**Paradiplomacy: The Actorness and Agency of Subnational Units**

The activities of regions (provinces, US states, cantons) and cities, as non-state or sub-state actors, attracted considerable scholarly attention in the 1980s using an array of titles – constituent diplomacy, microdiplomacy, federative diplomacy – but more often usually fall under the more popular concept of ‘paradiplomacy’ (Duchacek 1984, Cornago 2010, Kuznetsov 2015). Paradiplomacy is a part of much broader process of “pluralisation” of diplomacy or multi-level diplomacy in which diplomatic practices, institutions and discourses are no longer limited to traditional international diplomacy dictated by foreign ministries and ambassadors. Sub-state units – sometimes referred to as Non-Central Governments, together with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), are the main non-state actors that engage in paradiplomacy, an emerging area of academic scholarship (Cornago 2013).

Local and regional governments across the world are more and more actively participating in international relations (Tavares 2015). Therefore, subnational entities, such as cities or regions, can certainly be considered actors in International Relations, sometimes acting in coordination with the state and sometimes acting against or at least without the consent of the state. Substate actors behave like international actors in a number of ways. For example, they mimick international diplomatic practices (organizing fora), create transnational networks (C40 or U20), and engage with international organisations and other international actors (e.g. lobbying at the UN) (Gongadze 2019). However, this “actorness” has provoked a set of important questions:

* Can cities and provinces be considered substantive actors that are able to make meaningful progress or decisions related to the resolution of global issues?
* To what extent and under what circumstances are substate actors’ international activities truly autonomous from the foreign policy of state foreign policy? How much is autonomy dependent on differences in political systems, cultural and historical contexts or geographical location?
* What types of political instruments do subnational entities use in their paradiplomatic actions? Which are most effective? Which draw more ire from central governments?
* How can focusing on the foreign relations of cities and regions contribute to or challenge IR theories and understandings of sovereignty and the state?
* How can focusing on cities further strengthen non-statist approaches to IR?

This workshop aims to bring together empirical studies from different perspectives investigating the “actorness” and “agency” of cities and regions in international relations. We are welcoming papers that present empirical studies analysing “meaningful” paradiplomatic activities, relations between foreign policy making and international activities of cities and regions, as well as case studies or comparative studies trying to assess effectiveness of different instruments of paradiplomacy.

**Workshop Convenors**

**Tomasz Kaminski** - Ph.D., political scientist, associate professor at the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz. My research activities are concentrated on the topic of paradiplomacy and city diplomacy, in particular in the context of EU policy towards China. I have worked in numerous research projects funded by the European Commission (Horizon 2020, Jean Monnet Module) and the Polish National Science Centre. I am also regular contributor to the magazine “Liberté!”. Passionate about innovative teaching and using games in education I have been engaged in development of educational computer game about the project management. I have co-authored a book “The Role of Regions in EU-China Relations”. Please visit my personal website to find my publications and details about my experience: [www.tomaszkaminski.eu](http://www.tomaszkaminski.eu)

**Craig Simon –** Ph.D. candidate at the School of International Studies, University of Nottingham Ningbo China. Craig is interested in transnationalism the external relations of the city beyond the nation and state. He also is interested in local governments’ implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and international human rights. His PhD thesis looks at cities in the US and China in order to compare city-led internationalisation strategies and implications for international relations theories and ideas of the state.

**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.