



AN IDIOSYNCRATIC APPROACH IN THE INDONESIA-JAPAN COLLABORATION TO ADVANCE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN SEMARANG

Anna Yulia Hartati^{1*}, Yuwanto², Teguh Yuwono², Muhammad Adnan²

¹Department of International Relations; University of Wahid Hasyim; Indonesia

²Faculty of Social and Political Sciences; Diponegoro University; Indonesia

*email: hartati.unwahas@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak karakteristik seorang pemimpin, khususnya ciri-ciri kepribadian idiosinkratik. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak karakteristik seorang pemimpin, khususnya ciri-ciri kepribadian idiosinkratik. Salah satu studi kasus yang menonjol melibatkan Walikota Hendrar Prihadi dari Semarang, Indonesia, pengaruh uniknya telah secara signifikan membentuk keberhasilan kerja sama antara Indonesia dan Jepang di kota tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif, tulisan ini mengandalkan sumber data primer, berupa wawancara dengan informan kunci dan data sekunder berupa studi dokumentasi dari sumber-sumber relevan. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa diplomasi kota, seperti yang diamati di Semarang, sangat terkait dengan kepribadian walikota, Tingkat kepekaan dalam menanggapi isu-isu global, pengaruh nilai-nilai budaya dan agama Jawa, prinsip pribadi dan organisasi. pengaruh dan motif yang bertujuan untuk memberikan manfaat bagi kota, khususnya dalam upaya menciptakan lingkungan perkotaan tanpa emisi karbon. Temuan-temuan ini menggarisbawahi keterkaitan antara kekhasan seorang pemimpin dan proses pengambilan keputusan dalam ranah diplomasi kota, menekankan sifat beragam elemen kepribadian yang memandu pilihan kebijakan.

Kata kunci: diplomasi; energi terbarukan; kepribadian idiosinkratik; kerja sama Indonesia-Jepang; Kota Semarang; pengaruh kepemimpinan

Abstract

This study explores the impact of a leader's characteristics, particularly idiosyncratic personality traits. A prominent case study involves Mayor Hendrar Prihadi of Semarang, Indonesia, whose unique and powerful influence has significantly shaped the success of cooperation between Indonesia and Japan in the city. This study uses qualitative descriptive research. This paper relies on primary data sources, in the form of interviews with key informants and secondary data, in the form of documentation studies from relevant sources. The study reveals that city diplomacy, as observed in Semarang, is strongly associated with the Mayor's personality, level of sensitivity in responding to global issues, the influence of Javanese cultural and religious values, personal and organizational principles, and motives aimed at providing benefits to the city, particularly in the effort to create a zero-carbon urban environment. These findings underscore the link between a leader's characteristics and the decision-making process in the realm of city diplomacy, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of personality elements that guide policy choices.

Keywords: city diplomacy; idiosyncratic personality; Indonesia-Japan cooperation; leadership influence; Semarang city

Introduction

Changes in the global political and economic landscape have led to significant shifts in market structures, necessitating organizations to adapt to intensified competition and technological advancements. This transformation has compelled entities to undergo restructuring and embrace novel management methodologies. The primary objective is to enhance organizational agility, flexibility, and dynamism, aligning their operations with international benchmarks for productivity, competitiveness, and quality (Franco & Marmelo, 2014). Within this framework, Kwon & Feiock (2010) assert that the organization of local authority administration, facilitated through localized agreements, presents an endogenous solution to collective action problems faced by towns in delivering public services. Warner (2010) emphasizes the importance of rebuilding local government capacity in the twenty-first century, focusing on financing essential infrastructure, attracting a skilled workforce, and engaging citizens in devising innovative solutions for common public challenges.

In response to these dynamics, regional and global sister-city relationships have witnessed a surge in both numbers and activities. Particularly in emerging economies and regions distant from developed countries, establishing advantageous relationships often hinges on good ties with home governments (Dai, 2008). Despite the challenges, over 70% of the world's cities have engaged in some form of international cooperation, whether through sister-city or friendship-city relationships (Tjandradewi & Marcotullio, 2009). Notably, more than 11,000 pairs of cities across 159 countries have entered into sister-city relationships (Cremer et al., 2001; Dai, 2008).

In alignment with Semarang City's aspiration to become a green and sustainable region, the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme from the central government is considered capable of supporting this vision (Nugroho et al., 2020). Through the JCM scheme, the City of Semarang collaborates with Kawasaki in various domains, including solid waste management, LED road lighting, and energy efficiency in development. Following several feasibility studies, collaboration materialized to realize Semarang City as a green and sustainable region. Despite Semarang City having numerous sister city collaborations worldwide, such as with Brisbane (Australia), Beihai, Fuzhou, Nanjing (China), Jung Gu (South Korea), Split (Croatia), and several others, the collaboration with Toyama stands out (Wirastomo & Lituhayu, 2020). This collaboration is particularly noteworthy due to the escalating global climate change

issue and the cooperative efforts of Indonesia, through its sub-state entity Semarang City, in addressing this challenge via the JCM scheme in partnership with Toyama City, which has a commendable background in pollution management (Indriyati et al., 2016).

Initiated by the Semarang City Government, this collaboration aims to position Semarang as a smart city. Achieving this image necessitates new initiatives and program updates across various sectors, including politics, economics, society, branding, and the environment (Rudiany et al., 2021). The Semarang City Government has environmental development programs focusing on infrastructure like roads, rivers, towers, and public transportation, with a particular emphasis on building a smart environmental image. The public can directly access information about programs and procedures implemented by the Semarang City Government to construct a smart city image through the official website provided by the city.

Toyama, one of Japan's most populous cities, is renowned for its success in integrating manufacturing areas with sustainable development (Hara et al., 2014). The city's prosperity is attributed to the numerous global environmental awards it has received. As of February 2018, Toyama, with a population of 417,878 people, has been honored with awards such as Eco Model City (2008), Future City (2011), and SDGs Future City (2018) (Neves & Namba, 2023). The Toyama City Government consistently implements its primary environmental policies, and the city is recognized for its well-structured environment, particularly in terms of mobility and the utilization of new renewable energy. Additionally, the Toyama City Government actively engages in municipal cooperation projects and collaborates with international organizations and institutions. Consequently, Toyama City is anticipated to serve as an exemplary model and partner for Semarang City in establishing an environment conducive to development, especially in the transportation industry (Nugroho et al., 2020).

With the rapid pace of globalization, it is essential to emphasize that in the context of city diplomacy, the role of a leader with a strong personality and specific personal values can significantly influence the direction of policies and the success of international cooperation. This study analyzes how the personal traits of a leader affect the success of city diplomacy, with a focus on Mayor Hendrar Prihadi of Semarang, Indonesia. The study also highlights the cultural and religious values held by Mayor Prihadi, as well as his awareness of global issues, which influence the direction of

policies and decisions made in city diplomacy. What is particularly interesting about this study is how the personal traits of a leader, often overlooked in international diplomacy research, have a significant impact on building productive relationships and partnerships with other countries. This is reflected in the partnership between Semarang and Japan in efforts toward environmental sustainability and the creation of a zero-carbon city. In terms of positioning this research in relation to previous studies, this study focuses on the personality aspects of leadership, which have often been neglected in prior city diplomacy research that primarily focuses on political, economic, or formal diplomatic factors (Putri, 2022; Rudiany et al., 2021; Huijgh, 2017; Malik, 2023; Nurisnaeny et al., 2024; Prasetyo, 2023; Chan, 2016; Nugroho et al., 2020). Therefore, this study makes a new contribution by expanding the understanding of how the personal dimensions of a leader can be an essential element in the success of city diplomacy, especially in the context of sustainable development and climate change.

This study looks at how a leader's personal traits affect the success of city diplomacy, focusing on Mayor Hendrar Prihadi of Semarang, Indonesia. It explores how the Mayor's unique personality, in terms of his awareness of global issues, respect for Javanese culture and religion, and personal values, has helped shape the partnership between Semarang and Japan, especially in promoting environmental sustainability. The main question is how Mayor Prihadi's personality has influenced the decisions and outcomes of international cooperation, particularly in efforts to create a friendly renewable energy city in public transportation.

Literature Review

Cities are playing an increasingly prominent role on the global policy stage, establishing more formal international engagement processes. However, there is an incomplete understanding of the type and level of capacity required for such engagement. This study provides an examination of the foundations of "urban diplomacy," confirming that cities recognize its importance but lack the resources needed to fulfill their commitments on the global agenda. The study calls for action in three areas: more effective training, formalized multilateral engagement, and more robust city-level diplomatic capacity. The Mayor's position is increasingly decisive and will influence decision-making in implementing diplomacy (Kosovac et al., 2021).

This research employs a theoretical perspective of individual-level analysis, specifically utilizing the idiosyncratic concept to analyze regional policies toward international collaboration. Idiosyncratic refers to an individual's character or personality, often associated with a leader's unique leadership style. The idiosyncratic concept originates from psychology, where an individual's personality is believed to influence their daily actions, and this influence extends to shaping a person's approach to policies or politics within a country. Numerous studies have utilized the idiosyncratic approach to explain decision-making processes by leaders. Greenstein's (1967) study, for instance, highlights the significant role that a leader's personal character, or figure, plays in certain circumstances, undoubtedly influencing how policies are formulated (Dyson, 2006).

International relations are transforming the involved actors as globalization advances. The authority of international cooperation traditionally held by central governments is now considered insufficient for effective policy implementation. The goal is to achieve national interests, aligning with the diverse needs of people in different regions within a country, which cannot be independently addressed (Diliani & Susanti, 2015). Consequently, there is a transfer of authority from central governments overseeing international cooperation to regional governments (Cândido & Abreu, 2000; Pipa & Bouchet, 2020).

In practice, regional governments must, however, continue to report the initiation of international cooperation forms to the central government. This reporting ensures that coordination among government institutions within a country remains aligned with the national interests being pursued. In today's interconnected global scenario, cities have emerged as significant actors engaging in diplomatic activities to enhance their international presence and influence. As cities become more involved in international relations, they gain the ability to shape global policies and networks through their city diplomacy efforts (Karvounis, 2022). Within this evolving context, the adoption of inter-organizational cooperation emerges as a viable organizational strategy, driven by two fundamental factors identified by (Cândido & Abreu, 2000). heightened competitiveness and increased competition, coupled with the realization that isolated organizational actions are unsustainable for survival and development. The application of cooperative principles is increasingly prevalent, prompting acknowledgment of its

significance and efforts to comprehend its application in contemporary organizational landscapes (Franco & Marmelo, 2014; Dyer et al., 2001; Augustine & Cooper, 2009).

Hambleton (2021), Klaus (2022), Pipa & Bouchet (2020) show how important leadership is in city diplomacy and international cooperation. For example, in Indonesia, Tri Rismaharini's leadership in Surabaya is often cited as a model for effective urban management and global engagement (Dida et al., 2018; Diliansi & Susanti, 2015; Zamjani & Zamjani, 2022). Her work in improving waste management and green spaces has made Surabaya stand out internationally. Research on her tenure highlights how her proactive and visionary approach helped strengthen Surabaya's global partnerships. This offers valuable comparisons for understanding how personal qualities and leadership style might influence international collaborations of a city, especially in environmental sustainability. Looking at other successful cities, such as Yokohama and Freiburg, further supports the idea that strong leadership is key to effective city diplomacy (Pipa & Bouchet, 2020; Shefer, 2019). Both cities have been recognized for their environmental efforts and international cooperation, showing how mayors who focus on sustainability and global connections can boost their city's global reputation.

Inter-organizational cooperation, encompassing not only businesses but also local authorities as organizations or institutions, can be rooted in various foundations, such as friendship, cultural exchanges, human resource collaborations, educational partnerships, and commercial interactions (Franco & Marmelo, 2014). Economic globalization has rendered local authorities susceptible to intricate challenges stemming from continuous and diverse social transformations within the system's environment (Leroux et al., 2010). Factors like communication revolutions, privatizations, decentralization, and enhanced democratization have facilitated the establishment of relationships at the local level. The decentralization of power to local governments necessitates entrepreneurial efforts to drive local economic development (Villiers et al., 2007).

Sister city cooperation is a manifestation of increasing globalization and the interconnectedness of communities throughout the world. Through sister-city cooperation, both city governments gain valuable opportunities to learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, leading to greater cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding (Li & Li, 2022). Local government officials or community

leaders usually initiate these agreements and often include inter-city visits to formalize the partnership (Schmidt & Azzi-Lessing, 2019). Under these conditions, sister-city relationships denote enduring collaborations between communities in distinct cities or towns founded on principles of reciprocity and fairness (UNDP, 2000; Ringrose, 2000). Villiers (2009) notes that the underlying objective of most twinning and sister-city connections is a sustained, mutually beneficial partnership between the involved cities. This implies a collaborative alliance between two or more cities, as emphasized by (Keiner and Kim (2007). who posit that city networking is widely perceived as the most efficacious method to enhance cities' capabilities in addressing significant environmental and social challenges, providing urban services to their residents, and establishing effective structures for urban governance and management.

In these circumstances, sister-city relationships pertain to enduring collaborations between communities situated in different cities or towns, characterized by principles of mutuality and equity (UNDP, 2000; Ringrose, 2000). Villiers (2009) emphasizes that the overarching purpose of most twinning and sister-city affiliations is a sustained, mutually advantageous partnership between the involved cities. Highlighting the collaborative nature of the relationship, Keiner and Kim (2007) assert that city networking is widely regarded as the most efficient approach for enhancing cities' capabilities in addressing significant environmental and social challenges, delivering urban services to residents, and establishing robust structures for urban governance and management. Sister-cities, town twinning, or linked cities encompass not only local government entities but also involve the broader business communities and the education sector (Tjandradewi & Marcotullio, 2009; Ewijk & Baud, 2009). The central connection is forged between communities, facilitated not solely by local governments but perceived as organizers and facilitators of diplomacy between populations. Sister-city relationships have transformed from their initial role as instruments for fostering international friendship and cultural exchange at the local level to influential tools for capacity building, learning, and economic and social development, particularly in developing countries (Franco & Marmelo, 2014; Villiers, 2009).

When making decisions or formulating policies, individuals are influenced by various considerations. The personality of each individual in making different decisions in the face of the same situation is attributed to different elements inherent in each

person. Winter explains that there are four elements of personality, namely temperament, social context, cognition, and motives (Hara, 2011). These four elements can elucidate the factors influencing an individual's decision-making process. The first personality element is temperament, which is related to the emotional level of a leader or individual and their strength or speed in responding to an event. Temperament reflects one's demeanor, attitude, and character (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). Temperaments inherent in individuals range from passive, aggressive, and rigid to humorous. Every individual possesses a distinct temperament, indicating their behavioral style and characteristics in responding to stimuli (Joyce, 2010). A high level of sensitivity also signifies an individual's temperament (Ogona, 2022).

Social context, which is one element of personality, can be observed involving factors such as gender, race, culture, ethnicity, and generation (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). This social context is related to the values of social life in which an individual is born, grows, and develops, as well as the individual's interactions with other individuals, which then influence the individual's character. The forms of environmental influence manifest as self-esteem, work ethic, pride, awareness, the way one views other people, and social adjustment towards others (Mary, 2022). The social context starts from childhood and influences a person's personality development, beginning with family life, such as upbringing or the learning processes obtained in the family, interactions between children and parents, and interactions between the father and mother as perceived by their children, all of which contribute to shaping the individual's personality. Besides the family, the environment that can influence personality includes school life and peers. This educational background also influences social interactions with others (Rogers, 2020).

Cognition is related to certain factors such as beliefs, values, and attitudes (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). The process involves acquiring knowledge, analyzing, assessing, imagining, and conveying it in the form of language. Cognition is interconnected with perception. Cognition can be interpreted as processing information, while perception is how the mind processes incoming information. Each individual definitely has different cognition, which will impact various perceptions (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). Cognition can be derived from past experiences, enabling individuals to manage information and interpret it accurately. Motive can be construed as a strong reason, encouragement, or

drive for someone to act. With the actions taken, the individual can achieve the desired goal. Motive or motivation can make an individual enthusiastic about the goals they want to achieve (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). Every decision or policy carried out has different motives, such as image reasons, economic progress, security, peace, or humanity, which are influenced by the individual's personality.

Research Methods

This method employs qualitative research methods. Qualitative data is presented in the form of verbal words rather than numerical values, constituting a general description of the object, including its processes (Harison, 2001). Meanwhile, the data source in this research utilizes secondary data, which is information obtained from existing sources. Such data can be sourced from various outlets, such as books, articles, journals, annual reports, written media, literature, websites, and official documents (Harnovinsah, 2001). The author utilizes data sources acquired through literature studies involving books, journals, and articles, as well as information gathered from internet networks, including news, media interviews, and speeches made by Hendrar Prihadi. This research adopts a descriptive-analytical qualitative research type, where the author seeks to subjectively describe the phenomenon under study, subsequently analyzing it to conclude (Lim, 2024). This research type aims to address pre-designed questions to understand the subject's response to specific issues. In contrast to questionnaires with predefined answer choices, this research allows subjects the freedom to respond based on their intentions. The outcome of this research type is a description of the causality (cause and effect) relationship between variables (Khoa et al., 2023). Consequently, this study provides an overview of leader idiosyncrasies that can contribute to the success of city diplomacy in developing renewable energy and addressing environmental issues in Semarang. The research also explores the extent to which the relationship between these variables influences each other.

The research conducted is descriptive and tends to employ analytical methods. The data sources for this research encompass both primary and secondary data. Primary data involves information acquired directly from sources or research informants, particularly experts or officials deemed knowledgeable with direct contact with the research object (Akhter, 2022). This also includes observations of developmental

changes occurring in the research area. Conversely, secondary data involves processed information obtained through literature searches.

The necessary data for this research includes information on the collaboration between the city of Semarang and Toyama, Japan, achievements of Semarang, factors contributing to the success of Semarang's development, and data on improvements and benefits derived by Semarang as a result of collaborations established by related research objects. Data collection techniques in this research include library research, interviews, and observations conducted in the Semarang city area during Hendrar Prihadi's term of office, spanning from 2018 to 2022. After the conclusion of this term, Hendrar Prihadi was succeeded by the deputy mayor of Semarang.

Qualitative analysis techniques, specifically those used to investigate the conditions of natural objects, will be employed, with the researcher serving as the vital instrument (Sugiyono, 2012). The analysis involves statements from authority figures (officials or experts), quotations from literary sources, and interview results. Conclusions will be drawn at the end of the discussion based on the analysis of the collected data. The writing method employed is inductive, where the author describes explicitly the idiosyncratic aspects of the Mayor's role in the successful development involving cooperation with the Japanese city of Toyama in Semarang. Subsequently, a general conclusion will be drawn in alignment with the results for potential avenues of future research.

Results and Discussion

One country that is particularly sensitive to environmental issues, such as pollution or increasing carbon emissions worldwide, is Japan (Dou et al., 2021). This concern was evident in Japan's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2010 due to a lack of programs and cooperation results. Japan subsequently initiated the Joint Credit Mechanism (JCM) program as a new step towards improving the environment, particularly in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Technology transfer is an integral component of the Joint Credit Mechanism (JCM), a bilateral cooperation mechanism related to carbon trading. This collaboration aims to facilitate the growth of green and low-emission investments in both developed and developing countries by providing incentives from developed countries to developing ones (Rudiany et al., 2021). The

Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) program serves as a step to support developed countries in emission reduction initiatives or assist developing countries in their growth by implementing environmentally friendly technology. The implementation of JCM activities involves various industries, including those involved in producing new and renewable energy, reforesting forests, increasing energy efficiency, and managing waste disposal (Nugroho et al., 2020). Through the JCM program, Japan encourages developing countries, especially Indonesia, to take a more active role in addressing environmental problems. With JCM, it is anticipated that industrial activities will progress using cutting-edge, environmentally friendly technology without compromising traditional values. This collaboration with JCM is also deemed one of the most significant partnerships for Indonesia (Hara et al., 2014).

This significance arises from Indonesia's historical contribution, as in 2009, it only accounted for 26% of global emissions but received 41% of global international subsidies for greenhouse gas emissions (FAO in Indonesia, 2016; UNFCCC, 2022). Given this background, it is predicted that Indonesia may not make a substantial contribution to reducing global emissions in 2020 (UNFCCC, 2022). Due to the comprehensive nature of its initiatives, the JCM collaboration has gained notable recognition in Indonesia. It is hoped that Indonesia will take consistent and gradual steps to reduce emissions now that this cooperation has reached all levels of government in its cities.

One example of sister city or city-to-city cooperation between Indonesia and Japan in the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme is observed between the City of Semarang in Indonesia and the City of Toyama in Japan. As outlined in the Letter of Intent (LoI), the management of renewable energy and public transportation under the JCM scheme is the focal point of the partnership between the City of Semarang, Indonesia, and the City of Toyama, Japan. The collaboration between Hendrar Prihadi, Mayor of Semarang, and Masashi Mori, Mayor of Toyama, was formalized on December 14, 2017, in Toyama. This city collaboration is anticipated to yield developments and changes that will impact the rate of reduction of Indonesia's emissions. In reciprocation, Japan will assist Indonesia in utilizing technology to establish sustainable cities and environments, particularly in the energy sector. This

assistance will indirectly contribute to the development and absorption of human resources in the city of Semarang, Indonesia.

One example of sister city or city-to-city cooperation between Indonesia and Japan in the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme is observed between the City of Semarang in Indonesia and the City of Toyama in Japan. As outlined in the Letter of Intent (LoI), the management of renewable energy and public transportation under the JCM scheme is the focal point of the partnership between the City of Semarang, Indonesia, and the City of Toyama, Japan (Rudiany et al., 2021). The collaboration between Hendrar Prihadi, Mayor of Semarang, and Masashi Mori, Mayor of Toyama, was formalized on December 14, 2017, in Toyama. This city collaboration is anticipated to yield developments and changes that will impact the rate of reduction of Indonesia's emissions. In reciprocation, Japan will assist Indonesia in utilizing technology to establish sustainable cities and environments, particularly in the energy sector (Wirastomo & Lituhayu, 2020). This assistance will indirectly contribute to the development and absorption of human resources in the city of Semarang, Indonesia.

The sister city collaboration between Semarang and Toyama is intricately linked to the broader cooperation framework between Indonesia and Japan regarding the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) aimed at reducing carbon emissions in Indonesia. Aligned with the vision and mission of the City of Semarang, the collaboration is a result of the partnership between the Indonesian government and the Japanese government concerning the JCM in their joint effort to reduce carbon emissions in Indonesia (Rudiany et al., 2021). This collaboration involves several private companies in Japan, which enhances the participation of the private sector in emission reduction efforts (Neves & Namba, 2023). In response to the global occurrence of climate change and global warming, efforts to reduce carbon emissions are paramount (UNFCCC, 2022). Through the ratified Kyoto Protocol at the UNFCCC conference, Indonesia and Japan aim to develop strategies to reduce carbon emissions in developing countries. The commitment to carbon emission reduction initiated by the central government extends to sub-state actors, such as the City of Semarang, reflecting a comprehensive approach to addressing carbon emissions at various levels (UNFCCC, 2022; Hara et al., 2014).

Given the environmental challenges, Semarang seeks assistance from other cities, particularly those in developed countries, to support efforts in mitigating environmental

damage. The success of Toyama City recognized as an environmentally friendly technological industrial hub with various advanced technological achievements by local businesses, serves as a driving force for the Semarang City Government's decision to collaborate with the Toyama City Government (Rudiany et al., 2021). The collaboration between the City of Semarang, Indonesia, and the City of Toyama, Japan, is part of a sister city program scheduled to run from 2017 to 2018. Notably, one of the implemented programs is the Trans Semarang Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which utilizes Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) instead of traditional fuel oil. The execution of this CNG-powered public transportation initiative is integral to the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme (Wirastomo & Lituhayu, 2020). This transportation effort is expected to assist Indonesia in meeting its obligations to reduce emissions, contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions (UNFCCC, 2022). Furthermore, such collaborative initiatives are critical in enabling Indonesia to access clean technology and innovative practices that support long-term sustainability goals (Keiner & Kim, 2007).

Indonesia, as a nation with defined national goals, must actively work towards realizing these objectives. Development in a democratic environment is guided by the will, needs, and capabilities of the people and then executed by them. The Central Government is intricately connected to the role of Regional Government. With 34 provinces spread across an archipelago, every province plays a distinct role in the governance of the region (Neves & Namba, 2023). This interrelationship between levels of government reflects the comprehensive approach needed to address complex challenges like climate change and sustainable development (Hara et al., 2014). Through international partnerships like those with Toyama, Indonesian cities are gaining access to global best practices in environmental management, which is crucial for achieving the SDGs (Neves & Namba, 2023). Additionally, the role of local governance in fostering sustainability aligns with broader global efforts to implement the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2022).

In the sphere of economic growth activities, the government can initiate various strategies to propel economic advancement. Regional autonomy bestows authority upon the regional government to regulate economic governance within their jurisdiction. Considering the importance of regional governance for achieving competitiveness, it is imperative that the government, community, and relevant regional stakeholders work

together effectively (Wirastomo & Lituhayu, 2020). Cooperative activities emerge as a means to enhance the well-being of the populace. The existing collaboration is a well-considered initiative by the Regional Government, reflecting the importance of strategic partnerships in fostering regional development (Neves & Namba, 2023). Effective collaboration, coupled with sound public policy, yields tangible outcomes aligned with the objectives set at the time of policy development. Collaboration, in essence, refers to the collective efforts of multiple entities (institutions, government, etc.) working together to achieve shared goals (De Villiers et al., 2007).

This type of intercity agreement has gained increasing popularity in recent years, reflecting a growing acknowledgment of the benefits derived from international partnerships (Hara et al., 2014). Foreign cooperation is one avenue Regional Governments can pursue to enhance regional competitiveness (Tjandradewi & Marcotullio, 2009). Sister City Collaboration involves a partnership between two cities united by a vision to improve their respective urban environments. Temperament personality elements, precisely the level of sensitivity in responding to global issues, played a pivotal role during the leadership characterized by swift action. The leader promptly initiated collaborations with sister cities and engaged in technical cooperation with municipal governments in other countries. This strategic approach aimed to identify and implement best practices in the city of Semarang (Rudiany et al., 2021). Furthermore, participation in the international organization UCLG-ASPAC ensured staying abreast of developments and active involvement in addressing international issues, particularly those related to global environmental concerns (Neves & Namba, 2023).

Social context elements, rooted in Javanese cultural and religious values, as well as character and leadership concepts, have been adapted to various Javanese leadership principles, including *Hasta Brata*, *Ki Hajar Dewantara*, and *Sultan Agung* (Prajayanti & Suharnomo, 2012). This conceptual framework aligns with the Western leadership style, commonly recognized as the transformational leadership style. The leadership concept is succinctly expressed through a *seloka* or Javanese term for an exemplary leader: *Ngayomi* (protect), *Ngayemi* (calming), and *Ngayahi* (carry out duties) (Purba & Darmastuti, 2015). The applied leadership concept has proven effective and well-received by subordinates, encompassing government employees and residents of the

city of Semarang. In the future, it is anticipated that the Semarang city government will sustain a leadership concept adapted to the cultural realities of the city's residents, one that is perceived as beneficial to the community (Indriyati et al., 2016). Continuous improvement in addressing existing deficiencies within the cognition element, including personal principles and the influence of the organization being followed, is expected (Wirastomo & Lituhayu, 2020).

In analyzing Mayor Hendrar Prihadi's success, it is essential to examine how his unique personality traits directly contributed to Semarang's achievements. One of the Mayor's standout idiosyncrasies is his innovative thinking, particularly his ability to integrate traditional Javanese values with modern governance. For instance, his emphasis on community-based decision-making, rooted in local cultural norms, has facilitated more inclusive and practical policy implementations. This trait has been instrumental in the successful rollout of sustainability initiatives, such as the city's waste management program, which combines modern technology with traditional community practices.

Another significant trait is the Mayor's high sensitivity to global environmental issues, which has driven Semarang's engagement in international collaborations, such as the partnership with Toyama City. His proactive stance on environmental sustainability, including the implementation of the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme, reflects a deep commitment to addressing climate change. This responsiveness not only strengthened Semarang's global reputation but also attracted international support and resources. By detailing these specific traits and their practical applications, the discussion clarifies how Mayor Prihadi's idiosyncrasies have translated into successful policy outcomes and overall improvements in the city's well-being.

The interaction pattern of the Mayor of Semarang with his subordinates and the community is reflected in the results of the interview with the Mayor:

"We engage in as much communication as possible. Beyond formal meetings and direct interactions, I often reach out to government officials or SKPD, inquire about updates, and discuss established policies and programs. With the community, we consistently organize events touring sub-districts to hear their complaints and suggestions directly. Regular health walks, visits to markets every Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday, recitation tours, scheduled visits to churches and temples every Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, as well as visits to schools every Monday and Thursday. In these places, where people from various backgrounds gather, we recite the Koran and engage in casual conversations. This approach allows people to share their complaints and provide input more freely, creating a relaxed environment for them to criticize and offer suggestions to

the city government. Additionally, I maintain an open-door policy for every element and layer of society. At the office and home, I am always willing to receive guests. My door is open to anyone who wishes to meet me, without discrimination based on identity or origin, as long as it serves the common good."

The Mayor emphasizes prioritizing deliberation and involving both subordinates and the community in decision-making processes. Interviews with several SKPDs (Kadis Kominfo, Kadis Budpar, Kadis Bappeda, Ka DPMPTSP) revealed:

"Mr. Hendi, in decision-making, consistently involves SKPD (regional work units). He is a leader who actively seeks suggestions and welcomes input from his staff. In every policy implementation, he prioritizes dialogue and encourages his subordinates to lead with firmness while safeguarding both subordinates and the community."

Furthermore, the interview with the Mayor highlighted efforts to enhance bureaucratic processes, including regulations to control gratification. The Mayor emphasized a zero-tolerance approach to corruption, with consequences such as postponed promotions, demotions, or removal from positions for employees found involved in such practices. The Mayor expressed a commitment to firmness and joint efforts in handling and streamlining bureaucracy. As a government administrator, he stressed the importance of clear regulations, leadership, supervision, development, and understanding of the conditions of subordinates. The Mayor emphasized the Javanese concept of "*nguwongke uwong*" (humanizing humans) to foster understanding, emulation, and role modeling among the people he leads.

Motivational elements have been instrumental in advancing Semarang City toward achieving the goal of zero carbon emissions. Over the past two years, under the leadership, Semarang City has undergone substantial positive transformations. Notably, passive vacant lands have been converted into city parks, contributing to the augmentation of Green Open Spaces (RTH). Additionally, damaged parks have been revitalized into active spaces featuring various trees and amenities for residents. The integration of green open spaces extends to public facilities in residential areas, offices, shops, markets, schools, hospitals/health centers, and bus terminals/city transportation. Furthermore, the reorganization of sidewalks on protocol roads, including Jalan Veteran, Jalan Imam Bonjol, Simpang Lima area, Jalan Pemuda, Kota Lama, and others, exemplifies the comprehensive urban planning carried out by Mayor Hendi.

Mayor Hendi's efforts also emphasize aesthetic considerations, with numerous locations becoming popular selfie spots. Recognizing these achievements, the Ministry

of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia awarded the Semarang City Government the Adipura Cup. The award ceremony took place on Wednesday evening (2/8) at the Manggala Wanabhakti Auditorium within the Ministry of Environment and Forestry complex. Minister of Environment and Forestry, Siti Nurbaya Bakar, personally presented the Adipura Award to the Semarang City Government, represented by Gunawan Saptogiri, the Head of the Semarang City Environmental Service. This accolade marks the city's sixth consecutive Adipura award since 2012.

The Head of Public Relations and Protocol of the Regional Secretariat of the City of Semarang, Achyani, highlighted the collaborative efforts and dedication of the Mayor of Semarang in organizing and maintaining environmental cleanliness. Semarang City has successfully met the standards across various assessment elements, encompassing cleanliness, greening, and other criteria related to parks, roads, markets, shops, housing, and schools, as well as the cleaning of gutters and rivers. "The City of Semarang has received the Adipura award six times consecutively from 2012 to 2017," emphasized Achyani.

This Adipura award is also inseparable from the innovation of Hendi, the Mayor's nickname, who changed the slum environment along with the arrangement of the traditional market to make it more beautiful, clean and well-maintained. One of the slum villages that was successfully transformed was "Kampung Pelangi" in Wonosari Village, which went viral and spread to foreign countries. This is also the case with waste management, where in the city of Semarang, it is not just thrown away at the Jatibarang landfill but has been processed into a waste power plant, methane gas, and the Smart City Control System program through Smart Energy Saving PJUs are also significant innovations in this city. It would not be wrong if the city of Semarang were one of those appointed by President Jokowi to be a pilot for developing a waste power plant project. The Mayor of Semarang, who is familiarly called Hendi, emphasized that in the context of commemorating Environment Day, which this year has the theme 'One Earth for the Future', the Semarang City Government will hold a series of Environment Day commemorations in the form of campaigns and education. The Vehicle Smoke-Free Day will last for one month, with implementation once a week. The Semarang City Government itself requires all employees within the city hall not to use vehicles.

The Adipura Award received by Semarang is closely tied to Mayor Hendi's innovative initiatives, involving the transformation of slum environments and the enhancement of traditional markets to foster beauty, cleanliness, and proper maintenance. Notably, the successful rejuvenation of "Kampung Pelangi" in Wonosari Village, which gained viral attention and international recognition, stands out among these accomplishments. Another facet of innovation is evident in waste management practices, where Semarang processes waste into a waste-to-energy power plant, methane gas, and implements the Smart City Control System program through Smart Energy Saving PJUs.

Semarang's pioneering efforts in waste management led to its selection by President Jokowi as a pilot city for the development of a waste-to-energy power plant project. Mayor Hendi, commonly known as Hendi, highlighted the city's commitment to Environment Day, themed 'One Earth for the Future.' The Semarang City Government plans a series of Environment Day commemorations featuring campaigns and educational activities. The Vehicle Smoke-Free Day initiative will span one month, with weekly implementation. As part of this commitment, all city hall employees in Semarang are required to abstain from using vehicles during this period.

There are at least three factors, such as interpersonal skills, past experiences, and ideological orientations, that influence the outcome of the Mayor's diplomacy. The first is interpersonal skills. Mayor Prihadi's ability to build strong relationships with international partners has been crucial to his diplomatic efforts. His approachable demeanor and empathetic communication style have fostered trust and cooperation with global counterparts. For example, his interactions with Toyama City officials—marked by genuine engagement and respect—have been essential in advancing joint environmental projects. These interpersonal skills have facilitated successful negotiations and the smooth implementation of collaborative initiatives.

The second is past experiences. The Mayor's background in local governance and community development has significantly shaped his diplomatic strategies. His previous roles in managing urban development and community projects have provided him with a practical understanding of local needs and challenges. This experience has informed his approach to international collaborations, enabling him to blend Javanese cultural values with modern practices effectively. For instance, his experience in community

engagement has influenced his approach to incorporating local cultural norms into the city's sustainability projects, which has been well-received by both local and international stakeholders. The last is ideological orientation. Mayor Prihadi's commitment to sustainability and community welfare has guided his diplomatic strategies. His focus on environmental stewardship and inclusive development is reflected in his policy choices and international collaborations. This commitment is evident in the successful implementation of the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) scheme with Toyama City, aimed at achieving a zero-carbon urban environment. The Mayor's strong ideological stance on sustainability has been a driving force behind the city's proactive approach to environmental issues and international cooperation.

Conclusion

The importance of democratization for economic development and the critical role of regional governments in reaching national goals cannot be overstated. Regional autonomy is crucial for development that meets the needs and desires of the local population. Cooperation between central and regional governments is essential for achieving sustainable economic growth. In Indonesia, with its many diverse provinces, this cooperation is essential.

Semarang illustrates how development strategies focused on sustainability and environmental cleanliness can be successfully implemented. By combining the Sister City concept with leadership that values and incorporates local cultural traditions, Semarang has achieved significant milestones, including winning the Adipura Award. Our study of Mayor Prihadi shows how his unique traits, like his interpersonal skills, past experiences, and ideological views, are vital to his success in diplomacy. Instead of only focusing on physical projects, the Mayor engages with the community and develops policies that support inclusive growth. His innovative approaches to public space planning, waste management, and energy policies highlight his commitment to making Semarang a model of sustainability. The findings highlight how personal traits are crucial in diplomacy and effective leadership. It shows that the unique characteristics of leaders strongly influence successful international collaborations and sustainable development.

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