City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics

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Acknowledgements

About the Author

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1. Introduction

It is often asserted that modern diplomacy, characterized by the establishment of permanent missions that are resident in the capital of a foreign country, finds its origin in the Peace of Westphalia. However, the foundations of diplomacy as such were established long before 1648, in times when states as they are known now did not yet exist and cities pioneered as foreign policy entities. Diplomacy thus existed before the existence of states. In ancient Greece, for example, city-states like Athens and Macedon were regularly sending and receiving embassies of an ad hoc character and appointed ambassadors to engage in negotiations on behalf of the city-at-large. Later, in Renaissance times, powerful Italian city-states like Venice and Milan were the first to establish permanent diplomatic missions abroad and to create an organized system of diplomacy (Nicolson, 2001: 6-33).

After the Treaties of Westphalia, cities like Venice were not able to prolong their monopoly over foreign policy and diplomacy became the domain of the newly established European states. The standardization of diplomacy after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the co-evolvement of diplomacy and states in the time thereafter further intensified state-centredness in both the theory and practice of international relations in general and of diplomacy more specifically. Although it could be argued that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, foreign affairs is still primarily a task of national governments and their ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs), the state is no longer the only actor on the diplomatic stage. Associations of states, NGOs and multinational corporations, for example, increasingly play a role in diplomacy (Davenport, 2002; Langhorne, 2005; and Muldoon Jr,

2005). Despite substantial academic attention for these three groups of new actors, academic discussion has focused less on the increasing role of another actor in diplomacy, namely the city. This omission is remarkable given the increasing importance of cities around the world. In 2007, for example, for the first time in human history, more people will live in urban than in rural areas. In addition, on a global scale, over 100,000 people a day move to cities. It is therefore clear that cities now matter more in the world than ever, making some even term cities as the one socio-political unit that is growing in power in the era of globalization (Savir, 2003).

This paper aims to fill a gap in the academic literature on diplomacy by introducing the concept of city diplomacy, defined as the institutions and processes by which cities, or local governments in general, engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another. It will be argued that city diplomacy is a professional, pragmatic and upcoming diplomatic activity on the international political stage, which is changing and will continue to change current diplomatic processes. In doing so, this paper first outlines the theoretical background of city diplomacy. Subsequently, the concept is conceptualized and the six most important dimensions of city diplomacy are discussed. Finally, some concluding remarks are provided and suggestions are made for further research.

2. Theoretical Background: Multilayered Diplomacy and the City

In recent decades, international relations' theorists have started to acknowledge the existing link between domestic and international politics (Putnam, 1988; and Brown, 2002). For a long time, such a focus on domestic politics and political structures was lacking in theories of diplomacy as well. Indeed, long since the coming of age of modern diplomacy, academics continued their focus on the state – that is, on states and their central governments. Traditional definitions of modern diplomacy thus tend to be based on three principles, namely: the conduct of peaceful relations; between mutually-recognized sovereign states; and based on expectations of long-term relations. In addition, these traditional definitions have included such agents as ambassadors and envoys and refer to a certain manner of doing business (Wiseman, 2004: 38).

In essence, such presumptions of state-centredness in diplomacy are theoretically valid, for indeed the role of the state in the practice of diplomacy is substantial (Blank, 2006: 884; and Coolsaet, 2004: 12). However, since the end of the Second World War, actors other than the state have entered the diplomatic stage. These non-state actors could be divided into those with a non-territorial character, like NGOs and multinational corporations, and those with a territorial character, like states in a federal system, regions and cities.

The reasons for the growing involvement of territorial non-state actors in the diplomatic process can be found in the globalization processes of recent

decades. Globalization, which is often understood as the dissemination, transmission and dispersal of goods, persons, images and ideas across national boundaries, has nowadays come to signify almost every major event that happens: from the rise of the internet and the spread of McDonalds to the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the emergence of global terrorism. Focusing on the implications of globalization for the involvement of territorial non-state actors in diplomacy, it could be argued that states have lost their monopoly over social, economic and political activity in their territory. Because of the rise of various transnational or suprastate regimes there is no longer a clear distinction between the national and international political sphere. International issues like global warming, for example, become national issues as drought threatens crops, while national issues like defence become international issues as nuclear weapons threaten countries around the world. Consequently, the division of responsibilities between the state and territorial non-state actors has changed. New opportunities have been created for territorial non-state actors to become involved as the economic, cultural and political dimensions of globalization have worn down the state's responsibilities and functions. The subsequent innovations with regard to new information and communication technologies have only increased the opportunities for actors on the periphery to be informed on, and influence, decision-making at the centre. The diplomatic mode evolving from this is characterized by an apparent paradox. On the one hand, there is a growing internationalization and integration of world politics as national governments are no longer able to manage internationalized policy issues like climate change and transborder crime on their own. On the other hand, there is a stronger focus on devolution and sub-state involvement, as internationalized policy issues become evident to a wide range of domestic constituencies and their representatives at the local level (Blank, 2006: 882; Hocking, 1993: 9-10; Keating, 1999: 1; and Sassen, 2004: 649-650).

At the same time, territorial non-state actors are not only actors of globalization, they have also been affected by it. Regions, states and cities, small, medium and large, have turned more international as immigration across the globe has increased, both because of technological advances and the outbreak of conflict. At the same time, regions, states and cities are being influenced by monetary and fiscal policies of the World Bank and the IMF, are subjected to development and planning schemes heralded by global institutions, and experience an influx of foreign goods and global corporations and institutions. Global cities – the denationalized platforms for global capital and the key sites for the coming together of a varied mix of people from all over the world – such as New York, London and Tokyo, may be the best examples of this phenomenon (Blank, 2006: 886; and Sassen, 2001).

Focusing on the involvement of the city in diplomacy, the widespread view is that state and city actors inhabit different regions of the so-called 'two worlds of world politics'. First of all, there is the 'state-centric world' in which state actors operate. Second, there is the diverse 'multicentric world' in which

cities and other non-state actors operate (Rosenau, 1990: 243-297). The notion of parallel diplomacy, or 'paradiplomacy' as it is also known, is very much in line with this theoretical reasoning, for it creates an image of a central route of diplomacy on which national governments 'ride', and a separate, peripheral route of diplomacy on which city actors 'ride' (Duchacek *et al.*, 1988).

Although the 'two worlds of world politics' approach seems theoretically acceptable, in practice it appears to be a simplification of a more complex reality. For, rather than operating in two separate worlds, state and city actors are part of a complex diplomatic environment, which does not recognize the exclusive territories of the domestic and the international. In this post-Westphalian society, both the domestic and the international are blended together in various ways at the behest of a range of forces located at different political levels. The outcome of this is a continuum of policy types in which differing elements of the domestic and the international that are located in various political arenas, whether subnational, national or international, are blended together: a multilayered diplomatic environment (Hocking, 1993: 34). Contemporary diplomacy has, in other words, become more than anything else a web of interactions with a changing cast of state, city and other players, which interact in different ways depending on the issues, their interests and capacity to operate in this so-called multilayered diplomatic environment. With this approach, the idea that city actors are engaged in other and new forms of diplomacy is replaced with an attempt to fit these actors – which operate in a transnational network environment, simultaneously across multiple scales – into the changing patterns of international politics (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2006: 147; and Hocking, 1993: 36). Therefore, the notion of parallel diplomacy is an unfortunate and rather inappropriate term, given that state and city actors do not necessarily 'ride' along different diplomatic routes, but rather along the same route although in a different car.

3. City Diplomacy Conceptualized

Given that cities operate in a multilayered diplomatic environment, how could the term city diplomacy be further conceptualized?

Any discussion involving diplomacy should first of all distinguish between the content – that is, foreign policy – and the way in which this content is 'sold' – that is, diplomacy. Given the interrelatedness of these two concepts, it is important to realize that the diplomatic process tends to change with any change in foreign policy goals. Having mentioned this, many definitions of diplomacy exist and certainly in the last decade or so these definitions have changed according to the changes in the international political system described above. In very general terms, however, diplomacy could be defined as the institutions and processes by which states and others represent themselves and their interests to one another (Melissen and Sharp, 2006: 1). Given that engaging in relationships and pursuing national interests are crucial elements of diplomacy, any definition of city diplomacy should include these elements as well. Therefore, by extrapolating the general definition of diplomacy to city diplomacy, city diplomacy could be defined as 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 interests to one another.

With such a definition, city diplomacy could be considered a form of decentralization of international relations' management, choosing cities as the key actors. In many cases, the representatives of cities involved in city diplomacy will be mayors, given that they are often responsible for the international relations of their city. However, aldermen, councillors,

municipal civil servants and municipal advisers representing the city at large also engage in city diplomacy. Citizens united in citizen movements cannot be said to be actors of city diplomacy, unless these movements represent the city at large. If not, then these citizens could be said to be the actors of yet another mode of diplomacy, namely citizen diplomacy.[1]

On behalf of their city, these actors can engage in relations with other actors on the international political stage through two-sided or multiple-sided interactions. Two-sided city diplomacy is a diplomatic process in which two parties are involved, of which at least one is a representative of a city. The goals at which this process is aimed can concentrate on creating benefits primarily for one party (as in, for example, cities providing assistance to municipalities in developing countries or in cities lobbying the European Commission and European Parliament) or on creating benefits for both parties (as in, for example, negotiating the establishment of a multinational corporation's headquarters or a new international institution). Multiple-sided city diplomacy is a diplomatic process in which more than two parties are involved, representing various cities. Associations of municipalities such as United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), Eurocities or the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities are often one party in such multiple-sided processes of city diplomacy.

The definition of city diplomacy spurs the question of how cities' diplomatic activities relate to the diplomatic activities of state actors in general and, more specifically, MFAs as the main carriers of states' diplomatic functions. One view on this is that cities' diplomatic activities infringe upon the role of central governments, thereby often creating an adversarial relationship between cities and state actors such as MFAs. Such a view is in line with a more general outlook by some that the core functions of MFAs' diplomats are more and more downgraded, which undermines the diplomatic profession as such. Apart from the examples of the diplomatic activities of multinational corporations and NGOs, another example, drawn from the EU, is the development of ministries other than the MFA sending their own diplomats to Brussels to engage in negotiations and lobbying (Coolsaet, 2004: 13). In that sense, city actors could be seen as yet another actor interfering with the traditional diplomatic profession of which MFA diplomats held a monopoly for so long.

Another view on the relationship between city and state actors is that rather than fighting over the same piece of land, both types of actors engage in diplomatic activities that complement one another. With the rise of a global, economic infrastructure, the power of the state to oversee and manage international activities is significantly weakened – a phenomenon known as the defective state proposition (Wang, 2006: 34). In those international

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1) For a discussion on citizen diplomacy, see Paul Sharp (2006), 'Making Sense of Citizen Diplomats', in Christer Jöhnsson and Richard Langhorne (eds), *Diplomacy, Volume III: Problems and Issues in Contemporary Diplomacy* (London: Sage), pp. 343-362.

political areas where the state can no longer fulfil its tasks sufficiently and effectively, actors such as cities come in and take its place. An example of this is the build-up of local governmental structures in post-conflict societies. In many of those societies, foreign governments focus on rebuilding central government structures, thereby often neglecting the local government structures. In those instances, cities and other local governmental entities jump in and start rebuilding local government structures. This is one way in which state and territorial non-state actors' acts complement one another (see paragraph 4.1).

In reality, the effect of city diplomacy on the relationship between city and state actors lies somewhere in the middle of the two views described above. Competitive cooperation may be the best term to describe the relationship. Indeed, there may be instances when city and state actors work for mutually excluding policy outcomes, and instances when city and state actors work for identical or for supplementary policy outcomes.

However, whether pursuing mutual or mutually excluding interests, the need for coordinating the diplomatic activities of cities and state actors is pressing, given that foreign policy is said to benefit most from coherence and continuity. Whereas the involvement of other ministries in European affairs, as discussed above, leads to horizontal fragmentation of foreign policy, the involvement of cities in foreign policy leads to vertical disintegration, as foreign policy is no longer either created or executed at one single level. This issue can be illustrated by one interviewee's observation on city diplomacy in Surinam: while national governments try to execute, through development assistance, a long-term plan concentrating on various policy areas in Surinam, Western cities pursue shorter-term goals in different policy areas. By doing so, cities often undermine national policies. This observation strikes at the heart of the multilayered diplomatic environment discussed above. The danger in foreign policy being created and executed at different levels is that policies aimed at achieving general external policy goals can become redefined, both in terms of the perspectives and concerns brought to them by the different actors at the different levels and through the rise of locally based bureaucratic politics (Hocking, 1993: 14 and 179). Some cities, such as the municipality of Amsterdam, understand the importance of preventing this, and stress the necessity of a local international policy being in line with the international policies of other involved actors, such as embassies, ministries, other local authorities and municipal associations. MFAs also include cities in their multilateral meetings on specific countries or issues to prevent the redefining of foreign policy goals (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2005: 9), and representatives of the Netherlands Ministry of the Interior meet every month with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities to discuss various international political issues. At the same time, however, other interviewees point out that at the moment such cooperation between cities and state actors, especially with regard to cities' involvement in conflict areas, is neither automatic nor systematic.

In traditional notions of diplomacy – that is, notions in which the conduct of international relations of states is the main focus – various functions of diplomacy are distinguished. Bull, for example, distinguishes between the functions of facilitating communication, negotiating agreements, gathering information, preventing conflicts and symbolizing the existence of an international society (Bull, 1995: 163-166). Although Bull discusses these functions in a different context, they could be transferred to the diplomacy of cities as well. To some degree, city diplomats' behaviour appears to be comparable with the behaviour of states' diplomats, although unlike states' diplomats, they are of course not officially accredited diplomats and therefore are not part of the official system.

Looking at the legal context in which city diplomacy is taking place, it is striking to note that the legal framework in which states' diplomats operate is clearly outlined, for example, in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Such legal clarity is, of course, lacking in the case of city diplomacy. The first reason for this is that cities operate diplomatically in two distinct legal spheres: the national; and the international. In the national sphere, the legal rules applying to the diplomatic activities of cities differ from country to country. Whereas a city in one country can act rather autonomously in engaging in international political activities, a city in another country can be hindered by national law in its international aspirations. At the same time, cities operate in the international legal sphere, in which they hold no legal personality at all. Indeed, the sources of international law do not recognize cities as possessing legal person. Local governments are treated as mere subdivisions of states and have neither legal standing nor independent presence in formal international institutions. The existence of two legal spheres makes the legal position of cities acting in the international political field ambiguous, to say the least (Blank, 2006: 892).

The second reason why it is difficult to outline the legal framework of city diplomacy is that the national and international legal grounds on which city diplomacy is based are shifting. Indeed, national laws may hinder cities in their diplomatic activities abroad, but national governments increasingly permit and even encourage local government involvement in foreign policy. Also, cities may not hold legal personality in international law, yet international legal rules increasingly extend over cities. For example, various UN agencies have been established that centre on issues such as local self-government and decentralization of powers, such as UN HABITAT; cities are increasingly internalizing international norms into their local legal systems and enforcing these norms; various associations that represent local governments in global governance projects are appearing; and administrative and judicial bodies that regulate the relations between localities and states have become more prominent (Blank, 2006: 878).

Cities can have multiple reasons for engaging in city diplomacy. Overall, personal engagement from the side of influential figures in city governments, such as mayors, aldermen and senior civil servants, with other actors and

international political issues appears to be crucial in decisions to engage in city diplomacy. The fact that the structures in which city diplomacy takes place are less official and set than those of state diplomacy creates more space for such personal influences. In the majority of cases analysed for this research, personal contacts between influential figures in city governments, between such people and specific countries and between influential figures and specific policy issues drove the international politics of the various cities. This is especially true for the smaller cities, which often lack a professional apparatus for city diplomacy.

Having said that, three reasons to engage in city diplomacy are most often referred to in the literature and by interviewees. First, cities can engage in city diplomacy in order to serve the interests of their city and its community. Such well-understood self-interest has increasingly become a driving force behind the international initiatives of local governments (VNG-I, 2005: 5). Serving the interest of the city and its community can be interpreted very broadly. Interviewees point out that conflict-resolution activities, for example, can be said to be undertaken to protect the international legal order, but may truly be undertaken to prevent refugees from the conflict area in question from seeking asylum in the city that is undertaking the conflict-resolution activities. In this context, an increasing number of cities, especially in countries receiving many migrants, such as the Netherlands, gear their international policies to the countries of origin of their migrant populations. Amsterdam, for example, has a large population from Ghana, Surinam and Turkey, and its international activities are therefore partly directed towards these countries. Another diplomatic activity in which serving the interest of the city is the leading motive is the representation of cities at the EU.

Second, citizens may force their municipal representatives to engage in specific diplomatic activities. City diplomacy in that sense is a manifestation of citizen activism. Examples of this are the rallies against nuclear weapons in the 1980s in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, which led to protests on the international level and nuclear-free zones in various cities across the globe.

Finally, cities can engage in diplomatic acts out of solidarity with other cities. Just like states that want to protect the international legal order and contribute to an equal distribution of wealth, cities too can have 'idealistic' motives for engaging in diplomacy. Although in many of those cases self-interest plays a role as well, solidarity can be said to be an important reason for becoming involved. Many of the city-twinning projects with South African townships in the late 1980s, for example, were set up by Western cities to show their solidarity with the black population in South Africa in the fight against apartheid.

Apart from the above-stated internal motives, one could also point to more external factors that contribute to cities' involvement in international politics. In this context, Hocking describes six factors that are significant in

determining the pattern of involvement of states in a federal state in diplomacy (Hocking, 1993: 47-57). Analysing various cases of city diplomacy, it appears that these factors are equally applicable to the diplomatic activities of cities. Perhaps the most important factors in this respect are the resources that cities are able to command. These resources could be divided into intangible resources, such as the political culture of a municipality, and tangible resources, such as money, the willingness and ability to develop cooperative mechanisms and bureaucratic strength. With regard to the latter, it should be pointed out that the most visible city diplomats are often those representing larger cities. This is perhaps unsurprising given the greater amounts of money and the larger number of staff that larger cities can allocate to diplomatic activities. This does not mean, however, that city diplomats representing smaller cities are less active; the activities of smaller cities such as the Dutch municipalities of Nieuwegein or Apeldoorn demonstrate this. It is likely, however, that the overall impact of smaller cities on the international political agenda is in general more limited than larger cities.

Second, the character of the state system is an important determinant of the extent to which cities become involved in diplomacy. As discussed above, cities will have more autonomy in one state than in another. The degree of autonomy very much seems to depend on the extent to which a culture of devolution exists in the state in question. Such a culture is expressed in a pattern of formal and informal rules impinging on subnational interests and activities in foreign policy issues. In that context, municipalities in the Netherlands, for example, enjoy greater autonomy and have greater powers than their counterparts in Flanders, because of a stronger Dutch culture of devolution on the municipal level. This difference in culture partly explains why cities in the Netherlands are more actively involved in city diplomacy than Flemish cities. Canada also enjoys a strong culture of devolution, making its cities take the lead in developments in city diplomacy.[2]

A third determining factor in the involvement of cities in diplomacy is the linkages between the central government and the cities. In instances where local interests are very much represented by central governments, the perceived need by cities to engage in city diplomacy is more limited than in those instances where local interests are less represented. Although this factor strongly relates to the extent to which a culture of devolution exists in a given state, it focuses more on the nature of the means by which local interests are represented by the central government. In Canada, for example, mechanisms are lacking to ensure strong representation of local interests at the centre. In Germany, on the other hand, the linkages between the central government and local authorities are strong because of the many consultations that take place at the various governmental levels.

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2) A culture of devolution must not be seen as a static concept, but rather as a fluid process. Through time, cities have had varying degrees of autonomy caused by varying political climates.

Fourth, cities' location within the state is influential. Every state has so-called 'core' and 'peripheral' regions in terms of politics and economics. Subsequently, the location of a city in either a core or a peripheral region generally influences its role on the diplomatic stage. This is clearly demonstrated in the Netherlands, where every interviewee acknowledges that the four biggest cities in the economically and politically powerful 'Randstad' – that is, the western provinces – play the biggest role in Dutch city diplomacy. A similar image emerges from, for example, Canada and Australia, where cities located in the core regions of Ontario and New South Wales, respectively, are very active in city diplomacy.[3]

Finally, the extent to which a city has international linkages plays a role in the pattern of involvement in city diplomacy. Geography is very determining in this respect. Hocking points out that where contiguous borders encourage the development of transnational and transgovernmental links between regional authorities in regional states, the international interests of territorial non-state actors are likely to be particularly evident (Hocking, 1993: 54). The same goes for cities. It is striking to note, for example, that cities harbouring the world's largest ports, such as Shanghai in China and Rotterdam in the Netherlands, are very outward looking and active on the diplomatic scene.[4]

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3) Hocking rightly points to the rising tensions between core and peripheral regions and the shifts in balance of power to which this could lead (Hocking, 1993: 53). In the case of city diplomacy, the dominance of cities located in a certain region can also spark counter-movements by cities located in peripheral regions. A division between the core and periphery as such is therefore not static.

4) These cities are especially active for obvious economic reasons, although the city of Rotterdam has recently also joined the Clinton Climate Initiative and allocates substantial amounts of money to development assistance.

4. Six Dimensions of City Diplomacy

Now that city diplomacy is defined and conceptualized, it is time to articulate how the role of cities in international politics is changing. City diplomacy and, subsequently, the evolving foreign policy of cities have various dimensions. These dimensions can roughly be extrapolated from the five functions of diplomacy: facilitating communication; negotiating agreements; gathering information; preventing conflicts; and symbolizing the existence of an international society. On the one hand, distinguishing various dimensions of city diplomacy is a rather artificial exercise, because in reality many of the diplomatic activities undertaken by cities fall within more than one dimension of city diplomacy. On the other hand, distinguishing various dimensions offers an opportunity to structure the diversified field of city diplomacy. Although more dimensions could be identified, the six dimensions most often referred to in the literature and by interviewees are security, development, economic, cultural, cooperative and representative dimensions of city diplomacy. These dimensions are discussed in the coming paragraphs, not to provide a complete picture of city diplomacy, but rather to give an insight into the dynamics of contemporary city diplomacy.

4.1. Security

Theoretical and political interests in conflict resolution, conflict prevention, mediation and peace-building have increased since the end of the Cold War. The end of the balance of power between the US and the former Soviet Union and the subsequent rise in internal strife in, among others, Africa, Europe and Asia posed new socio-political questions to which answers had to be found. Although states have for a long time taken the lead in efforts to resolve these 'new' conflicts, new entities have arisen on the conflict-resolution front in recent years. NGOs, businesses, civil society and religious groups now play an important role in resolving national and international conflicts (Stanley, 2003: 1).

In addition, and despite the fact that many would not see it as cities' core task, in recent years conflict resolution has turned into an important dimension of city diplomacy. Cities are active in post-conflict environments such as Colombia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, but also in current conflict environments such as Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian territories and Sri Lanka.

Before going into more detail on the specifics of city diplomacy in conflicts, it is important to articulate why there is a role to play for cities in conflict areas. Perhaps the most convincing argument for their involvement is that the root causes and the victims of conflicts are most often local. Consequently, the resolution of conflicts and the struggle for sustainable peace also have to be concrete – that is, local government and cities are the political entities to know best about localities. Second, cities do not possess arms, given that arms are a state monopoly. In this context, the saying 'for he who has a hammer, the world looks like a nail' is highly applicable, because cities are as a result less inclined to see conflicts as military problems. In addition, given their looser affiliation to international society, cities are less inclined than states to speak with one voice. These factors make cities actors with a degree of added value compared to states. Finally, cities are generally more pathological than states, meaning that cities do not embody natural traumas and myths. As a result, cities are often perceived as more neutral than states (Galtung, 2003: 1-2).

In describing the historical involvement of cities in conflict situations, one could point to the colonial days when, for example, the British in India focused greatly on involving local Indian communities to prevent uproar. The focus on local communities, including cities, as a source of conflict and a source of peace is therefore not new. It was, however, not until after the Second World War that relationships between cities, instead of between states and cities, intensified. Although every project had its own specifics, the twinning projects between cities in Western Europe and the US and Germany and Eastern Europe, and later cities in Latin America and Africa, were all, in one way or another, aimed at conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction through city-to-city interaction (see also paragraph 4.5 below).

Recent insights into the interconnection between development and security has, however, moved cities away from 'classical' city-twinning projects as a mode for conflict resolution and has created a new role for cities in resolving conflicts. Given that development generates security and vice versa, and that for a large part development starts with good governance, developing good local governance has turned into a major foreign policy goal. This reasoning very much resembles the line of thinking of the British colonizers when they acknowledged the importance of local government in keeping the peace. The first difference with the colonial days, however, is that states nowadays play a more facilitating role through financing projects, while cities play a more practical role. Second, economic gain is no longer the leading motive for becoming involved, as cities seem to base their diplomatic activities in conflict regions primarily on idealistic grounds.

The specific diplomatic activities undertaken by cities in conflict situations are threefold. First, there are those diplomatic activities undertaken by cities before any violence has taken place: the diplomacy of conflict prevention.[5] A first example of such diplomatic activities is the efforts undertaken by the US organization Cities for Peace in 2003 to prevent war between the US and Iraq. Cities for Peace urged city governments throughout the US to pass resolutions imploring President Bush to avoid a confrontation with Iraq. Although in the end 70 US cities, representing 13 million people, passed such a resolution, the success of this diplomatic campaign was obviously limited. The same goes for a conference of diplomats from cities in Europe and the former Yugoslavia in 1991 to prevent the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. Another example is the ongoing initiative Mayors for Peace, which was established in 1982 by the mayor of Hiroshima, and aims to prevent future nuclear attacks by raising consciousness regarding nuclear weapons' abolition. Despite the wide range of this programme, which is supported by 1,553 cities in 120 countries, the mayors have not been able to stop the process of nuclear proliferation in various countries around the world.

More successful were the diplomatic efforts undertaken by, for example, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities in post-genocide Rwanda. National and international actors concluded that in order to prevent future ethnic tensions in Rwanda, poverty had to be reduced, the Rwandan government had to be decentralized and good local governance had to be promoted. The Association of Netherlands Municipalities contributed to these goals by facilitating the creation of the Rwandese Association of Local Governments. Since its establishment in 2003, the Rwandan association has strived for and builds an efficient effective, transparent and accountable local government system in Rwanda.

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5) It is difficult to distinguish between conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. Given the cycle of conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction is at the same time a means to prevent conflict. Distinguishing between the two is therefore primarily a theoretical exercise; see Lund, 1996: 38.

The second type of diplomatic activities undertaken by cities in conflict situations are those activities that are undertaken during a conflict. An interesting first example in this case is the involvement of various European cities in the Palestinian territories. Especially now, when state governments cannot cooperate with the Hamas government, cities are in an excellent position to continue the dialogue and provide assistance. More generally speaking, the involvement of cities in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over recent years appears to be quite substantive. Canadian cities are, for example, involved in the overall support of the Palestinian Territories Municipal Management Programme. This programme is aimed at building capacity and enhancing public participation in municipal management, with key activities including improving solid waste management, organizing financial management and analysis training, as well as leadership, management and capacity-building (Bush, 2003: 29). Another example is The Hague's hosting of a conference entitled 'Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East' in June 2005, which was aimed at getting trilateral local peace-building activities off the ground in various municipalities in Israel, the Palestinian territories and elsewhere. Apart from Israel and the Palestinian territories, city diplomacy is also exercised in other parts of the Middle East: in Iraq, for example, where various twinning projects have been established between cities in the US and Iraq, such as between Denver and Baghdad, Dallas and Kirkuk and Philadelphia and Mosul. The scope of most of these projects is limited, however, and more substantial efforts to build a lasting peace in Iraq are of course hindered by Iraq's dismal security situation.

The last type of diplomatic activities by cities in conflict situations are those activities undertaken after a conflict has ended. Examples of these post-conflict reconstruction efforts by local governments are plentiful. Apart from development assistance (see paragraph 4.2), many diplomatic activities in post-conflict environments appear to focus on improving or developing local democratic structures: through conferences and seminars, the Dutch city of Rheden, with help from others, for example, supported the merging of the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat administrations in the town of Fojnica in central Bosnia; and in the fragile post-conflict environment of the Philippines, Canadian cities have supported local Philippine authorities in creating effective local governance with enhanced stakeholder participation.

Problematic is that cities in their post-conflict diplomatic activities often do not sufficiently take into account the extent to which the legacy of conflicts hinders democratic reform in post-conflict environments. A positive exception is the diplomatic activity that has been undertaken by British cities, united in the Local Government International Bureau UK, to support the capacity-building of new local authorities in Sierra Leone since 2004. In these activities, dealing with the war legacy and engaging the traumatized population in local policy-planning are key issues.

Based on the available examples of city diplomacy in conflict environments, it is difficult to assess the scope of the security dimension of

city diplomacy. Cities have been particularly involved in the area of conflict resolution since the 1950s, when city-twinning projects emerged. This could lead to the conclusion that the security dimension of city diplomacy is nothing new. The fact is, however, that certain cities are now more openly involved in various stages of the conflict cycle than before. The current diplomatic activities in conflict situations are also of a more specific nature, while at the same time the motives and levels of solidarity that underlie these activities are different from traditional city twinning projects. The world federation of local governments' (United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG) special committee focusing on the issue of cities in conflict environments is a clear sign of the speed at which new developments take place in the security dimension of city diplomacy.

4.2. Development

Local communities have always played a big role in development assistance. It is therefore not surprising that many of these community activities have through time been integrated with cities' development assistance projects. Especially since the end of the Second World War, when an increasing number of cities in various parts of the world twinned with cities in Western Europe and the US, cities have become dominant players in the field of local development assistance.

Although other motives can play a role as well, the leading motive behind the diplomatic activities of cities that are geared towards development assistance is international solidarity. Indeed, it is a similar argument that underlies many states' development assistance. The added value of cities providing development assistance lies in the local level at which assistance is injected. Some interviewees argue that especially in development assistance, top-down initiatives do not always generate the greatest result and that central governments should therefore be more facilitating than directing. In that context, a shift is currently taking place in policy-makers' thinking on the role of local governments in development assistance, in that development starts at the local level and that the greatest result can thus be achieved at this level. The fact that local governments know local needs better that other actors makes cities increasingly recognized and appreciated players on the development assistance stage. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for example, recognized the role of local governments in international development when he argued that development ultimately comes about in the streets of cities (UCLG, 2005). It is therefore surprising that scholarly attention for the role of cities in development assistance has so far only been limited.

Assistance provided by cities can be divided into humanitarian development assistance and emergency development assistance. Humanitarian development assistance is geared towards long-term crises,

while emergency development assistance is geared towards sudden crises. With regard to the former, long-lasting donor relationships exist between, for example, cities in the US and Lesotho, Cameroon and Benin, between cities in Australia and cities in East Timor and Sri Lanka and between cities in Canada and cities in Brazil. The activities that emerge from such links differ and can range from international loans or grant-based cash transfers and building schools to information and technology-sharing and promoting democracy through improved local governance (Hewitt, 1999: 29). With regard to emergency development assistance, cities around the world donated money, for example, in the aftermath of the 2003 earthquake around the Iranian city of Bam, the 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

The 'diplomatic mode' through which these two types of development assistance are provided varies. Sometimes there is direct contact between the mayors of involved cities, while at other times contacts may run via civil servants or citizens' organizations, which administer international contacts on behalf of city governments. Development assistance is sometimes also provided through associations of municipalities or a civil servant posted abroad who, on behalf of a city's government, oversees projects in developing countries or crisis areas, just as diplomats at an embassy do. Development assistance agreements are often directly related to city-twinning projects, but many of these projects are currently being re-evaluated and new channels outside the city-twinning projects are being sought. An example of such a new channel is the involvement of cities in the Millennium Towns and Cities Campaign, which aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this campaign, hundreds of cities in the developed and developing world are united to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education and promote gender equality. Diplomatic ways to achieve the goals vary from informing local communities and expressing solidarity, to mobilizing local resources, to funding efforts and partnering civil society organizations in efforts to achieve the MDGs, as well as lobbying central governments.

Coordinating the diplomatic activities of state and territorial non-state governments is crucial to ensure a common foreign policy. In the context of development assistance, such coordination appears especially difficult given that cities often lack the bureaucratic machinery of central governments to set and monitor long-term foreign policy goals and, as a result, to focus on short-term results. Although city diplomats can and should operate autonomously on the social dimensions of city diplomacy, it is important that territorial non-state governments do not put a spanner in national governments' wheels and vice versa. The increasing realization, however, among central governments that cities can play a vital role in successful development assistance, and the increasing willingness among city governments to realign their development policies with national foreign policies, point to greater future synergy in local and national development assistance.

4.3. Economy

Self-interest has increasingly become a driving force behind the diplomatic activities of cities. In some cities it even appears to be the only leading motive. That this self-interest is predominantly translated into economic gain explains why the economic dimension of city diplomacy is an important element of cities' international activities.

It appears that there are two ways by which city diplomats can ensure economic gain for their city: first, they can attract tourists, foreign companies, international organizations and international events to their city; and second, they can export their services and knowledge or enter into partnership agreements with other cities.

Economic-pull activities are most common and many cities in the developed world seem to have a special economic office dedicated to attracting capital in various forms to the city. World cities such as Tokyo, New York and London have a reputation for being the financial, political and cultural capitals of the world. That this reputation matches reality is illustrated by the finding that each of these three cities' economies is as big as the economies of medium-sized countries such as Canada, Spain and Sweden; and that they are growing (Hawksworth, 2007: 15). Given the economic gains that come with such an image and position and the importance of maintaining them, it is not surprising that these cities have large offices dedicated to attracting even more capital, either through tourism or through negotiating the establishment of a multinational corporation's headquarters or a new international institution. However, smaller cities like the Dutch city of The Hague, with its image of legal capital of the world, and the city of Dubai, with its image of gateway to the world, have a lot to gain as well from maintaining a certain image and attracting foreign capital. An interesting aspect of this diplomatic game is the theory and practice of city branding – the notion of applying business marketing models to cities and positioning cities as a brand that sparks various positive associations (Parkerson and Saunders, 2005: 242-244; and Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006: 183-186).[6] Campaigns like 'I AmSterdam', 'Washington, the American Experience', 'Auckland, City of Sails' and 'Joburg, A World Class African City' are all examples of efforts to position cities as a valuable brand and to generate positive economic effects.

A completely different example, which is also related to attracting capital, is the bidding for the Olympic Games. The fact that the bidding is a truly

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6) No common vocabulary exists on what exactly branding and city branding mean. It goes too far in the context of this paper to discuss the various issues surrounding the theory and practice of city branding, but for further discussion see, among others, Anholt, Simon (2004), 'Editor's Foreword to the First Issue', *Place Branding*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 4-12; and Papadopoulos, Nicolas, 'Place Branding: Evolution, Meaning and Implications', *Place Branding*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 36-50.

diplomatic game with negotiating, lobbying and influencing makes it a very interesting case in explaining the economic dimension of city diplomacy. Since the success of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, cities have come to see organizing the event not only as a matter of prestige, but also as a means to strengthen their global status in an era of growing inter-urban competition and to finance large-scale planned construction projects in their cities (Shoval, 2002: 583). Local governments in London expect, for example, that organizing the Games in 2012 will generate 35,000 new homes, 50,000 jobs and some £525 million extra income for East London alone (Communities and Local Governments, 2006). At the same time, the costs of bidding and organizing the event are high and cities have a lot to lose from losing the bidding or dysfunctional organization. Given these high stakes, it is not surprising that bidding for the Olympic Games is a tough diplomatic process, by some termed a mega-event strategy, demanding combined efforts from mayors, city governments, local civil servants and companies. At the same time, it is a process that is characterized by combining diplomatic skills from both territorial non-state and state governments, given that countries as a whole have to back the bidding and have a lot to gain from organizing the event as well (Andranovich *et al*., 2001; and Martins, 2004: 6-9).

The second way through which cities try to ensure economic growth focuses on exporting services and knowledge to other cities or entering into partnership agreements with other cities. These activities could be termed push-diplomatic economic activities. Entering into partnership agreements, in particular, is common with cities that have a clear communal business interest. Good examples are the partnerships between various harbour cities in the world, such as Rotterdam and Shanghai, Antwerp and Durban, and Ningbo and Rouen. Apart from expressing friendship between the cities, these partnerships are primarily aimed at sharing best practices and exchanging services. At the same time, cities also enter into partnerships with other cities that generate economic gain merely as a side effect. Many of the city of Amsterdam's development assistance, for example, comes in the form of services in which Amsterdam excels, such as waste and water management. The Amsterdam civil servants involved in providing such assistance not only share their know-how, but also learn from their colleagues in developing countries. Indirectly, these additional skills have a positive effect on the work of the civil servants and thus on the city's economy. Development assistance in this sense becomes a tool for human resource policy.

A final act of diplomacy that is difficult to classify, but that is still very much related to the economic dimension of city diplomacy, is the diplomatic effort allocated to combating global warming. In international relations' theory and practice, global environmental governance is often assumed to take place at the global level. However, the issue has a very strong local dimension, given that city governments have considerable authority over land-use planning and waste management and play an important role in dealing with transportation issues and energy consumption (Betsill and Bulkeley,

2006: 141-142). Various networks of concerned cities exist, such as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Cities for Climate Protection and the Clinton Climate Initiative, together encompassing a majority of the largest cities in the world. It is interesting to note that many of these initiatives were a reaction to ineptness by national governments to negotiate a truly global climate-change agreement. In that sense, cities are turning out to be a key arena in which policies to address special global environmental problems are pursued. These networks are aimed not only at developing local economic policies for a better environment, but also at lobbying national governments and international organizations and creating awareness in communities worldwide. With these interactions on different policy levels, the networks are a good example of the practice of multilevel diplomacy on the economic dimension. The continuing difficulty, however, is coordinating the efforts not only of the various diplomatic levels, but also of the various networks and goals.

4.4. Culture

Just as culture is important in the diplomacy of states, so is culture an important element of city diplomacy. Already during the Cold War, policy-makers at the national level in the US understood the link between engagement with foreign audiences and victory over ideological enemies, and considered cultural diplomacy to be vital to their national security (Finn, 2003: 15). It was in that same period that city-twinning projects between US cities and cities in Europe, the former Soviet Union and Japan thrived. Although the stakes were not as high as on the national level, cultural diplomacy between cities undoubtedly contributed to the overall goal of preventing a deadly war.

Analysis of partnership agreements between cities shows that culture nowadays still plays an important role in the diplomacy of cities, also outside city-twinning projects. Allowing young people from cities in different cultures to interact with one another through sports, organizing cultural visits for officials from other cities and setting up guidelines to promote cultural development are just a few examples of the scope of the cultural dimension of city diplomacy. In the context of the latter, UCLG's Working Group on Culture states that culture lies at the heart of urban strategies, both based on its intrinsic vocation of the promotion of human rights, shaping the knowledge society and improving quality of life for everyone, but also on account of its role in the creation of employment, urban regeneration and social inclusion. It is for these reasons that the organization has set up guidelines in its *Agenda 21* to ensure cultural development in cities worldwide (UCLG, 2004: 7).

Part of the broader dimension of cultural relations are the diplomatic activities that focus on exchanging values relating to, for example, freedom of

speech, religion and sexual orientation. With regard to sexual orientation, the city of Amsterdam was diplomatically involved in the difficulties surrounding the organization of the 2006 gay parade in one of its partner cities, the Latvian city of Riga. With officials in Latvia, including Riga's city government and the Latvian prime minister, opposing the organization of the first gay parade, Amsterdam's officials, in their role of city diplomats, tried to persuade opponents and actively took part in the parade in Riga. In the meantime, Amsterdam police have been involved in training their counterparts in Riga in crowd control for events like a gay parade. More recently, the focus within the partnership between the two cities has been on ethnic minorities and culture, given that both Amsterdam and Riga have large ethnic populations in their cities. Representatives of both cities believe that they can learn from each other's policies relating to these different cultures.

Although cultural diplomacy is an important part of cities' diplomatic activities, some observers argue that this diplomatic mode is not yet used to its full potential. They point, for example, to the limited cultural exchange between cities in the Western world and the Islamic world. Apart from partnerships with cities in countries from which many citizens have emigrated, Western cities are hesitant about agreeing partnerships with countries in the Middle East and Asia, and vice versa. According to critics, misunderstanding between the two parts of the world is primarily caused by cultural ignorance, an issue that in the past cities have proven to be capable of overcoming.

4.5. Networks

The cooperative or networking dimension of city diplomacy is somewhat an outsider amid the other dimensions discussed above, for international cooperation is usually not a diplomatic aim in itself but more a means to achieve higher goals, such as heightened security or increased economic gain. However, in the case of city diplomacy, becoming organized on a regional, continental and global level is indeed a diplomatic goal in its own right.

The development of structures through which local concerns can be channelled at the national level is quite common, especially in the developed world. Many countries have associations of municipalities that represent and guard the interests of cities nationwide. In the developing world, associations such as the example of the establishment of the Rwandan associations of municipalities (RALGA – Rwandese Association of Local Authorities) are less common. At the international level, cooperation between individual cities is not new either. In this context, city-twinning, referred to throughout this paper, is so common that it is almost becoming old-fashioned. In France, for example, there were 3,753 inter-municipal linkages in the 1990s, while Germany had 3,229 and the US had 1,859 (Zelinsky, 1991: 12). Notwithstanding various exceptions, these sister-city linkages are often

pursued for cultural, recreational or educational ends.[7] Although these are valid ends to pursue, cities are increasingly turning to pragmatic forms of inter-municipal cooperation, such as the sharing of technology and information.

More recent are the diplomatic efforts geared towards international cooperation between cities outside city-twinning projects. More and more, international networks in general seem to be replacing the international society of states on the diplomatic stage and cities contribute to this phenomenon (Hocking, 1999: 30). Examples of networks of cities are abundant. One could point to the Mega-Cities Project, linking eighteen of the world's largest metropolitan areas to exchange ideas and technological innovation, and the M4 meetings in which the mayors of the four largest European cities – Berlin, Moscow, Paris and London – come together to discuss the big challenges facing their cities. On a regional level, Eurocities, the network of more than 130 large European cities, is a good example, as well as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, consisting of European municipal associations, and the Merco-Cities Network, comprising 160 cities in the MERCOSUR region. All of these regional forms of cooperation aim both at protecting cities' interests at the decision-making bodies in the respective regions and at sharing information and best practices on various municipal issues. On a global level, cities' diplomatic efforts towards international cooperation come together in United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the global association of municipalities. The mission of UCLG is to be the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation with local governments, and within the wider international community. To achieve this goal, city diplomats have joined forces and issued declarations on topics ranging from gender equality and HIV/Aids to water and the information society. Interesting from the view of diplomacy is the aim of UCLG to gain an official status at the UN in order to promote and protect the interests of cities worldwide in all of the issues with which the UN deals. If such a status becomes reality, it will be formal recognition of the growing influence of cities in diplomacy and international politics.

Overall, it is important to realize that the powers of the transnational networks of cities described above, as with the powers of other transnational networks, have not evolved so much from economic or military strength as from expertise and moral positions (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2006: 148-149).

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7) Former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ben Bot, argued for example that twinning between cities in the Netherlands and Belarus could enhance knowledge of the Netherlands and the EU in Belarus, as well as strengthen the process of democracy in a country where ties with the Netherlands and the EU on a national level are almost non-existent (http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/actueel/brievenparlement,2006/10/Beantwoording-verzoek-inzake-banden-tussen-Nederla.html, 24 October 2006).

This ought to give cities a firm base in international politics. Given the recent efforts to organize themselves internationally, however, it appears that cities have only recently come to realize their powers on the international stage. Once the right structures for international cooperation are in place, international organizations of cities are likely to become recognized and respected actors in diplomacy.

4.6. Representation

The representative dimension of city diplomacy may come closest to what people have in mind when thinking of city diplomacy, as it encompasses all of those activities that are aimed at representing the city at international organizations. These diplomatic activities are very similar to the tasks of state diplomats at international organizations, apart from the fact that city diplomats are not engaged in high-level diplomatic games. The aim of city diplomacy in the representative dimension is to participate in and influence decision-making at the supra-national level. Good examples of the representative dimension of city diplomacy are the representation of cities at the EU and at the Council of Europe.

Cities are represented at international organizations both within and outside the political structures. Within political structures, city diplomats' main goal is to participate in the decision-making process. In the case of the EU, for example, cities are part of the decision-making process through the Committee of the Regions (CoR), whose 344 members represent both the regions and the cities of their respective country. Given the significant influence of EU policies on the political, social, economic and cultural environment of cities, the CoR is frequently consulted by the European Commission and Council and independently adopts resolutions on topical political issues. In the case of the Council of Europe, cities have their own decision-making body as well: the Chamber of Local Authorities within the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The activities of city diplomats in the Chamber are wide-ranging, but primarily aim at protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Europe. In that context, one interviewee called the Chamber a walking stick for young democracies and a whip for established democracies, although he admits that the Council of Europe, including the Chamber of Local Authorities, has become a slow and overloaded bureaucracy.

Outside the political structures of international organization, cities primarily try to influence decision-making through lobbying. They do so at the UN, for example, where cities and associations of cities such as the UCLG are frequent dialogue partners at the various committees of the UN General Assembly and UN agencies such as UN HABITAT. In the EU, cities try to influence decision-making as well, either individually, like the city of London, or as a group, like the G4 (the four main cities in the Netherlands:

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). City diplomats in Brussels representing the G4 protect their cities' interests and actively respond to EU developments. An important task is therefore lobbying the European Commission and the European Parliament. From a diplomatic point of view, the lobbying activities of groups of cities are interesting, because they require individual cities' interests and goals to be geared to one another internally in order for the group to speak with one voice externally. In that sense, it is a two-dimensional diplomatic game.

Overall, with regard to the representative dimension of city diplomacy, interviewees acknowledge that cities still have to claim their position in various international organizations; especially the smaller cities. Cities may have formal and informal influence; their powers come neither naturally nor are they automatically accepted by states. Ground may indeed be shifting, but international organizations such as the EU, the UN and the Council of Europe are still primarily the domain of states that are reluctant to share their power. At the same time, however, with cities becoming increasingly involved in international decision-making, the need for cooperation between state and non-state actors increases, as should the opportunities to do so.

5. Conclusion

This paper defines the concept of city diplomacy as 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 interests to one another. It has been pointed out that diplomacy is not static and changes with the continuing dynamics of international politics. As a result, contemporary diplomacy has become a web of interactions with a changing cast of players that interact in different ways depending on the issues, their interests and capacity to operate in this so-called multilayered diplomatic environment. In that sense, city diplomacy could be said to be merely one small element of this multilevel diplomatic game. Such a conclusion, however, would not do justice to the growing scope and importance of cities' diplomatic activities in international politics, as the six dimensions of city diplomacy have illustrated.

Four main conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, cities seem to participate in almost every stage of international politics; either marginally or considerably, either formally or informally. In doing so, cities are changing and will continue to change current diplomatic processes. The extent to which diplomacy is still state-dominated should, of course, not be underestimated. Indeed, major decisions on the international political scene are still taken by state representatives. At the same time, however, the ground is shifting and it becomes increasingly clear that traditional diplomatic structures have to be altered in order to include non-state actors and to protect local interests.

Second, this paper illustrates the growing professionalization of cities' international activities. Although various cities still participate in international politics on an ad hoc basis, many have professional civil servants dedicating their time to establishing a coherent municipal foreign policy. International cooperation among cities worldwide is also increasing, as is the growing influence of cities on decision-making in international organizations. As such, cities are first of all increasingly embedded in the structures of diplomacy, turning a growing number of people at the local level into city diplomats. Moreover, city diplomacy becomes increasingly subjected to standards, pre-set policy goals and evaluations.

Third, there is a visible trend from idealism to pragmatism in cities' diplomatic activities, which is very much related to the growing professionalization of cities' international operations, as both developments reinforce one another. The diminishing influence of idealism in city diplomacy may be a result of an overall trend in societies away from the idealistic norms and values of the 1960s and 1970s to the more individualistic and realistic stance of the 1990s. On almost every dimension of city diplomacy, local governments increasingly seem to reason from both a practical and economic point of view. As a result, more traditional forms of city diplomacy, such as the city-twinning projects, are either abandoned altogether or re-evaluated and adjusted to fit these practical and economic criteria.

Fourth, it should not be overlooked that city diplomacy is still in its infancy. As a result, many inconveniences still have to be overcome. For example, despite its professionalization and pragmatic nature, city diplomacy is still very much oriented towards the short term. This becomes especially apparent in the security and social dimensions of city diplomacy. Also, international organizations, states and cities still have to find an effective way of cooperating with one another to ensure synergy in those cases where interests and goals overlap and to ensure freedom of movement when there are clear differences between them.

Given the limitations of this research, various questions remain unanswered. One question is how big the influence of cities on international politics really is, which requires insight into the tangible results of the various diplomatic activities undertaken by cities. This requires empirical research. Another question is about the scope of city diplomacy outside the West in general and the Netherlands more specifically. An overview of the human and financial capital allocated to city diplomacy in various parts of the world is a first step in answering this question. Finally, what are the specifics of the multilevel diplomatic structures in which cities operate: how often do the various actors in the multilevel diplomatic game meet, how are they and their policies interrelated and how do decisions come about? Answering this question requires much more reflection on the work of city diplomats and the fields in which they are active.

All in all, modest groundwork has hopefully been laid through this research for further study into a diplomatic phenomenon that only a few theorists have focused upon. Given the speed at which new developments take place, new theoretical insights on the changing diplomatic field are very welcome. This paper argued at the beginning that state and city actors do not necessarily 'ride' on different diplomatic routes, but rather on the same route although in a different car. It has become apparent from this research that the car of city diplomacy is not slowing down, but rather seems to be increasing its speed, or, as one interviewee said, 'cities in international politics are here to stay, you'd better get used to it'.

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7. Interviews

Karen Dolan – Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies (at the International Meeting of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, Perugia, 5-7 October 2006)

Tim Honey – Executive Director, Sister Cities International (at the International Meeting of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, Perugia, 5-7 October 2006)

Joe Moore – Alderman, city of Chicago (at the International Meeting of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, Perugia, 5-7 October 2006)

Avi Rabinovitch – Deputy Director General, Union of Local Authorities in Israel (at the International Meeting of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights, Perugia, 5-7 October 2006)

Paul Meerts – Adviser, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael (19 October 2006)

Alexandra Sizoo - Project Manager, International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International) and Secretariat UCLG Committee on City Diplomacy (19 October and 12 November 2006)

Marijke Jansen – Bureau for International Affairs, Municipality of The Hague (19 October and 16 November 2006)

Gerard Pieters – Head, International Relations, Municipality of Amsterdam (23 October 2006)

Karin Boven – Senior Policy Adviser on Surinam, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (26 October 2006)

Peter Knip – Director, International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International) (7 November 2006)

Lo Breemer – G4 Office Brussels, Amsterdam representative (14 November 2006)

André van der Meer – G4 Office Brussels, The Hague representative (14 November 2006)

Simone van Raak – G4 Office Brussels, Utrecht representative (14 November 2006)

Ben Hoetjes – Professor of Public Administration, Leiden University, and Chair in International Comparative Government of Regions, University of Maastricht (16 November 2006)

Frans van Bork – Director, Bureau for International Affairs, Municipality of The Hague (29 November 2006)

Paul Zoutendijk – Senior Adviser, Municipality of The Hague (29 November 2006)

Axel Buyse – Representative of the Flemish Government to the Netherlands (12 December 2006)

Joop van den Berg – Director, Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) 1996-2002 (21 December 2006)

Tom Leeuwestein – Director, Internal Administration and Europe, Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (3 January 2007)

Dion van den Berg – Senior Policy Adviser, Inter-Church Peace Council (IKV) (23 January 2007)

Georg Frerks – Professor of Conflict Studies and Director of the Centre for Conflict Studies, Utrecht University (12 February 2007)

Onno van Veldhuizen – Mayor of the municipality of Hoorn, leader of the Dutch delegation to the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (22 February 2007)

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