global
POLICY

International City Cooperation in the Fight Against Covid-19: Behind the Scenes Security Providers

Anna Rudakowska and Craig Simon

Tamkang University, Taiwan and University of Nottingham, Ningbo China

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of society and nearly every unit of government. Much discussion has occurred regarding how to best protect and equip front-line and essential workers, but what about front-line and essential governments? Arguably the most important governments in pandemic response are city governments. Although most international debate surrounding governmental and societal prevention and response to the pandemic has centered around the nation-state or national leaders, this paper takes a different direction. Instead we focus on pandemic initiatives that have mostly occurred 'behind the scenes.' Cities, without the general public's realization, have been at the forefront of international cooperation in the fight against Covid-19. This paper focuses on US, Chinese, and Taiwanese cities in order to shine light on the phenomenon of city diplomacy and offers policy recommendations to various stakeholders in city diplomacy, including local authorities, international organizations, academia, and journalists.

Policy Recommendations

- Even though cities in certain national political systems are viewed only as an arm of the state apparatus that implement centrally-devised policies on the local level, very often the problems and tasks they face are of international nature and as such, necessitate responses with international consideration. Therefore, in order to solve global challenges, cities should invest into the recruitment and education of the staff able to deal with international matters or even develop a separate department responsible for dealing with 'foreign affairs'.

- Cities need to be better integrated into the international community. Because cities have shown that they can develop innovative, nimble, and efficient solutions to international problems, their problem-solving capacity needs to be further recognized. Although there have been noble efforts in the last few years with the creation of the Global Parliament of Mayors and the U20, along with higher profile, higher participant level, global summits like UN Habitat's World Urban Forum, the power of cities is still generally outside the mainstream decision-making processes of the state based international system.

- As long as the central governments may have different priorities than the cities located within their purview (i.e. achieving nation-wide political goals rather than finding practical solutions to local problems), cities should look for and improve existing international partners outside national governments. Moreover, cities should not limit themselves to partnerships with foreign counterparts but also learn from the other international actors, including the central governments around the world.

- In the era of internet communication, knowledge sharing is not only a privilege of the wealthiest cities, which have resources to invest in more formal diplomatic tools and officials. Medium and small size local authorities can also benefit from information sharing and reporting that is now available and distributed via online networks and communication channels. Moreover, this type of online exchange can become an important first step for long term development cooperation in more complex issue areas.

- International relations scholars and the media need to pay more attention to the international activities of cities. Without increased awareness within academic and journalistic communities, the general public will not be aware of the potential impact that cities (and by extension people) have on solving global borderless challenges.

The Traditional Division of Power in Security Area between the Central and Local Governments

Cities' international endeavours are frequently described as focused on practical action and solutions in comparison to national governments which are perceived as driven by security concerns and self-preservation. In other words, at first glance, cities are only concerned with low politics and states deal with high politics. Recent literature recognizes the international impact of cities and claims that the local governments are more efficient that their national counterparts and very often local governments are able to get things done, while states do not deliver (Hachigian and Pipa, 2020). For example, some have argued that cities, in opposition to the national governments, are predisposed to provide nimbler responses 'to certain global challenges such as climate change or pandemics' (The World Economic Forum, 2019). At the same time, as the world continues to urbanize at a rapid pace, cities are further poised to be front and center in the solution-seeking debates of future global challenges.

The goal of this essay is to continue the debate about this traditional division of roles between the state and local governments through the lens of a global pandemic. Cities, besides 'getting things done' at the local level, are indispensable players in the area of international security, which commonly has traditionally been regarded as reserved for states. Yet, while decisions and actions of governments on the international stage are in the spotlight, the decisions of cities are usually unnoticed by the general public. Moreover, this study confirms that cities' international actions are more pragmatic, less political, quite innovative and in consequence,

more efficient. Nevertheless, cities may also engage in politically motivated diplomatic struggles, but these cases are rare. As an example, we will refer to the response of cities to Covid-19 with particular focus on the US, Chinese and Taiwanese local governments.

Local Governments' Role in Provision of Security

The protection of citizens from international threats is one of the basic roles performed by the state. The basic social contract concludes that citizens relinquish some freedom in exchange for security during emergency situations, the relevant example being the spread of pandemics. Concurrently, city governments are arguably more responsible for most of the issues related to citizens' basic human security when it comes to access to water, sanitation, transportation, waste management, provision of housing, settlement of immigrants, etc., which contribute not only to city security, but also to national security. Moreover, cities possess capacity and resources (municipal policy) as well as prerogatives (closure of public spaces and disinfection of transit systems) that are related to the management and implementation of the policies devised on the national level (OECD, 2020a). In fact, as it is often touted, cities are the level of government closest to the people. Not without reason, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sees regions and municipalities as the crucial partners for the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies designed to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (OECD, 2020b). The organization now has a 'Champion Mayors' program designed for municipalities to share their best practices concerning equality of opportunities, better healthcare and

education. The OECD has also been developing and promoting a publicly accessible tool to track municipal and regional progress in the local implementation of the SDGs. The financial power of cities that originates from their increased control of vast economic resources as a result of more investment and development with urban jurisdictions will possibly even grow in the changing global economy, as more and more capital is becoming embedded in the urban areas, which in turn, would allow mayors for a more active diplomatic strategy.

When it comes to response to epidemics, even if the central government decides nationwide preventive measures and nationwide economic stimulus packages, ultimately it is the responsibility of the cities to implement the restrictions, manage the situation on a daily basis and play the major leadership role in moving towards the 'new normal'. To paraphrase the words of former Deputy Mayor of London, Nicky Gavron, speaking before The World Cities Leadership Climate Change Summit about the role of the cities in tackling climate change, to capture the cities' crucial role in the time of pandemic crisis situation: Leadership from national governments is crucial in tackling pandemics, but when it comes to practical action on the ground cities are centre stage.[i] In a recent report, the OECD notes cities' short and medium term responses to Covid-19, based on the examples collected from over 40 cities. The report discerned six areas of municipal work, including: 1) implementation of social distancing and confinement (limiting gatherings, closing cultural facilities, schools and universities, cancelling or postponing mass events); 2) support of new workplace practices and commuting patterns (encouraging flexible working time, telework, testing at the workplace, reorganising and disinfecting

public transport facilities); 3) introduction of measures for vulnerable groups, including homeless, migrants, refugees, elderly, poor and low wage workers and women; 4) continuation of local service delivery (water and waste) and public procurement to meet Covid related increased safety and sanitation needs; 5) support to business and economic recovery (making projections of crisis economic impact on cities and citizens, implementing measures to support business, such as provision of loans, subsidies, fiscal exemptions, tax breaks, etc.); 6) communication with the public to inform, reassure and increase awareness (OECD, 2020a). Yet, the OECD report does not inform how cities have utilized their international cooperation to fulfill these tasks, and we turn to the answer to this question in the following.

National Bickering, Subnational Action

The response of the central and local governments in the US and Europe left the general impression that the Covid-19 took them by surprise. The responses on both levels were very often chaotic, even changing from day to day (ICOMOS-China, 2020). Notably, when the virus had already been confirmed in China and started spreading to other countries, European national governments did not instruct their citizens whether or not to wear masks. Germany, the Federal Ministry of Health on its website questioned the usefulness of wearing surgical masks (Matthay, Aldrich and Gotts, 2020, p. 435) while on 15th April, Chancellor Angela Merkel officially recommended wearing masks in public transport and while shopping (The local, 2020) and finally, wearing masks became mandatory in Germany on 27th April (Pleitgen and Schmidt, 2020). In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the guidelines on its website did 'not

recommend' to wear a face mask, but on 3rd April it recommended to wear a cloth mask in public areas, not mentioning President Trump's 'mixed messages' on the issue (Bennett, 2020). Most recently, President Trump's decision not to wear a mask while touring a Ford factory in Michigan has caused the state Attorney General to consider legal action because the state's executive orders regarding the mask issue were not enforced (Stimson, 2020). He did eventually wear a mask and encouraged people to wear them as it is the 'patriotic' thing to do. This is yet another polarizing event that has aroused further debate about the necessity of mask wearing and only continues to make cooperation throughout the country more difficult. In many ways, in this, a consequentialist US election year, wearing or not wearing a mask has become a political statement, regardless of the fabric, design, pattern, or words customly written and outwardly portrayed. In effect, there was a great deal of confusion among various communities concerning the usefulness of masks. There have even been cases where individuals who decided to wear masks were ridiculed.

This patchwork of policies in the US is in direct opposition to certain Asian governments, such as Korean or Taiwanese, who experienced SARS 2003 and have done their homework on the responses to pandemic in the future. In contrast, Western government decision-makers were thoroughly unprepared for such an emergency. All facets of a smooth, effective response - personnel, procedures and equipment – were lacking. Politicians at the highest level, seemed to be more concerned about political gains and self-interest rather than practical solutions on the ground to the spread of the virus, as the US-China tensions about virus origins demonstrated (Walcott, 2020, p. 6). Still, it very quickly

became evident that local governments provided the nimbler responses than their national governments. Successful city responses can be attributed to their implementation powers and the formal and informal channels of communication, which connect cities within existing well-known networks like C40, Metropolis, UCLG, as well as the local stakeholders outside of them.

As Covid-19 sporadically but inevitably arose in cities around the world, their governments shared practices and learned from each other. Vittoria Beria - director for International Affairs at the City of Milan stated: 'I'm helping out trying to find information from the cities that went into management of the pandemic before we did. Of course, it goes both ways in that we do receive information and support and knowledge and pass it onto the ones that are coming after us. We had the misfortune of being the first European city very hard hit by the crisis and so that we can now pass on information and knowledge that is very quickly developed, because this is a very complicated phenomenon to manage and the learning curve is very steep and useful for people to know what they and foresee in terms of the various phases of the pandemic' (Pipa, Beria and Hachigian, 2020). Cities, in order to respond to the virus, leveraged the existing or constructed new channels of communication. For example, C40's new Economic Recovery Task Force, created to advance post-Covid economic recovery, hosts meetings online in order to discuss and share notable examples of cities coming together within the existing city networks to share experiences and ideas about working towards a 'new normal' (C40 cities, 2020). Moreover, decision makers on the local level did not limit themselves to the official ways of political exchange, but took advantage of the most accessible and common

channels of communication, such as web pages, chat and instant messaging applications, such as WhatsApp and conferencing platforms, such as Zoom, which is being used as a favorite platform for many municipal practitioners. The transnational municipal cooperative initiatives derived from existing networks as well as from individual cities. An example of the leveraging of existing networks is the formation of the 'Mayors Act Now Campaign' on the website of the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM) and the Virtual Parliament created to share the local initiatives in response to Covid 19 and to keep the mayors connected (Global Parliament of Mayors, 2020). An example of the creation of newer international city networks is the Seoul city government's website *Cities against Covid-19* (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2020) and Eurocities with *Live updates Covid 19 from Eurocities*, which reacted the fastest to share their experience with the international community (Eurocities, 2020). Another, quite informal way of dealing with the crisis, at least, as far as the foreign affairs standards are concerned, was initiated by the city of Los Angeles, which created a WhatsApp group for cities to connect and share information (Pipa, Beria and Hachigian, pp. 8-9). Besides sharing information, good practices, experience, and advice on how to deal with Covid-19, cities also have been cooperating with each other in issues like medical equipment procurement, donation of masks, or fundraising for relief packages. Another type of initiative worth mentioning was the letter to the European Union (EU) institutions asking 'for no austerity as a way out of Covid-19 crisis,' signed by the mayors of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Paris and Milan (Global Parliament of Majors, 2020). Here, cities came together in order to realize their common goals. Similar initiatives were carried out by the C40 Cities Global Mayors Covid-19 Recovery

Task Force, who expressed objection to the austerity measures in the main principles of recovery, stating in point 8: 'We commit to using our collective voices and individual actions to ensure that national governments support both cities and the investments needed in cities, to deliver and economic recover that is healthy, equitable and sustainable.' (C40 Cities, 2020). Moreover, while national governments are still grappling with stopping the crisis, cities are more far-sighted as epitomized by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)'s recent live sharing sessions which utilized the hashtag, #BeyondTheOutbreak (UCLG, 2020). Rather than simply 'reopening', cities are sharing knowledge and ideas about how to renovate existing infrastructure and policies (OECD, 2020, pp. 52-54). Another city-led initiative full of promise has been spearheaded by the Seoul City Government's 'Cities Against Covid-19 (CAC) Global Summit.' At this summit's June 2, Mayoral Meeting, the late Seoul Mayor Park Won-Soon proposed the creation of a new formal international city network tentatively named 'Cities Alliance Against Pandemic (CAAP)' (Kim, 2020). If devised properly, this network could greatly improve cohesive responses to future diseases. While nations are still looking backwards to the origins of the virus, undoubtedly still an important question, what is needed more, is looking forwards.

Therefore, it could be said that , in response to Covid-19, cities defended their perceived status as efficient actors, who are focused on implementing practical policies and achieving their goals. We claim that it was possible for them to act 'nimbler' than states mainly for two reasons. First, thanks to the multiple networks of connection, cities were able to quickly share information, experience and advice. Second, the communication between the cities was so

efficient as their networks were very often straightforward and informal.

This brings us to two more reflections: Firstly, cities have been very quick to learn from each other. But how did they learn from the other international actors? If cities' own governments failed on such issues as mask distribution, municipalities hopefully should have learned from the actions of other more effective governments. For example, the Taiwan government utilized a very effective 'Masks Distribution Program'. Holding prior experience from the 2003 SARS outbreak, as soon as Covid-19 was discovered, the government in Taiwan provided clear guidelines concerning policies on wearing masks in public areas. At the same time, in order to respond to the surging demand for masks, the government promptly built additional production lines, and designed a masks distribution system in order to ensure every citizen and permanent resident was sure to get his/her share for a relatively low price (Y. Huang, 2020). The lesson here is that cities should follow the footsteps not only of their municipal counterparts and peers, but also from quality policies and programs at all levels.

The second question is, why are the relations between the cities informal/casual? The characterisation of the contacts between the local governments aforementioned comments of Maria Vittoria Beria of Milan City, should hopefully provide us with some clues. Ms. Beria claimed that they prefer cooperation over competition due to the *similar responsibilities, duties, and needs' of the cities'* (Pipa, Beria and Hachigian, 2020). One can take this claim further by arguing that cities are able to cooperate thanks to their 'integrative power', manifesting itself in creation of 'networks of trust', which enable groups

to work together toward common goals, while such level of trust is not possible to attain on the national level (Nye, 2011). Trust in government has been one of the recurring issues regarding the relationship between the government and people throughout the pandemic. Although people may not trust their governments, fortunately cities trust one another and are therefore able to learn from one another.

Trust is perhaps at the heart of the difficulty in stymying the virus' spread and trust will be required even more in the future. This will not be the last pandemic. This will not be the last global challenge of the century. 'Can city diplomacy help salvage the multilateral system?' (Hachigian and Pipa, 2020) Can trust between cities move towards constructing a more predictable and stable world order? To further explore these questions, let's look at the relations of US, Chinese and Taiwan cities during the most critical time of response to Covid-19, the first months of 2020. Particular attention is given to China, the US and Taiwan because the diplomatic relations of these particular cities constitute the topic of research for both authors and at the same time, the specific relationship in the triangle between these actors, very often leads to tensions on the state level, which is not always the case for subnational relations. For example, China discourages and condemns any contacts between high ranking US officials and their Taiwanese counterparts. However, relations between the mayors of Taiwan and US cities generally exist without any greater Chinese opposition. According to a bilateral factsheet from the US Department of State, there are currently 148 sister cities between the US and Taiwan which from the point of view of the State Department are "connecting our two societies on a local level" (US Department of State, 2018). Moreover,

we can say that the level of trust between Beijing and Washington as well as the level of trust between Beijing and Taipei is very low and therefore distrust prevails. Despite the complex relationship between the national governments of the US, China and Taiwan, and inaction of these governments with respect to certain issues, their cities in response to Covid-19 were able to actively participate in international donations of equipment, joined the same cities' networks in an effort to fight the virus and side by side participated in information sharing. Additionally, the cities of US, Taiwan and China, although differ with respect to their powers concerning foreign affairs,[ii] when it comes to their international reaction to Covid-19, they took advantage of the same channels of communication, joined the same networks and responded in a very similar manner. And even if direct communication did not occur, city government officials likely reviewed various international city network knowledge platforms.

China, USA, Taiwan in response to Covid-19: cooperation or conflict?

US-China-Taiwan relations in the era of Covid-19 replicate what has been said about the main characteristic discerning the responses on the national level from those on the local, i.e. while the former focus on politics, the latter are more pragmatic and trusting. Despite the signing of the Phase 1 Trade Deal in January 2020, an important first step towards some minor improvement in bilateral relations, Covid-19 emerged and has contributed to the even further souring of Sino-US relations. While President Trump continues to lambast China and World Health Organization (WHO) for what he perceives as their role in the US currently having the world's highest Covid-19 death count - as of 20 July 2020; there are over 150,000 deaths

which has prompted called by John Hopkins University for a total reset of responses at all levels of government (Almasy, Steve, et al, 2020), China is responding aggressively, so aggressively, that it has been even called 'wolf warrior diplomacy' (Wong, 2020). These relations are made even more complicated by Taiwan's search for allies that would support its participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) and forceful Chinese opposition to any kind of Taipei's involvement (Huang, 2020).[iii] The continued withdrawal of US international leadership has most recently epitomized by Trump Administration's move to withdraw funding permanently for WHO as well as an announcement to withdraw from WHO membership entirely (although there is currently an international legal debate as to whether or not the President can actually unilaterally withdraw) (LeBlanc, 2020). Moreover, the ongoing wrangle between China and the US about the origin of Covid-19 and the question as to whether or not China and WHO responded adequately to the epidemics, along with Taiwan's attempts to participate in WHA has shown continued political struggle. Whereas, the relations between the cities of China, USA and Taiwan seem to be uninterrupted and their mayors continue to develop their international relations as 'usual', as far as it is possible during the epidemics.

As for material contributions between cities, donations of medical supplies are being given by Chinese cities to their partners abroad, including cities in the US, South Korea, Japan, Iran, and Europe (Solarczyk, 2020; China Daily, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). Flows have gone both ways, and a few US cities were raising money and passing resolutions of solidarity with their Chinese partners. Cities of Taiwan are also involved in so-called 'mask diplomacy' - a recently coined term that has arisen during the

pandemic (Chen, 2020). We are not able to assess whether Chinese cities simply fulfilled the central government's instructions or these actions were independent, but more clearly, in the case of the donations made by Taiwanese cities, they were independent initiatives, which did not follow any centrally directed strategy by President Tsai Ing-Wen (Interviewee 1 Taipei, 27 March 2020; Interviewee 1 Taichung, 5 April 2020).[iv] Suao Township sent them to Ishigaki City in Japan; Yilan City To Rockville in Maryland, USA; New Taipei City to Cincinnati, just to mention a few examples (You, 2020; WKRC, 2020).

Similarly, the cities in the United States were free to make choices concerning their international cooperation in response to Covid-19. When US cities donate medical equipment, organize or encourage donations of funds for partner cities abroad, or pass resolutions condemning hate speech, these are all independent initiatives of local politicians or activists and can cause condemnation from members of the federal government. On the point relating to hate speech, a relevant example is when the city council of San Antonio declared that Covid-19 is a public health issue, not a racial, religious or ethnic one, and the deliberate use of terms such as 'Chinese virus' or 'Kung Fu virus' to describe Covid-19 only encourages hate crimes and incidents against Asians and further spreads misinformation at a time when communities should be working together to get through this crisis' (Brnger, 2020). This local resolution drew ire from Texas Senator Ted Cruz (Gstalter, 2020). Nevertheless, the mayor of San Antonio, Ron Nirenburg, continues to be a firm supporter of San Antonio's international activities and the activities of the Sister Cities International Organization, of which he is the current chairman (USC CPD, 2020).

In contrast to what one may expect, mask diplomacy at the level of cities has not emerged as another overt conflict by which Taiwan, China, and the West are pitted against each other. What's more, there was only one case, where Covid-19 constituted a seed of disagreement between the cities in a manner similar as it happened on the national level - in April 2020, an Australian city Wagga Wagga cut ties with its Chinese partner city, in large part for what members of the local council perceived as China's fault for the global pandemic (Smee, 2020).

Besides 'mask diplomacy', Chinese, US and Taiwanese cities, despite the disagreements and even enmity between their central governments, were involved in the same initiatives created by the cities in response to pandemics. In the 'CityNet Webinar I - Consultation Series on Rapid Responses for Covid-19', organized by the CityNet - the Asia Pacific network of local stakeholders, in which both Taiwanese (Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung, Kaohsiung) and Chinese cities (Nanchang, Shanghai, Nanjing and Wuhan) participate, Taipei and Taoyuan city governments presented epidemic outbreak and response (CityNet, 2020). Taiwanese as well as Chinese cities responded to the call to share their strategies, policies, plans and other initiatives designed to deal with Covid-19 as well as other emergencies, which came from Metropolis- the global network of cities and metropolitan areas, in which Taiwanese, Chinese and US cities are members (Cities for Global Health, 2020). In the above mentioned sessions 'Live Learning Experience #BeyondTheOutbreak' organized by the UCLG, the US - New York City (UCLG, 2020) as well as Chinese - Guangzhou (Tang, 2020), Xi'an (UCLG, 2020) and Shenzhen (UCLG, 2020) cities presented briefings. Lastly, at CAC discussion on quarantine measures, Zachary Rubin, the

Chief of Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County, and Xuejun An, Deputy-Director, Beijing Municipal Health Commission, both spoke (CAC2020, 2020).

Saying this, the cooperation between cities in response to Covid-19 was not without controversies either. Firstly, the bilateral exchange and contacts flourished only between the cities on the two out of the three arms of the triangle, i.e. between the US and Taiwan and US and China, not between Taiwan and China. Therefore, the controversial relations on the central level in the cross-Strait contacts were replicated at the local level. Secondly, the cities' international cooperation against Covid-19 was not free from the limits set by the central government. The state still matters and cities still are compelled to work within the confines of the legal and political space in which they find themselves. In less decentralized cases, cities must follow all the official guidelines and regulations from the national government. For example, Taichung City in Taiwan was approached by multiple partner cities from abroad to provide masks. However, the city could not respond to this request due to the central government management of the masks' distribution. As the center controlled the supplies, the local could not distribute the materials as it saw fit. Nevertheless, Taichung was still able to provide other badly needed equipment for the partner cities, such as sanitized water and offered advice related to control and prevention (Interviewee 2 Taichung, 5 April 2020).

Finally, one question that needs exploring is whether an inclusive amount of cities around the world were involved or were initiatives only for the club of 'global cities'? Urban areas in developing countries with large slum populations and worse health systems faced greater threats and potentiality to spread Covid-19. At the same time, these types of urban areas are the ones, which are possibly being left out of the conversation. However, the inclusion of certain non-global cities, like Colombo, Hanoi, and Ulaanbaatar at the CAC Mayoral Meeting show promise for more cooperation between global and non-global cities. Notably, U.S., Chinese and Taiwanese cities' international involvement have contributed to the sharing of experiences and responses with other municipalities, including developing ones. Yet, in the post-Covid environment, when we need innovative approaches more than ever, these cities, with relatively big budgets and vast network of partners around the world can do more - they should consider to include international development cooperation in their programs to mitigate the impact of such pandemics in the future. But the overall picture needs a more thorough exploration in future studies.

Growing Role of Municipalities in National Security and Global Governance?

Although not often discussed, cities also contribute a great deal to security issues and therefore, the traditional division of roles between the state and local governments, where the security is in hands of the central government, presents an outdated discourse. In the globalized world, when global problems, such as pandemics or environmental degradation necessitate global responses, collaboration is the only way out (Allison and Li, 2020). Cities seem to understand this point and use their international networks and easy-going and informal methods as channels for communication in situations of emergency, such as Covid-19. While the US and other national governments lack cooperative efforts or adopt unilateral

approaches and/or play a blaming game, municipalities are increasingly receiving support of IGOs, and are pioneering their own new forms of multilateralism. They agree on a plethora of issues on which their central governments do not necessarily reach consensus, such as that austerity should not be the way to recover from this crisis or that sustainable development and environmental protection are crucial means to avoid such pandemics in the future and necessary paths for tomorrow, and 'join together with the network of cities' to solve the issues upon which the national governments 'are very slow to act and take care of humanity needs in our [cities'] hands directly' (Eric Garcetti, 2020). Moving forward, nation-states and international organizations should consider further empowering cities to cooperate and share best practices amongst municipal peers and in order to lead effective responses to current and future global problems.

Anna Rudakowska is Associate Professor at Department of Global Politics and Economy, Tamkang University, Taiwan and Non-Resident Senior Associate Researcher at Department of Political Science, Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She is interested in the role of identity, perception, values, and norms in international relations with particular attention given to their work in the relations between the European Union, China and Taiwan. Her current research focuses on Taiwan cities' diplomacy and she created the FB Group 'City Diplomacy' in order to help connect academics and practitioners who are interested in this topic.

Craig Simon is a PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

His research focuses on the position of cities within the international political arena. Craig's research places special emphasis on the external relations of US and Chinese cities. His research also encompasses ideas on transnationalism and city diplomacy.

References

Almasy, S., et al. *As US Passes 150,000 Coronavirus Deaths, Experts at Johns Hopkins Call for Reset in National Response.* CNN, [online] 29 July. Available from: www.cnn.com/2020/07/29/health/us-coronavirus-wednesday/index.html [Accessed 30 June 2020].

Allison, G. and Li, C. (2020) 'In War Against Coronavirus: Is China Foe-or Friend?', *The National Interest* [online], 27 March. Available from:

https://nationalinterest.org/feature/war-against-coronavirus-china-foe%E2%80%94or-friend-138387 [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Bennett, B. (2020) 'President Trump Says Americans Should Cover Their Mouths in Public — But He Won't', *Time* [online], 3 April. Available from: https://time.com/5815615/trump-coronavirus-mixed-messaging/ [Accessed 13 June 2020].

Brnger, G. (2020) 'San Antonio City Council Passes "COVID-19 Anti-Hate Resolution"', *KSAT* [online], 8 May. Available from: www.ksat.com/news/local/2020/05/08/san-antonio-city-council-passes-covid-19-anti-hate-resolution/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

C40 Cities (2020) Global Mayors Launch COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task

Force [online]. Available from: https://www.c40.org/press_releases/global-mayors-covid-19-recovery-task-force [Accessed 14 June 2020].

CAC2020 (2020) Cities Against COVID-19 Global Summit: Discussion on Quarantine Measures [online], 2 June. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez7oR-Rlo4M&t=3650s [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Chen, C.C. (2006) Concerning the Local Law: The Division of Power and Responsibilities between the Central and Local Governments in the Area of Autonomy (in Chinese), Taiwan Legal Network [online]. Available from: http://lawtw.com/article.php?template=article_content&area=free_browse&parent_path=,1,1648,&job_id=109629&article_category_id=1170&article_id=48971 [Accessed 24 July 2020].

Chen, K. (2020) 'Yilan City donates medical supplies to sister city', *Taiwan News* [online], 24 April. Available from:

https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3922311 [Accessed 14 June 2020].

China Daily (2020a) 'Los Angeles Mayor Appreciates Chinese Cities' Help in Fighting COVID-19', *China Daily* [online], 27 Mar. Available from: http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/27/WS5e7dcbfca310128217282942.html [Accessed 14 June 2020].

China Daily (2020b) 'China's Shenzhen to Donate 270,000 Masks to Sister Cities', *China Daily* [online], 19 Mar. Available from: www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/19/WS5e72d8c6a3101282172805c2.html [Accessed 14 June 2020].

China Daily (2020c) 'Beijing to donate medical supplies to Seoul, Tehran, Tokyo', *China Daily* [online], 13 Mar. Available from: www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/13/WS5e6aecc4a31012821727ed50.html [Accessed 14 June 2020].

CityNet (2020) CityNet Webinar I — Consultation Series on rapid responses for COVID-19 [online], 13 April. Available from: https://citynet-ap.org/citynet-webinar-i-consultation-series-on-rapid-responses-for-covid-19/ [Accessed 1 June 2020].

Cities for Global Health (2020) Cities for global health [online]. Available from:https://www.citiesforglobalhealth.org/ [Accessed 1 June 2020].

Eurocities (2020) Recovery – Live updates COVID-19 [online]. Available from: https://covidnews.eurocities.eu/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Fred, P. and Nadine, S. (2020) 'Germans face fines of up to $5,000 as wearing a face mask becomes mandatory', *CNN* [online], 27 April. Available from: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/27/europe/germany-face-mask-mandatory-grm-intl/index.html [Accessed: 13 June 2020].

Garcetti, E. (2020) 'How City Mayors are Taking Action on Climate Change?' TED Ideas Worth Spreading, [online]. Available from: https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_garcetti_how_city_mayors_are_taking_action_on_climate_change?fbclid=IwAR16YMutSGXiQYVJ2tqZDmW8rUg1giiIaDgxa2lHAU8GfFv0ezFcX5Z7hEs [Accessed: 24 July 2020].

Global Parliament of Mayors (2020) *'Corona Crisis: Mayors Act Now'* [online]. Available

from: https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Global Parliament of Mayors (2020) 'Joint letter Mayors Amsterdam, Barcelona, Paris and Milan to Ask for No Austerity as a Way out of Covid-19 Crisis' [online]. Available from : https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/joint-letter-mayors-amsterdam-barcelona-paris-and-milan-to-ask-for-no-austerity-as-way-out-of-covid-19-crisis/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Gstalter, M. (2020) 'Cruz Rebukes San Antonio City Council for Denouncing "Chinese Virus" as Hate Speech', *TheHill* [online], 9 May. Available from:

https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/496953-cruz-rebukes-san-antonio-city-council-for-denouncing-chinese-virus-as-hate [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Hachigian, N.and Pipa, A.F. (2020) 'Can Cities Fix a Post-Pandemic World Order?' *Foreign Policy* [online], 5 May. Available from: https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/05/cities-post-pandemic-world-order-multilateralism/ [Accessed 20 May 2020].

Huang, T.T. (2020) 'Australia voices support for Taiwan's participation in WHA', *Taiwan News* [online], 14 May. Available from: www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3933950 [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Huang, Y. (2020) 'The Mask Distribution Program in Taiwan', *Ampheros Media* [oline], 20 May. Available from: https://ampheros.com/the-mask-distribution-program-in-taiwan/ [Accessed 27 July 2020].

ICOMOS-China (International Council on Monuments and Site) (2020) 'Urban Function-Spatial Responses for the Epidemic - A Concise Manual on Urban Emergency Management' [online], Urban Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development Research Team, School of Architecture, Southeast University (SEU), China; SEU Key Laboratory of Urban and Architectural Heritage Conservation, Ministry of Education, China, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Resource Management, 18 March. Available from: https://www.ovpm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/covid-19icomos-china.pdf [Accessed 20 May 2020].

Interviewee 1 Taipei (2020) Taipei City Government, Interview by Anna Rudakowska, 27 March.

Interviewee 1 Taichung (2020) Taichung City Government, Interview by Anna Rudakowska, 5 April.

Interviewee 2 Taichung (2020) Taichung City Government, Interview by Anna Rudakowska, 5 April.

Nye, J.S. (2011) *The future of Power*, NewYork: PublicAffairs.

Kim, S.J. (2020) 'Seoul Mayor Proposes "Cities Alliance Against Pandemic" ', *Koreatimes* [online], 3 June, Available from: www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/06/281_290629.html [Accessed 14 June 2020].

LeBlanc, P. (2020) 'Trump threatens to permanently pull funding from WHO and "reconsider" US membership', *CNN* [online], 19 May. Available from:

https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/18/politics/trump-world-health-organization-coronavirus/index.html [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Lindemann, B.A. (2014) *Cross-Strait Relations and International*

Organizations, Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

Michael, A.M. , J Matthew, A. and Jeffrey, E.G. (2020) 'Rational use of face masks in the COVID-19 pandemic' [online], *The Lancet*, 8(6). Available from: https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2213-2600%2820%2930134-X [Accessed 13 June 2020].

Mierzejewski, D. (2018) Channelling Foreign Policy Through Local Activities in China: City of Guangzhou Case Study, in Pietrasiak, M., Bywalec, G., Kamiński, T., Mierzejewski D. and Słowikowski, M. (Eds) *Paradiplomacy in Asia*, pp. 93-135. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324454898_Paradiplomacy_in_Asia_Case_studies_of_China_India_and_Russia [Accessed 14 June 2020].

OECD (2020a) Tackling Coronavirus (Covid-19), Contributing to a Global Effort, Cities Policy Responses [online]. Available from: http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/cities-policy-responses-fd1053ff/ [Accessed 16 May 2020].

OECD (2020b) Measuring the Distance to the SDGs in Regions and Cities [online]. Available from: https://www.oecd-local-sdgs.org/about.html [Accessed 1 June 2020].

OECD (2020c) Tackling Coronavirus (Covid-19): Contributing to a Global Effort, Cities Policy Responses, Annex 1.B. Selected Examples of Organisations' Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis in the Cities [online], version updated on 13 May 2020, pp. 52-54, Available from: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=126_126769-yen45847kf&title=Coronavirus-COVID-19-Cities-Policy-Responses [Accessed 27 May 2020].

Pipa, A.F, Beria, M.V. and Hachigian, A.N. (2020) The Brookings Institutions Webinar: Global City Cooperation in the response to Covid-19, 23 April. Available from: https://www.brookings.edu/events/webinar-global-city-cooperation-in-the-response-to-covid-19/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Positive.News (2006) 'Our Aim is Simple: to change the World' [online], 31 August. Available from: https://www.positive.news/archive/our-aim-is-simple-to-change-the-world/ [Accessed 12 June 2020].

Seoul Metropolitan Government (2020) Cities Against Covid19 [online]. Available from: http://english.seoul.go.kr/covid/forum/. [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Smee, B. (2020) 'Wagga Wagga severs ties with Chinese sister city over "death and destruction" from coronavirus', *The Guardian* [online], 15 April. Available from:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/15/wagga-wagga-severs-ties-with-chinese-sister-city-over-death-and-destruction-from-coronavirus [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Solarczyk, A. (2020) 'Chinese Sister City sending masks to Fort Wayne' [online], 8 April. Available from: https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/chinese-sister-city-sending-masks-to-fort-wayne/ [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Stimson, B. (2020) 'Trump blasts Michigan AG for "viciously threatening" Ford for letting him tour plant without mask', *Fox News* [online], 22 May. Available from:

www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-blasts-michigan-ag-for-viciously-threatening-ford-for-letting-him-tour-plant-without-mask [Accessed 13 June 2020].

Taipei City Government, Secretariat (2015) Duties, International Affairs Division [online]. Available from: https://english.sec.gov.taipei/News_Content.aspx?n=87EA24FD6EAB3D08&sms=75252D2E3FF8E9E3&s=37973754AC34E194 [Accessed 24 July 2020].

Tang, X.P. (2020) Containment Efforts against Covid-19 in Guangzhou [online]. Available from: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/guangzhou.pdf [Accessed 1 June 2020].

Tavares, R. (2016) *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Players*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Local (2020) 'Explained: Do You Have to Wear a Face Mask in Germany?' [online], 16 April. Available from: https://www.thelocal.de/20200416/what-does-germanys-recommendation-to-wear-a-face-mask-mean [Accessed: 13 June 2020].

The World Economic Forum (2019) The Growing Role of Cities in International Diplomacy [online], 24 November. Available from: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/the-growing-role-of-cities-in-international-diplomacy/ [Accessed 12 June 2020].

United Cities and Local Governments (2020) Live Learning Experience #BeyondTheOutbreak [online]. Available from: https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/live-learning-experience-beyondtheoutbreak [Accessed: 27 May 2020].

United Cities and Local Governments (2020) Live Learning Experience Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak [online], 8 April. Available from: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ppt_shenzhen.pdf [Accessed 1 June 2020].

United Cities and Local Governments (2020) Live Learning Experience Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak [online], 15 April. Available from: https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/live-learning-experience-beyondtheoutbreak [Accessed 1 June 2020].

U.S. Department of State (2018) U.S. Relations with Taiwan, Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs [online], 31 August. Available from: https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-taiwan/ [Accessed 23 July 2020].

USC Center on Public Diplomacy (2020) Q&A With CPD: Ron Nirenberg [online], 19 May. Available from: www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/story/qa-cpd-ron-nirenberg [Accessed 14 June 2020].

Walcott, J. (2020) 'US-China tensions cloud virus origins', *Time*, 195(18), pp. 6.

WKRC (2020) 'Cincinnati's sister city in Taiwan sending big shipment of PPE', *Local 12* [online], 20 April. Available from: https://local12.com/news/local/cincinnati-sister-city-sending-big-shipment-of-ppe [Accessed 22 May 2020].

Wong, A. (2018) 'More than peripheral: How provinces influence China's foreign policy', *The China Quarterly*, *235*, pp.735-757.

Wong, C. (2020) 'Too soon, too loud: Chinese foreign policy advisers tell "Wolf Warrior" diplomats to tone it down', *South China Morning Post* [online], 15 May. Available from: https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3084274/too-soon-too-loud-

chinese-foreign-policy-advisers-tell-wolf [Accessed 14 June 2020].

You, F.N. (2020) '日本石垣市2新冠確診姊妹市蘇澳鎮捐3200片口罩送暖' (Diagnosis of two new Covid cases in Ishigaki City, Japan. Sister City Suao Township sends warmth with 3200 masks), *Ettoday* [online], 20 April. Available from: https://www.ettoday.net/news/20200420/1695705.htm [Accessed 22 May 2020].

Zheng, Y. (2006) 'De Facto Federalism And Dynamics of Central-local Relations in China' [online], Discussion Paper, no. 8, China Policy Institute, The University of Nottingham, June. Available from:

https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/iaps/documents/cpi/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-8-de-facto-federalism.pdf [Accessed 4 June 2020].

Zhao, K. (2015) 'The motivation behind China's public diplomacy', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 8(2), pp. 167-196.

Notes:

[i] The original statement by Nicky Gavron: 'Leadership from national governments is crucial in tackling climate change, but when it comes to practical action on the ground cities are centre stage' (Positive.News, 2006).

[ii] The political agency of cities in the United States has a long history that opposes intervention by the central or foreign powers. The siege of Boston during the American Revolutionary War was in part a reflection of the desire of Bostonians to govern their city themselves. A decentralized democratic self-rule is one of the foundations of the US political system. One of the more often cited provisions of the US Constitution that justifies or at least demonstrates the vagaries of the legal framework in which US cities operate is Article I, section 10 which states, "no State shall, without the Consent of Congress … enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power." This section list discusses the competencies of states of which cities are under the control. However, the 10th amendment to the US Constitution states, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." It is this amendment that can justify the international activities of cities because it is the people that have the power to decide on the issue not enumerated by the constitution. Tavares (2016) discusses the international powers of state governments within the US by stating, "Presently, US states sign a huge volume of international business and cooperation formal and informal agreements, but there has been little federal–state conflict over such agreement-making activity as Congress does not wish to be inundated with time-consuming approval requests. Even though an unlawful act on this domain may be overruled by the Congress, experience has shown that international paradiplomatic affairs reflect a legitimate interest of local communities and that the state's authorities would hardly overstep their legal competencies. But the same arguments can be made for cities. With thousands of municipalities across the country, there is no way Congress can approve every single memorandum of understanding or city council resolution that is related to city diplomacy. Moreover, by signing non-binding agreements, cities are generally acting legally. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties says nothing about local resolutions that possess a flavor of international intrigue. Questions relating to the division of powers between the central and local governments in China regarding international affairs have been vastly discussed in the literature (Mierzejewski, 2018; Wong, 2018; Zhao, 2015; Zheng, 2006). The opinions about the autonomy of the PRC's local governments in foreign affairs range from the statements that in China's unitary system, diplomacy is reserved only for the central government to the claims about 'de facto federalism' (Zheng 2006), suggesting that 'Each ministry and government agency conducts public diplomacy with specific goals in mind, rather than according to strategic motivations from a national perspective' (Zhao 2015). In contrast to the vast literature about the Chinese cities' powers in foreign affairs, the Taiwanese cities are under researched in this respect. The research points only to the fact that in accordance with the articles of the constitution on the division of powers between the central and local governments and particularly the Articles 107 and 111, the international and cross-Strait matters are the responsibility of the central government, while the matters of local nature fail within the responsibility of the local governments. The city governments of Taiwan's Special Municipalities, which are at the same time the island's six biggest cities, in order to deal with the international matters, such as for example: 'liaising with global industry and business leaders,' 'participating in international activities and organizations to heighten Taipei's international profile and making meaningful contributions in the international community' (Taipei City Government, Secretariat, 2015), etc., all have established departments responsible for the conduct of international affairs, which are the responsibility and under the direct supervision of the city, not the central government. At the same time, Chen (2006) states, that while the handling of urban diplomacy belongs to the duties of the local autonomous organizations, the relevant central institutions, such as the Mainland Affairs Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in accordance with law, have the right to revise or even approve the conduct of relations across the Straits or internationally by the urban diplomats.

[iii] The Republic of China (ROC) was expelled from the WHO in 1972, after the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaced it as a sole representative of China at the United Nations (UN). Starting from 1997, when Taiwan launched a campaign to rejoin the WHO/WHA, it has been actively making efforts to become organization's observer or member. According to the public opinion polls, majority of Taiwanese support these efforts and every exposure to acute health risks, such as SARS in 2003 or Covid-19 nowadays, reinforces Taipei's determination in international fight for re-inclusion in the global health system (B.A. Lindemann 2014).

iv Interviews are anonymized.