Cultural Diplomacy
A Case Study of Municipality of Chania

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Abstract

The concept of "Cultural Diplomacy" highlights the exchange of ideas, information and cultural expressions among nations and their people, promoting mutual understanding, inspiring cultural cooperation, exchanges and relations. According to Cummings (2003), cultural diplomacy results in creating respect and trust with other nations, strengthening cooperation and dialogue, promoting good practices that concern culture, urban revival, science and research, as well as the tolerance of diversity. Bound et al (2007) argue that modern cultural diplomacy, which is based on dialogue, engagement and reciprocity, affects positively the development of communication, networking and the exchange of different ideas as far as intercultural dialogue is concerned. The paper aims to analyze the recent trend of cultural decentralization, in the sense that Local Government takes initiatives, in an effort to connect culture with regional and sustainable development. Nowadays, cities play a crucial role promoting intercultural dialogue and peace through the exercise of cultural diplomacy. The analysis of the theoretical framework, the relevant literature and bibliography, follows the empirical research on the Municipality of Chania case. The cultural policies and actions of the Municipality are examined and analyzed as well as specific measures are proposed so that the Municipality will use cultural diplomacy tools for its external agenda, socioeconomic benefit and development.

Keywords: Chania, City diplomacy, Cultural development, Cultural diplomacy, Intercultural dialogue

Introduction

According to Tzoumaka (2005) the concept of "Cultural Diplomacy" dates back to at least the first millennium, as written sources testify that interstate relations included the exchange of gifts between governors, as well as the exchange of works of art. As Vaseiliadis (2015) argues, it is known that empires' power, such as the Macedonians and Rome, supported their supremacy in cultural diplomacy.

During the 1980s, cultural diplomacy was connected with foreign policy, with culture emerging as an effective tool of diplomacy (Tuch, 1990). Cultural diplomacy became part of the international cultural agenda, being used as a tool to strengthen globalization and transnational relations. According to Belanger (1999), cultural diplomacy in recent years expresses the politicization of culture, aiming at the exercise of foreign policy and transnational cooperation.

At the same time, according to Finn (2003), cultural diplomacy is a means of exercising foreign policy and developing international relations, implemented by the central government, local governments, public organizations and non-governmental organizations involved in the cultural system. Moreover, cultural diplomacy as a two – way process is less linked to politics, enhancing intercultural dialogue (Schneider, 2009).

Nowadays, states are increasingly aware of the importance of cultural diplomacy, facing cultural issues as key parameters for the exercise of their foreign cultural policy. Among the main reasons for this practice, according to Vaseiliadis (2015), are the following:

- ❖ The cultural penetration into other countries, so that the positions and values of the country become understood, serving sovereign interests (former colonies).
- ❖ The promotion of a positive image of the country internationally, in order to improve its international relations.
- ❖ Economic reasons, as the exports of cultural products worldwide are a profitable process (Kosmidou, 2000).

Furthermore, transnational exchanges in fields such as: science, economy, music, arts, sports, literature, etc. create a fertile ground for mutual understanding and trust between peoples, contributing in the long term to the avoidance of conflicts and political crises.

Cultural diplomacy is practiced mainly between states, while there are often differences in the organizations to which states entrust it. Governments / partners of state organizations, wider political institutions and policy – making bodies (UN, EU, Council of Europe, OECD[1]) are authorized to engage in cultural diplomacy, developing activities to promote local / national interests, local values, etc. (Wiseman, 2005). Globally, UNESCO promotes cultural diplomacy to the Organization's members, contributing to intercultural dialogue.

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[1] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Globalization has led to the rise of cities as global actors (Curtis & Acuto, 2018), reinforced by the growth of world tourism (Beall & Adam, 2017). Moreover, cities' interaction with culture strengthens the ways cities promote themselves nationally and internationally (Beall & Adam, 2017). Recently, it has been observed that local authorities are undertaking cultural development initiatives by linking culture with regional and sustainable development. As a result city diplomacy emerges as a modern field of cultural exchanges, through networking.

Literature Review

An extensive literature on city diplomacy and "global cities" has emerged as an attempt to analyze contemporary urban change. According to Curtis & Acuto (2018), the UN has documented how the number of cities in the world (with more than 1 million inhabitants) increased from 75 in 1950 to 447 in 2011. During the same period the average size of the world's 100 largest cities increased to 7.6 million people (from 2 million). Moreover, in the decades 1990 and 2000 there was a 30% increase in the size of urban settlements in the developed world, while the increase in the developing world reached 50%.

At the same time the new technical capacities offered by digital networks have made it possible for mayors to participate in global events. Many new transnational metropolitan networks aim at various forms of global governance, operating at different scales: from national and regional to transnational.

Economic / trade interests and bilateral relationships constitute some of the purposes of cultural diplomacy, which involves a range of different actors: government, artists, academics, cultural institutes (Clarke et al., 2017). Therefore, globalization has allowed more actors, including non-governmental ones, to be involved in diplomacy (Grincheva & Kelley, 2019). Nowadays, according to Ang et al. (2015), the term extends beyond the national interest, including concepts, like international cultural cooperation, international cultural relations and exchange.

Therefore, Grincheva (2019) identifies a hybrid type concerning diplomacy, which engages civil society and doesn't exclude state actors. As Melissen (2005) argues, the new public diplomacy builds networks with civil society actors in other countries and it facilitates relations between non–governmental parties at home and abroad.

Literature review strongly connects cultural diplomacy to soft power, the term which is used to exert influence by using culture (Martel & Simic, 2018; Nye, 2019) and depends more on attraction (Beall & Adam, 2017; Nye, 2019). Based on intercultural communication and creative exchange it creates new public value (Sölter, 2015). The actors of soft power are cities, operating either with other states or independently, exercising soft power through their civil society and institutions (Beall & Adam, 2017).

Purpose / Objectives

The Paper examines the case of the Municipality of Chania in relation to cultural diplomacy. A brief presentation of the specific Municipality, its economic structure and cultural capital are provided, while emphasis is placed on the Organization's networks within the country and internationally, as well as the twinning network it has developed.

Among the main objectives of the Paper are:

❖ The mapping of the practices that the Municipality has developed in terms of cultural diplomacy and its networking, in order to examine their effectiveness.

❖ The examination of the strengths and the weaknesses of its cultural policy, with emphasis on extroversion, and the mapping of the opportunities and threats to which the Organization shall respond, in order to develop its cultural diplomacy tools for its external agenda, socioeconomic benefit and development.

❖ The formulation of recommendations and suggestions to the managers of the Organization, so that, through specific actions, they will include in their strategic planning good practices of extroversion and intercultural dialogue.

Methodology / Approach

Secondary sources, literature, articles and internet sources were used for the preparation of the Paper. Moreover, a SWOT analysis of the Municipality's cultural policy is undertaken, with emphasis on its extroversion and networks. The strengths and weaknesses of the Organization are presented, as well as the opportunities and threats, which come from its external environment. Based on this analysis, specific recommendations are made to Organization's managers, which can highlight cultural diplomacy as a key pillar for its development.

Brief presentation

The Municipality of Chania is located at the southern end of Greece and Europe, with a total area of 356.12 sq.km. and 110,646 inhabitants[2]. With a history of more than 50 centuries, it has a strong impact on the wider Mediterranean region.

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[2] Population Census 2022

Figure 1: The Municipality of Chania
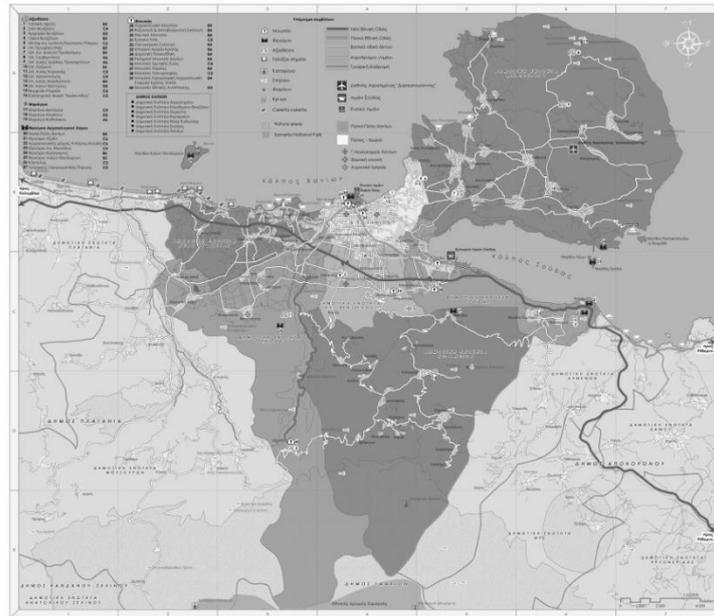
Source: (chania.gr)

With remarkable varied flora and fauna, the natural environment of the Municipality consists of forests, lakes, mountains, gorges, caves, rivers and hundreds of kilometers of coastline. An international airport operates in the area, serving domestic and international flights, while there is also a military airport. A passenger and commercial port, which also serves cruise ships, operate across the region.

Financial structure

According to the Greek Statistical Authority and the National Institute of Labour & Human Resources (EIEAD / NILHR), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Region of Chania from 2008, when it had its highest value, until 2013 showed a decrease. This decline from 2018 onwards began to reverse.

Table 1: GDP in the Regional Unit of Chania, in the Region

of Crete and in Greece (in millions of Euros)

Reference Area	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Regional Unit of Chania	2.740	2.871	3.005	2.954	2.766	2.528	2.261	2.200	2.271	2.277	2.223	2.279	2.344
Region of Crete	10.693	11.200	11.808	11.509	10.863	9.588	8.732	8.596	8.826	8.816	8.596	8.847	9.071
Greece	217.862	232.695	241.990	237.534	224.124	203.308	188.389	179.616	177.349	176.110	174.237	177.152	179.727

Source: (National Institute of Labour & Human Resources, 2022, eiead.gr)

The tertiary sector and especially the services related to tourism constitute the most dynamic sector of the local economy. Furthermore, the arrivals of tourists during the period, January - August 2022, moved to unprecedented upward levels, showing an increase compared to 2021.

Table 2: Traffic Development Overview

Traffic Development Overview

CHANIA AIRPORT "IOANNIS DASKALOGIANNIS" - 2022 vs 2021

Passengers	Domestic			International			Total		
Month	2022	2021	%Δ	2022	2021	%Δ	2022	2021	%Δ
JANUARY	34,382	10,539	226.2%	1,016	16	6250.0%	35,398	10,555	235.4%
FEBRUARY	35,310	8,868	298.2%	1,791	2	89450.0%	37,101	8,870	318.3%
MARCH	43,683	10,274	325.2%	9,610	307	3030.3%	53,293	10,581	403.7%
APRIL	53,853	14,270	277.4%	115,140	219	52475.3%	168,993	14,489	1066.4%
MAY	55,579	26,532	109.5%	274,610	19,599	1301.1%	330,189	46,131	615.8%
JUNE	62,783	44,012	42.6%	436,412	91,309	378.0%	499,195	135,321	268.9%
JULY	72,071	62,168	15.9%	548,348	313,760	74.8%	620,419	375,928	65.0%
AUGUST	72,567	68,096	6.6%	514,302	365,196	40.8%	586,869	433,292	35.4%
TOTAL CHQ	430,228	244,759	75.8%	1,901,229	790,408	140.5%	2,331,457	1,035,167	125.2%

Source:
(Fraport Greece Traffic Data Management, 2022)

Culture

The Municipality of Chania has an interesting and rich cultural heritage, with important monuments and valuable collections. There are a total of 102 cultural sites, while 50 cultural associations are active in the area, promoting cultural activities and local tradition. Moreover, a great number of cultural activities are organized annually.

As far as policy implementation is concerned the Municipality's Directorate of Social Protection, Education, Sports and Culture, the Office of Culture & Music Education in cooperation with the Cultural Organization are in charge for the promotion of culture.

Networks

The local authority, active in the development of international partnerships and networking, develops initiatives that strengthen city's extroversion. The main international networks are listed below:

- ❖ "Mayors Adapt Twinning"[3]: The Covenant of Mayors initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change concerns initiatives to twin cities around Europe, in order to become more climate change "resilient".
- ❖ "Visionary and Integrated Solutions to Improve Well – Being and Health in Cities – VARCITIES"[4]: The vision is to implement nature-based actions in cities through sustainable models for increasing the health and well-being of citizens exposed to different climatic conditions and challenges.
- ❖ "Environmental Risk Management and Information Service – Floods - ERMIS-F"[5]: The project is designed to combine an Integrated Public Service, a Digital System and an Online Information Platform regarding floods.
- ❖ "ECORouTs"[6]: Joint actions to create green environmentally friendly routes within tourist areas (Programme 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Greece – Cyprus).
- ❖ "SMARTCITIES[7]": Development of "smart city" applications in Municipalities of Cyprus, Crete and North Aegean (Programme 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Greece – Cyprus).
- ❖ "STEP2SMART[8]": Cross – border cooperation of island urban areas to improve environmental conditions through the use of smart transportation systems (Programme 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Greece – Cyprus).

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[3] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/mayors-adapt/
[4] Available at: https://www.varcities.eu/
[5] Available at: https://ermis-f.eu/en/
[6] Available at: https://ecorouts-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Project-ECOROUTS_English.pdf
[7] Available at: https://tinyurl.com/bdfu7fx2
[8] Available at: https://tinyurl.com/5ej2z4ex

Town – twinning partnerships

The local authority utilizes a network of twinned and cooperating cities, which has been developed mainly during the previous decades. Therefore, the Municipality of Chania has twinned with the following cities:

- ❖ Wellington New Zealand (1984),
- ❖ Engomi Cyprus (2001),
- ❖ Ermoupolis Syros (2007),
- ❖ Karpathos (2007),
- ❖ Axioupolis Kilkis (2008),
- ❖ Paphos Cyprus (2009),
- ❖ Famagusta Cyprus (2010),
- ❖ Polis Chrysochous Cyprus (2011) and
- ❖ Tarpon Springs USA. (2021).

In the Cooperation Protocols, co-signed by the Municipality of Chania and its twinned cities, the development of relations between entities active in the fields of education, cultural heritage, trade, tourism, etc. are set as priorities. Moreover, the exchanges of experiences in areas of public administration, urban planning issues and utilization of EU funds are also promoted.

FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Analyzing the cultural policy of the Organization, emphasizing on its extroversion, its internal environment is assessed, mapping the strengths and weaknesses of its policy. Moreover, analyzing its external environment, the opportunities are presented as well as the threats, which may arise. S.W.O.T analysis is a strategic planning tool, used by Organizations in order to take decisions on future strategies and policies.

Table 3: SWOT analysis

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
- Participation in city networks - Town – twinning partnerships - Contacts with Consulates, Embassies - International Festivals (International Book Festival, M. Theodorakis International Festival) - Large number of cultural	- Limited financial resources - Lack of specialized personnel on international relations, networking support - Inability to train human resources in international relations, culture, European programs - Understaffing - Absence of a holistic plan for

8

activities • Cultural facilities • Participation of citizens to cultural events • Cooperation with cultural associations • Promotion of cultural assets in dynamic poles of culture	extroversion and networking • Fragmentation of responsibilities, lack of coordination • Absence of an overall plan for the utilization of cultural assets • Need to modernize cultural facilities
Opportunities	**Threats**
• City's important history • Temperate climate, varied flora and fauna • Infrastructure (airports, port, etc.) • Tourism, dynamic sector of the local economy • Important cultural heritage and assets • Leading cultural operators (Archaeological Museum of Chania, National Research Foundation "Eleftherios K. Venizelos", etc.) • European and national financial programs • Architectural inventory for cultural use • Private investment interest in culture – tourism • Development of entrepreneurship in the field of culture • Higher Education Institutions & Institutes • Low-cost airlines • Development of internet, new technologies • Alternative funding sources (crowdfunding)	• Lack of funding, due to financial crisis • Lack of sponsorships • Socio-economic conditions • Bureaucracy, fragmentation of responsibilities • Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of culture • Political turmoil

Source: (Own processing)

From the above analysis, the following useful recommendations are made regarding the ways in which networking and especially cultural diplomacy can contribute to the Municipality's development. Moreover, the suggestions can be used by the managers of the Organization as useful tools.

The Municipality of Chania, participating in networks of cities and having developed the institution of twinning to a point, it is beneficial to activate and utilize to a greater extent its networks. Through the exchange of good practices and experiences the Organization will build intercultural dialogue with other local authorities as well as with interest groups (entrepreneurs, tourism operators, educational institutions, etc.).

The cooperation with representatives of foreign authorities (Consulates, Embassies), as well as with cultural associations can reinforce the necessity of an overall plan for the extroversion and networking of the Municipality. Following international examples the managers of the Organization will understand its weaknesses, putting in place the required changes.

International festivals empower the extroversion of the Municipality, as events of international impact address to audiences that exceed the boundaries of the country. Artists with a great impact can turn into the best ambassadors of the Municipality internationally. Given its experience in this field, having organized with success international festivals, such as the International Book Festival and M. Theodorakis International Festival, the Organization can promote more Festivals on an international scale.

Using the internet and new technologies as an opportunity, managers can develop initiatives to promote the Municipality internationally, further strengthening its image, with an emphasis on culture.

By treating as an opportunity the history of the city, its cultural assets, as well as the leading cultural operators of the region (Archaeological Museum of Chania, National Research Foundation "Eleftherios K. Venizelos", etc.), the administrators can strengthen Municipality's partnerships and international cooperations.

The search for international financial programs and their utilization can act as reinforcements to the limited financial resources of the Municipality and the lack of funding and sponsorships, as a result of the economic crisis. Moreover, the issue of underfunding can be addressed through alternative funding sources (crowdfunding).

The need to train the staff of the Organization in international relations, programs and culture, is an important issue that must be addressed. The staff following administrators' guidelines will prepare an overall strategic plan in cultural diplomacy.

The operation of Educational Institutions in the area (Technical University of Crete, Hellenic Mediterranean University, MAICH) can act as reinforcements in the efforts of the administrators of the Municipality for extroversion. Through cooperation protocols and targeted research, useful data can be utilized in various fields of interest (tourism, culture, international relations, etc.).

Given the large tourist flow, private investment interest in the tourism and culture sectors should be supported, with a parallel emphasis on the development of entrepreneurship in the

cultural sector. Low-cost airlines should be treated as an opportunity, as they facilitate contacts both nationally and internationally.

Attention must be paid also to the challenges and political upheavals both in the country (Greek-Turkish relations) and in the international environment (war conflicts), which have a destabilizing effect. The lack of trust and solidarity in international level makes it difficult for the development of international relations and the expansion of cooperation networks.

Discussion

Municipality of Chania, active in international partnerships and networking, has developed to a point its initiatives to strengthen its extroversion. However, a greater effort is needed, in order to encounter important and long - standing weaknesses on the way to cultural development.

As Higgott (2020) argues, nowadays the prospects for successful cultural diplomacy are massively challenged, especially in European level. Europe's crises of identity and confidence and diplomacy's core practices, such as communication, representative function, mediation / reproduction of knowledge, which has changed, lead to significant challenges (Jonsson and Hall, 2005).

Moreover, the attempts to consolidate a European understanding are different from trying to universalize them through cultural diplomacy. As Higgott (2020) argues, most states - especially the non-Western great powers do not accept this Universalist nature.

As far as city diplomacy is concerned, cities face various constraints, as they develop in a "world of cities" (Robinson, 2011). There is a key limitation as far as the collaborative spirit of the foreign policy is concerned, as markets, limited resources and competition dominate on a global scale.

Moreover, Curtis & Acuto (2018) note that the balance between competition and collaboration can be also seen in the relationship between cities and states. There are examples of cities trying to bypass inadequate state legislation and national institutions, participating at the same time in transnational networks. Collaboration between national and local governments is a need, in order to form a roadmap, which will create a collaborative city – state model.

Conclusion

The modern concept of "Cultural Diplomacy" is associated with the promotion and implementation of cultural activities, aiming at the improvement of interstate relations, the development of relations connecting cultural communities and intercultural understanding. The development of technology, the open communication between states / organizations / citizens and globalization are among the factors that led to this positive result.

The case study of the Municipality of Chania proves that it is a local authority active in international partnerships and networking, as it has developed initiatives to strengthen the

city's extroversion. The participation of the Municipality in international networks of cities, as well as the creation of a network of twinned cities, demonstrates the pursuit of an extroverted orientation and the expansion of its collaborations.

However, using the SWOT analysis, regarding the cultural policy and the extroversion of the Municipality, it is proved that there are still several steps that must be taken by the Organization. The main weaknesses concern the limited financial resources of the Municipality, mainly as a result of underfunding from the central government, the lack of specialized staff for the promotion of international relations, the absence of an overall plan for networking support. Furthermore, the fragmentation of responsibilities and the non-activation of the twinning network for a long period of time hamper the total effort.

As far as the methods and practices that the Municipality of Chania can adopt, in order for cultural diplomacy to contribute to its development, specific recommendations put forward in the Paper can be utilized by its administrators. The activation of its networks and the developing of new contacts with other local authorities as well as with other interest groups can become useful tools. Furthermore, the development of a holistic framework for extroversion and networking, the use of the Internet and new technologies, the use of the city's important cultural heritage and the cooperation with cultural operators can act in a positive way.

The search for international financing programs and alternative sources can help to address the issue of underfunding and the limited financial resources of the Municipality, while cooperation with the educational institutions of the area is considered beneficial. In this direction, the utilization of the large tourist stream is considered important, supporting private investment interest and the development of entrepreneurship in the fields of culture and tourism.

In conclusion, the administrators of the Organization should formulate a holistic strategy of connecting cultural diplomacy with regional development, seeking wider collaborations and networks.

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15

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