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City Diplomacy

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Abstract

Diplomacy is one of the oldest mechanisms of managing the international environment. It is traditionally associated with operation of the state. However, in contemporary times the parameters of the international environment have changed considerably. States are no longer the only entities participating in international relations. Along with states, sub-state actors (regions and cities) have emerged, as well as supra-state (the EU) and non-state entities. Sub-state actors go through the process of repositioning in the contemporary international order: from being an object of management to building their own subject status in this respect. In order to achieve this goal, they increasingly use mechanisms and instruments which were the sole domain of the state until recently. Despite substantial attention paid to regional diplomacy, academic discussion has focused less on the increasing role of cities in diplomacy. The paper aims to introduce the concept of city diplomacy. It will be argued that cities have become important actors on the world stage, that they have developed diplomatic apparatus, and that city diplomacy is becoming more and more professional diplomatic activity.

Keywords: city, diplomacy, paradiplomacy

JEL: K33, R58

Introduction

Diplomacy is one of the oldest mechanisms of managing the international environment. As an institution of the international community, it emerged at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries together with the formation of the Westphalian international order. This is why it is traditionally associated with operation of the state. However, in contemporary times the parameters of the international environment have changed considerably. The qualitatively new features pertain mostly to the increasing heterogeneity of its subject-related structure but also to the way of functioning of this environment and the control over it. States are no longer the only entities participating in international relations. Along with states, sub-state actors (regions and cities) have emerged, as well as supra-state (the EU) and non-state entities (transnational corporations, non-government organizations). Without doubt, the most important actors of diplomacy are still the states which have traditional diplomatic institutions and implement their foreign policies through official communication channels. It can be assumed that the "core" of diplomacy is the sphere of relations between states and that it constitutes a closed system regulated by diplomatic law which is part of international public law. However, if we make an assumption that diplomacy is not only "the dialogue between states" (Watson 1984), but also "the mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business" (Melissen 1999, xvii), the "soft shell" of diplomacy appears (Bátora and Hynek 2014, 7) in which various actors involved in diplomatic interactions are functioning: NGOs, transnational corporations, regions and cities.

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The emergence of sub-state territorial actors, such as regions and cities, on the international arena is an effect of delegation of state power to the regional and local levels. The "diplomacy" of sub-state actors has significantly evolved in recent decades and has gone through the process of legal and political "normalization" (Cornago 2010a), becoming a permanent element of the diplomatic environment. The most "diplomatically active" are large regions with a high level of economic development, having their own competence in external policy and defining their own political, economic and cultural interests. Big cities (metropolises) also join the group of active diplomatic actors and create their own cooperation networks to solve both their own and global problems (e.g., environmental issues). As Benjamin Barber claims, in his book *If Mayors Ruled the World. Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (2013), civilization has its origin in cities. States emerged much later, cities last when states fall. Beijing, Athens, Damascus, Philadelphia, Cairo, or Delhi were witness to the rise and fall of the empires. The collapse of the Roman Empire did not cause the downfall of Rome. Berlin is an example of a cosmopolitan city which survived the fall of the Kingdom of Prussia and the Third Reich.

Since 2007, for the first time in human history, more people have lived in urban than in rural areas. World cities such as New York, Tokyo or London have economies as big as the economies of medium-sized countries. They are also the primary incubators of cultural, social, and political innovations. It is therefore clear that cities are growing in power in the globalized world. What is equally important is that they are unburdened with the issues of borders and sovereignty which impede the capacity of nation-states to work with one another. Despite substantial attention towards regional diplomacy, academic discussion has focused less on the increasing role of cities in diplomacy. Both international relations theorists and diplomacy theorists have been quite reluctant to include cities in their research agendas. The paper aims to introduce the concept of city diplomacy. It will be argued that cities have become important actors on the world stage, they have developed diplomatic apparatus, and city diplomacy is becoming more and more professional diplomatic activity.

The paper has four parts. The first part introduces a conceptual framework within which the concept of city diplomacy could be considered. In the second part, both quantitative as well as qualitative determinants of city diplomacy are examined. The next section aims to define the concept of city diplomacy. The final part examines dimensions and forms of city diplomacy.

1 Conceptual Framework

The international operation of sub-state entities, similar to traditional diplomatic activity, is the object of numerous conceptualizations and interpretations due to the fact that there is no consensus among the researchers about a specific name (a relevant neologism) for this relatively new phenomenon. One of the first terms to describe the discussed phenomenon was "microdiplomacy" introduced by Duchacek to distinguish between the international activity of sub-state actors and traditional diplomacy (macrodiplomacy) managed by state governments (Duchacek 1984, 1990).

Another notion, which seems to have made the greatest "career" in the literature on the subject, is the term "paradiplomacy." It was first used by Butler in 1961 to define the "personal or parallel diplomacy complementing or competing with the regular foreign policy of the government" (Butler 1962, 13). This term is used to describe the international activity of sub-state actors owing to Duchacek and Soldatos. The term "paradiplomacy" is an acronym of "parallel diplomacy." They define it as direct and relatively autonomous international activity of sub-national actors (regions, cities) which can pursue a policy "parallel to, often co-ordinated with, complementary to, and sometimes in conflict with their central governments' diplomacy" (Duchacek, Latouche, and Stevenson 1988; Soldatos 1990). Soldatos adds that this activity is characterized by the existence of direct communication channels with the international environment and direct relations with foreign entities, formulation of objectives and strategies of "foreign policy" and, what becomes increasingly important, having financial means for its implementation.[1] A consequence of such a conceptualization

1. The starting point for Soldatos' theory was the case of Quebec, which is a quite extreme case of striving for self-determination.

is interpretation of this activity as autonomous and challenging for the state-centric international order, as a process parallel to traditional diplomacy.

Slightly different concepts are presented by Crieckemans and Cornago. Crieckemans indicates that international activity of such sub-state actors as Quebec, Flanders or Catalonia — having broad constitutional autonomy within their states — shows features which enable its comparison to traditional diplomacy (Criekemans 2010). On the other hand, Cornago defines paradiplomacy as "non-central governments' involvement in international relations through the establishment of permanent or ad hoc contacts with foreign public or private entities, with the aim of promoting socioeconomic or cultural issues, as well as any other foreign dimension of their constitutional competences" (Cornago 1999, 40). He argues that the phenomenon of paradiplomacy can be perceived as an innovative process creating its own models of practices, institutions and discourses, through which sub-state actors challenge traditional diplomacy (Cornago 2010b, 100). Both researchers suggest using the term "sub-state diplomacy," as it best reflects the practice of international activity of regions or cities in contemporary reality.

The term "paradiplomacy" can also be interpreted in accordance with the Greek etymology of the prefix "para" as a process which only resembles diplomacy, functions in a way similar to it, but at the same time is outside its scope (Łuszczuk 2013, 123–124). In this perspective, paradiplomacy becomes para-diplomacy. Both interpretations create a picture of two "paths" of diplomacy: the central one in which states operate and the peripheral one for sub-state actors. The criticism of the notion of "paradiplomacy" pertains mostly to its conceptual ambiguity, vagueness and connections with diplomacy, with simultaneous emphasis on its autonomy, which suggests a conflict or a contradiction between the state and sub-state levels of policy. One of the major opponents of this term is John Kincaid. He introduces the notion of "constituent diplomacy" which, in his opinion, better conveys the idea "that states, provinces, cantons, Länder, and the like are constituent units of federal polities" (Kincaid 1990, 47), and thus emphasizes the consensual and inclusive aspect of this phenomenon.

Another conceptualization of the international activity of sub-state actors is presented by Aldecoa. According to him, the term "paradiplomacy" consolidates old international order and does not reflect the transformation of contemporary diplomacy. On the basis of Putnam's concept of two-level diplomacy, he suggests the term "plurinational diplomacy" which not only describes the phenomenon of development of sub-state actors' international activity, but also their influence on foreign policies of their states and their contribution to implementation of this policy on the EU forum (Aldecoa 1999).

Two concepts seem to be particularly useful from the perspective of the analysis carried out in the paper: "multi-level governance" and, related to some extent, "multi-layered diplomacy." Even though the concept of multi-level governance has its origin in the studies on European integration where it refers to vertical distribution of political power — from the state to supra-state level — and to horizontal distribution — from the state to sub-state level: regional or local (Ruszkowski 2007, 211), it becomes increasingly important as a mechanism of controlling the contemporary international environment. It means that the global management process takes place on different levels and through various scales of social relations (multi-scalar governance) which overlap, cross and merge. A kind of "re-scaling" of the global management process takes place, both vertically and horizontally. In the vertical aspect, this "re-scaling" goes both "down" — to the sub-state level, and "up" — to the supra-state level in relation to the state apparatus. In the horizontal aspect, it pertains to growing participation of non-state actors in the global management process.

The author of the multi-layered diplomacy concept is Hocking (Hocking 1993, 1999). In his opinion, the international involvement of sub-state entities is one of the symptoms of globalization impact on the contemporary diplomacy. He conceptualizes it not as autonomous activity questioning the hegemony of states in international policy, but as an integral part of multilevel or catalytic diplomacy; as a supplement to this policy and not its opposite. In the increasingly complex diplomatic environment, states are forced to extend, both vertically and horizontally, the process of foreign policy formulation and implementation through inclusion of a broad range of actors. "Localization of foreign policy" means co-optation of sub-state actors to this process, whereas

"diplomacy" of sub-state actors is one of its levels. With this approach, state and sub-state actors (regions, cities) do not necessarily "ride" along different diplomatic routes, but rather along the same route although in a different car (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, 9).

2 Determinants of city diplomacy

"The 19th century was the age of empires, the 20th century—the age of states. The 21st century becomes the age of cities."[2] There are two main forces that empower cities as international actors: globalization and decentralization. Globalization determines position, role and functions of the state in international system through modification of the relation between the state's components (territory, population, the government) and the international environment. The Westphalian system was based on division of political space between the states. Although the state's territory and borders remain important they ceased to be the only indicators of political space. The view of deterritorialization of the state and partial loss of control over the processes taking place in its territory is widespread in academic debate. The areas in which countries can realistically exercise their authority are decreasing. Globalization has encouraged the emergence of polycentric (multi-sited and networked) regulation and opened considerable possibilities for substate authorities to engage directly with realms beyond their states. Regulation has been increasingly diffused from states to other sites "above" and "below" the state government (Scholte 2005, 202). Globalization affects cities and requires them to respond politically, administratively and legally in order to secure good living conditions for citizens. As Neil Brenner argues, globalization re-scaled configuration of state territorial organization: cities become global while states become local (Brenner 1998). Decentralization contributes to the growing autonomy of cities vis-à-vis states and the international community.

The role of cities began to grow together with the industrial revolution (Jałowiecki and Szczepański 2002, 104–105). Whereas at the beginning of the 19th circa 2,4% of the world's population lived in cities (Giddens 2004, 594), at the start of the 21st century it is already more than a half of the world's inhabitants.[3] Urban settlements are already the main driving force behind global development: they produce over 80% of the world's GDP (World Bank 2018), of which the 600 biggest ones—60%. According to the estimates of McKinsey Global Institute, the 600 cities with the highest GDP will have been joined by 136 new ones by 2025, all of them from developing countries, while 100 of these 600 will be in China.[4]

Tokyo, the world's largest metro economy with USD 1,6 trillion in GDP-PPP, is just slightly smaller than all of South Korea.[5] Were it a nation, Tokyo would rank as the 15th largest economy in the world. New York City's USD 1,5 trillion GDP places it among the world's twenty largest economies, just a tick under those of Spain and Canada.

Owing to the globalization processes, the power and significance of cities as actors of international economic relations are growing. However, cities simultaneously experience adverse effects of these processes. The issues which used to be the sole domain of politics and diplomacy of states, such as the fight against terrorism (Nussbaum 2010),[6] climate change, poverty in the world, or international crime, currently become an important part of the policy and diplomacy of cities. Moreover, globalization entails a necessity to compete on the international arena for an inflow of investments and tourists, or for hosting prestigious cultural or sports events.

2. Wellington Webb: former Mayor of Denver and past President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

3. See: The World's Cities in 2016. Data Booklet. United Nations, Economic and Social Affairs, [@:] http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/urbanization/the_worlds_cities_in_2016_data_booklet.pdf. In 2016, an estimated 54,5% of the world's population lived in urban settlements.

4. See: The Urban World: Mapping the Economic Power of Cities. Report by Richard Dobbs and others, McKinsey Global Institute, March 2011, [@:] https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Global%20Themes/Urbanization/Urban%20world/MGI_urban_world_mapping_economic_power_of_cities_full_report.ashx.

5. [In the journal European practice of number notation is followed—for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style).—Ed.]

6. The security system in New York is much more developed than in many states. For instance, the NYC Police have their own antiterrorist unit and liaison officers located in 11 European cities (e.g., in London and Hamburg), in Asia (e.g., in Singapore) or in the Near East (e.g., in Tel Aviv and Amman).

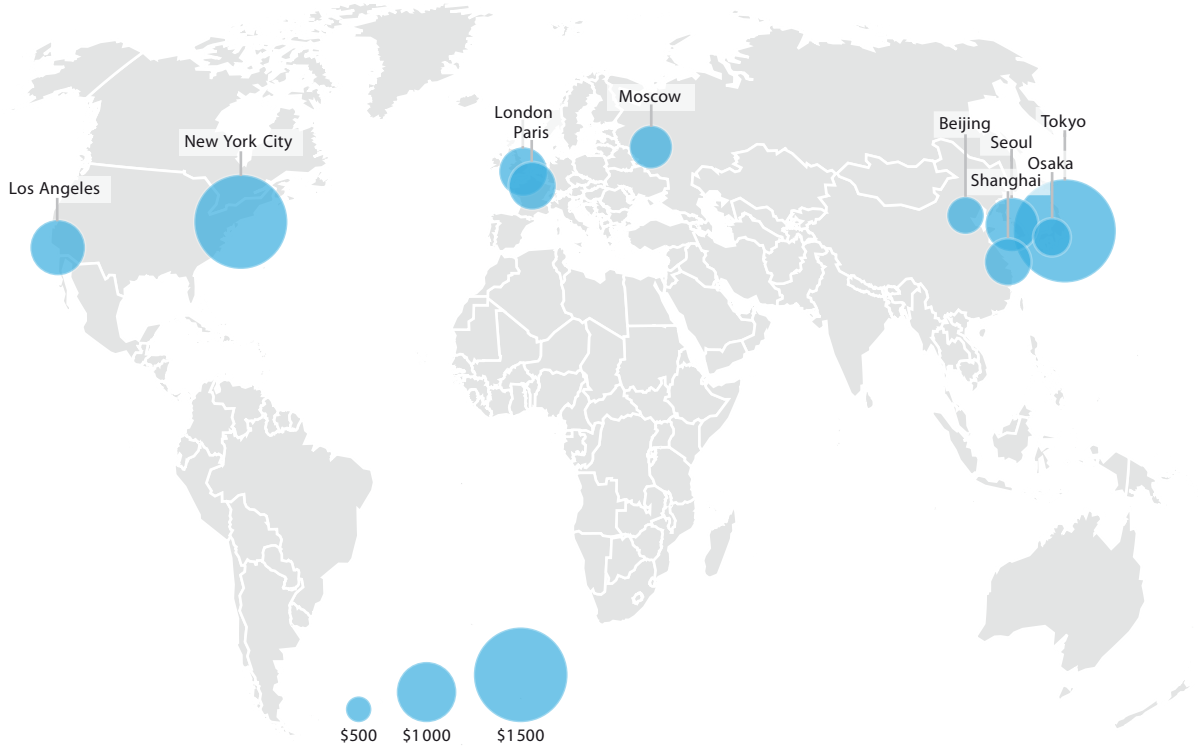

Fig. 1. Top 10 cities by GDP, as in the year 2015 (PPP-adjusted, in USD billion)

Source: Own elaboration based on data published at CityLab webpage (https://www.citylab.com/)

The national state is losing its functionality, its efficiency is falling in the majority of important issues of the contemporary society. On the one hand, it is too small to cope with global challenges, but on the other hand it is too big to deal with the needs of increasingly individualized and diversified communities. Sovereignty of states is a factor which frequently paralyses cooperation, whereas cities, which are not sovereign, do not operate in the categories of national interests and are able to create such cooperation networks which the competing states cannot afford. Mayors are far less ideological than state leaders and more willing to compromise, because their main task is good management and practical problem solving. Their pragmatic outlook on reality usually gives them a considerable mandate of social trust, they typically operate more efficiently and are more trusted than the state authorities. Pragmatism, citizens' trust, participation, indifference to state borders and sovereignty, democratic eagerness to create contact networks, creativity, innovation and cooperation are the common features of cities around the world (Barber 2013).

3 What is city diplomacy?

City diplomacy may be a new term, but the phenomenon has a longer history. Although there is common knowledge that modern diplomacy finds its origin in the Peace of Westphalia, the foundations of diplomacy were established before 1648, in times when cities pioneered as foreign policy entities. In ancient Greece, Athens regularly sent its representatives, received foreign emissaries and held negotiations. Diplomacy of the Italian city-states gave rise to modern diplomatic forms. It was not until the Peace of Westphalia and the resultant centralization of diplomacy within the competence of national states that cities were deprived of the rights and opportunities to conduct diplomatic operations.

Nowadays, the majority of municipal governments attach considerable significance to international cooperation, have in their structures the units responsible for its management, and some of them even have their own representative offices in foreign states, while mayors frequently travel abroad. These actions are aimed at improvement of a city's image and standards of living, but also have a more political dimension associated with building of a city's political position on the

international arena. The political orientation is connected with the assumption that cities can play the role of not only addressees but also co-authors of certain policies. In the literature, these processes are described in various ways, as: "political outward rescaling" (Brenner 2004), "political internationalization" (Lefèvre and d'Albergo 2007, 317), "municipal foreign policy" (Lackowska-Madurowicz 2014) or "city diplomacy."[7] The European Committee of the Regions defines city diplomacy as a "tool with which local authorities and their associations can promote social cohesion, environmental sustainability, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, at global level, with the aim of creating a stable environment in which people live together peacefully in a climate of democracy, progress and prosperity."[8]

Another definition, much narrower, is given by van der Pluijm and Melissen, according to whom city diplomacy is "the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interest to one another" (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, 6). On the other hand, Acuto defines city diplomacy as "mediated 'international' relations between rightful representatives of polities (cities in this instance) which result in agreements, collaborations, further institution-building and cooperation across boundaries." (Acuto and Rayner 2016, 1148). On the basis of the elements of the above-mentioned definitions we can claim that city diplomacy is the process of representation and communication through which cities establish and foster their mutual relations, advance their own interests, try to exert influence on conduct of other international actors (states, international institutions, other cities and non-state actors — e.g., corporations) and look for opportunities to solve problems of the international character (Surmacz 2015, 451).

4 Dimensions and forms of city diplomacy

City diplomacy — its scope, scale and intensity — is correlated with the size of a city. In smaller towns these are actually single projects, usually connected with youth, sports or cultural exchanges and events. On the other hand, large cities carry out operations which can be called their own "foreign policy." World cities (Friedmann 1986, 70)[9] or global cities (Sassen 1991, 3)[10] are becoming important actors of the global management process in the 21st century (Acuto 2013a). Global cities are those with the international scope of influence in the domains of economy, culture and politics.[11] New York, London, Tokyo and Paris are traditionally regarded as the big four of the world metropolises. These cities are not only the "global economic centres" but also political centres accumulating political influences and creating global social practices, or — as defined by Taylor — they are the "organizational nodes" of three networks on various levels: the international "Westphalian" diplomatic network, supranational global management network and transnational global civil society network (Taylor 2005).

City diplomacy is implemented in many dimensions and various forms. Van der Plujim and Melissen (2007) identify six dimensions of city diplomacy: security, development, economy, culture, networks and representation. However, these dimensions are misleading as they are not based on clear classification criterion, not distinguishing dimensions of city diplomacy from its forms.

7. The term "city diplomacy" is officially used in the works of the United Cities and Local Governments, C-40 Cities, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

8. See: Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on city diplomacy. OJ C 120, 28.5.2009, p. 1–5.

9. The author of the world city hypothesis is John Friedmann who argues that the processes occurring within such cities are closely connected with the form and level of integration and with functions of a city in the world economy. He considers world cities to be the effects of changes in the international distribution of labour in which they become the central points of capital concentration and the function of global production management and organization.

10. The author of the global city concept is Saskia Sassen who argues that global cities are concentrated command points in the organization of world economy; key locations for finance and for specialized service firms; sites of production, including the production of innovations and markets for the products and innovations produced.

11. The measurement of the scope of influence of global cities typically includes: organization of international events (fairs, exhibition, sports events); presence of the media of the international character and international institutions (NGOs, diplomatic posts etc.); location of international companies; tourism volume; international air and rail connections.

Dimensions could be described as the main areas of activity in city diplomacy. We could identify five of them: security, development, economy, culture and political affairs. Although it should be noticed that in reality many of the diplomatic activities undertaken by cities fall within more than one dimension of city diplomacy. Forms of city diplomacy indicate the mode of cooperation and representation of the city both in bilateral and multilateral relations (e.g., networking).

The issues of international security are not commonly viewed as the major task of cities. Nevertheless, conflict prevention, peace-building and especially post-conflict reconstruction have become important aspects of city diplomacy in the recent years. City authorities undertake various initiatives promoting peace and the world without wars. In 2003 an American organization "Cities for Peace" got involved in convincing the authorities of American cities to pass resolutions calling President Bush to end the war with Iraq. The effectiveness of the campaign was quite limited, even though more than 160 cities adopted such resolutions (among the biggest ones: Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago and Philadelphia). Another example, but also with little diplomatic success, is an initiative "Mayors for Peace" promoting the idea of the world without the nuclear weapons. Currently, this initiative gathers almost 6 500 cities from 160 states. Much more effective are diplomatic operations undertaken by cities in the phase of post-conflict reconstruction, in the form of development assistance, or substantive and technical support for local government formation (Musch et al. 2008).

City authorities are particularly active in the non-military security issues connected with ecological or social threats. It is estimated that cities are responsible for 70% of carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere[12] and are also the most affected by this phenomenon, which means that it is the cities that are able to solve most of these problems, regardless of the fact whether states can reach an agreement. "While nations talk, cities act"—this famous quote from Michael Bloomberg, former Mayor of New York City, accurately describes the scope of the initiatives undertaken by city governments on a global scale in their fight against climate change. The Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) report on the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, which took place at the end of 2011 in the atmosphere of helplessness, points to the fact that local governments are on the front line of the struggle against human impact on climate. A typical feature of these actions is their network character. An expression of the global mobilization of local governments is creation of a process parallel to the international negotiations on climate held on the United Nations forum. This is a common voice of cities and local governments from all over the world for reaching a new ambitious agreement on climate and for acknowledgment of the role of local communities in climate protection. This process is supported on a global level by the largest world associations of cities and local governments,[13] United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), World Association of the Major Metropolises (METROPOLIS), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)[14] and World Mayors Council on Climate Change. As part of this process, representatives of local authorities participate as observers in sessions at conferences of the parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. During the 2013 summit in Warsaw, the World Cities Day was put on the official agenda for the first time, and a broad representation of local governments was an official participant of the dialogue with the representatives of the states-parties to the Climate Convention within the framework of the High Level Segment.

The cities' common position on climate change was the most fully presented in 2010 when 207 urban settlements from all over the world signed a pact during the World Mayor Summit on Climate Change in Mexico, in which they voluntarily undertook to act for reduction of greenhouse gas

12. See: Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories. An Accounting and Reporting Standard for Cities. By Wee Kean Fong et al., World Resources Institute, 2014, [@:] http://www.ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/ghgp/standards/GHGP_GPC_0.pdf.

13. ICLEI gathers over 1500 local governments which act together to make tangible beneficial change in the area of sustainable development, with special emphasis on environmental protection.

14. C40 was initiated in 2005 by the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone. Currently, it gathers 90 global cities which control 12% of the world carbon dioxide emission to the atmosphere. It has always been presided over by very influential mayors: Ken Livingstone—Mayor of London, David Miller—Mayor of Toronto, Michael Bloomberg—Mayor of New York, and currently Anne Hidalgo—Mayor of Paris. The group closely cooperates with the World Bank and OECD. C40 is focused on tackling climate change and driving urban action that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks.

emissions and for counteracting the effects of climate change.[15] A similar commitment was taken on by the C40 Group mayors during the summit parallel to Rio+20.[16] This commitment became especially important in 2017 after President Trump's announcement that the United States was withdrawing from the Paris climate accord. Hundreds of mayors signed a pact to continue fighting climate change in the US despite this decision.

For many cities, the economic interest is an important, and sometimes the primary goal of their efforts on the international scale. Economic dimension of city diplomacy can be understood as the use of such foreign affairs competencies to maximize the competitiveness of cities in the global economy. In this respect, cities compete against each other for an inflow of investments, tourists, location of large companies or a chance to host prestigious cultural or sports events. Cities engage in lobbying, hold negotiations with corporations and international organizations, and build the city brand on the international arena. A special case of the economic dimension of city diplomacy is competition for hosting the Olympic Games. City authorities get involved in diplomatic actions with states, other cities and a broad range of private actors in order to create a coalition with a strong status in negotiations and they fulfil the key role in this coalition. Thus, they are the participants of a typical, quite "hard" diplomatic game (Acuto 2013b).

Culture is an important part of diplomacy of every state and is also a significant element of city diplomacy. It is frequently a resource on the basis of which cities build their international position and a platform on which an international cooperation network is created. Sometimes city diplomacy is also grounded in political reasons. For instance, at the end of the 1980s, Western cities got involved in partner cooperation with RPA cities to express their solidarity in the fight against apartheid. Political reasons can also lead to a breach or suspension of partner cooperation. The authorities of Prague took a decision on suspending cooperation with Moscow and Petersburg in connection with Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

City diplomacy can have the form of either bilateral diplomacy (between two actors of which at least one is a city), or multilateral, involving representatives of many cities (e.g., city networks). Bilateral diplomacy between cities usually takes the form of cooperation within the framework of twinning cities or sister cities. This is the most widespread form. Overall, it is difficult today to find a city which would not be involved in this form of cooperation. It is based on official agreements and its goal is comprehensive cooperation, exchange of experiences and good practices. New York has 97 partner cities, Shanghai — 67, Berlin and Beijing — 17 each, Chicago — 28, Tokyo — 11, Paris has only one twin city — Rome, but more than 50 partner cities. Polish cities also actively participate in this form of cooperation: Warsaw has 25 partner cities, Cracow — 7 sister cities and 21 partner cities, Lublin — 24, Łódź — 20, Poznań — 14, Katowice and Gdańsk — 13 each, and Wrocław — 12.[17] However, effectiveness of the partnership agreement mechanism is a different issue. In many cases, partnership agreements are not filled with content and are not effective tools of diplomacy. In addition, opinions on their anachronism are more and more frequent.

Unlike regions, cities do not often use "diplomatic" representation in the form of their agencies in other states. 15 cities have their representative offices in Brussels.[18] This form of representation is actively used by: Vienna (13 representative offices — in Brussels, Tokyo and in Central and Eastern Europe — e.g., in Cracow), London (4 representative offices — in Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai, and Brussels), Osaka (Chicago, Singapore, Paris, and Shanghai). The authorities of Moscow also have their representative offices in the form of "Moscow Houses" in Yerevan, Riga, and Sofia. Among the Polish cities only Łódź has its representatives in Brussels and since June 2014 in Chengdu in China, and Cracow has the "Cracow House" in Nuremberg. Certainly, all these representative offices do not have a diplomatic status. They represent interests of particular cities, but mostly in economic and cultural issues.

15. See: The Mexico City Pact. [@:] http://www.worldmayorscouncil.org/the-mexico-city-pact.html.

16. The mayors of metropolises undertook to reduce emissions in their cities until 2030 by the amount equal to the joint emissions of Canada and Mexico.

17. On the basis of websites of city offices.

18. Copenhagen, Zagreb, Utrecht, Malmö, Hague, Amsterdam, London, Budapest, Vienna, Tallinn, Madrid, Helsinki, Prague, Barcelona, and Łódź.

There are a lot of international institutions uniting cities over the state borders, owing to which cities cooperate with one another quietly and inconspicuously (Acuto 2010)[19] to cope with climate change, security issues and immigration. The list is very long: United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); CityNet (cities of Asia and Pacific), Eurocities (Europe), Road de Associationes de Municipios de America Latina (RAMAL), Union des Villes Africaines (UVA), Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), New HANSE([20]) or City Protocol([21]) are only some of them. As Michal Acuto estimates, the overall number of city networks is about 200 (Acuto and Rayner 2016). Benjamin Barber notices that these structures with dull names from which, as it seems, bureaucratic boredom is drifting, are just creating a new and fascinating cosmopolis. However, it should be emphasized that an informal network of cities does not have any mechanism which could enforce anything. It cannot enact laws, it can only promote best practices. Furthermore, it should be noted that most networks are dominated by the cities from Europe and North America, even though in the last few years there has been a tendency for the cities from the developing states to get involved more actively.

City diplomacy is also becoming professionalized. The majority of local authorities have in their structures the units responsible for its management. These units, in the form of offices or departments, usually situated at offices of mayors,[22] are accountable for planning and development of the city's "foreign policy," international economic missions, attraction of foreign investments, cooperation with partners, cultural exchange, the city's participation in international programmes, but also, especially in the case of capital cities, relations with the diplomatic corps, international institutions and international NGOs.

Without doubt, the most important role in city diplomacy is performed by their leaders, that is mayors. They are the "ambassadors" of their cities on the international arena. Rudolph Giuliani, Michael Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio — former and present Mayors of New York City, Rahm Emanuel — Mayor of Chicago, Boris Johnson — former Mayor of London, Yury Luzhkov — former Mayor of Moscow, or Eduardo Paes — former Mayor of Rio de Janeiro — these figures are recognizable also in the world politics. Many mayors of big cities became presidents or prime ministers of their states.[23] They increasingly voice their opinions on international affairs, they are present in the international media, speak at conferences held by international organizations, pay numerous visits abroad and receive not only their counterparts from other states, but also heads of governments, presidents and ambassadors. Criticising states for inefficient solving of global problems, they create their own international cooperation networks, organize "summits" of mayors of the biggest cities, propose own solutions and reach an increasingly important political position on the international arena. The Global Parliament of Mayors, an organization established in 2016 on the initiative of Benjamin Barber, is especially worth noticing. The aim of this organization, founded by and for mayors from all continents, is to face the biggest challenges seen from the perspective of large cities and metropolises. Currently, it has 61 members (including the mayors of Warsaw, Wrocław, Gdańsk, and Katowice).

19. Referring to a famous experiment demonstrating selectiveness of our attention, Michael Acuto calls cities "invisible gorillas" on the international arena. A group of people were presented a short video in which six people — three in white shirts and three in black shirts — pass basketballs around. While you watch, you must keep a silent count of the number of passes made by the people in white shirts. At some point, a gorilla strolls into the middle of the action, faces the camera and thumps its chest, and then leaves, spending nine seconds on screen. Half of the people who watched the video and counted the passes missed the gorilla. It was as though the gorilla was invisible. This experiment reveals two things: that we are missing a lot of what goes on around us, and that we have no idea that we are missing so much.

20. A network of towns and cities, founded in 1980, that historically belonged to, or had active trading exchanges with the association of merchant towns known as the Hanseatic League.

21. An organization located in Barcelona which facilitates exchange of good practices among cities, via an online platform.

22. The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs consists of three departments: for diplomatic and consular affairs, international protocol and international business. The Office is an intermediary between the city, diplomatic community, governments of foreign states, United Nations and Department of State. Within the structures of London self-government there is the Office for External Relations and an independent position of an advisor to the mayor on international relations.

23. For instance, Jacques Chirac who was the Mayor of Paris in 1977–1995; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, former Prime Minister and current President of Turkey, was the Mayor of Istanbul in 1994–1998; Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the Mayor of Teheran in 2003–2005; Francois Holland was the Mayor of Tulle in 2001–2008.

Conclusions

The opportunity for cities to carry out their own "diplomatic" actions is the effect of both the globalization processes and fragmentation and dispersion of state power. Without doubt, sub-state actors are going through the process of repositioning in the contemporary international order: from being an object of management to building their own subject status in this respect. In order to achieve this goal, they increasingly use mechanisms and instruments which were the sole domain of the state until recently. They fulfil the basic diplomatic functions: negotiations, representation, effective communication, data collection and analysis. "Diplomatic" actions of cities pertain mostly to so-called low-politics areas: culture, development cooperation, environmental protection, migration issues or sustainable development. Characteristic features of their diplomacy are: operating within the framework of projects and campaigns; cooperation through networks and platforms, exchange of information and good practices, but also elements "borrowed" from diplomacy of states: establishment of representative offices abroad, development of structures for international cooperation, keeping a certain degree of ceremony (diplomatic protocol), or using a complex procedure of approving international agreements and giving them a special rank in the regional legislative process.

However, as rightly pointed out by Benjamin Barber, "no matter how correlated and interdependent the states can be within their economic, technocratic and cultural functions, they are subject to law and jurisdiction, executive and fiscal authority of states which are still very powerful. States are not going anywhere" (Barber 2013, 25). City diplomacy will not replace diplomacy of states. What contributes to growth of global cities, united in networks, does not necessarily contribute to development of states, and if this growth is connected with a deficit in state power, the governments will not passively look on undermining their supremacy.

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