors – especially those who are strong and influential – can shape and reshape the nature of relations through actions and social interactions. The illustration for the constructivist approach can be seen as the following:

Figure 1. Constructivist Approach Illustration



Source: illustrated by authors, adapted from various sources

This research investigated the role of the idea “global city” which was embraced by Jakarta’s regional leader, Governor Anies. The idea was often sounded before both local and international audiences during his tenure. Considering that the idea contributes to identity construction according to the constructivist approach, the idea of the global city was becoming an identity which encouraged the appropriate action to bring the city to global conversations. In addition, such identity led to the city’s interest pursuit; building a good image as an active global city by, such as promoting its local development and enhancing its global contribution by performing its role in addressing various global issues. The city’s active internationalism could be defined by the visibility of the top regional leader in global forums.

Methods

This research applied the qualitative approach through which the authors attempted to comprehend phenomena, activities, and social processes. During the research meaning and understanding became the most important parts of data analysis. The explanatory model was applied to explain the linkage between the idea and the leader's international visibility regarding the city's para-diplomacy. The primary data were retrieved from official documents like press releases and reports published by the Jakarta regional government as well as the statements of Jakarta's governor in a few media interviews and lectures. In addition, the secondary data were retrieved from scholarly journals, books, and other relevant sources.

Results and Discussion

“Global City”: Idea and Identity

Prior to his inauguration as a governor-elect of Jakarta in 2017, interviewed by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation before delivering a lecture hosted by the Japanese think-tank, Governor Anies equated the city with its global city partner, Tokyo since both had similarities as well as challenges as the world's mega-cities (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2017). Separately at the public lecture, he talked about the new prospects for partnerships between the two cities to not only further the cooperation but also address global issues becoming a concern among the world's cities (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2017). It could be his first insights regarding international relations and the global role of the city after winning the local election, revealing how Jakarta would be going under his leadership.

The idea of a global city was often mentioned by Governor Anies on many occasions which had been becoming popular since Jakarta faced the unprecedented Covid-19 crisis. To an Aljazeera interviewer, he reiterated that the city upheld transparency and attempted to keep the city safe for everyone and such effort was a reflection that it was part of the global community (Luerdi, 2021). As the city was a home for foreign nationals as well as residents, the regional government needed to provide enough accessible and timely updates on the crisis development as a policy normally taken by global cities (Luerdi, 2023a).

“Jakarta Global City” sounded stronger after the city gained international recognition for its local development like the Covid-19 handling and progressive urban mobility initiative among

the world's cities. The existence of a green stadium "Jakarta International Stadium" and the net-zero race "Formula E" – the icons often representing global cities – also strengthened the idea in the city. However, it was not until the city celebrated its 495th anniversary, Governor Anies declared that Jakarta as a global city. At the peak event's remark, he stated:

"At the moment of its 495th anniversary, we vow a message that Jakarta is a global city, the city which stands equal to other mega-cities, the city which proudly represents the nation in the world" (Jakarta Regional Government, 2022b).

His claim was based on several achievements the city had in addition to international recognition, such as world-class infrastructure, digital-based administration, and global events (Jakarta Regional Government, 2022b). Another achievement that could bolden the effort for the status of a global city was its participation in global forums addressing both urban and global issues. It could be one of a few cities in the Global South that paid attention to the role of cities on the global stage (Luerdi, 2023b). Further, the tagline "Jakarta Global City" and "Jakarta Kota Global" were intensely spread by regional government officials through digital platforms (Luerdi, 2023b).

The idea of the global city which was embraced by the regional actor determined the behavior of the city. According to the constructivist approach, in the process, such factor contributes to constructing the perception and the identity of the city. As the identity – cultural representation – is constructed through social interactions, a leader has a significant role in affecting the environment and vice versa. Hence, the leader's backgrounds like international experience take part in the construction process.

This paper argues that Governor Anies is an internationalist with a huge interest in global affairs. In one interview, he admitted that he was active in the global politics of mega-cities so that a city like Jakarta could give color to the agenda of global conversations (Total Politik, 2023)¹. Further, he also mentioned that he was one of the founding members of Urban 20 (U20) – one of the G20 pillars bringing the local perspective to the G20 agenda – which held its first summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2018 (Total Politik, 2023).

Seeing Jakarta as a global city encouraged the leader to take a role complying with such identity as suggested by the constructivist approach. Engaging actively in global issues became an

¹ At the interview, he was no longer acting as a definitive Governor of Jakarta.

appropriate option for the city and it could not refrain itself from current global issues. Instead, the trend has shown that cities are capable of being important actors and demonstrating their increasing roles in responding to global issues. That several global cities performed their best practices in responding to the pandemic through para-diplomacy can be evidence (Pipa & Bouchet, 2020).

Cities should not be forgotten in international affairs since cities are home to both global problems and solutions. Cities will likely remain the attraction for migrations among citizens in the future which means that they are likely to consistently consume more food and energy amidst the scarcity. So are they home to extreme poverty, social discrepancy, pollution, environmental degradation, and others. However, cities are also home to innovation, technology, and resources as well as the main drivers for national GDPs. The latter can be the most reasonable argument that cities can take part in addressing global issues through, especially, the networks they have created. In other words, cities are now at the “forefront of all sorts of agendas” (Acuto & Rayner, 2016).

Realizing that Jakarta was one of the world’s megacities and the capital of one of the largest countries amidst current global problems strengthened by the idea and identity of the global city, that city needed to be present in many global conversations. The city has joined several TMNs and thanks to the existing networks, the city could project its para-diplomacy like its counterpart global cities. Its participation should be represented by the governor as the top manager to put the city in the international spotlight. Furthermore, the elected leaders of the mega-cities take a more central role in the resolution of important global issues (Stren & Friendly, 2019).

City in Global Conversations: Regional Leader’s International Visibility

Not only does a global city mean that it becomes one of the centers for global economy and investment, but it also hosts the meetings of cultures and plays its political role in responding to the current issues challenging cities and nations (Luerdi, 2023b). The latter can refer to active internationalism which can be defined – in the case of the city – as active engagement of the city to pursue specific interests and respond to global issues often collaboratively with other world cities.

Since such para-diplomacy is played by regional top leaders (Governors or Mayors) who have high interests in global issues, the visibility of cities can be associated with the visibility of their leaders in global conversations. In addition, regional leaders who chair international networks of cities can help to bolden the visibility of cities in which they are in charge. Jakarta, for example,

under Governor Anies' leadership was elected to co-chair the C40 Cities together with London and Tokyo in December 2020. Acting as a steering committee of the C40 Cities, he had the role of helping direct other member cities to foster sustainability principles in response to the climate crisis at the local level (Luerdi, 2023b). Jakarta also chaired the U20 in line with Indonesia's turn to host the G20 summit, formulating the policy recommendations to the national governments of G20 (Fathun, 2022).

However, Jakarta appeared mostly in global forums, for instance; seminars, conferences, public lectures, and summits within which Governor Anies acted as a distinguished speaker or a panelist. Those events were organized by the TMNs, universities, think tanks, and the city itself. When hosting the forums at home, he also delivered remarks raising particular issues to audiences. The following is a list of events displaying the city's global participation involving its leader:

Table 1. Remarks, Lectures, and Presentations Delivered by the Governor of Jakarta at Global Forums from 2018 to 2022.

Date	Event	Issues Addressed
October 29-30, 2018	U20 Mayors Summit 2018 hosted by Buenos Aires, Argentina.	Social integration and inclusion; environment-related development and climate crisis response.
May 20, 2019	Lecture by Governor Jakarta “New Face of Jakarta” hosted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) in Tokyo, Japan.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; other urban issues.
May 20-21, 2019	U20 Mayors Summit 2019 hosted by Tokyo, Japan.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; social integration and inclusion.
July 10-12, 2019	World Cities Summit (WCS) Mayors Forum 2019 hosted by the WCS in Medellín, Columbia.	Inclusive economy; environment-related development and climate crisis response.
June 1-5, 2020	Cities Against Covid-19 Global Summit 2020 hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan City Government, Republic of Korea.	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience.
October 2020	U20 Mayors Summit 2020 hosted by Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience.
December 17-18, 2020	Jakarta Development Collaboration Network (JDCN) Forum 2020 hosted by the Jakarta Regional Government.	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience.
February 17, 2021	C40 Cities Forum “Overcoming the Covid-19 Crisis and Accelerating Climate Actions for Future.”	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience; environment-related development and climate crisis response.
March 17, 2021	Zero Carbon City International Forum hosted by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
April 16, 2021	Dialogue Between C40 Mayors and UN Secretary-General – “Advancing Carbon Neutrality and Resilient Recovery for Cities and Nations” hosted by the C40 Cities.	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience; environment-related development and climate crisis response.

September 3, 2021	U20 Mayors Summit 2021 hosted by Rome and Milan, Italy.	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience; environment-related development and climate crisis response.
September 30, 2021	Climate Heroes – “Sinking Cities and the Climate Emergency: Jakarta and Beyond” hosted by the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI).	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
October – December 2021	Mobilize Jakarta 2021: Virtual Summit Series hosted by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP).	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
October 15, 2021	Summit Hybrid Conference “Time to Act: Climate Action Forum” hosted by Tokyo, Japan.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
November 1, 2021	Steering Committee Meeting C40 Cities Leadership Group in Glasgow, the United Kingdom.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
November 27, 2021	WBS Special Public Webinar: Asian Renaissance in the Age of Covid-19, hosted by Wanita Berdaya Selangor in collaboration with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF).	Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience.
March 23-24, 2022	U20 Sherpa Meeting hosted by the Jakarta and West Java, Indonesia.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; other urban and global issues.
May 13, 2022	Public Lecture – “Future of the World’s 2nd Biggest Metropolitan City – Indonesia and ASEAN Perspectives on Sustainable Mobility Policies” hosted by the OSGA – University of Oxford, the United Kingdom.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
May 20, 2022	Public Lecture hosted by the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, France.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
August 14, 2022	Public lecture hosted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) in collaboration with the Hiroshima University, Japan.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; other urban issues.
August 30-31, 2022	U20 Mayors Summit 2022 hosted by Jakarta and West Java, Indonesia.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; Covid-19 handling and post-pandemic resilience.

September 1, 2022	Jakarta Investment Forum (JIF) 2022 hosted by the Jakarta Regional Government, Indonesia.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response.
September 14, 2022	Public Lecture – “Public Policy in a Mega City - Lessons Learnt from Jakarta” hosted by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore.	Environment-related development and climate crisis response; social equality and unity.

Source: compiled by authors

The table informs that Jakarta was keen on participating actively in global conversations and Governor Anies was often set as a speaker or a panelist addressing several issues. Among the issues, environment-related development and climate crisis were a cluster that he mostly shared with his foreign counterparts and targeted groups of audiences, such as journalists, academia, activists, or business people. While, the issues varied like sustainable urban transport and mobility, green infrastructure, clean energy transition, climate crisis adaptation, and others. As more than half of his tenure was challenged by Covid-19, the pandemic handling and post-pandemic resilience were the second topics most discussed in the forums followed by inclusion and social integration. So does the table inform that summits and meetings facilitated by the TMNs along with their partners and member cities provide stages for him to talk before his international audiences. This is in line with what Insch (2020) suggests that summits and meetings are platforms for city para-diplomacy.

Taking advantage of involvement in global forums has been a normal practice among developed cities and Jakarta was looking for a similar opportunity. The visibility of regional leaders representing their cities demonstrates that they are not restricted by inward-looking initiatives; on the other hand, they attempted to play more beyond their administrative regions. Considering the constructivist approach, Jakarta's involvement and its leader's visibility in global conversations elaborated above was driven by the identity that was constructed by the idea of the global city. It was the appropriate role and action taken by the leader based on the constructed identity.

Active Global City: Promoting Local Development and Enhancing Global Role.

Jakarta during the leadership of Governor Anies has demonstrated city leadership among its counterpart world's cities through various global events both invited as guest speakers and initiating or hosting the events at home to respond to global issues and formulate specific policies at the local level. Such engagement retained the city amidst the important agenda of cities which cannot be solved only by national governments. Ruiz-Campillo (2022) notes that regional leaders representing their cities – being interviewed, participating, and organizing meetings and conferences – help the city's visibility and make it a referent in a particular area. This action could mean that the city attempted to gain an equal position to other global cities that have commenced their activism in the arena of global politics of cities before those in the global south.

Promoting local developments and enhancing the global role in responding to global issues were a couple of goals that Jakarta could express through its para-diplomacy. The city's presence among global cities and participation in global conversations would be effective in projecting such goals which was expected to create a good image as an active global city through the role of its leader as a top policy maker.

The global forums could be media for Jakarta to exchange the best practices of local initiatives and development. Furthermore, its presence in global conversation was the chance to promote local development towards audiences, including counterpart cities so that they could learn from its experience. For example, at the first U20 Mayor Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina talking about inclusion and social integration, Governor Anies introduced Jakarta's initiative to involve the residents' participation in the collaborative "Community Action Plan" program allowing them to decide the planning and management of their own kampongs (Jakarta Regional Government, 2018). Similar principles were also implemented in developing public facilities as the city's third space (Jakarta Regional Government, 2018).

Jakarta's green transformation in line with the city's commitment to adapt to the climate crisis was the most often-discussed issue brought by Governor Anies in global forums and the development of sustainable transport and mobility was the most prominent he used to share. Delivering a distinguished public lecture "Public Policy in a Mega City: Lessons Learnt from Jakarta" at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy – NUS, Singapore, Governor Anies described how the city was shifting from car-oriented to transit-oriented development and integrating the city's public transport system known as "Jak Linko" covering the integration of modes, payment, and services (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, 2022). Such policy paved the city – put it in the spotlight as the first in Southeast Asia – to receive the Sustainable Transport Award from the ITDP (Luerdi, 2023b).

The pandemic of Covid-19 became the most challenging time for the world's city leadership. During the pandemic, Jakarta, together with other world cities, attempted to respond to the crisis through the use of ICT to exchange insights and policies at the local level. Hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, Governor Anies shared the initiatives to tackle the crisis from the very beginning by upholding the principle of transparency and data-based policies to gain trust from the people both locals and foreign nationals (Luerdi, 2021). At the forum, he raised a message

that the city – despite its status as the most populous city in the country – was capable of facing the challenges caused by the unprecedented crisis.

In addition to promoting the development that Jakarta had experienced, its participation in the global forums meant that the city was taking part in addressing global issues by sharing its best practices and encouraging narratives from the perspective of the Indonesian city. Other cities could get insight and possibly learn how Jakarta managed its challenges and how the global trend, such as sustainability could be applied at the local level. In other words, the development of Jakarta as one of the mega-cities in the Global South deserved studying by scholars as well as policymakers. The existing city networks should be media for in-depth learning, not just policy sharing (Haupt et al., 2020).

Studies reveal that the world's mega-cities with significant local development tend to advance their role beyond borders (Acuto, 2013; Luerdi, 2023b; Ruiz-Campillo, 2022). Thanks to the recognized local development, Jakarta could enhance its global role with confidence. In addition to chairing the C40 Cities and the U20, Governor Anies at the C40 Cities and the UN Secretary-General dialogue forum attempted to advocate a stronger role of cities in facing global issues, like climate crisis.

Governor Anies urged the UN to encourage national governments to recognize the cities' action treated as the National Determined Contribution (NDC) of climate action and foster vertical and horizontal integration at the action and policy level (Baswedan, 2021). In addition, he proposed that the UN develop a comprehensive architecture and financing structure to translate the benefits the national governments could gain through global forums to be executed at the local level (Baswedan, 2021).

Being an active global city means that Jakarta attempted to be visible globally represented by the role of its top regional leaders. Participating in global forums also demonstrated the city's responsibility to address global problems as it was perceived by the regional leader as the part of global community. Jakarta's policies to be present in various forums could be the consequence of the identity constructed by the idea embraced by the actor as suggested by the constructivist approach. Unless the idea changes whether or not under the same leadership, the city would be consistently behaving the same and pursuing similar interests.

Conclusion

Having the ambition to be a global city, Jakarta under the leadership of Governor Anies performed its para-diplomacy quite differently from his predecessors, weighting the importance of the TMNs and other global forums not only to be present but also to project its leadership among other mega-cities. Promoting its local development and enhancing its global role in responding to borderless global issues when maintaining its presence in global conversations could be expected to build a good reputation for the city. The city's international visibility associated with the regional leader's international visibility was driven by the idea of the global city, from which the identity and interest were constructed.

This paper provides a perspective that regional leaders possess an important role in driving the direction of city para-diplomacy. Different leaders with different ideas (or particular values) may act differently when managing their cities, whether to take active internationalism or restrained para-diplomacy regarding the global agendas that are not only initiated by the TMNs but also other institutions. However, this research simplified the issue – relying on the meta-theory – by equating the international visibility of a city to that of a leader. Though the leader can be a determinant in the study, there could be another determinant, such as political support, political rivalry, or others. This drawback is expected to be addressed by future research to analyze similar cases.

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