**An Analysis of City-to-City Cooperation in Asia:
CITYNET Experience and the Readiness of Philippine Cities**

（アジアにおける都市間協力の分析：CITYNETにおける経験およびフィリピン
諸都市の即応能力）

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Introduction

The latter half of the 20th century has seen the resurgence of local actors as important international players. This rise of the "urban internationale" would soon pave the way for the eventual inter-linking of cities, a "friendship" that would grow from supporting community exchanges to lending technical assistance for the achievement of specific local development goals. The partnership between cities has since led to the transfer of ideas, skills and practices across time and space. To date, it has been estimated that 70 percent of cities worldwide are connected to other cities in one way or another.

City-to-city cooperation (C2C), as it came to be known, has been recognized as an effective development strategy in strengthening urban governance, improving urban services and housing, and even closing the gap between local institutions and citizens. As an evolving form of decentralized development cooperation, it is underpinned by the direct collaboration of local institutions, particularly local authorities, with or without the support of other actors such as city networks and non-government organizations. The UN-HABITAT (2003) has noted that C2C could enhance the capacity of local governments in various management areas.

However, in spite of its prevalence globally, academic understanding of the phenomenon remains scant, particularly in the context of Asian cities. Extant research has been largely limited to case studies mostly involving cities from outside Asia, with little attention paid to the role of city networks. The evaluation of successes and failures have likewise focused more on the procedural and managerial aspects of partnerships, while the inherent readiness of cities themselves seems to have been taken for granted. The case of small cities is particularly intriguing not only because many of the published studies involved secondary cities, but more importantly because there seems to be a growing interest among C2C practitioners to engage smaller cities.

In light of these research lacunae, this study investigates the practice and prospects of C2C cooperation in selected Asian cities. It specifically asks the following research questions:
1. How does CITYNET, a regional network of local authorities headquartered in Yokohama, implement C2C cooperation among its members?
2. What are the different roles of cities under CITYNET's C2C umbrella and what are the common characteristics, if any, of those that are active in it?

3. Based on the experience of CITYNET cities, what is the level of readiness of Philippine cities for C2C cooperation? Are smaller cities in a better position to engage in C2C cooperation than their larger counterparts?
4. In view of the above, how can network-based C2C cooperation be strengthened, if necessary? And how can it be further promoted among Philippine cities?

Research Design

A mixed methodology was adopted for the study, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, CITYNET's C2C practice from 1990 to 2009 was analyzed through a combination of archival, case study and organizational network analyses. Drawing from this, the readiness of Philippine cities was then assessed using descriptive and non-parametric statistics. Data were collected from various primary and secondary sources including electronic databases, newsletters, reports, key informant interviews, direct observation, and mixed-mode questionnaire surveys.

Results and Analysis

The study has shown that C2C cooperation is still an evolving, if not young, concept in Asia. The experience of CITYNET member cities pointed towards increasing interest not just among cities, but also among other local actors especially NGOs. It also revealed the changing modality of how partnerships have been implemented, moving from single to mixed modalities, from ad hoc engagements towards more sustainable project-based interactions, and from an exclusive activity among local authorities to one that is more inclusive of other actors from civil society. South-South partnerships were also found prevalent in the network.

By and large, three types of C2C arrangements were identified from CITYNET's experience. The most common type may be termed as "Ad hoc C2C" or partnerships characterized by one-off activities, with neither a follow-up plan nor an overarching framework for future or wider collaboration. The second type may be called "Intermittent C2C" wherein interaction is occasional and takes place over a prolonged period, albeit without a specific timeframe. The third type is "Programmatic C2C" which is normally based on a time-bound program that is guided by an elaborated project plan or by a formal agreement outlining the terms of the partnership. All of these types were featured in the reviewed disaster-related C2C cases.

Moreover, analysis of the cities' Participation Index (PI) revealed five dynamic actor roles in a C2C network. The first group can be referred to as "sources" (PI=1). They have shared their best practices to others, but have never been a beneficiary (e.g. Yokohama). The second group of participants may be called as "sinks" (PI=-1), the largest in CITYNET's C2C network. They have been involved in C2C cooperation solely as beneficiaries. The third group has a totally balanced PI of 0.00 and may be called the "optimizers" for they have received as much as they have given. The fourth type can be called "conduits" (0<PI<1) or participants which have received assistance in the past, but functions more as a resource to others. The fifth group may be called as "adapters" (-1<PI<0). These are those who have acted as a resource at some point but their primary objective is still that of learning from others. Network centrality measures were also tested, revealing that some less prominent actors might play an important role in the network, even more than what they seemed to be if based on degree of participation alone.

The analysis of Yokohama's experience, along with that of Bangkok and the perspectives of two national municipal associations, revealed a number of factors that could facilitate or hinder the engagement of cities in C2C. These were previous C2C experience, network membership, organizational set-up, C2C

strategy, ICT access, internal support, political need, leadership stability, external partners, communication skills, technical competencies, internal budget, and external funding. Through Mann-Whitney U tests, it was found out that there was no significant statistical differences in how these indicators were viewed by the cities and a selected number of external stakeholders, except for past experience, ICT access, technical competencies, and C2C strategy. Both cities and external stakeholders ranked internal political support as the most important enabling factor for cooperation.

Transforming the above factors into an evaluation framework, it was found out that majority of the participating Philippine cities could ably undertake either Intermittent C2C or Programmatic C2C, indicating a high level of readiness as a whole. By using the two readiness scores based on the ranking of external stakeholders and cities, a "range of readiness" was then identified indicating the high and low ends of the city's aggregated weighted score. From here, it was observed that while some cities may be clearly up for a particular type of C2C, a number of them may also be borderline cases.

Lastly, findings from Kruskal-Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U tests supported the hypothesis that, to some extent, smaller cities are more prepared for cooperation than their larger counterparts. This, however, was not found to be true in all categories of "smallness" used in the study. The overall readiness score of the cities was found to be strongly statistically associated only with the size of personnel and level of urbanization categories. In particular, it was discovered that cities with medium-sized personnel and partial urbanization were in a better position to engage in C2C cooperation than their respective categorical counterparts.

To further understand the performance of the cities relative to the evaluation framework, the abovementioned non-parametric tests were extended to each indicator. Some interesting results supporting the hypothesis were as follows:

- Cities with smaller land size were more embedded in international city networks than their larger counterparts ($H(3) = 7.466$, $p = .058$);
- The organizational set-up of cities with medium-sized personnel appeared to be more conducive for C2C cooperation than their larger or smaller counterparts ($H(3) = 14.928$, $p = .002$);
- Cities from the Visayas had stronger internal support than cities from the National Capital Region (NCR) and Luzon, regions that were generally held to have stronger political clout than the former ($H(3) = 7.408$, $p = .060$);
- Political need was observed to be stronger among cities that were partially urban compared to those that were totally urban and primarily rural ($H(3) = 6.523$, $p = .089$);
- Very fast-growing cities (i.e. with annual population growth rate greater than 3 percent) rated lower in communication skills compared to cities with fast and slow population growth ($H(3) = 9.340$, $p = .025$);
- Cities with medium-sized personnel were in a better position to fund C2C cooperation than those with larger and smaller number of employees ($H(3) = 6.798$, $p = .079$); and
- Cities with an annual budget of less than Php1 billion knew more potential external funding organizations than those with a yearly allocation of Php1 billion and above ($H(3)=7.399$, $p= .060$).

Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

The analysis of CITYNET's experience points to the evolving practice of C2C cooperation within its membership. The stocktaking has shown that C2C under CITYNET's umbrella has grown over the years, not only in numbers but also in the mixture of modalities, direction and partners. The prevalence of South-South exchanges was also notable, in spite of a clear dominant role played by one developed city,

Yokohama. The actors themselves were found to have shifting roles as they immersed themselves deeper in the C2C network. The network analysis also unraveled some interesting insights on the relative importance of actors—cities and non-cities—in the network. To strengthen network-based cooperation, a results-based monitoring and evaluation system was proposed.

The analysis of Philippine cities revealed an overall high level of readiness. This means that most of the cities could readily engage in medium- to long-term partnerships, whether or not under a formal framework or agreement. Both cities and external stakeholders agreed that internal support is the most important factor that could either hinder or facilitate the participation of cities in C2C cooperation. On the notion of "smallness," it was found out that the best performers were neither the smallest nor the largest cities, as defined in different categories. Medium-sized cities, particularly in terms of personnel size and urbanization level, were found to have better overall readiness score than their respective categorical counterparts. In view of these findings, a four-point agenda was put forward to further promote C2C cooperation in the Philippines.

By and large, the study contributes to the academic understanding of C2C cooperation by elucidating theoretically and empirically the praxis of C2C cooperation in Asia from a network perspective. It also presents a new approach at unraveling the roles of actors in network-enabled C2C cooperation through network analysis, and provides an evaluation framework to assess the readiness of cities for international city-based cooperation. It likewise provides empirical evidence from the Philippine case study that, to some extent, smaller cities are in a better position to engage in C2C cooperation than larger ones.

The indicators used in the study can further be extended for application to other cities. It is also interesting to confirm whether the readiness of the cities actually corresponds to their success record in C2C cooperation, one of the fundamental assumptions not tested in the research. On a practical note, the evaluation framework itself can further be improved and used as a simple tool to support the decisions of organizations like CITYNET that promote C2C cooperation in the region.

Reference

UN-Habitat and WACLAC. *Partnership for local capacity development: building on the experiences of city-to-city cooperation.* Nairobi: UN-Habitat, 2003.