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Investigating the Global Relations of Small and Medium-Sized Cities**

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中小都市のグローバルな関係性を探る

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概要 (Abstract / Short Outline)

This research examines the global relations of cities in the state of New Mexico, USA. Surveys were administered to city hall officials to understand more about the global activity of their respective cities. This article focuses on three cities that have responded to this survey as of July 30, 2022. The global relations of Clovis, Santa Fe, and Los Alamos are discussed in detail. In addition to describing the global activities of these three locations in New Mexico, the article also reflects on methodological problems involved in studying small and medium-sized city diplomacy and discusses possible improvements.

本研究では、米国ニューメキシコ州の都市のグローバルな関係を調査する。各都市のグローバルな活動をより深く理解するために、市役所職員にアンケートを実施した。本稿では、2022年7月30日時点で、このアンケートに回答した3都市を取り上げ、クロヴィス、サンタフェ、ロスアラモスのグローバルな関係性について詳しく解説する。また、ニューメキシコ州のこれら3都市のグローバルな活動を説明するとともに、中小都市外交の研究に伴う方法論の問題点を振り返り、改善の可能性を論じる。

Keywords

City Diplomacy; City Networks; Sister Cities

1. Introduction

The study of city diplomacy is a relatively new subfield in the discipline of International Relations (IR) but one that has grown in the last ten years. The growth of this subfield has gone hand in hand with the expanding power of urban centers within a globalized world as well as the growing phenomenon of global city networks such as the C40 Climate Leadership Group, the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, Mayors for Peace, and Climate Mayors. These burgeoning forms of city global relations come on top of more established practices such as international

tourism, trade promotion, and sister city relationships. However, amongst the flurry of global activity, the role of medium-sized (100,000-500,000 people) and small cities (100,000 people and below) in global affairs has been mostly ignored.

This study attempts to rectify this gap in our understanding by examining cities in the state of New Mexico, USA. New Mexico offers an ideal proving ground for studies of the global relations of medium and small-sized cities. The largest city in the state is Albuquerque with a population of approximately 560,000 people. Only 23 cities have a population of over 10,000 people. In addition, New Mexico is not a state known for its global activity. For these reasons, New Mexico can serve as a “hard case” for the study of medium-sized and small-city global relations.

With these details in mind, the current study attempts to answer these questions:

1. Do small and medium-sized cities have enough global activity to warrant scholarly interest?
2. Do these activities revolve mainly around sister city relationships or are there other activities worth examining?
3. What methods are most useful for interrogating those relationships?

2. Literature Review

The study of city diplomacy is a growing subfield within the discipline of International Relations (IR). Prior studies have found that cities, especially large urban centers, are having a more substantial impact on the international stage through networks such as the C40 Climate Leadership Group, the Global Covenant for Mayors for Climate and Energy, the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, the Resilient Cities Network, Mayors for Peace, and Climate Mayors (Acuto, 2013; Amiri & Sevin, 2020; Marchetti, 2021; Van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007). Research has also found that many cities have staff members or even departments dedicated to international issues and that cities are becoming more strategic and purposeful in their approach to global policy (Acuto et al, 2016; Kosovac et al, 2020).

In this literature, there is a noticeable gap that is only now beginning to be explored. This gap is the global relations of medium-sized and small cities. One reason for this neglect may be that there simply is not enough activity to warrant scholarly research. A study by Acuto et al (2016) examining trends in sister city relationships found a clear relationship between the size of the city and the number of sister cities. In short, larger cities in both the UK and China had substantially more sister cities than smaller ones (Acuto et al, 2016, p. 13, 21).

However, recent articles suggest that further study is indeed warranted. A study by Miyazaki (2021) examined the antinuclear peace activism of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as Mayors for Peace, an organization that enrolls cities throughout the world as non-nuclear cities and engages in activities to boost awareness about the threat of nuclear weapons. Miyazaki’s study is

significant for the study of the global relations of medium and small cities because it includes the global activism of Nagasaki, which has a population of approximately 407,000, and shines a light on the activity of Mayors for Peace, an organization that includes many medium and small-sized cities.

In addition, the author discovered one intensive study of medium-sized city diplomacy. A case study by Clerc (2020) examines the global relations of Turku, Finland, a city of about 190,000. Clerc's intensive case study approach found that city global relations often defy attempts to theorize about them. City global relations may include commercial promotion, cultural exchanges, city branding, networking, and other semi-diplomatic activities (Van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007; Clerc, 2020), but attempts to theorize too broadly about these trends risk ignoring the historical contingency of city global relations (Clerc, 2020, p. 332). Clerc's findings suggest that a survey approach to medium and small-city global relations may not produce generalizable theories. Nevertheless, a survey approach with open-form questions may point to unique examples worthy of follow-up research. Most importantly for this study, the case of Turku serves as a positive example that there is often more going on in medium-sized and small cities than what is apparent at first sight.

3. Research Design

In order to learn more about city diplomacy in New Mexico, a short survey was administered using Google Forms. Several of the questions were taken from the survey constructed by Kosovac et al (2020) in their survey of 47 cities (all large global cities) on the topic of city diplomacy. However, the survey also included questions more relevant to medium-sized and small cities, such as their participation in sister city relationships and their affiliation with the Mayors for Peace organization. The survey was designed to take no more than 20 minutes and to serve as the basis for follow-up research.

The survey was distributed to cities with known sister city relationships and/or affiliation with Mayors for Peace. Nine cities met these criteria in total. For each of these cities, their respective city hall was called ahead of time and permission was asked to administer the survey by email. However, in several cases there was confusion as to which city hall official the survey should be sent to. After the survey was sent through email to an official, the researcher made at least two follow-up calls to check on the progress of the survey.

4. Survey Results

As of July 30, 2022, 3 out of the 9 cities had responded to surveys. The low response rate to

the surveys suggests that perhaps examples of small and medium-sized city global relations may be rare. However, it is also possible that the lack of dedicated international relations specialists or the distribution of these activities amongst various departments may make it difficult for them to report the extent of foreign relations. In the case of Albuquerque and Las Cruces, the two biggest cities in the state, it seems that the major obstacle is the workload of city hall staff. Officials at both city halls promised to look for a qualified respondent for a survey response but had not responded as of July 30, 2022.

The responses of the cities are summarized below.

Table 1: Basic Information about City Global Relations

*(Population Data was gathered from World Population Review (2022); Mayors for Peace affiliations were confirmed on the Mayors for Peace website; Sister city relations were confirmed on the respective city hall websites.)

City Name	Population	Global Relations: Specialized Staff or Department	Mayors for Peace Affiliation	Number of Sister City Relationships
Santa Fe	86,099	No	Yes (2005)	10
Clovis	37,488	No	No	1
Los Alamos	12,666	No	No	1

Though the sample size is quite small, this basic data confirms findings in previous works (Acuto et al, 2016; Marchetti, 2021) that cities with larger populations tend to be more active in global relations. This is not surprising given that bigger cities have larger budgets to draw from and are more attractive destinations for tourism and trade.

Table 2: Awareness of Mayors for Peace

City Name	Is your city a member of Mayors for Peace?	If your office is not a member of Mayors for Peace, please explain why to the best of your ability.
Santa Fe	Yes (2005)	
Clovis	No	Did not know there was a Mayors for Peace organization.
Los Alamos	No	Not aware of this program.

Each city was also asked about its relationship with the organization Mayors for Peace. This organization was chosen because there is no population restriction on membership. Thus, even small cities can join. For example, Taos, New Mexico, a city of approximately 6,000 people, is a member of the organization. Of the three respondent cities, only Santa Fe is a member of the organization. Representatives from both Clovis and Los Alamos responded that they were unaware of the organization. This suggests that small towns in New Mexico and elsewhere might join Mayors for Peace and other city networks if they were made aware of their activities and the benefits of joining.

Table 3: Sister City Relationships

City Name	Sister City Relations	City Hall's Role in Sister City Relationships
Santa Fe	Zhangjiajie, China Holguin, Cuba Sorrento, Italy Tsuyama, Japan San Miguel de Allende, México Parral, Mexico Incheon, South Korea Santa Fe de la Vega, Spain Bukhara, Uzbekistan Livingstone, Zambia	The city approves all sister city relationships and approves a group of citizens who constitute the sister city advisory board. Both Tourism Santa Fe and our Arts and Culture Department liaison with this committee.
Clovis	Kasama, Zambia	Involvement with Sister Cities program; attendance at conferences; communication with sister cities partners.
Los Alamos	Sarov, Russia	Several visits between the two cities have occurred over the years. Los Alamos County has hosted visitors from Sarov; and has sent Los Alamos County representatives to Sarov. No activity has occurred recently.

Sister city relationships are one of the most common and conspicuous forms of city diplomacy. However, there remain many unanswered questions regarding the level of activity of sister city relations, the types of activities being engaged in, and other nuances of these relationships. In many cities, a separate organization is established, either a committee or a non-profit, that handles the actual minutiae of these relationships. For example, both Las Cruces and Albuquerque have separate foundations that have dedicated staff and collect fees from members of the foundation. For Santa Fe, a committee is responsible for sister city relationships. In the case of Clovis, it appears that city hall manages the sister city relationship. With regards to Los Alamos, further inquiry into the sister city relationship is a sensitive matter given the ongoing conflict between

Russia and Ukraine, as well as the secretive nature of the national security research both countries conduct. However, it does seem that the relationship between the two cities had been strained even before the current Russia-Ukraine crisis (see Laskey, 2017, August 18). In each of these cases, further research could be conducted, including interviews with citizens directly knowledgeable of the specific sister city relationships.

Table 4: Other International Activities

City Name	What international programs (student exchanges, sister city relations, festivals, cultural exchange, etc.) is your city currently involved in, if any?
Santa Fe	International Folk Art Market; student exchanges (no involvement of city government); international visitations based on recognition as a global destination
Clovis	No other activities indicated
Los Alamos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Council County Chair traveled with New Mexico governor to UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in October 2021 *Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Smart Grid *Participated with the State of New Mexico, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization, and several of Japan's businesses to demonstrate smart grid technology and introduce more renewable energy on to the electric grid *Los Alamos-Japan Institute *Inclusive Community, a global non-profit think tank building communication bridges with partner educators, artists, scientists, social thinkers, atomic bomb survivors, holocaust survivors, historians, universities, national parks, museums and communities interested in civil dialogue and crucial conversations *Los Alamos County has participated with the Santa Fe Council on International Relations - an International Visitors Leadership Program on Renewable Energy (through the U.S. State Department) *Los Alamos County hosts the Jemez Mountain Trail Run which attracts participants from around the world.

This research was also interested in global activities outside of city networks and sister city relationships. These types of activities can be hard to discover because they are distributed throughout the various organizations of cities, for example, tourist organizations, museums, educational institutions, and citizen groups. In some cases, the role of city hall might be substantial; in other cases, these activities may occur with little knowledge of city officials.

As the answers demonstrate, global activities tend to reflect the various identities of the cities involved. In the case of Santa Fe, activities tend to reflect that city's identity as a city that fosters the art community. In the case of Los Alamos, the city is known for its historic role in atomic bomb research, national security-related research, and alternative energy and smart grid

technology. Thus, much of its global activity reflects issues of technological innovation, collaborative research, and reconciliation with atomic bomb survivors. As of this moment, all that is known about Clovis is that it has a sister city relationship.

5. Santa Fe, Clovis, and Los Alamos: Discussion, Analysis, and Follow-Up Research

Santa Fe, New Mexico (Population: 86,099)

Perhaps it is not surprising that Santa Fe has such extensive global activity. Not only does the city have the fourth largest population in the state, but it is also famous for its art community. For that reason, the International Folk Art Market seems like a creative extension of its local identity and tourist branding. One element of Santa Fe's city diplomacy that was not mentioned in the survey response, but was discovered later in follow-up research, is that Santa Fe is part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN), a network of 246 cities that encourages international cooperation in cultural and creative industries. In addition, the city's association with global activist networks like Mayors for Peace and Climate Mayors fits with Santa Fe's identity as a location for conscientious artists. Its ten sister city relationships are also quite substantial given that Las Cruces, New Mexico, a city with a slightly larger population (105,292), has only two, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, a city with a much larger population (563,165) also has ten sister city relationships. Santa Fe also has a local organization – the Santa Fe Council on International Relations – that boasts visitor exchanges, conferences, community outreach, and other global activities. Interviews with employees of this organization could greatly improve our understanding of the unique activities of Santa Fe. Follow-up research is certainly necessary to understand more about the various aspects of Santa Fe's city diplomacy, especially its motivations for joining city networks like Mayors for Peace and Climate Mayors, as well as the role of Santa Fe's Council on International Relations.

Clovis, New Mexico (Population: 37,488)

Despite the survey response and further investigation of the city, not much is known about the global relations of Clovis beyond its one sister city relationship. The relationship with Kasama was started in 2012 in cooperation with the organization Eastern Plains Council of Governments and through the initiative of a resident in New Mexico who was born in Zambia (City of Clovis, personal communication, May 16, 2022). As part of this sister city relationship, a used ambulance was donated to the City of Kasama; additionally, members of the Central Baptist Church have visited Kasama (City of Clovis, personal communication, June 17, 2022).

Los Alamos, New Mexico (Population: 12,666)

Even though Los Alamos is the smallest location examined in this research, its global activities are extensive. This level of global involvement is not surprising once its local identity and principal local institution are taken into account. Los Alamos is well-known both for its role in the development of the atomic bomb and its continuing role in national security science through Los Alamos National Laboratory. Given the prominence of Los Alamos National Laboratory, it is logical that its global relations reflect the location's technological strengths, such as smart grid technology. It is also not surprising that its one sister city relationship is with another location well-known for its nuclear research (Sarov, Russia). Los Alamos is perhaps atypical in that its principal employer is a national security laboratory. However, Los Alamos is representative of city diplomacy in one important aspect: it demonstrates how a location can use its experiences and local identity to establish a particular niche in global relations. Given Los Alamos' many activities, including activities that revolve around reconciliation with Japanese citizens and victims of the atomic bomb, it is a worthy candidate for an intensive case study. However, aspects of its global relationships might be difficult to research for reasons of political sensitivity and national security secrecy.

6. Conclusion - A Role for the Study of Medium and Small-Sized City Global Relations?

Let us now return to the questions that motivated this study.

Do small and medium-sized cities have enough global activity to warrant scholarly interest?

I chose New Mexico as an area for investigation because it was ostensibly a hard case for proving the importance of medium and small-sized city diplomacy. New Mexico is not a state known for its global activity. Still, even from the small sample of cities investigated here, there were some unique examples. In particular, the amount of activity in Los Alamos and Santa Fe is surprising given their respective sizes. Only when you account for their local identities does the amount of their global activity begin to make sense. The lack of knowledge of officials in Los Alamos and Clovis about global city networks like Mayors for Peace also points to an opportunity for scholarly activism. In the future, scholars might help inform small cities about opportunities for global engagement.

Do these activities revolve mainly around sister city relationships or are there other activities worth examining?

There is not enough information yet on Clovis to determine if the city has more activities beyond its sister city relationship. However, both Santa Fe and Los Alamos demonstrate that small

cities can have significant global relations that extend beyond sister city relationships. In both cases, these relationships were based on defined local identities. In the case of Los Alamos, activities are based on its role as a hub for innovative new technologies and its historic role in the development of atomic weapons. In the case of Santa Fe, these activities are based on its role as a city of artists. Given these two examples, scholars might discover other small cities with well-developed identities that have found useful niches for global activity.

What methods are most useful for interrogating those relationships?

A glaring weakness of this study was the lack of participation from cities. As of July 30, 2022, six cities have yet to respond to the survey. This research demonstrates some of the problems involved with studying something that is by its nature inconspicuous. The first problem in each city was finding someone in city hall who was willing to answer questions and felt qualified to do so. Though many bigger cities have departments or staff dedicated to international affairs, medium and small-sized cities rarely do. Alternatively, future researchers might have better results by establishing informal relationships with city officials before attempting a formal research project. Thus, instead of soliciting survey responses for a pre-defined sample, unstructured research that uses brief interviews and participant observation in international city events might yield better immediate results that can serve as the groundwork for later structured research projects.

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Appendix - Survey

City Diplomacy and Global Relations Research Project

This research is being conducted by researchers from Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies in Nagasaki, Japan. If you have any questions about it, you can contact Daniel Clausen at:

clausen@tc.nagasaki-gago.ac.jp

This research is being conducted to understand what kinds of diplomatic and global activities take place in cities around the world. This research aims to deepen our understanding of how cities operate and what roles they play in international affairs.

Your participation is voluntary.

1. Responses to this questionnaire will be used as part of the data in research articles in international policy journals and academic journals. Do you agree to participate in this survey?
 - Yes
 - No
2. What is the name of the city government office to which you belong?
3. Would you like your name to appear in the interview or would you prefer to remain anonymous?
 - You can use my name.
 - Please use simply “city official” of (city name)
4. If it is okay to use your name, please write it here.
5. If it is okay to contact you with further questions, please write a phone number or email address.
6. What is your role within city hall? If you are not an employee of city hall, please indicate your role in the organization.
7. Do you think your city plays a role in international relations?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
8. Do you think the residents of your city find it important to be involved in global issues?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
9. Do you feel that there is a difference between the national government’s policy toward international issues and the contributions that residents of your city want to make?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
10. If you answered “yes” please explain in detail.
11. What is the relationship between your city and the governor of your state with regards to foreign relations?
12. Is there a department in your city office that specializes in international affairs?
 - Yes
 - No
13. Does your city have staff who specialize in international affairs?
14. If you answered “yes,” how many people?
15. If your city is actively involved in any international issues, please describe this involvement.
16. What international programs (student exchanges, sister city relations, festivals, cultural

exchange, etc.) is your city currently involved in, if any?

17. Is your city a member of Mayors for Peace?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure what Mayors for Peace is.

18. If your city is a member of Mayors for Peace, please tell us about its activities as part of this organization.

19. If your office is not a member of Mayors for Peace, please explain why to the best of your ability.

20. If your city has sister city relationships, what is city hall's role in them?

21. Is there anything else you would like to say about your city's global relationships?

22. Are there any questions you think should be added to this survey?