

## City diplomacy as a tool to reinvigorate international multilateral cooperation

The 21<sup>st</sup> century faces numerous urgent global challenges, including climate change, migration, and pandemics like COVID-19. These issues necessitate international cooperation, yet there is a crisis of multilateralism and a rise in nationalism, exemplified by leaders like D. Trump, J. Bolsonaro, and R. Duterte. Brexit and the ascent of far-right movements further undermine global cooperation. Amid this, cities are gaining prominence, wielding unprecedented influence akin to Renaissance city-states. With nation-states faltering in addressing global issues, cities are stepping up, leveraging their assertiveness and influence. This shift may reshape international politics and law. While states dominate at international forums, they often lag due to bureaucratic inertia and compromise on optimal policies. In contrast, cities excel in addressing issues like climate change, drawing on i.e. sister cities and networks for cooperation.

The research problem of this project can be formulated in the following question: What kind of tools do cities have at their disposal to reinvigorate international multilateral cooperation? Following this, the project's research objective is to identify tools that contribute to cities' most influential participation in international multilateral cooperation and to create models for such participation.

The authors formulated the following hypotheses with corresponding research questions, the answer to which is necessary in order to verify the hypotheses:

1. As the inter-governmental multilateral cooperation deteriorates (or becomes less influential), cities offer an alternative to reinvigorate international multilateral cooperation. And the questions: In what kind of fields of international multilateral cooperation is city diplomacy more influential compared to inter-governmental diplomacy? Are cities more influential/better than States in solving global problems (i.e. climate change and sustainable development, the migration crisis, and the pandemics)? What kind of tools do they use?
2. Considering the growing role of cities in international relational and multi-level governance, cities have developed their capacities to exert influence on the international stage. And the question: How do cities develop their institutional, human, financial and planning capacities to exert influence on the international stage?

To assess the level of influence of city diplomacy on multilateral cooperation, the research will be devoted to the creation and validation of the **Index of Local Government International Cooperation**. The primary assumption indicates that it should be built on four indicators: (1) Cooperation Planning, (2) Human Resources, (3) Financial Resources and (4) Organizational Resources. It will enable an objective evaluation of the level of engagement of a local government unit in international cooperation and will help to identify areas requiring improvement. In order to verify the hypotheses, it is necessary to research selected cities (London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, Oslo, Stockholm, Cairo, Gwangju, Melbourne, Porto Allegre) and city networks (ICORN – International Cities of Refuge Network, WHO Healthy Cities Network, C40 Cities) through their international activities at various levels. The first level is an evolution of city diplomacy, which will show the progress and development of this city activity in the history of international relations. The second level should concentrate on the current tools of city diplomacy, namely sister cities (bilateral diplomacy) and city networks (multilateral diplomacy). The third one should focus on the representation of cities in international organizations like the United Nations, Council of Europe, European Union, and ASEAN, and the fourth one should focus on regulations in the fields of climate change, the migration crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In each of these levels, the authors will concentrate on the three subject areas – climate change, the migration crisis, and pandemics – and will indicate tools of international inter-municipal multilateral cooperation.

The primary criterion for selecting research methods is the need to verify the adopted research hypotheses and thus achieve the assumed research objective. It is also necessary to consider the interdisciplinary nature of the issues under examination. Research methods mirror the qualitative character of the present research and, as such, include comparative analysis, interviews, non-participant observation, formal-legal analysis (including the analysis of various legally binding and non-binding documents), and the critical analysis of the relevant literature (international relations, international law, political science, urban studies literature).