JANUS.NET
e-journal of International Relations

FROM CITY-STATES TO GLOBAL CITIES:
THE ROLE OF CITIES IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Global governance has altered institutional architecture and the systemic and institutional conditions under which power is exercised, as well as the characteristics of the political system, the form of government, and the system of intermediation of interests. However, although it has surpassed the State's dimension of power, it created new interstate dimensions and new relations between powers, particularly at the level of cities. Cities have helped to solve common problems in a more efficient and effective way by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, sharing of solutions and resources, and building capacity to implement and monitor progress in order to achieve collectively agreed goals, in a bottom-up approach. Cities have the virtue of securing the most direct social and political contract between societies and the notion of authority. This study, therefore, aims to reflect on this emerging, less hierarchical and rigid governance and address complex global challenges such as climate and demographic change; increasing crime rates; disruptive technology; and pressures on resources, infrastructure and energy. As a global/local interface, cities can ensure effective solutions to current challenges and act together in areas where the global agenda has stalled.

How to cite this article

Vaz, Domingos Martins; Reis, Liliana (2017). "From city-states to global cities: the role of cities in global governance". *JANUS.NET e-journal of International Relations*, Vol. 8, Nº. 2, November 2017-April 2018. Consulted [online] on the date of last consultation, Handle

FROM CITY-STATES TO GLOBAL CITIES:
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1. Introduction

The proportion of the global population living in cities has grown rapidly. Massive concentrations of people exist now on a scale that has hitherto been deemed inconceivable, leading to the formation of worldwide urban systems with rapid transformation effects on societies and on the functioning of the economy and global politics. As a consequence of these transformations, the current challenges faced by cities bring us, in certain situations, closer to the idea of "city-states",[2] from the perspective of the concentration of diverse activities and innovation, as well as of action in networks and their relevance in understanding the phenomenon of global governance.

The article analyses and questions the role of cities and the decentralisation of power at the level of national and international governance, which is a consequence of the globalisation process. The holistic approach presented contributes to improving the analysis of current global governance processes, emphasising the role of cities as actors capable of generating responses to global risks and threats (terrorism, climate change, crime, among others), considering that many of them have an urban genesis. Thus, the first section assesses the role of cities in the process of globalisation, the city as a centre of power and the globalisation as a multidimensional phenomenon. The second section deals with the formation of city networks, their role and the issue of governance, particularly multilevel governance. In the third section, the main challenges and problems faced by cities are discussed, putting into perspective their role as subnational actors for the enrichment and maturation of the process of global governance. We conclude that city networks are a new form of action composed of subnational actors, previously excluded from the international scenario, and they represent a new world reality with

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[2] The term has an English origin, dating from the nineteenth century, and covers the cities of the Greco-Roman world and medieval Italy. Although this conception of State refers to the pre-classic civilizations of the Fertile Crescent (from Phoenicia to Mesopotamia, especially in Sumer), it reached its maximum splendour between the fifth and fourth century B.C. (the period of Classical Greece) as a political system constituted by an independent city, which has sovereignty over a surrounding territory and functions as a political, economic and cultural centre, with emphasis on Athens, Sparta and Troia. The need to conqueror and survive are still the explanatory hypotheses for the emergence of this form of political organisation in the Greek cities scattered throughout the Mediterranean (City-state, Infopédia, 2003-2017). Today, globalisation, the decentralisation of States' power and the local need for global solutions have changed the context dominated by national States. The foreign policy of many cities is no longer limited to simple commercial promotion or twinning ceremonies. Many cities and regions consider themselves actors within the context of networks with common interests and, as sub-national actors, they develop paradiplomatic actions in the international scenario.

JANUS.NET, e-journal of International Relations
e-ISSN: 1647-7251
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their own structures and innovative ways of equating and interacting in the international system.

2. Cities and Globalisation

2.1 The city as a centre of power

Cities have always been centres of power throughout history. They are originated from a process of sedentarisation and their political existence is inseparable from their material existence. They are centres of power and administration, where myths and symbols are produced, ceremonial places; it is where the temples are located, where the gods are able to guarantee the dominion of the territory (Rolnik, 1994).[3] Since ancient times, from the Sumerians to the Greeks, the role of cities as crucial points of interests and decisions connected communities of citizens. They assumed and equated themselves with State functions. The Greek cities of Sparta and Athens, as political units, played a prominent role in "international" relations in terms of defence, with the formation of alliances between city-states, which subsequently fought against each other in the Peloponnesian War.

The city is also one of the first social groupings open "to all strangers",[4] unlike the village or the clan, causing evident dynamic effects. Cities allowed, and still do, meeting, sharing and innovation. Hence, even today they are identified with "civilization" and cosmopolitanism. Not only are many different individuals concentrated in the cities, but also individuals from very different places. This exchange (of ideas and information) allows the cities to be the centre of change (Mumford, 1989). They respond to all kinds of yearnings, combine economy and knowledge, security and power.

Innumerable examples of transformations originated in the cities, as meeting places, warehouses, stops for "many and wild people". These are found throughout history, such as Florence or Lisbon during the Renaissance;[5] or Birmingham with the Industrial Revolution. Cities are the engines of the production of knowledge and progress as well as agents of protagonism.

One can even admit that, in the current situation of weakening or fragility of traditional political decision-making centres, such as States, other actors claim leading roles, such as international organisations, transnational corporations, as well as cities. The current international panorama favours the role of cities and even considers the possibility of using a Hanseatic type of system. Due to the absence of a unifying political power, in the

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[3] Today, do contemporary metropolises still have these characteristics? Don't their shiny glass and metal towers represent the decision centres of the destiny of States, countries and the world? Are not their advertising hoardings, shop windows and TV screens the temples of new gods? It seems to us that in these non-centralised metropoles urban power has never been so centralised. The instantaneousness of the computer and the video image support control systems organised in heavily centralised and hierarchical structures exist, without this necessarily implying space concentration.

[4] For Mumford (1989:133), the city is one of the first social groups open "to all strangers", unlike the village or clan, causing dynamic effects as a source of innovation and technical progress, in contrast to the countryside.

[5] It was shown as a global, multi-cultural and mixed city and as a sixteenth-century commercial centre in the exhibition "The Global City", at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (National Museum of Ancient Art). "This city had a world inside itself, which could be seen by walking through Rua Nova dos Mercadores, which was the centre of commerce. There are not many European capitals of the Renaissance where we could buy macaws, monkeys and civets, where there were thimbles from Ceylon [now Sri Lanka] to sell, where the variety of Chinese and Japanese wares were as large as here," says Gschwend, who shares with the historian Kate Lowe the curation of the exhibition *Jornal Púbico*, February 23, 2017.

late Middle Ages, the management of the vast area of the Baltic Sea was ensured by an alliance of cities (Lubeck, Bergen, Hamburg, Riga . . .) and by a league of merchants, the Hanseatic League (Moita, 2017).

An analogy with this experience can be established, albeit not artificially, given the growing global governance of multinational corporations and large metropolises. But this is not only explained by the recent emergence of authentic city-states, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, neither by the expansion of megacities, which are classified as global cities in different continents (Sassen, 1991, 2002, 2005, 2007). In fact, local powers, especially those of large urban concentrations, are today affirming themselves as actors in their own international life and developing an active role that interferes with the current processes of globalisation; the national and international research that has been produced in International Relations on the centrality of cities in the current international system shows this (Curto et al., 2014; Tavares, 2016; Santos, 2017).

The intensity of contemporary urbanisation has contributed inexorably to this. According to the United States' National Intelligence Council, 65 million people join the urban world population every year, which is equivalent to seven cities the size of Chicago or five cities the size of London. This dynamic is particularly strong in China and India (National Intelligence Council, 2012). Africa, especially Nigeria, has also made a great contribution. UN reports (2014; 2017) on global urbanisation clearly show the strength of the flow of migrants. From 1990 to 2014, the number of cities with more than 10 million people increased from 10 to 28, with the majority being in Asia. Most of the world's population lives in urban areas. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be an additional 2.5 billion people living in cities and the urban population will grow by 66%.[6]

More than two thirds of the European population live in urban areas and this share continues to grow.[7] The development of cities will determine the future economic, social and territorial development of the European Union.[8] This is reflected in the objectives of the strategy of Europe 2020, which calls for a real partnership with European urban areas, cities and towns for its implementation and continues to strengthen public support for sustainable urban policies across the EU.

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[6] In 1950, less than one-third (30%) of the world's population lived in urban spaces (Harvey, 2004).

[7] In the "Europe of 28", in 2017, 74.5% of the population live in urban areas and this share continues to grow, albeit in a much more moderate way. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the urban population steadily grew. Whilst in 1950 the rural European population was still larger than the urban, currently more than two thirds of the European population live in urban areas (Eurostat, 2016), although occupying only 17% of the total European territory (PBL, 2016). In this sense, the United Nations has stressed that in 2050 Europe will have an urban population of around 80% (UN, 2014). The development of cities will determine the future economic, social and territorial development of the European Union.

[8] In several official documents since 2004 the EU has emphasised that cities play a crucial role as engines of the economy, as places of connectivity, creativity and innovation, and as service centres for their surroundings. Among the most relevant on the role of European cities are:
  – The Urban Acquis of 2004, which recognises "the importance of cities' contribution to Europe's economic, social and environmental success";
  – The 2005 Bristol Agreement, which underlines the importance of sustainable communities for Europe's greatest development and identifies the characteristics of these sustainable communities;
  – The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, which refers to the importance of the greater integrated use of urban development for political approaches;
  – The 2007 Territorial Agenda, which points out the issues faced by cities and urban areas in the context of territorial cohesion;
  – The 2008 Marseille Declaration, which calls for the application of the Leipzig Charter's principles through the development of a European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities;
  – The 2010 Toledo Declaration, which recognises the role that European urban areas and cities can play in achieving the goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth pursued in the Europe 2020 strategy.

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Large cities have emerged as a strategic place for numerous types of operations in different thematic areas, since "multiple globalisation processes assume concrete localised forms, electronic networks intersect with thick environments (whether financial centres or activist meetings" and "new subjectivities arise from the encounters of people from all around the world" (Sassen, 2012). The link between these cities and globalisation becomes evident. Authors such as Dollfus (1998) advance the idea of creating a "world megapolitan archipelago" composed by groups of cities that contribute to guiding the world, which is one of the strongest symbols of globalisation combined with the concentration of innovation and management activities. This is because new processes of urbanisation materialise in the recent trend of the appropriation of cities by global business interests, redefining different territories and their relationship with agents that have transforming power.

In many geographical regions, power is shifting from central governments to regional and local governments. That is why the foreign policy of many cities is no longer limited to mere commercial promotion or twinning. The American economist Stephen J. Kobrin states that there are already many cities and regions that have begun to feel freer from central governments and that "a modern version of the medieval city-state order is emerging".[9]

In historical terms, it can be said that the most stable territory in traditional societies was, in general, fragmentary and excluding in relation to other outside cultures, but deeply integrating and holistic for the inner social group. In contrast, in the contemporary world, globalisation is a vital necessity for the reproduction of the system, resulting in a form of territorial organisation, increasingly shaped by mobility, flows and networks. An important trend is the one that considers the network as an element of territory or one of the forms of territory.

2.2 Multidimensional globalisation

Globalisation can be synthesised by the idea that many local realities are part of broader phenomena, with global reach and significance. There is a complex of social relations transcending national territories to the extent that what happens in a given place is influenced by events from a great distance (Giddens, 2001). The global mode of operation involves very disparate domains, which is why one speaks of dimensions of globalisation, in the plural, as Appadurai (1996) does by suggesting that the current world is characterised by the existence of five "fluid landscapes", formed by flows of individuals, media, technology, capital and ideology. In this way, we can say that the main characteristic of this new arrangement of the social is to establish new coordinates in the relations of space-time, producing multiple flows and new forms of organising human life.

Understanding this new reality requires theory that understands the phenomenon of globalisation according to an approach that goes beyond a strictly economic view and that privileges, above all, the political and cultural dimensions of contemporary changes. There is certainly a difference between an orientation that favours structures and a reality where mobility, circulation and insertion into multiple belongings are central. What characterises the contemporary world are all kinds of flows that recreate it and give it

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[9]   Stephen J. Kobrin quoted in A. J. Teixeira (2015: 11).

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vitality permanently. Traditional theory seems to have subdued "rhizomatic" proliferation and*, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1980), preferred stable referents: territories, organisations, institutions, the State. The entire planet is currently crossed by unceasing flows of various kinds – financial, commerce, information and populations – and this new situation challenges the observer's point of view and encourages its reordering.[10]

An alternative to economic and geopolitical theories of globalisation that intervenes the geocultural dimension, in the perspective developed by Appadurai (1996: 2004), has gained in interest. This author highlights the crisis of the traditional nation-state and shows the impact of the circulation of individuals and information in the contemporary world. The means of social (mass) communication and (mass) migrations have, according to Appadurai (1996), had a decisive effect on the "imagination", which is, for him, the constitutive characteristic of modern subjectivity – that is the "sentiment of identity" of each one. When analysing globalisation, the author attributes a central place to "imagination", according to Durkheim's notion of collective representation. We can point out here a parallel with Anderson's (1991) reflection on the formation of the nation-state and the "imagined community" as its main component. Anderson shows the role of new communication techniques linked to the invention of the press and its impact on the structuring of centralised nation-states that concentrate the exercise of sovereignty and the monopoly of legitimate violence in a territory with well-defined borders. With Appadurai's (1996) "imagination", the idea of invention prevails in a context where the media plays a determining role, not only disseminating but also shaping cultural processes and making them more flexible. The link between the definition of sovereign spaces, the ways of information circulation and their diffusion through a device of appropriate technologies allows for the recontextualisation of the nation-state and re-equating the issue of sovereignty.

Therefore, globalisation has two very precise effects. First, in the geopolitical framework, the nation-state as a stable reference had a very strong importance, with members of society as its privileged base. Discourse on the nation dichotomously opposed similarity and difference, belonging and exclusion, which was a characteristic of modern culture (Anderson, 1991). It was a context where the processes of identity induction took place within a permanent dynamic of opposition between "us" and "them", between the inside and outside. However, migrations, on the one hand, and media flows, on the other, have shaken this once dominant framework. The conditions of late modernity have posed difficulties to binary thinking, producing in the nation-states scenarios that Anderson

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[10] The connection of the networked world increased information processing capacity, which is essential to the development of economic and social activity and became available in real time. It can be mentioned, from the growing international movement of travellers with economic and cultural impact: i) travel and tourism; ii) globalised business administration; iii) study in other countries; iv) participation in scientific events and congresses; v) flows of international migrants. As an example, we can say that international trade represents, in most countries, a large percentage of GDP, and its economic, social and political importance has grown in the last decades. Industrial and transportation development, globalisation, the emergence of multinational companies and outsourcing had a great impact on the growth of this trade. The volume of world trade had a twentyfold increase since 1950. This increase in manufactured goods exceeds the growth of their production rate by three times. The EU-28 accounts for around 15% of world trade in goods. Between 2006 and 2016, the evolution of the EU-28's goods exports by main trading partner varied considerably. Among the major trading partners, the highest growth rate was registered in exports to China, which nearly tripled; whilst exports to South Korea almost doubled. Exports to Norway and Japan grew more slowly and were 26% and 30% higher in 2016 in comparison to 2006; whilst there was no change in exports to Russia in the same period (Eurostat, 2017).

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(1991) defined as the "crisis of the hyphen", being difficult today for many States to consider themselves unitary nations.

Secondly, in a world marked by the "power of the imagination", Appadurai (1996) does not ignore the relation between the local and the global. To a certain extent, the author reacts to the pessimistic view that globalisation means, in the long term, the disappearance of the cultural specificities of the territorialised world of the past. The "end of territories" would be associated with the crisis that destabilises States whose sovereignties are called into question by the proliferation of economic flows and the constitution of new transnational groups. Thus, globalisation marks, to a large extent, the decline of a civilization where transmission and tradition played a preponderant role and where the subject defined itself by a locality, region and nation.

The proliferation of deterritorialised groups, the diversity of diasporas observed everywhere, has the effect of creating new translocal solidarities (Appadurai, 1996). Identity constructions that go beyond the national framework have emerged. State policies contribute in their own way to maintaining this situation and producing migratory movements. Appadurai (1996) insists on the great heterogeneity of these forms of circulation. Refugees, specialised workers in international enterprises and organisations, tourists and students represent very different types of migrants and constitute a type of delocalised "transnation" in their own way.

Considering these conditions, will we be entering the post-national era? New forms of organisation playing a leading political role in very diverse areas – such as the environment, economy and humanitarian relations – are fluid and flexible in contrast to the rigid structures of traditional state apparatus. The affirmation of cities in global governance and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) being developed, often in connection with crisis situations, represent a new political model more directly anchored in civil society, which clearly transcend national boundaries. Transnationality, which increasingly characterises the globalised world, imposes new networked solidarities and more flexible modes of action. Thus, emerging post-national sovereignties can be interpreted and the very idea of patriotism does not lose all its value as it makes sense to speak of a "mobile, plural and contextual" patriotism. This is another notion that confronts the classical conceptions of the nation-state that do not admit that there can be mobile forms of sovereignty and a new type of commitment, where civic and political action make the national framework implode.[11] In addition, the formation of transnational institutional groups – such as the paradigmatic case of the European Union – has confronted the traditional framework of sovereignty.

3. City Networks and Governance

3.1 City networks

As globalisation progresses and urbanisation intensifies, the globalised economy structures the space of flows theorised by Castells (2005),[12] which is embodied in a

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[11] The protests that mobilise organisations that bring about causes as diverse as those that are developed around environmental, inequalities or hegemonic counter-globalisation issues show this action.

[12] This author proposes that there is a new spatial form characteristic of the social practices that dominate and shape the networked society: the space of flows. For Castells, flows are the intentional, repetitive and programmable sequences of interchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political and symbolic structures of society. In this network, no place exists

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spatial organisation around control and command centres. This corresponds to Sassen's (2012) idea of a "global city", in which some world cities dominate international finance and most of international consulting and business services. The world economy is administrated from these cities, where policies and international strategies come from, and whose main challenge is to expand the dynamics of growth in all sectors of activity. It is a process that affects not only the world cities that are at the top of the hierarchy but all the cities that are part of the global network.

It is interesting, therefore, to analyse the performance of city networks and their increasing importance in understanding the phenomenon of global governance, which composes a new reality in the international scenario. This process has developed since the 1980s and 1990s, given the changes that have led to the reappearance and expansion of paradiplomacy in the world (Curto et al., 2014; Neves, 2010; Moita, 2017; Santos, 2017).[13] Since the intensification of globalisation, the network-state has emerged – that is the State that shares authority over a network – after end of the Cold War and the subsequent fall of the bipolar system (Borja & Castells, 1997; Lecours, 2008; Araújo, 2011). In this context, cities and regions have assumed new economic and political roles in the international scenario due to the decline of a hierarchy that had the State as the sole holder of power and decentralisation, which gives subnational agents autonomy to act as global actors (Araújo, 2011; Curto et al., 2014; Tavares, 2016; Santos, 2017).[14]

City networks date back to antiquity, from Greek city-states to Spanish America, which had been organised as a large network of cities. Being organised in networks implies that cities have autonomy and have to cooperate with other municipalities horizontally, allowing access to information and resources in order to be more direct and less bureaucratic. Based on Araújo (2011), the main characteristics of these networks can be systematised:

- There is no hierarchy in the relationship between its members;

- They have global reach;

- Agility – both for decision-making and the exchange of information;

- The multiplicity of actors;

- The democratisation of knowledge through the inclusion of municipalities of various geographic, economic and social characteristics.

Networks are both a consequence and a cause of global governance as they contribute to its development. Governance is understood as a phenomenon that dispenses with the

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by itself, since positions are defined by flows. Consequently, the communication network is the fundamental spatial configuration: places do not disappear, but their logic and meaning are absorbed by the network.

[13] Based on Neves (2010) and Moita (2017), paradiplomacy is understood as the capacity of non-state actors to establish international cooperation agreements from their own interests, regardless of the State's actuation. This is an expanding process, due to the logic of economic globalisation, boosting competitiveness and given the dynamisation of processes of cultural internationalisation. This reality has led to the proliferation of international partnerships and the dissemination of various kinds of networks. Since the urbanisation process is intensifying, the role of cities should also be emphasised because they have increasingly affirmed themselves as important "nodes" of very diverse globalised networks, aiming to influence the international agenda, have an active voice along with multilateral organisations, and they are now key poles of internationalisation and relevant agents of new non-state "diplomacy", paradiplomacy.

[14] Resulting, especially, in the creation of associations of cities and local governments; the establishment of bilateral agreements and international technical cooperation programs between cities; the twinning of cities; trade missions; and international networks of cities (Araújo, 2011).

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government, since government implies activities supported by a formal authority with coercive powers, whilst in governance objectives are achieved not necessarily through formal authority but through common and shared goals by all those who are part of the system (Rosenau, 2000). Therefore, governance is more comprehensive than government and its objectives and ways of achieving them are longer lasting. Thus, city networks are examples of governance without government, as there is no central authority in this type of organisation and the relationship between its members is horizontal; its common objectives and symmetrical cooperation enable its existence.

City networks fall into the concept of governance in two different ways, although they may differ in their scope of action. First, horizontal cooperation, consensus-based decision-making, a lack of hierarchy among members, and therefore a central authority, demonstrate how governance functions as an organisation and a form of order. Global networks, such as United Cities and Local Governments, focus on broader issues in the international scenario, whilst regional networks, such as Mercocities, strive to find solutions to regional and local problems. These two examples also demonstrate the networks' intention and objectives to maintain horizontal cooperation and no hierarchies of any kind, whether political, economic or cultural.[15] On the other hand, the international development of city networks shows the existence of global governance as an international order. If the internal action of cities and their greater autonomy in the domestic context is the result of decentralising federal or national power, in networks, cities demand greater affirmation in order to influence the decisions of governments and the international organisations they lead.

3.2 Governance and multilevel governance

The expression of governance emerged from reflections conducted mainly by the World Bank since 1992, "with the objective of deepening the knowledge of the conditions that would guarantee an efficient State" (World Bank, 1992: 1). The introduction of the concept results from the inability of the term "government" or "governability" to capture new dynamics after the end of the bipolar period of the Cold War and States as the main actors in the international system. The concept of governance was thus intended to shift the focus of attention from State action to a broader view, involving not only a holistic approach to subnational, national and international public management, but also intersecting economic, political, social, environmental and cultural dimensions.

According to the document *Governance and Development* of the World Bank (1992: 3-5), the governance paradigm should include "patterns of articulation and cooperation between social and political actors and institutional arrangements that coordinate and regulate transactions within and across boundaries of the international system"; and "traditional mechanisms of aggregation and the articulation of interests, such as political parties and lobby groups, as well as informal social networks, hierarchies and

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[15] For example, according to the Mercocities Network's Bylaw, the decisions of the network council – formed by two cities from each country member of Mercosur and one city from each associated country, as well as the Board of Directors – should always be made by consensus. In the UCLG, even though decisions are made by simple majority, the number of representatives of each local government in the World Council and in the Executive Board is defined according to the population and the political engagement of its members. Moreover, it follows the principle that no part of the world should have more than a quarter of the total number of seats or more than twice the number of seats allocated to any other part of the world.

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associations of various kinds." Thus, the institutional format of the decision-making process should be open to the participation of all interested actors.

Keohane and Nye (1974: 41) used the term "transgovernmental" for the first time to describe interactions among "sub-units of governments" in response to the "greater complexity" of governance. Risse-Kappen (1995: 17) also defined transgovernmental networks as "sub-units of national governments acting independently of established policies". Slaughter (2004: 26) recognised the functions of information exchange and political coordination of cities through "a dense web of networks". This author would even defend a new world order based on the existence and functioning of transgovernmental networks, capable of allowing governments to benefit from the flexibility and decentralisation of non-state actors and, at the same time, strengthen the State as the main actor in the international system.

However, this decentralisation of governance to the supranational, but essentially the subnational level, has made it possible for cities to assume a central role not only in governance but also in the management and sharing of responsibilities in resolving States' problems from an endogenous and exogenous point of view. In fact, a number of authors (Curtis, 2016; Hershell & Newman, 2002) that consider cities as the closest units between the governed and rulers have emerged. Regarding international relations, cities have the potential to solve global challenges as many of them surpass the local level and are not restricted to the limits of city. As in The Hague Declaration during the launch of the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), cities have the right to "take action together, across borders, in domains where the global agenda has been stalled or thwarted" (2016: 2).

The institutionalisation of a city network provides not only a channel for cities facing similar challenges and a platform for sharing knowledge and resources, but also an opportunity to address and mitigate many challenges and problems the world has faced (Barber, 2013).

Nevertheless, according to traditional theories – in which the nation-state is seen as the central authority – subnational governments act under the (single) influence and direction of national governments.[16] In this way, the conceptualisation of governance would be mainly top down, deriving from the international to national level and then to the regional and local level, so that the role of local governments as relevant primary agents of global governance would be marginalised over time.

In contrast, there are a variety of methods to design public and international policies for multilevel governance. In this model of governance, a distinction is made between the State as an institution and the State as an executive, which pursues its own interests – which does not exactly mean "national interest". Moreover, the State as a main actor is now involved in a complex network of relations at the international level as well as at the level of domestic politics (Marks, 1996:26). The theory of multilevel governance considers all actors involved in the various stages of the decision-making process relevant. This is the rationalist component of this theory – all the people and groups involved in this policy will have as much or more influence over the current impact as

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[16] Realism and neo-realism, and liberalism and neoliberal-institutionalism are considered as traditional theories of International Relations.

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those who initiated or legislated this policy. In fact, who formulates it and who implements it may be or may not be the same actor.[17]

Thus, a premise underlying multilevel governance concerns the world turning inside out and outside in (Anderson, 1996: 135). With the hierarchical dilution or at least the reduction of the State's structures of authority and the very subversion of traditional State sovereignty, there are other subnational actors paradoxically retrieve State sovereignty – the local governments. In this sense, supranational institutions are more than just the sum of its constituent parts and subnational institutions are more than central government administration. Thus, the multilevel approach does not condemn States to death. With the hierarchical dilution or at least the reduction of the State's authority structures and the very subversion of its traditional hierarchical order, States seek their repositioning in the international system and better adaptation of internal governance through regional and local agents.

Under this conception of multilevel governance, the conception of "glocal" governance emerges, based on a vertical link between local citizens and global policies, which does not advocate the replacement of States by cities, but the privileged position of cities to link their citizens to policies (Robertson, 1995). Glocal governance, with municipal governments as major actors, serves as a vertical link and fills this gap.[18] For Robertson and White (2003: 14), "rather than speaking of an inevitable tension between the local and the global it might be possible to think of the two as not being opposites but rather as being different sides of the same coin", presenting "glocalisation" as the connection of the local with the global system.

4. Threats and Risks: Glocal Answers

Cities contribute both to the current threats and risks and to their solutions. This illogicality is observed in the characterisation of urban areas, often related to high concentrations of economic activity, employment and wealth, high rates of literacy among residents and the daily flow of passengers, which suggests that there is an abundance of opportunities in these innovation, distribution and consumption centres (Eurostat, 2017; United Nations, 2014). However, cities are also characterised by a series of social inequalities and it is common to find people who enjoy a comfortable life and live close to others facing considerable challenges, for example, in relation to housing, unemployment and crime. These polarised opportunities and challenges are often strongly contrasted, since the patterns of inequality in cities are generally more widespread than those observed in States as a whole. While the concentration of economic activity in cities can contribute to attracting a highly qualified workforce in pursuit of diverse opportunities, bringing together large numbers of people also leads to several negative externalities, including crime (Eurostat, 2016: 46; Zukin, 2010).[19]

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[17] This idea is related to a key element of multilevel governance: the eradication of the traditional distinction between domestic and foreign policies, that is between States' domestic and international plans, which emerges as methodologically indispensable in the theoretical framework of this model.

[18] With one of the main modern democratic theories, Robert Dahl (1956) argued that nation-states and state-based international organisations failed to meet the challenges they faced.

[19] In 2014, the proportion of people in the EU-28 living in areas with problems related to crime, violence or vandalism was considerably higher among urban residents (19.9%) than those living in suburbs (11.8%) or rural areas (7.3%). The inhabitants of EU-28 cities were, on average, 2.7 times more likely to live in an area with problems related to crime, violence or vandalism than those living in rural areas.

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Although cities generate growth and development, it is where the greatest threats are found, which can be called the "urban paradox". For example, even though cities lead to growth, they also have higher unemployment rates (Eurostat, 2016; Curtis, 2016). Globalisation has led to job losses – especially in the secondary sector – which increased due to the economic crisis. Many cities face a significant loss of inclusive power and cohesion and increased exclusion, segregation and polarisation.

Currently, threats to the international system and, particularly, to States are diffuse and interdependent. Indeed, in the most recent data of the World Economic Forum (2017), the following risks were pointed out:

– Geopolitical risks (failure of global and regional governance, State collapse, failure of national governance structures, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorist attacks, inter and intrastate conflicts);

– Societal risks (large-scale involuntary migration, food and water crises, profound social instability, spread of infectious diseases, failure of urban planning);

– Economic risks (energy price shock, illicit trade, unemployment, fiscal crises, deflation, failure of critical infrastructure, failure of financial mechanism and institutions);

– Environmental risks (natural disasters, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, extreme weather events, failure of climate-change mitigation and adaption, man-made environmental disasters);

– Technological risks (cyberattacks, adverse consequences of technological advances, breakdown of critical information infrastructure, data fraud and theft).

These broader and more diversified threats confront and go beyond the powers of the Westphalian State. On the one hand, they require global responses, given the globalised characteristics of threats and risks; and, on the other hand, requires an investigation that considers the responses from "inside" States, within a subnational sphere. In relation to the risks and threats listed by the World Economic Forum, several authors have converged on the possibility of cities to respond to global problems. Regarding geopolitical risks, some authors (Graham, 2004; Dickson, 2002) argue that only cities are able to respond to new international threats, since many of these risks are in cities themselves (unemployment, social exclusion, terrorist groups recruitment, prostitution, drug trafficking, organised crime...). It is also at the urban level that both knowledge of problems and responses to societal risks are found (Saunders, 2010; Zukin, 2010). With respect to environmental risks, several authors (Taedong, 2015; Betsill & Bulkeley, 2005) have insisted that climate change, although traditionally considered a global issue, has become an urgent local challenge. Cities are responsible for more than 70% of greenhouse gas emissions and 80% of energy consumption. With 90% located along the coast, cities face common climate threats, such as rising sea level and coastal storms. These problems justify the need for a "glocal" arrangement, with an overlap between local and global issues. As Rosenau (2000: 4) wrote, "What is domestic is also international and what is international is also domestic".

Thus, democratic global governance must move away from the national structure, bound to national sovereignty, and towards decentralised local authorities. As the ancient Athenian democracy and the "public sphere" of Habermas (1962) suggest, cities are the

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place where citizens can engage in the ongoing political process, influence policies that affect their lives and make the authorities to take the responsibility for them. Regarding the "glocal" governance, municipal governments are seen as the vertical link that enables citizens to participate in the formulation of global policies through local institutions and national authorities. With city diplomacy and "glocal" governance, international decision-making can also be more democratic.

5. Conclusion

In the history of mankind, such a strong acceleration of change has never been registered as that during the last century and, especially, over the last 50 years. We are in a world of cities, where globalisation has given a major boost to urbanisation. The comprehensive approach to the role of cities in global governance leads us to highlight the concepts of global governance and city networks, given their growing importance on the international agenda.

Governance refers to the means and processes that are used to produce effective results. It cannot be an isolated action of the civil society looking for greater spaces of participation and influence. On the contrary, the concept comprises the joint action of State and society in the search for results and solutions to common problems. It is undeniable that the emergence of non-state actors is central to the development of governance practice. The action of global cities consists of a new type of authority that has gradually become more important, assuming itself as a new form of organisation, which is more horizontal and has no central power and hierarchy among members.

City networks are a form of governance and today they take on new characteristics in paradiplomacy, although their creation is not a new phenomenon, as we have observed. Currently, they have been developed by the need of local governments to talk to each other in order to find solutions to the common problems they face. One of the main objectives of network organisation is to achieve better results than what the agents involved would if working separately, such as municipalities. By working in a network, they are better positioned to face situations involving international actors and to interact and exchange experiences with other members.

We conclude that city networks are a new form of action composed of subnational actors who have increasing power to solve many current international challenges in the international system.

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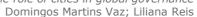
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