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**INTERNATIONAL CITY'S  
NETWORKS AND DIPLOMACY**

**Renato Balbim**

**DISCUSSION** PAPER





## INTERNATIONAL CITY'S NETWORKS AND DIPLOMACY<sup>1</sup>

Renato Balbim<sup>2</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The internationalization of cities and the constitution of a new international space of power involves a much more expressive number of cities than the usual global cities. Nowadays, dozens of international organizations are composed of regional capitals, medium, and even small cities. With diverse agendas and their own strategies of action, those organizations seek to interfere in global processes and negotiate with large corporations, multilateral organizations, and nation-states. Historically, the internationalization of cities carries strategic values such as peace, culture, and sustainability, among others discussed in this paper. More recently, the notion of the city as merchandise explains this process. Urban requalification and urban space commoditization are treated here under the conception of rugosities (Ribeiro, 2012), local and global rationality (Santos, 1995), and creative destruction (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). By hypothesis, I affirm that city internationalization is directly related to the democratic environment, degree of social participation, and local government's autonomy. The magnitude of this process is measured confronting original database research to secondary sources and illustrated using the Brazilian scenario. Additionally, a theoretical discussion proposes an innovative classification of those networks according to their constitution, composition, agendas, and spatialization. The characteristics, agents, and means of city diplomacy are debated, and the adequacy of other terms (paradiplomacy, federative diplomacy, and metrodiplomacy). In conclusion, it summarizes notes and indications of further research aiming to deepen the knowledge about this new and important agent of the world order, the city network.

**Keywords:** city diplomacy; cities' networks; internationalization; globalization; international agreements; geopolitics.

## SINOPSE

A internacionalização das cidades e a constituição de um novo espaço internacional de poder envolve um número muito mais expressivo de cidades do que as habituais cidades globais. Hoje, dezenas de organizações internacionais são compostas por capitais regionais, cidades médias e até pequenas. Com agendas diversas e estratégias de ação próprias, essas organizações buscam interferir nos processos globais, negociar com grandes corporações, organismos multilaterais e Estados-nação. Historicamente,



a internacionalização de cidades carrega valores estratégicos como paz, cultura e sustentabilidade, entre outros discutidos neste artigo. Mais recentemente, esse processo está vinculado à ideia de cidade como mercadoria. A requalificação urbana e a mercantilização do espaço urbano são tratadas aqui sob a concepção de rugosidades (Ribeiro, 2012), de racionalidade local e global (Santos, 1995) e de destruição criativa (Brenner e Theodore, 2002). Por hipótese, afirma-se que a internacionalização de uma cidade está diretamente relacionada ao ambiente democrático, ao grau de participação social e à autonomia do governo local. A dimensão desse processo é dada confrontando achados de uma pesquisa original com dados de fontes secundárias, além de ser apresentado o cenário brasileiro como forma de ilustrar algumas estratégias. Adicionalmente, uma discussão teórica propõe uma classificação inovadora dessas redes, de acordo com sua constituição, composição, agendas e espacialização. São debatidas as características, agentes e meios da diplomacia de cidades, bem como a adequação de outros termos (paradiplomacia, diplomacia federativa e metrodiplomacia). Na conclusão, resumem-se notas e indicações de novas pesquisas com o objetivo de aprofundar o conhecimento sobre esse novo e importante agente da ordem mundial, a rede de cidades.

**Palavras-chave:** diplomacia de cidades; redes de cidades; internacionalização; globalização; acordos internacionais; geopolítica.

## 1 PRESENTATION

Cities occupy a central position in the definition of the world order, and at least two factors explain this centrality. First, accelerated urbanization and the consequent environmental crises push cities to the world order's front line. As never before in history, cities are facing colossal constraints for the future of humanity. Associated with these aspects are opportunities for the profound transformation of the modes and means of production. That generates an economic shift mainly related to the energy matrix and the production of waste and pollution of all kinds. Secondly, even if capital accumulation has supplanted national barriers, this has not yet ceased to be territorialized. The urban space production, use, and appropriation regulation seem to be the last international capital frontier.

This article's primary goal is to present the internationalization, and the diplomacy of cities beyond Western public diplomacy and global studies approach, where the theme has been first established.

Therefore, I present, conceptualize and categorize City Diplomacy, its strategies, and agents since its beginning in 1913, and its interactions with nations' soft power.

From the Global South, international and multilateral technical cooperation and its different instruments are scrutinized to understand and engage cities' geopolitics critically.

Moreover, from a broader theoretical framework based on the Southern Milton Santos' geography school, this article seeks to contribute to better communication between knowledge fields and to a more robust conceptual precision of the phenomenon, notably based on the "organizational solidarity" concept.

Overcoming the analyzes that take the city exclusively as a stage of social, economic and political rationality, I present the active role of cities (the geographic space configuration and praxis) as the constituent elements of the autonomy and particularity of each city in the establishment of solidarity relations with other cities worldwide, in particular establishing "organizational solidarity" networks.

This proposal enables a more precise understanding of the actual relation between nations and cities on the international agreements' scale, revealing the particular practices of city diplomacy and some relation with nation-state diplomacy. In this manner, different instruments and strategies used by cities in the international field, including the constitution of the city's networks, are presented.

The analysis employed here mix fundamental subjects and questions explored in the cities diplomacy study field and some particular hypotheses searching for preliminary answers. For example, in the first case, scholars generally envision that the degree of city internationalization is directly related to the democratic environment, social participation, and local government autonomy.

In my turn, and based on my human geography background, I affirm that cities emerge in the actual stage of globalization, not exclusively as individual players but as a new organized formal actor, as a potential international legal personality. This situation imposes the comprehension of cities as a category. Moreover, that leads to understanding cities' networks like a mechanism or instrument of power's organization and a new geopolitical agent.

These statements' analyses lead to debate and collaborate to understand cities' active role in the new international order.

Furthermore, taking Brazil as a case of study, this paper presents some examples and ideas about the Global South engagement on city networks and diplomacy, usually disregarded in the Global North's technical and academic works. To minimally accomplish all these endeavours, this article presents eight other sections in addition to this presentation and the introduction.

The third section discusses the internationalization of cities and their specificities in the current period, seeking to contribute to a comprehension of the phenomenon logic based on informative references of organic and organizational solidarity. Due to the size and complexity, this section is subdivided into four themes: indicators, strategy, agents and governance. Next, the adequacy of paradiplomacy and city diplomacy terms are questioned regarding the autonomy of the city in the international scenario and the characteristics, agents, and means proper to the diplomacy executed by the cities. The

flexibility of forms, agents, agreements, and partnerships employed by city diplomacy is disclosed. As a metaphor for the concept of Social Spatial Formation, the idea of *terroir* emphasizes the individual and unique characteristics of each city to play a role in the international scenario. The sixth section goes on to support the local autonomy in the international scenario from the approach of strategic values for the internationalization of cities such as peace, culture, and sustainability. The seventh section addresses the theme of urban requalification and its importance in the commoditization of urban space, its internationalization as an input, and its regulation by local governments. The idea here is to reveal the new and current level of internationalization that places cities in a global market. The eighth and ninth sections analyze the networks of cities. The eighth section uses the “organizational solidarity” concept as proposed by M. Santos to show how the city’s networks could be or not the result of global rationality rather than the outcome of a kind of “organic solidarity” from the cities themselves. This section proposes a classification of the different networks according to their constitution, composition, agenda, and spatialization. This classification is essential for the geopolitics analysis of the cities. The ninth section deals specifically with the set of these discussions looking at the specific case of Brazil. Finally, the last section summarizes some final notes and indications of research to deepen further the knowledge about this new and essential agent of the world order, the city.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

Cities, especially the largest ones, have always been international in some ways. The city’s emergence as a crossing of routes (Mumford, 1991) emphasizes its geopolitical role. Since ancient times, several cities have actively participated in global geopolitics by constituting power fields in the international domain. Athens, Rome, Sparta, Bangkok, and many other City-States, capital of empires, and political and commercial centers of the ancient and medieval era were recognized as sources of power, printing their rationality in vast regions of the world. The City-States’ power decline over two centuries of revolutions and territorial unification that followed the Nation-State political invention and production since the Peace of Westphalia (1648).

The cities’ return to the center of global diplomacy of modern Nation-State happens during the XX century differently. In general, it is not about this or that city anymore.

The cities are much more a generic entity or actor that composes the States in the international scenario, including playing designated roles, in particular on the peacemaking process and soft power strategies.

Even if they still existing global cities, usually places and regions related to nation-states and corporations rationalities, ordinary and also global cities all over the world speak out about their issues, interests, solutions, and conditions in a coordinated way, a constellation of cities, a supra-regional space of connections and flows.

Although recent, this process has been intense and fast, thus accrediting authors to design scenarios of a New World Order. For some, in the future, the city's networks would resemble a Hanseatic system of global power organization<sup>1</sup> in which cities and corporations would respond to an essential dimension of the global order.

Before the modern states' actual organization, established under the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations, seeds of cities international organization were already flourishing. In 1913, the first international network of cities emerged in Europe. L'Union Internationale des Villes arose from a search for inter-communal cooperation, raising the "flags of local democracy, solidarity and peaceful relations among peoples" (Balbim, 2016, p. 141). For the first time is verified the constitution of a diplomatic space of cities on the international level. However, that evolved very little between the two world wars, pushing the transformations to a further historical period.

With the end of the Great War in 1945 and the need to rebuild cities and establish new bonds of solidarity among people, the international relations of cities gained importance for the diplomacy of the nation-states. The creation of new forms of cooperation plays an essential role in the soft-diplomacy constitution. Such examples include the twin cities and the introduction of new agents within international geopolitics, such as unions, political parties, religious organizations, ethnic groups, and so on, including the nowadays so-called social influencers.

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1. In "reference to what happened in the vast coastal area of the Baltic Sea, since the end of the Middle Ages, on a proto-capitalist experience in which, in the absence of a unifying political power, the management of that zone was assured by an alliance between cities (Lübeck, Bergen, Hamburg, Riga...) and a merchant league, the Hanseatic League" (Moita, 2017, p. 9).

With the end of bipolarization as the foundation of the actual world order, the strengthening of neoliberal thinking, the growth of the “*technical-scientific-informational milieu*” (Santos, 1994a)<sup>2</sup> and the advent of technical unicity, all combined, result in a deepening of globalization and a correlated political decentralization movement, actively promoted by the European Community.<sup>3</sup>

It is in the context of hegemonic neoliberal macroeconomic thinking, supported or not by cities, within a democratic and decentralized political environment, that the city will become an active and relatively autonomous geopolitical and diplomatic agent, sometimes playing an influential and always important role in the development and sustainability, as it assured by all the international agreements related to these themes during this century.

### 3 CITY NETWORKS CONCEPTION AND HISTORICAL PERIODS

The internationalization of cities and their various forms of organization were previously analyzed from a historical review perspective when we proposed the distinction of four recent periods to understand this global process (Balbim, 2016).

The first period begins in 1913 and lasts after the Second World War, in which we see what we call a “protodiplomacy” when the development of the field has been affected by international conflicts.

Then, under the USA and European countries’ auspices, starting in the 1950s, cities became sisters as a soft power strategy. This is the period we call “Cities for Peace”, identified with the world order of progress of the nations.

2. The technical-scientific-information milieu, in addition to its historic period, “(...) is defined by the ever increasing and increasingly important presence of artifacts that allow for simultaneity and instantaneity of actions. Differently from the previous period, in this moment, the information flow is not associated to material flows anymore, overlapping with them, allowing the connection of points and places without there being a necessary contiguity of the physical infrastructures in the territory” (Balbim, 2003, p. 89). In this point in history, the period’s organizational condition “is the space of structured flows of the territory, not, as in the previous stage, spaces where the material flows designed the skeleton of the urban system” (Santos, 1994a, p. 92).

3. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht was signed, establishing the European Union, based not only on economic union but on European citizenship. Local governments have had a strong presence in the discussions and decentralization has been renewed as one of the foundations of their integration.

Technical north-south axis cooperation among countries and implemented by cities gained strength since the 1970s. This process results from the various UN conferences on cross-cutting and diffuse issues of significant impact on cities (environment, peace, human rights, and settlements), especially in Europe and its areas of influence.

The world order idea of development and underdevelopment is the foundation of this period logic in which there is recognition of the role of the city in the international scenario, particularly marked by the year 1976 when Habitat I took place, and that went on until the 2000s.

During this period, it is observed the establishment of a global rationality through multilateral agreements. Resulting from UN conferences and implemented through multilateral agencies, programs, and financing, this rationality involved cities as a major actor to bring global agreements into effect. Based on a “*technical-scientific and informational environment*” (Santos, 1996), different institutions, forms and examples of global governance arose during this period making it possible to see “organizational solidarity” arising, a global rationality influencing relations and lifestyles all over the world,<sup>4</sup> producing the places of globalization.

At the end of this period, carried out with all the Nation-States support, a new kind of cooperation between cities gained strength. Decentralized cooperation, as defined by the European Commission, is the development cooperation between local authorities from Europe and their counterparts from partner countries, usually underdeveloped ones. The term is used “to describe the publicly and privately funded aid provided by and through local authorities, networks, and other local actors”. In contrast, the budgets of the EU and some of its members indicate substantial allocations for decentralized cooperation that are increasing rapidly (EU, 2008). Regional programs such as the Italian 100 Citta, the Rhône-Alpes Region and the Junta de Andalucía Cooperation involved several cities in the global south and significant financial contribution which in 2006 revolved around 700 million euros from German local governments, 600 million from Spanish regional governments and something like 150 million from French local authorities (EU, 2008).

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4. This is the moment, for example, in which the American suburban model spreads in all the major cities of the world.

On this design, it can be observed a lesser or even no direct intervention by the Nation-State on the cooperation instruments, replaced by the tutelage of national and multilateral agencies and banks (Balbim, 2016; Trevas, 2015), which represent the interests of the States and also of international corporations and funds.

One of the current period characteristics is the multiplication of the number of networks and cities, which nowadays form a tangle of connections, dealing with diverse issues, often with overlaps and extending throughout the world. These networks work as instruments of “organizational solidarity” diffusion.

This hypothesis demonstration will happen with the deepening of the city networks research, which necessarily involves analyzing their composition, structure, capacities, and scope, establishing a typology that could allow the production of innovative geopolitical cartography of the phenomenon.

#### **4 SOLIDARITY, NETWORKS, AND CITIES**

The process of internationalization of cities reaches its current apex with the structuring of several international city networks, a particular organization of cities analyzed in this paper. However, before addressing this theme and its particularities, notably the solidarity that engage and organize cities in networks, it is necessary to point out critical approaches for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, first about the intentions that drive actors in this field, and secondly about the difference between city and urban network.

First, it is relevant to notice that the academic production about the subject is usually descriptive or non-critical. This approach is probably related to what Brenner and Theodore (2002, p. 369-372) describe as the “*urbanization of neoliberalism*”, a global process related to the commoditization of urban land (Rolnik, 2019), or in other words is related to the global financial capitalism order. Also, it is not difficult to notice the commitment of part of this academic production with the new field of work development, the business opportunities, the international urban services corporations’ interests, and on a grand scale the global urban requalification projects, as it will be seen further.



Secondly, it is relevant to clarify the difference between city networks and urban networks. From a monocentric to polycentric region, the concept of “urban network” seeks to identify the “life of relations” established between cities. That means identifying the limits of the influence of a large city (capital of the region, i.e.) and analyze the existence and location of several hierarchical intermediate cities. This theoretical approach, developed in many different schools over a century, was created to overcoming the limitations of the “natural conditions” or the “landscape homogeneity” as criteria used to define the region and explain territorial configuration. The flows of all orders and the necessary infrastructure are organically and hierarchically organized. The hierarchical relations of functionalities and complementarities between nodes form a fabric, differently composed depending on the scale of analysis. The urban network theory works with homogeneous and delimited space (scale), including the global one. This is the comprehension behind definitions and explanations of global cities, a homogenous space of production, financial institutions, cultural services, and other modern flows hierarchically organized.

However, city networks do not necessarily result in flows, hierarchical functionalities, and complementarities. At first, when analyzing a city network, in addition to the political, cultural, humanist, and other explicit commitments that establish the organization, it is not obvious to verify hierarchies or homogeneity (more than the commitments) among their nodes or participants. It is the organization of cities and of institutions and agreements that draw the flows and connect the nodes. City networks can be understood using social and spatial network knowledge, but the network created results from political decisions more than practical logic.

In this sense, it is possible to say that urban networks result from organic solidarity, involving interdependence, complementarity, and functionality. In comparison, city networks are the expression of a kind of organization that defines the conditions and structures of solidarity, cooperation, and competition.

The “organic solidarity” (Durkheim, 1978), which complements “mechanical solidarity” (the connection between the individual and the social group) in Durkheim’s explanation of the social organization, is responsible for the organization of individuals in the division of labor, establishing complementarities that enable social unity. In geography, organic solidarity responds to a local order of interaction between beings and objects in a contiguous way in a delimited space (Castillo et al., 1997) on multiple scales.

Complementary to this understanding, and responding to the transformations of the “*technical-scientific-informational milieu*” (Santos, 1994a), Milton Santos (1996) propose the concept of “organizational solidarity”, which responds to a global order that enables the gathering of sparse objects according to an exogenous reason, mainly by making use of information.

Following Santos’s argument, the local and the global order constitute two genetically opposite situations, even if, in each one, it is possible to verify aspects of the other. In general, the local reason is organic, and the universal reason is organizational.

In the first case, the local reason is organic, and its organization is a product or a result of solidarity established based on communication, which takes precedence. In the second case, the universal reason is organizational, and solidarity is a product of organization and information, which takes precedence. Information, in fact, is synonymous with the organization (Santos, 1996, p. 338-339).

*Organic solidarity* is marked by interdependence, complementarity, communication. In this case, material flows design the skeleton of the urban system, the urban network.

As Milton Santos suggests, *organizational solidarity* is market both by cooperation and competition and grounded on the information. In this case, it is the information flows that design the space of relations.

The new fact of the current period (Balbim, 2016, p. 145-146) is that the internationalization of cities occurs not exclusively according to the functionality, complementarity, and the strategies to improve them of each place combined in a kind of “organic solidarity”. The functions of interdependence and complementarity that establish a hierarchical network explain urban networks composed, for example, by global cities and organize global regions and global urban economies.

Based on “organizational solidarity”, city internationalization subverts hierarchies and connects cities designing new urban flows and skeletons.

In this regard, it is no longer accurate to talk about this or that city as an international, cosmopolitan or global city, but rather as The City being an agent that combines its

strategies, means, and mechanisms of participation in the global scenario according to an organization that escapes of their own and individual control.

The primary expression of this phenomenon, given its complexity, is the networks of cities, their increase in numbers and subjects discussed, as well as the proliferation of other diplomatic mechanisms (agreements, forums, i.e.) used by cities<sup>5</sup> in their joint, complementary and supportive action on the international scale.

#### 4.1 Questioning the indicators

As we shall see later, this often neglected complexity helps explain why the global city theory is often used as an explanation of the phenomenon, even though it does not necessarily encompass its entirety. For instance, the evaluation of the city internationalization degree involves many other indicators than what could be used to measure the internationalization of the economy.

The first research step to define useful indicators for this process is to systematize the cities' internationalization strategies, which means contextualize historical periods, goals, and scales of insertion (national, regional, and global). Consistent with these, one can proceed with the next phase of research, which would be the definition of indicators adapted to the internationalization strategies and their periods, pretty much the same definition process used to evaluate public policies in general.

The list of indicators is as diverse as the multiple dimensions of internationalization established between cities and firms, agencies and government scales. As a methodological exercise one could mention quite concrete indicators based on demographic, economic or social data such as population mix; the international flow of people and goods; languages used; religions and peoples represented; the number of establishments linked to international tourism; existence and size of ports and airports; the number of multinational companies installed; the number of international organizations represented; the existence of an internationalization plan; participation in city networks; twinning; international cooperation; and others.

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5. About the different mechanisms, see below the section "Paradiplomacy or city diplomacy".

We could also use indicators that represent ideas of cities with internationally known attributes: smart, open, pleasant, safe, clean, dynamic, healthy, with quality urban services, with a strong appeal (people and capitals), and so on. Alternatively, we could even use compound indicators such as the Happiness Index, and so many other indexes that already rank cities in a variety of ways in the city's global market.

If the gathering and use of city's internationalization indicators can reveal the existence of this phenomenon and its specificities, including according to each period, which is significant to produce the indispensable geopolitical cartography of the subject, in the diplomacy field, as Moita (2017) suggests, the indicators discussion it is not as relevant as the deliberate diplomatic strategy aimed to insert cities as players into the global scenario. As for the field of geography or geopolitics, the interest seems to be widened, including the analysis of the conditions, characteristics, scope, means, and infrastructures that credit the city to enter actively into the global order.

#### **4.2 What about strategies and agents?**

An analysis of strategies and agents involved in it requires the precise definition of the city's internationalization. For instance, this process is understood as the intentional action taken by the local public authority to project city abroad, to promote attractiveness (capital, science, innovation, culture) in search of investments, exchanges of experiences and knowledge and, in a level of greater importance, to assert the city's influence in international networks and multilateral organizations, thus participating in global governance.

International cooperation between cities is strictly instituted by heads of local government, citizen, and city representatives, with legal prerogatives more or less established to enforce non-binding international agreements of various kinds with other subnational powers.<sup>6</sup>

Non-governmental corporations and organizations working as ambassadors can also initially establish cooperation between cities. The proximity between local authorities and other public and private groups that coexist in the complex urban

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6. In Brazil, the legal term used by the government is "acordos institucionais" (institutional agreements).

space and diverse urban lifestyle production is responsible for the wide range of agents involved in the internationalization.

Accordingly, for analytical purposes, it is also necessary to circumscribe the understanding of the city so that the other agents involved in diplomacy can be clearly identified. In this regard, 'city' refers to a delimited urban space, restricted to the territory and the autonomy of an established local authority (municipality, district, county, i.e.), whether executive or legislative that represents a specific society, economy installed capacity (territorial configuration) and a history. The city establishes political interactions with other autonomous agents due to its control over instruments and resources relevant to economic sectors, politics, and social relations.

The internationalization of cities can happen in multiple ways, starting with different agents and far surpassing the individual capacity of the local government. Internationalization can even be intrinsic to the city, a constituent of its social and spatial foundation. However, the effort here is to deepen our knowledge about the recent and strategic internationalization of cities as a movement that is both local and global.

In order to better understand the dimension here analyzed, let us take the example of Rio de Janeiro. The city became international when the Portuguese Royal Family arrived there in 1808. As the Empire Capital, an outbreak of urbanization sought to transform the colonial city, its aesthetics, and practices, into a new Metropolis. To that end, new inhabitants, visitors, knowledge, and practices arrived. Rio de Janeiro quickly modernized (infrastructures) and internationalized (the port opening) itself.

Since then, this city is internationally projected counting, for example, with international events such as the Centennial of Independence Exhibition of 1922 and the Football World Cup of 1950. However, it was only in 1987 that the city's administration began to establish continuous international relations, under a clear strategy, with a public administration area dedicated to international relations. In 1993, due to global commands (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED – ECO92), the Municipal Secretariat of International Relations<sup>7</sup> emerged.

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7. About the creation of the Municipal Secretariat of International Relations in Brazilian cities and its motivators, see CNM's detailed study (CNM, 2011).

Even though since the beginning of the nineteenth century Rio de Janeiro made an effort to internationalize itself, it is only in the last decade of the twentieth century that the city began to project its internationalization strategically.

In the same way, since the 1980s, Lisbon has structured a clear and lasting internationalization strategy, largely due to incentives and demands from the global rationality, especially from the European Community. Through this time, the city, which had “*a tiny territory, a small population, a peripheral location, a certain perception of isolation*” came to be seen as one of the most competitive in Europe, the 57<sup>th</sup> in the world, leading several international initiatives and participating in at least 48 international networks of cities (Moita, 2017, p. 10). Lisbon internationalization, likely in other cities, has competitiveness as one of its primary goals.

An efficient city, a smart city, a city as a product of the global market are realities within globalization that also do not fully explain the composition of the international power field operated by city diplomacy. For example, there seems to be a significant number of cities that develop internationalization strategies but do not take part in the networks and circuits of the so-called hegemonic globalization, supported by large financial corporations, urban service, and technology companies and even by the interests of Nation States (among them, see: C40, 100 ResilientCities, LeadingCities). In the same way, it is not strange to see cities that participate simultaneously in global circuits that are politically and ideologically different.

In this sense, empirical research is needed to accurately reveal the composition of the power fields, agents, subjects/agendas, and strategies addressed, by spatializing information, revealing overlaps or overlaying of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic globalization (Santos, 2006).

The city's internationalization strategy does not only respond to transnational reasons. It is also associated with gains and changes in local, national, or regional policy. Rather than merely taking part in and influencing processes and decisions on a global scale, local authorities – mayors and others – engage in these processes because they see gains, often symbolic, in the internal scenario of their countries and regions.

For example, about the French decentralized cooperation momentum in the 1990s, Trevas (2015) explains that several mayors at that time had national political aspirations and, therefore, motivated by the instruments of the European Union, fostered international relations on their cities to consolidate their names in the national level.

### 4.3 And finally, the governance

Global, regional, national, and local are all scales that participate in the internationalization of cities. The decentralization of power and the gathering of nations that has characterized the constitution of the European Union since the 1980s have influenced discussions about global governance models involving cities in networked multilevel governance.<sup>8</sup>

This experience and other forms of multilevel international cooperation benefit themselves from both technical and informational development, which make possible the simultaneous and instantaneous connection of places and paradoxically the multiplication of world-wide issues related to the increased of connections. From food and sanitary safety (pandemics, for example), to migration and problems related to the maintenance of a shared structure of communication networks, for example, innumerable are the global problems that affect the multiple scales of the social, economic and political order in different ways.

The relationships of cities with particular global challenges reveal the central role of this agent in the new world order. At the last United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III (Quito – 2016), cities once again called for a leading role in negotiating the Urban Agenda. The UN did not meet this demand,<sup>9</sup> who also got a governance model revision request to include cities among its members from UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments).

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8. Bulkeley et al. (2003) talk about the constitution of “Transnational Municipal Networks” (TMNs) to refer to the new agents of multilevel governance.

9. To discuss the subject, the seminar “Strategies of internationalization of metropolitan areas” took place in Barcelona to mark the preparation of countries and institutions for Habitat III, which was held on October 2016 (AMB, 2016). In the final document of the conference, it is made clear that the intention to discuss such strategies is directly related to the role in dispute by the local governments in global agendas. After all, as is well remembered, even if the United Nations understands the importance of local governments, its recognition in the business table is the same that non-governmental organizations hold. The participants and organizers of the conference propose the adoption of global governance mechanisms as the only way to implement international agendas, just as it happens with lots of different networks of cities.

Regarding climate change and social development themes, cities have earned a relevant spot in the international scenario. Networks of cities committed to more rigid goals than those of the Paris Agreement are structured, congregating cities that even oppose their countries' position, as is the case of Los Angeles and New York (see C40) and the current North-American position of denouncing the aforementioned Paris Agreement.<sup>10</sup>

In turn, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveal a significant advance to cities' centrality into development and a significant challenge. A specific SDG to address cities and several urban policy indicators composing other Goals shows this significant role. Regarding the SDG implementation, as happened with the MDG and Agenda 21, it is imperative the role of local governments as planners and executors of a substantial part of these policies. Nevertheless, there is the challenge of advancing an effective governance strategy that builds on existing efforts and engages most local governments with this agenda's success.<sup>11</sup>

Considering the immense challenges to be faced in cities in the 21st century, especially in megacities and issues related to climate change and access to housing,<sup>12</sup> the urgent institution of global and effective city governance structures is evident. The global governance design to face the immense challenges of cities must be innovative. For instance, Trevas (2015), taking the example of ILO (International Labor Organization), envisages a multilateral tripartite body composed of cities, citizens, and Nation-States to define future global plans, ensuring civil participation to compromise governments and corporations to implement the agreed agendas.

10. About the main role assumed by the local governments in the implementation of international agendas, it's interesting to analyze the roles American cities have been taking on, especially after the country's exit from the Paris Agreement (Pinault and Cavicchioli, 2017). Particularly in regards to climate change, see ICLEI, a network that gathers over 1500 cities in the whole world. Available at: <[www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)>.

11. According to UCLG (2017), only 38 of the 63 nations analyzed in their last report state there is organized involvement of local governments in the monitoring of SDGs.

12. According to UN-Habitat ([n.d.]), "by 2030, about three billion people, or around 40% of the world population will need decent housing conditions and access to basic services and infrastructure, such as water and sanitation. This translates to a need to equip 100 thousand houses a day with access to basic services in legalized lands between today and 2030 (...). In some cities, up to 80% of the population lives in slums. Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean have a population of over 500 million people living in slums".



#### 4.4 Globalization

City diplomacy relevance is justified by facts such as the cities-state emergence (Hong Kong and Singapore), the cities capitals of regional blocs (Brussels and Montevideo), the growth in number and importance of the so-called megacities<sup>13</sup> – there will be over 41 of them until 2030 –, the multiplication of “global cities”, or the fact that the world today has more people living in cities than in the countryside.

However, the internationalization of cities and the consequent constitution of a new space of power adds a much more significant number of cities than just mega and global cities on the international scenario. Regional capitals, medium cities, and even small cities comprise dozens of international organizations representing various interests, with their action strategies, seeking to interfere in global processes by negotiating with large corporations, multilateral organizations, and the Nation States.

The cities’ role in the current system of power no longer derives from the prominence of this or that city exclusively or the hierarchical urban network explanations. What matters is the emergence of an advanced stage of globalization in which global rationality, a totality, organizes solidarity between the parts, the cities, that form it. It is always relevant to remembering that totality is not the simple sum of the parts.

In this stage of globalization, cities emerge as a potential new international law subject<sup>14</sup> (public or private), which impose the comprehension of the city as a category and the networks of cities as an organization of its power. To that end, the ontological understanding of this subject is required.

The analysis of the academic production on the process of internationalization of cities reveals the multiplicity of fields of knowledge that deal with the subject: international relations, sociology, political science, economics, geography, urbanism,

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13. About the dimension of megacities in a global scale, see Balbim (2016, p. 127-129).

14. The international law is divided in Private or Commercial Law and Public or Intergovernmental Law. This second category defines and controls the system that organizes the private international law and is exclusively composed by representatives of Nations. The place where cities are represented as subjects of international law is undefined. At this moment, the cities networks are defined as international organizations and as such are governed by private law.

history, public management, and a myriad of related thematic interests: peace processes, culture, migration, health issues, innovation, employment, financing, human rights, along with others.

Given all this, a rigorous definition of this process is needed reinforced. Moreover, the insertion in a broad theoretical framework will allow the communication between fields of knowledge, resulting in a better understanding of the matter at hand.

In the company of other authors,<sup>15</sup> it is possible to state that the field of action and knowledge about the internationalization of cities, particularly about city diplomacy, is still in its initial stage of formation. However, this theoretical fragility does not arise, as sometimes pointed out, from the lack of academic production on the subject. On the contrary, since the 1990s, in the wake of authors like Castells (1996), there is a profusion of work that advocates for a new world order based on networks of all kinds, and especially in city networks, as it probably has been the first time treated by Craven and Wellman (1973).

The deficiencies in the field of knowledge are most related to the lack of improvement of theoretical and methodological references – often borrowed from political sociology and economy without due academic rigor. That becomes clear from the ample use of “global cities” to portray both internationalization and city diplomacy.

The repeated use of this yardstick is most likely due to the relevant theoretical and empirical production about global cities since the 1960s, following the seminal book by Peter Hall – *World Cities*, resulting in the wide diffusion of the subsequently created concept to several other areas of knowledge. All the discussions since this moment are more or less based on the ideas that come from the Central Place Theory (Christaller – Losch) and the functional hierarchic areas of influence of each city. Moreover, the global cities’ hierarchical command and control principle, treated as a myth by Smith (2014), seems well suited to a traditional view of state-centered diplomacy.

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15. See, among others: Moita (2017); Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros (2017); Abraham (2015); and Pluijijm (2007).

According to Santos (2017, p. 19),

giving visibility as “global cities” solely to macro urban centers, discarding medium sized and/or small cities as mere dots or less important knots, or even as non-existent in terms of international agency, literature has reproduced what it claims to criticize and try to overcome in the traditional literature of International Relations: conforming to conservative analytical standards that mistakenly opt for a scale that recognizes only the macro criteria.

The notion of a hierarchical network continues to exist in global city studies. The adaptations that this explanatory framework has received over the years have credited it as a kind of theoretical paradigm, an axiom with vast practical application, including in urban planning.<sup>16</sup> In 1996, Peter Hall revealed a load of truth in the widely held idea that the networks were replacing hierarchical logic. The proliferation and dispersion of firms around the world would be a triumph of networks, according to P. Hall, who then points out, as Sassen (2005) does, that linked to this movement of horizontal network spreading, there is a reinforcement of the leadership position of corporations from the global cities.

However, due to the need to explain the non-global cities internationalization process and participation as agents of global rationality, due to its relations with other cities, other “*geographical connections*” (Souza, 1993), forming spaces of power, it is undeniable the need to overcome the relative global city theory reductionism driven by its fast transposition to other knowledge areas.

Many of the analyzes based on Saskia Sassen’s studies, which consider the intrinsic characteristics of the urban economy to qualify cities as global, reinforce the notion of city hierarchy and the understanding of the city as an “organizational commodity” (Sassen, 2005, p. 39). As it is generically used in other academic disciplines, this idea seals the

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16. “This urbanization based on the market dynamism and the local capacity of the cities has placed them inside a logic of competitiveness, whose theoretical paradigm was that of the global cities, and the practical application of strategic planning. This recipe, much in the same fashion as neoliberal advancement, has come to be advocated throughout the world, especially in the least developed countries (LDCs) and in developing countries, as the only possible solution for the survival of cities in the new global paradigm. That is a fallacy, as we have shown previously (...), but it had a great impact on urban thinking at the end of the 20th century” (Ferreira, 2016, p. 71).

city as a mere functional part of the global sphere, a stage, without its differences and particularities<sup>17</sup> recognized and its active role understood.

In this regard, the study of the internationalization of cities is essential to understand new geopolitics aspects and to produce an explanatory reference or a benchmark which:

- reaches the universe of the cities that participate in the current process, far superior to that of global cities;
- learns the active and autonomous role of cities in the process and not just takes them as a stage where globalization happens or just as a constituent part of the nation-state; and
- considers the dialectical understands of relations established between cities as a driving force for the creation of the internationalization space, that is, of globalization.

## **5 PARADIPLOMACY OR CITY DIPLOMACY**

For many authors of International Relations, influenced since the early 1970s by the studies of Nye and Keohane (1971), cities, as well as corporations, unions, churches, political parties, and NGOs, have been breaking the state-centric paradigm of the international relations, creating a sort of paradiplomacy.

From that moment, the process of internationalization, which until then was almost a monopoly belonging to the national State, is now also exercised by social agents and subnational entities and by the increasingly more influential insertion of transnational corporations.

At the same time, global issues arise (environmental degradation, deterioration of human rights, drug trafficking, migration, terrorism, violence), transcending the responsibility of an isolated nation-state, crossing the frontiers and capacities of nations, and directly affecting local governments.

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17. It is these peculiarities that allow cities such as Brussels and Singapore – the first and second cities in the ranking of international events, far ahead of other cities – to be considered today as the most internationalized or global, although they have a relatively small meaning in the global economy (28<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> place in GDP measured by PWC or 22<sup>nd</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> place in GDP according to Brookings Institution). Available at: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_cities\\_by\\_GDP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_by_GDP)>.

Federative countries share the responsibilities of some of these issues; thus, with an effective decentralization, as it is occurring in countries such as Mexico and Argentina (Milani and Ribeiro, 2011, p. 24), that could lead to a shared action between the national and subnational entities in the international scenario.

Paradiplomacy of cities has played a prominent acting role in the international geopolitical scenario since the 1990s, associated with major UN conferences on human rights, environment, urbanism, and social issues, sparking a debate about the most appropriate terminology to embrace this phenomenon.

The strategic actions of local governments on the international scenario have been based on the terms paradiplomacy or diplomacy of cities more often than not, while local diplomacy and federative diplomacy appear in the scenario with explanatory limitations.

Local diplomacy, for example, has a wide scope, referring to all forms of diplomacy exercised from a local scale. The term federal diplomacy, however, brings with it the limitation of referring exclusively to federative countries.

More recently, and seemingly restricted to the North American area of influence, the term metro diplomacy appears (Attwell, 2014; Hormats, 2013). The US State Department created or supported the strategy in order to strengthen diplomacy with growing metropolitan areas around the world. The goal is to increase the business opportunities, with the focus of the State Department being the 600 metropolia cited in the McKinsey report “*Urban World Cities and the rise of the consuming class*”.<sup>18</sup>

The term has also been related to the trade agreement between Chicago and Mexico City,<sup>19</sup> which far surpasses the experiences of sister cities, involving an effective commercial agreement not linked to any strategy or economic agreement between the two nations. Beneath NAFTA, the city diplomacy, in this case, have specific signed programs that lead with \$1.7 billion estimated trade-in 2013, revealing effective and

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18. Available at: <<https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/urbanization/urban-world-cities-and-the-rise-of-the-consuming-class>>.

19. This agreement was inked at a forum sponsored by the Global Cities Initiative, a corporate city network, a joint project of Brookings and JP Morgan Chase to expand trade and investments between US metropolis areas and metropolis economies around the world.

mature diplomacy, or using the sponsors of this world agreements, a new standard for the modern-day city-to-city relationship, the path to creating a strong network of trading cities that drive the global economy.<sup>20</sup>

For some authors, the strategies established by the cities to act in the international scenario constitute parallel diplomacy or semi-diplomacy, which have the city networks as one of their instruments (Moita, 2017).

The term paradiplomacy is still used more frequently (Balbim, 2016, p. 140) and encompasses not only subnational entities but also all non-state social actors engaged in diplomatic negotiations. This myriad of actors, both public and private, gathered under the same conceptual umbrella unquestionably generates analytical inaccuracies.

In addition, as states Pluijim (2007), the use of paradiplomacy evidence the central system and a parallel system, which according to Santos (2017, p. 33) contradicts the current reality in which cities, in his understanding, often exceed the Nation-State in different areas of diplomatic activity, such as trade agreements.

The growing role of cities in the international business arena is one of the elements that accredits the use of a specific term for their diplomatic activity. The central role of cities in promoting significant private investments, impacting even the national level (i.e., the dispute between US cities to receive the new headquarters of the giant Amazon corporation, or disputes to receive plans of automotive companies in Mercosur cities), or the international competition to receive the Olympic Games, which is strongly associated with the symbolic capital of each chosen city, are all examples of this centrality.

The relative autonomy of cities on specific global issues also credits the use of the term city diplomacy. North-American cities that oppose the federal government concerning the Paris Climate Agreement are an example of this autonomy. Likewise, Tavares (2016) cites the improbable cooperation agreement signed between Sakhalin

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20. Available at: <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2013/11/18/chicago-and-mexico-city-cut-new-kind-of-trade-deal/>>.

Island (Russia) and Hokkaido, a Japanese city, despite the two countries' historical territorial dispute.<sup>21</sup>

As Abraham (2015, p. 37) points out, when a national government does not reflect local interests, they legitimately place themselves as operative agents alongside transnational bodies, other cities and countries (technical cooperation) and even corporations. In this sense, we could remember Borja and Castells (1997) when they proposed understanding the local scale as a territorial manager of the global forces, exercising an effective, active, and relatively autonomous diplomacy.

### **5.1 Specific aspects of city diplomacy: flexibility and terroir**

In addition to an active and relatively autonomous role, diplomacy exerted by cities has its instruments, characteristics, features, means, and attributes, which are distinct from those used by national states. These also conform to an active professional field of diplomacy.

According to Pluijim (2007, p. 6), city diplomacy is the process by which cities, or local governments in general, engage in relations with agents in an international political arena in order to represent themselves and their interests.

In short, city diplomacy is the conjunction between the intentions and competencies of local governments and their “ambassadors” to represent the symbolic, cultural, social, economic, and political power of a place and its people, history, and fate.

Alternatively, still, advancing in the ontological understanding of this agent, city diplomacy is the representation, on an international scale, of a specific and particular “Socio-Spatial Formation”, which constitutes a totality and represents, in the international scenario, the fundamental factors of each place: political, cultural, social, territorial, technological, and so on.

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21. “One example is the improbable agreement on regional cooperation that the Sakhalin oblast signed with the Japanese prefecture of Hokkaido, despite the serious territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Kurile Islands, currently administrated by Sakhalin” (Tavares, 2016).

The concept of Socio-Spatial Formation (SSF), proposed by Milton Santos (1977a; 1977b), is based on the Marxist concept of Social and Economic Formation. The importance of the concept is its application in the analysis of specific societies, totalities that differ from each other by having distinct techniques, means and modes of production and being in different stages of development.

In this sense, each city seals its form of generating urban space, constituting a totality, with practices, techniques and technologies, their use, and the lifestyle resulting from that, distinguishing them from each other. If a conclusion is reached about the theoretical, methodological, and empirical viability of using this concept, city diplomacy could use this framework to advance in two critical issues related to each other. The first one is overcoming the exclusive view of a city as a stage for international actions (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2017, p. 15), and the second is related to the legal acknowledgment of the city as an entity with relative autonomy before the states to establish relations with other SSFs in the international scenario.

Building a kind of analogy, we could say that the diplomacy made from each city differs as a result of their *terroir*, which brings unique qualities specific to particular places. This French word, used as the set of all environmental factors which affect food production, including farming practices, technics, and means of production, could be understood as the structure of SSF, its geography.

A great example of this analogy based on each SSF is to think about the city diplomacy made by New York. One of the epicenters of global financial capital recently gathered all its sister cities in a technical cooperation program to sell its technical, management, and urban services expertise to other cities abroad, establishing its own diplomatic and urban business network around the world.

The solidifying of the cities' diplomatic action happens through using a series of instruments, the main ones being city twinning, bilateral agreements, and participation in international networks. These instruments leverage each city's power in a scenario of disputes and agreements between large corporations, nations, regions, and other cities.

Among the *instruments used* to establish diplomatic relations beyond the networks, cities have bilateral agreements; thematic agreements and/or protocols; technical



cooperation protocols; decentralized cooperation protocols (between cities, but under the tutelage of the Nation-State or regional governments); delegations; organization of international events; training actions; technological and professional exchanges; participation in international campaigns, councils, federations, leagues, covenants, forums, committees, platforms and, last but not least, programs and projects counting on exclusive financing.

Among the *characteristics and specific aspects* of city diplomacy, it is essential to note that the initiatives are generally flexible and customized mainly in the image of their representatives, who often voluntarily choose to establish and/or reinforce diplomatic instruments. Additionally, city diplomacy is characterized by being very flexible and pragmatic. Protocols, agreements, and other instruments have simplified formalities and procedures, at least when it comes to the Nation-State. They acquire multiple shapes with relative international legal precariousness. The capacity to institute peculiar and precise thematic relations of variable duration and commitment should also be noted.

Opposing the traditional diplomacy of the Nation-State, city diplomacy presupposes specific aspects of local governance. These include healthy interdependence between agents and groups of society and a robust intersectoral understanding of the problems covered, usually derived from the ordinary and quotidian complexity.

Among the *agents of city diplomacy*, the main one is the mayor or head of government: the elected representative. There are also other essential agents and representatives of institutions that carry the city's ideals: universities, companies, sports teams, all of whom play the role of city ambassadors.

Among the *means and attributes for implementing* city diplomacy, the necessary infrastructures are the most obvious: hotels, venues for events, ports, airports, technological platforms for communication and transportation, along others.

However, once again, the ordinary infrastructure does not appear to be the main attribute to ensure the internationalization of a city and its participation in city networks and other forms of diplomacy. The social environment that characterizes a place, its

identities, and its method of generating urbanity, seems to be the elements that credit the international association of cities and the projection of cities in the international level. Symbolic, architectural, and landscaping icons, styles, cultural expressions, and events are all elements that guarantee greater international exposure of cities.

There does not seem to be a clear way of defining the essential means and attributes for internationalization and city diplomacy. These characteristics are directly related to each network and other instruments of this or that cities are associated. Thus, for instance, it is part of the necessary infrastructure of a city that participates in the network of Portuguese-speaking cities to have institutes and/or universities/schools that value the common use of this language in different countries, working on orthographic agreements, cultural initiatives, and others.

It is interesting to notice the particular importance of universities for cooperation and city diplomacy. That happens because of universities specificities that end up crediting cities in the international and cooperative scenario, such as the history of international exchanges involving universities around the world; the university's ability to articulate different sectors of the economy and society (especially those linked to innovation and entrepreneurship); the ability to appeal to foreign investors; the contribution to technical cooperation; the ability to transfer knowledge; the fact that university extension is a mechanism for articulating social networks; and, the formulation of speeches through their opinion makers, both students, and professors and their disciplines and research.

Beyond the search for investment and market opportunities, city diplomacy affirms its symbolic space and identity as strategic, something that particularizes it in opposition of the diplomacy exercised by the Nation States based on the art of mediation and the representation of countries in their disputes for domination, security, trade, and affirmation among peoples.

## **6 SHARED VALUES IN THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CITIES**

The particular internationalization strategies of each city seem to be similar regarding the defense and search for specific values. Here, we address a set of four essential values that historically have driven the strategies of cities internationalization. As in the previous

section, the goal is to reveal the specificities of city diplomacy that consubstantiate a field of thought and practice.<sup>22</sup>

The three central values that cities share in their internationalization strategies are Peace, Culture, and Sustainability. Additionally, there are a set of values associated with Social Participation, Decentralization of Power and Local Management, which together could be called Democratic values. These four sets of values each constitute transversal problems, with expression in multiple scales, often projecting places to an international scale.

Generally speaking, the cities' internationalization is based on common values recognized in the most important multilateral treaties: peace, culture, democracy, and sustainability. By this, we do not wish to conduct any moral and idealized defense of the international cooperation between cities as opposed to or even "better" of Nation State's actions. It is always important to remind that cities neither control the hard power instruments of diplomacy nor are responsible for sensitive areas such as security and trade battles, placing these agents in a comfortable position to defend universal principles operating in the international complex geopolitics field.

The limited political and geographic city capacity to enforce the common shared on participating in a city network or any other kind of international cooperation is relativized by its ability to structure solidarity and soft power dynamics. It is intended here to point out the basis on what cities historically establish their fields of power, resulting in networks funded by a kind of "organizational solidarity", where each city in a horizontal manner works with others to achieve collective results.

In this respect, although competitiveness as a value in itself appears more and more in the discourses and efforts of internationalization of cities, even going so far as to become a motto of some networks or a hegemonic logic, overall, competitiveness is still marginal. It does not effectively correspond to the quotidian of the diversity parts that

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22. The definition of these values is based on bibliography analyses, on unstructured interviews with managers of the area in Brazilian cities, on the analysis of some city internationalization plans and management reports, as well as on the specialized media (see, for example, <[www.cityscope.org](http://www.cityscope.org)>), and moreover, over 15 years of experience as a manager and researcher of urban policies, having worked with various forms of international cooperation between cities and, above all, having analyzed something like a hundred web pages of networks of cities, projects and organizations that address this theme.

constitute each city as a totality, a Social Spatial Formation represented on its diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, this value does not emanate from cities, but rather from markets and their agencies tailoring organizational solidarity between cities. Point out this aspect is relevant to categorize city networks, as we will see further.

Competitiveness is a term that has appeared for decades in the discourse and practices of nations, corporations, and universities that conduct an effective global war without any morality, as Santos (1995), Petrella (1991), and several others point out. Therefore, this value expertly guides strategies and forms of internationalization of cities. For this reason, the next section addresses this subject and analyzes the relation between urban requalification and city internationalization. From this, we could infer that specific city networks are especially committed to urban land commoditization, as it will be presented further.

The matter of peace is part of the world order that had founded the United Nations after the Second Great War. The subject is also present in the formation of the first networks of cities and at the beginning of city diplomacy with the twinning cities and other forms of soft power instruments encouraged by various nations.

The matter of peace is both a way for cities to stand autonomously on the international stage, overcoming differences between national states, as well as a way of associating cities with national diplomacy and its efforts to reconcile and build peace after wars and tensions between nations.<sup>23</sup>

More recently, the matter of peace seems to be linked to the increase in cases classified as terrorism. For example, after recent attacks in Paris and Barcelona, a clear message on the cultural peace and diversity from the peoples that make up the city can be heard in the local executive governments' speeches.

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23. The biggest active network to deal with the matter seems to be Mayors for Peace, created in 1982 and that brings together over 7 thousand cities from 162 countries and regions from all over the world. About the foundations mentioned, see Giorgio La Pira's speech (Balbim, 2016, p. 142) and the 1913 constitution of the UIV (l'Union Internationale des Villes).

*No nos vencerán. Estos atentados cobardes no cambiarán los valores de una ciudad valiente. No permitiremos que el odio y el racismo se instale entre nosotros. Barcelona seguirá siendo una ciudad de paz, democrática, orgullosa de su diversidad y convivencia. El miedo no prevalecerá* (Congostina, 2017).

*Nous sommes plongés dans une douleur et je la partage avec tous les Parisiens, leurs familles et les victimes. Tous les quartiers visés étaient jeunes, cosmopolites, ouverts sur les cultures du monde. C'est cette jeunesse là qui a été très lourdement touchée. C'est le cœur de ce qui fait l'âme de Paris : l'envie de faire la fête, d'être ouvert au monde. Ce que je veux dire aux Parisiens, c'est que la solidarité, la liberté, l'altruisme, tout ça ils (les terroristes, ndlr) ne l'atteindront pas. On est dans la douleur, le drame et la tragédie mais on est debout* (Waymel, 2015).

These messages are made very meaningful when they advocate this universal value in a moment of profound violence and great international exposure. Those messages reveal the specific place of cities in the national, regional, or international geopolitical context.

Moreover, we cannot neglect the growing importance of cities and their internationalization related to security, surveillance, and safety business promotion (products, services, markets, and networks) (Balbim, 2016).

Culture, in its turn, is one of the most prominent areas of internationalization of cities. Because it is multifaceted, involves various sectors and is capable of forming identities and symbolic values, culture is used as a strategy for cities in their diplomacy and internationalization. The matter is generally associated with the strategies of technical, academic, and technological cooperation. It also seems to be related to humanitarian and pacifist actions. Because of its cultural bias, sport and tourism may be emphasized as well.

International cultural events such as book fairs, universal and/or regional expositions, and others ensure the existence of a transversal platform to support cities in their internationalization process. Museums with international accreditation, for example, can also be considered as part of the internationalization infrastructure of cities.

Anyhow, culture<sup>24</sup> also plays an ambiguous role in the internationalization of cities since the cultural industry associated involve hard competitiveness, global marketing strategies, and cultural domination.

Culture is as much an expression of the local scale as it is of the global one. The intersection between these two scales of life, or between these two worlds, occurs in a variety of ways, often spontaneously, taking the monopoly of diplomacy from the hands of the state. The importance of culture in the internationalization of cities is expressed in a series of networks of cities that deal with the subject, such as Intercultural Cities Networks – Union of Iberian American Capitals – International Association of Educating Cities – UCCLA.

Like culture, sustainability (environmental issues) plays a central and strategical role in the current internationalization of cities. “City networks for global environmental governance show how cities can matter beyond their territories and are one expression of our globalizing world in which norms and practices are shaped and dispersed through networks” (Bouteligier, 2013, p. 2). The significant number of projects financed with this goal, in particular by the European Community and international agencies such as IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), AFD (Agence Française de Développement), reveal how the regulation of the territory also happens through the internationalization of cities.<sup>25</sup>

Under the umbrella of the term “sustainability” are several strategic subjects concerning internationalization, most of which are associated with technical advances, especially related to urban mobility. With regards to this particular topic, it is worth mentioning the existence of a network launched and financed by a particular city, Stuttgart, whose goal is to internationally disseminate, specifically to the cities that make up the network, the local innovations that they made in the sector, ensuring improvements

24. “Culture is a cross-cutting sector that articulates with other areas of intervention, such as tourism, the economy, education and the environment, producing employment impacts and encouraging training, helping to create and strengthen the virtuous circle of sustainable development” (Quintas, Brito e Curto, 2017, p. 173).

25. Regarding the use of the territory, the territory as a norm and the regulations of the territory in a period in which corporate and transnational law responds to a significant part of the money production and accumulation, see Antas Junior (2017). In the same way as the corporative law by which companies and instances of conciliation and non-state trials abide, the creation of an international law system or conciliation instruments between cities seems to be a relevant subject for future research.

in the mobility abroad and expansion of its urban business environment, qualifying as effective diplomatic action. Alternatively, as happens with companies, sustainability is part of a strong marketing strategy for cities too.

As for the bloc formed by themes generically linked to Democracy (Social Participation, Decentralization, and Local Management), it is interesting to note that, like the matter of peace, this issue has guided the internationalization of cities since the formation of the first city network in 1913. Democracy and decentralization are also present in the agenda of “international partisan organizations” in twentieth-century Europe, and more strongly after the Second World War, which was one of the movements that fostered international cooperation between cities (Trevas, 2015), as can be seen in the Brazilian case further analyzed.

As already stated, the very presence of local governments in the international scenario presupposes the existence of a minimally democratic and republican environment in the local, national, and regional scenarios. In this respect, the European Union played an important role in financing projects between cities through the improvement of urban management. The constitution of the Mercocities network, which through their cities, had the financial support of the Urbal Network to improve the municipalities’ governance instruments, revealed the EU role and rationality.

The improvement of local management, usually, but not always, appears as a goal associated with other issues encompassed by the various forms of internationalization of cities. Most importantly, improved management is a necessary foundation for the internationalization process and plays a vital role in each city’s domestic environment.

Finally, social participation appears as a potent symbolic content in the internationalization strategies of cities. Sometimes that happens due to the demand of funding bodies and managers of global policies. More importantly, local authority usually speaks out in the global scenario on behalf of its inhabitants, thus solidifying its expression. Social participation somehow confers the legitimacy that, in some instances, cities do not formally have on the international scene due to the national legal prerogatives specific to each country.

## 7 URBAN REQUALIFICATION: THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE CITY?

For more than a century,<sup>26</sup> urban requalification projects and major urban modernization projects have occupied a suitable spot in local and global strategies of internationalization of cities. Large urban projects build the idea of city marketing and make their land market internationally available. What moves the cities internationally around these projects is competition for investments and marketing.

These projects involve academic and stylistic debates, architecture competitions, internationally recognized professionals, and urban planning offices. There is also a whole complex normative, financial, and engineering architecture that involves international organizations and agencies in the development of these projects.<sup>27</sup>

The current model of these interventions is part of a postmodern global urban process marked by what Brenner and Theodore (2002, p. 349) call “*creative destruction*” to describe “the geographically uneven, socially regressive, and politically volatile trajectories of institutional/spatial change that have been crystallizing under these conditions”. Alternatively, as Ribeiro (2012, p. 58) reminds us, this is a condition of capitalism represented in the “famous statement of the Communist Party Manifesto that, under the ruling of the bourgeoisie, all that is solid melts into air, [which] contains an ever-current truth: capitalism builds and destroys. Its dynamics imply the control of nature and other men, as well as the desecration of scriptures, laws, limits, and previous certainties”. By “scriptures, laws, limits and previous certainties”, one can also take to mean the territory!

Urban requalification projects are initially marked by changes in local legislation and by the establishment of benefits that ensure specific groups of investors and parts of society the appropriation of spaces previously occupied by dysfunctional uses and groups. There is the refunctionalization of space through the normatization of the territory, as

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26. “Among many universal exhibitions, those in 1915, San Diego, 1922, Rio de Janeiro, 1933, Chicago, 1970, Osaka, and recently 1992, in Seville, should be mentioned. Each one showcased their artworks to the world, showing not only new urban shapes, but also a new way of life and the inclusion of cities in global diplomacy” (Balbim, 2016, p. 138).

27. Similarly, specific infrastructures currently linked to non-motorized urban mobility or that value aspects such as civility, environmental quality, safety and urban cleaning, requalifying damaged areas for new uses such as tourism, are repeated in an international market of cities, with their consultants, NGOs, awards, their metrics and internationally standardized indicators (ITDP, Mobility, TOD, ODS efforts).



is the case of Urban Operations in Brazilian cities (Balbim, 2011), and the frequent eviction who previously lived or frequented the area.

From then on, new urban forms are created that can or cannot guarantee a relative and always orderly social mix. In these cases, state interference is essential to transform the social production and use of space, ensuring corporate ownership of urbanity.

These business models are often presented and developed by international consultants, either through international technical cooperation or by hiring companies, through projects financed by banks or multilateral agencies. The argument is that large-scale projects are not financially viable without the composition of structures that involve all scales of public power, different types of companies (executing agencies, managers, and consultants), each specialized in an area of the complex operation, and different forms of enterprise securitization. What we notice is the establishment of a regulatory environment that goes beyond the legal understanding of the rules, “organizational solidarity”, which enables the urban operation in the international market.<sup>28</sup>

The business model enables the normative changes by committing all public agents, which allows the opening of the market and access to land for exploitation, including by international companies, with all the guarantees defined, involving small risks for investors. That is one of the mechanisms of urban land commodification, inserted in a global market, following neoliberal rationalization.

The neoliberal ideology requests and installs competitive economic development mechanisms with deregulated markets without any form of state interference. However, as in other sectors, the urban space production demands a series of new standard regulations that make feasible the international action of corporate groups, customarily deepening inequalities and creating new segregations.

In the analysis of urban restructuring under the neoliberal order, called by Brenner and Theodore (2002) as the “urbanization of neoliberalism”, this global rationality must consider the characteristics of each place, the active role of the space, their “roughness”.

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28. This matter has been previously discussed (Balbim, 2016) and constitutes an important part of a research agenda to be developed about the corporate regulation of urban spaces or an international law to rule the cities.

The goal is to produce an ambiance with less resistance. For doing that, international agencies and corporations not only scrutinise the produced space, its fixed physical forms. They also need to rationalize its flows, institutional frameworks, political regimes, regulatory practices, political forces, and symbolic contexts. In that sense, each SSF plays an active and crucial role in this process, several times identified as the resistance one. Nevertheless, the global market and cities' marketing usually show these different places and processes as being homogenous and, therefore, prepared to receive the same global rationality and investments.<sup>29</sup>

This "roughness" (Ribeiro, 2012)<sup>30</sup> is the exclusive characteristic of each place that transforms, particularizes the result of a global movement of obsolescence, degradation, and destruction of certain areas of the city with the subsequent creation of new urbanities that are then refunctionalized, requalified and ennobled, probably turned smoother for the new international waves of investments.

Guaranteed investment funds, trust funds, international funds, state-guaranteed business models, and, above all, models that add up similar public and private partnership changes in rules of space use and occupation are instruments usually provided for in international relations linked to urban requalification projects.

These mechanisms of urban requalification are part of a new context of the neoliberal ideology. In the current stage of globalization, it is a matter of hegemonic globalization, the "*global rationality*" (Santos, 1994b) does not merely want to impose a "one size fits all" policy, nor does it deny the State or conceive it as diametrically opposed to the interests from the market. In this moment of globalization, as Brenner and Theodore (2002, p. 353) argue, global rationality acknowledges the existence of "*roughness*" and imposes local strategies adaptation, usually involving partnerships between State's levels,

29. "While neoliberalism aspires to create a "utopia" of free markets liberated from all forms of state interference, it has in practice entailed a dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 352).

30. "This roughness, while allowing the emergence of alternative rationalities and the survival of many others, opposing spatial cosmetics, may contain the marks of past occurrences that prevent the realization of socially generous political projects. Roughness is formed by inherited structures and hierarchies, as exemplified by the shamelessly called "noble areas" of large cities, which make it impossible to materialize alternative futures. It is about the existence of structuring structures of social action, which dissolve ideals in the bowels of past times without viable return, making it impossible to manifest them as structuring structures" (Ribeiro, 2012, p. 69).

mechanisms of governance responsible by the “normalization” of the various fragments of the world accessed.

Different places should constitute a unique business environment, forming a “smooth” space at the exclusive service of the corporations. This exclusivity of the corporations in the appropriation of city internationalization benefits happens because Nation-State operates internationally limited to its territory! Companies seize fragments of territory in various countries, forming and operating that in networked space. It would, therefore, be questionable how city networks resemble the corporate organization of territories on a global scale.

The local rationality, or the active role of the place, makes it so that a business instrument diffused alongside the neoliberal agenda around the world, the Public-Private Partnership (PPPs), i.e., gets varying degrees of local specificities, composing business models that share their foundations, but not necessarily the same designs. To illustrate this dynamic, we mention a study of the particularities of the use of PPPs in the production of urban space in Latin America, carried out in cooperation with AFD (*Agence Française de Développement*) and local governments in different countries.<sup>31</sup> In this case, AFD’s interest was undoubtedly to use technical cooperation within localities to produce information relevant to French investors, whether public or private. International cooperation agencies usually establish relations with cities in different countries controlling and monopolizing a network of information. In some cases, this network and its products are also shared with all the network nodes.

In many ways, large urban projects participate in the globalized agenda of capital accumulation, and urban territory increasingly becomes global merchandise, a commodity. These projects result in creating “*spaces of globalization*” (Santos, 1994b, p. 24), constantly refunctionalized, serving the most modern interests with a high level of urbanity and information infrastructures. In many ways, several of them are symbolically segregated from other city areas. The international negotiation of these megaprojects is also part of city diplomacy!

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31. In the Brazilian case, the partnership was made with the federal government (Ipea), because of the history of support, from the Brazilian government, to technical and decentralized French cooperation (AFD and Ipea, 2014).

The production of “*spaces of globalization*” is necessary to insert cities into a logic of, once again, international competition. According to Brenner and Theodore (2002, p. 369-372), this process is called “*urbanization of neoliberalism*”, installed in places according to the combined movement of destruction and creation of local structures, regulations, social standards, and city spaces. This global process, portrayed by the authors in consonance to its occurrences in the rich countries of the North, would also happen in cities of the global South. The similarities found between examples given by the authors and what is happening in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, are strongly related to the moment of destruction. In contrast, the moments of creation seem less robust, thus revealing a likely incompleteness inherent in peripheral capitalism, marked by regulations that impose less resistance of the place against global rationality (Santos, 1994b) and its exploitation.

Subsequently, in order to reveal how the internationalization of cities takes place, some examples of destruction-creation processes addressed by Brenner and Theodore are presented and reveal typical situations of “*spaces of globalization*” production according to the cities internationalization rationality.

The first neoliberal localization mechanism, or the “*spaces of globalization*” production, could be called a *recalibration of intergovernmental relations* and would be associated with the broad movement, started in the 1990s, of states power decentralization. At the time of destruction, there is a dismantling of the central support system of local actions, followed by the creation of new tasks, duties, and responsibilities passed on to local governments. Accompanies this movement the creation of incentive structures to reward local entrepreneurship and catalyze endogenous growth.<sup>32</sup> The model of internationally rewarding good practices, among other forms of incentives, fits this logic.

In a way, as we have seen in the analysis of local governments participation at Habitat II (Balbim and Amanajas, 2015), this process of decentralization, more than constituting an appreciation of local governments in the international scenario, since they were called to participate in solving global problems or some form of deepening of democracy, was a strategy by the Nation-State in response to neoliberal rulings.

32. The mechanisms of deterioration of the public services for subsequent privatization, preferably with the provision of customized services that can serve as mechanisms of differentiation, are classic cases associated with water supply and urban tolls, for instance.

The location of neoliberal global rationality also reconfigures the institutional infrastructure of local governments. There is, at first, the local bureaucracy dismantling. In many cases already precarious, the transfer of responsibility to community and NGOs (also demonstrated as one of the results of Habitat II) invariably posed difficulties to respond to the needs of society. Over time, these precarious arrangements are replaced by PPPs, various forms of “quangos” (quasi-non-governmental institutions), similar in Brazil to the OSCIPS, SPE, and OS, or the model of the *Société d’Économie Mixte Locale*, in France, or semi-public companies, in Europe in general. The interest is to institute new forms of governance of city projects geared towards competition, redirecting the range of influence of the local government and the community’s decisions to the business field.<sup>33</sup>

Another example is the “best-practice” introduction as the “modern” governance model at the local government’s expense. Many urban requalification projects mobilize strategies such as zero tolerance, the deepening of discrimination forms, the introduction of electronic surveillance and control systems, and other technical solutions, including private urban maintenance services, notably provided by BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) or similar.

The final result of these strategies of internationalization of cities based on urban requalification, megaprojects, and the production of spaces of globalization is invariably the destruction of the liberal city, a space of diversity and differences, which is replaced by more homogeneous spaces (Highsmith, 2015), which fulfill predefined roles for exogenous rationality.

Beyond large cities, where capital interest seems to be more explicit, the model presented is reproduced on smaller scales to enable investments and transformations that connect small and medium-sized cities to an international level. It thus appears to weave a functional transnational network of spaces of globalization, “*organizational solidarity*”.

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33. Another example of this logic seems to be Urban Development Cooperation – UDC used in England.

## 8 CITY NETWORKS: A CLASSIFICATION PROPOSAL

Since the 1980s, the role of networks of all kinds has gained importance in a new form of global governance, network governance.<sup>34</sup> Particularly concerning city networks, several authors relate the expansion of this number to a clear European Union policy, which can be evidenced by the number of networks resulting from their financial projects and support. Another factor that encouraged this process was the launch, in 1988, of the European Charter of Local Autonomy.<sup>35</sup>

At that time, the authors referred to these networks as Local Transnational Networks or Municipal Transnational Networks, which were used by cities to influence decisions at the European and national level, secure funding and improve capacities (Bulkeley et al., 2003).

This EEC regional strategy has spread all over the world and has served as a platform or springboard for other forms of city cooperation, which often gain their political maturity when they found or joined international networks of cities. At present, for some authors (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2017) that defend the city diplomacy professional field, the number of networks is so significant that they foresee a certain Darwinism happening in the not so distant future, pure speculation!

Whether the number of city networks is excessive or not, only a detailed survey of the whole field and a prospective analysis could tell us. Of course, this has been configured as a new and effective transnational space of power to the point where there are meta-networks or networks of networks, such as UCLG, whose strategic objective is the search for a seat in the UN, thus placing cities as first-class players in the negotiations of the world order.

So far, the most comprehensive survey on city networks appears to have been conducted under the coordination of Acuto, in 2016, as the product of a contract from the City Leadership Laboratory of the University College of London and the

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34. Network governance is define in management as a processes that "involves a select, persistent, and structured set of autonomous firms (as well as nonprofit agencies) engaged in creating products or services based on implicit and open-ended contracts to adapt to environmental contingencies and to coordinate and safeguard exchanges. These contracts are socially – not legally – binding" (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997).

35. European Charter of Local Self-Government (CEAL): an international treaty signed first in Strasbourg on 15 October, 1985 and entered into force on 1 September, 1988, which defines, among other issues, local autonomy to establish international relations with other local authorities on matters within its domain.

World Health Organization's Healthy Cities Network – WHO-UN. This study used three primary sources of information: literature, national city networks, and surveys in networks formed by projects financed by multilateral bodies, such as the Global Urban SDG Campaign. According to the study, there are some 200 city networks around the world, 170 of which were analyzed by the authors in greater detail (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2017, p. 15).

This survey, however, does not categorize the different city networks and also includes national networks in the aggregation of the research, probably resulting in an exaggerated coverage, which ends up equaling networks with different strategies, goals, and scales of action. There is also a noticeable difference in goals, instruments, and capacities of each network in the international scenario when one considers, for example, the composition of each one.

Some are formed only by cities and headed by mayors. Others generally include a Nation-State in its power strategies. There are also networks formed from supra-regional or multilateral bodies, most of them linked to the UN system or the EEC, which respond to global strategies. Finally, there are a considerable number of networks that congregate cities under the umbrella of profit-making or not-for-profit organizations with apparent interests in expanding markets via international consultancies.

Nevertheless, given the importance of this study in the creation of a database, we summarize its conclusions below and then begin the necessary refinement of the information based on our database, which is currently in formation.<sup>36</sup>

With over two hundred networks active globally, city diplomacy is no rare occurrence and city networks are a widespread phenomenon. (...) Importantly, we see an expansion in supra-national city diplomacy. While national networks continue to represent the largest type of city networks (49 percent in total, and 36 percent of the networks created since 2001), there is also a growing trend for regional urban associations in Europe, Latin America or Asia (21 percent in total, representing 30 percent in networks created since 2001). This is equally pushed forward by regional bodies like the EU or the ASEAN, but also by multilateral processes like those of WHO (...) International

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36. The analysis presented here could be more conclusive if we had access to the cited database, and also, if the database we are developing already had all the variables surveyed, which is expected to happen soon with support from field research.

networks (29 percent of the total, 46 percent of the networks created since 2001) are starting to populate the overall landscape quite substantially. The WHO is not unique in its push for this cooperation. For instance, the UN agency for human settlements, UN-Habitat, launched in 2012 a Global Network of Safer Cities aimed at strengthening cooperation on matters of urban safety. The internationalization of city networks is not only being pushed by multilateral organizations but also by influential members of the private sector. Just over 63 per cent of the 'international' city networks surveyed by the Lab have forms of multilateral and corporate partnership with organizations including UNICEF, the ILO, UN-HABITAT, or private interests like Google, SAP, and Cisco, or philanthropic influence as with Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Rockefeller Foundation (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2017, p. 16).

According to the study, 51% of the surveyed networks have a non-national dimension. As a result, internationally, there are 102 city networks with different formats.

Taking literature, research reports, city management reports, EEC reports, surveys in multilateral organizations, field surveys during international seminars (particularly WUF and Habitat III) and interviews with IR managers as our sources of information, we estimate the current number of international networks of cities in 120, among which probably 80 have only cities as their primary partners.

In order to contribute to the studies on city diplomacy, it is necessary to produce a typology of these networks that helps overcome a Durkheimian view that would identify this phenomenon as the simple creation of a new international bureaucracy. It is also necessary to overcome specific and partial views of city diplomacy related exclusively to the subject of International Relations by understanding the active role of the city space in the organization of the world system. After all, as Claude Raffestin (1993) teaches, networks invariably contain power strategies, and it is the architecture of each that reveals details about powers' exercises. The intention here remains to deal with the phenomenon from what it is in its genesis: the constitution of space of power.

The ultimate goal of the current survey is to map, in great detail, the organizations made up of cities, since the hybrid networks do not translate into horizontal international peer cooperation, adding not only different strategies but, especially, different diplomatic mechanisms, often in a clear soft power dispute and, above all, over new markets.



In pursuance of this goal, we propose to analyze the networks from: i) constitution, identifying the date of creation of each network according to historical explanatory periods; ii) composition, the agents that make up the network, as well as cities, Nation States, multilateral organizations, NGOs and corporations; iii) agendas or main themes of each network; iv) region, or spatialization of each network, or more accurately, the formation of a “*functional space*” (Santos, 1993), or as we prefer, the definition of a region, understood as “*functionalization of power*” (Balbim, 1996).

In the next stage of the research, the improvement of the database that we have gathered so far will result in global political cartography of the city networks, revealing their regional and thematic organizations, and their constitutive logics, according to different periods of the global organization.

For the moment, besides advancing in the theoretical and methodological field (Balbim, 2016), we seek to discuss the matter of the different types of city networks, their spaces, and strategies of power. In this way, and at first, the city networks could be classified as *project networks*, *corporate networks*, and *city networks*.

This classification is not only analytical; it represents significant differences and particularities between the organizations. The most crucial characteristic to classify is to determine the institution type which heads the network. In this scheme, we have three general groups directed by International Organizations, Corporations, or Cities.

*Project networks* are formed by cities that are associated with projects instituted by international or multilateral organizations. These networks reveal a hierarchical architecture, with the coordination associated with funding body and Nation-States policy, associated or not to international agencies. As a rule, these networks follow rigid bureaucratic standards.

*Corporate networks* involve cities and private capital in a variety of ways. All of them are clients and can be recipients, donors, buyers and/or sellers of specific knowledge, negotiated in an international consulting market, which is usually introduced in the initial phase of the project as a sort of technical cooperation. In this first phase, there

is the market analysis, the city and its demand, a local-global movement. Then the demands are adapted to the network offered services, who seek to rationalize the places, planning its business development. From then on, the consultants and consultancies start to establish businesses and contracts.<sup>37</sup>

The private lobby and its articulation with the city networks do not differ much from the technical cooperation of the 1990s nor from the decentralized cooperation of the 2000s, when rich countries and regions, through their cities, offered technical expertise and their consultants to the global South to produce market viability studies for their public and private companies. It seems that the only difference is that the present consulting market has been expanded and privatized, not necessarily being identified with a country or city anymore, which lends even greater diversity to the field of corporate action.

These networks promote city marketing for the attraction and dissemination of opportunities and innovations. Other institutions, other than corporations and local authorities, are involved or are called upon to participate in corporate city networks. More often than not, mainly universities<sup>38</sup> and research centers are added, providing talents, knowledge, and innovations.

Like other networks, one also differs from each other thematically, strategically and according to their influence areas or regions. For example, Moita (2017, p. 139-141) examines the internationalization of Lisbon, which shows that the networks in which this city participates, included in the European regional context, refer to human rights, urban management, environmental sustainability, and culture. One may surmise from the author's previous analysis that networks whose regional area is the so-called global South have among their central themes human rights, humanitarian aid, technical cooperation, and matters of Lusophonic culture.

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37. In Latin America, the city of Medellín registers a strong and long-lasting internationalization strategy, one of its strategies being to negotiate its expertise internationally in the implementation of successful projects, such as slum requalification. On this subject in particular, see study on the Complexo do Alemão, in Rio de Janeiro, and the relationship between the two cities. Medellín recently became part of the Global Network of Learning Cities, a network established by UNESCO. In the words of Mayor Federico Gutierrez Zuluaga, one can identify the structuring of a market of urban solutions (available at: <<https://bit.ly/3kf7o9m>>; accessed on Dec. 2017).

38. In the specific case of Leading cities, each city must bring up to the table one university.

Regarding what the author calls “*a group of intercultural networks where US influence takes on greater weight*”, or merely American regional networks, economic partnerships, competitiveness, resiliency, and sustainability for creating business environments are undoubtedly the guiding star of networks such as LeadingCities, Global Cities Initiative, Urban Land Institute, NY Global Partners, 100 ResilientCities, The Indus Entrepreneurs, and others.

LeadingCities, former World Class Cities Partnership – WCCP, is a particular and curious case. These networks bring together or recruit local governments represented by city mayors, forming a restricted or corporate network of cities. They rank themselves as the most restricted city networks, adding only ten cities around the world: Barcelona, Boston, Dublin, Hamburg, Lisbon, Lion, Vancouver, Zapopan, and Rio de Janeiro.<sup>39</sup> The purpose of these cities is to enable networking. They seek to generate innovation, new businesses, jobs, and to strengthen the local economy.<sup>40</sup> This network sells its “*comprehensive services*” to companies, public institutions, universities, and NGOs and, similar to market consulting firms, offers risk analysis for the application of “*smart cities assessment tools*” and resilience.

The intention of this network is not necessarily cooperation between cities, but an organization that brings the cities together according to the principles of the network: a crystalline form of what Milton Santos (1996) calls “*organizational solidarity*”.

Self-organized *city networks* constitute a field that is not new to global geopolitics or diplomacy but has gained relevance in recent decades. In the past, these networks have emerged with at least two of three active banners: decentralization, democracy, and peace. Currently, there is a large number of networks that emerge with sustainability as their main motor, but they still share the original principles.

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39. A quick look at the portfolio reveals that the international network of consultants in expanding markets, new technologies and program development opportunities is connected to the transformations in the legal environment for investments in cities, as is the case of the Rio de Janeiro, with its Porto Maravilha and its “innovative” CEPACs.

40. “LeadingCities is a network of ten cities representing ten countries. These cities have been chosen specifically for their common traits. All are mid-sized metropolitan areas with a highly educated workforce, strong ties to higher education, innovation and technology. Because of these similarities, our cities can learn a great deal from one another. Cities all over the world face many similar challenges, but by choosing cities with similar characteristics we have been able to identify similar trends and opportunities in response to the common limitations and restrictions that cities face. To be included in the LeadingCities network, a city must secure the commitment participation of the municipal government and at least one university” (available at: <<https://bit.ly/2ZWcTRj>>; accessed on Oct. 2017).

The city networks seek to provide further power to the representativeness of cities within the framework of major global agreements, especially those taking place under UN auspices and those that address specific issues but with global dimensions. For example, UCLG; Metropolis; C40; World Network of Port Cities; and International Association of Educating Cities.

## 9 A LOOK AT BRAZIL

The specific study of city diplomacy in Brazil goes back to the time of city twinning in the 1950s, and from there, it is an evolutionary line that is institutionally fragile and scarcely diversified (spatially and thematically) (Balbim, 2018).

With the late 1980s process of democratization and decentralization, accompanied by the country's insertion into neoliberal logic and the modernizing discourse of globalization in the 1990s, some cities began to diversify their international actions and even outlined strategies and structures for internationalization.

In Brazil, as in other countries, the international activity of subnational entities does not have a necessarily constitutional formalization. Since 2005, there has been a proposal for a constitutional amendment in the National Congress (PEC 475), which would allow subnational entities, under the federal government's authorization, to establish such partnerships. In the absence of a formal expedient, the legitimacy of cities in the constitution of international cooperation could be questioned. For example, in the European Community, this subject has been regulated since 1988 in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. In its 10<sup>th</sup> article, this Charter authorizes the right of association of local governments.<sup>41</sup>

41. "Artículo 10. El derecho de asociación de las Entidades locales

1. Las Entidades locales tienen el derecho, en el ejercicio de sus competencias, de cooperar y, en el ámbito de la Ley, asociarse con otras Entidades locales para la realización de tareas de interés común.

2. El derecho de las Entidades locales de integrarse en una asociación para la protección y promoción de sus intereses comunes y el de integrarse en una asociación internacional de Entidades locales deben ser reconocidos por cada Estado.

3. Las Entidades locales pueden, en las condiciones eventualmente previstas por la ley, cooperar con las Entidades de otros Estados" (Spain, 1989).

The structures to deal with international relations in Brazilian municipalities emerged due to different motivations. Between 1993 and 1996, the first experiences were related to global rationalities. In 1993, Porto Alegre created an international bureaucracy in response to the World Social Forum realization. In the same year, Rio de Janeiro did the same to deal ECO 92.

Otherwise, from 1997 to 2000, Santo André and Maringá created their areas of IR due to Workers' Party internationalist history. Furthermore, between 2001 and 2004, eight more cities followed this movement; among them, the capital cities of São Paulo and Recife during the left list governments.

Besides being recent, the internationalization of Brazilian cities is quite timid for several reasons. Global cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have just recently played a significant role in some international networks, the C40 was presided over by the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, who reaped the fruits of the city's choice for the 2016 Olympics, and São Paulo presided over the Mercocities network. However, until 2016 the effective strategies of internationalization of these cities are subject to a political-partisan agenda that, in general terms, governs the actions of public management in Brazilian cities.

This logic can be evidenced in government reports, abandoned projects, and as portrayed by Jakobsen (2004), in the mere shift of the electoral process. According to the then Secretary of IR of the City Hall of São Paulo, the secretariat, created in 2001, narrowly disappeared at the beginning of the next government, despite countless achievements which had been accomplished in a short time and with little investment. In the period from 2001 to 2004, the Secretariat had attracted three times more income from international resources than the city had expected in costs. Also, for the first time, the city held a UN Conference (11<sup>th</sup> UNCTAD) in addition to being chosen to coordinate an EEC network project. During a visit to São Paulo, the Secretary-General of the United Nations at that time visited one of the flagship projects of the public administration, the Unified Educational Center (CEUs), which exposed this experience to the eyes of the world.

In Brazil, there is a relative consensus regarding the strong correlation between the political party and the structuring of management mechanisms and internationalization policies. As revealed by Godoy (2013), Milani and Ribeiro (2011), and the exhaustive

study of the CNM (2011),<sup>42</sup> a significant part of this international relations structuring is linked to the early 1990s Workers' Party (PT) local governments. In turn, in the 2000s, the multiplication of the number of cities that now have IR management mechanisms is linked to the federal government's support of the matter, starting with PT in 2003. Only between 2004 and 2008, for example, proper structures were set up to manage the subject in 16 of the 30 cities that are part of the CNM survey (2011).

Godoy (2013), particularly analyzing the internationalization strategy of the PT mayor mandates, warned that this effort was not merely to seek technical and financial complements for projects, but that it was also a strategy to strengthen inclusive development agendas, thus symbolically and materially complementing an anti-hegemonic discourse, giving visibility to the public policies developed at the local level.

This movement reinforces some of the raised hypotheses of this article, in particular regarding the correlation between internationalization strategies and local democracy and social participation, one of the leftist movements and party banners in Brazil.

According to Trevas (2015), this tendency of the internationalization of Brazilian cities has its foundations in the leftist governments of European countries with whom the most relations were established (Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and Denmark). The socialist and communist parties in these countries developed cooperation, via cities, with cities that had left-wing governments, particularly the Workers' Party (PT), in Brazil. The internationalist foundation of those party's ideologies, the relative and belated rise of social democracy in the South American context, and the need for support from structured leftists local administration influenced the PT's international practices.

In France, which likely has the most significant number of direct relations with Brazilian cities, the intense activism in decentralized and technical cooperation among cities is also linked to the figure of *Depute-Maire* and *Senateur-Maire*. That means the mayor, who also has a seat in the national congress, plays on two distinct scales of politics, gathering support and national forces of local interest to the international scenario and vice versa.

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42. In 2008, the CNM carried out an exhaustive study on the public structure for the management of international relations in Brazilian cities, which counted 30 cities with some apparatus to deal with the issue. A similar number was reached by Milani and Ribeiro (2011), with these authors highlighting another 40 cities that had some form of international relations. Due to our practice in urban management from the federal government, we believe that this number could be even greater, revealing the potential growth of the City Diplomacy in the country.

In Brazil, city diplomacy seems to have decentralized cooperation as its main instrument, leaving city networks behind. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for this was the strong encouragement of PT's national governments between 2003 and 2014, when specific areas were created in the federal government to deal with the issue, especially the Federative Affairs Office of the Presidency of the Republic.<sup>43</sup> In this period, the federal government signed decentralized cooperation protocols with Italy and France, regulating and fomenting city cooperation. The period is also marked by the emergence of the International Relations Secretaries Forum and the Decentralized Cooperation Observatory in Brazil, both with the support of the National Secretary of Federative Affairs (SAF), as well as the promotion of the three national networks of municipalities (FNP, CNM, and ABM).

In most Brazilian cities, the IR area responds directly to the mayor, which also reinforces the view that the internationalization of cities is a very personalized action. However, mayors do not necessarily bet on the international agenda, lacking activism to cities and having discontinuity as one of their brands. According to Trevas (2015), in the international scenario, Brazilian cities are the consumers of the world, not the producers. Additionally, as there are also many areas of public management in the country, there is no national project that brings together a framework built around convergent international strategies.

The increase of the organizations dedicated to IR in Brazilian cities is closely linked to their participation in specific projects that involve financial resources, mainly through international agencies (AFD – CIDA – AECID – GTZ – FMDV – JAICA) and their initial offers of technical cooperation. The URBAL network, an EEC project, was responsible for funding and technical support, for instance, by structuring SMRI in São Paulo and, indirectly, by creating Mercocities.

The CNM study analyzes the action of the municipalities that have IR structure according to 4 axes of action: International Politics – International Cooperation – Economic Promotion – Urban Marketing. It is essential to point out that this separation

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43. According to information courtesy of Carlos Cuenca, in the Itamaraty, in the 1990s, the Federative Relations Office was created (today, merged with the Office of Relations with the Congress, it is called the Special Advisory Office for Federal and Parliamentary Affairs – AFEPA), in response to the need, already identified at that time, to support and advise Brazilian states and municipalities in their increasingly frequent international movements, in addition to “federalizing” the Itamaraty's activities internally.

is only analytical, with apparent overlaps in reality. Nevertheless, we agree on the need for categorization so that we can advance in the explanation of the specificities. Thus, while in economic promotion we can state that there is a clear tutelage of the National State via the Central Bank, the Ministry of Development and the COFIEIX, the same cannot be said concerning Technical Cooperation, an area that has been disputed in the Federal Government for several years between ABC (Brazilian Cooperation Agency) and SAF and that today is entirely “dehydrated”, making space for the direct action of the cities.

International politics and international cooperation are the two main axes of Brazilian cities in their internationalization strategies. Part of the explanation is the strategic actions of the federal government to encourage decentralized cooperation, South-South cooperation, in particular the cooperation provided by Brazil, and discourage funding from multilateral organizations, at least between 2003 and 2010. The particular performance of Brazilian cities in the scope of Mercosul, especially the border municipalities and the Consultative Forum of States and Municipalities (FCCR), should be mentioned.

As in other countries, the twinning of cities continues to be important for structuring internationalization strategies in Brazilian cities. The first twinning of Brazilian cities took place between Rio de Janeiro and Istanbul in 1965. Of the cities surveyed by the CNM, all except Itu in São Paulo had sister cities, with 157 cities involved, mainly with Portugal (22), China (15), Japan (14), USA (12) and Italy (11). The main agenda for this form of bilateral cooperation continues to be the promotion of peace and fraternity among peoples. In addition, technical cooperation and cultural exchanges remain essential.

Even though the volume of financial resources circulating in the international cooperation of cities is small, especially compared to the inter-country volume, these associations provide Brazilian cities with important benefits related to the technical and financial tools that complement the local resources and abilities.<sup>44</sup>

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44. Regarding these partnerships, the reports of the National Program for Rehabilitation of Central Urban Areas of the Ministry of Cities can be consulted, as well as two publications of the Program (Balbim, 2008; Brasil, 2005). The case of the second publication already reveals the importance of these partnerships, since it is the result of an agreement between the Council of Public Works and Transport of the Junta de Andalucia (Spain) and the Ministry of Cities of Brazil, dealing with the decentralized actions of the Rehabilitation Program of Central Urban Areas, carried out by the Department of Urban Programs of the Ministry of Cities.



As in other countries, in Brazil, the internationalization of a city ultimately aims to strengthen agendas from which the correlation of the forces of the cities with regional and national governments prevent or hinder their progress. After all, international level recognition of local governments and politicians responsible for those projects can change the correlation of the strength of further political disputes.<sup>45</sup>

## 10 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The territory of each city is central to the global strategies of production and accumulation. The urban land, in the last instance, begins to be a part of the inputs of global capital as a commodity. The corporate urban space of cities is then regulated, standardized, no longer only by citizens, but above all, by the international interests coordinated by large corporations, which emanates an “organization solidarity”. City networks are, in part, the vectors of this global rationality.

In this sense, international programs, plans, cooperation and agreements involving cities multiply in an environment of intense competition for investments and recognition of capacities and good practices. Ultimately, the internationalization of cities creates the stability necessary, a single ideal urban regulatory space, for new forms of accumulation to take place.

The commoditization of urban land seems to be the leading institute for these new forms of accumulation. To that end, the urban environment and landscape are transformed, ensuring its adequacy to the precepts of a global reason, which would include overcoming the image of the industrial city, the working classes, and the values that in the city are associated with the disorder, danger, and poverty.

Therefore, new urban spaces arise in response to a global order, introduced in various forms and instruments of internationalization of cities. That guarantees the technical and financial mechanisms to mobilize these spaces. The urban requalification, the gentrification process, and the megaprojects are some of the mechanisms of this logic.

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45. “Increasing the technical capacity of managers, the creative potential resulting from city meetings in thematic networks and seminars, awards and the international recognition of successful policies are some of the tangible benefits of international cooperation. This is not to mention the ability to introduce agendas into the international environment, or to put pressure on national governments” (Godoy, 2013).

The competition between cities points to a moment of aggressive policies in search of new markets that will probably result in the destruction of the city based on organic solidarity. That will result in an even more functional city emerging from the “organizational solidarity”, a city that is exogenous, global, and that does not result from the quotidian interaction in the space, but that produces cities’ daily life in its favor.

On the other hand, cities concentrate most of the world’s population, most of them benefiting very partially or precariously from the urbanity and wealth produced by this global reason. However, they also experience suffering from the daily consequences of climate change, deepening social inequality, increasing poverty and violence, and the side effects of geopolitical positions of the Nation States and large corporations, especially migrations and terrorism.

Cities are also the place of crises, opportunities, and innovations that emerge from everyday life. This other city, based on a local order, on the organic and territorial solidarity, also participate in the deepening of the internationalization of cities, especially with the multiplication of its networks and the structuring of new fields of power, which seek a greater autonomy of the cities to participate in global agendas, particularly in regards to environmental, urban, human rights and technological innovations.

City diplomacy is called upon to contribute to the definition of a new global order in a complex field of forces also formed by transnational corporations, national states, multilateral agencies, NGOs, and, most importantly, city networks directed by citizens.

Therefore, it is necessary to advance understanding this complex phenomenon, seeking to elaborate the theoretical and methodological instruments for its practice, surpassing visions exclusively state-centric, ensuring city diplomacy has the adequate and necessary autonomy to negotiate in the global scenario.

A thorough understanding of the state of the art of international city networks, i.e., their geopolitical cartography, is essential for cities to recognize themselves in this scenario and exercise their power strategies more clearly. In the same way, this information is crucial for social movements of all kinds and for citizenship, which, after all, constitutes the ultimate resistance to exogenous reasons and the first production line of a future shared by individuals, peoples, cities, and nations.

The internationalization of cities is a process that will multiply and deepen rapidly in the coming years due to the existence of the necessary means to do so and the increasing interests (corporate, humanitarian and environmental) in the regulation of the use of territory, of the daily life and the human scale of processes, mainly aiming market's increase and control.

Despite having an enormous potential for expansion, the scenario of the internationalization of cities in Brazil does not seem to be a relieving prospect. From a conjunctural perspective, international time relations now existing were mainly constituted in a political moment with the left-wing in office and the country's perspective to participate in the world geopolitics powerfully. Both situations have changed radically in recent years.

On the other hand, from a structural perspective, the role of Brazilian cities from the periphery of capital is to be a consumer of the world, much more than a producer. That is also how public managers have placed themselves on the international scene. Other cities, including from countries with similar developmental stages, have sought to insert themselves by valuing local strategies to produce global solutions.

Paradoxically, facing organizational solidarity, which seeks to smooth any type of roughness, cities, and peoples' resistance seems to derive from the innovation and the particularities produced by the daily life of each place.

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