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# City Diplomacy

Current Trends and Future Prospects

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Edited by  
Sohaela Amiri · Efe Sevin



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Diplomacy

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Sohacla Amiri • Efe Sevin  
Editors

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*To Benjamin Barber (Sobacla Amiri)*  
*To Arnold Bernid “Casey” Jones (Efe Sevin)*

## PROLOGUE: A NEW GENERATION OF CITY DIPLOMACY

A new generation of city diplomats as much as scholars might be afoot. Certainly, scrolling through the pages of *Current Trends and Future Prospects* we are comforted with positive evidence to that regard. Critically, a few steps beyond both early-2000s debates in diplomatic studies more generally and city networking more specially are indication we might be headed in prolific and novel direction when it comes to recognizing, understanding and unpacking the role of cities in international affairs. This is not to say that we should ditch our collective origins, whether in international theory (IR) or urban studies, or across the two, but rather take stock of the background the collective gathered in *Current Trends and Future Prospects* draws on and takes new bold steps into this interdisciplinary arena. I hope the reader of this volume will take note and let this generation run free of traditionalist skepticism, well-rehearsed critiques and disciplinary minutiae. Questions of “city diplomacy”, understood at least as the conduct of “international” (or “world political” as some would say) relations by representatives of cities, might now be in for a much-needed recognition beyond curiosity and skepticism, into the realm of evidence and practical application. What I offer here is a short prologue to ease the reader into this new generation and highlight how, once again, this is not just academic affairs: a new generation of city networks and networking might also be afoot “out there” beyond the proverbial ivory tower, and I very much encourage city diplomacy scholars young and old to engage proactively with this change, these institutions, city diplomats and practices.

For a while now city diplomacy has taken a back seat in the realm of international affairs. This, as Ben Leffel (2018) already pointed out, has very

much been seen as the “animus of the underling” born out of the “municipal foreign policy movement” of the 1980s in the US. Of course, we could also justifiably argue that this movement has deep historical roots elsewhere and very much outside the “West”. Likewise, we could posit that, in fact, the Westphalian era is (has been?) but a historical interlude in the presence of organized representation of cities and local(ized) authorities in world politics, as city diplomats roamed this realm well before states (Acuto 2016b). Surely, the early 2000s saw a proliferation of both practitioner and academic interest in the theme, perhaps best propelled by the expansion in “transnational municipal networks” (Toly 2008) such as the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and some scholarly interest in them. We owe much today to the work of, among others, human geographers like Harriet Bulkeley (2013) but also IR scholars that took issue with the possible role of cities in world affairs (Alger, 1990s; van der Pluijm & Melissen, 2007).

### A SHIFT IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF CITIES

The landscape of philanthropic funding that has fuelled much of the 2000s “new” wave of city diplomacy such as the efforts of C40 Cities has to some degree changed in the last few years. This was perhaps most dramatically testified by the (not so sudden) April 2019 decision of the Rockefeller Foundation end to the large \$150 m enterprise of 100 Resilient Cities. Yet Gates, Mellon, Ford and other foundations had taken similar directions before them. This is not to say charitable support to city diplomacy is ending. In fact, other interests are emerging in the potential of cities to tackle global governance matters, as with the Open Society Foundation’s support to the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) initiative. And countries still matter. MMC has been backed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Important parts of C40’s budget rely on governmental departments from the UK and Denmark. Germany played an important role in both UN efforts at networking cities for urban safety, as well as NGOs addressing inequality and informal settlements.

After all, the networked nature of city diplomacy, which Lecavalier and Gordon brilliantly depict in this volume, is indeed not just the prerogative of local governments alone. In fact, cities might but a part of a much wider political economy of networked (urban) governance (Davidson et al., 2019). And, as they note poignantly, city networks might have been emerging as actors in themselves, less as large coalitions of sister cities like those of the 1990s and more as internationally minded non-governmental



organization (NGO) secretariats orchestrating complex alliances of cities, private sector actors, states and multilaterals. Several scholars and commentators have, in the 2010s, been arguing that some of these even represent “second” and “third” generation city networks. If a first generation took off in the first half of the 1900s on the back hand of city twinning, representing mainly networks driven by cities and for cities, the end of the Cold War and the expansion of non-governmental international actors saw the emergence of networks mixing cities and other actors, often with independent secretariats and in several cases driven by multilateral agencies—in a sense networks by cities and other actors for cities and other actors. This second generation, however, has come across a third iteration of the logic of city networking prompted by heavy private sector and/or philanthropic investments, leading to a typology of networks by private actors and for cities (and other actors). Of course, it is not easy to draw clear lines, and networks themselves have been going through different evolutions (e.g. United Cities and Local Governments [UCLG] emerging from the heritage of the International Union of Local Authorities). Yet it is important to note that not all networks out there are similar in shape, nature and purpose.

The test of the new generation of city diplomacy scholars, just as much as that of city network managers and, dare I say, mayors and city leaders, is in how effectively they will grasp and shape this complexity and the variety of global urban forces at play in the international sphere. Just as the MMC with Mayors Rees of Bristol, Plante of Montreal and Aki-Sawyer of Freetown, or recent driving forces within C40, UCLG and ICLEI testify, we also need to open up the imaginary of the kinds of cities that act “out there” in global governance. More in-depth thinking about alternative geographies of city diplomacy “off the map”, to paraphrase Robinson’s (2002) famous critique of the “global city”, is urgently needed. Kudos to the cases of Tel Aviv, Turku, Singapore, Medellin and the Baltic—a kaleidoscope of tones to the contemporary city diplomacy story that the editors have aptly assembled here. For once, we need more evidence-based discussion as to the place of city diplomacy globally. Again, several chapters in this volume do so encouragingly breaking boundaries of political and urban research, as with Grincheva’s ‘soft power’ analysis of museum connections or Leffel’s marine policy investigations. This is also about a new generation ushering new generation methods and redefining what evidence means such as Insch’s Twitter analysis of the inaugural Urban 20 meeting in Buenos Aires in 2018.

As several others and I have already pointed out numerous times, this has been a time of international expansion in the number and foci of city diplomacy initiatives. The boom of ‘city networks’ seems to be proving that point amply and calling for cities to take a more formal seat at the table of international affairs (Acuto, 2016a). Amidst some city diplomacy practitioners, as much as popular commentators (Khanna, 2016), mayors appeared to be taking to “the global stage” with some even arguing “a political star is born” (Pinault & Hansen, 2018). About 300 formalized city networks, millions poured by philanthropy into inter- and transnational city initiatives and the global visibility of initiatives like the London School of Economics/Deutsche Bank “Urban Age” all pointed (more or less cautiously) in that direction. Yet the 2000s and 2010s have been a time of ups and downs for the fortunes of city diplomacy. Skepticism, for instance, followed the limited success of the late Benjamin Barber’s Global Parliament of Mayors program, in spite of the best seller nature of the book that ushered it a few years before (Barber 2013).

In the midst between boosterism and dismissal, recent years also brought about important questions as to the place of cities in global governance as much as to the volatility of the “boom” of city diplomacy. For one many questioned the sustainability of the expanding number of networks: which should mayors join? How could they be supported in the long term? These and many other critical questions as to the apparent success of city diplomacy echo clearly throughout several of the chapters of this volume. In that, *Current Trends and Future Prospects* comes in not just as an apt testament to the continued relevance, and timeliness, of discussions about cities in “the global arena” (as the editors put it), but it also paves the way to pose new questions and challenges to contemporary city diplomacy projects.

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## CHAPTER 1

---

# Introduction

*Sohaela Amiri and Efe Sevin*

### 1.1 WHY THIS BOOK?

With more than half of the world population living in urban areas, and with the projected rise of this figure to nearly 60% in the next decade (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2016), it is almost redundant to stress the importance of cities. As places to live, work, and play, cities facilitate the development, wellbeing, safety, and security of their residents while “providing the density, interaction, and networks that make us more creative and productive” (Florida 2011, para. 2). This is particularly important for the field of public diplomacy because public diplomacy activities are run through or by city governments. At its root, public diplomacy is about the connections that form between people and

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between people and foreign governments. Cities are the first physical spaces where foreign publics come to interact with a country, and its people. Traditional examples of the role of cities in public diplomacy include Sister Cities International and the International Visitor Leadership Program. But we continue to see the co-dependence between cities and public diplomacy programs such as hosting the Olympics, various cultural and educational exchange programs, and city branding, media broadcasting, and advocacy campaigns. The international examples presented in this book highlight more nuances about how cities advance public diplomacy goals of their respective nations.

In this book, we invited scholars and practitioners to reflect on a recently acknowledged trend in cities' actions in the international arena. We do not claim that cities have never been interested in engaging with other international actors. Indeed, cities have appointed ambassadors to other cities and engaged in trade negotiations with each other throughout history (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007). Yet, the analytical attention to their presence has been limited until recently. Acuto (2013, p. 2) called cities "the invisible gorillas of international studies", establishing an analogy with the invisible gorilla experiment in which subjects who watch a video focusing on basketball players completely miss the person walking around in a gorilla costume. As the practice of city diplomacy is evolving, we need to form more intellectual and academic frameworks to advance the study and practice, which will in turn advance public diplomacy goals and programming. Additionally, we need such research to be conducted to inform policies that guide or interfere with city diplomacy. While such research and policymaking will be focused on city diplomacy, it will also have broader implications for global public diplomacy.

In this edited volume, our aim is to contribute to the discussions on the role of cities in international relations. In the last few years, we have witnessed the rise of cities as players in global politics, with objectives ranging from branding and attracting foreign businesses and travelers to brokering international agreements in the face of climate change and other security challenges. On the scholarship side, there have been attempts to describe and theorize these practices. This book builds on the existing body of practice and literature to expand and enrich the field through three mechanisms.

First, we believe in the necessity of a sustained dialogue between scholars and practitioners. The latter group has experience in a variety of diplomatic processes on numerous topics ranging from refugee settlements to

climate change (Musch and Sizoo 2008). Moreover, this breadth of activities translates into attempts to create knowledge within the practice. From best practice papers to industry research reports, practitioners have chronicled their experiences. Scholars have been following these developments and presenting their own analytical accounts. For instance, Lecavalier and Gordon (Chap. 2) share statistics and works on city networks. The rapid increase in the number of actual city networks in the last two decades was replicated in the number of scholarly works on the topic. We position this book as both a home and a source for both scholars and practitioners, and accordingly invited contributors from both academia and industry. The diversity of our authors is reflected in their approaches to the research questions at hand. The following pages include theoretical chapters, empirical case studies, and reflections of practitioners on the new strategies and roles of cities in international relations.

Second, there are many different tools and strategies cities can use to engage in international affairs. We use city diplomacy almost as an umbrella term but acknowledge that the vocabulary used to describe the international activities of cities is extensive. The chapters in this volume will discuss, for instance, how cities internationalize themselves through global governance (Leffel, Chap. 4 and Guirao-Espiñeira, Chap. 11), networking (Abdullah and Garcia-Chueca, Chap. 3), twinning (Lara, Chap. 9), international summits (Insch, Chap. 8), and museums (Grincheva, Chap. 6), among others. This variation in terminology is not an invitation to or a defense of neologisms but is solely an acknowledgement of the depth of practice.

Last, we argue that cities are more diverse than they are portrayed in the literature. Current literature has produced extensive accounts of how global cities combat climate change through city diplomacy (Curtis 2014). The existing focus is not without its merits or reasons. Indeed, such cities have sustained a high level of activity in the international arena for years and enjoy the resources to continue their activities (Barber 2014; Bouteligier 2013). These cities have been affected by climate change; in other words, they have needed to act (Bouteligier 2013). As the study and practice of city diplomacy is growing (Acuto et al. 2017; Sizoo 2007), it is time to improve policies and strategies. The chapters included in this volume together present a more inclusive picture of what cities are doing or have the potential to do. We have brought together studies discussing how cities interact not only with each other but also with other actors,

including their own state governments, other states, and non-governmental organizations, to present solutions to the problems they are facing.

In other words, we started working on this book project because we believe a new wave of city diplomacy studies is afoot. Throughout the last year, we had the opportunity to discuss with our contributors the most recent developments in the practice and study of city diplomacy. In the next section, we outline the major types of activities cities engage as a preview of the in-depth discussions in the following chapters.

## 1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book consists of four sections: three conceptual sections and a case analysis section. While discussing the role of cities in the international arena, the concept of city diplomacy is used as an umbrella term to describe the actions by local governments that intend to raise the global profile of their cities and influence global policies in ways that advance the interests of local constituents. Yet, as an umbrella term, city diplomacy lacks a nuanced analytical framework. The actions discussed within this concept can take multiple forms, such as diplomatic representation, negotiation, collaboration, branding, advocacy, and public diplomacy. Moreover, these activities span policy areas such as trade, climate change, security, peace-building, tourism, and education. For instance, Chaps. 2, 3, and 4 use *global governance* and *networks* as their focus of analysis. Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 bring in *communication* and *engagement* as they explain how concepts such as soft power and place branding apply to the practice of city diplomacy. The chapters in the last conceptual section discuss city diplomacy across different *levels* of governance: national, regional, and global.

The first section of this book, *Global Governance through City Networks*, includes three chapters that shed light on city networks as facilitators of global governance in the twenty-first century. These chapters intend to help readers identify key actors within global city networks, the mechanisms through which these actors advance their policy interests, and the representation structure and power dynamics. Moreover, the authors allude to the ways in which the private sector can become involved with city networks and play a role in global governance. Consequently, they portray how cities can utilize their networks as venues for influencing global policies in ways that advance their respective local interests.

In Chap. 2, *Beyond Networking? The Agency of City Network Secretariats in the Realm of City Diplomacy*, Emma Lecavalier and David J. Gordon

challenge one of the main assumptions in city diplomacy by shifting the agency focus to city network secretariats (CNSs) rather than cities. They argue that CNSs have the capacity to act as autonomous agents in global politics. Through the case of CitiesIPCC, their research demonstrates how three separate city networks came together to influence the agenda of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Hannah Abdullah and Eva Garcia-Chueca position city networks as the principal mechanism for cities to contribute to global politics. *Cacophony or Complementarity? The Expanding Ecosystem of City Networks under Scrutiny* shares the insights and information the authors gained during a seminar organized by the Global Cities Programme at Barcelona Centre for International Affairs which brought together representatives from various city networks. Their findings demonstrate how the crowded scenes of city networks have been helping cities put local concerns on the global agenda.

In the last chapter of the section, Ben Leffel brings in a specific case study. *Marine protection in the polycentric governance system: The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments* (PNLG) focuses specifically on the participation of Chinese cities in global governance processes. Leffel argues that the experience of Chinese cities, especially of Xiamen, can be seen as a way to overcome authoritarian governments' limitations on city participations. Moreover, PNLG stands out as a robust case in which cities in the Global South use networks for knowledge and information sharing, without necessarily resorting to a Global North-to-Global South knowledge transfer.

*Local Strategies for Global Engagement and Communication*, the second section of the book, consists of four chapters that look at how communication and branding practices are being used by local governments to engage with foreign audiences and shape their opinions about global policies. The authors offer analytical and measurement frameworks for such efforts, including applications of social network and sentiment analyses to capture how international actors can utilize digital communication tools to push their messages and frame their agenda in favorable ways. Each chapter identifies different cultural, political, social, and communicative assets that cities have that can be strategically utilized to enhance a city's international image while activating their power to impact global policies.

Bruno Asdourian and Diana Ingenhoff bring in the concept of negative emotional engagement to discuss whether the reactions to Donald Trump's infamous 2017 decision to withdraw from the Paris climate change agreement had any positive impacts for local governments.

Through content and sentiment analyses of tweets sent related to C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, their study concludes that there are indeed positive impacts as such negative reactions lead to active engagement between city leaders (i.e. mayors) and target audiences (e.g. citizens, other politicians, and associations). Negative tweets, therefore, were not seen as a harbinger of bad news or boycotts but rather as paving the way for further local engagement.

*Museums as Actors of City Diplomacy*, brings our level of analysis a further step down in local strategies by introducing a sub-city actor to our discussions: museums. Natalia Grincheva presents a robust framework on museum diplomacy. Her study argues that museums have a dual role in helping cities increase their international presence. On one hand, museums have “hard assets”, as Grincheva labels them. Through their collections, and even their architecture, museums contribute to a city’s image as well as its economy and politics. On the other hand, museums also directly engage with other cities and actors interested in their hard assets. This “soft power” aspect of museums opens up new areas for inter-city collaboration. Through various short case studies, the chapter makes a strong case for how museums, within the context of city diplomacy, are moving away from ‘hard’ infrastructure to ‘soft’ strategical social activities.

In *Un-nation branding*, Rhys Crilley and Ilan Manor tackle a difficult question: What can cities do if their nation brand image is hurting their own branding efforts? Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, two cities included in the study, find the nation brand image of Israel almost an obstacle in their attempts to engage with foreign audiences. Crilley and Manor observe that these cities engage in a branding strategy in which there is little to no reference to the country name. Their proposed concept, un-nation branding, further explains how city branding can help nations rebuild their image provided that cities start their branding campaigns by breaking the link with their countries.

The last local strategy for global engagement discussed in this section comes from the Urban 20 (U20) Mayoral Summit in Buenos Aires. Andrea Insch takes summits as an important opportunity for cities to share their commitment to global governance with the rest of the world. Subsequently, she analyzes the conversation on Twitter to see how the host city, Buenos Aires, as well as other participant cities in the U20 summit are represented. The findings of her study demonstrate the potential of summits for city diplomacy, despite the fact that the host studied had missed this particular opportunity. Regardless, Buenos Aires and other

participant cities were able to communicate their activities with interested parties during the summit, amplifying the offline work with online communication.

The section *City Diplomacy across Governance Levels* includes three chapters that present inclusive approaches to how city diplomacy operates at three different levels: global, regional, and national. These chapters offer frameworks that help place cities within broader governance systems to highlight how they can harmoniously establish and strengthen their global role while empowering the broader governing body to which they belong.

Chapter 9 carries its research question in its title: *How are cities inserting themselves in the international system?* Ray Lara argues that we need to move the discussion beyond city diplomacy. Currently, the concept is used as a catch-all term that does not value the nuances among different strategies. Lara instead presents a typology of insertion composed of four types that include eight different dimensions through which cities can insert themselves in the international arena. His typology is the result of an eight-year-long study that includes cities across the world.

Tamara Guirao-Espiñeira adds a regional focus to a similar question. In *Strategies for Enhancing EU City Diplomacy*, she studies how cities within the European Union utilize a combination of various representations, projects, campaigns, and networks to represent their local interests at the Union level. Her study incorporates her experience helping cities increase their international presence with EU databases and existing typologies in the literature. The three scenarios presented in the chapter, namely *bywatcher*, *silent silo*, and *strategist*, outline the main behavioral patterns of European cities in city diplomacy.

At the last, and most local, governance level, Sohaela Amiri discusses what the rise of city diplomacy means for American diplomacy. Through a comparison of three cities that house the Mayor's Office for International Affairs (MOIA), Amiri conceptualizes the 'in-between' power of these actors. Atlanta, New York, and Los Angeles have found themselves a place in-between non-state actors and state actors through their MOIA. The chapter further introduces organizational theory to these city diplomacy efforts to present recommendations to establish sustainable city diplomacy institutions for the United States.

The final section of the book includes in-depth studies of successful city branding and diplomacy practices—covering a diverse set of cities in terms of their size, geographic location, and social and political context, as well

as time. These case studies offer valuable insight about goal-setting, strategies, and role definition for public diplomacy and city branding initiatives at a time when communication platforms and speed are multiplying. The chapters also shed light on how cities can best identify their unique assets, or design new social and urban programs that help them promote both their brand and their policy objectives.

Hun Shik Kim Seow and Ting Lee look at how the city-state of Singapore has used track two diplomacy to position itself as an international peace broker. Singapore received global media attention in 2018 when the city hosted a historic summit that brought Americans and North Koreans together. Seow and Lee argue that attempts to understand Singapore's role in the global arena have been limited to tourism, arts, and other low politics subjects. Yet as the recent Trump-Kim summit demonstrates, the city-state has been active in other areas, including brokering peace deals. The chapter further details how Singapore has used its existing brand to increase its city diplomacy activities, which in return have diversified and strengthened its brand.

The next case study comes from South America. Eika Auschner, Liliana Lotero Álvarez, and Laura Álvarez Pérez present a comprehensive analysis of how Medellín, Colombia—once known as the most dangerous city in the world—managed to transform its image through paradiplomacy and city branding projects. The chapter takes the readers on a journey through the modern history of the city. Starting with Mayor Sergio Fajardo in 2004, the city has invested in both development of urban infrastructure and increasing its international outreach. Their study shows how local administrations can use diplomacy and branding to develop their cities.

*City diplomacy in young democracies: The case of the Baltics* starts with a stark observation: existing case studies in the field include mainly cities from 'old democracies', or countries that have developed substantial governance traditions throughout history. Valentina Burksiene, Jaroslav Dvorak, and Gabriele Burbulyte-Tsiskarishvili argue that the Baltics constitute an outlier. After a relatively recent social and political change period, the cities in the region have been discovering new opportunities and platforms to engage in international relations. In their study, the authors survey city diplomacy experts and identify existing activities of four cities in the major *Eurocities* network: the capitals Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia), and Tallinn (Estonia) as full members, and Klaipeda (Lithuania) as an associated partner. Their findings suggest that these cities are active in city-to-city networking activities but the region does not necessarily

have the institutions or structures for city diplomacy to affect political relations.

The last chapter starts with Louis Clerc highlighting two important areas for further discussion in city diplomacy. Existing research tends to favor larger cities, disregarding the role of smaller ones, such as the one he is studying: Turku (Finland). He establishes an analogy between the diplomacy of small cities and the behavior of smaller nations in international relations. He further argues that city diplomacy studies have a presentist feel. In order to avoid falling into the same trap, his chapter presents a historical view of Turku, starting with 1971 when city twinnings were discussed during the second Finno-Soviet meeting of twin cities. After discussing four decades of Turku's diplomatic adventures, Clerc concludes that there is a unique mix of agency and dependence on wider developments and other agents in the case of small city diplomacy.

### 1.3 THE WAY FORWARD

This book is intended to add to the growing literature on city diplomacy and to inspire future research and scholarship on this topic. To date, climate change experts, network analysts, sociologists, urban designers, historians, and branding experts have studied cities as a unit of analysis in their respective fields. However, in the field of international relations, and more specifically soft power and public diplomacy, the global role and influence of cities should be better studied. As editors of this book, we hope to begin filling this gap by expanding the focus of city diplomacy studies from an almost exclusive focus on how larger cities are combating climate change through networks. We bring together novel insights about city diplomacy, from practitioners' viewpoints to academic perspectives. Thus, the topics range from global governance and systems of diplomacy to nation branding and strategic communication.

We anticipate that more examples of globally shared policy challenges that are tackled through city diplomacy will quickly emerge—pandemics, migration, sustainability, education, and human rights being a few of the examples to consider. Cities have both the responsibility to act as more and more people call them 'homes' and the flexibility to adapt to the changing landscape of global relations. We hope the following chapters will encourage more scholars to pay attention to cities as legitimate actors in international relations and to continue articulating better ways to conduct effective city diplomacy.



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SECTION I

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Global Governance Through  
City Networks



# Beyond Networking? The Agency of City Network Secretariats in the Realm of City Diplomacy

*Emma Lecavalier and David J. Gordon*

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Cities actively participate in the global governance of a wide variety of complex issues, ranging from climate change to public health to human migration, and they often do so through the medium of transnational city networks. However, despite nearly two decades of research on the subject, we still lack a systematic appreciation of the implications of transnational city networking for global politics and diplomacy (Acuto et al. 2017; Herrschel and Newman 2017). This chapter focuses on one under-theorized dimension of city network agency: the role and impact of city network secretariats (CNSs). It examines the sources of CNS authority

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and the conditions under which they enact independent agency in global politics. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on how the exercise of authority by CNSs relates to the practice of city diplomacy.

Existing scholarship tends to treat city networks in general terms—as mechanisms of inter-city communication, learning, cooperation, and coordination—with a subsequent focus on tracing and explaining the content and directionality of both inter-city relations and policy/information flows (Lee 2015; Bouteligier 2013). Put another way, city networks are most often conceptualized as sites and facilitators of city diplomacy. From this perspective, it is cities and other non-state actors (multinational corporations, development banks, non-governmental entities, etc.) who possess agency, albeit to varying degrees, and their activities and interactions that are the focal point of analysis.

However, as this chapter will discuss, recent events in climate diplomacy suggest a need to rethink the prevailing conceptualization of city networks. In this chapter we explore whether and under what conditions city networks exert agency *of their own*. As city networks have grown in size and number, so too have network bureaucracies and organizational staff. With these shifts, city networks like United Cities and Local Governments and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group have increased their in-house expertise and material and institutional capacities. As a result, network secretariats, the administrative arms of city networks, are demonstrating increased influence over global political decisions regarding cities, especially in the realm of climate change governance.

In this we are clear to distinguish our focus from scholars such as Acuto (2013) who seek to understand the collective agency of city networks as assemblages (see also Gordon 2018). Our goal, instead, is to advance the proposition that city diplomacy can be, and indeed already is in part, practiced by CNSs as autonomous actors—entities that speak on behalf of cities in international forums and who aim to shape both the global governance agenda and the local governance activities of cities themselves. In this we draw inspiration from early work on cities and transnational climate governance that sought to identify the mechanisms through which city networks “govern” their member cities (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Betsill and Bulkeley 2004; Andonova et al. 2009), but seek to more directly theorize the agency of the network secretariat itself.

Our chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of, and scholarship on, city diplomacy, identifying the manner in which this concept has been defined, operationalized, and deployed in recent years. We then

illustrate our core claim by looking at the influence of CNSs in global climate governance. We examine one case in particular, which is the push to introduce a special report on cities and climate change into the Seventh Assessment Cycle of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The case of CitiesIPCC is, we believe, a particularly illustrative instance of CNS agency and the exercise of network authority. As such, we use this single case study to both generate a series of questions and suggest testable hypotheses that can be addressed in future comparative research on CNS agency in global politics (Gerring 2013). The case study draws on participatory observations by the authors from the inaugural CitiesIPCC Conference held in 2018, supplemented by desktop reviews of primary, secondary, and gray literature related to city networks and the push to “urbanize” the IPCC reporting process from 2015 to 2018. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring ways to reconceptualize city networks in light of their secretariats’ effective agency in global climate governance. Drawing on the work of Barnett and Finnemore (2004) and Jinnah (2014), we suggest that theories of bureaucratic autonomy can help us understand the nature of CNS agency, as well as the conditions under which it might be most influential.

## 2.2 THE URBANIZATION OF GLOBAL POLITICS

In September 2018, the mayors of twenty major cities issued a joint communiqué calling on the national leaders of the Group of 20 to recognize the increasingly urban nature of the needs, demands, and imperatives of the issues on the global agenda. Leveraging their stature as centers of population and economic activity, these twenty cities, referring to themselves as the ‘Urban 20’ (U20), engaged in a process of lobbying and advocacy aimed directly at the national leaders who would be gathering soon thereafter in Buenos Aires for the annual G20 summit (Urban 20 (U20) 2018). A few weeks later, another, albeit less acknowledged, instance of city engagement in world affairs took place in Seoul, South Korea. Here, a group of city network representatives from the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), Cities Alliance, ICLEI, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) presented to the members of the IPCC a Global Research and Action Agenda on Cities and Climate Change (World Climate Research Programme 2019). Summarizing and synthesizing the current state-of-the-art research related to the role of cities in governing climate change, the report illustrates a novel phenomenon in world affairs, one in which city networks are speaking directly for cities.

One way to characterize both these phenomena is as instances of contemporary city diplomacy—one being led by a coalition of influential city mayors and the other by influential city networks. A frequently cited definition refers to city diplomacy as “the institutions and processes by which cities, or local governments in general, engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another” (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 6). Historically, this has been operationalized via city-twinning or sister-city relationships, and may or may not be pursued through the creation of offices of international relations or foreign affairs embedded within the organizational structure of municipal government (Acuto et al. 2018). In a report published by the University of Southern California’s Center on Public Diplomacy and Portland (a strategic communications firm), government representatives from Los Angeles and New York City suggest that city diplomacy is a “critical role” for municipal governments, one that entails the sharing of best practices and experiences with other cities around the world (McClory 2018, p. 113). While practices of city-twinning represent the historical manifestation of city diplomacy, and celebrity mayors continue to grab headlines in global politics, there is no question that the center of gravity has, in recent years, been relocated to formal city networks (Acuto and Rayner 2016).

Underscoring the ‘urbanization’ of global politics is a boom in the number of these city networks, defined as formal associations of cities and municipalities through which officials learn from one another, engage with public and private actors such as firms and multilateral institutions, and advocate for collective urban interests (Acuto et al. 2017). A survey by Acuto and Rayner (2016) suggests that city networks are becoming more numerous and more transnational. Their initial review found roughly 200 city networks in existence, most of which have been established in the last few decades: since 1985, over 140 new city networks have been formed, and the numbers continue to climb with roughly four new networks established each year.

Not only are there more numerous city networks, but the practice of city networking is also shifting, and since the 1980s has become more *issue-specific*. The first generation of city networks generally focused on mediating the local—national relationship, as illustrated by national networks like the Swiss Cities Association and the Association of German

Cities.<sup>1</sup> This began to shift in the 1980s, when issue-specific city networks like Mayors for Peace (1982) and the World Health Organization's European Healthy Cities Network (1984) were founded. The result has been a shift in the roles and functions of city networks and their secretariats, which have become valuable producers of knowledge for and about cities. Indeed, issue-specific networks such as Energy Cities and Cities Alliance not only facilitate city-to-city interaction, but also distill, reformulate, or reinvent policy actions and best practice about the specific issues that they focus on. Not only do we have *more* city networks than in the past, but these city networks are qualitatively *different* when compared to their antecedents.

The specialization of city networks serves an important function for cities, especially in light of tighter municipal budgets arising from the influence of ideas drawn from both New Public Management<sup>2</sup> and economic precarity (Bryson et al. 2014). City networks and their secretariats provide useful "economies of scale" by pooling cities' resources to provide policy research, formal case studies, expert consultancy, and advocacy (Benington and Harvey 1998, p. 161; Betsill and Bulkeley 2004; Bulkeley and Betsill 2003). In some instances, secretariats provide specific tools and resources to their members. Australia's Cities Power Partnership provides a "power analytics tool" meant to help cities "plan, track, and share energy, financial, and carbon data" (Cities Power Partnership 2019). On a global scale, the Compact of Mayors provides a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory tool called ClearPath (Compact of Mayors 2019), while the C40 Cities Leadership Group offers its member cities a range of tools through its "Climate Action Planning Resource Centre" intended to help reduce GHG emissions, assess their particular climate risks, and plan their medium- and long-term climate strategies (C40 Cities 2019a). These platforms illustrate some of the valuable capacity building and information

<sup>1</sup>One of the earliest city networks, founded in 1885, was the Union Internationale de Tramways/Internationaler Permanenter Strassenbahn-Verein, or the International Association of Public Transport, *was* a transnational, issue-specific network. However, this is the exception, and there is limited evidence of other issue-specific networks being founded until Mayors for Peace in 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Popularized in the 1990s, New Public Management is a public administration approach based on a distrust of big government and a belief in the efficacy and efficiency of markets. It emphasized devolution for the delivery of services and integrated many private sector strategies and models into its bureaucratic management approach.

gathering tools city networks can provide to their city members, who are under enormous time and budgetary pressures.

In certain issue areas—especially in the realm of climate governance—CNSs also serve important diplomatic functions, acting as representatives for urban interests in official United Nations spaces or at multilateral meetings. In part thanks to the long-standing advocacy of city networks such as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability<sup>3</sup> and others, cities were recognized as key governmental stakeholders at the 2010 United Nations climate conference in Cancun (Fischer et al. 2015). The important role of cities in global climate governance was further recognized in 2014 with the launch of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda and the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) platform.<sup>4</sup> While advocacy comprised some of the work done by early generations of CNSs, it is notable that the recent generation of CNSs is advocating at the *global* scale. Moreover, as the case of climate governance suggests, CNSs are pursuing more ambitious diplomatic goals than in the past, seeking to garner recognition for cities in a diplomatic space that previously afforded them none (Escobar 2017). By advocating for the inclusion and consideration of cities in multilateral governance spaces, network secretariats have played an important role in garnering official recognition for cities and thus serve key diplomatic functions for their members (Acuto 2016). Whether they are shaping shared expectations with respect to the role of cities, and how they are to participate in world affairs, is thus a meaningful line of inquiry.

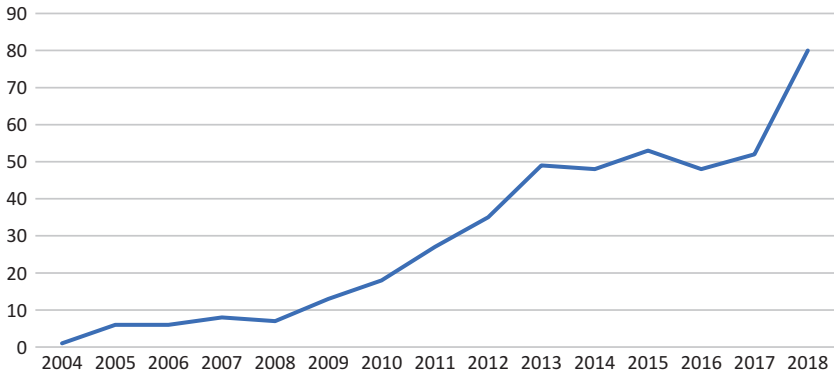
### 2.3 CITY NETWORKS AND CITY DIPLOMACY

The increase in the number of city networks, as well as the shift in their scope and function, has provoked considerable academic interest in recent years. As Fig. 2.1 shows, the number of studies mentioning transnational or global city/municipal networks has increased rapidly, from only one

<sup>3</sup>At its founding in 1990, ICLEI was an acronym for International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. However, since a name change in 2003, the network is now officially called ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, or ICLEI for short.

<sup>4</sup>The UN uses the term non-state to refer broadly to all actors other than states. Cities, while technically sub-state actors, are included in this designation, and are featured on the NAZCA platform and in the Lima-Paris Action Agenda.





**Fig. 2.1** Number of articles mentioning “transnational municipal network\*”, “transnational city network\*”, or “global city network\*” each year

article on the subject published in 2004 to 80 articles published on the topic in 2018.<sup>5</sup>

Within this body of literature, there are a number of approaches to understanding the role of city networks in global politics. Early approaches considered the advocacy role played by city networks as tools for cities to enhance their economic or social security (Alger 1990; Dudley 1999; Turner 1994). Studies of subnational para-diplomacy challenged state-centric conceptions of diplomacy and broadened the categories of *who* diplomatic actors could be and *where* diplomacy could occur. Early work traced the growing influence of cities and subnational entities outside of their geographic bounds, and challenged traditional notions of space and scale upon which diplomatic studies relied, including the separation of the domestic and the international sphere (Aldecoa and Keating 1999; Hocking 1993; Hocking et al. 2012). A key contribution of this literature was to trace the processes and rationales driving city networking and the pluralization of diplomacy. However, many of these approaches treated city networking as a phenomenon operating in parallel (hence *para*-diplomacy), rather than interacting with, institutions of traditional diplomacy. As such, the potential effects on global politics were considered to be limited. As one report notes, “in the case of city diplomacy, becoming

<sup>5</sup> Based on a search in the abstract and citation database SCOPUS.

organized on a regional, continental and global level is indeed a diplomatic goal in its own right” (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 28).

As city networking evolved in the 1990s and 2000s, so too did collective understandings of its political consequences. Tracing the indirect effects of city networking on the global political landscape has been key to this shift. In climate governance, city networks are notable for their role in encouraging policy experimentation, a practice that can reveal new technological or knowledge solutions which can be transferred to other locations or scaled up to drive deeper forms of change (Bulkeley et al. 2012; Fuenfschilling et al. 2019; Hoffmann 2011). Moreover, urban geographers and political scientists began to consider the internal governance dynamics of networks, and the ability of city networks to steer member cities in particular directions (Gordon 2013; Kern and Bulkeley 2009).

What remains undervalued is the diplomatic role played by city networks, and more specifically their secretariats. City networks are treated conceptually as either *venues for* or *tools in* global politics—a framing which emphasizes *city* rather than *city network* agency (Gordon 2018; Gordon and Acuto 2015; Bouteligier 2013; Lee 2013). This framing emphasizes the role that CNSs play as facilitators of city-to-city learning, as platforms through which cities can act in different venues and at different scales. In this sense, CNSs are not actors in global politics. Rather, they are understood through principal-agent framings, or treated as tools for urban para-diplomacy. From this perspective, it is cities and other non-state actors (multinational corporations, development banks, non-governmental entities) who are presumed to possess agency, albeit to varying degrees, and their activities and interactions that are the focal point of analysis.

However, contemporary city networks are evolving and maturing, and some now wield considerable material, bureaucratic, and knowledge resources. This suggests the need to engage in research which considers the networks’ secretariats and conceptually reframes CNSs as actors with the potential to exert some measure of agency independent of the actors who create, fund, or populate them. Not only are city networks governed by or governors of their member cities, but, through the activities of their secretariats, they are also increasingly involved in complex governance relationships with international organizations, think tanks, charitable foundations, and private firms. Given their evolving roles, how should we theoretically engage with the agency of CNSs? Moreover, under what conditions might we expect CNSs to exert their independent agency?

In response we look for inspiration from IR scholarship on the bureaucratic autonomy of international organizations to provide valuable insight. Barnett and Finnemore (2004) offer an account of international organizations (IOs) that questions the assumption that these organizations behave as designed, pointing instead to the informal and unsanctioned behaviors that are commonplace among IOs. Moreover, the book traces the conditions under which IOs obtained the power to act in such ways, arguing for a reconceptualization of international organizations as *bureaucracies*, a view which moves beyond thinking of IOs through principal-agent relations of delegation, and views bureaucratic IOs as “authorities in their own right” (Barnett and Finnemore 2004, p. 5). The power of bureaucracies comes from the missions they pursue (missions that are often crafted by states and often considered ‘progressive’), as well as the way they pursue those missions through rational, legal, impartial, and nonviolent means. Their perceived impartiality, technocratic expertise, and networks of social relationships are key sources of legitimacy, providing IOs with meaningful claims to authority. Such agency is operationalized in multiple possible ways: agenda-setting and issue framing, brokering and bridge-building, shaping norms and shared expectations.

Similar to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), city networks have progressive missions crafted by their governmental ‘principals’ (cities rather than states), and these missions provide them with the legitimacy to act in global governance. ICLEI aims to make “sustainability a fundamental part of all local and global development” (ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability 2018), whereas the C40 boasts a commitment to “delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe” (C40 Cities 2019b). Both missions are eminently ‘good’ and progressive goals to pursue, and as such city networks draw legitimacy from these missions in the work they do. Moreover, as representatives of not one but rather a collection of cities, these networks embody the same kind of impartiality as do IOs. In pursuing particular interests or agendas, their intentions appear more benign as they speak for a body of cities rather than if one city were advocating for its own particular interests. Finally, with increasingly large independent staff<sup>6</sup> and an ever-widening range of activities beyond facilitating

<sup>6</sup>As an illustration, the C40 had a full-time staff of 157 as of October, 2018, while ICLEI had 260 staff as of January, 2019.

peer-to-peer networking, city networks have become increasingly ‘bureaucratized’, with internal rules or cultures that can shape the networks’ interests, as well as the interests of the member cities themselves (Gordon 2020; Kern and Bulkeley 2009). The comparison is, of course, imperfect, as city networks lack the legal-rational authority of the UNHCR and IMF, which have legal mandates from their member states. However, as the functions of city networks have become more numerous, and the size of these networks has ballooned, these organizations, like more formal IO bureaucracies, are beginning to leverage their impartiality and moral and expert authority in order to gain the legitimacy to act autonomously.

As Bauer and Ege (2016, p. 3) remark, the task is no longer one of demonstrating whether international bureaucracies possess and exert agency in world politics (“they certainly do”) but rather to identify and account for the conditions and degree to which that agency is exercised. Jinnah (2014, p. 8) posits the importance of substitutability and principal preferences as key conditions that shape secretariat agency: in a nutshell, the more a secretariat can perform tasks that are unique or difficult to replace, and the weaker the preferences (and thus identity and interests) held by principal actors (cities in our case), the more likely it is that secretariats will be able to shape and influence outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter will apply these ideas to explore the proposition that city diplomacy is being undertaken by CNSs. It will explore whether and under what conditions CNSs exert agency of their own by looking at the recent example of the #CitiesIPCC campaign.

## 2.4 CITY NETWORKS AS DIPLOMATIC AGENTS: THE #CITIESIPCC CAMPAIGN

In March, 2016, C40, ICLEI, and UCLG—three of the most influential city networks in urban climate governance—launched the #CitiesIPCC campaign. The aim of the initiative, broadly speaking, is to advocate for the enhancement of scientific knowledge with regard to cities and climate change. The timing of the launch was no coincidence, coming in advance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 43rd session in Kenya.<sup>7</sup> The specific aim at the time of the campaign’s launch was to encourage the delegates gathered in Nairobi in April, 2016 to write a special report on cities as a part of the sixth assessment cycle (AR6), which

<sup>7</sup>The IPCC is the UN body tasked with assessing the science related to climate change.



Fig. 2.2 Timeline of #CitiesIPCC campaign

began in 2016 and will conclude in 2023. While the campaign did not achieve this proximate objective, delegates did agree to write the report during the following assessment cycle, AR7 (International Institute for Sustainable Development, IISD 2016). Six months later at the IPCC's 44th session in Bangkok, the #CitiesIPCC campaign scored another win when the IPCC agreed to co-sponsor a scientific conference on cities and climate change. By this point, the #CitiesIPCC campaign had grown in size, and included prominent partners such as Future Earth, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the United Nations Environment Programme, UN-HABITAT, and the World Climate Research Programme (Fig. 2.2).

Two years after the launch of the campaign, in March, 2018, 750 urban researchers and city practitioners arrived in Edmonton, Alberta to attend the Cities and Climate Change Science Conference-CitiesIPCC. The purpose of the event was to take stock of existing research related to cities and climate change and map gaps in knowledge which should be filled by future study. More broadly, the aim of the conference was to catalyze research that would provide the basis for the AR7 Special Report on Climate Change and Cities and could help deliver on the objectives embedded in the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The CitiesIPCC conference and the IPCC's commitment to a special report on cities are both notable milestones for proponents of global urban climate governance, as they represent the IPCC's recognition of cities' role in managing and mitigating climate change.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the conference itself marks an unprecedented move by the IPCC, which had never held an outreach event of this kind before.

<sup>8</sup> Prior to the decision, the IPCC's focus on cities was limited to one chapter (Chapter 8, in *Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*) in the Fifth Assessment Report (2014).

The #CitiesIPCC campaign and the CitiesIPCC conference in particular illustrate the evolving agency of CNSs as autonomous actors. The secretariats of the lead networks—C40, ICLEI, and UCLG—demonstrated independent agency during the conference, setting the conference agenda and interpreting the lessons for research which emerged from the event. Moreover, their leadership roles in the campaign and conference have potentially important feedback effects, entrenching their positions as leaders in urban climate governance and moving them into increasingly central positions in the global climate governance network.

### 2.4.1 *Shifting Locations of Knowledge Generation*

Prior to the conference, the locus of urban scientific knowledge generation was located in entities like the Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN, a global network of scholars and experts with core operations based out of Columbia University). UCCRN has mimicked the IPCC process and produced two multi-authored scientific reports on various dimensions of urban climate governance (Rosenzweig et al. 2011, 2018). With CitiesIPCC, and the formation of direct links to the inter-governmental process through the IPCC, this effort has become more formalized and institutionalized. In fact, the CitiesIPCC conference ‘behaved’ like an IPCC conference, reflecting and replicating practices common to the IPCC process itself. It drew similar political ‘boundaries’ around discussion, censoring some topics (e.g. those related to the veracity and viability of national commitments and actions), marginalizing others (e.g. regarding the tensions between objectives of economic growth and sustainability transformation), and prioritizing others still (especially those related to technological innovation, standardization, and open access to urban data). As such, while CitiesIPCC was broadly inclusive with respect to geographic participation, and encouraged a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives related to the urban dimensions of climate impacts and governance, this stance runs the risk of limiting the range of inputs (source of knowledge) and outputs (recommended modes of response) generated.

However, the CitiesIPCC conference was more than just city knowledge being brought *into* the IPCC process. Rather, driven by key actors in the CNSs, the CitiesIPCC conference marked a significant shift for the IPCC: the formulation of an authoritative Global Research and Action Agenda intended to both convey and guide urban climate governance

priorities marks an unprecedented move by the IPCC. The reporting process to date has relied upon compiling and summarizing existing peer-reviewed scholarship. Never before has the IPCC attempted to dictate the direction of future scholarship, nor have its events ever included such a plurality of actors beyond the research community. The initiation of the CitiesIPCC conference alone suggests the significant and independent impact CNSs are having not only on cities, but also on the global governance of urban climate change.

### 2.4.2 *Shaping the Research Agenda*

C40, ICLEI, and UCLG played a key role in bringing the cities agenda to the IPCC. This is reflected in the clear leadership positions they held in the framing and organization of the conference. Not only did C40 and Cities Alliance co-chair the organizing committee (alongside the host city of Edmonton), but C40's then-Director of Science and Innovation Seth Schultz was one of three co-chairs of the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC).<sup>9</sup>

The SSC played an important role in shaping the content of the event's scientific outputs, "developing the scientific strategy and vision to achieve the conference objectives" (CitiesIPCC 2018). This included setting the four themes around which conference discussion centered,<sup>10</sup> and selecting the participants invited to attend the event. Moreover, Schultz in his capacity as SSC co-chair was a contributing author on two of the key framing documents released prior to the conference, including a key piece published in *Nature* (Bai et al. 2018). Both publications recommend research pathways for enhancing our understandings of the science of cities and climate change. Finally, the SSC proved influential because it was this committee that had the power to interpret the outcomes of the three-day conference—the Research and Action Agenda—and was the

<sup>9</sup>In addition to Schultz (formerly of the C40), the Scientific Steering Committee was co-chaired by two scientific researchers: Dr. Shobhakar Dhakal from the Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand) and Professor Diana Ürge-Vorsatz from Central European University (Hungary).

<sup>10</sup>The four themes of the conference were as follows: Theme 1- Cities and climate change (imperatives for action); Theme, 2- Urban emissions, impacts, and vulnerabilities (Science and practice of cities); Theme 3- Solutions for the transition to low carbon and climate resilient cities (science and practice for cities); Theme 4- Enabling transformative climate action in cities (advancing science and advancing cities).

body reporting back to the IPCC at the 48th Session in Korea (World Climate Research Programme 2019). The SSC had “ultimate decision-making power with regards to the conference”(Scientific Steering Committee 2018).

The C40’s expertise and role as research and knowledge producer is reflected in their representation within the Scientific Steering Committee, and in Schultz’s contributions to the related publications. The network’s position was more than ornamental. The C40 was a key contributor in shaping the knowledge which emerged from the conference, choosing to recommend certain research pathways over others and implicitly representing certain values or interests regarding urban climate change and how it should be approached. Some, in fact, critiqued the approach recommended in the Bai et al. (2018) piece as being overly technocratic and lacking an appreciation of the complex socio-political challenges at the heart of the urban climate challenge (Romero-Lankao et al. 2018). This suggests, therefore, the influential role played by the C40 as a member of the Scientific Steering Committee and a key contributor in charting a future pathway for research on cities and climate change. The ability to shape knowledge about cities and climate change—including how to define the problem and what the possible solutions might be—is an underappreciated but powerful role played by city networks in climate governance.

It is notable that the CNSs in the CitiesIPCC conference operated without clear directives from their member cities (besides the networks’ mission statements). Instead, the network officials operated in their capacity as city experts, shaping and guiding the conference’s scientific agenda and interjecting the knowledge they had acquired from researching urban climate change and assisting cities with policy design and implementation. In fact, the city network partners were so independent from their member cities that there were criticisms that the conference lacked representation from practitioners, who comprised roughly 20% of conference participants (World Climate Research Programme 2019). Part of the thrust behind CitiesIPCC is a desire among cities and city networks for the United Nations to be better engaged with local governments (IISD 2018); the CitiesIPCC conference suggests that engagement is likely to be with or through networks, rather than with cities directly.

In sum, through initiating the CitiesIPCC conference, framing its objectives, and setting its agenda, CNSs are influencing the IPCC agenda. They are exerting direct and discernible impacts on the characterization of urban climate change research and action imperatives for cities moving forward.



## 2.5 RECONCEPTUALIZING CITY NETWORKS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The CitiesIPCC case suggests the need for more nuanced conceptual tools that can account for the different dimensions of city network agency. Now city networks are not, as noted above, directly analogous to IOs; they differ in the plural sources of authority from which city networks draw (verses the rational-legal authority which makes up the core of IO authority). Not only do CNSs derive legitimacy from their member cities, they can also draw upon international organizations and states, as is the case with the CitiesIPCC. Whereas cities provided the mandate for the C40, ICLEI, and UCLG to advocate for city interests at the global level, the states gathered in the context of the IPCC provided these networks with the legitimacy to act as leaders of the global urban scientific agenda. In other instances, partnerships with think tanks (e.g. the partnership between the Strong Cities Network and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue) or with global philanthropic organizations (as is the case with the C40 and Bloomberg Philanthropies) can provide alternative forms of authority, whether grounded in epistemic or material capacity. Indeed, the range of partnerships city networks have engaged in could be considered an advantage of these institutional forms, providing the legitimacy to act with different actors in different spaces. What this suggests is the need for empirically grounded research that interrogates the novel political spaces created in the form of inter-urban governance initiatives (operating at national, regional, and global scales) and identifies and assesses the autonomy of CNSs as distinct actors, as related to their attempts and ability to shape, direct, and generate collective urban governance outcomes (Davidson et al. 2019). Such an approach can offer a means for better understanding and assessing the ways in which city networks exert influence over the diplomatic landscape in which they engage. One example of such research is recent work in climate governance which explores the demonstration and inspiration effects of city networking on traditional multilateral negotiations (Fraundorfer 2017; Hickmann 2016). This work highlights how city networks are increasingly diplomatic actors in and of themselves, with consequences for both their city members and other actors in global governance.

### 2.5.1 *Conditions for City Network Independence*

The preliminary analysis presented above suggests some potential conditions under which CNS agency might be most probable or effective, of which we want to highlight two: the nature of the issue and its degree of complexity, and whether or not there is a strong institutional presence regarding the issue (Biermann and Siebenhuner 2009). In the case of urban climate change, the issue is highly complex and characterized by uncertainty, while the absence of a public institution in charge of the issue of urban climate governance (e.g. a UN agency) gave CNSs scope to act as leaders in the campaign. Given alternative circumstances, we would not expect CNSs to embody as much independent agency. The following paragraphs further explain the dynamics.

First, the impact of climate change on cities is a complex, technical issue marked by a high degree of uncertainty. Indeed, this is precisely the reason for the CitiesIPCC campaign—the need to generate research on this understudied but critical issue. Researchers of epistemic communities have argued that experts are more likely to be influential given complex or highly technical policy issues (Haas 1992; Lindvall 2009). As an outgrowth of their role in facilitating peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practice, city networks have increasingly become sites of expertise and research regarding cities and climate change. Against the backdrop of securing financial investment required to drive urban development, maintenance, and transformation, this condition of issue complexity and uncertainty opens up space for CNSs to leverage their positions in order to influence the generation, dissemination, and distribution of scientific knowledge about cities and their role in the global governance of climate change. In doing so, CNSs can shape both how cities are understood by external audiences and how cities prioritize governance objectives and interventions. The prevailing emphasis on emissions measurement, standardization, accounting, and public disclosure is one manifestation of this dynamic in need of research and analysis. Thinking about CNSs as potential sources of agency in global urban (climate) governance offers a broader conceptual point of entry into the governance dynamics taking place within any and all instances of formal city-networked governance. This analysis picks up on early efforts by scholars to theorize the mechanisms through which city networks exert influence over their constituent members, but redirects attention toward understanding the interests that shape CNS agency as well as the conditions under which it is/can be exerted

(Andonova et al. 2009; Bulkeley and Betsill 2003; Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Selin and VanDeveer 2009).

In this light, we might also think about the potential agency of CNSs to build bridges between, or exert influence beyond, formal network initiatives. In this sense initiatives like CitiesIPCC may represent one means through which CNSs as autonomous actors attempt to generate coordination beyond the boundaries of discrete city networks. While scholars have tended to focus on the mechanisms and processes through which city networks like ICLEI, the C40, or the Climate Alliance aim to generate coordination among member cities (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Lee 2015), much less attention has been paid to the ways in which coordination might be achieved beyond or outside those bounded spaces. Initiatives like CitiesIPCC may offer CNSs a means of exerting influence by establishing themselves as linking agents or central nodes through which the broader universe of cities can be networked. This suggestion opens the door to thinking about CNSs as participants in processes of orchestration, through which the governance objectives and activities of cities are being steered in particular ways (Gordon and Johnson 2017; Abbott et al. 2015).

Second, the distribution of authority in the broader governance landscape can influence the degree to which CNSs can exercise independent agency. When there is a clear institutional leadership (such as the UNHCR for the refugee crisis) and delegated roles for a global challenge, one would not expect CNSs to develop significant autonomous agency. However, climate governance is a unique issue in that it is relatively *under-institutionalized*, lacking a legally binding treaty around which a diplomatic regime might form. Decades of multilateral ‘gridlock’ and interstate disagreement have produced a policy environment without a clear leader (or legal rule-maker); consequently, global climate governance has been a space conducive to upstart non-state governors, of which city networks have been an influential part (Green 2010; Hale et al. 2013; Hoffmann 2011). This institutional leadership vacuum has been conducive to *city* agency, providing opportunities to take leadership roles where states have been unwilling or unable to act. One phrase frequently invoked in this context embodies this trend: “National governments debate and dither. Cities act, cities do” (Bartlett 2017). At the same time, it may be conducive to *CNSs’* agency as well. While cities and celebrity mayors have indeed been ‘acting’ and ‘doing’, they have been doing so through the vehicles of city networks. The effect of this has been a strengthening of these institutions and their independent legitimacy. As one report notes in reference to

the C40: "...not all authority rests wholly in mayors' hands...In the eyes of some closely involved, C40 runs the risk of becoming an aim in itself" as a result of the growth of the C40 Secretariat from a "small, advisory" role to one that has "acquired significant powers over time" (Francesch-Huidobro et al. 2017, p. 11).

Future research can and should address the question of whether, and under what conditions, CNSs are able to exert agency and contribute to overcoming the tendency for these voluntary initiatives to struggle with matching the nominal commitment of cities to the production of meaningful collective effects. Furthermore, analysis must confront the normative bias that at times inflects public discussion of city networks and global governance, and must explore with a critical eye the interests served by CNS agency. To this end, it is essential to parse the sources of funding, staff, and resources that city networks possess, and how these are mobilized through particular mechanisms of relationship management, information dissemination, and capacity building.

One might argue that climate governance is a unique domain, and CNS agency may be unlikely to develop in other issue areas. However, given economic and demographic changes and projected future rates of urbanization, it is unlikely that climate governance will be the only global policy area that will change to accommodate urban needs (Curtis 2016). Already, one can observe global public health taking greater account of city needs, supported in part by city networks like the WHO's Healthy Cities (Acuto et al. 2017). Similarly, the changing nature of transnational crime and terrorism seems likely to force policymakers to consider trans-local flows of people and goods in order to enhance urban and national safety (Kilcullen 2015; Ljungkvist 2016). Other policy domains may therefore also provide conducive environments for city network agency, and future research should consider CNS authority in other issue areas.

## 2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Whereas the concept of city diplomacy has tended to emphasize the interaction between city government officials and "other actors, particularly other cities, nation-states, NGOs and corporations" (Acuto et al. 2018, p. 3), the increase in transnational city networking in recent years and the ambition of such initiatives to claim a position of global leadership have generated an augmented focus on the mechanics of inter-city coordination (Acuto 2013; Bouteligier 2013; Gordon 2018). This chapter suggests

that taking seriously the possibility of CNS agency requires scholars and practitioners to consider how traditional diplomatic spaces are becoming increasingly hybridized, and how institutions of diplomacy are evolving to reflect these new modes of agency in global urban politics. By exploring one dimension of city network agency—the agency of CNSs—this chapter offers a potential lens through which researchers can assess the independent effects of city networks, through their secretariats, in global governance.

If, as this chapter argues, we are to consider CNSs as agents in global governance, this raises a key question for future research: What are the potential theoretical implications of this phenomenon for diplomacy studies? First, CNS agency forces scholars of diplomacy to consider how traditional diplomatic spaces are becoming increasingly hybridized, and how institutions of diplomacy are evolving to reflect new modes of agency in global urban politics. In light of the plurality of agents in urban diplomacy, future research should consider and trace the various independent (and at times competing) interests among these actors.

Second, in order to appreciate city network agency, diplomacy research must account for more diverse forms of power. Network power (Grewal 2008; Kahler 2009), epistemic authority (Davis Cross 2013; Haas 1992), and discursive power (Schmidt 2008) should be considered if scholars hope to understand the ways in which the governance landscape is changing. Bringing to bear recent scholarship on interstate diplomacy may offer a means of illuminating the dynamics of agency and authority, by focusing attention on the practices through which city-city diplomacy is enacted, how these practices serve to constitute cities as actors of a particular sort on the world stage, and whether CNSs are able to shape or diffuse those practices through mechanisms of agenda-setting, providing sets of standard procedures and rules of conduct, or establishing platforms for inter-city communication (Pouliot and Cornut 2015).

Finally, future research should explore the nature of the relationship between CNSs and member cities in global diplomatic spaces. More specifically, we need a better understanding of the conditions under which CNSs have the potential to exert agency and influence over their members or beyond network boundaries. This requires clarifying when network secretariats serve primarily as mouthpieces for the interests of network members, funding partners, or stakeholders, and when their actions suggest an attempt to impart on the network an independent set of interests. Moreover, it requires a closer analysis of the nature and form of CNS

influence, and careful consideration of the variety of ways in which CNS influence may manifest. Process tracing, interview research, and ethnographic approaches would benefit our understandings in this regard, providing greater insight into instances of divergence between secretariat and member city interests and evidencing instances of CNS influence in practice.

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# Cacophony or Complementarity? The Expanding Ecosystem of City Networks Under Scrutiny

*Hannah Abdullah and Eva Garcia-Chueca*

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Recent public discourses on the urban century have hailed cities and their networks as promising new advocates for global democracy. What is often overlooked is that the ambition of cities to gain international influence and projection is no new phenomenon. Cities have operated through formalized international networks for decades. That said, there has been an unprecedented expansion in formal city networks since the 1990s (Alger 2011; Acuto et al. 2017). A key feature that distinguishes this latest phase of city networking is that today municipal governments are no longer the lead protagonists promoting associations and knowledge exchange between cities. A whole cast of other international players from both the public and private sectors have become involved in city networks as

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founders, funders and/or members (Fernández de Losada and Abdullah 2019). They include intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the United Nations [UN] and its agencies, the European Union [EU] and the World Bank), powerful members of the private sector (e.g. Google, Cisco and Arup), philanthropists (e.g. Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Rockefeller Foundation), civil society organizations (CSOs) and knowledge-based institutions. The space historically occupied by transnational municipal networks (TMNs), which limit membership to local government administrations, is now shared by a new generation of multi-stakeholder city platforms. This sprawl in city networking and diplomacy is both a *cause* and a *consequence* of the growing importance attributed to urbanization processes in international policy debates and processes.

The new enthusiasm for collectively tackling shared urban challenges and the availability of networking channels should be viewed as a positive development. The great potential of the many kinds of city networks and strategic alliances lies in their dynamic and innovative mode of operating. Yet, they also risk becoming increasingly competitive, territorial and redundant (Acuto and Rayner 2016). Cities themselves find it increasingly difficult to navigate the opportunities of city diplomacy (De La Varga 2019; Roca 2019). They are overwhelmed by the number of invitations to join networks and are increasingly confused about which avenues will produce the most effective outcomes. To use an ecological analogy, today's global landscape of city networks constitutes a complex "ecosystem" of a great variety of public-public, public-private and other multi-stakeholder arrangements (Acuto et al. 2017; Fernández de Losada and Abdullah 2019). Oftentimes this ecosystem produces a cacophony of voices and actions rather than a concerted effort to represent local interests in the international governance system. This dynamic is driving the fragmentation of advocacy relating to global policy processes with an urban dimension. It highlights the urgent need for city networks to move toward more collaborative and concerted actions and to speak with a united voice.

In this chapter, we ask what type of international political actors city networks are and how they can be more effective in influencing global urban policies. We suggest that a better understanding of the current ecosystem of city networks can provide valuable insights into these questions. We give particular attention to how the new plethora of networks presents both risks and opportunities in terms of the ability of cities to leverage international agendas in order to bring local challenges and perspectives to the global table. The structure of the chapter is as follows. It begins with

a brief discussion of the progressive recognition of cities and city networks as global political actors and how they contribute to new forms of multi-level and networked global governance. We then reflect on some of the main trends in city diplomacy and networking with the aim of identifying opportunities and strategies for more collaboration across networks. After examining the challenges posed by the sprawl in city networks, we point to some possible opportunities that come with the new variety in networking arrangements.

Given the chapter's focus on the influence of city networks on global governance, the analysis is limited to transnational networks, both traditional TMNs and more hybrid city platforms.<sup>1</sup> The arguments are based on document analysis, interviews with representatives of city networks and insights gained during a seminar titled "Rethinking the Ecosystem of International City Networks: Challenges and Opportunities", organized by the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs), in July 2018. The seminar involved representatives from major regional and international city networks, including the Euro-Latin American Alliance of Cooperation among Cities (AL-LAs), MedCities, Eurocities, Cities Alliance, the International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC), the World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), as well as representatives from some city councils that are active members of city networks.

### 3.2 NETWORKED CITIES AS GLOBAL POLITICAL ACTORS

Since the turn of the century, there has been a city-centric shift in international policy discourses and processes (Curtis 2014; Klaus 2018). In 2001, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened the annual meeting of UN-HABITAT by stating that the world had entered an "urban millennium".<sup>2</sup> He elaborated on this notion in his foreword to the first

<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that national networks have no role and influence in global governance. With the increasing interconnectedness of global and local developments, their actions at times also make a mark on the international scene. For example, the Sanctuary Cities network in the US has not only intervened in US migration policies but also impacted the global discourse on migration policy. Yet, advocacy in international governance forums are rarely among the principal mandates of national networks.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.un.org/press/en/2001/GA9867.doc.htm>

edition of UN-HABITAT's flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities*, of the same year: "As more and more people make cities their home, cities will be the arenas in which some of the world's biggest social, economic, environmental and political challenges will be addressed, and where the solutions will be found. As globalization proceeds, more cities will find themselves managing problems and opportunities that used to be the exclusive domain of national governments" (UN-HABITAT 2001, p. 2). The ideas articulated in this excerpt are characteristic of many of the larger international policy debates that have emerged around cities in the past two decades. With the escalating urbanization trend, it has become widely acknowledged that today's major global challenges concentrate in cities and that urban governance is key to their remedy. Together with this acknowledgement, a new "urban optimism" has emerged, in which cities are no longer thought of as problems but as sites of opportunity and positive transformation (Barnett and Parnell 2016).

The evolving UN discourse on cities suggests the establishment of a pro-urban policy consensus. This urban shift of the UN has been gradual. In 1976, the first UN Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT I) expressed a shared international concern about "overcrowding, pollution, deterioration and psychological tensions in metropolitan regions". One year later, the Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) was created with the mandate "to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all".<sup>3</sup> But it was not until the early 2000s that "*urban* policies" started to be systematically interlinked with issues that touch upon "*high* politics" (Ljungkvist 2016, p. 1). The culmination of this trend was the UN 2030 Agenda, adopted in 2015, which includes a stand-alone goal on inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities (Sustainable Development Goal 11) and 169 targets that nearly all depend on the actions of local governments. UN-HABITAT's sponsorship of a global urban policy agenda, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted in 2016, further consolidated the city-centric perspective on sustainable development. Together, the two agendas constitute a major paradigm shift at UN level and in global governance more generally: they recognize the developmental role of local governments and that, in an urban world, cities can be pathways to sustainable development (Parnell 2016). The assumption is that there is a positive correlation between sustainable "urban development", mostly

<sup>3</sup> See <https://new.unhabitat.org/about-us/learn-more>

through compact city planning, and sustainable development more generally. Urban processes are considered central to securing sustainable futures in areas ranging from climate change to economic growth, poverty eradication, food security and public health. Kristin Ljungkvist (2014) has called this shift a new “global localist ideology”. In this ideology, international bodies are becoming heavily involved in the empowerment of local authorities and other urban stakeholders.

But more than a top-down process, the empowerment of cities has been bottom-up. With global challenges being reframed as urban ones, cities and their governments have seized the opportunity to expand their political influence and claim authority. Increasingly, cities are no longer just strategic sites and places to govern—they are establishing themselves as autonomous global political actors (Acuto 2013; Ljungkvist 2016; Oosterlynck et al. 2019; Foster and Swiney 2019). The exponential rise in transnational city networks since the 1990s clearly shows how cities and other urban stakeholders are collectively stepping up to meet the new responsibility. A study by the City Leadership Laboratory at University College London shows that of the 200 networks active today, 29% were established in the 1990–2000 period and 30% since 2001 (Acuto et al. 2017, p. 16). The study also highlights that while national networks continue to predominate, there has been a growing trend toward regional urban association (mostly in Europe, but also in Latin America and Asia) and global city networking since the early 2000s. City networks were originally created to promote cooperation and institution building across borders, to facilitate knowledge sharing and to foster certain political values and goals, such as local democracy and peace.<sup>4</sup> Today, networks are engaging even more in international policy lobbying and advocacy, especially at the UN level. The need to develop international associations that “parallel those of States” (Alger 2011, p. 3) is becoming increasingly important for cities. Through the participation in formalized networks, they have the opportunity to access and try to influence the different spheres of government in which the global agendas they need to implement at local level are negotiated. Recent global policy processes around the post-2015 development agenda suggest that city diplomacy is in fact beginning to alter the

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the mission and statutes of two traditional TMNs: UCLG (<https://www.uclg.org/en/organisation/about>, [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/eng\\_constitution\\_2013\\_.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/eng_constitution_2013_.pdf)) and Metropolis (<https://www.metropolis.org/about-us#mission>, [https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/statutes\\_2014.pdf](https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/statutes_2014.pdf)).

rules of global governance. The drafting and negotiation process of both the 2030 Agenda and NUA intensely mobilized city networks and acknowledged their important role in constructing a new multi-level governance structure that can better respond to complex global challenges.

### 3.3 CITY NETWORKS: GOVERNING FROM THE MIDDLE

With the shifting patterns and objectives of city networking, city diplomacy has also undergone profound transformations. Another term that has often been used to describe and theorize city diplomacy is “paradiplo-macy” (Michelmann and Soldatos 1990). But the prefix “*para-*”, meaning parallel to, is misleading in today’s international relations context. As Pluijm and Melissen (2007) have shown, the notion that city actors operate in a parallel diplomatic sphere which is separate from a central sphere dominated by nation-states is a simplification of our post-Westphalian reality. Instead, city and state actors operate in a diplomatic environment that “does not recognize the exclusive territories of the domestic and the international” (Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 9). In this environment, a changing cast of city, state and other players interact, depending on the issue at stake. Notably, with the urbanization of global challenges, the issue areas around which cities are forming international alliances have broadened substantially. They now encompass concerns that were traditionally considered core responsibilities of national governments. Some of the most prominent networks have formed alliances around climate governance (e.g. ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability, C40 and the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy). Others address issues such as international cooperation and solidarity (e.g. UCLG, Metropolis and AL-LAs), sustainable urban development (e.g. Cities Alliance, 100RC and UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network), health (e.g. the World Health Organization’s Healthy Cities Network), education (e.g. Educating Cities) and child protection (e.g. UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities Initiative).

A key feature of contemporary city diplomacy is its multi-sidedness. Compared with the city-twinning programs that emerged in the post-World War II period, typically to strengthen relations between only two cities, contemporary city diplomacy usually involves multiple cities and other entities. The latter include states and intergovernmental organizations and, increasingly, also other urban stakeholders, such as private businesses, CSOs and knowledge-based institutions. The multi-sided nature of contemporary city diplomacy is also what distinguishes it from the foreign



policy of states. Whereas states mostly rely on sovereign forms of power, cities today operate through networked forms of power, with “the ability to convene and lead coalitions of actors towards specific governance outcomes” (Curtis and Acuto 2018, p. 1).

Some scholars of city diplomacy have gone as far as to suggest that formalized city networks represent emerging networked governance structures in world politics (see, e.g. Aldecoa and Keating 1999; Lachapelle and Paquin 2005; Acuto 2010, 2016; Amen et al. 2011; Curtis and Acuto 2018). They argue that city networks not only *influence* policy processes and decisions of intergovernmental organizations, they actually participate in *governing* global risks and problems. The prominent role of city networks in the negotiation and drafting of the post-2015 global development agenda supports this observation. What we are witnessing is a fundamental redefinition of state-local relations in global governance, with national governments facing increasing pressures to share their monopoly power. As Mikael Román (2010) has put it, by engaging in transnational networks to influence intergovernmental policy processes, cities “not only redefine their role as public actors, but, by extension, they also challenge the role of government as sole governing institution” (p. 74). Cities are moving “beyond government politics” and toward complex “governance arrangements” that consist of hybrid and multi-sectoral partnerships between public and private stakeholders, as well as innovative modes of multi-level government cooperation (Acuto and Rayner 2016, pp. 1159–60).

For many advocates of pro-urban discourse, the great value of these emerging networked governance structures is their potential to effectively take on the scale and diffused nature of global challenges. By offering spaces in which the public sector, civil society and the for-profit private sector can collaborate, city networks constitute much-needed “creative new arrangements” (Reinicke and Deng 2000, p. vii) in which different stakeholders are brought together to address global challenges. This “governance from the middle” (Román 2010, pp. 73–74) involves city networks mediating between a diverse set of actors and governing both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, by linking cities with established formal governance structures at national, regional and global levels. Horizontally, by fostering dialogue and coordination between local governments that are members of city networks and other non-state actors. This governance from the middle has proven particularly effective in the area of climate mitigation, in which city networks have made their greatest efforts to engage in international policy debates and commit to concrete

local action. In the EU context, for example, several vertical or multi-level governance developments have emerged in the area of climate mitigation (Kern and Bulkeley 2009). At global level, interesting horizontal or networked forms of governance have been created around hybrid city platforms such as C40 (Bouteligier 2013).

The positive results of city-led climate action mean the much-cited slogan “nations talk, cities act”, often attributed to Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York and now president of the board of C40, rings true. In the area of global climate governance, the new forms of networked governance driven by cities and their allies have offered opportunities to overcome the widely diagnosed “gridlock” (Hale et al. 2013) affecting large parts of the multilateral system (Acuto and Rayner 2016). City networks, it seems, are partially filling the “governance gap” (Hale et al. 2013) that has emerged between our need for global climate solutions and the increasing inability of the multilateral order to deliver them.

Proponents of a “new localism”, such as Bruce Katz and Jeremy Nowak (2017) and Benjamin Barber (2013), have attributed this ability of cities to collectively offer solutions to global problems to their inherent pragmatism. While intergovernmental processes are often sabotaged by political and ideological interests, collaboration between cities is oriented at channeling resources to addressing shared problems, peer-learning and joint capacity building. Further, these authors highlight the ability of cities to counter the democratic deficit in international policymaking (see also Chan 2016; Alger 2011). Outmoded hierarchical models of international governance that are headed by nation-states have for a long time failed to engage citizens in global decision-making processes that affect their lives and thereby fueled the upsurge in populist movements around the world. Resorting to a well-established paradigm that links decentralization with democratization, proponents of the “new localism” argue that the multi-stakeholder and multi-level global governance arrangements fostered by cities can effectively reconnect citizens with global policymaking. As the level of government closest to citizens, cities can allow for political participation to an extent that is much harder to achieve at national level.

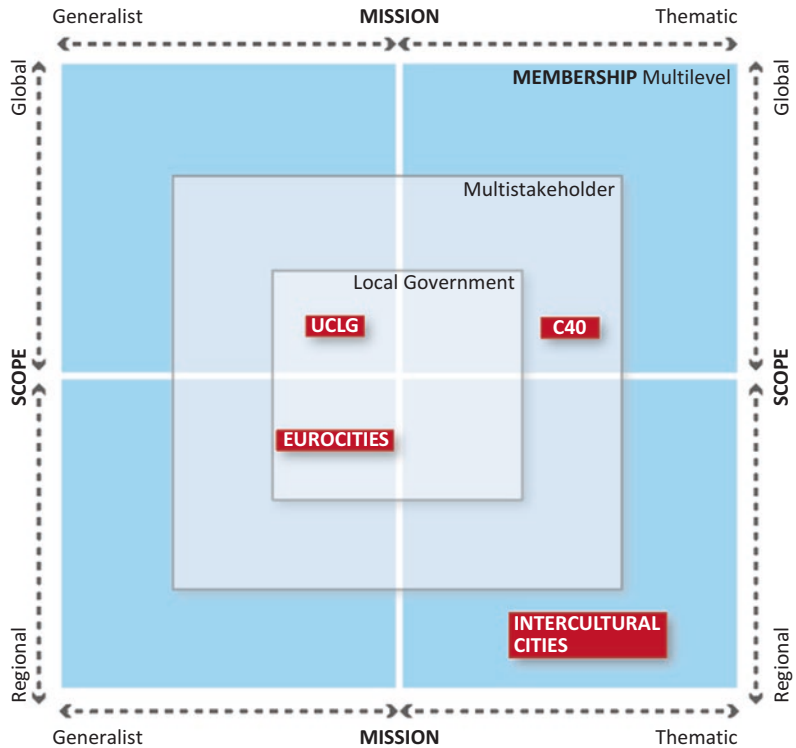
Despite these potential advantages of the empowerment of cities, some international relations scholars point to the trade-offs that come with what they consider to be fragmentation of the international governance system (see Hale et al. 2013; Biermann et al. 2009). The proliferation of transnational organizations involved in global governance no doubt provides opportunities for experimentation, flexibility, healthy competition and a

wider range of actors and preferences. However, it also has serious downsides, related to potential failures of policy convergence, insufficient coordination, the diffusion of international political will and the siloing of political issues. In the next two sections of this chapter, we explore how this risk of fragmentation is further augmented by the recent sprawl in city networking. The expansion of the ecosystem of city networks has led to a competitive mindset recently taking hold of it. This mindset is jeopardizing the hard-won achievements of the international municipalist movement, all of which have fundamentally been based on the principle of collaboration. We argue that in order to provide effective global governance structures, city networks urgently need to move toward more cross-network collaboration and concerted actions that allow them to speak with a united voice.

### 3.4 FROM COMPETITION TOWARD COLLABORATION

Several attempts have been made to map the contemporary ecosystem of city networks and to establish typologies of networks according to, for example, their geographical scope, thematic focus, membership criteria, governance structure or funding model (see Alger 2011; Acuto and Rayner 2016; Acuto et al. 2017; Fernández de Losada 2019). However, any attempt to reduce the complex variety of networks to fixed typologies invariably produces distortions. On the one hand, this is because most networks are hybrid in nature: it is hard to find a single network that is entirely the same as another. On the other, networks are dynamic, fluid structures in continuous adaptation and transformation. Both characteristics defy any fixed categorization over time.

The hybrid nature of city networks is illustrated in Fig. 3.1. The illustration shows how networks belonging to one category might substantially differ from other networks in that very same category when other dimensions of their organizational makeup are considered. Thus, if we categorize city networks according to their geographical scope (regional or global for the purpose of our analysis), we see that networks in the same category may have little or no overlap when it comes to the themes they work on. For example, both UCLG and C40 are global networks with members from around the world. However, while UCLG is a “generalist” network that covers a wide range of urban issues, C40 focuses on climate mitigation. The same goes for regional networks like Eurocities and Intercultural Cities, with the former being a generalist network and the latter a thematic



**Fig. 3.1** The hybrid nature of city networks

one focused on cultural cooperation. Another criterion for grouping networks is their membership requirements. While traditional TMNs such as UCLG and Eurocities are only open to local governments, multi-stakeholder and multi-level networks such as C40 and Cities Alliance<sup>5</sup> also include other urban players from the private and knowledge sectors, national governments and multilateral organizations. The composition of a network’s board of governance might also vary accordingly. In the case of traditional TMNs, the board will be made up of elected local officials.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.citiesalliance.org/>

By contrast, in multi-stakeholder and multi-level networks, it will consist of representatives from the various groups of actors involved in them.

The dynamic and fluid transformation of city networks over time makes it essential for any systematic overview to operate within a delimited time-frame. Networks continuously adapt to the evolving policy and governance scenarios in which they operate. An extreme example of this are the ad hoc alliances or temporary “informal associations” (Ward 2019, see also Malé 2019) that have emerged recently based on political affinities between certain cities. They join forces to mobilize actors and resources to advocate for pressing “local” issues that are intimately linked with global dynamics—such as migrant and refugee reception systems, housing and platform economies—to be put on national and international agendas. They include the Sanctuary Cities networks in the US and UK (Bauder 2017) and the “Cities for Adequate Housing” declaration during the 2018 UN High-Level Political Forum, which was supported by UCLG.<sup>6</sup> These alliances are generally dissolved once the political issue at stake has received a satisfactory level of political attention or a policy solution has been formulated. Similarly, more long-term formal alliances created around specific political issues, such as the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy (FAL)<sup>7</sup> and the European platform, Cities for Human Rights,<sup>8</sup> are often discontinued when their leadership steps down and other stakeholders lack the interest (or funding) to take over. But the transformation of networks over time can also result from internal changes relating to a network’s strategy and leadership. For example, UCLG is the product of the merger between the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the Fédération Mondiale des Cités Unies (FMCU), which decided to join forces to enhance their capacities in 2004. Thus, while state-centered international organizations have proven to be relatively static, city networks are more dynamic structures. The ecosystem of city networks is a space in flux that requires remapping and reconceptualization at regular intervals.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/cities-adequate-housing>. The great advantage of ad hoc alliances is their bureaucratically light structure and their ability to act rapidly and flexibly. Yet, because of their temporal character, they lack the appropriate mechanisms and tools to carry out adequate follow-up of their actions in the long term, which diminishes their impact (Roca 2019). To prevent this, it is important that ad hoc alliances are backed by more permanent TMNs.

<sup>7</sup> For further information on this network, see Marx (2008).

<sup>8</sup> For further information on this network, see García-Chueca (2016).

The current ecosystem faces a particularly pressing challenge that is underexplored both in practice and in the emerging literature on city networks: how to structure relations between the growing number and variety of networks more strategically so that they have a stronger and more coherent voice in global governance. Recent assessments of transnational city networking seem to suggest that there is a trade-off between the number and diversity of networks, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of their action and political impact on the other. Acuto and Rayner (2016) have suggested that, rather than contributing to overcoming the “gridlock” affecting large parts of the global governance system, “the current proliferation of city networks has the capacity to further lock in ‘fragmented’ forms of governance” (p. 1160). Collaboration across different networks is essential to reduce this risk. But reaching this next level in city diplomacy remains a challenge. Although collaborative forms of power are part of the DNA of contemporary city networks, the creation of ever more networks with varying and at times conflicting agendas has created a competitive environment. Networks vie for funding, members, the support of mayors, innovative urban solutions, access to political forums and international recognition (Fernandéz de Losada 2019; Cardama 2019).

Larger networks like UCLG, Metropolis, ICLEI and C40 have understood that “networking with networks” is essential to expanding their influence. Since 2013, they and other networks have begun to collaborate regularly in the framework of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), which is facilitated by UCLG.<sup>9</sup> Acting as a coordination mechanism that brings together major city networks to undertake joint advocacy relating to global policy processes, the GTF allows networks to speak with one voice and, in turn, provides intergovernmental organizations with a single interlocutor. Through the GTF, networks are beginning to move beyond merely implementing and following up on state-set global agendas and toward actively influencing and shaping these agendas according to the needs of local realities. That said, the GTF remains a voluntary mechanism with no formal UN status. The UN and other intergovernmental organizations are struggling to revise existing procedures and mechanisms to accommodate the new role of local governments and their networks. The fear many member states have of losing political leverage and visibility does not help in this process. While the latter have come to accept cities’ “soft power” (Foster and Swiney

<sup>9</sup><https://www.global-taskforce.org/>

2019), which is to say, their power to influence international declarations, resolutions, agendas and campaigns, they are not willing to grant them a permanent and equal “seat at the global table”.

Collaborative action between the larger networks is also necessary because many of them include the same member cities. For example, 90% of C40 member cities are also members of Metropolis and almost 99% of Metropolis’s members are also members of UCLG. Most networks track the participation of their members in other networks and actively look for complementarities and opportunities for shared action that does not compromise their competitive advantage. Besides collaborating on training workshops, joint pilot projects and issue papers, networks have recently responded to the growing fatigue among city representatives and other stakeholders resulting from the saturated calendar of high-level meetings, conferences and summits by stepping up efforts to coordinate their programs and events so as to reduce travel time and costs (De La Varga 2019).

But city networks cannot drive collaboration alone. Member cities and their mayors also have a responsibility to contribute to the production of synergies. The problem here is that feedback from representatives of city networks has shown that the average city does not have a strategic plan for its participation in networks (Fernández de Losada and Abdullah 2019). As a former senior policy specialist at Cities Alliance observes: “It is still common to see cities and regions from varying latitudes and development levels assess the strength of their internationalisation strategy or their capacity-building plans in merely quantitative terms – i.e. the number of networks they are part of – with no similar attention given to analyzing the strategic objectives of each membership” (p. 51). Too many cities still fail to see their participation in individual networks as part of a larger internationalization strategy. The trend toward thematic networks, which fosters siloed policy approaches rather than the development of holistic and integrated answers to territorial issues, is both a cause and consequence of this failure. Whereas in the past a city’s engagement in international networks was usually the responsibility of the city council’s international relations office, today the international “networking culture” has been absorbed by the entire local administration, with many different municipal departments engaging in city networking (Canals 2019). In this context, it is plausible that local officials often find thematically specialized networks that address the specific challenges they are dealing with in their department more useful than generalist ones. However, the international action of the different departments needs to be coordinated internally in order to develop a

public policy of international relations. Only with a whole-of-government internationalization strategy in place can a city's participation in networks become more strategic and more aligned with its local policies, making insertion in global affairs feed local development and policy outcomes.

### 3.5 QUESTIONING THE PRIVATIZATION OF URBAN AFFAIRS

The rapid expansion in international city networking over the past three decades is due in large part to non-local government actors—ranging from multilateral organizations, to the private sector, philanthropy, CSOs and research and knowledge centers—having jumped on the bandwagon of the “global localist ideology”. Alongside traditional TMNs such as UCLG and Metropolis, which are limited to local governments, multi-stakeholder and multi-level city platforms have emerged that are characterized by mixed public-private membership criteria, financing and leadership models. Cities Alliance was one of the first of these new platforms to be created in 1999. Led by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), its members comprise national governments, multilateral institutions, associations of local governments, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector members and foundations, universities and knowledge networks. But it is another type of platform that is reshaping the form and functioning of the ecosystem of city networks with greater force: namely, what have been described as “privately led” multi-stakeholder platforms that emerged around and are financed by influential public personalities and philanthropic foundations (Fernández de Losada 2019).

The most notable of the privately led platforms are C40,<sup>10</sup> which is jointly funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the British Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the Danish foundation Realdania,<sup>11</sup> and 100RC,<sup>12</sup> which is an initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation. Both have become highly attractive platforms for cities. They provide technical assistance and spaces for knowledge exchange without charging membership fees, and their human resources, financial capacities

<sup>10</sup><https://www.c40.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Other philanthropies, private sponsors and national governments support specific C40 projects.

<sup>12</sup><http://www.100resilientcities.org/>



and communication tools far outweigh those of traditional TMNs.<sup>13</sup> The downside is that they operate as a “closed-door club” (Pinault 2019). Their membership is by invitation only and generally limited to major global cities. As a result, the urban challenges they seek to tackle and the generously funded solutions they develop cannot be transferred to all cities.

Another problem of the privately led platforms is representativeness in their governance structures. For example, C40 has a public-private governance model in which the president is a mayor (currently the mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo) and the board of directors, which is led by philanthropist Michael Bloomberg, is overwhelmingly made up of representatives from the private philanthropic sector.<sup>14</sup> This hierarchy can potentially lead to divergences between the concerns and priorities of member cities and the private professionals who manage these platforms. Pluijm and Melissen (2007) distinguish between two types of non-state diplomatic actors: “those with a non-territorial character, like NGOs and multinational corporations, and those with a territorial character, like states in a federal system, regions and cities” (p. 7). The paradox and problem of the privately led city platforms is that although they claim to represent the interests of their member cities, decisions are not always taken by representatives of these cities. What is more alarming is that the private actors involved in these platforms as partners, such as consultancy and engineering firms, often have vested interests. By providing services and technical solutions to member cities, they can potentially to make cities dependent on their brand of solutions and create a monopoly market.

This “privatization” of international urban affairs raises serious concerns about the democratic legitimacy and reformative potential of city diplomacy in world politics. The abovementioned anticipation of some pro-urban scholars, that the growing engagement of local governments in national and international politics promises a new level of citizen engagement and democracy, is called into question by this new trend. A serious and systematic debate about the risks and opportunities that the privately led platforms pose to the traditional ecosystem of city networks is urgently needed. Many traditional TMNs view the new platforms with suspicion, fearing that “*hidden agendas* exist beyond their commitment” (Allegratti

<sup>13</sup> C40 and 100RC have around three times as many followers on Twitter as some of the major TMNs.

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing, five out of eight members of C40’s board of directors are from the private philanthropic sector.

2019). Such mistrust is not favorable to the creation of more collaborative relations between the two generations of networks and can only be overcome by additional efforts at transparency and dialogue. We need to better understand in what ways the actions of the privately led platforms can complement those of traditional TMNs; how they contribute to or undermine the international municipalism movement and how their actions can be aligned with this movement's values of democracy and citizen participation. However, with the growing influence of these platforms on the public policies of major cities and in international forums, such an assessment is becoming a politically delicate exercise.

### 3.6 THE OPPORTUNITIES OF A DENSE ECOSYSTEM OF CITY NETWORKS

But while the densification and diversification of the ecosystem of city networks poses risks, there is also room for optimism about the opportunities for enhancing the potential of city diplomacy. Above all, it can help “pluralize the urban agenda” (see Bassens et al. 2019, p. 2) and ensure a more balanced representation of the inherent polyphony of urban territories and their inhabitants. This can be done in various ways.

First, more opportunities to access and disseminate knowledge and best practices are emerging out of the great diversity of urban typologies and from city-making practices that exist around the world. As city networking attracts increasing membership, resources and attention, networks have the capacity (and responsibility) to represent the full range of urban territories and their local authorities: covering the Global North and South, large, medium-sized and small cities, and metropolises and their peripheries. Crucially, more inclusive city networking could remedy a dangerous paradox that characterizes the current ecosystem of networks. Contrary to what may be assumed, the sprawl of city networks has led to less, not more, representativeness of the diversity of urban territories. While networks have flourished, urban diversity has withered (Garcia-Chueca 2019). Many networks, especially those supported by the private sector, focus on working with major cities located on the grid of global economic and trade flows. This has created an environment in which urban size and location matter more than urban diversity and representativeness. A revision of these hegemonic hierarchies is urgently needed in order to make agenda setting and implementation strategies more inclusive and democratic. If the objective of city networking is to produce truly innovative and

transferable solutions to global problems, the experiences and best practices of urban areas located off the dominant economic grid need to be systematically engaged and considered.

Further, the new breadth in city networking could serve to promote “*demodiversity*” (Alleghetti 2019) in city networks by ensuring greater diversity in management structures and involving a range of non-state actors in decision-making. If city networks truly wish to grasp the opportunity to drive the democratization of global governance, they need to ensure greater equality with regard to gender, ethnicity, language, class and age in their leadership and staff. Traditional TMNs generally still lack this diversity of voices and viewpoints. Their governing bodies mostly consist of mayors and other high-level city representatives who are overwhelmingly white, male and from privileged backgrounds, thereby reproducing existing inequalities. By contrast, multi-stakeholder networks have more hybrid management boards that include both public and private actors and, in many cases, more women and people of color. As we have argued above, they currently present the acute problem of the privatization of city networking. Yet, they could also use their greater capacity for flexibility and innovation to create boards of governance that include not only private sector representatives but also members of organized civil society.

Other non-state actors should also become more involved in the decision-making processes of city networks more generally. As the quadruple-helix approach to innovation research and policy suggests, beyond partnerships with the private sector, the involvement of organized civil society and the knowledge sector is key. Citizens are the beneficiaries of urban public policies and also those directly experiencing “good” and “bad” urban living conditions. Their involvement in city diplomacy can ensure greater efficiency and sustainability of urban policies agreed at global level. To be able to respond to the needs and proposals of citizens, it is important that city networks engage in meaningful dialogue with civil society. This can be done through representative democracy mechanisms (e.g. by organizing exchanges or discussions between TMNs and transnational CSOs or NGOs) or more innovative methods such as participatory democracy in the form of citizen panels or randomly selected citizen representatives (see Alleghetti 2019). These and other methods of citizen engagement could greatly boost the potential of city diplomacy to contribute to the democratization of global governance.

The involvement of the knowledge and research sector in city diplomacy has until recently been an underexplored area in both theory and practice. However, since cities have embarked on the challenging task of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, such partnerships have attained growing relevance. Inputs from science and technology have become particularly important given the complex technical nature of SDG implementation and monitoring (Langenhove 2016) and the lack of guidance offered by the 2030 Agenda for local-level action. Science and technology can provide capacities and expertise in fields such as data gathering and analysis, research and development and policy analysis, which local governments often lack. Some pioneer cities such as New York, San José and Baltimore have established partnerships with local universities to develop their long-term SDG implementation plan (Ruckstuhl et al. 2018). More recently, other cities, including Barcelona, Boston and Geneva, have tried to strengthen the policy-science nexus by developing a city-driven science diplomacy that can foster scientific cross-border collaboration on local solutions to global challenges and provide structures for sharing and up-scaling these solutions (Roig 2018).

### 3.7 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to show how cities have evolved into global political actors that play a growing role in international relations and how city networks have become the principal mechanism for assuming this new role. Since the 1990s, city networks, which were originally created to connect cities, facilitate knowledge sharing and city-to-city cooperation and foster progressive political values, have increasingly engaged in advocacy to influence the international governance system and demand a role in global agenda-setting processes.

Great advances have been made in city diplomacy, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms since the creation of the first international city networks at the beginning of the twentieth century. At present, we are faced with an expansive ecosystem of networks that has contributed to the creation of innovative multi-level and multi-stakeholder global governance arrangements and that is seeking to put “local” concerns, relating to issues such as housing, migration and platform economies, on the global agenda. This chapter did not attempt to develop a fixed taxonomy of city networks, as this would eventually be reductionist and distort the hybrid and fluid reality of city networking. Instead, it has indicated the

challenges and opportunities entailed in the rapid expansion of city diplomacy. Although discussion is beginning to emerge about the risks of competition, fragmentation and inefficiency that this trend entails, the formulation and implementation of strategies to foster collaboration across networks and synthesize the potential of the diverse players involved remains a highly challenging task. This calls for more practice-oriented debates, pilot projects and theoretical analysis. The final part of the chapter has pointed toward some possible ways forward that may feed future research and action.

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# Marine Protection as Polycentric Governance: The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments

*Benjamin Leffel*

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social science has long understood the world as a sum of its nation-state parts, with national governments chiefly responsible for managing matters of state, commerce and beyond. Better ascertaining the world through its local parts, cities, emerged first from scholarship measuring how urban economies are connected to the larger world economy. City economies serve as the key nodal points for transnational capital flows, creating a dense world city network woven together by private sector threads (Friedmann 1986; Sassen 2006). Cities have thus taken on a global persona through their function of marshaling mammoth investment and other flows, where the more central a city's position in these flows, the more consequential it can be for local political-economic outcomes (Alderson and Beckfield 2004; Smith and Timberlake 1995; Taylor 2001).

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However, the global *actorhood* of cities as organized bodies acting deliberately in world affairs is vested not in private sector interactions but in the international networking of city governments. Capturing this dimension is “city diplomacy”, which involves city governments conducting foreign affairs, including global governance (Acuto 2016; Leffel 2018; Leffel and Acuto 2018).

City governments participating in global governance can be understood as part of a larger structural phenomenon, that of “polycentric systems” of global governance that have emerged over the past three decades. These systems involve multiple organizations of sub- and non-state actors pursuing global governance goals without a centralized authority, but rather forming multiple centers of power (Hsu et al. 2017; Hale et al. 2013; Ostrom 2010; Victor 2017). The role of city governments in these polycentric systems take the most crucial form in transnational municipal networks, or formalized, membership-based organizations comprising city governments worldwide (Borja and Castells, 1997).

While much literature on transnational municipal networks focuses on activity within the EU or otherwise Global North locations (Bouteligier 2013), this chapter focuses on a network in East Asia that offers theoretically significant insights for studying polycentric systems. The Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia Network of Local Governments, or PNLG, is an environmentally focused transnational municipal network, a category largely populated by networks with foci ranging from energy to climate change to general sustainability (Bulkeley et al. 2012; Keiner and Kim 2007).

There are a number of reasons for selecting this example to gain insight into the role of city networks in global governance. First, this example offers important insight on how otherwise politically restricted countries can see greater municipal participation in global environmental governance than would perhaps otherwise be achievable. Second, while PNLG was initiated by Global North actors, it does not at all adhere to the presumed north-to-south pattern of knowledge transfer, suggesting that there is much still to learn about variation in inter-city knowledge flows in polycentric systems. Third, empirical lessons are observed on the positive coastal management policy outcomes in Chinese cities attributable to PNLG membership, namely the stringency of marine protection efforts involved with PNLG membership. Last, city governments located within urban economies that marshal greater transnational capital flows, or are

otherwise more connected to the global economy, tend to show greater leadership in environmentally focused transnational municipal networks.

Furthermore, one theoretical lesson observed in examining PNLG is that Chinese city membership in global environmental governance initiatives, particularly environmentally focused transnational municipal networks, lags well behind that of other countries of commensurate economic size (Hale and Roger 2017; Mai and Francesch-Huidobro 2014). However, PNLG is unusually active in China in that it has 16 Chinese member cities, whereas the majority of other municipal networks rarely have over 5 Chinese member cities. I argue that this is due to member city Xiamen's "first-mover" leadership, or early policy action, as well as embeddedness in the global economy. These factors led to both the city becoming the PNLG Secretariat and to other Chinese cities joining the network. Furthermore, existing research assumes that in transnational municipal networks initiated by developed world or "Global North" actors, policy learning is characterized by a disproportionately Global North to Global South pattern (Bouteligier 2013; Bulkeley et al. 2012). The PNLG example, however, provides us with nuances to appreciate the variations within the system through which this network of Global South cities participate in global governance.

This chapter is organized as follows. The first section, *Networked Environmental City Diplomacy in Context*, describes the background of PNLG's founding and provides further context by comparing it to another, well-known environmentally focused transnational municipal network. The second section, *First-Mover Leadership as Catalyst for Chinese Environmental City Diplomacy*, quantitatively narrates Xiamen's early leadership and how this leadership paved the way for other coastal cities to follow suit. The third section, *Challenging Theoretical Assumptions on Inter-city Policy Learning*, explains how PNLG challenges theoretical assumptions about Global North to Global South knowledge transfers by examining case studies of marine policy outcomes associated with PNLG activities.

## 4.2 NETWORKED ENVIRONMENTAL CITY DIPLOMACY IN CONTEXT: PNLG VERSUS C40

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a partnership for international cooperation with 183 member countries that work with public, private and civic sectors on environmental issues. GEF serves as a funding

mechanism for several conventions administered by the UN, the Asian Development Bank and other supranational institutions. In 1994, GEF launched the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, or PEMSEA, based in the Philippines, a regional initiative to diffuse and implement Integrated Coastal Management practices throughout East Asia to improve the governance and protection of marine ecosystems (Chua 1998). Integrated Coastal Management is an internationally accepted means of achieving sustainable development and protection of coastal areas, including Agenda 21 (Chua et al. 2006; UN 1993, 2003). This resulted in the creation of a regional marine strategy among 14 East Asian nations, including China, called the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA). In 2006, PEMSEA became the official regional coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the SDS-SEA. Since its inception, PEMSEA emphasized the importance of local governments implementing Integrated Coastal Management practices and hence created the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG), a mechanism for the city-level implementation of the organization's goals, comprising 45 member cities from nine member countries, including China.

PNLG can be helpfully put in context by comparing it to that of another well-known environmentally focused transnational municipal network, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40). C40 is a climate change governance-focused network facilitating inter-city knowledge and resources exchange on climate change policy matters (Bulkeley et al. 2012; Lee 2015; Gordon 2016; Pichler et al. 2017).

PNLG has the relatively stringent requirement that a potential member city demonstrate its capacity to implement the Integrated Coastal Management practices that PNLG specializes in. The entry requirements of other networks tend to be more lax, at least regarding demonstrated environmental governance capacity. For instance, to become a C40 member city, the candidate city must have a minimum city (metropolitan) population of 3 million (10 million), be among the top 25 global cities ranked by current gross domestic product output at purchasing-power parity, and set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Leffel and Acuto 2018). The requirement of setting a target for emissions reduction, however, is more an indication of city government intention to take policy action, rather than the already-demonstrated governance capacity required for PNLG membership.

#### 4.2.1 *Chinese City Participation in Global Environmental Governance*

Both PNLG and C40 have Chinese member cities and can similarly be compared along these lines. The relative dearth of Chinese city membership in global environmental governance initiatives and networks is partly attributable to the authoritarian nature of the government (Hale and Roger 2017; Mai and Francesch-Huidobro 2014). This means that what involvement there is in such networks is managed heavily in China from the top-down, contra the more laissez-faire approach in democratic states. C40's principal administrative counterpart in China is the National Development and Reform Commission, a central government institution whose approval is necessary for new Chinese cities to join the membership of C40. Cities are either invited or apply directly to become new C40 members, but are subject to the abovementioned selection criteria (Leffel and Acuto 2018). Similarly, China's State Oceanic Administration serves as PNLG's principal government overseer.

My interviews<sup>1</sup> with representatives from PEMSEA headquarters, China's State Oceanic Administration and various PNLG member cities describe the process for recruitment of new Chinese member cities into PNLG as starting with China's central government. The State Oceanic Administration "recommends" a potential Chinese city for membership to the PNLG Secretariat in Xiamen only if the city currently has an Integrated Coastal Management site and/or if the city is engaged in Integrated Coastal Management work of any other identifiable sort. The Administration utilizes internal channels of communication with the candidate city and/or accesses official government records of the city in order to determine if the membership criteria are satisfied. The Administration then communicates its recommendation to the PNLG Secretariat while also notifying the Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau of the candidate city. The candidate city will then communicate its acceptance or rejection of the membership offer to the PNLG Secretariat. The majority of Chinese

<sup>1</sup> A total of eight structured telephone interviews were conducted for this study with the following respondents: the State Oceanic Administration; PEMSEA headquarters; PNLG Secretariat and member city Xiamen, situated in the Oceanic Fisheries Bureau; and the following PNLG Chinese member cities via representatives in their respective Oceanic and Fisheries Bureaus: Dongying, Haikou, Fangchenggang, Lianyungang and Wenzhou. IRB approval was obtained for this research, IRB reference number 2015-2129 (UCI Office of Research). All respondents agreed to publication of their remarks, which involve minimal risk to respondents.

PNLG member cities to date have been recruited via this process.<sup>2</sup> Of note, interviews with the PNLG Secretariat indicated that Chinese cities that are not able to handle the implementation and maintenance of an Integrated Coastal Management site normally do not join, and to date no such city has joined the membership and then quit for that reason.

Next, Chinese C40 member city government respondents in Leffell and Acuto (2018) reported the motivation to join—or rather, to accept the offer of membership—as being both to learn environmental governance best practices from other member cities and to share their own unique policy knowledge. Chinese PNLG member city respondents indicated identical motivations. Both the cases of PNLG and C40, then, are consistent with the argument in extant literature that city governments tend to join such networks both in order to gain desired knowledge from other experienced city governments and/or to share their own experience to gain reputational benefits (Lee 2015). Further, Chinese PNLG and C40 respondents also expressed that their respective network memberships offered an exclusive source of the sought-after environmental policy knowledge and international networking opportunities, the quality of which alternative channels did not offer. These considerations in mind, PNLG and C40 face similar structural obstacles in expanding membership in China, yet PNLG’s Chinese city membership at 16 cities remains remarkably larger than that of C40 or other environmental networks including ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability and R20—Regions of Climate Action. To shed light on why this is, the next section describes the early leadership shown by the city of Xiamen and quantitatively narrates both it and other Chinese coastal cities’ marine policy efforts on a domestic and international scale.

### 4.3 FIRST-MOVER LEADERSHIP AS CATALYST FOR CHINESE ENVIRONMENTAL CITY DIPLOMACY

In the early 1990s, the coastal Chinese city of Xiamen, Fujian province was faced with severe marine pollution, shoreline erosion and deterioration of marine habitats, while also lacking appropriate legal frameworks and

<sup>2</sup>The State Oceanic Administration also organizes “national Integrated Coastal Management training workshops” promoting best practices sharing and also attracting new candidate member cities. Interested non-members may directly express interest and enter themselves into the vetting process for new member selection.

expertise to remedy them. Beginning in 1994, PEMSEA worked with Xiamen to design and launch an Integrated Coastal Management project, which involved government and local university marine experts helping to establish a monitoring system. This led to Xiamen adopting its first coastal strategic plan in 1996, the installation of sewage plants and the cleaning up of the local Yuandan Lagoon. PEMSEA cooperation with Xiamen also led to the relocation of mariculture from the shipping area and eel larvae harvesting, which helped reduce conflicts between maritime shipping and fisheries (Chua et al. 2006). For these reasons, Xiamen was made the secretariat for the PNLG. Since 2002, Xiamen also began to publish reports on annual monitoring results of marine environmental quality and ISO 14001, and adopt an Integrated Coastal Management strategic action plan for 2005–2020 (GEF/UNDP/PEMSEA 2010a).

This “first-mover” leadership, or early policy action, by Xiamen has direct bearing on the expansion of PNLG membership to other Chinese cities, which subsequently sought to become high performers in marine policy themselves. Specifically, PNLG respondents note that Xiamen’s leadership in marine policy performance as well as domestic and international marine cooperation predated that of other Chinese coastal cities, serving as leadership by example that paved the way for other capable, motivated coastal cities like Dongying to subsequently join PNLG. Xiamen’s early cooperative successes are attributed to its relative centrality in international flows of trade and investment, through which it gained competency in utilizing international sources of technical and financial resources later needed to exert leadership in PNLG (Chen and Uitto 2003; Chua et al. 2006). This observation resonates with broader literature arguing a positive association between city-level connectivity to the global economy and leadership in transnational environmental initiatives (Lee 2013, 2015).

I illustrate the above claims using a series of data for Chinese PNLG member cities including Xiamen (7), and with a comparison sample of non-PNLG Chinese coastal cities (8), covering 15 coastal Chinese cities in total. The former includes Beihai, Dongying, Fangchenggang, Haikou, Lianyungang, Xiamen and Wenzhou. The non-PNLG cities include Cangzhou, Dongguan, Guangzhou, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai, Shantou, Shenzhen and Yantai. Table 4.1 summarizes the data gathered. “Marine policy efforts” represent the total number of new city-level marine policies implemented during 2004–2015, specifically those most relevant to Integrated Coastal Management. These include policies on sea area use or management, marine environmental protection, island or peninsula

**Table 4.1** Descriptive statistics of variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>PNLG</i>		<i>Non-PNLG</i>		<i>Data source</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	
New marine policies	28	10–49	16.3	3–30	Municipal Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau websites, and online search
International marine exchanges	10.4	1–39	6.3	0–25	Municipal Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau websites, Foreign Affairs Office websites and online search
Domestic marine exchanges	15.4	8–23	9.7	4–17	Municipal Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau websites and online search
Foreign co-authored marine science articles	36.2	0–204	62	0–212	<i>Web of Science</i> database search

protection, nature reserve or species protection, fishery resources management, marine economy, coastal zone management, marine zoning or marine industry development. “International marine exchange” represents the personnel exchanges between municipal Oceanic and Fisheries Bureaus and with foreign government counterparts regarding marine environmental protection, coastal management best practices or technology transfers. For PNLG cities, the majority of international marine exchanges are independent of PNLG membership-related activities. These international exchanges are part of a broader trend of Chinese city government departments engaging in advice-seeking and training on a broad range of environmental and other policy topics with foreign counterparts (Chien and Ho 2011; De Jong et al. 2017; Koehn 2016; Shin 2007; Zhan and De Jong 2017).

Also included here are data on inter-governmental advice-seeking personnel exchanges on policy practices. The variable “Domestic marine exchanges” as listed in the table represents the “study tour” (*kaocha xuexi*) personnel exchanges between the Oceanic and Fisheries Bureaus of different Chinese cities. This type of inter-city activity is quite common among Chinese locales. While central government guidance of local governments characterizes much of China’s environmental governance (Xu 2014), Chinese city governments also frequently send personnel on exchanges to other Chinese cities to seek knowledge and obtain training on best practices in environmental policies and other contexts (Chung 2016; Mai and Francesch-Huidobro 2014). All data are obtained from corresponding



sample cities' Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau websites, which at the time of gathering reported consistent records of policy implementation, domestic and international marine policy exchanges dating back to 2003. These records should be understood as distinct from Chinese government reporting of air pollution statistics, which are understood to often be manipulated for political purposes (Ghanem and Zhang 2014).<sup>3</sup>

Last, "foreign co-authored marine science articles" measure the total number of scientific articles on marine protection and governance issues published by authors in each sample city with foreign (non-Chinese) co-authors. The *Web of Science* database is used to identify all articles fitting these criteria, across the natural and social sciences. This approach is adapted from Ma et al. (2014), who measure scientific cooperation between Chinese cities by using the "search by address [of author]" feature of *Web of Science* database to identify scientific publications with authors based in specific cities. The *Web of Science* database includes articles from over 8500 academic journals in the natural sciences, physical and social sciences, thus allowing for a comprehensive metric of publication-based scientific cooperation between Chinese cities. There is no science-policy measure for the extent of collaboration between the local scientific community and policymakers. However, a city with a larger number of co-authored articles on marine policy reflects a larger amount of international research connections in the marine policy context. If the local scientific community involved in these foreign co-authorships interfaces with and influences local government officials, it may be expected that a larger number of co-authorships would be positively associated with PNLG membership.

The implementation of new marine policies is the aspect in which PNLG member cities are most distinctive from non-PNLG cities in China. The map shown in Fig. 4.1 displays this difference with graduated symbols proportional to quantity of new marine policies implemented by PNLG (black) and non-PNLG (tile) cities.

Figure 4.2 splits PNLG versus non-PNLG cities displaying the total new marine policies implemented over 2004–2015 in descending order from the middle of the graph-outward, alongside the corresponding

<sup>3</sup> Additional searches were performed of each city's main municipal government and Environmental Protection Bureau websites, as well as Google and Baidu searches in English and Mandarin to ensure that no recorded policies implemented nor exchanges carried out were not also reported on Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau websites.

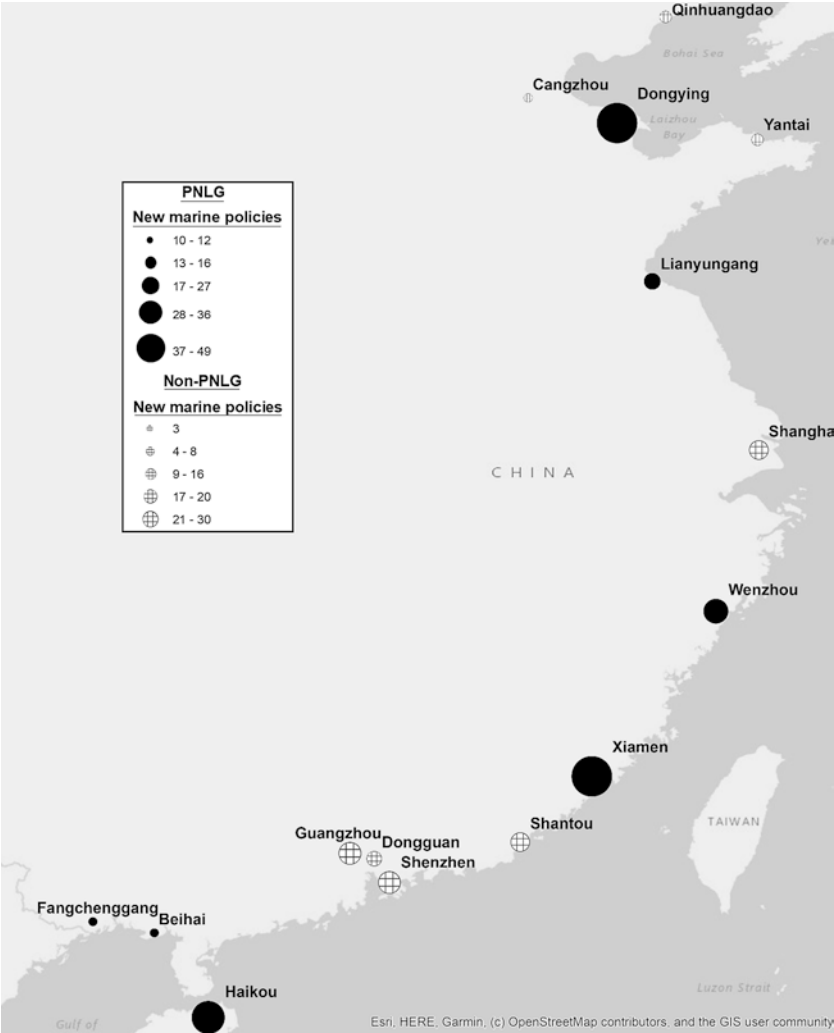


Fig. 4.1 Marine policy in coastal Chinese cities: PNLG versus non-PNLG cities

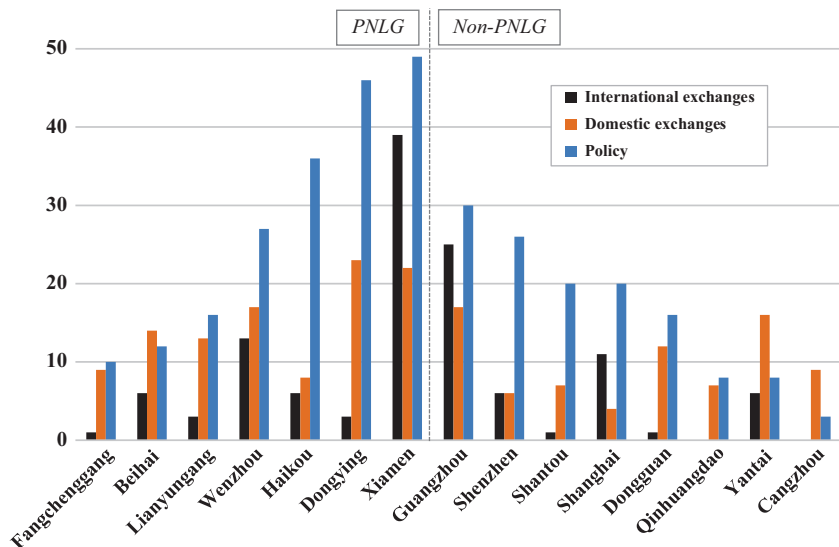


Fig. 4.2 Marine policy implementation, international and domestic exchanges by city, 2004–2015

values for the (a) total number of international marine policy-focused technical exchanges with foreign counterparts and (b) the domestic marine-focused study tour exchanges with other Chinese coastal cities. In addition to showing the more frequent policy implementation, the graph shows that PNLG cities are on average more involved in domestic study tour exchanges with other Chinese coastal cities than are non-PNLG cities. The same is not the case for international marine-focused technical exchanges, where the distribution across PNLG versus non-PNLG cities shows no important differences.

Figure 4.3 shows no discernible pattern between foreign co-authored articles on marine science and governance by city and PNLG versus non-PNLG coastal Chinese member cities. Xiamen, which has the highest frequency of international marine exchanges as well as participation from local universities in the implementation of its Integrated Coastal Management policies, also has the most foreign co-authored scientific publications among PNLG cities by a wide gap. This is matched only

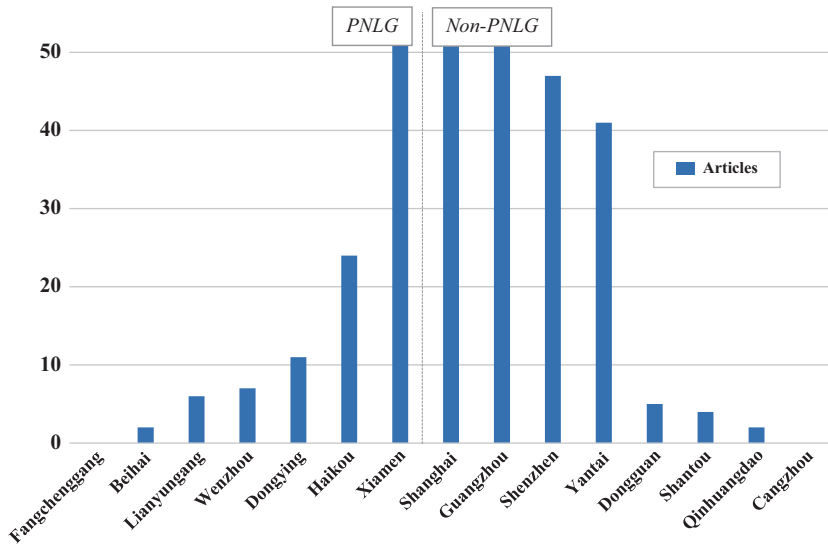


Fig. 4.3 Foreign co-authored marine science and governance articles by city, 2004–2015

among non-PNLG cities by Shanghai and other heavily internationally-connected coastal cities. Much like international marine exchanges, foreign co-authored articles on marine science do not coincide with marine policy performance among the observed cities. While nevertheless an empirically interesting metric, this suggests little overall collaboration between the scientific communities and policymakers in each city.

Local marine policy efforts as well as inter-city marine policy cooperation on the domestic and international scales narrate the environmental city diplomacy leadership first shown by Xiamen and later among other PNLG member cities, while also distinguishing PNLG members cities in general from other coastal Chinese cities not party to the network. With the top-down nature of Chinese authoritarianism stifling much Chinese subnational involvement in international environmental networks, this offers valuable insight as to the bottom-up processes accompanying relatively greater such Chinese municipal involvement. Beyond this context, examination of PNLG also offers broader theoretical insight on polycentric systems in global environmental governance, specifically the directionality of inter-city policy learning, which is addressed in the next section.

#### 4.4 CHALLENGING THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS ON INTER-CITY POLICY LEARNING

Inter-city policy learning involves information and knowledge exchange among government and other policy-relevant actors for the purpose of improving governance practices (Henry 2009; Lee and Van de Meene 2012; McFarlane 2011). As city governments mobilize internationally to obtain or share sought-after policy knowledge, transnational municipal networks provide a platform on which the supply and demand for policy knowledge are met, ideally allowing for cities to better solve daunting local problems (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Gordon 2016; Hodson and Marvin 2010; Lee 2013; McCann 2011). Consistent with inter-city policy learning dynamics observed in other environmentally focused transnational municipal networks (Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Gordon 2016; Hodson and Marvin 2010; Lee 2013; McCann 2011), PNLG functions by mobilizing local- and national-level support for urban implementation of Integrated Coastal Management via facilitation of inter-city marine and coastal management policy cooperation (PEMSEA 2002).

Beyond these similarities however, PNLG exhibits theoretically important differences that challenge conventional wisdom on environmental city diplomacy. Transnational municipal networks are typically established by actors in the Global North, developed world (Bulkeley et al. 2012), which in part accounts for Global North cities significantly outnumbering Global South cities in transnational municipal network memberships, environmentally-focused and otherwise (Backstrand 2008; Backstrand et al. 2017; Bansard et al. 2017). Within this schema, it is argued that a Global North to Global South flow of policy knowledge disproportionately characterizes policy learning among transnational municipal network member cities (Bouteligier 2013).

That a U.S.-based organization, Global Environmental Facility, initiated the creation of PEMSEA, situates PNLG in the typical context of networks created by Global North actors. However, the functioning of PNLG challenges the assumption that a Global North to Global South pattern of inter-city knowledge transfer will take place. PNLG relies less on its Global North funder, the Global Environmental Facility, than it does its Global South member cities—from Chinese cities to its Philippines-based headquarters, PEMSEA—to cultivate and share marine policy learning among cities.

This can be illustrated by closely examining the new marine policy implementation among PNLG member cities and its relationship to PNLG membership. Interviews with PNLG representatives were conducted inquiring as to specific governance activities directly attributable to PNLG membership and if PNLG membership offered access to environmental governance resources presently unavailable through other international channels. Respondents included a program officer at PEMSEA headquarters in the Philippines, and one interview each with representatives of the Ocean and Fisheries Bureaus of the following PNLG Chinese member cities: Dongying, Wenzhou, Haikou, Lianyungang and Fangchenggang.

Further informing are records obtained from these respondents on PNLG-related governance activities. PEMSEA uses a State of the Coast reporting system, which monitors and assesses baseline conditions and the responses, trends, impacts and outcomes of Integrated Coastal Management programs using an agreed set of indicators. These indicators include the adoption and enforcement of related laws, monitoring of compliance and Integrated Coastal Management/environmental cases that have been filed and resolved. Respondents provided the State of the Coast reports for three out of the seven observed Chinese PNLG member cities: Xiamen (2010), Haikou (2010 and 2013) and Dongying (2010). State of the Coast reports are completed by the Oceanic and Fisheries Bureaus of PNLG member cities and sent to the PNLG Secretariat, which provides a comprehensive status update on all aspects of Integrated Coastal Management implementation.

Much of the marine environmental protection policies captured by the search of PNLG member cities' Oceanic and Fisheries Bureaus were also mentioned in the State of the Coast reports of Xiamen, Dongying and Haikou—the only three Chinese PNLG member cities from which State of the Coast reports were obtained. As shown in Fig. 4.4, the number of Integrated Coastal Management-related marine environmental protection policies in Dongying and Haikou implemented after joining PNLG increased markedly and plateaued from 2010 to 2012. The chart reflects new marine protection policies reported by each city's Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau, and many of these reported policies matched the policies listed in the State of the Coast reports as being influenced by information obtained from other Global South PNLG member cities and the Xiamen secretariat (GEF/UNDP/PEMSEA 2010b, c).

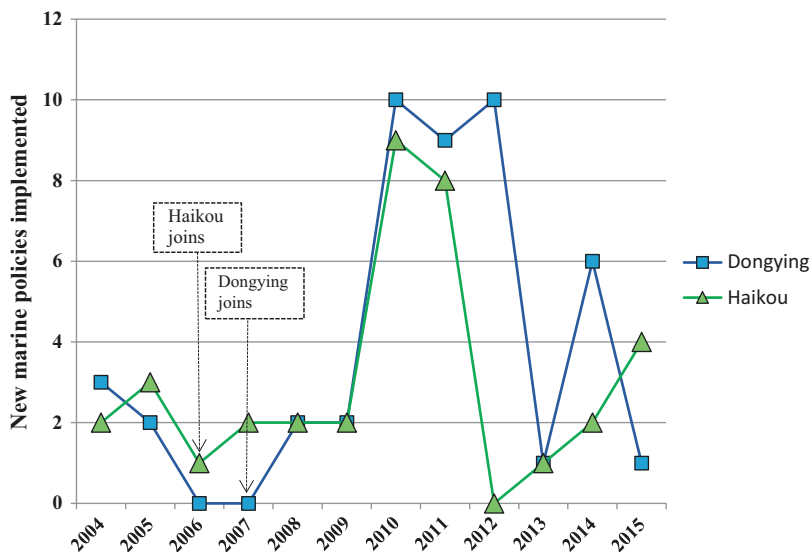


Fig. 4.4 Dongying and Haikou new marine policy implementation, 2004–2015

Interviews with the Dongying Oceanic and Fisheries Bureau representative indicated that during this time, Dongying’s “unceasing” efforts in the implementation of Integrated Coastal Management with help from PNLG and PEMSEA. Part of the plateau was the “Dongying Declaration on Building a ‘Blue Economy’ Through Integrated Coastal Management”, which was adopted by all PNLG member cities from across East Asia in 2011. The “Dongying Declaration” was signed by members at the 10th PNLG Forum, hosted in Dongying, and committed all members to accomplish several goals by 2015, including the implementation of Integrated Coastal Management strategies, objectives and targets into local government planning, and the implementation of the PEMSEA Integrated Coastal Management Code across 50% of the PNLG membership as a certification of Integrated Coastal Management implementation progress. The increase in marine policies implemented between 2010 and 2012 was associated in large part to the Dongying Declaration, a new Integrated Coastal Management program, increased local government investment in sewage treatment, public awareness programs and a remediation project for the local polluted Guangli River. Noteworthy is that

the policies surrounding Dongying's Guangli River led to a decrease in Chemical Oxygen Demand in the river (GEF/UNDP/PEMSEA 2010b), which is generally considered an important indicator of improved marine and coastal environmental quality (Zheng 2015).

The Haikou 2010 and 2013 State of the Coast reports similarly note 2010–2012 marine policies in Haikou as being associated with PNLG activities. The reported dividends from these efforts include decreases in shoreline erosion and in the amount of waterborne pollutants being discharged from the city into the sea and improvements both in public awareness of coastal protection and in multi-sectoral cooperation between relevant local government departments (GEF/UNDP/PEMSEA 2010c, 2013). Haikou-based government respondents further noted that the city formulated its first “Haikou Coastal Strategic Plan” as a direct result of knowledge obtained through PNLG.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSIONS

As climate change forces sea level rise, coastal cities will be the most vulnerable, driving further demand for solutions to new marine protection problems. Hence as a matter of necessity, PNLG itself and transnational municipal networks of similar foci will further expand across polycentric systems of global governance. The theoretical and empirical lessons learned here offer important insights for understanding and utilizing these forces.

This study shows that authoritarian government limitation on city participation in transnational environmental networks, namely in the case of China, may be overcome by the sort of first-mover leadership seen in the case of Xiamen and PNLG. That is, the embeddedness of Xiamen's economy in dense international trade and investment flows granted local officials the experience in managing foreign resources that would later enable it to successfully cooperate with PEMSEA, implement reforms and become the PNLG Secretariat. This was paired with the local administration's existing knowledge base in and immediate need for solving marine protection problems, owing to a large portion of the city being surrounded entirely by water, to initiate cooperation with Xiamen. This paved the way for further successful PNLG member city expansion in China. Further, more frequent implementation of new marine protection policies coincides with more frequent domestic and international policy learning exchanges with other cities—independent of PNLG activities. These traits are unique to PNLG member cities and suggest that a predictor of city



success in a transnational municipal network context may be the extent to which a city government engages in domestic- and international-scale advice-seeking independently of the network. These approaches and considerations thus may be effective for transnational municipal networks expanding into politically restrictive countries, in China or otherwise, in environmental or other global urban governance contexts.

This study also shows that in a transnational municipal network context, Global South cities are not as dependent on Global North actors for policy knowledge as posited in existing literature. PNLG exhibits south-south inter-city knowledge policy learning that does not conform to assumptions of similar environmentally focused transnational municipal networks established by Global North actors. This suggests that Global South cities are contributing indigenously-developed innovation that is becoming internationally legitimated in polycentric systems of global governance, and diffused as policy best practices among cities through transnational municipal networks. However, these results are not generalizable beyond the sample of cities observed in this study. PNLG also offers lessons on how the stringency of entry requirements to membership may yield positive results on the policy performance of member cities over time. While both PNLG and C40 offer access to novel policy learning resources unavailable through alternative international channels, PNLG membership requires demonstrated coastal integrated management capacity. These detailed guidelines may at least in part drive the successful policy outcomes observed in this chapter.

A strong impetus exists for future research on environmental city diplomacy in China given the country's status as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases yet a minimal player in polycentric systems of climate change governance. Also warranted in future research is Global South city participation in transnational municipal networks established by Global North actors or others. The networked topographies of inter-city policy knowledge flows among Global South cities are evolving in complex ways, yet receive the least scholarly attention. High-polluting industries have expanded and continue to expand in the developing world, causing harmful environmental externalities and generating local demand for policy solutions. As this trend continues, achieving global-scale solutions to these problems requires we better understand south-south environmental city diplomacy and Global South-exclusive city networks.

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## SECTION II

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# Local Strategies for Global Engagement and Communication



# A Framework of City Diplomacy on Positive Outcomes and Negative Emotional Engagement: How to Enhance the International Role of Cities and City/Mayor Branding on Twitter?

*Bruno Asdourian and Diana Ingenhoff*

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the negative emotional engagement of mayors in the contexts of city diplomacy, green issues and communicating city sustainability. In line with psychology and consumer behavior literature on the link between emotions, judgments and behavior (Haidt 2007), we argue that negative emotional engagement with government decisions promotes not only negative but also positive outcomes from engaged

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citizens, on elements such as city branding (Greenberg 2008; Sevin 2014; Vanolo 2017), and the reputation of city mayors.

So far, the phenomenon of negative emotional engagement has been discussed in public relations, political communication, interpersonal psychology or strategic communication literature. However, the concept has not been transferred to public and city diplomacy, especially in the context of city-government relationships used by city mayors.

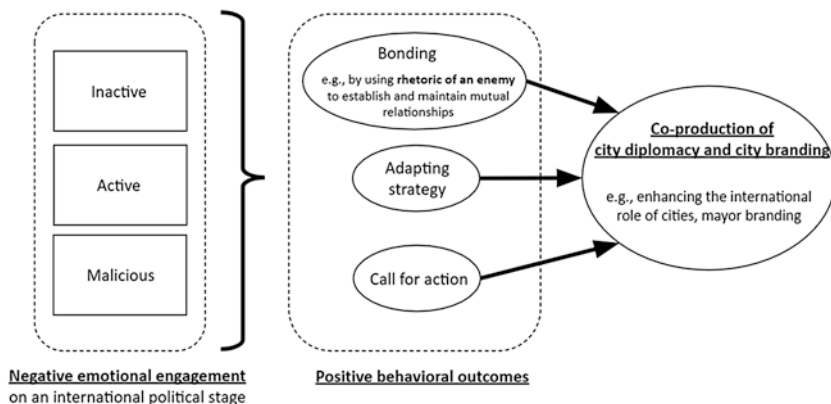
Cities' images have acquired increasing importance in economic, political, environmental and societal terms (Albino et al. 2015). Engaged in various challenges at local, regional, national and international levels, city mayors are in a better position than previously when interacting with governments (Wang 2006, p. 34). Thus, tensions between collaboration and competition (Taylor Buck and While 2017)—in other words, “competitive cooperation” (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 13)—could appear when national and local governments do not take the same approach. Having the strategic interest of establishing and maintaining mutual relationships with their citizens (Ledingham 2001), cities can take the opportunity to criticize government actions which oppose the actions or interests of cities (Lievonen and Luoma-aho 2015). However, the role of mayors and cities for the transformation of the international system is still relatively unexamined (Acuto 2013).

We apply a case study to illustrate recent phenomena of negative emotional engagement and diplomatic functions of cities (city diplomacy) and show its challenges and opportunities. Specifically, we study how mayoral messages from the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (called C40 Cities hereafter) publicly criticize President Trump's decision to leave the Paris climate change agreement (on June 1st, 2017), in order to encourage positive citizen engagement around the world. As previous research has highlighted clearly the importance of human, social or infrastructural dimensions of cities (Kourtit and Nijkamp 2012), we explore what city diplomacy entails and what positive outcomes a negative emotional engagement could have for citizen relationships.

## 5.2 FRAMEWORK OF CITY DIPLOMACY INCLUDING NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES

We conceptualize a framework of negative emotional engagement applied to city diplomacy (Fig. 5.1). To measure this concept, we content analyze both C40 Cities social media messages and press releases and all tweets





**Fig. 5.1** Framework of city diplomacy including negative emotional engagement and positive outcomes

related to Trump's announcement and C40 Cities actions, and additionally sentiment analyze these tweets. In this sense, city diplomacy is viewed as part of a negative emotional engagement issue with several positive outcomes.

### 5.2.1 *City Diplomacy and City Branding*

As cities today have an important role at international level, their "mayors cannot be left behind" (Stren and Friendly 2019, p. 176). Indeed, a diplomatic vision of the mayoral role has been defined by Barber (2013), who argues that mayors should rule the world in a context of dysfunctional nations and rising cities as nodes inside a network of global synapses. Indeed, there is a growing attention paid to the leaders at the helm of these cities as key drivers of this internationalization (Acuto 2013), in relation to both governments and other cities. City diplomacy is also strongly based on the idea that the political arena is grounded in the civic: a "glocal" civil society without borders building a network of interconnected cities with a high level of bottom-up democracy (Barber 2013). Thus, we understand city diplomacy as "the institutions and processes by which cities ... engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another" (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 6). This city diplomacy appears in

relation to two key mayoral motivations for engagement at the international level. Stren and Friendly (2019, p. 173) argue that these motivations are “(1) the maintenance and strengthening of local constituency support; and (2) the promotion of policies overseas to reinforce the legitimacy of local policy choices”. In the case of climate change, discourses (Jost et al. 2019) and actions against the lack of US leadership at national level since the 2015 Trump decision to leave the Paris Agreement are paradoxically useful to acquire and/or maintain support from local citizens and to leverage acceptance of local decisions. The issue of combating climate change is thus very relevant as a way of obtaining higher visibility and credibility at international level, which then acts to strengthen ties with city-level actors. Such glocal activities, which appear with the emergence of international involvement of mayors (McEnery 1994), are constitutive of what McNeill (2001, p. 355) called a “new mayoral class”.

More recently, several big city mayors have embraced the issue of climate change to demonstrate how cities, businesses and citizens can save the planet (Bloomberg and Pope 2017). Such engagement acts to leverage city branding and a multi-level governance structure with national and local governments (Ye and Björner 2018). Indeed, as cities compete internationally for success in economic, social, cultural or ecological domains, they act strategically to attract international visibility to their efforts. Eshuis et al. (2014, p. 154) insist on the role of competition and branding for cities or places: they define place branding as “the development of brands for geographical locations such as regions, cities or communities, usually with the aim of triggering positive associations and distinguishing the place from others”. Place and city branding scholars have described the shift from traditional place marketing (Kotler 2002)—with, for instance, promotional measures, festivals or improvement of place design—to place branding (Kavaratzis et al. 2017), where cities’ communications practitioners integrate some corporate branding methods (Kavaratzis 2009) and promote various intangible assets such as emotional, symbolic and reputational values (Eshuis and Edwards 2013; Eshuis and Klijn 2017). Recent hashtag diplomacy activities, which use Twitter as a tool for engaging in public diplomacy (Collins et al. 2019), show specific changes that occur in terms of communication between residents (Braun et al. 2013) and cities’ mayors. The growing necessity to work with these new types and roles of engaged stakeholder (Stubbs and Warnaby 2015) in the development of city branding enhances the use of social media and the appropriation of direct and emotional speech coming from recent

citizen social movements (Snow et al. 2004). In this inter-place competition of city branding (Zenkler and Beckman 2013), for instance, in the domain of sustainability, places are both trying to differentiate themselves from other places and collaborating in city networks such as C40 Cities or the European Metropolitan Authorities in order to gain in attractiveness (Snieska and Zykiene 2015), in visibility and in power to compete with nation governments. In the strategic attempt to communicate dialogically with citizens, some mayors using social media to communicate on an emotional level have moved far from a traditional diplomatic way of political interpersonal exchanges. This communication is particularly present nowadays with the large-scale media coverage of President Trump's Twitter messages, which broke with these traditions.

### 5.2.2 *Negative Emotional Engagement*

Engagement has become a buzzword in various research fields such as public relations (Brodie et al. 2011; Danesh 2017), public engagement (Taylor and Kent 2014) or digital engagement (Men and Tsai 2013). In the specific field of public diplomacy, there is also an apparent debate in the literature regarding interpretation of the “engagement” concept (Welsh et al. 2008). In our framework, we select Hollebeek and Chen's (2014) three major patterns of individuals' engagement—cognition, emotion and behavior—to illustrate the types of engagement made by various city actors. Cognition appears when a stimulus leads to a public awareness on a specific topic. Here, citizens express the fact that they have discovered this key issue or that the issue has gained a strategic importance for them. This stimulus can lead to a negative emotion, such as feelings of injustice or unfairness, which could then be activated in behaviors, by which we mean an organism's action and reaction in a spontaneous or automatized and rigid way (Lazzeri 2014). These three elements, and particularly the last two, are visible in public messages such as press releases and social media posts. Indeed, even in the city-related context, a new situation appears when citizens shift the nature of their relationships and communication with both city mayors and governments toward more horizontal dialogues. As a consequence, public sector communication (Canel and Luoma-aho 2018) is adapted to achieve a greater citizen engagement (through expressing their feelings on social media) and improve collaboration (through taking concrete actions for the city and at city level) (Lovari 2013; Taylor and Kent 2014). This citizen sourcing is seen as a tool that

allows for a greater involvement of citizens in the public-value creation process (Lukensmeyer and Torres 2008). Within the context of the city, the use of social media tools has radically changed the ways in which citizens perceive, consume and co-produce city brands (Vanolo 2017, p. 203). In short, negative emotional engagement could be linked to negative but also positive outcomes. In this chapter, the study of city mayors and citizen reactions is focused on the fact that negative emotions expressed publicly through press releases and through social media tweets by citizens, associations or city mayors lead to positive outcomes.

Negative emotional engagement is a process understood by Lievonon et al. (2018) as unfavorable feelings toward organizations. These authors propose negative emotional engagement categories depending on a stakeholder's activity and on connectivity. The authors define three levels of negative emotion: (i) weak negative emotions (inactive) held by passive, discontented and inactively resentful stakeholders, (ii) moderate negative emotions (active) are held by either irate or justice-seeking stakeholders (also called "hateholders"), and (iii) extremely strong negative emotions (malicious) are held by revenge-seeking stakeholders or trolls. In other words, stakeholders can either avoid sharing their negative feelings experiences actively, share actively their negative emotions, or have very hostile thoughts and intend malice toward brands and organizations. Thus, Lievonon et al. (2018) argue that in a context of high public connectivity (with unlimited audiences appearing in public online conversations and on social media platforms), people can express emotions that have the potential to harm an organization. In fact, the messages of justice-seeking stakeholders, also called "hateholders" by Luoma-aho (2015), are those that damage the reputation the most and affect individuals through both tangible and intangible means diffused in high-visibility online platforms such as social media. Indeed, moderate negative emotions "ensure that the public actions stay at plausible levels, and the negative contributions are thus more effective" (Lievonon et al. 2018, p. 542). It should be noted that the hate-related definition given by Luoma-aho (2015), when using the term hateholders, diverges from others such as that of Davidson et al. (2017, p. 512), who link hate speech to a "language that is used to express hatred towards a targeted group or is intended to be derogatory, to humiliate, or to insult the members of the group". In brief, what Lievonon et al. (2018) call a malicious negative emotion could be comparable to the hate speech definition of Davidson et al. (2017). As the latter indicate, "hate speech is a difficult phenomenon to define and is not monolithic" (Davidson et al. 2017, p. 515).

Such communications and actions against someone are linked to the negative word-of-mouth concept, which is defined as a “customer’s effort to share negative or unfavorable feedback or opinions with friends, family and others” (Balaji et al. 2016, p. 529). According to Verhagen et al. (2013, p. 1430), negative word-of-mouth “consists of disclosed individual negative experiences and opinions about goods, services and organizations that have been formed during and after the consumption process”.

Reactions are triggered by a stimulus based on individuals’ experiences (Brodie et al. 2011), oriented toward a target (Kuppens et al. 2003) struggling with an ethical behavior or an environmental or social moral standard (Haidt 2007). Stimuli identified in scientific literature refer, for instance, to real or perceived injustice, unethical behavior, dissatisfaction or information misuse. These elements guide consumers and citizens to “draw attention to the cause of their dissatisfaction in order to get a solution” (Verhagen et al. 2013, p. 1431). The negative emotions expressed both by city mayors’ networks in press releases and on social media, or by associations, activists and citizens, could be followed by behavioral outcomes which could be negative but also positive.

### *5.2.3 Negative and Positive Behavioral Outcomes: Adapting Strategy, Call for Action and Utility of Having an Enemy*

As important as the positive outcomes are for the negative emotional engagement holder, previous literature has focused more on the negative outcomes for the target of this negative engagement. Negative behavioral engagements (or consumer responses to corporate wrongdoing) are usually those related to disengaging from, avoiding or boycotting the organization (Klein et al. 2004). In other words, moral reactions result in engagement behaviors such as resistance toward or avoidance of the individuals or organization targeted. In our case study, climate change is an important issue in which city representatives, such as activists, citizens and associations, but also city mayors and city networks express negative emotional engagement against opponents like politicians. These moral reactions lead to destructive or constructive punitive actions. As Romani et al. (2013, p. 1029) indicate, destructive punitive actions are those “intended to discredit or harm firms, ultimately leading to disengagement from firms”. Their purpose is to stop the relationship with the target and disseminate negative information about it. Senders in this case have contempt for the target and want to create distance from that target without

offering reconciliatory possibilities. On the contrary, there is no intention to stop the relationship in constructive punitive actions because senders are just angry about the target's actions and want to rectify what they perceive as a wrongdoing. Indeed, these actions are "those designed to induce firms to change their behavior but with the hope of sustaining relationships with consumers" (Romani et al. 2013, p. 2019). This focus on changing behavior is an important source of positive outcomes generated by the anger of consumers, associations or citizens. It can be linked to the willingness of people to excuse the actions of the enemy in the hope of seeing future modifications of its decisions and actions, particularly when this enemy has a great influence on the issue at stake.

However, positive behavioral outcomes appear even in the context of negative emotional stakeholder engagements following denunciation messages by an association or a network of mayors. Such negative emotions can also be viewed as a source of improvement of behaviors and habits (Finkelstein and Fishbach 2012). This is a key strategic element for motivating active contributors to fight on an issue through positive actions. Micheletti (2003) proposed the idea of a political consumerism which may involve positive (e.g., boycott or socially responsible investing) forms of collective action. In this framework, three types of positive behavioral outcome were tested through the content analysis, namely (i) adapting strategy, (ii) call for action and/or (iii) using the rhetoric of an enemy to foster changes and collective actions. The violation of a standard in terms of, for instance, environmental issues instigates the transition of communication terms from awareness and concern to the idea of a call to action (Moser 2016; Romani et al. 2013) in favor of the specific issue.

This call for action is a consequence of having an enemy (Volkan 1985), and it reinforces bonding activities in the public arena. The term 'bonding' refers to the capacity to create strong ties between participants of a closed group. It is directly visible in the process of citizen participation, for instance, in urban planning (Van Dijk and Holstein 2007) where several neighborhood branding initiatives have been witnessed. In Amsterdam's 'Western Garden Cities', for instance, a co-production model fosters "local government and residents [to act] together [to] 'produce' the urban plan" (Van Dijk and Holstein 2007, p. 16). This experimentation was based on "a collaborative quest for the current and desired identity of a neighbourhood" (Van Dijk and Holstein 2007, p. 18). In the literature on social networks, this term contrasts with bridging activities, which tend to create weaker ties, for instance, where citizen engagement in

sustainable activities in voluntary associations or in political activities (Putnam 2000) help to foster ties among people of these groups. As indicated by Volkan (1985), people need to have both enemies and allies; this is part of the dynamics of human development. Having or constructing an enemy and publicly disapproving of him/her is a natural way to be able to identify a group of people who share common values. By sharing “primar sentiments” (Volkan 1985, p. 241) toward someone who has another vision, the group activates concrete collective actions against *him/her*. This natural process of group bonding is linked to phenomena such as ethnicity or nationality. Interestingly, this common enemy helps to create a form of solidarity between actors whose interests could otherwise diverge. This leads to a buttressing of the interests of those who have constructed, or positioned themselves as, obstacles between the enemy and the people who have suffered from the decisions and actions of the enemy. Being anti-something or anti-someone has been well studied in anti-brand activism research focusing on how people want to achieve social justice (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2010). These authors highlight the role of the community vision which drives members to action, the role of the image of an antagonist which/who generates imbalances and injustices, and “the creation of a world apart from mainstream society” (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2010, p. 341). In this chapter, we have added the participation of political actors at city level—the mayors—who have understood that residents’ participation in online social movements aiming to foster city sustainability is motivated by the quest for personal development in a liberal environment (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2010). This study illuminates the recent participation—within social movement actors—of a traditional political actor. It focuses on the phenomenon of self-renewal of the mayor actor as a member of the community of activists, their expression of moral and emotional support and the way they act to “construct shared visions of social justice in relation to [governments]” (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2010, p. 341).

#### 5.2.4 *International Role and City Network, City and Mayor Branding as a Positive Intangible Outcome*

Positive behavioral outcomes include, for instance, going viral on social media (Baumeister et al. 2001), thereby showing positive aspects of city diplomacy and enhancing the city’s image. Mayors and thus association of mayors have a new opportunity to position themselves as the current

guardians of the moral order (Haidt 2003) in terms of, for instance, fighting climate change, and to urge people to act with them for collective actions at local levels. Here it is not only a question of waiting and hoping for a change in the mindset or actions of the source of the stimuli (President Trump), it is a chance to take the leadership on this action by being closely connected to urban-living people around the world.

These positive aspects of city diplomacy and negative emotional engagement toward a clear target and stimulus reinforce citizen-mayor relationships by encouraging citizens to modify their behaviors and to cooperate (Brodie et al. 2013), as well as enhancing the international role of cities as primary actors regarding, for instance, global warming. Indeed, it is acknowledged that due to globalization and the decline of nation-states, contextual factors like sovereignty impact cities' governance (Ruhlandt 2018) and concepts such as mayors as diplomats (Barber 2013), big city mayors (Stren and Friendly 2019), mayors as avatars of an interconnected global network (Jayne 2011) and smart citizens (Capdevila and Zarlenga 2015) have acquired an increasing importance in the literature in recent years. For instance, with Jayne's (2011) metaphor of becoming avatars, the conception of mayors goes beyond the traditional vision of them as local actors and engages with both the political and policy domains of mayors subscribed to networked international relations.

Cities around the world collaborate together on specific topics and are aggregated into international city networks (Dameri and Ricciardi 2015; Gil-Garcia et al. 2015), with the aim "to participate in and influence decision-making at the supra-national level" (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 30). In fact, as cities are considered to be vital elements at local, regional, national and international levels, the various levels of regulation they are subject to have an increasing impact on the degree of autonomy a city mayor possesses (Walravens 2012). Mayors, and particularly mayors engaged in climate, sustainability and resilience processes, will increasingly assume a strategic importance as political and economic actors.

These multi-level activities of cities foster two types of relationship between city and state actors. According to van der Pluijm and Melissen (2007, p. 12), "one view on this is that cities' diplomatic activities infringe upon the role of central governments, thereby often creating an adversarial relationship [and] another view [...] is that both types of actors engage in diplomatic activities that complement one another". We argue that our case study on cities' climate change and network communication related to Trump's decision regarding the Paris Agreement follows the



first view, resulting in tensions and negative emotional engagement. In summary, positive outcomes include improved city branding (enhancing the international role of cities and/or stronger engagement of a city) and enhanced city mayor reputation. Thus, we argue that communications against someone also lead to positive outcomes.

### 5.2.5 *Content Connectivity (Dissemination Score on Social Media) and Citizen Use of Twitter*

Negativity or negative information leads naturally to a higher propensity for being shared on social media compared to positive content or events (Lievonon et al. 2018; Park and Lee 2009). In their framework of negative online emotional stakeholder engagement in the context of organizations and brands, Lievonon et al. (2018) propose a separation between private (low connectivity) and public (high connectivity) audiences when stakeholders express their various levels of emotions. Currently, these emotions are particularly disseminated through social media such as Twitter, providing rich data to analyze. Indeed, the social networking platform is widely studied in the scientific literature around citizen mobilization paradigms and social movements (Foust and Hoyt 2018) such as Occupy Wall Street (Tremayne 2014), climate change protests (Seegerberg and Bennett 2011) or risk issue adoption (O’Neil and Ackland 2019). Social movements are traditionally recognized as “rhetorical achievements and constitutive forces that cohere collective identity” (Foust and Hoyt 2018, p. 51). This collective identity (Melucci 1996) is also constructed through the use of social media, which “has altered organizational behavior and its consequences” in terms of political mobilization (Hodges and Stocking 2016, p. 226).

## 5.3 CASE STUDY: THE C40 CITIES CLIMATE LEADERSHIP GROUP

This study uses a mixed-methods case study approach (Yin 2003) applying content and sentiment analyses, since the purpose of our study is to demonstrate how online social mobilization supported by mayors could lead to enhancement of the international role of cities and city/mayor branding. The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is a global network (Vanolo 2017, p. 132) of large cities cooperating to address climate change and

related issues around the linear economy through direct actions on policy fostering and program implementation. The C40 Cities' goal is to obtain measurable reductions in carbon emissions and climate risks. Created in, 2005, C40 Cities aim to "demonstrate the power of cities to address climate change" (C40 Cities 2019) by collaborating effectively, sharing knowledge, and implementing measurable, sustainable and impactful actions. More than 90 mayors of megacities in more than 50 countries across the world are represented in this group, including present or past mayors of London, Toronto, Paris, New York, Sydney, Seoul, Santiago, Chicago and Cape Town. The C40 Cities group thereby represents around 25% of global GDP and is related to an extensive network of strategic funders, company donors, partnerships and city networks such as Bloomberg Philanthropies, Open Society Foundations, Michelin, L'Oréal, the Rockefeller Foundation of 100 Resilient Cities or the World Bank. All these partnerships and actors support C40 Cities' initiatives to foster circular flows of materials and zero waste economies at city municipality level in order to reduce carbon emissions while also leading to job creation and operational savings.

This issue has been selected because "the imaginaries of both the green / sustainable / resilient city and the technological / informational city have been, and still are, powerful rhetorical devices for boosting urban images" (Vanolo 2017, p. 126). Some state governors like the Governor of California, as well as city managers and other members of this group, have actively criticized the "absence of leadership from Washington" (We Are Still In n.d.) with the Trump administration's decision to leave the Paris Agreement. With this negative emotional engagement, cities and citizens, through their mayors, criticize what they consider to be a negative issue concerning the US government and express it through press releases and social media messages, but also through new collaborative platforms like "We Are Still In" (We Are Still In, n.d.), where various local actors, CEOs, mayors, college presidents and others—representing more than 3500 organizations and 150 million people across 50 states—have joined "forces for the first time to declare that we will continue to support climate action to meet the Paris Agreement" (We Are Still In n.d.). The mayors' and cities' user-generated online content participates in building the cities' brands through their online communications. Our aim is to investigate this development and to generate knowledge on it with an innovative framework of negative emotional engagement in relation to public and city diplomacy.

## 5.4 METHOD

We first content analyze messages related to the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group on Twitter. A content analysis allows researchers to examine citizens' and city mayors' emotions and behavior through a cost effective, unobtrusive and nonreactive method (Berg and Lune 2011). We choose Twitter as it is a free social media tool that allows people to indicate their ideas and to disseminate and/or comment on others by using retweets, mentions and hashtags. A total of  $N = 237$  tweets were collected using a search algorithm integrating the keyword 'Trump' and the hashtag '#Cities4Climate'. These tweets were chosen during a specific period, starting the day of the Trump administration's announcement, on June 1st, 2017, that the United States would leave the Paris Agreement. To finish the collection period we chose November 24th, 2018, when the number of tweets had decreased and the issue seemed to be on the decline. The collection of the tweets was done with the help of a python-based scraper code. Two independent coders coded the Twitter messages using a code book and coding scheme we developed. Some examples of how we have defined each category of the code book are indicated in Table 5.1. Using the Perreault and Leigh (1989) formula as a rigorous test to determine intercoder reliability, the overall reliability is 0.952. In our case study, we focus only on public connectivity with unlimited audiences where C40 Cities publish press releases and disseminate tweets, or where the public at large or associations have published tweets. We examine three degrees of connectivity on public websites or social media platforms. The level of engagement has been calculated with the sum of likes, replies and retweets for each tweet, leading to one of the three categorizations adapted to our sample: (i) low engagement means that this sum is under 5; (ii) high engagement refers to between 6 and 50 engagements; and (iii) very high engagement occurs when tweets generated more than 50 engagements.

In addition to this, we propose measuring the emotionality embedded into the unstructured short messages (informal and free text format, with the writer not following any constraints) related to climate change and city diplomacy (Arjun et al. 2013). We sentiment analyze our dataset of tweets with the help of a lexicon which uses natural language processing to classify sentiments. Due to the rise of social media and the web 2.0, sentiment analysis has developed rapidly in recent years. It has been applied to a large set of applications such as political campaigns or product evaluations. We use a sentence-level sentiment analysis method and apply it to our 237

**Table 5.1** Main categories and examples of negative emotional engagement on Twitter

Categories	Sub-categories	Examples
Negative emotional engagement	Inactive	<i>A year after Trump threatened to leave the #ParisAgreement [...]</i>
	Active	<i>A year ago tomorrow, @realDonaldTrump abdicated US climate leadership by announcing his intent to withdraw from the #ParisAgreement [...]</i>
Positive behavior	Malicious	<i>One year after the decision of this stupid f***** guy [...]</i>
	Adaptation strategy	<i>New Orleans mayor: US #climate change policy cannot wait for Trump. @c40cities @ICLEI_USA #cities4climate</i>
	Call to action	<i>Outrageous! We must take action.   #Resist #Trump   Protect our #health #environment.   #ActOnClimate #cities4climate #CleanWater #renewable</i>
	Using rhetoric of enemy to justify actions	<i>Everyone of you from local &amp; subnational governments, you have a responsibility to act now [on climate change]. If anyone tells you to wait, you tell them, f*%\$ you!" says Arnold @Schwarzenegger @Regions20 #united4climate #COP23 #Cities4Climate @realDonaldTrump <a href="https://pic.twitter.com/vQYqeczY9N">pic.twitter.com/vQYqeczY9N</a></i>
City Branding	Enhancing the international role of cities	<i>76 cities adopted the Paris #climate deal in defiance of #Trump. #Cities4Climate #climatechange #ParisAgreement</i> <i>Thanks @ericgarcetti for leading US mayors response to @realDonaldTrump. 331 mayors &amp; climbing #ClimateMayors @c40cities #Cities4Climate <a href="https://pic.twitter.com/PW7wPCjbjb">pic.twitter.com/PW7wPCjbjb</a></i> <i>Trumps steps down but the Mayors step up [...]</i>
	Stronger engagement of a city	<i>Assessing the effectiveness of city leadership on the climate [...]</i> <i>In the year since, cities like NYC have stepped up to fill the void [...]</i> <i>A coalition fights to fill the gap [...]</i> <i>Cities took a stand and set their own goals [...]</i>
		<i>If Donald Trump won't tackle climate change, then #Chicago will [...]</i> <i>In the year since, cities like NYC have stepped up to fill the void [...]</i>
Mayor Reputation	Enhancing mayors' reputations and visibility of actions	<i>Congrats @MikeBloomberg! Bucking Trump, These Cities, States and Companies Commit to Paris Accord</i> <i>Mayor of Paris @Anne_Hidalgo has a message for Mayor @BillPeduto and all the citizens of #Pittsburgh. #ParisAgreement #Cities4Climate #Trump <a href="https://pic.twitter.com/XD6mOkq4TN">pic.twitter.com/XD6mOkq4TN</a></i>

scraped tweets. We choose to use the valence aware dictionary for sentiment reasoning (VADER). This is a widely used rule-based model for general sentiment analysis which “performs exceptionally well in the social media domain” (Hutto and Gilbert 2014, p. 1). This kind of method was originally developed in linguistics and psychology. We use a human-validated lexicon specifically attuned to sentiment in microblog-like contexts wherein the text data is a complex mix of a variety of text features. A sentiment lexicon is a list of lexical features such as words, which are labeled according to their (i) semantic orientation, with positive emotion (love, good, etc.) or negative emotion (sad, bad, etc.); and (ii) sentiment intensity, which is the strength of the sentiment expressed in text. VADER also has the distinctive quality of being a fully open-sourced lexicon running under Python 3, available on GitHub and, to date, quoted and used numerous times in highly relevant journal papers. VADER has the unique ability to “combine a lexicon and the processing of the sentence characteristics to determine a sentence polarity (the numerical output is from -1 to +1). These approaches make use of a series of intensifiers, punctuation transformation, emoticons, and many other heuristics” (Ribeiro et al. 2016, p. 7). One key element of VADER is related to the five heuristics based on grammatical and syntactical cues: “(1) punctuation (e.g., number of ‘!’s); (2) capitalization (e.g., ‘I HATE YOU’ is more intense than ‘i hate you’); (3) degree modifiers (e.g., ‘The service here is extremely good’ is more intense than ‘The service here is good’); (4) constructive conjunction ‘but’ to shift the polarity; and (5) tri-gram examination to identify negation (e.g., ‘The food here isn’t really all that great’)” (Ribeiro et al. 2016, p. 9). VADER gives us the opportunity to obtain metrics for (i) positive, negative and neutral elements of a text; and (ii) a final compound score which is the sum of all the lexicon ratings—the valence scores of each word in the lexicon—adjusted according to the rules and then normalized to between -1 (most extreme negative) and +1 (most extreme positive). An example of a positive sentence is ‘VADER is smart, handsome, and funny’ (‘neg’:0.0, ‘neu’:0.254, ‘pos’:0.746, ‘compound’:0.8316).

The content analysis and sentiment analyses are expected to give insights into elements of the framework. Indeed, in addition to characterizing the type of negative emotional engagement that appears in the selected tweets, the results inform us as to who generates these emotional messages and whether the behavioral outcomes are traditional and negative ones or innovative and positive. Sentiment analysis complements the content analysis at this step by indicating and quantitatively confirming

the distribution and types of emotion shared on Twitter. Moreover, content analysis characterizes how various types of positive behavior are used in such negative emotional engagements and indicates how often city diplomacy and city branding elements are highlighted.

## 5.5 RESULTS

### 5.5.1 *Insights from Content Analyses*

Table 5.2 shows the results obtained from content analysis based on the theoretical framework of city diplomacy including negative emotional engagement and positive behavioral outcomes.

We observe that nearly 40% of the senders come from C40 Cities, city mayors and associations related to climate change. They have reacted strongly to Trump's decision with a massive negative emotional engagement, declaring their disagreement through emotion (17.6%) and behavior (20.6%), and also messages combining both emotion and indication of behavior (49.6%). The negative emotional engagements in our sample consist mainly of active messages (35.7%) and are linked to positive outcomes (46.2%), which are related to a positive behavior such as a call for action or call to adapt city strategies (these types of positive behavior represent 71.1% of all the messages of the sample). In this context, some cities have been quoted for their actions (18.9%), for their new role in the international context (32.8%) or for both of these elements (10.1%). Some individual mayors benefit also from this situation by being more visible or cited as good actors on this issue (31.1% of all tweets in the sample).

Finally, in terms of connectivity, a majority of tweets had a low engagement and dissemination score (63.4% of tweets had fewer than 5 engagements), but some tweets had a high level of engagement (24.4% of tweets had between 6 and 50 engagements) or very high level of engagement (12.2% had more than 50). These tweets reach an important number of people and disseminate the negative emotional engagements of mayors, groups, associations and citizens which criticize Trump's decision, and also add elements related to positive outcomes. In our sample, the majority of tweets have fewer than 100 engagements, but two tweets achieved more than, 2000 and more than 7000 engagements, respectively. For instance, this tweet from the mayor of Paris, followed by more than 1.4 million people, generated 7316 engagements (495 likes, 138 replies and 2227 retweets): *Once again @realDonaldTrump is wrong. #Paris & #Pittsburgh do stand*

**Table 5.2** Frequencies and percentage of tweets for each of the framework categories ( $N = 238$ )

<i>Categories</i>	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
<u><i>Senders</i></u>		<u><i>Type of negative behavior</i></u>	
C40 Cities	36 (15.1%)	Not applicable	181 (76.1%)
City mayors	10 (4.2%)	Destructive punitive actions	50 (21.0%)
Citizens	135 (56.7%)	Constructive punitive actions	7 (2.9%)
Associations/politicians	42 (17.6%)	<u><i>Type of positive behavior</i></u>	
Other/not specified	13 (5.5%)	Adaptation of strategy	15 (6.3%)
<u><i>Evaluation of the issue</i></u>		Call for action	7 (2.9%)
Negative	208 (87.4%)	Rhetoric of enemy to justify actions	7 (2.9%)
Positive	1 (0.4%)	Mix adaptation and call	18 (7.6%)
Neutral	5 (2.1%)	Mix adaptation and rhetoric of enemy	65 (27.3%)
Not applicable	24 (10.1%)	Mix call for action and rhetoric of enemy	22 (9.2%)
<u><i>Type of engagement</i></u>		All types of positive behavior	35 (14.7%)
Cognition	0	Not applicable	69 (29.0%)
Emotion	42 (17.6%)	<u><i>City Branding</i></u>	
Behavior	49 (20.6%)	Enhancing the international role of cities	78 (32.8%)
Emotion and behavior	118 (49.6%)	Stronger engagement of a city	45 (18.9%)
Not applicable	27 (11.3%)	Both enhancing and stronger	24 (10.1%)
<u><i>Type of emotional negative engagement</i></u>		Not applicable	91 (38.2%)
Inactive	74 (31.1%)	<u><i>Mayor reputation</i></u>	
Active	85 (35.7%)	Present	74 (31.1%)
Malicious	4 (1.7%)	Not present	164 (68.9%)
Not applicable	75 (31.5%)	<u><i>Connectivity</i></u>	
<u><i>Type of behavior</i></u>		Low	151 (63.4%)
Not applicable	71 (29.8%)	High	58 (24.4%)
Negative outcomes	4 (1.7%)	Very high	29 (12.2%)
Positive outcomes	110 (46.2%)		
Both negative and positive outcomes	53 (22.3%)		

*together for the #ParisAgreement #Cities4Climate.* Inside this tweet, the Paris mayor embedded another tweet from the mayor of Pittsburgh which generated nearly 400,000 engagements and which was also related to the climate change issue (but without the term Trump or the C40Cities name): *As the Mayor of Pittsburgh, I can assure you that we will follow the guidelines of the Paris Agreement for our people, our economy & future.*

### 5.5.2 Results from Sentiment Analysis

Our sentiment analysis supports the results of the content analysis. The two highest positive compound levels are sentences that are not in favor of Trump's decision and which use ironic ways of greeting Trump: for example, *Thanks to Trump, we've managed to turn the Paris Agreement into the Chernobyl appeasement. We need a political detox #cities4climate#resist.* ('neg':0; 'neu':0.736; 'pos':0.264, 'compound':0.7269); *I am hoping most US States just separate themselves from Trump & cont. with the Paris Agreement* ('neg':0; 'neu':0.684; 'pos':0.316, 'compound':0.7184). This kind of messages illustrates how plausible a message with moderate negative emotions held by justice-seeking stakeholders can be. These messages stay at a plausible level even if in reality they are very negative toward the Trump administration's decision. The sentiment analysis shows very well the ability of natural language to express fairly an idea which is highly negative toward the target. The highest negative compound level is related to a tweet including terms *of call to violence on Trump supporters* ('neg':0.261; 'neu':0.681; 'pos':0.058, 'compound':-0.8785). In addition, when we look at term scores, the highest positive term is *@MikeBloomberg = hero* ('pos':0.783), and the highest negative terms are linked to *Paris Disagreement* ('neg':0.714). What the scores given by the sentiment analysis reveal is that in line with Lievonon et al. (2018), terms mostly related to higher neutral scores—for example, *US Mayors say Pres Trump has instilled sense of urgency. Working at local and regional levels allows energy, transportation and buildings to be decarbonized. Cities have to act in the vacuum. UK metro mayors could really drive that change too. #Cities4Climate #GCAS18* ('neu':0.952)—are in fact those made by people with a moderate negative emotion (justice-seeking stakeholders) and a willingness to obtain positive outcomes through a call to adapt strategy, a call to action or using rhetoric of an enemy. These results are robust, although the sentiment analysis still has difficulties interpreting ironic sentences. Future developments of these already powerful sentiment measurement tools are still needed. They will help various forms of organization to better understand public opinion through natural language used in social media.



## 5.6 DISCUSSIONS

City diplomacy is characterized by the fact that negative and active emotional engagement leads to positive outcomes such as enhancing the international role of cities and calls for action, particularly by using the rhetoric of an enemy. The fact that behavioral engagement comes alone or in addition to emotional engagement indicates that a majority of tweets refer to the willingness to go beyond sentiments by indicating changes needed compared to previous visions on this issue (i.e., the vision materialized by Trump and his administration).

The content analysis shows that when mayors disapprove of policies with moderate negative emotions, it leads them to be more active in bringing about local changes: for example, *In the year after Trump withdrew from the #ParisAgreement, cities took a stand and set their own goals; or 19 cities pledge to slash emissions from buildings, with or without Trump. Learn more about this new @C40cities initiative; or Regardless of Trump's decision, the cities of the world will implement the #ParisAgreement #Cities4Climate.* Indeed, some tweets summarize the very proposition that the analysis conducted in this chapter is testing—that positive outcomes result from negative emotional engagement with President Trump's decision on the Paris Agreement: (i) *Pres Trump's order which was meant for bad in #climatechange is actually going to end up being for good;* (ii) *Trump inadvertently boosted fight against #climatechange & united cities, says Mayor of Atlanta @KasimReed #cities4climate @EventsPOLITICO.* In line with sentiment analysis results, we have shown that negative emotional engagement is not directly related to negative terms or what Lievonon et al. (2018) categorize as malicious (according to the VADER lexicon), for example, *Thanks to Trump, we've managed to turn the Paris Agreement into the Chernobyl appeasement. We need a political detox* is predominantly related to neutral terms and has a quite positive compound ('neg':0; 'neu':0.684; 'pos':0.316, 'compound':0.7269).

The negative emotional engagements tend to use the rhetoric of a common enemy to motivate people to take participative actions. Indeed, having an enemy is observed, for instance, in tweets such as *In perfect response to Trump on #ParisAccord, Paris monuments went green last night, along with cities around the world.* This rhetoric of an enemy has been coded for all behavior-related tweets. The use of the hashtag #Trump or reference to Trump's decision is also present in emotion-related tweets, but our aim is to measure the presence of this rhetoric in behavior-related tweets, as defined by Volkan (1985).

Our study reveals that negative emotional engagement has positive outcomes and contributes to promoting city diplomacy and the city's overall image. Positive outcomes are found in terms of city branding in tweets such as *If Donald Trump won't tackle climate change, then #Chicago will - @ChicagosMayor #Cities4Climate*.

Another strong insight from our case study is that a new type of reaction appears in terms of calls for action and behavior. As we have seen from the content analysis, this reaction is not linked to a traditional negative behavior, with destructive or constructive punitive actions. The messages do not include a call either to boycott or to rectify what they perceive as a wrongdoing. This is a major change and a clear indication that citizens and associations engaged with climate change, rather than demanding changes inside the system with new national policies in favor of climate actions, instead want to change the system by acting themselves at local levels. In line with Castells' (2001) social movement analysis, Tremayne (2014), and also Harlow and Harp (2012), has described this shifting role of social media in the relationship between online social movement and off-line results. Indeed, Tremayne (2014) focused on the consequences of the connecting capacities of Twitter, which enable the creation of links among individual activists who have similar ideas. The online dialogue among them, which could happen through various forms of clicktivism and hacktivism (George and Leidner 2019), leads to "the desire for action, or at least the desire of the average citizen to be heard by those in power" (Tremayne 2014, p. 123). In the context of city diplomacy, one actors' level of this power—the mayor—responds to the citizens' preexisting sentiment on this issue and collaborates and makes calls at city level by using the rhetoric of an enemy at national and international levels. This leads to a fostering of the recognition of the new role of city mayors as strategic international actors through whom real changes could happen.

## 5.7 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter contributes to the emerging academic discussion on city diplomacy and city branding by defining and measuring what city diplomacy entails and what positive outcomes a negative emotional engagement can have on citizen relationships. It provides a solid foundation with which to fill the gap between emotional and behavioral components when

positive outcomes appear in a city diplomacy context. This is particularly the case when observing and measuring the role of a common enemy and call for actions made by active messages shared on social media tools like Twitter. Furthermore, cities are in a stronger position to fight climate change with the help of local actors when their international roles and their brands are enhanced.

The negative emotions identified are mainly moderate in this context of diplomacy. They follow the principle of competitive cooperation indicated in city diplomacy literature and in line with diplomacy principles. Predominantly, messages were not expressed in order to lead to reputational damage or to harm President Trump, but instead to call for action and to adapt a strategy by using the rhetoric of an enemy. So far, numerous mayors around the world have taken the opportunity to be part of the new mayoral class invoked above and to be involved both in international issues and toward more horizontal dialogues and collaborative decision-making processes with a growing number of engaged citizens, such as new movements of young people following Greta Thunberg's call to action. Integrating all these various elements, the theoretical framework of city diplomacy developed in this chapter is thus a powerful and useful basis for demonstrating how negative emotional engagement in public diplomacy can be analyzed and measured.

Our framework has several implications for city diplomacy and city branding practitioners. As these two elements become increasingly popular in urban management, we recommend that advantage be taken of both the new emotional norms of social media and the citizen participation in place branding and city diplomacy. Diffusing moderate negative emotional discourses on social media is a way to create and maintain a bonding group of city actors involved in the co-creation of the future of the city. Using the online dissemination power of the cities' residents could be a fruitful way to position the city at an international level and to communicate and improve the image of the city. This also enhances resilience processes in terms of the revitalization of people's involvement in urban development, sustainability-oriented actions and all other economic and political fields. The authors encourage managers to use recent scraping and opinion-mining tools adapted to social media to address real-world applications and to understand opinion holders and opinion targets on a specific topic. This will help them to develop a better comprehension of online messages and to take better decisions.

In future research, the framework developed here could be applied to studies on social movement or public relations protests. It could help to determine how this hashtag diplomacy serves to reframe the organizational behavior of both (i) citizens and local leaders in international societal challenges such as climate change protest and (ii) inter-place competition where high volumes of tweets exchanged play a large part in establishing city branding. The societal, political or relational consequences of the contagious nature of negative emotional engagement expressed on powerful social media tools are important future directions for city diplomacy scholars.

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# Museums as Actors of City Diplomacy: From “Hard” Assets to “Soft” Power

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first century marks the age of rapidly increasing urbanization and global boom of the museum industry with potential implications for city diplomacy. The global population inhabiting urban areas is speedily growing. By 2050, 70% of the world population will be living in cities (UN 2015). It is estimated that in 2025, the 600 largest cities in the world will produce 60% of global gross domestic product (Snowl et al. 2016, 92). Furthermore, as portrayed below, cities acquire more power and visibility on the world stage as key players in international relations alongside their national governments (Acuto and Rayner 2016).

As Chillón (2018) expressively put it, “we are living the golden age of ‘urban’ seduction, as cities [...] have become the scenarios of the global economy, acting as magnets for the new hyper-connected communities.” Gone are the times when national governments used to be the only actors

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in the international networks of global politics. Although nation states retain their power and resources to shape the global agenda, cities increasingly stand out on the world stage as new powerful actors (Acuto 2013). City diplomacy is an important tool of municipal governments not only to maintain the citizens' support by advancing their global interests, but also to attract global investments and talent, increase international visibility and intervene in the global flows of international relations (Lord 2000).

In a way, city diplomacy is a new soft power, that is, the power to attract global cultural, social and economic capital as well as to form more favorable opinions about the foreign policy objectives of the local constituents. Nye (2004) originally defined soft power as a country's ability to influence others through persuasion, ideas and cultural attraction. Urban soft power can be appreciated through the same lens, as the power to have global influence based on local reputation through cultural exchanges, advocacy, and policy collaborations (Chillón 2018). Local governments tap into their urban appeal, international image or brand in the global context as well as other power sources such as economy and technology. These non-coercive sources of power, based on urban culture, values, and economic assets, help cities build their international prestige and reputation in the eyes of the global publics, which in turn can generate more favorable views of the citizens' foreign policy stance. Interestingly, museums play more than just a marginal role in such a rise of cities as actors of soft power.

Historically, museums have earned their dedicated role as important agents of cultural diplomacy, defined as "cross-cultural exchanges of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding" (Cummings 2003, 1). Different states have supported the international missions of museums to promote national cultural ideas and values abroad to pursue strategic geopolitical interests (Sylvester 2009; Arndt 2005). For example, the British Museum (1753) and Louvre (1793) as major national cultural repositories of cultural heritage and history have been conceived as key actors of cultural diplomacy "to address questions of contemporary politics and international relations" by presenting national cultures, artistic excellence and power and on the global stage (MacGregor 2004). As "identity machines" (McClellan 2012) and public hubs for constituting citizenry (Bennett 1995), museums in the recent decades expanded their roles from "status symbols of a developed country" (Lorch 2015) to key actors of urban soft power.

Lord and Blankenberg (2015) in their book *Cities, Museums and Soft Power* stressed that in the twenty-first century museums are experiencing a new transformation. In a growing competition among cities for talent, tourism and investment, museums are gradually turning from “sites of branded experience to places of soft power” (13). As the premier nation-branding specialist Simon Anholt observed, the presence of a museum in a place signifies a community sense of self-respect. Cultural institutions in this case serve “as means by which this is communicated to the outside world” (Anholt 2011). Museums transformed into key centers of soft power because they elevate the global visibility of cities, shape and even define their urban identities. They do this by hosting international cultural festivals and mega-events, generating tourism and developing diplomatic connections with cultural institutions abroad (Lord and Blankenberg 2015).

Perhaps this is one reason why the museum industry is rapidly spreading across both the developed and developing countries. There is no single continent left without a museum, including Antarctica where there are already five museums. In the last 40 years, more than 40,000 new museums appeared in different parts of the world, half of all museums that exist to date (Guerzoni 2014). From 2007 to 2017, China alone gave birth to almost 3000 new museums (Statista 2019). Such a speedy growth of the museum industry in the age of urbanization indicates that these cultural institutions are no longer mere national repositories of cultural heritage, solely dependent on public or private funding. They are vital actors of creative urban economies that accelerate tourism and project soft power on the global stage (Lord and Blankenberg 2015).

While the economic potential of urban “attraction” power generated by contemporary museums has been discussed extensively in the academic scholarship (Frey 1998; Zulaika 2003; Feldstein 2009), this chapter aims to explore the implications of attraction power through museums for city diplomacy. It addresses an important question of *how exactly museums help cities to exercise cultural diplomacy by projecting soft power*. Specifically, the chapter draws on the soft power activation framework developed by Joseph Nye (2011). This framework rests on three foundational stages of Nye’s model of soft power convergence from mere resources to strategic outputs leading to significant outcomes (Nye 2011). As Nye clarifies, agents of soft power need to convert their resources to achieve desired outcomes from their targeted subjects. The process of generating “soft power” starts with activating available *resources* through employing certain strategies that lead to specific *outputs*, such as events targeted at particular audiences,

eventually shaping public perceptions as key outcomes of activities (Nye 2011). This soft power conversion model nicely correlates with a city's performance evaluation framework. Such a performance is usually "measured by how much, and how well, a city is doing given the *resources* it has available" as well as evaluating "*outputs* and measuring how well they are delivered" (Hoornweg 2011, p. 97).

This chapter focuses on the first two stages of the soft power convergence model (resources and outputs) in the context of museums and their international activities within their urban eco-systems. It employs analytical approaches to investigate a number of case studies that help (1) identify what exact museum resources, or hard assets, can generate and wield soft power as well as (2) explain how they could be activated to deliver or complement city diplomacy. Surveying grey literature of urban cultural policy documents and museum reports across several cities in different countries, this chapter sets the twofold agenda that is discussed in the following main parts. The first section focuses on "hard" assets of museums that manifest in their collections and facilities. As observed in the museology scholarship, museums "were extensions of colonial rule (hard power) and were set up initially as cabinets of curiosity" (Mehta 2015, p. 119). Focusing on museum colonial capital, such as unique collections, as well as facilities and buildings, including modern design architecture, the section explores why and how the cultural infrastructure offered by museums play an important role in city diplomacy, especially in place making and city branding.

The second section goes further to illustrate how "hard" assets of museums can be activated through social activities and programming that help transform cultural resources into diplomatic outputs. This section is more concerned with issues of international cultural relations that museum can facilitate by creating strategic and engaging programming around their collections and exhibitions. This chapter reveals that the unique architecture and world-famous artifacts of museums have a strong power to attract global audiences. However, knowledge and experience-based creative economy of contemporary museum industries, especially implemented on the global scale, can further transform this "attraction" power into global influence offering new dedicated channels for city diplomacy.

## 6.2 “HARD” ASSETS AS INFRASTRUCTURE OF CITY DIPLOMACY: FROM UNIQUE ARTIFACTS TO “SIGNATURE” ARCHITECTURE

Cities are gradually transforming into key arenas in which global policies and causes are negotiated and pursued (der Pluijm and Melissen 2007). Urban soft power draws on brand, attraction and reputation that a city builds in a global community (Chillón 2018). Cities use this power to influence the global agenda on policies that matter for the prosperity, security and well-being of their citizens. This power rests within the representative dimension of city diplomacy, or in other words city branding (der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, 31).

City branding usually refers to strategic efforts of multiple stakeholders to market a city “for the purposes of attracting inward investment, customers for its export products or visitors for its tourist industry” (Clarke et al. 2017). Brands are critical for cities to retain the audiences’ loyalty, facilitate urban growth and sustain long-term development (Van Ham 2008, 130). Cities rely on their reputation and credibility to advocate in favor of global policies that result in urban sustainable development. Place making and city branding, the same way as national branding, draw on spreading and popularizing cultural ideals, values and identities employed to create a positive image of the place. They engage local myths and symbols to articulate aspirations for wealth, power, social justice and enhanced visibility to construct a favorable city image (Anholt 2007).

Importantly, city branding goes beyond a mere “gloss or spin or the placing of a territory on the map as an attractive tourist destination.” By contrast, a city brand is an intellectual property comprising “the totality of the thoughts, feelings, associations and expectations” stemming from unique culture, heritage and the history of a specific city (Van Ham 2008, p. 2). As Nye (2004) argued, “in an information age, it is often the side which has the better story that wins” (p. 11). Museums, as focal points and main keepers of urban history, culture and traditions, are the best players in the city diplomacy to construct local narratives and tell appealing stories.

First and foremost, storytelling powers of museums are grounded in their collections of unique artifacts as authentic evidences of historical events as well as symbols of cultural values and identity. Historically, museum collections proved to work well to shape cultural and political discourses, build cultural citizenry and elevate feelings of local belonging

(Wallis 1994; Poulot 1997; Luke 2002). Furthermore, museum collections and treasure artifacts from the past serve as magnets attracting people from all over the world to see famous pieces, generating activity in the local economy (Chitty 2017).

For example, Greffe (2009) conducted research on the economic impacts of Louvre upon tourism development in Paris. His research revealed that up to 52% of foreign tourists visiting the city recognize Louvre as their primary motivation. Attributing the equivalent of only a half of the tourists' travel expenses to the impact of the Louvre, Greffe (2009) calculated that total economic impact of Louvre to the economy of Paris reaches approximately 535 million euros per year. Similarly, the largest cultural capitals on the world stage, such as New York, London, Madrid or Rome, boast their high tourism rates associated with their world-class museums, the main cultural heritage repositories of the world treasures.

A capacity of museum collection to produce economic impacts and political influence directly depends on its historic value (Sagot-Duvaroux and Rouget 1992; Navrud and Ready 2002). Stressing a historic value of museum collections, Chitty (2017) indicates that the most enduring "soft power" capital has survived the longest time and is manifested in treasures from the past. These attractive cultural assets transmit cultural values from one society to another and have the power to change common beliefs and behaviors. Internationally recognized museums with large and diverse collections, like the British Museum, Louvre or Metropolitan, possess the largest collections of historical artifacts, representing different civilizations, religions and cultures. This cultural capital is a significant tangible power resource that can influence global public perceptions and to effect people on emotional and psychological levels.

For example, the British Museum with its rich collections of 8 million objects from Africa, Oceania and Americas, Ancient Egypt and Sudan, Asia, Greece and Rome, Middle East and prehistory Europe is a classical product of the colonial British history and its global imperial legacy. The museum collection keeps the museum on the top in the list of London's most visited attractions and invites more than 6 million people annually to visit the museum (BM 2018). More importantly, the large collections representing cultures across continents guarantee the museum a special status. The British Museum positions itself as a global "cultural ambassador," reaffirming the London's ambition to remain the "undisputed capital of the world" (Parsons 2017).

According to the Global Power City Index, in the last seven years, London has been ranked as the most comprehensively powerful city in the world, outperforming all others, including New York, Paris or Tokyo. Furthermore, London reaches the top 5 in 13 out of 16 indicators in its key strength in the category of Cultural Interaction. It is ranked according to the quantity and quality of UNESCO heritage sites, premier museums, cultural centers and world-class international programming (GPCI 2018). The British Museum’s ownership of the extensive global collections and its high expertise in world cultures have strong political implications. The Museum has always been actively involved with the “contemporary cultural and geopolitical issues in a wider context” that helped it manage conflicts in political engagements with Iraq or Sudan, among other countries (Hoggard 2006).

During the Iraq War, for example, it was the British Museum Director, Neil MacGregor, who personally called the Great Britain Prime Minister and asked to deploy tanks to stop looting the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad (The Telegraph 2011). It was the British Museum that despite all odds put together the famous blockbuster *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* to mitigate political crisis between the UK and Iran in 2000s. And again, it was the British Museum that led *Africa Lives* festival in London in 2005 with its complex multi-season and multi-exhibition programming *Africa 05* to respond to the Britain’s chairmanship of the Group of Eight and Prime Minister Tony Blair’s “Commission for Africa” foreign policies (Spring 2006). These examples evocatively evidence that museums’ collections and cultural expertise have strong political powers to facilitate international cultural relations to complement official diplomacy of states and cities. It is important to indicate, though, that these diplomatic activities of the British Museum pave a strategic pathway to retain its institutional legitimacy in the context of ongoing acrimonious debates demanding the return of the world’s greatest treasures in the museum’s possession to their homelands. Obviously, this diplomacy of “hard” assets is based on the institutional privilege as well as it is a result of the imperial colonial legacy of the museum.

Recognizing the power of museums’ collections to elevate a political status of cities and generate economic activity, municipal authorities supported local museums to loan artifacts from the major keepers of the global heritage. Indeed, temporary acquiring “hard” assets of globally recognized museums help local governments to rebrand their cities reaching a new level of global visibility. For example, in, 2006 the young and



ambitious High Museum of Art in Atlanta in the US loaned hundreds of works from the Louvre's collections through a three-year partnership program. The opening of "Louvre Atlanta" exhibition invited almost 3000 visitors, nearly doubling normal attendance. Moreover, it immediately attracted new members who "have joined because they think we finally have a museum worth belonging to," museum managers proudly shared (Goodman 2006). In 2009, the High's membership has grown to more than 50,000 households, pushing the museum to top 10 among American art museums ranked by their membership numbers. During the course of the partnership, 1.3 million people visited the High museum featuring 493 treasures from the Louvre's collection through seven exhibitions. These exhibitions attracted people from all 50 US states and invited international visitors from around the world (ArtDaily 2009).

However, as then Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin confirmed, the benefits for the city went far beyond the local tourism development. Celebrating the three years project closure, the Mayor awarded the High Museum with a "Phoenix Award" to recognize the partnership's impact on the city. She stressed that working with the Louvre offered a unique opportunity to the city to establish a relationship with "a partner of the highest caliber in constructing a thriving cultural scene that enriches life in the Georgia capital." This allowed Atlanta to build "its reputation as an arts and cultural center," taking the city to the next level of the global recognition and attracting new opportunities. "Louvre Atlanta" has become an important driver of the city's economic development scheme and helped promote its enhanced brand abroad (Williams 2008). However, museums' collections constitute only one dimension of the "hard" assets infrastructure resources that can generate urban soft power.

Increasingly, post-modern architecture, cultural and leisure facilities as well as spaces of public "spectacles in potentially de-contextualized" urban-scapes become important power recourses that enhance cities' economic and political position on the world stage (Ponzini 2011, p. 251). Specifically, building dedicated cultural districts with spectacular star-architecture has become a key strategy that enables cities to trigger urban regeneration and increase their visibility in the international context (Urry 2007; Lazzeretti and Cooke 2008). Within the cultural district strategy, museums are the most powerful urban agencies that can revitalize and rebrand local communities (Lazzeretti and Cooke 2008). A well-known flagship of the Guggenheim Bilbao designed by famous architect Frank Gehry does not require a special introduction as an exemplary project that

contributes to a city's international brand (Zulaika 2003). While “flagship starchitecture” as a panacea to urban ills is a mere utopia (Ponzini 2011), the “Bilbao effect” had a strong global impact on urban decision makers.

The last few decades have seen a rapid expansion of museums that have taken dedicated roles as “signature ornaments of any self-respecting city, vital to its civic and cultural identity and economic growth through tourism” (McClellan 2012, p. 271). The examples of the best world architects, such as Foster, Isozaki, Nouvel and Gehry, designing spectacular mega-projects of cultural districts with museums as focal points are countless. New cultural districts with museums as central actors of urban re-branding and development are currently raising in Shanghai (West Bund Cultural Corridor) and Hong Kong (West Kowloon). However, Saadiyat Island, or Island of Happiness, in Abu Dhabi stands out in this list as the most ambitious urban regeneration campaign in terms of resources involved.

The Saadiyat cultural district was designed as a miniature city of culture and leisure bringing together several world-class museums by leading “starchitects,” including the Maritime Museum by Tadao Ando, Zayed National Museum by Norman Foster, Guggenheim by Frank Gehry and Louvre by Jean Nouvel. The Saadiyat Island promises to deliver “a dynamic and perhaps paradigm-altering new museum-scape in one of the most rapidly evolving parts of the world” (McClellan 2012, p. 289). The capital of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi is the richest city in the world sitting on one-tenth of the planet's oil and accounting to two-thirds of the \$400-billion country economy (WB 2019). Within several decades, it has transformed from a small Bedouin village into one of the busiest global destinations with almost 25 million travelers landing at the Abu Dhabi Airport each year (ADA 2016). Abu Dhabi is an urban experiment to create a cultural oasis in the desert with the Saadiyat Island, 670-acre cultural district at a cost of \$30 billion, as a center of the urban brand strategy (Gimbel 2007).

Back in 2005 The Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, envisioned the city as a “cultural pearl,” “a cultural destination that everybody in the sophisticated world of art and culture would have to visit” (Gimbel 2007). While the premier objective of this urban campaign was shifting Abu Dhabi's oil economy to global cultural tourism model, it had strong political goals to instill the “national pride in a new generation of Emiratis” (Ouroussoff 2010, 2). In early 2000s, it was critical to change the perception of the place as a safe and appealing destination for work, travel and investments (Ajana 2015).

Reconstructing the image of the Arab world, Abu Dhabi pursued a strategy to create a cultural bridge between the West and the Middle East (Ouroussoff 2010). The Saadiyat cultural district with several new museums intended to tell a story that would reframe a long history of regional decline caused by militant fundamentalism (Henderson 2014, p. 108).

The Louvre Abu Dhabi is the first museum on the Island that opened its doors to the public in late 2017. It attracted more than a million visitors from around the world in its first year of operations (Carvajal 2018). Offering new spatial experiences, created by Jean Nouvel through the “rain of light” architecture, the museum compellingly demonstrated the city’s ambition to put a new landmark of the twenty-first century on the global map. Academic scholarship often describes such museum-scapes as expansive architectural “wonders” that create “hyperreal” environments (Sorkin 1992). “Images and myths transcend and replace their original sources of inspiration, blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy” (Hashim 2012, p. 80). The political or diplomatic implications of these spaces, however, manifest in explicit urban narratives that help the city to “play the global competitive game” by constructing the image of the cosmopolitan inclusiveness (Hashim 2012, p. 73).

As scholars of urban diplomacy emphasize, cities that strive to adopt these cosmopolitan or global identities increasingly become spaces where international flows of resources, energy, capital, services, goods, communication and people intersect and materialize (Amen et al. 2016, p. 1). They help cities to advance their positions in the global competition for economic and cultural capital by making the city more open to varieties of cultures, languages and religions. The same logic of hyper-real architectural wonders drives major local development campaigns that aim to bring cities to the new horizons of international opportunities while serving major foreign policy objectives of developing countries. Ambitious star-architecture of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech in Morocco (2017), Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town (2017) or IK Lab Art Gallery in Tulum, Mexico, provide an evidence of this popular cultural rejuvenation urban trend spreading across continents. Another good illustration is the boom of the museum industry in contemporary China, facilitated by urban policies pursuing both global ambitions and local development goals.

In the last decade, museums in China gained a special recognition through the “Cultural China” image-building scheme (Kong 2015). Not only did the scheme delegated Chinese museums a leading role to exercise

cultural diplomacy “in order to demonstrate the glorious and splendid achievement of Chinese civilization” (Kong 2015, p. 50). It also offered a wide range of local government incentives to facilitate the development of the museum industry across the country (Gaskin 2014). From only 45 museums in the 1950s, many of which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, China established over 1000 museums in the 2000s (Hsu 2014). By 2020, the Chinese museum world has grown even larger reaching almost 5000 museums (Statista 2019).

Priority access to state-owned land, tax exemptions and special government awards in recognition of “individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the development of private museums” (SACH 2010) caused a speedy growth of the museum industry. For example, in the last decade the municipal government policies in Shanghai encouraged a development of dozens of privately funded museums, such as Rockbund Art Museum, Yuz Museum, Long Museum and Zendai Museum, to name just a few. All of them are designed by famous architects, ensuring a high visibility in the urban context and inviting larger visitation by locals and tourists. According to the government expectations, these museums aim to serve as “cultural carriers” of creative industries and key landmarks in “tourist routes across the country” (Yan 2017).

While the Chinese government strives to offer new opportunities to accelerate the development of museums as key urban attractions (Feng 2015), it remains questionable whether newly born museums can achieve these goals. Failing to generate high attendance and sustain themselves in the economic sector of culture, the majority of new museums in China close down with the same speed as they pop up in big metropolitan centers and small provincial towns across the country. As Dr. Adrian Cheng, a famous art philanthropist from Hong Kong and a convener of K11 Art Mall franchise chain, explained: the focus on “hardware (architecture, space utilization, customer services) rather than software (art exhibitions)” keeps attendance growth of new Chinese museums very low (Chen and Yong 2016).

Apparently, it is not just enough to have a spectacular “starchitecture.” A mind-blowing design does not necessarily guarantee a birth of a museum that can effectively engage global audiences. Indeed, the majority of new Chinese museums lack sufficient expertise to lead world-class exhibitions that can boast their curatorial creativity and excellence of artistic scholarship (SACH 2010). This explains why the Bilbao city government paid \$20 million “rental fee” to the Guggenheim headquarters in New York.

Entering into a 20-year contract with the museum, Bilbao secured the Guggenheim's commitment to advise on and oversee the collections', exhibitions' and programming development of the new museum (Rauen 2001). Similarly, in the last decade the Abu Dhabi government has been paying the British Museum £10 million a year to provide consultancy services to help establish Zayed National Museum (Rocco 2013; Harris 2018). Furthermore, the Louvre Abu Dhabi brand cost the city budget \$525 million. This only covered the rent of the institutional name for 30 years as well as access to the French heritage collections and expertise for the development of the new Louvre (Ajana 2015).

This impressive but simple cultural arithmetic leads this chapter to the following section. It shifts the focus from "hard" assets of museums, such as collections and facilities, to explore strategies of museums that activate these tangible resources to generate soft power and help shape city diplomacy beyond place branding. In this section, the cases of the British Museum and Louvre demonstrated that museums' tangible assets, such as collections and unique artifacts, are, in fact, "repositories of hard power – safeguarding the spoils of war and human conquest of nature" (Lord 2017). Recognizing the political and economic power of this cultural capital, emerging global cities like Abu Dhabi and Shanghai invest considerable resource to build their own "hard" assets urban infrastructure to compete in the global arena. The section illuminated that museum resources as a powerful cultural capital could be strategically acquired, traded or exchanged to strengthen or even create "de novo" a city global brand and reputation. However, it also flagged that strategic leveraging of this capital is required to activate its soft power. The next section will explain how it could be done.

### 6.3 GENERATING "SOFT POWER": MUSEUMS AS HUBS OF INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

Contemporary cities perform the role of new data republics, expanding their geo-spatial reach and activity to new levels of global governance, "from the most localized spheres of municipal and domestic affairs to globalized issues such as climate change, security, new democracy or economic exchange" (Chillón 2018). Cities are gradually transforming into key arenas in which global policies and causes are negotiated and pursued (der Pluijm and Melissen 2007). To achieve a global visibility and

resonance, governments have been using cities as “appeal arenas” by hosting global mega-events, like Olympic Games or Word Expos. These activities usually transform cities into international centers for celebration of events, occasions or causes of truly global significance (Hollinshead and Hou 2012). They change the city’s local cultural ecology for a certain period by inviting a large influx of visitors who stimulate local employment and bring high tourism revenue. Additionally, the government, at a local or national level, uses these opportunities to engage foreign publics to win over their hearts and minds and to advocate for certain foreign policy objectives.

The role of museums in facilitating these global mega-events and involving people in a meaningful cross-cultural dialogue and sharing is incredibly important. Museums host international events and activities complementing a city’s main programming. More importantly, they develop their own projects that bring their cities to a new level of political visibility on the world stage. For example, from 2005, the year when the bid was won by London to host the 2012 Olympic Games, 61 museums across the UK developed special programs to showcase the British heritage on the global arena “putting the country on display” (VisitBritain 2013). As a part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, the national Museums, Libraries and Archives Council implemented the project “Stories of the World” that aimed to tell inspirational stories about the UK’s relationships with the global community by developing international relations through local museums across the UK cities, large and small (MLAC 2011).

As a result, a rich international programming of 130 exhibitions and 5000 events developed by museums in different cities engaged younger generations of its multicultural audiences, directly involving 22,000 young people as participants. What is more important, it raised the global reputation and significance of cities in the UK beyond London, through a strategic international programming developed by each of the museum with their overseas counterparts. To name just a few examples of these international connections, Manchester and Luton museums organized residential trips to India and Pakistan, while Leicester’s museums service borrowed objects from the China National Silk Museum to organize a collaborative exhibition (Rodenhurst 2013). Another illustration is the North East of England program, *Journeys of Discovery*, devoted to the voyages of Captain Cook who was born in the region. It was developed to attract global public attention to historical cultural treasures of Durham Oriental Museum’s

extensive collection of Eastern art, containing objects from Egyptian mummies to Japanese Manga (Rodenhurst 2013).

Overall, such a multitude of international events and activities facilitated new diplomatic connections with international partners and boosted the UK tourism in 2012, inviting visitors to different parts of the UK. As the national tourism research agency VisitBritain reported, during the 2012 London Olympics, holiday visits to the UK have grown by 26%, reaching almost 12 million visits and contributing £7.5 billion to the UK economy. More than 30% of the total visitation accounted for visits across the country beyond London (VisitBritain 2013). More importantly, the most popular holiday activities of tourists in many regions included visiting museums, heritage sites, parks and gardens (VisitBritain 2013).

This example illustrated how strategic international engagements helped museums across the UK to expand the global mega-event of London Olympics beyond the capital area. They brought new visitors to various cities and engaged local communities to establish meaningful cultural relations with counterparts abroad. As effective as they are, temporary mega-events, like the Olympic Games, are not sustainable platforms for increasing local attraction in an ongoing sustainable manner. While the “Stories of the World” case of the UK museums is an evocative example of museum international engagements strategically aligned with major city diplomacy campaigns, the following case studies will demonstrate how museums can participate in strategic urban management that can sustain cultural tourism and generate international attractiveness beyond the global media attention of mega-events.

In the age of increasing globalization and knowledge-based economy, cities need to transform into “global hubs” that can compete on the world stage only if they are able to generate sustainable tourism (Kwek et al. 2014, p. 37). From the political perspective, tourism is recognized as a geopolitical tool of soft power. Specifically, tourists develop greater and more profound understanding and empathy of the destination place. This helps destroy cultural stereotypes and create human links and connections that enable cultural knowledge exchange. As a result, travelers bring their positive experiences back to their homes serving as unofficial “cultural ambassadors” (Ooi 2016).

“Soft power capitalizes on participant motivations of cost, culture, curiosity and consumerism and is manifest in high quality and low-cost facilities and services” (Kwek et al. 2014). Within this equation however, culture is central. Cultural attraction and experience of the place help

retain high tourism rate despite urgent political and economic problems (Iyer 2017). The best illustrations of this would be a significant adaptation of major European museums from lower economy countries, such as Italy or Greece, to the new experience-centered cultural paradigm that helped cities to facilitate sustainable cultural tourism and develop enduring international partnerships.

In the past twenty years, for instance, Turin’s museums facilitated major cultural and social inclusion campaigns within the wider framework of the city’s cultural policies. Specifically, since 2000s, the communication and management strategies of Turin’s museums underwent a significant transformation to develop a metropolitan system of sustainable tourism based on active citizen engagement. With more than 80,000 foreign citizens from over 100 countries living in the city (10% of the total city population), Turin suffered from identity fragmentation challenged by a disharmonic co-existence of culturally diverse residents and tourists within the urban cultural landscape (Scazzosi 2004). However, the city always boasted its unique cultural heritage sites and collections distributed across 49 museums, including the famous Egyptian Museum. It contains rich collections from Egypt brought to Turin by King of Savoy in 1820s that cost him three-quarters of the Kingdom’s budget. Turin is also known as the first city in Italy to establish in 1863 the Civic Museum that hosts a comprehensive collection of the modern art (Maino and Zamboni 2013).

To address social and cultural challenges, the Department of Cultural Heritage Education of city administration designed and implemented a series of museum initiatives to promote and facilitate cultural inclusiveness for tourism development. These activities shifted the emphasis from heritage places of artistic or cultural excellence to collaborative spaces of engagement for negotiation and sharing of cultural identities (Scazzosi 2004). Such major programs as *Heritage for All* and the European learning partnership project *Museums Tell Many Stories* created collaborations among “local authorities, cultural and non-governmental institutions, and civil society” to facilitate intercultural dialogue in Italy on the national level (Simone et al. 2009).

The report of this campaign stressed that these initiatives led to a long-term continued partnership between Turin city administration, local museums, immigrant associations, foreign affairs and tourism agencies. Working in partnership, they have developed a new experience-based local heritage consumption model designed “*with* (rather than *for*) audiences, who were actively engaged and given a real opportunity of



self-representation” (Da Polo and Simone 2010). This model served to increase cultural cohesion in Turin as an appealing and welcoming urban heritage destination that until now retains high tourism rates. Turin welcomes almost 4 million international visitors every year to the city with a population under 1 million residents (Statista 2016).

Furthermore, Foreign Affairs department of the city government extensively collaborates with local museums who serve as dedicated hosting spaces and active facilitators of numerous international delegations, establishing economic partnerships and negotiating political alliances (City of Torino 2015). For example, in October 2015, a Cooperation Pact between Bethlehem—Palestinian Territories and Turin was signed by two city mayors to support local development in water management and commerce. The ceremony of signing the Letter of Intent between the two cities took place at the Museum of Oriental Art that for this occasion opened a dedicated exhibition on historical objects coming from Palestine (City of Torino 2015). The same year, the Museum of Oriental Art organized a major festival of Japanese art to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of twinned cities relationships between Turin and Nagoya, Japan. The celebration ceremonies included signing an agreement for mutual promotion and exchanges in the fields of economy, culture, environment and design (City of Torino 2015).

These few cases among dozens of similar events happening in Turin every year demonstrate that while museums can generate sustainable tourism, direct diplomatic implications of these international activities are also vital. More importantly, these cases illustrated that soft power resources of Turin museums’ rich collections and artifacts are well activated through strategic city diplomacy initiatives. This diplomacy rests on partnerships among multiple actors and draws on strategic engagements of local communities, immigrants and international visitors.

These collaborations between local governments and museums are not exclusive to the European context. The following example from Melbourne in Australia provides further evidences. By contrast to the Turin museums’ case, though, it especially demonstrates how local museums can outsource “hard” assets, such as collections and exhibitions, from abroad to complement city diplomacy in the unique context of urban social and cultural ecology. Melbourne, originally conceived as a museum city (Bonyhady 1985, p. 12), is home to Australia’s busiest galleries and museums and is the national urban star for cultural tourism. It brings AU \$2 billion per year to the local government of Victoria through international cultural

tourism. Local museums as central hubs of international collaborations have earned the city a reputation of the global cultural destination, keeping Melbourne in the last years among the top five in the Monocle Quality of Life survey (Monocle 2019).

Since 2004, Creative Victoria has facilitated 23 major international art exhibitions through its highly successful Melbourne Winter Masterpieces program, attracting more than 6 million attendees (CV 2019). These exhibitions are the result of international collaborations with galleries and institutions from around the world. They are usually hosted by the best Melbourne museums such as Museums Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria and Australian Centre for the Moving Image. Apart from the economic impact, the key objectives of the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series include attracting international visitors to Melbourne and generate international media exposure (CV 2019).

In the last fifteen years, the series brought to Melbourne unique arts collections from Europe and Americas delivering a dedicated platform for international cultural collaborations, strengthening the city's diplomatic capabilities. A brief overview of the 2019 mega-popular international blockbuster *Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality* can offer an interesting illustration of how the Winter Masterpiece exhibition can facilitate city diplomacy. This exhibition is organized in partnership with several Chinese organizations including Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau, Shaanxi History Museum, Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Centre and Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum of the People's Republic of China. It features full-size sculptures of warriors from the famous terracotta army and displays more than 160 gold, jade and bronze works of ancient Chinese art, first discovered in 1974 in the tomb of Qin Shihuang, China's First Emperor (NGV 2019). “Regarded by some as an eighth wonder of the world,” this unique exhibition is complemented with an immersive installation by one of the world's most exciting contemporary artists Cai Guo-Qiang. Featuring 10,000 porcelain birds, the installation offered a three-dimensional impression of a calligraphic drawing of the sacred Mount Li, the site of the ancient tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, and his 8000 warriors (Jefferson 2019). Such a combination of ancient and contemporary arts, the exhibition's curators pointed out, aimed to create “a fresh new environment,” to inspire a more appreciated vision of “historical things as objects that relate to our visitor,” “in dialogue with a contemporary, international Chinese voice” (Jefferson 2019).

Tony Ellwood, the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, shared that thirty-six years ago, in 1982, museum already presented the China's ancient *Terracotta Warriors*. The exhibition first arrived in Melbourne "only several years after their discovery," Ellwood explained: "It's a legacy we wanted to reclaim now" when Asia is, in fact, the largest arts tourist market (Only Melbourne 2019). According to the 2018 Australian Council for the Arts report, since 2010, visitors from Asia have been steadily replacing those from Europe. By 2017, almost half of all international arts tourists were visitors from Asia. More importantly, 72% of visitors from Asia attended a museum or gallery during their stay. In 2017 alone, visitors from China constituted 620,000 arts tourists (ACA 2018).

The exhibition in a way is the response to the rapidly changing cultural and political climate of Melbourne that in the last decade has become a home to 155,998 Chinese immigrants, 140,000 visitors and 14,000 students from China each year (VG 2018). *Terracotta Warriors* provided a platform for implementing a number of international initiatives, actively engaging local Chinese communities and visiting guests from Asia. The blockbusters were complemented with numerous free Family tours in Mandarin to the exhibition itself as well as to the Gallery's famous White Rabbit Collection that presents hundreds of works by 26 Chinese artists (NGV 2019a). Furthermore, Knowing China Teacher Masterclass series offered unique opportunities to local students, emerging artist and traveling art seekers to gain new cultural knowledge, skills and hands-on experiences through engagements with the art and culture of China, facilitated by famous artists Echo Wu and Zhu Ohmu (NGV 2019b). Furthermore, in collaboration with Asia Society Australia, the gallery hosted educational events, China's World View, Then and Now that helped audiences to gain more informed insights into the blockbuster exhibition's content, its historic significance and cultural value (NGV 2019c).

These and other international events, bringing in collections, artists and ideas from abroad, allowed the museum to explicitly communicate and celebrate a high respect and appreciation of traditional and contemporary Chinese cultures. More importantly, they made local Chinese residents and visitors active participants of these storytelling activities creating a unique cross-cultural space for learning and sharing. This aligned well with Victoria and City of Melbourne governments' strategies to "deepen understanding of each others' people and culture" to "unlock doors for local businesses and link Melbourne companies to Asian markets" (CV 2018). "Strengthening relationships with China is vital to advancing

Melbourne’s prosperity,” the Lord Mayor stressed, also pointing out that the city aims to showcase “to the world Melbourne’s key strengths in innovation” (City of Melbourne 2019).

On top of that, the exhibition provided a meaningful public space to discuss political issues shaping international relations between Australia and Asia. For example, in collaboration with Lowy Institute, the leading foreign policy research thin-tank in Australia, the Gallery hosted a public debate, Mapping Power in Asia. Hervé Lemahieu, the principal researcher behind the Asia Power Index project, facilitated a discussion on the rapidly changing distribution of power in Asia (NGV 2019d). This event is especially meaningful in the city’s ambition, as a national premier cultural hub, to play a leading role in Australia’s foreign policy objectives.

*Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, released in 2012 by the Australian government, stressed Asia’s growing economic power and urged the country to embrace changes and rethink the national strategic objectives for the following decades (Australian Government 2012). To manage and shape the national future in the era of rapid “transformation of the Asian region into the economic powerhouse of the world,” many cities in Australia strive to create deeper connections with Asia to broaden the flow of ideas and exchange of knowledge and capabilities (Australian Government 2012, p.ii). Media connectivity, international cultural relations and people-to-people exchanges play a key role in the national plan to help develop the potential of the “Asian century” (Australian Government 2012, p.ii). The City of Melbourne local cultural activities in a wider Creative Victoria China’s strategies agenda offer a meaningful platform for city diplomacy, elevating the status of Melbourne on the international stage.

Exploring international museum activities across British, Italian and Australian museums, this section illustrated the importance of social agenda and programming of contemporary museums that can no longer afford to use only “hard” assets of their collections and facilities to meaningfully interact with their constituencies and audiences on the local and global levels. While the first case illuminated the power of museum diplomacy in the context of international mega-events, Turin and Melbourne museum activities are especially insightful to demonstrate how museum collections, either local or brought from abroad, could be activated as soft power resources to complement city diplomacy in a more sustained and long-term manner. The activation of these soft power resources occurs when museum visitors are appreciated as main participants and

stakeholders of the international storytelling activities helping cities to communicate their intercultural and inclusive identities. Considering that soft power cannot be “shaped fundamentally by the government” (Blechman 2005, p. 680), museum international collaboration strategies and social agenda transform mere place branding into a more meaningful and democratic endeavor, experienced by locals and travelers. These collaborative museum initiatives among institutions, communities and audiences advance cultural heritage ontologies allowing both citizens and visitors not only to access their historical value but also to generate social value of places.

## 6.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter explored museums as key actors of city cultural diplomacy. It identified and analyzed the role and place of cultural resources and outputs in urban efforts of projecting soft power. Focusing on museums as global actors with powerful brands and reputations, this chapter provided an empirical analysis to illustrate the increasing role of local urban actors, such as museums, in city diplomacy. This chapter was instrumental to explore two important stages of soft power convergence process transforming museums into actors of city diplomacy. They include different case studies identifying what museum tangible assets or “hard” resources can generate soft power as well as exploring how museum strategic programming can engage international audiences to implement city diplomacy.

On the one hand, these “hard” resources of museums’ collections, historical artifacts and buildings constitute a powerful “attraction” force that helps cities accelerate tourism and construct their global identities to attract human, cultural and economic capital. On the other hand, as cases from Abu Dhabi, China and Italy explicitly demonstrated, museum “signature” architecture as well as rich and diverse collections across times and civilizations are not enough to activate urban soft power. In the framework of creative knowledge-based economy that is based on experience-centered modes of consumption, international hearts and minds are not easy to win without a meaningful engagement. A strategic facilitation of interaction among objects, ideas, people and institutions in an urban cultural space is required to make city diplomacy a successful exercise going beyond a one-way promotion or place branding. Positive cultural experience makes visitors come back for more, involving them in people-to-people exchanges. This favorable climate helps cities to develop

collaborations across different economic and political areas of international relations.

This shift from “hard” infrastructure to strategic social activities that help museums project soft power, in fact, demonstrates a vital transformation of museums from colonial institutions that used to signify and reinforce national military and economic power into more open and democratic non-state actors of diplomacy. These actors generate global recognition and attract international audiences. This finding invites an appealing speculation that in the age of globalization and urbanization, cultural resources, on their own, become less important and, perhaps, obsolete tools of global influence. They need to be incorporated into a broader city diplomacy strategy and narrative for increased impact. This change is in part necessary to thrive in the international arena which has become more democratic and inclusive of more distributed and equal opportunities for local actors across developed and developing countries to find their niche and place in the global competition for public opinion.

While this chapter illustrated that social programming is “a must” for contemporary museums to activate their “attraction” powers, further comparative explorations across distinct cases could reveal to what extent museums’ collections and buildings help them develop their cultural expertise to lead world-class exhibitions and shows with a potential to appeal to and engage international audiences. Furthermore, future research could unpack or deconstruct the social dimension of museum soft power. Employing different taxonomies of city diplomatic communications (der Pluijm and Melissen 2007), it would be useful to explore how museum international campaigns correlate, contribute to or maybe challenge city diplomacy activities across international broadcasting, city twinning, global networking or urban development campaigns.

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# Un-nation Branding: The Cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Israeli Soft Power

*Rhys Crilley and Ilan Manor*

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

No state in contemporary global politics provokes polarised debate quite like the state of Israel. On the one hand Israel is viewed as an international pariah, as an aggressive militarised state engaged in the illegal occupation of Palestinian land. On the other, it is a bastion of democracy in the Middle East, surrounded by enemies and threatened by terrorism every day. In one recent international survey, Israel was the fourth most disliked country in the world, behind only Pakistan, North Korea and Iran (Globescan 2017). Within this context, research suggests that states like Israel that wish to improve their international standing should utilise ‘soft power’ and ‘nation branding’ to market themselves as attractive to others. Indeed,

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research has demonstrated that Israel engages in these activities, once referred to by the Hebrew term ‘hasbara’ (Greenfield 2012). As the sociologist Jon Dart recently noted, ‘the primary cause of Israel’s poor international image has been seen as a failure of hasbara (i.e. ‘to explain’) rather than the actions of the state’ (2016: p. 1406), and subsequently, whilst Israel has not changed the policies that make it so unpopular, the state has invested many resources into soft power and nation branding campaigns in order to improve its international image.

Israeli attempts at soft power cultivation occur through multiple means and emphasise how Israel is ‘a democratic country, technologically developed and connected to major world religions’ (Avraham 2009, p. 211). This messaging is disseminated through the media, cultural industries, celebrities and opinion leaders, and Israel’s participation in, and hosting of, major international sporting and cultural events such as the Eurovision Song Contest. Yet despite such efforts, Israel is still viewed with derision, and a recent study suggests that citizens of Israel’s staunchest ally—the United States of America—are increasingly critical of Israel (Telhami 2018). In the face of international unpopularity, where ‘brand Israel’ (Dart 2016) is viewed by many to be associated with war, conflict, occupation and abuses of human rights, Israel has adopted a novel way of influencing international audiences—one which we refer to as un-nation branding. This effort involves the promotion of Israeli cities without any reference to the country of Israel itself and is made evident in the current marketing campaign ‘Two Cities. One Break’—a campaign that promotes Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as international holiday destinations.

In order to make sense of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign, we draw upon and extend contemporary theorising of soft power and nation branding by articulating a theory of un-nation branding. We define un-nation branding as the practice of promoting a nation-state with minimal or even no reference to the nation-state. In contrast to nation branding, un-nation branding involves states symbolising themselves as and through cities (or regions) in order to make themselves attractive to others. Specifically, we argue that un-nation branding may be used by states such as Israel whose national brands are viewed as contentious or who have limited soft power resources. In this way, a city’s brand is used as a surrogate for the state. It is also through the city brand that the state may better its own soft power resources.

This chapter proceeds in three parts. First, we situate our theory of un-nation branding within the literatures on soft power and nation branding,

and in the context of Israel's nation brand, we examine what un-nation branding involves alongside how and why it has developed. Second, we analyse the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign and explore how the campaign represents Israel through visual media. Finally, we conclude by discussing the broader significance of un-nation branding for global politics beyond Israel. Our chapter contributes to the burgeoning literature on city diplomacy by drawing attention to the novel development of un-nation branding and how it is currently being used by the Israeli government to attract soft power effects. In doing so, we provide a semiotic reading of the 'Two Cities, One Break' campaign and reflect on its political significance given how it is being used to attract investment and visitors to Israel without mentioning Israel itself.

## 7.2 UN-NATION BRANDING: THE SOFT POWER SYMBOLISM OF CITIES

Soft power refers to a nation's ability to influence the behaviour of other nations through attraction rather than coercion and force (Nye 1990). According to Joseph Nye, 'a country may obtain the outcome it wants in world politics because other countries- admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of property and openness- want to follow it' (2004, p. 5). A nation's soft power emanates from its culture, its social values, its domestic institutions and its foreign policies (Fan 2008, p. 149). Nation branding is therefore a tool for soft power projection. Branding campaigns aim to improve a nation's image by telling stories about the norms that shape domestic politics, the values that determine its foreign policy, and its art, history and culture (Fan 2008, p. 154). Given the focus on norms, values and culture, nation branding contributes to a nation's soft power, and nation branding can be understood as a process by which a nation's image can be created, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed to improve or enhance a nation's reputation among a target international audience (Fan 2010, p. 6). A nation's brand relates to what people find most enduring and distinctive about that nation. Reputation relates to feedback gained from the outside world regarding a nation's identity claims (Fan 2010, p. 6; Manor and Segev 2015, p. 90).

Scholars agree that nations, regions and cities have images—whether these are proactively managed as brands or not (Manor and Segev 2015, p. 91). Such images consist of the associations that nations evoke in peoples' minds (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2002; Kotler and Gertner 2002;

Kaneva 2011; Fan 2010). In this way, a nation's or a city's image functions as a cognitive mechanism that is similar to a stereotype as 'it helps people make sense of the world around them' (Manor and Segev 2015, p. 92; Gudjonsson 2005). However, given that the images of cities and nations are cognitive mechanisms, altering the associations that places evoke is a long-term and demanding process (Fan 2010).

Unlike nation branding, which has attracted scholarly attention for nearly two decades, city branding is a more recent domain of academic enquiry (Dinnie 2011, p. 7). Indeed, an analysis of academic publications reveals that the majority of studies on city branding were authored between 2008 and 2019, while nation branding studies first emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A review of the existing literature suggests there are five recurring arguments that resonate across the city branding research corpus. First, a city's brand begins with a certain image. The branding of a city is thus a 'planned practice of signification and representation' (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Firat and Venkatesh 1993). The image of a city is shaped by its history, culture and art, as well as films, novels and the news (Herstein 2012; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Zhang and Zhao 2009). A branding campaign hopes to create a stable and positive image for a city. For example, in 2009, Bogota published a bid for a city branding campaign aimed at negating the common image of the city as yet 'another South American poor mega-city, devastated by crime and drugs' (Kalandides 2011, p. 284). This image took root thanks to negative depictions of Bogota in the news and popular culture.

Second, the motivation for city branding is often a financial one (Middleton 2011, p. 16). This is because city branding and nation branding activities are rooted in the Country of Origin (COO) effect, which states that consumers use country of origin information (such as the made in China label) as an indicator of product quality (Kotler and Gertner 2002; Manor and Segev 2015). Moreover, country of origin labels have been found to elicit emotional processes as they prompt connotations of a certain country. Italian brands, for instance, elicit connotations of Italy leading to both emotional and cognitive processes among consumers (Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999; Fournier 1998). Notably, by improving a nation's image or the connotations it elicits, one could also improve the perceived quality of its products (Chattalas et al. 2008). As such, the motivation of nation branding activities was originally a financial one, which sought to increase the competitiveness of national brands given growing global competition over the hearts and wallets of consumers. Similarly, in

a globalised world, in which cities compete with one another over investments, tourists and employment opportunities, cities must develop a unique image that sets them apart (Caldwell and Freire 2004; Zhang and Zhao 2009). Branding campaigns strive to create a city brand that is associated with a set of emotions and values. During the early 2000s, Amsterdam found itself launching a city branding campaign following increased competition from other cities in Europe. Moreover, Amsterdam's past association with drugs and the red-light district was deterring affluent tourists from visiting the city. Amsterdam thus decided to distinguish itself through an association with three, new, core values: creativity, innovation and the spirit of commerce (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005).

Third, city branding is confounded by the fact that 'everything a city consists of, everything that takes place in a city and is done by the city, communicates messages about the city's brand' (Kavaratzis 2009; Hulberg 2006). Moreover, city marketers have little control over their brand which can be influenced by a host of policies and municipal authorities (Kavaratzis 2009). Successful city branding thus requires that one view the city as a holistic brand that consists of numerous products including the city's landscape, culture, architecture, design and infrastructure. Mega-events can play an important role in city branding as they attract prolonged media attention and can lead to changes in infrastructure and architecture creating a new landscape for the city. When hosting the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing saw fundamental changes to its landscape given authorities' desire to brand Beijing as an eco-friendly global city that embraces modernity and tradition. However, Beijing's poor environmental conditions, its faltering infrastructure and China's disregard for human rights all directly negated Beijing's new brand and prevented it from taking root in people's minds (Zhang and Zhao 2009).

Fourth, city brands consist of two dimensions: representational and functional. The representational dimension rests on the notion that consumers use brands to help express themselves (Caldwell and Freire 2004, p. 52). For example, the choice of holiday destination is also used by consumers to set them apart and to communicate messages about themselves to their peers (Caldwell and Freire 2004, p. 52). This is especially true in the age of social media as tourists take selfies and share their vacation experiences on social media. The representational dimension of a city's brand thus rests on the values, emotions and beliefs a city evokes and how people choose to represent their experiences in them. The functional dimension rests on the notion that consumers chose a brand that helps them meet



certain needs. The functional dimension of a city's brand includes the physical attributes of a city such as museums, beaches, mountains, festivals, and so on.

Finally, city branding often focuses on culture and art (Kavaratzis 2009). Kunzmann argues that in the global age, local identity has become a key concern and the arts are the last bastion of local identity (Kunzmann 2004, p. 387). Cultural branding can be achieved through hosting mega-events or opening new cultural institutions such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao (Kavaratzis 2009). Kavaratzis summarises by saying that branding captures the symbolic economy of a place, its media, fashion and financial industries. Culture can also be used to re-fashion a city's image. Turin, for instance, launched a city branding campaign aimed at associating the city with creativity and the arts following the decline of the automotive industry that was once synonymous with the city (Vanolo 2008).

When examining the differences between nation branding and branding a city or a region, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) argue that branding a nation is more complex as it involves more variables as well as more stakeholders. Moreover, the images of nations constantly change due to political circumstances and news reports. By contrast, politics at the municipal level does not normally attract global media attention (Caldwell and Freire 2004). Herstein (2012) suggests that citizens of different countries perceive other countries in very different ways. For instance, French and Germans citizens have very different views of Israel. However, views of cities are more stable across a 'spectrum of nationalities' (Herstein 2012).

As Ye and Björner (2018) demonstrate, city branding is by no means practised solely by developed countries. In recent years, China has adopted city branding approaches to stimulate growth in major cities and facilitate urbanisation. For instance, Guangzhou has been branded at the national, regional and municipal levels as a 'hub city' or an 'international hub for air travel, air cargo and technology innovation, with a heavy focus on high-end and high-quality modern industrial system' (Ye and Björner 2018, p. 33). As is the case with other nations, China also uses city branding practices to enable its major cities to compete in a global marketplace opposite other mega-cities. However, in the Chinese example, cities also compete with other cities within China to attract new residents, promote growth and facilitate urbanisation.

An important question that scholars have yet to address is whether city branding can be used as a tool for indirect nation branding. In other

words, can nations with overtly negative images use cities as branding surrogates? In such a process, a city would become the focus of a branding campaign, yet over time the values and qualities the city is associated with would transfer to the nation, thereby boosting its soft power resources. In order to explore this question, we focus on the case study of Israel.

### 7.2.1 *Brand Israel*

Israel's image, identity and nation brand rest on two pillars. The first portrays Israel as the 'only democracy in the Middle East' and a bastion of liberal values in the Levant (Anholt 2006; Avraham 2009; Hassman 2008, p. 52; Manor and Crilly 2018). Messages that resonate with this pillar often focus on LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Queer) rights, a free press and Israel being at the forefront of a global struggle against radical Islam. The second pillar portrays Israel as the 'start up nation' and a global hub of innovation (Aharoni and Grinstein 2017; Gilboa 2006; Lemelshtrich 2014; Molad 2012; Hassman 2008). However, Lemelshtrich (2014) argues that branding Israel as a 'start up nation' is unlikely to help Israel obtain legitimacy on the world stage.

So long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict endures, so Israel's global reputation will become poorer. This view has been validated in a number of global surveys. For instance, a survey of the Nation Brand Index from 2006 found that 'Israel is the worst brand in the world ... Israel's brand is by a considerable margin the most negative we have ever measured ... If Israel's intention is to promote itself as a desirable place to live and invest in, the challenge appears to be a steep one' (Lemelshtrich 2014, p. 4). Similarly, a global BBC survey from 2012 found that 52% of respondents believed that Israel had a negative influence on the world while a Gallup poll among EU citizens in 2003 found that Israel was perceived as number one threat to world security (Hassman 2008).

Herstein (2012) has argued that when places go through such a crisis they must acquire a new image before they can become attractive again. For instance, in the wake of constant terrorist attacks, Jerusalem launched a branding campaign positing the city as an attractive destination for domestic tourism (Mitki et al. 2011). Yet such repositioning is not an option for Israel when the nation is mostly depicted in the news and media in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict (Head 2016; Siniver 2012). In recent years, Israel has also increasingly become associated with committing war crimes in the occupied territories and maintaining an apartheid

state (Sussman 2004). This is a result of Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians, the framing of Israel in the media and Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) activities aimed at boycotting Israel. Importantly, Israel's reputation may have become even poorer thanks to the activities of the current right-wing government that has passed legislation relegating Arab Israelis to second-class citizens, openly attacked Israeli democratic institutions including the Supreme Court and supported authoritarian anti-Semitic regimes in Eastern Europe.

### 7.2.2 *Un-nation Branding*

In light of Israel's negative reputation and depleted soft power resources, some Israeli cities have attempted to distance themselves from brand Israel. The City of Eilat, for example, has for some time branded itself abroad as if it were unrelated to Israel (Hassman 2008). Yet this was a decision reached at a municipal level. More recently, through the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign, the Israeli government deliberately branded the two cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as if they were unrelated to Israel. It is our contention that such activities constitute a form of un-nation branding in which cities serve as surrogates for the nation when that nation suffers from minimal soft power resources. Before examining the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign in detail, we now outline our theory of un-nation branding and how it contrasts with nation branding and city branding.

Soft power and nation branding are often underpinned, not by nation-states, but by cities. Not only do cities produce 80% of global GDP (Beall and Adam 2017, p. 4), but they often symbolise and represent the nation at large. Examples of this abound in how New York epitomises the American dream, in how London signifies modern Britishness, in how Tokyo exemplifies a high-tech metropolitan Japan and in how Dubai symbolises a contemporary United Arab Emirates. Whilst these cities stand as surrogates for the broader nation, their branding campaigns are often organised and promoted by their municipal governments whilst having the support of the state (Bagaeen 2007; Govers 2012; Greenberg 2008; Kaika 2010; Kelts 2011). In contrast to these examples of city branding, un-nation branding is a practice that occurs at the state level and is produced and disseminated by national governments (with the support and involvement of municipal governments and advertising/marketing companies) (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1** The distinctions between nation branding, city branding and un-nation branding

	<i>What is promoted</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Why it is done</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Nation branding	The nation-state	National governments	The nation-state wants to improve its image and soft power resources	'The Great Britain Campaign' <a href="http://www.greatbritaincampaign.com">www.greatbritaincampaign.com</a>
City branding	A city	Municipal governments	Cities want to attract investment and visitors	'People Make Glasgow' <a href="http://www.peoplemakeglasgow.com">www.peoplemakeglasgow.com</a>
Un-nation branding	Cities/regions	National governments	The nation-state has a contentious brand, lacks soft power resources and refuses to change the policies that drive its negative image	'Two Cities. One Break' <a href="http://www.citiesbreak.com">www.citiesbreak.com</a>

Un-nation branding is the practice of promoting a nation-state with minimal, and at times no, reference to the nation-state. Whereas nation branding involves states branding the entire country in such a way as to make themselves attractive to other states and citizens, and city branding involves cities making themselves appear attractive to investors and visitors, un-nation branding involves states symbolising themselves as and through specific cities (or regions) in order to make themselves attractive to others. Specifically, un-nation branding is used by states such as Israel whose national brands are viewed as contentious or who have very limited soft power resources. In this way, a city's brand is used as a surrogate for the state by the national government, and it is also through using the city brand to symbolise the nation that the state may better its own soft power.

States such as Israel may turn to un-nation branding due to the limitations of nation branding. As a nation brand must hold true to reality and to people's perceptions of the nation, a state that is often seen as engaging in war, conflict and occupation cannot brand itself as an attractive destination for investments and visitors. A nation-state such as Israel cannot successfully brand itself as a bastion of peace when it engages in the use of military force and is viewed to have militaristic policies and culture

(Kuntsman and Stein 2015; Manor and Crilley 2018). Given that nation brands work as representative images of entire nations and function in a similar way to stereotypes, once a nation's brand has become contentious it is difficult for that state to change its brand for the better without implementing fundamental changes to the policies that give it a negative image. Ultimately, when a nation-state struggles to brand itself in a successful and convincing way due to the limitations of having both a contentious and even toxic nation brand alongside limited soft power resources, they may turn to un-nation branding to promote themselves. In the case of Israel, this is what we have recently seen with their 'Two Cities. One Break' advertising campaign.

### 7.3 'TWO CITIES. ONE BREAK': UN-NATION BRANDING ISRAEL

The 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign was launched in the summer of 2016 by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism at a cost of NIS 40 million (Nissan 2016). Created by the Ministry of Tourism alongside LAPAM (the Israeli government's advertising agency) and the Israeli marketing firm Allenby, the campaign launched with online videos and campaign material featuring the Israeli model Shir Elmaliach. Described by the press as 'new and sexy' (Nissan 2016), the first video created by the campaign highlights the core themes at the centre of the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign.

The video is filmed in first person point of view, where Shir Elmaliach leads the viewer (at times literally by the hand) around the sights of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem whilst on screen text situates the audience in each city (Allenby 2017). Each scene is labelled, and Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are described in ways that highlight their differences. Tel Aviv is labelled as '24h, hot, street, wind, night' and alongside the images shown, Tel Aviv is depicted as a modern metropolitan city by the sea where visitors can party, relax and play sport on the beach. In contrast, Jerusalem is labelled as '3000y, spicy, art, fire, light' to emphasise its history, food and culture, whilst the images shown depict archaeological sites of interest and ancient, cobbled streets. The video concludes with the 'Two Cities. One Break' logo and a link to the campaign's website. Nowhere in the video is Israel mentioned (Fig. 7.1).

The 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign was launched amidst a slump in tourist visitors to Israel. In 2016, the number of tourists travelling to Israel

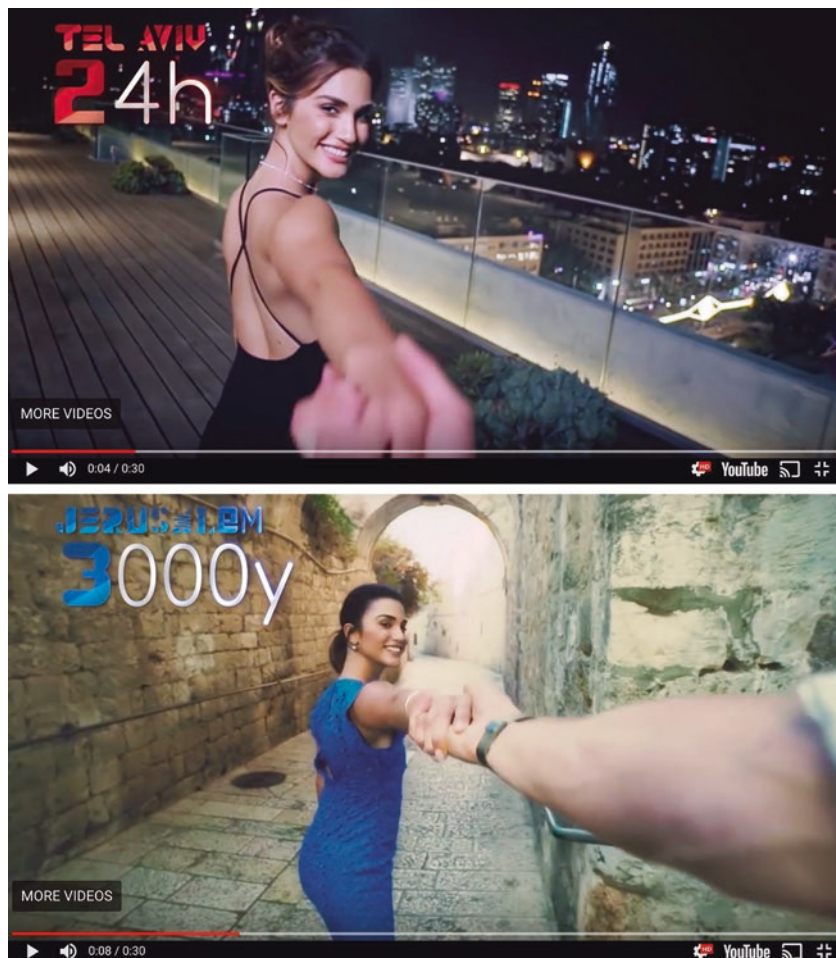


Fig. 7.1 Scenes from the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ launch video

had declined by 4% since 2014 (Reed 2016), and Tourism Minister Yariv Levin told the media ‘for most people in the world, Israel is not a tourist site that is even crossing their minds’ (quoted in Reed 2016). As such, the campaign was aimed at attracting visitors by reconfiguring Israel’s image after the Gaza War of 2014 and broadening views of Israel from a holiday destination for religious pilgrims to one for people seeking sand and sun.

According to the advertising company behind the campaign, ‘Two Cities. One Break’ is aimed at a global audience and ‘features highlights of urban tourism in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, mixing the best that both cities have to offer – from culture and history to food, parties and beaches’ (Allenby 2017). Since it was launched, the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign has been viewed by the Israeli government as a great success.

The Israeli Tourism Ministry has recently announced that over 200 million people have been exposed to the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ online, 13.5 million people have clicked through to the website and over 60 million people in Europe have viewed the television adverts. The ministry also expects another 90 million people in the ‘West’ to view social media and television advertisements of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign (Davidovich-Weisberg 2018a). After one year of marketing the campaign, a record high of 3.6 million tourists visited Israel, an increase of 25% from the year before (Davidovich-Weisberg 2018a, b).

For the second year of the campaign, there was a slight re-branding to ‘Two Sunny Cities. One Break’, and this campaign featured European weather presenters broadcasting from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, alongside videos of the Israeli model Shir Elmaliach and British TV host Sian Welby travelling around Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In launching the video, the advertising company that produced it noted that ‘in order to attract potential tourists from cold and grey Europe, the main theme in the campaign is the Israeli sun, with Boney M’s “Sunny” played [sic] in the background’ (Allenby 2018). Yet again, Israel is not mentioned in the video. Nevertheless, in response to the success of the campaign, Yariv Levin said:

I am happy that another campaign, starring Shir Elmaliach, has succeeded in exposing Israel and its excellent weather to hundreds of millions in Europe, and we see the results of the campaigns every day throughout the country, with record numbers of tourist arrivals every month. (quoted in Davidovich-Weisberg 2018b)

The ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign has been a success for Israel. It has reached millions of people and has had a direct and tangible impact on increasing tourist visitors to Israel. Whilst this success may be attributed to the campaign’s focus on sun, sea and sand, we argue that un-nation branding is central to how the campaign functions. In order to explore this claim, we now use visual analysis in order to provide an insight into how the core messages of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign were articulated in everyday spaces such as posters and online videos.



### 7.3.1 *Visual Representations and ‘Two Cities. One Break’*

One example of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ advertising campaign in situ consisted of a large, three-sided advertising billboard in the middle of a public square in Stockholm, Sweden. Each advert featured the text ‘Two Cities. One Break. Tel Aviv. Jerusalem.’ at the top, a portrait photograph of a woman in the middle, and then on the left a photograph of Tel Aviv and on the right a photograph of Jerusalem. Below the image was the price of a holiday and a link to the website [www.citiesbreak.com](http://www.citiesbreak.com) (the official website of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign).

In featuring no reference to Israel, these advertising posters serve to un-nation brand Israel and attract people to the two cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in various ways, and because of this, these posters and the campaign at large warrant attention. First, their prominence as advertisements in a public square demonstrates the importance of everyday experiences of un-nation branding in global politics, where understandings of national identities, cities and states are shaped through banal and vernacular engagements with advertisements, media and popular culture (Billig 1995; Edensor 2002; Saunders and Crilley 2019; Saunders and Holland 2018; Stanley and Jackson 2016). These posters were prominent in a place where we would expect to see advertisements for consumer goods or the latest music and cinema releases.

In as much as these posters advertise holidays to the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, they also serve to advertise an idea of what these cities symbolise and represent. In these advertising posters, this is done through visual media that symbolise and signify broader narratives. As the cultural theorist Roland Barthes argued in his work on photography and semiotics, visual media such as photographs contain two messages (Barthes 1977, pp. 37–41). The first message refers to the literal content of what is depicted within the image, whereas the second message is the broader social, cultural and political significance of what that content represents.

Our analysis of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ images draws upon the semiotics of Roland Barthes, and as such it involved several stages of analysis. The first stage involved examining what Barthes refers to as the ‘denoted message’ (Barthes 1977, p. 37): the content of the images such as who and what is featured, what activities are being done, what surroundings/locations are depicted, what text/graphics are included. The second stage of analysis served to elucidate the ‘connoted message’ (Barthes 1977, p. 40)—which refers to the broader political significance of



the image's content—by exploring how the content of the image represents and expresses certain ideas, values and political positions. For example, in the first stage of our analysis, we identified a building with a multicoloured, rainbow like façade in two of the images. In the second stage of analysis, we noted that the rainbow flag and colours are a symbol of LGBTQ pride, and therefore, the content of the images suggests values and ideas of sexual freedom, equal human rights and a place that is politically open.

Our analysis of the images shown in Fig. 7.2 draws attention to how the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign serves to un-nation brand Israel. In each image the left-hand side features the rainbow-coloured exterior of the Dan Tel Aviv Hotel sitting on an empty beach alongside a glistening Mediterranean Sea. Not only does this represent an idyllic holiday destination of hot sun, empty sandy beaches and warm water, but the rainbow-coloured façade serves to symbolise the cities as inclusive and welcoming places given that the rainbow flag is the symbol of LGBTQ pride and inclusivity. Such a representation constitutes what is often referred to as pinkwashing—'a deliberate strategy [of the Israeli state] to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life' (Schulman 2011; see also Ritchie 2015). In these images, the visual depiction of the rainbow on the Dan Tel Aviv Hotel associates Tel Aviv with LGBTQ rights and serves to un-nation brand Israel as a religious and pious nation, and instead represents Tel



Fig. 7.2 'Two Cities. One Break' advertisements in Stockholm. (Photographs by Rhys Crilley)

Aviv and Jerusalem as inclusive cities where people enjoy sexual freedoms and human rights regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Messages of inclusivity, alongside relaxation, openness and excitement, are reinforced by the central portrait of Shir Elmaliach in each advertisement. These portraits contrast and challenge familiar stereotypes of Middle Eastern women as religious, chaste and modest (Abu-Lughod 2001; Khalid 2011; Sjöberg and Whooley 2015; Wilkins 1995), by featuring Elmaliach dressed in jeans and a short sleeve low cut top, alongside an image of her wearing a backless black dress. The depiction of Elmaliach in these outfits is indicative of an idealised and sexualised representation of women that implies that women in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are similar to 'Western' women.

The singular focus on one attractive woman also suggests a notion of availability, and this is reinforced by the open arms and welcoming body language of Elmaliach, where the viewer of the advertisements is invited to place themselves with her in their expectant experiences of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. These advertisements, and the broader 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign which features attractive women and no men, are indicative of what Laura Mulvey referred to as 'the male gaze' (1989) where women are presented as passive, eroticised objects of sexual desire for heterosexual men. Sexualised representations of women have long been used to advertise products and to boost the popularity of brands (Reichert and Lambiasi 2014, p. 1), and they are also prominent in the advertising of tourist destinations (Pritchard and Morgan 2000). In the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign, such visual representations of women and the 'sex appeal' they depict serve to associate Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as liberal destinations where women enjoy the freedom to dress how they want. In doing so this representation further un-nation brands Israel as a religiously conservative state.

The images on the left- and right-hand sides above best capture the message of the campaign and how Israel un-nation brands itself in the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign. Jerusalem is depicted through historic architecture and thus offers a glimpse into history. In contrast, Tel Aviv is depicted through modern architecture and culture and thus offers an exciting experience of the present. With regard to Israel, Jerusalem is the foundation of the state—its origin—while Tel Aviv manifests the present-day values and culture of Israel. Notably, as is the case with most branding campaigns, the symbolism of these cities rests on images of their architecture, where one dates back to biblical times, and the other is modern and metropolitan. These two distinct architectures are juxtaposed in the above

posters and throughout the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign, emphasising how both cities offer diverse experiences and representations of values. In the case of Tel Aviv, this is shown to be beaches and metropolitan, inclusive culture, and in the case of Jerusalem, this is shown to be history and religion. These again symbolise a sense of openness, suggesting that the cities include a diversity of religion and cultures that have a rich history.

The right-hand side of the central image features a night-time city scape, suggesting that the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem have a vibrant, exciting, metropolitan nightlife. As such, the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign advertisements blend the reputational and functional dimensions of both cities. On the one hand, the adverts depict what both cities have to offer in terms of sightseeing in the biblical relics of Jerusalem or enjoying the sun and sea of Tel Aviv. These adverts also include a reputational dimension as they celebrate the values of liberalism and secularism and portray Tel Aviv as a bustling and fashionable centre of commerce and nightlife. It is this reputational dimension that may attract visitors hoping to express a moral viewpoint through their choice of tourist destination. This may lead them to selfie and share their experiences in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on social media. Something that is reflected by the ‘Two Sunny Cities. One Break’ use of social media aesthetics, which, as Fig. 7.3 demonstrates, make the adverts appear as if they are Instagram stories (Visit Israel 2017).



**Fig. 7.3** Screenshot from ‘Two Sunny Cities. One Break’ video

A central aspect of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign is the process of co-branding. This refers to the practice of commercial products being associated with a place that already has a beneficial image. Such is the case of German cars which are associated with German precision, attention to detail and long history of manufacturing (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). The ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign is an exercise in co-branding in which Tel Aviv is meant to reposition brand Jerusalem. Indeed, while Tel Aviv evokes associations with LGBTQ freedom, hipsters and a vibrant culinary and nightlife scene, Jerusalem is associated with historical struggles over religion and territory.

The slogan of the campaign, ‘Two Cities. One Break’ suggests that one cannot understand Tel Aviv without understanding Jerusalem and vice versa, and whilst the two cities maintain a semblance of distinct characteristics in the campaign—the modernity of Tel Aviv and the history of Jerusalem, for example—the co-branding of them associates one with the other, as both become associated with inclusivity, sexual freedom and human rights, alongside tolerance and the enjoyment of culture. Whilst the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ co-brands Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, it also un-nation brands Israel. Scholars have noted that a city should be viewed as a holistic brand that consists of numerous ‘products’ including the city’s landscape, architecture, design and infrastructure (Kavaratzis 2009). In this campaign the brand is missing and is only alluded to through its ‘products’. The two cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are the products while the brand, which is not mentioned, is Israel.

## 7.4 CONCLUSIONS

The ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign is exemplary of un-nation branding as it contains minimal reference to Israel and is instead focused on promoting the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. One only knows the campaign promotes Israel if they know that these cities are geographically situated there. Moreover, one only finds the word ‘Israel’ at the very bottom of the campaign website. Un-nation branding Israel in the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign involves promoting the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as destinations of sun, sea, sex and sand, thus negating the associations brand Israel has with armed conflict, violence, occupation and the oppression of human rights. In 2009, prior to the launch of the ‘Two Cities. One Break’ campaign, Avraham noted that:

over the years, several attempts have been made to brand Israel as a sea-and-sun destination, contrary to the country's hard image. The choice of sea-and-sun branding is inappropriate for countries constantly in crisis, as this branding offers strong competition with much safer destinations. This fruitless branding also resulted in the loss of many resources allocated to it. (Avraham 2009, p. 211)

Whilst the nation branding of Israel as a destination of sun and sand may, in Avraham's view, be inappropriate, fruitless and a waste of resources, when Israel has un-nation branded itself through the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign and shifted the focus from promoting the nation to the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, it has enjoyed success in attracting record numbers of tourists.

By focusing on the excitement and seduction of Tel Aviv and the history and culture of Jerusalem, Israel un-nation brands itself and represents both cities as attractive tourist destinations that offer a blend of the new and the old, the modern and the traditional, and the liberal and the spiritual. As a practice of un-nation branding, the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign silences contentious aspects of the Israeli state, such as questions about the use of military force, militarised culture, contested borders, illegal settlements and intractable conflict.

Importantly, we view the process of un-nation branding as cyclical in nature. During the first stage, a nation suffering from depleted soft power resources chooses a branding surrogate such as a city or a region. In the second stage, the city's image is reshaped and reimagined through a branding campaign that emphasises the norms, values and ideals the city represents. Finally, the city's norms and positive associations transfer to the nation-state, and its soft power resources are increased. Previous studies have found that nations often hope to brand themselves through cities, as was the case with the Beijing Olympics which meant to symbolise a modern China or the Barcelona Olympics which were meant to re-brand Spain (Zhang and Zhao 2009).

As un-nation branding is cyclical, we contend that the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign seeks to associate Israel with the values of liberalism, secularism and inclusivity. If successful, the campaign will not only boost tourism but also enable Israel to obtain its foreign policy goals. The reason for this is that morality breeds legitimacy on the world stage. Nations that are seen as promoting positive values, such as multiculturalism or human rights, are less likely to encounter resistance to their policies, including the use of hard power (Quelch and Jocz 2009; Manor 2019).

Un-nation branding thus has a tangible influence on a nation's ability to secure its interests and is not merely an exercise in signs, symbols and signification. It is therefore not surprising that Israel launched the 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign in the wake of the 2014 Gaza War that had a dramatic negative impact on the image of Israel given the high death toll and utter destruction of Gaza. In the absence of such a campaign, Israel would find it increasingly difficult to continue pursuing its foreign and security policies. The 'Two Cities. One Break' campaign is thus demonstrative of the importance of un-nation branding for states in the twenty-first century.

Scholars have noted that tourism nowadays is an instrument for self-expression. When tourists chose certain destinations, they also share identity claims with their peers. This is especially true in the age of Instagram stories and hashtags. By attracting tourists using the 'Two Cities. One Break', Israel may have been able to challenge its pariah status as people throughout the world associate themselves with Israeli cities through their use of social media. This campaign may have thus also helped Israel counter the global BDS campaign, which is also managed on social media sites. In this sense, un-nation branding is the proactive management of a surrogate brand and the use of the surrogate to contend with negative feedback (Fan 2010).

Consequently, this chapter offers three important contributions to the field of city branding. First, it expands the scope of the city branding research corpus, which has primarily focused on the branding activities of Western and European cities. Second, it offers a semiotic analysis of branding materials thereby unveiling the ideological underpinnings of un-nation branding campaigns. Third, it proposes a new framework for evaluating the branding activities of nations with limited or depleted soft power resources.

In conclusion, un-nation branding has important implication for the study of global politics. It demonstrates a process through which nations can rebuild soft power resources and reposition themselves on the global stage all with an eye to securing their ability to obtain foreign policy goals. Un-nation branding is also a sophisticated form of branding given that it is much easier to manage the image of a city than that of a nation-state (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2000; Caldwell and Freire 2004; Herstein 2012). Future studies should examine whether un-nation branding is exercised by additional states such as Pakistan and Iran, who suffer from negative images. Moreover, scholars should examine whether the

values attributed to a city during a branding campaign do in fact become associated with the nation. This may be a long-term process as changing people's perception of cities and nations is akin to challenging people's stereotypes. Finally, studies should examine how identity claims made by tourists online—such as those who comment, share and remediate content from campaigns like 'Two Cities. One Break'—shape online discussion and debates relating to nations that have negative images. Whilst the 'Two Cities' campaign appears to have had a positive impact on the number of visitors to Israel, the pro-Palestine graffiti made on the posters featured in Fig. 7.2 suggest that audiences of the campaign may also resist and challenge such sanitised representations of Israeli cities. As Israel continues to adhere to problematic policies such as occupying lands, the persecution of Palestinians and the use of overwhelming military force, it remains to be seen whether the practice of un-nation branding will have a long-term effect on improving Israeli soft power.

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# Do Cities Leverage Summits to Enhance Their Image Online? Examining the Twittersphere of the Inaugural U20 Mayoral Summit, Buenos Aires, Argentina

*Andrea Insch*

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Cities can potentially play a powerful role in addressing some of the world's most pressing and complex challenges through multilateral diplomatic processes (Acuto et al. 2017; Chan 2016). Formal city networks are one mechanism that cities use to achieve greater influence which have acquired growing geographical scale and scope since the 1990s (Acuto 2016). The Urban 20 (U20) initiative is an example of city networking designed to promote 'dialogue and cooperation between 25 global cities

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and G20 nations' (Urban 20 2018, p. 1).<sup>1</sup> This development in subnational diplomacy was launched at the One Planet Summit in Paris on 12 December 2017 under the leadership of Mayor of Buenos Aires, Horacio Rodriguez Larreta, and Mayor of Paris and Chair of C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), Anne Hidalgo. The U20 network is convened by the C40 group in conjunction with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (Urban 20 2018). This network is also supported by a number of international organizations: Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), Open Government Partnership (OGP), 100 Resilient Cities and ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability perform an advisory role for the organization (Urban 20 2018).

Members of city networks host summits and conferences, akin to a traditional summit, to exchange ideas, discuss important issues with their peers and raise awareness of engagement with particular issues. Special international events represent 'important moments in city diplomacy' (Pinault and Hansen 2019, p. 77) enabling cities' representatives to participate in situ and virtually through a myriad of communication platforms. Participants and observers can respond to an event in real time through a variety of online platforms including blogs and social media and engage in electronic word of mouth (eWoM) about topical issues, the event and its host. Previous research examining the eWoM of users on Twitter demonstrated that key users were prominent individuals that brokered information about the event due to their high centrality in the network. Furthermore, the festival examined in the study served to generate as well as animate online WoM (Williams et al. 2015). Digital platforms offer a 'repository of live experiences' (Uchinaka et al. 2019, p. 139) representing a valuable data source for city authorities, event organizers and researchers to monitor the aggregate sentiment of different groups or communities of interest towards the event.

Over the past decade, the global visibility of city networking meetings and political summits have increased (Ollion 2010), capturing the

<sup>1</sup> Beijing, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Durban, Hamburg, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Melbourne, Mexico City, Milan, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo, and Tshwane.

attention of city authorities and researchers alike. Previous research on the impacts of hosting international economic summits has focused on the economic costs and benefits (Guebert and Tanna 2010; Kirton et al. 2010). Evidence from these studies suggests that smaller, less visible cities and communities are likely to benefit more than highly recognized capital cities (Guebert and Tanna 2010). The reported benefits of hosting these large-scale events include boosting favourable publicity for the host (Giffard and Rivenburgh 2000), strengthening its global engagement and improving its international image (Cherry and Dobson 2012). There are also potential risks for host cities including negative publicity (Swinen and Francken 2006) and overcrowding during the event that could damage visitors' perception of the city (Erfurt and Johnsen 2003). What is not clear is whether (and if so, how?) cities are taking advantage of these city diplomacy events to enhance their image, particularly through popular digital platforms.

The event selected for this study is the Inaugural U20 Mayoral Summit held on 29–30 October 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Over 34 mayors and other city representatives took part in the summit designed to promote dialogue and seek coordinated responses to major global challenges such as action on climate change, the future of work, social integration and inclusion. More specifically, the signatories of the U20 were charged with working together to develop ideas and propose a joint position on solutions to global development issues including the rapid and full implementation of the Paris Agreement. At the conclusion of the two-day event, the recommendations of the group were presented to the President of Argentina, Mauricio Macri, and the other national leaders of the G20. The communiqué delivered was designed to 'inform and enrich' the discussions at the G20 Heads of State Summit (Metropolis 2018) held in the city one month later.

This chapter examines the conversations staged on Twitter during the Inaugural U20 Mayoral Summit in Buenos Aires with the aim of examining how cities participating in these events are promoted as part of a staged event of city diplomacy. This chapter does not examine city diplomacy *per se* and how it impacts public opinion shaping and agenda setting. A review of pertinent literature on international summits and meetings as a platform for city diplomacy is presented in the following section. The research methods are then detailed. The findings of the research are presented in the section that follows. Then the findings are discussed within the context of previous research. In the final section, the conclusions including

the implications of the research and the limitations of the study presented in this chapter are explained.

## 8.2 INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS AND MEETINGS AS A PLATFORM FOR CITY DIPLOMACY

The frequency and popularity of summits have continued to rise ever since the term ‘summit’ was afforded to describe one-on-one meetings between American presidents and Soviet or Chinese heads of state during the cold war period. Even though there were many similar types of meetings held during World War II, the Geneva Summit in 1955 was the first event to be labelled explicitly in this way (Grenville and Wasserstein 2001). International summits may be categorized as meetings that are exclusive and elitist, involving a closed circle of national leaders, policy advisors and their entourages, but of potential interest to a wide audience due to the importance of issues discussed.

Cities are increasingly vying to host summits as greater importance is placed on forms of global governance to address international issues. Cities actively compete to host these high-profile international meetings, which can be considered major events (De Groote 2005). Attracting these events involves extensive bidding processes and may feature detailed long-term plans for urban development and investment in infrastructure (Lauermann 2014). However, many places that lack the resources to bid for, invest in or host the event might perceive summits as too costly. This might account for the dominance of large, well-known cities in the lists of hosts, especially cities that are renowned for their role as hubs in political and economic affairs. Cities such as Washington, New York, Brussels, Paris, London and Geneva are among the most prominent centres of politics, especially due to their role as hosts to international organizations and diplomatic entities such as embassies, consulates and trade missions (AT Kearney 2014).

Despite the challenges of competing with established cities, places which are relatively unknown are able to successfully host such events, with reported benefits in the popular press (Insch and Bowden 2016). For example, Huntsville, Canada, hosted the 2010 G8 meeting and received substantial ‘media glow’, introducing the city to potential tourists around the world. The city and surrounding region also benefited from infrastructure upgrades and investment in ‘the biggest tourism campaign associated

with the G8 ever' (Steel 2010). In addition to the potential to strengthen and improve a city's image, summit hosts may benefit from an infrastructure legacy, job creation, spending on hospitality and accommodation as well as future conference and meeting hosting (Deloitte 2012). Furthermore, while the host city has the attention of the global audience, it can present its global appeal and advocate for the policy causes and values that advance its interest and with which it deems to be associated.

Conversely, hosting international summits are not risk free and may also laden hosts with considerable costs, ongoing debt and negative publicity. Allocating and protecting space within a city to situate the event is likely to be costly and disruptive. A pertinent example is the physical relocation of 223,000 employees in Toronto's financial services sector to a secret suburban location during the 2010 G20 summit (Sassen 2012). Similarly, residents' access in and around the venue may be restricted and strict security laws can be enacted. Images of Brisbane's CBD during the G20 summit in November 2014 resembled a 'ghost town', and the declaration of a public holiday encouraged many local businesses to close, negatively impacting the city's image. The threat of protest, demonstrations and even violence and property destruction is real as many international summits have been the scene of unrest, most notably the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy, on 21–22 July 2001, and the G20 summit in Toronto, Canada, on 26–27 June 2010 (Monaghan and Walby 2010). Unsurprisingly, demonstrations and riots receive disproportionate attention in the mainstream media when reporting on summits (Swinen and Francken 2006).

There is fragmented evidence of the estimated economic benefits and costs of hosting these mega-events based on publically available information (Guebert and Tanna 2010; Kirton et al. 2010). Examining reported estimates of the economic impacts of staging the G8 and G20 summits, Kirton et al. (2010) and Guebert and Tanna (2010) offer some general observations. Overall, benefits are much greater for the smaller communities and cities that lack the global visibility and infrastructure of capital cities in the industrialized world. The typical economic benefits from hosting these events are (1) the immediate, short-term stimulus of higher spending at hotels, restaurants and shops and the creation of temporary jobs; (2) longer term economic benefits such as increased tourist traffic and investment due to media and advertising coverage; (3) new, permanent, public infrastructures and upgrades and (4) training for security forces and other taskforces to prevent and respond to mass emergency events, such as terrorist attacks, infectious disease outbreaks and so on



(Guebert and Tanna 2010). Among the major non-economic benefits of hosting these events are boosting favourable publicity for the host (Giffard and Rivenburgh 2000), strengthening its global engagement and improving its international image (Cherry and Dobson 2012).

Cities have traditionally been positioned in the literature on international diplomacy as ‘the sites for international relations’ or as subservient entities of national actors in global politics (Acuto 2013, p. 291). However, there is growing acknowledgement of the role of cities as actors in international affairs with agency to act in global governance. As mentioned previously, one common form of city diplomacy is city networking (Acuto et al. 2017). In particular, several scholars have analysed the role of the C40 cities group, composed of 96 cities, which concentrates on addressing climate risks and enhancing the well-being of urban citizens (Urban 2018). As Chan (2016, p. 152) explains, the C40 group’s city diplomacy has been focused on ‘knowledge sharing and partnership resources to empower cities to undertake climate actions on the ground’, and as an organization, it is conscious not to challenge the leadership of nation states. As the limits of a network such as C40 have become apparent, additional platforms, such as the U20, have been formulated to allow city officials to communicate collectively to the leaders of the G20 and sherpas (Klaus 2018).

Thus, a city that hosts an international summit cannot be viewed as a ‘passive space’ (Le Gales 2002, p. 262) dominated by sovereign actors and interests but as a participant in a dialogue with other cities engaging in diplomatic efforts to address global challenges. As well as taking collective action, cities can take a leadership role to address a global issue in order to enhance their position in their national and international governance hierarchies. Host cities might also seek to leverage the event to raise awareness of their city and improve their international image. Similarly, other participating cities and their representatives might leverage the event to promote their image to an international audience. Research that investigates how participants and observers discuss cities’ roles as hosts of such events would contribute to understanding of cities’ global engagement strategies as part of the emerging literature on city diplomacy (Pinault and Hansen 2019). Building on the review of the literature and the need for further research, three research questions are proposed to guide the empirical research in this chapter.

- RQ1:** How does host city, Buenos Aires, feature in the conversation about the event?
- RQ2:** How are cities, other than the host, described in the conversation about the event?
- RQ3:** How do tweeps employ the term ‘city diplomacy’ in relation to the event?

### 8.3 METHODS

Twitter was chosen to obtain data for analysis to examine the Inaugural U20 Mayoral Summit. Twitter is a well-known social media platform launched in 2006 which enables users to post ‘microblogs’ known as Tweets which are limited to a maximum of 140 characters. This platform is particularly suited to users that post using mobile hand-held devices and facilitates dissemination of news and information to other users (Williams and Krause 2012). Thus, the information which is shared has the quality of immediacy so it is a useful medium to follow the progress of an event in real time, thereby allowing researchers to study the ‘real-life behaviour of individuals and groups’ (Shutes et al. 2016, p. 57). Relevant data is easy to identify as tweeps routinely use hashtags and appropriate keywords to signal the topic/issue of their contribution in a self-organizing way (Bruns and Burgess 2016).

Some Twitter studies have focused on a wide range of issues such as political discourses during a Federal election (Jungherr et al. 2015), participation in calls for tourism boycotts (Shaheer et al. 2018), brand communication strategy (Taecharungroj 2017), communication strategies of mayors (Triantafillidou et al. 2018), audience engagement with corporate messages (Manzanaro et al. 2018) and large-scale events (Dörk et al. 2010). City authorities and their representatives also use various social media platforms to share information about and promote their municipalities for the purpose of communicating with their target audiences and co-creating brands with users who engage in a digital conversation about a city brand (Sevin 2016). Social media platforms such as Twitter provide a platform for users ‘without being urged in any way to participate in the co-authoring of brand meaning’ (Andéhn et al. 2014, p. 143). However, there is evidence that local governments and their officials have yet to maximize the potential use of social media platforms to positively engage and interact with online users to co-create brand meaning (Sevin 2016).

### 8.3.1 *Data Collection and Analysis*

A new Twitter account was created to minimize any potential bias related to using an existing account. Only tweets written in English were included in the database. A handful of tweets that included another language (mostly Spanish) were also located and retained in the search results. Using the #Urban20 and #Urban 20 keywords to search for tweets, 512 tweets were identified after removing 3 irrelevant tweets over the period 1 October to 28 November 2018. In addition, the keyword Urban 20 revealed an additional 22 tweets. In total, 534 tweets were included in the database for analysis. Data was retrieved from the Twitter website by scrolling down until the last tweet was located for each search, and the content of the twitter conversation was copied and saved first as a word document and then entered into excel.

The frequency of the tweets posted before, during and immediately after the event was calculated. The majority of the tweets were posted on the first day of the event, 29 October ( $n = 239$ ), and more than halved ( $n = 107$ ) the following day. The remaining tweets ( $n = 188$ ) were distributed the month prior ( $n = 98$ ) and after the event ( $n = 90$ ). In total, there were 2227 retweets, 5264 likes and 195 replies to the 534 tweets posted during the specified period.

The characteristics of the tweets and tweeps were examined. Content analysis of the tweeps was both manifest (quantifying certain elements of the qualitative textual database) and latent, whereby the researcher examined the underlying meanings of certain words in their context (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Sentiment analysis of a portion of the tweets was performed using an online software program—afinn (<http://darenr.github.io/afinn/#>). In the following section, the findings are presented in response to the four research questions previously presented.

## 8.4 RESULTS

Altogether, 162 tweeps posted tweets during the timeframe studied. Tweeps were classified as either organizations (O), individuals with no obvious organizational affiliation (I) or individuals with a clear organizational affiliation (A). Most of the tweeps were classified as Organizations (67), followed by individuals with an organizational affiliation (53) and individual accounts (42). Many of the tweeps included a geographical location in their profile description. The most frequently mentioned

locations of tweeps are Washington, DC (24), Buenos Aires (11), New York (8) and Paris (7). The prominence of locations like Washington DC, New York and Paris is associated with the location of many of the international organizations and their representatives participating in the event, whereas the prominence of tweeps located in Buenos Aires is likely to be associated with the event's location.

The tweep that tweeted most frequently was the IFC @IFC\_org (40 tweets), followed by C40 Cities @c40cities (28 tweets), United Cities @uclg\_org (24 tweets), Global Taskforce @Globaltaskforce (19 tweets), World Bank Cities @WBG\_Cities (21 tweets), OECD SMEs, Regions, Cities & Tourism @OECD\_local (20 tweets) and IFC América Latina y el Caribe @IFC\_LAC (19 tweets). Individuals that tweeted most frequently were William Burke-White @wburkewh (Richard Perry Professor and Director, University of Pennsylvania) (18 tweets). Agathe Cavicchioli @AgatheCCC (12 tweets), the City Diplomacy Manager at C40, tweeted most frequently among the individuals with an organizational affiliation. Table 8.1 details the organizational tweeps contributing most to the conversation. The majority of the tweeps tweeted once, and the average number of tweets per tweep was three.

The most liked tweet (251 likes, 25 retweets, 2 replies) was posted on 29 October 2018 by Dr Tan Wu Meng (@tanwumeng), Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore, which attracted. This tweet, copied below, included a selfie of the tweep with the Governor of Jakarta:

Very glad to meet Jakarta Governor @aniesbaswedan again, this time in Buenos Aires! We'd previously met over lunch in Jakarta when I accompanied DPM @teocheechean on a working visit. We were at the U20 #Urban20 Summit, which is part of the @g20org process. @MFAsg @MTI\_Sg

The following tweet posted on the same day by the Governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan (@aniesbasweda) (205 likes, 40 retweets, 13 replies), also featured a picture of a poster promoting the event.

The #Urban20 Summit has started in Buenos Aires with 30+ cities, 50+ experts, and 2000+ participants Watch us LIVE to follow our policy debates and hear recommendations to the #G20 on Climate action Future of Work Social integration <http://www.urban20.org>

**Table 8.1** Details of selected top organizational tweeps (February 2019)

<i>Tweep</i>	<i>Followers</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Profile</i>	<i>Location (active since)</i>
@IFC_org IFC	145,000	<a href="http://ifc.org">ifc.org</a>	The official Twitter feed of IFC, a member of the @WorldBank Group focusing on the private sector in developing countries	Washington, DC (February 2011)
@c40cities C40 Cities	83,200	<a href="http://c40.org">c40.org</a>	C40 is the network of the world's greatest cities committed to taking climate action and cleaning the air we breathe #Cities4Climate 🌍🌳	Global (August 2010)
@uclg_org United Cities	26,400	<a href="http://uclg.org">uclg.org</a>	United Cities and Local Governments is the global network representing the interests of #LocalGov and regions on the world stage #localizingSDGs #Listen2Cities	World (March 2011)
@Globaltaskforce Global Taskforce	8089	<a href="http://global-taskforce.org">global-taskforce.org</a>	Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. #LocalGov networks working together to achieve the #SDGs, the #ParisAgreement and the #NewUrbanAgenda	(October 2013)
@WBG_Cities World Bank Cities	46,100	<a href="http://worldbank.org/urban">worldbank.org/urban</a>	Urban Dev at the @WorldBank: Helping countries face the challenge of rapid urbanization to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable #Cities4All. Follow @Ede_WBG	Washington, DC (September 2010)
@IFC_LAC IFC América Latina y el Caribe	9247	<a href="http://ifc.org/lac">ifc.org/lac</a>	Vea qué empresas están mejorando la vida de los latinoamericanos y siga la única institución global de desarrollo dedicada al sector privado	Grupo Banco Mundial (June 2011)
@OECD_local OECD SMEs, Regions, Cities & Tourism	4200	<a href="http://oecd.org/cfe/">oecd.org/cfe/</a>	@OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities. See Director @LamiaKC_CFE #ChampionMayors	Paris (November 2011)

The third most liked tweet (201 likes, 86 retweets, 7 replies) was posted by the World Bank AsiaPac (@WB\_AsiaPacific) on 14 November about the Jakarta Government. The text of this tweet is reproduced and also featured a video interview with the Governor of Jakarta.

Gov. Anies Baswedan of @jakartagoid Indonesia 🇮🇩: We're transforming the city 🏙️ ✖️ From one in which the government serves as an administrator and the people simply as residents ✅ Into one where the government is a collaborator and the people as co-creators. #Urban20 cc @Ede\_WBG

Mayors, deputy mayors and other city officials participated in the conversation as shown in Table 8.2. Among the most prominent tweets in the conversation were Jan Vapaavuori (@Vapaavuori) Mayor of Helsinki, Mike Rawlings (@Mike\_Rawlings) Mayor of Dallas, Nina Hachigian (@NinaHachigian) Deputy Mayor of International Affairs, Los Angeles, and Emmanuel Gregoir (@egregoire) First Deputy Mayor of Paris. These public officials were also frequently mentioned in the conversation by other tweets. Some of the most frequently mentioned included the event's Chairs Anne Hidalgo and Horacio Rodriguez Larreta, Commissioner for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena, Nina Hachigian and the Jan Vapaavuori. The President of Argentina, Mauricio Macri, was also mentioned frequently by tweets. Among the other designated city officials that engaged in the conversation included officials with such titles as 'Deputy Mayor', 'Chief Resilience Officer' and 'Vice Governor'.

Not all cities or their officials who attended the event or are part of the C40 network engaged in the conversation, even those cities whose official language is English. A total of 14 cities participated in the conversation and 3 countries also contributed (Argentina, Japan and Poland). In total, 44 cities were mentioned at least once in this conversation. In terms of the number of mentions, Buenos Aires received the highest number of mentions (127), followed by Paris (28), Chicago (22) and New York (21).

#### 8.4.1 *Tweets That Mention Summit Host City Buenos Aires*

The #BuenosAires and #Buenos Aires keywords featured in 58 (11%) of the 534 tweets. The city's name also featured in 127 (24%) of the tweets. Reference to the country hosting the event, Argentina, was made in 26 (5%) of tweets. In total, 62 tweets featured the host city in their tweets, and these accounts were predominantly organizational accounts, closely followed by individual accounts affiliated with organizations and cities.

**Table 8.2** Details of selected top city official tweets (February 2019)

<i>Tweep</i>	<i>Primary role</i>	<i>Followers</i>	<i>Location/Link (active since)</i>
@Vapaavuori	Mayor of Helsinki	65,721	<a href="http://vapaavuori.net">vapaavuori.net</a> (September 2012)
@Mike_Rawlings	Mayor of Dallas, Texas	34,702	Dallas, Texas/ <a href="http://dallascityhall.com">dallascityhall.com</a> /mayor (February 2011)
@NinaHachigian	Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles for Intl. Former: US Ambassador to ASEAN/ Obama, NSC staff/Clinton, CAP, RAND	4151	(April, 2009)
@egregoire	First Deputy Mayor of Paris	10,765	Paris/ <a href="http://medium.com/@emmanuelgregoire">medium.com/</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/emmanuelgregoire">@emmanuelgregoire</a> (January, 2009)
@Val_Plante	Mayor of Montreal	50,218	(June, 2009)
@Anne_Hidalgo	Mayor of Paris, President of @C40cities, de @AIMFrancophones et de la @Solideo_ JOP	1,446,087	Paris, <a href="http://paris.fr/annehidalgo">paris.fr/annehidalgo</a> (March, 2009)
@billpeduto	Mayor of Pittsburgh	96,715	Pittsburgh, PA/ <a href="http://billpeduto.com">billpeduto.com</a> (March, 2009)
@RegBerlin	Mayor of Berlin	8126	Berlin, Germany/ <a href="http://berlin.de/regberlin">berlin.de/ regberlin</a> (June, 2017)
@helviestinta	City of Helsinki	21,048	Helsinki/ <a href="http://hel.fi">hel.fi</a> (January, 2013)
@sannamarijantti	Director of Strategic Initiatives @ City of Helsinki	784	Helsinki/ <a href="http://myhelsinki.fi/fi">myhelsinki.fi/fi</a> (January, 2013)
@ResilienciaSSA	Office of Resiliency – City of Salvador, Brazil	30	Salvador, Brazil/ <a href="http://sustentabilidade.salvador.ba.gov.br">sustentabilidade.salvador. ba.gov.br</a> (May, 2018)
@horaciorlarreta	Head of Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires	1,434,088	Ciudad de Buenos Aires/ <a href="http://rodriguezlarreta.com.ar">rodriguezlarreta. com.ar</a> (September, 2009)
@PAbeywardena	Commissioner for International Affairs, New York City	3895	(May, 2012)
@aniesbaswedan	Governor of @DKIJakarta, Indonesia	2,533,335	Indonesia/ <a href="http://youtube.com/dkijakarta">youtube.com/</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkijakarta">dkijakarta</a> (February, 2010)

Tweets that mentioned Buenos Aires were included in a sentiment analysis using AFINN whereby each word in a tweet was rated for valence with an integer between minus five (negative) and plus five (positive). These scores were then added (or subtracted) to give a total score. Most of the tweets that mentioned the city in relation to the event were neutral or mildly positive with an average score of two (positive). The most positive tweet was given a score of nine (positive):

ANDREA FERNANDEZ Retweeted C40 Cities We are *thrilled* to open today the #Urban20 summit which provides a platform for mayors from around the world to send a **strong** messages to the G20 about the need to address and *support* climate action, social integration, the future of work and access to finance ANDREA FERNANDEZ added, C40 CitiesVerified account @c40cities The First #Urban20 Mayors Summit starts today in *Buenos Aires*, gathering mayors and representatives from 30+ major cities.... (ANDREA FERNANDEZ @AndreaF\_C40, 29 October 2018)

Tweets that scored 8 (positive) included:

William Burke-White Retweeted Jocelyn Perry Really *thoughtful* session at the #Urban20 Let's keep the discussion of cities and global governance moving forward from Buenos Aires to Tokyo. William Burke-White added, *Fantastic* roundtable at the #Urban20 with @wburkewh, @ChicagoCouncil @IvoHDaalder, @fresnicoff, @perryworldhouse Visiting Fellow Ian Klaus, and @PAbeywardena. *Thanks* to @CARIconsejo for helping.... (William Burke-White @wburkewh 29 October 2018)

*Inspiring* #urban20 roundtable with mayors, governors & urban *champions* – from Buenos Aires, Helsinki, Jakarta @aniesbaswedan, Madrid, Montevideo, Portland, @UCLG\_Saiz@ & beyond – on how #ogp can build citizen *trust* by making cities open, participatory, *responsive* to citizens! (Sanjay Pradhan @SPradhanOGP, 29 October 2018)

Other positive words that were included in the tweets featuring the host city included solutions, join, exciting, opportunity, welcome, increase, sustainable, help, great, fair, clear, share, want, proud, positively, promoting, empowerment, powerful, amazing, solve, leading, talent, progress, congratulations, fantastic, intelligent, commit, successful, protect, big, nice, prepared and better.



The majority of the tweets that featured the Buenos Aires in their message mentioned the city as the location for the event, paid tribute to their host and promoted their own seminar or presentation during the two-day event. For example:

The #Urban20 Summit is the opportunity for the most economically powerful cities in the world to send a strong statement to the G20. Please join @c40cities and city of Buenos Aires for this monumental event! (ANDREA FERNANDEZ @AndreaF\_C40, 1 October 2018)

Deputy Mayor Bob Rivkin is participating in the Urban 20Summit in Buenos Aires today. Watch his panel on how citizens can prepare for a shift in the labor market as moderated by @IvoHDaalder. use link <https://livestream.com/vivo/U20-ENG> #gcba #c40cities #uclg\_org #g20org #bainternacional (chicagosglobal @chicagosglobal, 29 October 2018)

A handful of tweets specifically commented on positive aspects of the city and its urban design such as:

The @WBG\_Cities team is Getting ready for #Urban20 launching tomorrow in Buenos Aires. Just went for a run through the amazing public spaces of Buenos Aires @gcba, can you get any better? @DesUrbanoBA @franco-moccia@Ede\_WBG@SamehNWahba@mgzhang@beaeraso@BancoMundial (Horacio Terraza @TerrazaH, 28 October 2018)

Meanwhile, a small number of organizations and individuals linked to the city leveraged the event in their tweets to promote the city of Buenos Aires. These tweets are reproduced below:

On the heels of the 1st #Urban20, held in #Argentina's capital, the #ArgentinaProjectPodcast brings you an interview with @BAInternacional's @fresnicoff, foreign affairs adviser to @horaciorlarreta, about Buenos Aires's efforts to become a technology hub. (Argentina Project @ArgentinaProj, 1 November 2018)

Replying to @UCLG\_Saiz Welcome to Buenos Aires @UCLG\_Saiz ! Thanks for joining us at #Urban20! (BA Internacional @BAInternacional, 27 October 2018)

@franomoccia Ministry of Urban Development and Transport of Buenos Aires at #Urban20 "The city developed over 15 years ago a flood manage-

ment master plan that is being implemented with the support from @BancoMundialArg, key to reduce urban flood risks and increase resilience”. (Beatriz Eraso @beaera, 29 October 2018)

#### 8.4.2 *Tweets That Mention Cities Other Than the Host*

Some city officials leveraged their participation in the event to promote initiatives of their cities to a global audience. For example, Mike Rawlings Mayor of Dallas, Texas, USA, tweeted:

Had an incredible few days at the #Urban20 Mayors Summit in Buenos Aires, where we talked a lot about climate change. I was particularly proud to brag on @DFWAirport for being the only airport in North America that is carbon neutral. (Mike RawlingsVerified account @Mike\_Rawlings, 30 October 2018)

Similarly, Singaporean MP, Dr Tan Wu Meng, highlighted the city-state’s sustainability initiatives in the following tweet:

Light moment with @MarkWatts40 of @c40cities at #Urban20. Wide-ranging discussion on climate change, sustainability & how thoughtful design can improve lives. Also chatted about Singapore’s water story. #ClimateActionSG @MFASg @MTI\_Sg @MEWRsg @MNDSingapore @The\_CLC\_SG @g20org. (Tan Wu MengVerified account @tanwumeng, 29 October 2019)

The Mayor of Helsinki also promoted a round table discussion with other city leaders in which he spoke about the city’s approach to building trust in the following tweet:

Starting this morning in Buenos Aires by speaking about Helsinki’s model of participation and building a city based on trust at the #Urban20 round-table Open Government for Urban Challenges with city leaders from around the world @uclg\_org @c40cities. (Jan VapaavuoriVerified account @Vapaavuori, 29 October 2018)

In a similar vein, the Deputy Mayor of LA tweeted:

#Urban20 panel on cities work in gender equality. I am so proud of @MayorOfLA’s record and determination. For once, a panel on women

where my presentation wasn't depressing. (Nina Hachigian @NinaHachigian, 29 October 2018)

Other participants attending the summit also shared initiatives adopted by other cities, such as the tweet posted by William Burke-White (@wburkewh) on 29 October 2018:

@PAbeywardena of @globalnyc urges cities at the #Urban20 mayors' summit to follow @nycgov lead in submitting Voluntary Local Review of #SDGImplementation to the UN. Great leadership by NY and a great model of cities and international law for others to follow. @perryworldhouse.

Singapore also encourages mixed-use development that prioritises the distribution of green areas and waterways equitably, regardless of community income level. #Urban20 (OluTimehin Adegbeye 🌿 @OhTimehin, 29 October 2018)

Similarly, Paul Maassen @maassenpaul on 29 October 2018 tweeted about the city of Helsinki:

Mayor @Vapaavuori of #helsinki says his city is fully open in everything – and has been doing it since the 18th century – to build trust and social cohesion, and to create a better and smarter city that delivers on citizens needs and realities. #Urban20

#### *8.4.3 Tweets That Reveal How 'City Diplomacy' Is Talked About*

The texts of the tweets were also analysed to examine whether the role of cities as agents of diplomacy was implicitly or explicitly mentioned. A number of hashtags relevant to the diplomatic and leadership roles of cities also featured in the conversation: #ChampionMayors, #Mayors4climate, #Cityleaders, #listen2cities, #Local4action, #innovate4cities and #investin-cities. Many tweeps also used hashtags to link cities, including #BuenosAires and #Helsinki, and the accounts of the cities and their local organizations: @Paris, @MunicipioQuito, @globalnyc, @gcba, @mayoroflondon, @cityofdallas and @Rosario\_intl.

The terms 'diplomacy' and 'city diplomacy' featured in a number of tweets to state that the event and the U20 is a new platform for diplomacy

whereby cities are making their voices heard in the global conversation about issues such as climate change, social inclusion and migration. As tweeted by Dylan Bokler @dylanb97 on 29 October 2018: ‘Cities are taking the place of the nation states’ @Vapaavuori #Urban20.

This notion is also encapsulated in the following tweet:

Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo, speaking at the #urban20 notes that the U20 is a new stage of city diplomacy that shows the capacity of mayors to act st [sic] the local level to address global issues and ensure city voices are heard by the world leaders. @perryworldhouse (William Burke-White @wburkewh, 29 October 2018)

A number of participants also mentioned the process of city diplomacy as they perceived it at the event, particularly the sharing of information and potential for knowledge transfer among city leaders and officials. The following tweets describe this:

Sharing thoughts and lessons-learned about the SDG’s Voluntary Local Review at a joint event with @ globalnyc & @PAbeywardena with the #urban20 cities in Buenos Aires. (Jan Vapaavuori Verified account @Vapaavuori, 28 October 2018)

At #Urban20 with Junko Inokuma, Tokyo Vice-Governor, and Ambassador @NinaHachigian, Deputy Mayor, International Affairs, Los Angeles. Both Tokyo & LA are vibrant & dynamic cities – lots we can learn from as we share experiences. @g20org @MFAsg @MTI\_Sg @MNDSingapore @The\_CLC\_SG. (Tan Wu Meng Verified account @tanwumeng, 29 October 2018)

Latin American cities like #SaoPaulo & #PanamaCity are vital to solving global challenges. This week’s #Urban20 Summit highlights the importance of collaboration among the world’s urban policymakers to step up #climate ambition. @amerquarterly: <https://bit.ly/2yFxagE> (Global Covenant Verified account @Mayors4Climate, 31 October 2018)

Many of the tweets included a call to action to the G20 leaders ‘to join cities in delivering net-zero emissions by, 2050’ and implement the Paris agreement. The message that cities have a central role in designing local solutions for global problems was reinforced in many tweets following the summit. One example is given in the tweet of Mayor of Paris and Co-Chair of the event:

Today, @horaciorlarreta, @NYCMayor, @ecoyuri and 30+ mayors are calling on #G20 leaders to join cities and rapidly implement the #ParisAgreement. #Urban20 #Cities4Climate Read the full Communiqué <http://goo.gl/Axr949> (Anne Hidalgo @Anne\_Hidalgo, 30 October 2018)

A number of tweeps described the diplomatic role of cities participating in the event. The following tweets describe the action of city representatives working together, sharing ideas and information to make progress on addressing several important global issues and lobbying their national governments to take their advice and recommendations.

#Localgov must own the global agendas if we want them to succeed!! Pioneering cities @globalnyc & Helsinki share their contributions to the #SDGs at an informal gathering at the eve of the first #Urban20 Mayors Summit in Buenos Aires! ✨ #Local4Action (United Cities @uclg\_org, 28 October 2018)

Closed door Mayor meeting starting at #Urban20. I'm between Chicago and Beijing and across from Seoul and Berlin. Montevideo second to my right and Kuala Lumpur second on my left. Question is how cities make their priorities heard. (Nina Hachigian @NinaHachigian, 29 October 2018)

Many tweets reporting on the event also highlighted the proactive role of the co-chairs and participants in developing recommendations for many of the world's biggest challenges and delivering their communicate to the Chair of the G20. This is shown in the tweets below.

Buenos Aires Mayor @horaciorlarreta delivers the communicate from the #Urban20 mayors to President @mauriciomacri for conveyance to the #G20 Summit next month – at Bs. As. Ciudad Casa de Gobierno (Jocelyn Perry @JocelynGPerry, 30 October, 2018)

Mayor @horaciorlarreta, #Urban20 co-chair handed the communicate to #G20 chair, President @mauriciomacri For the first time local governments are getting actively involved in the #G20 process to better defend the interests of the communities they serve. [http://urban20.org/item/ejes-y-documentos-clave/communique\\_eng.pdf](http://urban20.org/item/ejes-y-documentos-clave/communique_eng.pdf) ... (United Cities @uclg\_org 30 Oct, 2018)

## 8.5 DISCUSSION

Analysing the conversation about the event on Twitter showed that the tweeps involved were primarily organizations and affiliated representatives that support the C40 and U20 networks. Specifically, the tweeps contributing most to the conversation were organizations that are major stakeholders in these city diplomacy networks: IFC, C40 Cities and UCLG among others. Less than 25% of tweeps were individuals who did not declare an association with such networks. These findings suggest that the tweeps with a significant vested interest in the event are most active in the conversation. At the same time, the diversity of tweeps participating in the event mirrors previous research that demonstrates that the image of the event and the location ‘implicit within it, are projected on Twitter in a collaborative process among various stakeholders and audiences that generate a diversity of images’ (Garay and Morales Pérez 2017, p. 50). Unsurprisingly, the three most liked tweets related to the participation in the event of the Governor of Jakarta, a popular tweep with 3 million followers.<sup>2</sup>

Host city, Buenos Aires, received coverage in the Twittersphere by a range of Tweeps. Overwhelmingly, reference to the city related to its role as host of the event. Tweeps that were following the event would have a heightened awareness of Buenos Aires during this period. Even though these were on average mildly positive in their tone, with only a few tweets that were negative in sentiment, a handful of tweets promoted specific positive elements of the city or its diplomatic role in the network. Further, the majority of the tweets that mentioned the city leveraged the event to promote the participation of other organization, cities and their representatives. In particular, some of the Mayors, Deputy Mayors and other city officials of participating cities also tweeted about positive programs and actions adopted in their respective cities in relation to some of the important issues discussed at the forum.

Individual tweeps and those with organizational affiliations also reported on the initiatives and programs adopted by some of the participating cities, other than the host city. These contributions to the discussion shifted the focus away from the host city, to include other members of the city diplomacy network who were using this social media platform to report on and promote their own activities. In particular, there were

<sup>2</sup> As on August 2019.

several examples of participating cities promoting the actions they have taken to improve their cities' environmental sustainability and implementation of the SDG goals. As the results show, a small number of urban authorities, other than the host city, dominated the conversation. This is not surprising given the insights from previous research that local government authorities and their officials are not maximizing the potential of social media platforms to engage and interact with users online to co-create brand meaning (Ketter and Avraham 2012; Sevin 2016). Furthermore, some of the participating local authorities, including the host city, have not leveraged the event to engage with their global audiences and sustain a dialogue with members of these city brand communities as advised by And  hn et al. (2014).

City diplomacy and the power of cities to take leadership on many global issues and lobby their national governments to take their advice and recommendations were emphasized in many tweets. Further, tweeps described their observations about the nature of city diplomacy as it manifested at the event. Tweeps mentioned information sharing, knowledge transfer, owning the global agenda, collaboration, defending the interests of cities, leadership of the event chairs and importantly, a call to leaders of the G20 to support their recommendations, particularly in regards to climate change. These findings reflect the important role of city networks to empower cities to tackle issues that directly affect them and to enable city officials to communicate collectively with the leaders of the G20 (Chan 2016; Klaus 2018).

Many of the tweets which discussed the concept of city diplomacy also featured relevant hashtags (e.g. #ChampionMayors, #Mayors4climate, #Cityleaders, #listen2cities) and linked the accounts of tweeps (e.g. @g20org @MFAsg @globalnyc & @PAbeywardena) to enable the message to reach relevant audiences. The variety of content and the systematic use of various tools such as hashtags and account links demonstrate a strategic use of appropriate cues by tweeps to influence other tweeps and effectively engage with the online audience. However, this cannot be confirmed, as it was not examined in this study.

Considering the large number of member cities of the C40 network and the 25 cities in the U20 group, only a small proportion of members contributed to the conversation studied in this chapter. This could be linked to the sourcing of Tweets in English, excluding other major languages of the member cities. More cities were mentioned by other tweeps in relation to their participation in this event, highlighting the connections

forged between cities in these diplomatic networks. Similarly, fewer Mayors, their Deputies and other city officials engaged in the conversation on Twitter than participated in the event. Surprisingly, the event Chairs, Mayors of Paris, and Buenos Aires were frequently mentioned, but seldom tweeted about the event, in English at least. This demonstrates inconsistency in the use of this social media platform by city leaders and is consistent with the research of Triantafyllidou et al. (2018) who found that Twitter is not a common social media platform adopted by Mayors in Greece. Further, Twitter activity intensified during the event, similar to Triantafyllidou et al.'s (2018) study that showed the number of tweets posted reached several peaks during the Greek Mayoralty election periods.

## 8.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter examined the ways that cities leverage summits to enhance their international image online and how event participants and onlookers discuss city diplomacy in relation to such events. The results of the empirical study suggest that overall local government authorities and their representatives are overlooking a valuable opportunity to leverage their participation in global city summits to engage global audiences to advance their image and policy interests. Twitter, like other social media platforms, provides valuable opportunities for cities to listen into online conversations about what audiences think and feel about them. An increasing number of academics and practitioners have outlined the benefits of monitoring these conversations and use this intelligence to enhance their global engagement strategies (Thomaz et al. 2017). This study examined several aspects of the conversation, including the prominence of Buenos Aires in the conversation and sentiment expressed in the tweets towards the host city. The limited representation of the host in the conversation highlights a missed opportunity for the city to digitally leverage the event to elevate awareness of the city's role in city diplomacy, the city's unique characteristics and initiatives that contribute to achieving the U20's purpose and goals. Likewise, while the sentiment analysis indicated a mildly positive mood of tweeps, the positive words featured in the tweets related to the event, as much, if not more than the host itself. City authorities involved in attracting and managing events and promoting a city's brand can adopt a social media content mining framework (see, e.g. Thomaz et al. (2017)) to monitor participants' conversation about the event and additionally can proactively track the mood of participants in real time.



The major limitations of the study are related to the availability of data and analytical tools. The tweets included in the database for analysis were in English, thus excluding many languages, most notably the official language of the event host—Spanish. The timeframe for the data collection was also limited to 1 October to 28 November 2018, thus excluding potential tweets outside of this timeframe. In addition, the measures of engagement used to evaluate the tweets were limited to ‘Likes’, ‘Retweets’ and ‘Replies’. Other potential measures of engagement were not included (Manzanaro et al. 2018). Additionally, similar to the studies of Triantafyllidou et al. (2018) and Taecharungroj (2017), future research should categorize content types of the tweets to evaluate the effectiveness of the tweeps’ communication strategies when leveraging their participation in the event to enhance cities’ international images.

There were also a number of additional elements included in the tweets apart from the text. These included pictures, videos and links. These elements were recorded and examined, but not systematically analysed. These limitations could be addressed in future studies of the ways that participants, most importantly cities and their representatives, leverage events such as summits for city diplomacy and to enhance their international image. This study did not examine the host city’s activities in relation to specific policy issues discussed at the summit. Examining the fit between the host and the event in this way would be a promising avenue of future research. Another avenue of future research is to investigate the connection between the U20 event and the G20 summit and whether participants and onlookers link these two events and gauge the influence of city diplomacy on state diplomatic platforms. Comparing the Twittersphere of the inaugural U20 to other international summits would serve to confirm or refute the findings of this research and enhance understanding of the ways that cities can leverage their participation in such stages of city diplomacy to enhance their cities’ international image.

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### SECTION III

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## City Diplomacy Across Governance Levels



# How Are Cities Inserting Themselves in the International System?

*Ray Lara*

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter proposes a typology of activities cities use to insert themselves in the international system to clear some of the confusion in the literature about *city diplomacy* concept which attempts to fit in all the international and territorial activities of cities. The next sections help to fill in some of the gaps in the existing studies. It is important to keep in mind that a frequent mistake has been thinking about the global phenomenon of city diplomacy as an undermining force or even attempting to replace the nation-state as container.<sup>1</sup> The main function of the typology is to take a snapshot of the current insertion of cities in the international setting to

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Taylor (1994) uses Anthony Giddens (1985) metaphor about state as a “power container”. When we look at the twentieth-century state in the core of the modern world-system, we are immediately impressed by the sheer magnitude of functions it has acquired. That they can be reduced to just four basic strategies of territoriality, these amount to containment of power (state wage war), wealth (manage the economy), culture (give national identity) and society (provide social services).

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identify their level of internationalization. This can develop a better decision-making in public policy to solve the problems of urban and global governance.

Cities' role in the international system takes places at three levels as argued below. The first level is a locus where some actors interact (e.g. individuals, social movements and NGOs) and others are located (e.g. international organizations [IOs], transnational companies and universities). The second level focuses on their agency in the international system as an actor. The third level is their ability to influence other practitioners and decision-makers in world politics through city diplomacy.

The construction and refinement of this typology dates from 2011 to 2019. During this period, the most used ways by cities to internationalize have been identified with the intention to consolidate an image outside and within their territory and in turn creates or modifies a city identity. This typology is built based on data collected during earlier studies (Lara 2011, 2014, 2015; Lara and Hernández 2019). Those studies used Bilbao, Guadalajara, Mexico City and Singapore as cases and collected data from 2012 to 2015 for Bilbao, Mexico and Singapore, and 2015–2018 for Guadalajara.

### 9.1.1 *City as a Subject of Analysis in International Relations*

Earlier studies of cities acknowledge these actors as a *locus* of international relations (Boulding 1968). These studies have identified the functions of cities and placed them as international actors through their trans-governmental relations (Keohane and Nye 1974; Cohn et al. 1989; Mansbach et al. 1976). Therefore, scholars conceived them as a unit of analysis, for instance, in the World Relations of Cities (Alger 1977), pointing out the parts that allow their study as the local or non-central government as well as an important unit in foreign policy due to their significance within the lives of the individuals, organizations and businesses, and their potential to perform urban *para*-diplomacy (Soldatos 1989; Hobbs 1994; Kirby et al. 1995; Kresl and Fry 2005; Martín and Oddone 2010; Tavares 2016; Aprigio 2016).

Michele Acuto argues that these visions of higher levels of city activity make the same mistake with those that reduce the role of cities to a subject positing that “cities tend to be either represented as the sites for international relations or subsumed as lower-level governmental entities with a limited reach” (2013a, p. 7). It was not until 1990s when the study of the

city as a factor in world politics would have a place in mainstream scholarly discussions. James Rosenau (1995) foresaw that cities were about to become major control mechanisms in contemporary politics. Even if his (and others') expectations were beyond the current reality, as cities did not replace states completely, cities are still "seemed destined to emerge as either partners or adversaries of states as their crucial role becomes more widely recognized" (Rosenau 1995, p. 27).

According to Vanessa Marx (2010, p. 37) we have managed to identify an adequate theoretical framework to work on the cities' political aspects in the international setting through the concept of global governance. The power to govern and establish international relations does not belong exclusively to the states. Global governance had rather paved the way to a different path, in which actors manage issues via networks and have a relational capacity to share decisions, opening opportunities for local authorities together with other participants. Therefore, the emerging narrative of global governance asks new questions about the practice of sovereignty and authority in the world today (Amen et al. 2011, p. 2). In the last decade, the study of cities in global governance has increased identifying their agency in the structure (Marx 2010; Amen et al. 2011; Acuto 2013a, b; Aprigio 2016; Tavares 2016; Curtis 2014, 2017; Herrschel and Newman 2017; Lara 2019).

### 9.1.2 *The City as an International Actor*

Cities, acting via local governments, have the ability to relate more closely to the social, political, cultural and economic networks of different participants that have a role in domestic territory and on the international arena simultaneously. Tassilo Herrschel and Peter Newman (2017) points out that there are a growing number of cities and regions seeking to participate in and influence global politics (p. 17). They try to do so by working around the respective nation-states, as part of agenda-based networks, either as individual actors or through lobbying international organizations (IOs) (p. 17).

In world politics, cities are pushing the state-based system to a multi-centered one as they are the true promoters and beneficiaries of such global order (Torrijos 2009, pp. 367–368). All of these changes, along with city leaderships, "create an identity with people [which] can be insular or expansive, fearful of the world outside or eager to relate to it" (Alger 1977, p. 307). Currently, "the argument is not that cities will take over



the place of states, but that the changing nature of cities and states at the contemporary conjuncture are part of the same processes rescaling the relationship between local, national and global space” (Curtis 2011, p. 1945). Chadwick Alger (2013, p. 46) shows the impact of cities on global systems can be viewed from at least four vantage points:

1. The creators of new technology and culture that eventually flow around the world.
2. Nodes in international systems, providing the facilities that link them.
3. Headquarters from which both governmental and nongovernmental international systems are controlled.
4. People identify themselves with cities and turn to them for protection and support.

It is necessary to add a fifth point, which was the most important one in the last decade: the cities are participants that promote international regimes—“regime-building agency” (Acuto 2013b, p. 488). Cities gain this agency by “being participants [in world politics] with their own international agenda and with the capacity to defend positions of the local world in the various forums and international meetings” (Marx 2010, p. 41). These actions could be seen as a new type of diplomacy. Even though it is not yet equivalent in its power to political-economic outcomes as traditional diplomacy and it is often used to assist nation-states to better achieve a range of goals, it has been used to counterbalance federal government actions and to fill the void of nation-state leadership regarding global governance issues (Leffel and Acuto 2017, p. 9).

### *9.1.3 From City Diplomacy to Influence the International Environment*

Arguments in favor of cities’ power value the interactions with their international counterparts and their engagement in global affairs. These actions are loosely defined as the collective practice of city diplomacy. Yet, it is often overlooked that the shared interests and priorities of cities deal with different economic, geographic and political realities. This is a problem for the still growing and, for many, unproven field of city diplomacy (Tabory 2017, p. 15). Therefore, the posture of the chapter states that international activities of cities cannot be confined to a single concept.

Actually, “city diplomacy represents an increased collective capacity to solve a range of problems spanning local and global levels” (Leffel and Acuto 2017, p. 10). The term has been applied to many types of international actions by local governments and used in different ways by various participants and defined according to need and practice (Sizoo and Musch 2008, pp. 8–10). It is a way of decentralizing international relations management, that is, situating cities as key participants (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 11), which often consists of mutual projects that are not necessarily on a municipal level (van Overbeek 2007, p. 3). In addition, their relationships are not exclusively between cities. Despite this fact, the concept does not cover the diverse and numerous ways of city internationalization.

Consequently, I argue that it is better to talk about *insertion* of cities in the international setting. Due to its role as participants in the international system and world politics, one of the manifestations of the potential of the city is, for instance, “providing solutions to local problems that can be scaled globally, and vice versa” (Lara and Cerqueira 2017). Thus, *insertion* should be understood as the ability of the cities to act in, intervene and influence world politics without needing another international actor to support it.

It is important to identify insertion types and mechanisms that cities have developed, as well as their interventions in world politics in order to create intervention strategies to solve global problems so they can position themselves in the international setting. These places have increased their motivation to insert themselves with the following:

1. Economic promotion (production centers, investment and capital transfer centers, competitiveness)
2. Political impact (lobby, socio-political mobilization, political activism, municipalism, visibility of local leaders)
3. Socio-historical influence
4. Geographical-strategic location (cross-border cooperation, inter-municipality, hubs or *entrepôts*)
5. Participation in global governance (environment and climate change, denuclearization, peace and human rights, health, migration)
6. Dissemination of public policies

## 9.2 TYPOLOGY CONSTRUCTION OF THE CITY INSERTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING

The use of typologies allows the researcher “to interpret and understand a social phenomenon to characterize and identify relevant issues, to produce data or, in other words, to be a bridge, a connection between theory, concepts, and data” (Cohen and Gómez 2011, p. 36). Typologies “make crucial contributions to diverse analytic tasks: forming and refining concepts, drawing out underlying dimensions, creating categories for classification and measurement, and sorting cases” (Collier et al. 2012, p. 217). Their central function is to “generate a set of intentionally defined *type* concepts. They define new conceptual realities at the level of minor abstraction” (López 1996, p. 20). It is important to identify the elements, variables and dimensions that make up the *corpus* of the typology.

### 9.2.1 *General Concept*

The insertion of the cities in the international setting, as previously discussed.

### 9.2.2 *Dimensions and Variables*

These are the actual ways of insertion:

- (a) Para-diplomatic activities
- (b) City associations
- (c) City-to-city cooperation
- (d) City networks and alliances
- (e) City marketing
- (f) Competitiveness
- (g) Global networks
- (h) Model cities

These strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive nor collectively exhaustive. Yet, the fragmentation of city diplomacy actions allows to differentiate between the many more activities that these places carry out to position themselves in the imaginary of the other actors. It should be noted that these ways of insertion can work independently or jointly. At the end of the day, what matters is the action they take to solve specific problems: how do cities interact? For instance, on climate change, a city

can enter into a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and in turn belong to Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) and develop a city brand as a sustainable city. All of these actions are done to solve urban pollution.

### 9.2.3 *Types*

The crucial element of this typology is the image or the perception that other actors have regarding the city and its influence in the international setting. The proposed categorization used here is based on simple attribute measures. It is based solely on the state of knowledge of the actions, not of the theory. As a result, four types or images were generated that show how cities seek to insert themselves in the international setting:

- (a) *External projection*: Cities transcend their jurisdiction and exchange information with other players on how they want their images to be seen.
- (b) *International presence*: Cities engage in actions and establish relations with other international participants. There is a constant outreach from the cities to actors beyond the borders of their home countries.
- (c) *Territorial attractiveness*: Like international presence, territorial attractiveness shows how the city would like to see itself vis-à-vis other international participants in a broad way but with the main characteristic of the territorial issues as an attraction factor.
- (d) *Global recognition*: The last type refers to the most global and complete image of cities, where other international participants and agents acknowledge their importance and influence in the international system.

Within the typology, some insertion types are more complicated to design and implement than others, either for political or economic reasons. Many of the cities are inserted in world politics at the first two levels, while the over-performing examples reach the third and fourth levels, demonstrating much greater internationality and obtaining more influence in the international system. Building a typology to identify the level of insertion of cities allows the observation of the activities done by the city to power them and create new strategies of internationalization. It would also help the stakeholders to intervene in the different mechanisms that add for the insertion.



**Fig. 9.1** Intensity of the insertion of the city in the international setting. (Lara 2015)

This typology works as an analytic framework and as an assessment tool. Adopting this typology allows not only to clarify and define new concepts from a qualitative perspective, but it is a preliminary step to develop quantitative and comparative studies where clear concepts are needed to be able to measure and confront the different phenomena. Due to the aforementioned, it is possible to create a matrix.

### 9.2.4 *Matrix*

Matrix is based on the intensity and the volume of established relations of all the items identified in the forms of insertion (null, low, medium, high and very high). Intensity refers to the level of activity that municipalities engage in and the extent to which they establish transnational and trans-governmental linkages or networks (Cohn et al. 1989, p. 87). It is measured through the levels of external projection, international presence, territorial attractiveness and global recognition of other international actors.

On the matrix of the typology, it is important to clarify that the numerical assignment of the valuation and the sum of the items identified in the projection forms were arbitrarily established in consecutive even integers (Fig. 9.1).

In the next section, the eight ways of insertion listed in dimensions and variables are going to be grouped under four types.

## 9.3 TYPES OF INSERTION OF A CITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has estimated that around 70–80% of cities in the world perform at least some form of international activities, for example, twinning agreements, affiliation to networks or international associations. Some of these are more complex than

others, so not all cities can implement them. Due to the level of stakeholder engagement, resources usage and consolidation time, the waiting period for initial results varies from the way or mechanism of internationalization applied. However, the variation in time does not equate to not being strategies related to international relations and/or foreign actions of local governments. If observed hierarchically, a twinning between two cities marked by their toponymy and an agreement on climate change between several cities that belong to a network of cities or, furthermore, the dissemination of a good practice through IOs are not at the same level. All of this depends on the dimensions that are adopted in relation to the resources that are needed for their concretion (e.g. economic, technical and human aspects), as well as the commitments of the various stakeholders and institutions that intervene. The observable time in terms of the results and goals, the identification and assessment of the civil society (internal level) and the outward image (global level) are elements to consider in order to consolidate the insertion of the city (Fig. 9.2).

Amid all these variation and vagueness, what does this typology allow us, as scholars interested in cities, to provide in terms of analytic or explanatory leverage? Basically, the typology differentiates between the situation of cooperation that takes place on its first stages of insertion in the international setting (external projection and international presence) from competition that is reflected in the last levels (territorial attractiveness and global recognition). Nevertheless, the exchange of experiences and good practices as well as the dissemination of public policies is present at all times. Beyond the level of insertion, cities public policies are the main motivational factor for their internationalization.

### 9.3.1 *External Projection*

External projection includes activities in which cities project their qualities and reflect on how other participants perceive them. From the perspective of image, the city has begun adopting at least the simplest strategies and actions to be acknowledged outside, such as twinning, the performance of some para-diplomatic activity or becoming parties to city associations. The function of an external projection of para-diplomatic activities and being part of city associations is to be acknowledged and thus become “known” outside their jurisdiction, either inside or outside their home countries through small initiatives such as twinning, their positioning on specific issues, and national and international associations.

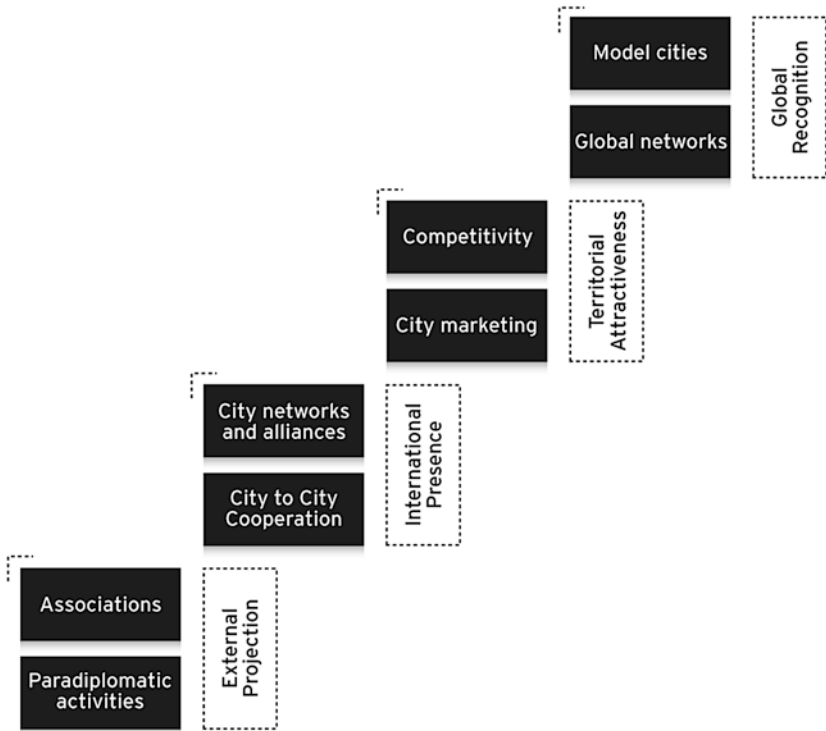


Fig. 9.2 Levels of the insertion of the city in the international setting. (Lara 2015)

*Para-diplomatic activities* refer to those actions through which “[most] governments in large municipalities and even in some medium and small-sized cities and towns are engaged in foreign affairs” (Kresl and Fry 2005, p. 48). Regarding image, these activities “have help a lot of people to understand there are different peoples, situated in several different countries that share the same problems and hopes” (Fisas 1988, p. 22).

For most cities, either small ones with limited financial resources or large ones with considerable budgets, the first type of external projection of cities is highly recommended. These para-diplomatic activities include twinning, reconciliation twinning, twinning-cooperation, twinning comprehension, cross-border twinning, agreements focused on co-development and city-to-city trade agreements as well as having contacts

with foreign representatives, official tours and missions, agreements with IOs, providing care for diasporas and establishing offices abroad.

*City associations* constitute another platform for cities to engage in external projection, that is, through the creation and active participation in organizations between local governments as inter-municipal cooperation. Despite the fact most scholars consider these activities within para-diplomatic activities due to the number of participating cities and the concrete work and topics dealt with, the insertion capacity of cities is more complex than para-diplomatic activities.

The cities are represented in national and international associations by town councils and/or mayors. The associations are characterized by the interests of municipalities vis-à-vis their nation-states in IOs. Being part of these associations (membership, presidency and headquarters) is important because “[the associations] also carry out advisory, management and technical support actions to the municipalities” (Zapata 2007, p. 126). Moreover, they are the main source of information in cooperation and international relations (Zapata 2007, p. 126). Therefore, they constitute transnational cooperation.

### 9.3.2 *International Presence*

In this typology, *international presence* is situated as a distinct category and after *external projection*. The latter indicates being outside of a city’s jurisdiction and territory, the former refers to being outside the borders of its home country. In other words, the reach of a city’s image increases. The fundamental premise is that “cities have a great deal to learn and teach from each other and are best placed to articulate their needs” through decentralized cooperation (HABITAT and UTO 2001, p. 9). It should also be noted that these forms have been the most commonly used tactic by cities insertion since the mid-1990s (HABITAT and UTO 2001).

In other words, cities “design joint participation, intervention strategies and stimulate the exchange of best practices to help them position the issue of local realities in the internal and international agenda” (Granato and Oddone 2010, p. 233). International presence involves a stronger commitment among stakeholders (such as local government, private sector, universities and civil associations), since they are also interested in internationalizing outward to excel internally.

*City-to-city cooperation* is about strengthening the capacity of cities to deal with their own problems in close touch with their citizens. In 2001,



the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) and the United Towns Organization (UTO) coincided with the growing recognition in the international community that the process of urbanization raised major issues of governance that called for new approaches to deal with building at the local level. For these organizations, the linking modalities are three: (i) one-on-one partnership between just two communities, (ii) a wide variety of technical cooperation networks between groups of cities and (iii) sectorial membership organizations or associations (HABITAT and UTO 2001, pp. 5–6).

Susan Handley (2006, p. 2) labels these activities as *international partnerships* regardless of their nature. It is the quality of the activities, the outcomes and benefits that make them count (Handley 2006, p. 5). For the typology described in this chapter, the city-to-city cooperation format (C2C) promotes decentralized cooperation through the exchange of experiences to mitigate similar problems. The main activities include specific agreements (bilateral), partnerships (technical exchange), development (welfare North-South, South-South), triangular and municipal cross-border cooperation (Lara 2015), that is, the search for financial resources as a whole, strengthening reciprocal relationships in many issues of the urban and development agendas, and increasing the degree of participation in the field of cooperation and international relations.

When it comes to *city networks and alliances*, Paqui Santoja (2013, p. 50) argues the following:

cities are grouped into networks for several reasons: To lobby jointly, to generate more cohesive territorial spaces, to insert themselves in the international system, to have access to information and new technologies, to build and strengthen leadership and to generate a space of relationships with each other as well as other participants. (2013, p. 50)

Distinguished by the fact that networking transformed their scope, they are formal networks because “they present a degree of institutionalization of collective actions among individuals or groups to achieve a shared goal, with a consciousness of belonging to a group” (Saltalamacchia et al. 2007, p. 12). Regarding their environment, these networks operate in public, openly and generally seek to be recognized as legitimate participants and interlocutors by authorities or official bodies, whom they intend to influence or mobilize according to their own interests and goals (Saltalamacchia et al. 2007, p. 12). These networks are a way for a greater international

insertion for local governments through the increase of decentralized cooperation, as well as through establishing “a channel of greater international resonance for discussing and disseminating the problems faced by local governments” (Batista, Freire and Fronzaglia 2004, p. 10).

In addition, networks consolidate spaces of agreement to create economies of scale and generate a common benefit, obtaining a greater power of lobbying, negotiation, exchange of experiences and information, linking isolated participants with other areas of action and encouraging collaboration with other institutions (Zapata 2007, p. 108). It is also known as inter-municipal network cooperation or transnational learning in networks (Kern 2001, p. 104).

In the last decades, “the number of formal networks has increased considerably, and [...] the multiplicity of networks expresses the richness and real potential of this type of work” (Zapata 2007, p. 108). This could be defined as “a free market of decentralized cooperation where networks compete for partners and have to demonstrate constantly their usefulness to members, especially if a membership fee is charged” (Rothfuss 2008, p. 221).

### 9.3.3 *Territorial Attractiveness*

Cities have become places where tensions, development and new forms of social expression accumulate. Consequently, they cannot base everything on cooperation, they need to compete to excel. This dynamic has a decisive influence on the performance of these places both internal and externally. Peter Taylor (2013) said there is a debate among those who study cities as to whether success depends on cities fruitfully competing or cooperating. The answer is that the most successful ones do both. In other words while “intense competition is one major aspect of the relationship among these cities, [...] cooperation is another major aspect” (Kresl and Fry 2005, p. 136). What is known as *competitive cooperation* (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 13) allows cities to compete and cooperate at the same time among them and with other non-state actors.

We are witnessing the phenomenon of reterritorialization “or the (re) appearance of the importance of territoriality” (Duran 2013, p. 55). The attractiveness of cities depends on their territoriality which is defined as “a form of behaviour that uses a bounded space: a territory, as the instrument for securing a particular outcome, their content can be manipulated and its character designed” (Taylor 1994, p. 151) with strategies such as

marketing and competitiveness. The process of territorial attractiveness of cities is the development of competitive advantages with the intention of competing with others that have similar characteristics.

This dynamic has provoked a virtuous circle where cities, through their competitive advantages, seek the attraction of inhabitants, tourists, businesspeople, who, in turn, will be the actors that will develop the new competitive advantages of the city. In order to do so, it is necessary that the city acquires the characteristics desired by the market. For Simon Anholt (2007, p. 2), “all the places with good, powerful and positive reputations find that almost everything they undertake on the international stage is easier” as the cities have to be convincing to seduce and attract people, make them stay and come back (Amendola 2000, p. 297).

*City marketing* is such a practice of internationalization acknowledged by several scholars (Fry et al. 1989; Fernández and Paz 2005; Paz 2005; Borja and Castells 2006; Elizagarate 2008; Marx 2010; Zapata 2007; Salomón 2008; Lara et al. 2015). It is argued that “[l]ike the nation-state, for better or for worse, each city has an international image with which it must contend” (Kresl 1989, p. 192). The objective of this form of attractiveness is to “design promotion and spreading strategies to improve the city reputation since it models an intangible input: the image” (Fernández and Paz 2005). This form of internationalization uses the territory as a device for attracting tourists, investors and talent.

City marketing becomes a key piece in the competition because cities can benefit from implementing coherent strategies regarding their resource management, reputation and image (Dinnie 2011, p. 3). As a result, it is important to design the promotion of the city toward external audiences that develops a strong and positive image supported by an offer of infrastructure and services that attracts investors, visitors and solvent users to the city and facilitates their exports (Borja and Castells 2006, p. 153). Therefore, the city marketing has a close relationship with the competitiveness of the city.

Through marketing plans, it is necessary to build an identity of the city, which is inevitably the first approach of the territory outward. The promotional action of a city positions it on the minds of local populations, as well as investors, tourists, academics and talent from abroad. In addition, the active presence in international events and the organization of temporary and/or permanent events in its territory such as sporting events, festivals or international fairs, being part of rankings and indexes of cities (benchmarking) and having a website helps too (distribution channel) (Lara

2015). For instance, “benchmarks not only make newspaper headlines; they also inform and influence the practice of urban governance and drive it toward international thinking” (Acuto et al. 2019, third paragraph).

*Competitiveness* brings in a space economy perspective to cities and argues that the most prominent feature of the geographical distribution of economic activity is its concentration through the economies of scale (Krugman 1992). It is true that “some cities are also formidable or potentially formidable global economic actors” (Kresl and Fry 2005, p. 16). For almost a century, cities had been considered only as an enclave for business location. However, on a regional, national and global basis, they are competing against each other to attract businesses, manufacturing companies, research and development facilities, and headquarters. Therefore, the competitiveness of a city can be defined as “the promotion of a social, technological, environmental and institutional environment conducive to the best performance of economic activities” (Cabrero, Orihuela and Ziccardi 2005) through its competitive advantages. Simon Anholt (2007, p. 3) uses the concept of competitive identity “to describe the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion”.

Moreover, “the notion of competitive advantage in the urban area refers to those attributes that the city develops and forges through its own means to improve its economic and social positioning within its area of influence or the urban system in which it operates” (Rojas et al. 2005, p. 68). In order to do so, they have to develop strategies based on their capabilities and strengths, their advantages, their vocation as a city and the professional characteristics of their populations and more important its *ethos* (Ward 2005) or spirit of the city (Bell and de-Shalit 2011). Thus, the territorial attractiveness seeks to build an identity of the city to favor its citizens, its position and excel internationally.

Each territory has a specific combination of factors “that ensure its attractiveness and development, focusing on its strengths (social, economic, cultural and natural diversity) thus establishing competitive advantages compared to other cities” (Ezmaile 2012, p. 121). In other words, “when a city is capable of generating an environment conducive to competitiveness, we speak of a competitive city” (Cabrero 2012, p. 4). In regard to their image, the city competitiveness plans not only to promote economies of agglomeration (clusters), return to scale and economic growth but also innovate and disseminate knowledge (innovative milieu), promote economic participation in cross-border region and increase the

quality of life promoting socio-economic development for the attraction of investments, investors, human talent and tourists (Lara et al. 2015). These competitiveness mechanisms are the ones that cities implement the most to excel abroad.

### 9.3.4 *Global Recognition*

When cities transcend their cooperation, association and competition relations with others and they are able to create their own interaction ways with other cities and international actors without the need for a nation-state that contains them or an IO that indicates them what is best for them. The presence of a global recognition that comes from the same cities and other actors is established. This is decisive since it allows us to observe how other participants perceive the cities.

Global recognition indicates a greater degree of insertion than external projection, international presence and territorial attractiveness because no city can become truly international on its own as this recognition is only meaningful when it is granted by other actors (Tesse 1989, p. 205). The recognition is not only within their territory or their container state, but in the eyes of other nation-states, IOs and, obviously, other cities. In other words, the promotion of good practices, processes, programs, projects and public policies of these cities, in relation to their agency in urban and global governance, increase considerably and are recognized.

*Global networks* can be understood as the “communicative structures that influence the discourse, procedures and action plan of these participants” (Keck and Sikkink 2000). There is no doubt that currently, international actors are organized in networks, either as formally constituted networks—described above—or as global networks, where the hierarchy of cities aims to identify those that have become the most important participants in world politics. From this perspective, the major cities of the world are “the key organizational nodes in multiple global networks of economic, social, demographic, and information flows” (Smith 2005, p. 48), earning these positions “through the qualification and quantification of connectivity between cities” (Kissack 2013, p. 13).

The global networks that make up world cities could be considered as informal, since they are made by a series of nodes connected to each other through non-fixed or irregular circulation of various types of flows and “do not seek an institutionalization” (Saltalamacchia et al. 2007, p. 12). So, the difference with formal networks and alliances is that these global networks are not institutionalized but have a large global reach, for

example, electronic production networks or airport hubs. These global networks are “structure(s) in which the nodes are the cities, connected by links of a socio-economic nature, where flows of different nature are exchanged, based on transport and communication infrastructures” (Boix 2003, p. 17), and the network is the global economy and the service companies are subnodes—in other words, specialized global circuits (Sassen 2003) connected by commerce and communication, as well as by political and social elements. In this, “the existence of global digital links had an important contribution, since they have allowed the development of a new type of territorial policy with global reach” (Sassen 2007, p. 22).

Currently, the only forms that can describe this global recognition are the academic models that show the transcendence of internationality by transnationality of global city networks, such as World City Network Formation by Peter Taylor and members of Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network. Thus, “one of GaWCs aims has been to reposition research on inter-city relations from the easy seduction of hierarchies to the complex subtleties of networks” (GaWC 2010, second paragraph).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there is a need to be well linked with prominent city networks. For instance, three world city networks are defined by Taylor (2005) as “inter-state city network[s] with state departments as network-makers, a supra-state city network with UN agencies as network-makers, and a trans-state city network with NGOs as network-makers” (p. 703).

Not all the cities of the world are global nor belong to networks. More interesting international insertion initiatives are set aside in order to be theorized and researched. For the members of the *Association of professionals in international relations and decentralized cooperation of French local authorities* (ARRICOD), the need for international actions to be transversal in the collectives, spreading in various local public policies, international action could seem less superfluous and gain in recognition and legitimacy (ARRICOD 2013).

Since each interest group seeks that their needs, conditions and concerns are present in the aforementioned public policy, it is important to generate favorable conditions for a multi-stakeholder dialogue. The local

<sup>2</sup>The typology uses the data of world according to GaWC who is a city-centered world of flows in contrast to the more familiar state-centered world of boundaries. Cities are assessed in terms of their advanced producer services using the interlocking network model. Indirect measures of flows are derived to compute a city’s network connectivity—this measures a city’s integration into the world city network (GAWC 2019).

government must have clear motivations to internationalize the city, since it would be one of its goals within its municipal plan. The private sector will facilitate the conditions and the right environment in order to achieve such purposes. Finally, the civil society will have to influence in the decision-making process identifying with these objectives.

*Model city* is the most complex form of insertion into international setting because “the construction of the models requires the recognition of a specific city project, compared to other local projects” (Sanchez and Moura 2005, p. 23). This process generates exemplary public policies to be acknowledged at the local level by other cities or nearby municipalities, nationally by the central government, and internationally by IOs and other cities. These are distinguished by national awards, recognition of good practices, international mentions and awards, and the most important: other cities replicating the model. In other words, the cities become “luminous points in the world, a selected set of cities classified as model, quality constituted from urban elements, management practices or what are usually called creative solutions for urban problems” (Sánchez and Moura 2005, p. 22). The definition of model city is obtained in the following way:

They are cities that have achieved a functioning scheme, an organizational design, a ‘way of doing’ that other cities would like to imitate. It is, above all, the maximum expression of the presentation as ‘international cities’. The fact of already appearing *de facto* as model cities is the maximum prize they aspired to, the definitive international recognition of their city strategies. Once admiration and recognition have been achieved, it is a question of covering the distance between admiration and emulation. It is different for the international prestige of the city to be simply admired and recognized to be imitated or even have requests to buy their ‘know how,’ to import their experience (Benach and Sánchez 1999, p. 38).

These specific public policies that start from the objectives of the stakeholders have developed processes that are considered good practices, as long as they have solved the problem in question, and the beneficiary local population values it positively. In short, they seek to show the world the actions that have given them results within their territory to be acknowledged at the local, regional, international and global levels. The model city comes from a constructed identity, from a strategy in the elaboration of an image of a city inserted in the international setting; in other words, “the construction of a model city is, by itself, a strategy of internationality”

(Benach and Sánchez 1999, pp. 39–40). Its main function in global governance is to become a reference for other cities, that is, to influence global decision-making in other ones. This trend causes cities to cooperate and to be more competitive. That is why there are models of cities around the world that can be replicated in those places that assume the challenge of adopting and adapting them to their needs.

Instances of municipal contributions to global governance are abound, as municipalities share best practices, policy cultures and norms across various issues (Amen et al. 2011, p. 3). Nevertheless, the most important recognition that a city can have is being defined as a model. A city does not have to be located in the developed world to reach this status or belong to the group of networks of global cities. For example, there are many cities that have established themselves as models across the world, including *Cultural city* (Bilbao), *Multicultural city* (Sao Paulo), *Sustainable city* (Curitiba), *Aerotropolis* (Abu Dhabi), *Sin city* (Macao) and *Smart city* (Tallinn).

#### 9.4 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the city as an international actor through the perspectives of the non-state actors, para-diplomacy and global city. Every theoretical perspective has a function in explaining the importance of the study of cities in the international setting due to the fact it is important to know that cities can be studied either as a subject of analysis in academia, or with their agency in the international system as an international actor, as well as their ability to influence other practitioners and decision-makers in world politics through city diplomacy.

This attempt has expanded the available theoretical perspectives to understand the participation of cities in world politics: both as a domestic actor within nation-state and as an actor within the international system. However, the city cannot be understood as a generic non-state actor because it is a territorial actor. Moreover, it cannot be observed only under the para-diplomatic eye. As it can be seen, the decisive element is the participation of the city government. This is why many para-diplomatic studies include discussions on local governments rather than the whole spectrum understood as a city (territory, identity, population and stakeholders) (Lara 2015).

These perspectives allowed conceiving a typology on the insertion of the city in the international setting. In academic terms, this typology, like other



studies observed from global governance, seeks to reduce the gap between urban studies and international relations. On the one hand, it could serve as a basis for specific studies of some of the forms, mechanisms, types or levels of insertion in the international setting of cities. Regarding the interested community in international relations, it allows to locate the influence from the governance and the agency that a city has observed through its image. It could also be used for urban studies, the identification of model cities and exemplary public policies that influence the actions of others.

On the other hand, from the practice, it can be used to assess the possibilities of implementing some insertion mechanism forms according to their available resources and/or if applicable, the adoption of some model cities. In turn, for the municipal plans, insertion strategies can be an element (means and end) to achieve considerable levels of development. For the private initiative and civil associations (consultancies, commerce chambers, industrial clubs, citizens' associations and civil organizations), it could create awareness about the positioning (for or against) of some model city or mechanism of insertion, giving advice designing and promoting any of these.

To conclude, how can the tipology helps to assess/understand city influence in world politics? It can be deduced that all cities have the capacity to insert themselves in the international setting (cooperating and competing), but not in all possible ways and mechanisms. There is a considerable urban management problem when cities do not assume the insertion in the international setting as a specific or cross-cutting public policy through their guiding programs or municipal plans, and/or de facto within their territory and/or as a mechanism of attractiveness to the outside part. The aforementioned strategy has to be done in order to create a favorable dynamic for temporary (e.g. tourism, investors, talent) and permanent (e.g. citizens, local entrepreneurs, university students, public servants) residents in the city.

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# Strategies for Enhancing EU City Diplomacy

*Tamara Espiñeira-Guirao*

## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

Regardless of their sizes, cities in Europe have learned how to develop their soft power within the context of the European Union (EU). As defined by Nye (2008, p. 95), “soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others”. Acuto (2013, p. 4) attributes agency to global cities whose size and insertion in economic flows determine a natural inclination to take part in the international arena, the “strategic hinges of globalization”. Still, in the EU context, even smaller cities, like Óbidos of Portugal, with fewer than 11,000 inhabitants, can coordinate an EU cooperation project like Obidos, Municipio (2011). This chapter presents a study of different instruments and strategies used by EU cities to increase their presence at the EU level.

In an increasingly competitive environment, cities try to attract the attention of the EU institutions about their interests and potentials. Many

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*In memoriam.* This chapter is dedicated to Teresa La Porte, whose work inspired and inspires my research.

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cities have their own representation office in Brussels. Their practitioners and mayors act as envoys in EU bodies and events. The goals are to acquire due visibility and legitimacy, raise funds and influence decision-making. These cities exercise a function, diplomacy, normally reserved for the state (Barber 2013, p. 5), in a process that can be “understood as a process of actorization” (Ljungkvist 2016, p. 25). However, there is no single standardized approach or strategy to guide all European cities as they exercise their international role. Observing the different tools that the EU provides for cities is therefore paramount to define a model for the analysis of those approaches.

One of the earlier definitions of *city diplomacy* was provided by Van der Pluijm and Melissen (2007, p. 6) as “the institutions and processes by which cities, or local governments in general, engaged in relations with actors on an international political stage to represent themselves and their interests to one another”. Building on this work, Wang and Amiri (2019, p. 1) define city diplomacy as a form of sub-national diplomacy that seeks to impact the international environment in a way that benefits the safety, security and prosperity of local citizens and advances their global interest and identity. The key dimensions of city diplomacy were identified by Wijnen in 2010 (p. 14): solidarity, self-interest and reciprocity. In the European Union, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) also recognized city diplomacy as a tool for peace, security and sustainable development (CoR 2009, p. 1).

Studies by Kern and Bulkeley (2009, p. 312) and Pasquier (2012, pp. 169–170) acknowledge the EU system as a favourable context for the rise of city diplomacy. Later, La Porte (2013, p. 101) identified two main strategic frameworks for generating influence: one being public diplomacy and the other being city networks. Further on, this chapter presents three additional types of instruments of city diplomacy in the EU that benefit from the strategic frameworks: classical diplomatic representation, EU-led campaigns and cooperation projects co-financed by the EU Commission. To paint a better picture for the audience, this chapter will briefly explore three scenarios that may hinder or enhance the effectiveness of the instruments of city diplomacy: the bywatcher, the silent silo and the strategist, based on three main indicators such as capacity, intensity and coordination. The study of these instruments is warranted because (i) they are commonly used by many European cities, (ii) they are observable and relatively measurable and (iii) it is an original contribution to the research on city diplomacy with strategic implications for the practice in the European Union.

### 10.1.1 *Research Approach*

The arguments presented in this chapter are based on an amalgamation of three main data sources: EU databases on cities, existing typologies and taxonomies of city diplomacy, and participant observation. The available EU databases (referred to as “EU databases” throughout the chapter) refer to the following datasets: the EU Urban Agenda’s Futurium (2019) with insight about various urban initiatives, and the European Commission’s portal to literature on cities and urban development (2019). The research also consulted the EU initiatives and funds’ websites. These include URBACT (2019), as the main EU’s Urban programme; KEEP (2019), as the register of all EU initiatives in territorial cooperation; CORDIS (2019), as EU’s research database; the Europe Green Capital list of awardees (2018), the Covenant of Mayors (2018), the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC 2019); and more (European Commission 2019). Last but not least, data also come from the European Parliament’s URBAN intergroup (2019), the Committee of the Regions web portal (2019) and EU and national city networks like Eurocities (2018), or the Association of Local Authorities of the United Kingdom (LGA 2019).

This study is not the first attempt to identify and categorize the instruments of city diplomacy. Therefore, the existing literature was analysed through a benchmarking understanding to categorize the strategies of cities. Benchmarking allows for constant “comparisons in a concrete field” (Gautron et al. 2003, p. 31). The study does not necessarily look for ways to rank existing strategies. The main interest lies in the process of building city diplomacy while respecting city diplomacy’s identity a process that is naturally diverse, based on both local contexts and external factors (Fievet 2017, p. 30).

Finally, as the author has been working on international relations of cities for over ten years, much of the data and analysis presented in this chapter are informed by participant observation. Since 2009, this participant observation has taken place (i) in the field (EU cities events and projects); (ii) with mayors, civil servants, and other EU and city practitioners; (iii) with daily formal and informal talk and interaction with stakeholders; and (iv) with the required personal engagement in the proposed instruments (learn by doing approach).

## 10.2 INSTRUMENTS OF EU CITY DIPLOMACY

This section of the study will explore three instruments that EU cities, large or small, use to activate and enhance their soft power in the EU: classic diplomatic roles (where the representative of the city acts as an ambassador), EU cooperation projects (that align EU funds with local policies) and the urban campaigns promoted by the EU institutions. City networks, albeit not unique to EU per se, will be introduced as the fourth instrument, and their specific implications within the union will be discussed.

### 10.2.1 *Classical Diplomatic Roles Reinvented By EU Mayors*

At the local level, diplomacy in the EU is an exercise to protect and promote the interests that may or may not coincide with those of the national or regional government. Consequently, cities can organize representation in diverse forms such as having their own diplomatic mission or through participation in forums and institutions as full-fledged actors. *Missions*—or embassies—are those bodies that allow the state to exercise a negotiating and observing role before another state or an international organization (Hocking and Lee 2011, pp. 665–667). The sub-national entities have gradually assumed this representation scheme (Acuto 2016, pp. 514–516). Thus, many cities have an office in Brussels, either individual (Varna, Dubrovnik), collective (Union of Cyprus Municipalities) or through regional support (South Poland House). Some of those offices are placed together in the *House of Cities, Municipalities and Regions*—a Brussels’ building gathering over twenty associations of local and regional governments, as well as the representation offices of eight European cities (EUKN 2010).

For example, British cities have different kinds of missions installed in Brussels to defend their specific interests. Birmingham was the first European city to establish its own Brussels office as early as 1984 (Pasquier 2012, p. 175). The office currently represents the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands. Beyond British cities, almost every European region with distinct legislative powers, such as Catalonia or Nouvelle Aquitaine, now has its own bureau, individually or shared with other regions. Therefore, European cities often rely either on regional representations, such as the Cornwall Brussels Office, or on national organizations, such as the Association of Local Authorities of the United Kingdom (LGA). LGA

is a “politically-led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice”. Detailed on its website, LGA’s list of functions could be used as a guideline to understand the work of the missions that EU local governments settle in Brussels. The roles include disseminating early intelligence on future EU initiatives, influencing the drafting and amending of EU laws, maximizing the receipt of EU funding programmes and building working contacts with key decision-takers (LGA 2019).

Depending on the internal organization of each state, EU cities can opt for a position as members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR)—the EU Assembly of Regional and Local Authorities created in 1994 (CoR 2019). Throughout the EU legislative process, several areas must count on the opinion of the CoR to be validated (European Parliament 2018). If the CoR is not consulted in any of the compulsory matters, or if its opinion is forestalled, the advisory body can bring a case before the European Court of Justice (Europa 2019), a possibility that guarantees the participation of CoR in these processes. This guarantee, the means of the organization (technical support, experts, communication, interpreters) and the visibility that mayors can have as CoR Members are remarkable tools for a true agency of the cities represented, regardless of their sizes. For instance, the leader of the Bulgarian Delegation is Tania Hristova, the mayor of Gabrovo, a city with fewer than 60,000 inhabitants (CoR 2019).

In addition, cities find their legitimacy and influence by participating in EU events addressing urban matters. These activities pave the way for cities to influence the EU institutions (Association des Maires des Grandes Villes de France 2005, p. 12). In Brussels, the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC)—also known as Open Days—is the most important meeting of the year for EU local and regional authorities. Held each October, it is a “four-day event during which cities and regions showcase their capacity” (EWRC 2019). The forum offers an updated exchange on European cohesion policy as it “welcomes some 6,000 participants in October each year (local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts) for more than 100 workshops and debates, exhibitions and networking opportunities” (EWRC 2019). There are three ways to participate, each of them presenting advantages (benefits for the positioning of the city before EU institutions and other actors) and disadvantages (concerning the cost-benefit rate).

These types of participation are cumulative (the second includes the first, the third, the other two). As a *participant*, cities usually send an English-speaking urban practitioner, either in charge of international relations (or EU affairs) or in charge of a subject where partnerships or funding are needed, as each year the event is themed. In a crowd of 6000 attendees, opportunities for networking are ample, with the workshop co-participants, in side-events or coffee breaks. However, it is almost impossible to set a particular meeting with representatives of the EU institutions as their agendas are full during that week. As a *speaker*, cities nominate the person dealing with a specific project or expressing a political idea. Thus, the message is delivered not only to EU institutions but also to interested stakeholders all over the continent. However, the position is limited by the framing and the topic of the event. As an *organizer*, “partner” of EWRC, the city also needs to pass a selection procedure for the event in which they will partake. Being a partner means working directly with the European Commission and the CoR, creating influence and opportunities for long-term dialogue. Yet, the organization of a workshop is not free, and the host should take the charge of an important part of the costs. As the event is themed, there is a risk of a competing schedule with a very similar topic in another workshop. EWRC also offers the possibility to hold “local days” in any EU city, building a privileged relationship with the EU institutions; to date, there have been over 250 “local days” around the continent (Table 10.1).

**Table 10.1** Open days’ participation (EWRC 2019; author’s data)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Simple participant	Access to networks, people and information	Little visibility Expensive travel Impossible to develop a parallel agenda: saturation of institutions
Speaker	Visibility and recognition Lobbying opportunity	Limited by the framing and topics chosen by the event organizer
Organizer (Brussels/local)	Showcasing capabilities and capacities	High expenses

### 10.2.2 *EU Cooperation Projects*

In the framework of its budget and policy implementation, the programmes of the European Union offer financing and grants to promote certain projects (European Commission 2019). These programmes define their own strategy—called “work plans”—and launch selective calls for projects that are open to the public sector, the private sector, research organizations and universities, and civil society. A diverse and consolidated partnership, both in terms of type, structure and nationality of the partners, is frequently a requirement (European Commission 2017, pp. 4–5). These EU projects should not be only seen as a source of funding as they represent a real opportunity of networking with different European organizations such as NGOs or companies, and because they confirm the city as an EU actor in the concrete topic of the programmes. Joining an EU compendium of *good practice* through a cooperation project can be, for instance, a tool for international benchmarking.

For example, inside the URBACT programme, cities create *comet* networks—ad hoc and temporary—around concrete issues (Allegretti 2019, p. 41). At URBACT, the networks to be funded are selected by a Monitoring Committee composed by the Member States and EU institutions (URBACT 2017). Between 2014 and 2020, the priorities of the programme are cities’ economy and competitiveness, environmental issues, resilience, employment, and social and educational issues. Through timely calls, the programme selects the most competitive proposals, “to achieve its objectives through co-financing exchange and learning networks that typically run for 30 months and involve six to twelve cities”. The projects selected focus on a concrete aspect of the priorities, such as creative entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, sectoral programmes can be classified by their main topics (LGA 2015, p. 4). With regard to transport and environment, the EU initiatives selected are LIFE+, Connecting Europe or Natura 2000. For Education, Culture and Social Issues, the programmes identified, which are often public diplomacy initiatives, are Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program, the Asylum programme or the Consumers programme. Cities can exercise city diplomacy through these initiatives. The approved projects get an EU co-financing that can go from 50%—Creative Europe programme—to 100%—some specific activities of the Horizon 2020 programme—making up a lever for local strategies. Those projects are also a means to exchange expertise

while sharing the costs and technical infrastructures. In this regard, most experienced cities act as mentors, enhancing their visibility and reputation.

### *10.2.3 EU-Led Campaigns*

Empowering local governments is increasingly present in the agenda of the EU institutions. Therefore, the EU has created specific initiatives to support cities to exchange know-how and participate in policy-making (Gonzalez-Medina & Fedeli 2015, pp. 9–12). As they mostly intend to raise awareness on the role of local authorities in the EU without official funding or decision-making power, they are referred to as “campaigns” in this chapter. These campaigns can take several forms: an award such as the European Green Capital; a movement, such as the Covenant of Mayors; or a political declaration establishing working groups, such as the Amsterdam Pact and its EU Urban Agenda.

Since the approval of the Charter of European Sustainable Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter 1994), the European Union has developed several initiatives addressed to or involving cities (Gonzalez-Medina & Fedeli 2015, pp. 9–12). On the policy side, currently, the key document is EU’s Urban Agenda which was approved in 2016. The declaration sets a new “multi-level working method promoting cooperation between Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the cities of Europe and to identify and successfully tackle social challenges” (Futurium 2019). This agenda is twofold: as a declaration of EU ministers in charge of urban matters, the Amsterdam Pact establishes a roadmap to tackle the most pressing issues for cities, whereas the EU institutions established fourteen initiatives (called thematic partnerships) to identify policy guidelines on concrete topics.

The roadmap is based on three main objectives: better regulation, better funding and better knowledge, so local authorities can ease their access to EU funding and their participation in EU policy. Partnerships “assess current European initiatives impacting cities” (Eurocities 2018). They are composed of fifteen to twenty partners (EU institutions, bodies and programmes, member and outside states, experts, city networks and other stakeholders). Cities (and city networks) can directly apply to the European Commission for joining a partnership, being co-opted if they are recognized as experts in one of the fourteen topics or act as “followers” and provide feedback later on (Futurium 2019).

Each thematic partnership shall draft an Action Plan which is afterwards submitted for public feedback. The European Commission reports on the results of the EU Agenda to the Member States, so they can take stock of the output. Every two years, the European Commission organizes a “Cities Forum”, so as to share and analyse the progress of the Amsterdam Pact, together with EU cities and city networks, Member States and regions and other international urban organizations such as OECD or UNHABITAT (Futurium 2019). As it is an umbrella campaign that does not have direct funding, the Amsterdam Pact relies on other EU programmes (such as the above-mentioned URBACT) or campaigns (such as the Covenant of Mayors) to implement its projects. In this sense, an interesting result of the agenda is the website Futurium, created by the European Commission to compile all the EU initiatives related to urban matters, as well as the results of the partnerships. It also offers the possibility to join the community of EU urban practitioners, register for the newsletter, and get information on events and policy developments (Futurium 2019).

#### 10.2.4 *City Networks as Facilitators of City Diplomacy*

A city network can be defined as “a structure where the nodes are the cities, connected by links of a different nature, through which flows of socio-economic nature are exchanged” (Boix-Domenech 2003, p. 33). Thus, formal associations of cities, EU projects and EU-led campaigns can be shaped and enhanced through city networks even though they are different in terms of (i) their foundation, (ii) their legal basis, (iii) their relation to EU funds, (iv) their engagement mode, (v) their priorities, (vi) their management and (vii) their governance.

These differences can be further explored by discussing one example per category: *Eurocities* as a city network, E-MOB as an EU-funded project and the *Covenant of Mayors* as an EU-led campaign. The Eurocities network “has grown from six founding members in 1986 to the current 137 major cities and 47 partner cities” (Beukman 2017, p. 95). Around 200 members pay an annual membership fee. Registered as a Belgian Association, it has its own staff and Secretariat. Eurocities holds a General Assembly each year, which decides the main orientations of the network (Rusell & Healy 2015, pp. 76–77). Finally, Eurocities’ members participate in the design and implementation of EU projects.



Approved in 2019, E-MOB is the acronym of *Integrated actions towards enhanced e-mobility in European Regions* (EU databases). E-MOB is a collective action of several organizations from different EU countries that intends to define a better alignment between EU funds for regions and local strategies for e-mobility. The lead partner, Leipzig, signed a contract with the managing authority (the region Hauts de France, responsible for the INTERREG Europe programme) in order to receive the funds (up to 85% depending on the type of partner) and carry out the action with the rest of partners. The project will last until 2023.

The Covenant of Mayors was launched by the European Commission “in 2008 to foster the implementation of sustainable energy policies at local authority level”. Management relies on the Covenant of Mayors Office—a consortium of European city networks, namely Energy Cities, CEMR, Climate Alliance, EUROCITIES and FEDARENE (Gesing 2018, p. 127). Cities can join as signatories, other public authorities (e.g. provinces) can register as coordinators and not-for-profits can request to be supporters (Covenant of Mayors 2018). The signatories of the Covenant of Mayors engage to develop and implement local sustainable action plans, which might be funded by EU programmes.

### 10.3 ARE EU CITIES PLAYING TENNIS OR CHESS? STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING CITY DIPLOMACY

The existing research essentially focuses on the attitude of cities towards EU policies and institutions. For instance, already in 1997, Goldsmith and Klausen set the stage of the influence of European integration on the local level, defining positive (reactive and proactive) and negative (counteractive and passive) attitudes before the EU. Other authors such as Wolfhardt et al. (2005, p. 98) explain the factors that determine the relationship, in a pull (benefits) and push (burden) perspective, and the attitudes in a three-strand model: euro-player (autonomous and interested relationship), client (fundraising perspective) and policy experimenter (expert and researcher behaviours).

Still, there is a need to explain how these attitudes depend on the internal administration of the city (Tabory 2017) and thus the strategies and instruments adopted. This study intends to highlight three key indicators (capacity, intensity and coordination) in order to create a model of

engagement based on three scenarios (the bywatcher, the silent silo and the strategist).

The survey of the EU databases highlighted three major factors to be considered when defining the relationship between city diplomacy and cities' internal administration: capacity, intensity and coordination. *Capacity* relies on the resources that a city actually deploys to get involved with EU affairs, both in quantity—how many staff members—and in quality—having a mayor politically involved in EU affairs. Capacity is different from the size of the city, as a city can have many resources, but they are not forcibly dedicated to city diplomacy.

*Intensity* refers to both the frequency of use of the instruments—how long, how many times—and their validity as city policy—if they are occasional or integrated into a detailed strategy. A city can prioritize a specific instrument over the others or use them alternately; nonetheless, it is the combination of frequency and validity of the EU action that measures intensity: instruments can be used *once* there is a concrete, timely purpose (low intensity) or *often* as part of the city strategy (high intensity).

*Coordination* apprehends how different city departments collaborate (or not) and how they understand EU policies in relation to their own work. If each department works alone and only one or two of them are involved in EU affairs, we can estimate there is a low coordination; if they are synchronized and contemplate the EU dimension in their tasks, coordination is high.

Based on these factors one of three scenarios often applies: the bywatcher (low capacity, intensity and coordination), the silent silo (medium to high capacity and intensity, low coordination) or the strategist (medium to high capacity, intensity and coordination).

### 10.3.1 *The Bywatcher Scenario*

Under the category of “bywatcher”, we find cities who do not have a significant capacity dedicated to EU city diplomacy; they lack resources (time, money, staff) or they allocate existing resources to other policy priorities. Also, bywatcher cities do not shape their strategies around EU cooperation projects or campaigns. Their intensity and coordination are low.

Not all EU cities have a dedicated team for international relations, either because the size of the city council does not allow for it or because foreign affairs are not a part of the political priorities at the local level

(Association des Maires des Grandes Villes de France 2005, pp. 4–5). In some countries, it is rare to find local staff who are fluent in English (or another foreign language), to facilitate cooperation. Hence, collaboration within the EU, if any, happens only with countries and stakeholders that speak the same language. Sometimes in the absence of a dedicated team for international relations, city councils step in and pursue city diplomacy to promote a particular policy with an EU award and for recognition.

An example of bywatcher scenario can be Nijmegen, a Dutch city with around 175,000 inhabitants. The city was selected as the European Green Capital in 2018. As mentioned in their application form for the award, Nijmegen understands being a EU's green capital in 2018 as a *first step* to share their environmental policy with other EU cities (Europe Green Capital 2018), thus translating the will of the city to progress in its EU endeavours—to increase intensity. Today, Nijmegen is working in several EU projects related to the environment, like INNOVA, an initiative to innovate in climate-related services (INNOVA 2019). As per capacity and coordination, the city's website presents a picture in which both are low. Nijmegen is twinned with Masaya in Nicaragua and Pskov in Russia. With some exceptions, the website is available only in Dutch. The section for international relations is only one page and does not include a concrete department, contact information or policy issues (Nijmegen 2019).

### 10.3.2 *The Silent Silo Scenario*

*The silent silo* scenario refers to those cities in the European Union that have allocated concrete resources to their EU initiatives in the form of a dedicated department in the council and tangible sections in the budget (medium or high capacity). Also, the city councils count on staff being able to work in a foreign language and to identify EU opportunities for cities' projects (intensity is medium or high). Moreover, while the cities are aware of the different instruments available to them, they do not have a coherent strategy to align resources and efforts across various departments and between local and EU level goals.

Dresden, a German city with 548,000 inhabitants, is as an example of the silent silo scenario. The city's official webpage depicts the picture of efforts that are not coherently weaved into one city diplomacy strategy and narrative. The city is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors since 2016 (Covenant of Mayors 2018), but on its website, this association does not appear. International relations are described in one section of the

website and include information on most of the city's international affairs, but not all of them. The information covered portrays relations with Dresden's twin cities, general European relations, the city's participation in International Dialogue—a youth forum—the cultural forum of Eurocities and the city networks to which they belong. It also includes a mention to a city network for urban mobility called Polis, yet this network is not mentioned in the web section of public transport (Dresden 2019). In other words, even though different city departments play a role in the city's international affairs, their contribution and collaboration cannot be fully traced on the website. Some of Dresden's EU projects are also presented in different sections, without linking to the city's EU engagement strategy. For instance, MatchUp (2019) is only explained in the business section (Dresden 2019). Finally, it should be noted that the brand of the city—worth living and loving—is also not consistently present on the website or tied to city diplomacy initiatives.

### 10.3.3 *The Strategist Scenario*

When all three factors (capacity, intensity and coordination) are utilized, and city diplomacy is well integrated into a city's overall strategy, we witness the strategist scenario. In this case, there are enough resources allocated to the EU strategy (high capacity). Thus, a small multilingual team is dedicated (i) to ensure continuous efforts in the use of city diplomacy instruments (high intensity), (ii) to the alignment of the EU opportunities with the local policy and (iii) to ensure coordination between all the city departments (high coordination).

In this scenario, mayors and city council members often function as ambassadors of the cities in their EU affairs. Moreover, EU opportunities are part of the urban planning, in mid- and long-term approaches. For instance, knowing that EU calls for projects are not yearly, a strategist city can intensify its networking activities in between bids, to ensure its position and a well-built partnership, so their project will be deemed eligible for enabling funding later (Baccarne et al. 2014, p. 169).

The case of Ghent (Belgium, fewer than 260,000 inhabitants) is a good example of the strategist scenario with Mayor Daniël Termont being personally involved in the EU affairs of the city for the last twenty-five years. He was the president of Eurocities between 2016 and 2018, pushing for the approval and launch of the EU Urban Agenda. He was one of the earlier advocates for the creation of the Global Parliament of Mayors in

2016 (Eurocities 2018). At the end of its Eurocities' presidency, Ghent won the first ethical trade award of the European Union. Recently, this Belgian city has also overcome the selective process of the EU programme for Urban Innovative Actions, receiving five million euros to renovate 100 buildings. The international version of the city's website (Ghent 2019) attests to the level of coordination. Under the label Ghent International, visitors and researchers can find not only the résumé of the Mayor but also all international instruments grouped together with the main lines of the city's strategy. Below those main sections, the website has a feed dedicated to the news on the development of EU projects and international initiatives.

It is important to note that a city can start its portfolio in one scenario and evolve or devolve into another. If one instrument of city diplomacy is applied successfully, it may encourage the city to rethink its EU stance and enhance their capacity, their intensity or their coordination. This may be witnessed by a city's efforts to increase its specialized staff, internal policies and the allocation of funding. Moreover, the successful use of an instrument can serve to start developing another. A member of the CoR has more chances to be invited to an EU project. If the city wins a European award, it may help with internal inertia and open the administration towards more EU initiatives. The reverse process is also possible: after several years, a strategist city may reduce its city diplomacy effort and restrict it to very selected opportunities and become a bywatcher. The model which includes moving from one scenario to another is as flexible as local policy is, to account for constant changes of local or EU level policy priorities.

## 10.4 CONCLUSIONS

EU cities have distinct instruments of city diplomacy at their disposal. Mayors and other local representatives can endorse the role of city diplomats if their Member State nominates them as country delegates in the CoR. Besides, local and regional authorities have gradually created a constellation of representation offices that serve them as their particular embassies before the European Union institutions in Brussels. Also, major EU events function as international summits where European cities can settle their stance. As a second dimension, a significant part of the EU budget is spent in the form of cooperation projects. EU cities are thus able to identify and receive complementary funding for their strategies, even if

their priorities do not coincide with those of their national or regional government. Else, these EU cooperation projects can enhance the visibility of the city, its position as a key expert or even its capacity to innovate. Furthermore, the European Institutions create agenda for the EU Cities, either by a political declaration (like the Aalborg Charter, the Toledo Declaration or the Amsterdam Pact), a competition to find “the city of the year” (European Green Capital, European Capital of Culture, European Accessible City) or by fostering a movement around a major topic such as climate change (the Covenant of Mayors). Again, registering in these EU-led campaigns feeds the positioning of EU cities. Moreover, EU projects or campaigns are instruments of city diplomacy, which mostly coincide with traditional public diplomacy initiatives such as Erasmus+ international sport events or other exchange programmes. The EU-funded projects and EU-led campaigns, as tools of European city diplomacy, have a stronghold from EU institutions, and conventional city networks are avenues through which cities can exercise these tools or invent new ones.

In this environment, each city develops their own city diplomacy strategy based on the type and frequency of use of city diplomacy tools. Consequently, the combination of local assets that each city has and the city diplomacy instruments that it utilizes are keys for understanding a city’s engagement strategy within the EU. This combination is influenced by three factors: capacity (resources allocated), intensity (how and when those instruments fit in the city strategy) and coordination (the consistency of the internal organization towards EU affairs). Capacity is not synonymous with size or economic power. As said in the introduction and shown by the examples, size does not matter. As the examples of Nijmegen and Óbidos show, any city can play an influential role within the EU, but the efficiency and effectiveness of a city’s strategy to conduct international affairs depend on how they combine capacity, intensity and coordination choices. Once the right amount and quality of resources is determined, a city can decide on whether they want to engage in an activity only once (low intensity), multiple times (medium intensity) or if they want to make an activity a core part of the city’s strategy (high intensity). Finally, the level of coordination among the different city departments will show how well a strategy is adopted across city departments to advance a city’s overarching global and local policy interests.

A city’s global engagement strategy can be further assessed by examining if and how a city taps into various EU opportunities for city diplomacy. For a bywatcher city, EU instruments are not part of a thorough strategy.

In a silent silo case, one or more city departments have identified EU initiatives as part of their endeavours. A strategist city integrates EU operations in its long-term planning, creating bridges between departments (capacity, intensity and coordination are high). It is worth noting that a city may move across the scenarios depending on how the local and EU level policy priorities change.

Future studies can look at cases to explore how cities choose which city diplomacy tools to utilize and how and why they navigate through the three main scenarios of global engagement. Furthermore, the social and political factors can be analysed to uncover the impact of a change of political majority or the personal influence of a mayor. Finally, it would be fruitful to see if the tools and scenarios for EU city diplomacy apply to city diplomacy in other regions.

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# Making US MOIA Sustainable Institutions for Conducting City Diplomacy by Protecting Their Precarious Values

*Sohaela Amiri*

## 11.1 INTRODUCTION

The global role of nonstate and sub-state actors, from local businesses and diaspora groups to cities and municipalities, seems to be on the rise. This is likely the case due to globalization and the advent of new information, communication, and transportation technologies. In 2014, the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and the Atlantic Council published the report, *Diplomacy for a Diffused World*, in which they explain how globalization, urbanization, and fragmentation are changing the global system and what this means for American diplomacy (Cabral et al.

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2014). The report has a section, “Focus more on cities,” in which it calls on diplomats to “understand that an excessive focus on capital-to-capital engagement between foreign policy elites” misses the critical role of cities as “sites where global challenges ranging from climate change and food security to terrorism, energy security, and poverty are played out” (Cabral et al. 2014, p. 1). This chapter looks at US cities as a unit of analysis and examines US city diplomacy, defined as the conduct of international affairs, diplomacy, and global engagement by cities, at the local government level, within the broader government system.

To further acknowledge the background against which city diplomacy is more pronounced, we need to consider how the field of international relations, and diplomacy as subfield, is changing in a globalized, digital, and hyperconnected world. As Kelley (2010, p. 288) evidences diplomacy is pluralizing, and the nation-states are no longer the sole institutions that “behave diplomatically.” So, even though diplomacy as an institution remains an asset of nation-states, diplomacy as behavior is pluralizing (Kelley 2010, p. 288). This pluralization means that nongovernmental and private actors such as businesses or advocacy organizations are adopting diplomacy as a mode of communication to engage international audiences, host delegations, or send emissaries abroad to advance their policy interests. The advancement of digital communication technologies further facilitates the pluralization of diplomacy and urges policymakers to pay attention to the rising power of nonstate and sub-state actors in global affairs (Sharp 2009). That said, for international actors to succeed in the “art of influence,” each side such as nation-state, sub-state, or nonstate “will need the other to achieve successful statecraft in the years to come” (Kelley 2010, p. 289). That said, sub-states, such as cities, have advantages over nation-states and nonstates as explained in the following paragraphs. Cities are “in-between” powers, as they share some characteristics with nation-states and other characteristics with nonstates.

Cities also benefit from the legitimacy challenge that the nation-state faces. “Political legitimacy” grows as the “sense of community” strengthens and “the physical distance between those in authority and the general public” reduces (Ham 2010). This may help explain the legitimacy crisis that the federal government often faces and suggests the rising importance of the “in-between power” of subnational actors, such as cities. Furthermore, as the “scale of governance” reduces and the “sense of community” is more easily established, the legitimacy of the governing power grows (Ham 2010). However, this is true if “the perception exists that the

decisions are made based on a shared sense of community underpinned by shared norms and values.” These changes add to the political legitimacy of cities and mark the advantage that they have over the nation-states.

The diplomatic behavior of cities often resembles that of the nonstate actors, especially when they tap into the power of their networks to gain influence (Hachigian 2019). We can see this similarity through the formation of climate action-oriented networks such as the C40 City Network that is pushing policies through agreements between cities. The sources of power available to cities include access to localized information and tighter issue-specific networks, to which the federal government may not have as close of an access. Nonstate actors, such as businesses, also benefit from this type of power. However, what advantages cities over nonstate actors is that they are still part of the government system. Their governing power, their implementation power and the fact that they are accountable to the public, less profit-driven and more driven by the interests and perceptions of the citizens whom they serve, give them a credibility advantage over nonstate actors (Ham 2010).

In short, cities have legitimacy advantages over the nation-state and the credibility and governing advantages over the nonstate actors. Hence, cities are filling the void in global governance in areas where both other nonstate actors and nation-states fall short. In the United States, the existing Mayor’s Offices of International Affairs (MOIA) exercise the “in-between” power of cities to advance the global interests of local constituents. MOIA are the only governmental organizations officially in charge of conducting foreign affairs on behalf of the cities in the United States. As of this writing, there are three cities with MOIA: New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Each city has its own story and reason for creating such an office, which will be briefly reviewed in this chapter. The creation of these offices goes hand in hand with the growing attention to cities’ diplomatic functions in recent years. But how can US cities, through their MOIA, activate their in-between power more effectively to conduct international affairs? How can cities sustain the integrity and relevance of their Offices of International Relation? These questions are addressed in the next section by applying an analytical framework that is based on organizational theories and systems analysis.

In other words, using organizational theory, this chapter explores how MOIA, as an element within the broader government system in the United States, could become more sustainable institutions that best serve as diplomatic actors and conduct foreign affairs to advance the policy interests

of the people they serve. The chapter then highlights the policy implications of the research findings with guidelines for policymakers. Data for this paper comes from other literature in the fields of international relations and organizational theory, archival data, and primary data from semi-structured interviews with five city officials as well as from the US City Diplomacy Summit hosted by University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy.

## 11.2 INTRODUCING US MOIA THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

The history of New York's MOIA can be traced back to 1962 when US Ambassador Adlai Stevenson suggested that Mayor Robert Wagner should establish "the position of the New York City Commissioner for the United Nations to act as liaison between the diplomatic community and residents, businesses, and government (NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs 2019)." This initiative later grows to become "New York City Commission for the United Nations." In 1992, "Mayor David Dinkins established the Division for International Business in the Commission's portfolio." And finally, Mayor Bloomberg "changed the name from the Commission for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol to the Mayor's Office for International Affairs" in 2012 (NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs 2019). Currently, under Mayor de Blasio, the NYC MOIA is the largest of the three existing MOIA with almost three times the staff.

The City of Atlanta's attention to international affairs seems to have grown under Mayor Andrew Young, the former US ambassador to the UN, and because of the critical experience of bidding to host the Olympics games in 1996. The Atlanta Mayor's Office of International Affairs was officially established in 2013 by Mayor Kasim Reed. In the few annual reports that the office has published since 2013, much attention and credit has been given to "international commerce and trade." That said, Mayor Reed acknowledged the importance of collaboration networks for "urban resiliency and sustainability in the face of our changing climate." Under his leadership, Atlanta took part in "the 100 Resilient Cities Initiative's inaugural Cities Exchange Summit to learn about leveraging smart cities technologies." Reed also participated in the "Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy as a board member." Under Mayor Keisha Bottoms, the Atlanta MOIA has grown in terms of staff size and expertise.

The Los Angeles MOIA was established in Fall 2017 but does not have an official mission statement yet. Other than being home to a large immigrant community with global interests, Los Angeles has been the host to large international events such as the Olympic games and is scheduled to host 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Summer Olympics. Being host to such large international events create a critical experience that influences the establishment and identity of the Office of International Affairs. Additionally, Mayor Garcetti's own political vision and network contributed to his decision to change the Mayor's Office of International Trade to Mayor's Office of International Affairs.

The paragraphs below explain the nature of factors that have been conducive to the existence of MOIA in New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Understanding the organizational culture of MOIA requires a three-pronged approach. First, it is vital to discuss what their staff, "operators," do (Wilson 1989) which depends on "the situations they encounter, their prior experiences and personal beliefs, the expectations of their peers, the array of interests in which their agency is embedded, and the impetus given to the organization by its founders" (Wilson 1989). Second, we need to highlight how major milestones or "critical experiences" of MOIA have contributed to the organization's "characters" and "distinct competence" (Selznick 2011). Finally, the role of institutional leadership is significant in all cases and will be further discussed.

Given the history of the NYC MOIA, it is not surprising that the organization's culture is heavily shaped by its responsibility to host and accommodate the United Nations. This shapes what the "operators" do, value, and encounter. New York's MOIA is in a unique position because its foundation, unlike those of the other two MOIA, is not international trade and business. This affects the culture because the "arrays of interests in which the agency is embedded, and the impetus given" to it are predominantly diplomacy-oriented and UN-centric. Major events such as the UN General Assembly, or UN Climate Action, or events around the Sustainable Development Goals shape the "distinct competence" and "character" of the NYC MOIA as an important government organization that facilitates such diplomatic events.

In the case of Atlanta, as mentioned above, Mayor Kasim Reed, as an institutional leader, made a "critical decision" to open the office, establish, and enhance Atlanta's image as a global city, one that can compete with major US cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. This gave the office an "impetus" and a direction that has been pursued by Mayor



Bottoms. Currently, Atlanta MOIA is predominantly trade-centric, and other aspects of global engagement and diplomatic affairs do not receive equal attention. The Atlanta MOIA does not have any staff who are dedicated solely to diplomatic engagement to enhance its competence in conducting international affairs.

The LA MOIA also shows how its own, unique contextual factors, such as geography, size, population, and economy, give it an “impetus” and orient its relatively new MOIA. As mentioned above, Los Angeles will be hosting major world events over the next decade. Such critical experiences currently influence the identity of the Office of International Affairs. Additionally, the LA MOIA benefits from having an institutional leader that is committed to enhancing the city’s global image and impact through diplomatic representation and global engagement. Other than the Mayor, Los Angeles is the only MOIA that is headed by a diplomat. Deputy Mayor for International Affairs has previously served as the US Ambassador of the ASEAN and further enhances the image of the office as one that is in charge of conducting diplomacy.

While it is important to understand what factors have supported the existing MOIA, it can be argued that the supporting factors behind the formation of the three existing MOIA in the United States are sometimes coincidental and are not always a guarantor of long-term commitment to diplomatic engagement and global affairs. For instance, the “selective attention” to UN-related tasks at the NYC MOIA could in turn undermine other aspects of global engagement that NYC could pursue. In Los Angeles and Atlanta, the two dominant cultures of the Olympics and trade can undermine other aspects of international affairs. Last but not least, it is crucial to develop a sustainability plan that works for more cities that are not branded as being “global” or are not as large as NYC, LA, or Atlanta.

MOIA epitomize how the local communities in the United States are stepping up to advance their global policy interests through their local government representatives such as Mayors. However, it is unclear how this growing role competes with or complements the diplomatic initiatives of the Department of State and the country as whole. Furthermore, it is unclear whether cities are acting ad hoc or strategically. Lastly, even existing MOIA may not be sustainable; their long-term integrity and legitimacy might be at stake and their fate might depend on leadership or other contextual factors. To better understand the challenges mentioned above and provide policy solutions to address them, this chapter

introduces the notion of “precarious values” as it best fits the conditions that US MOIA grapple with.

### 11.3 THE PRECARIOUS VALUE OF CITY DIPLOMACY

The uncertainties captured above are analyzed by applying the theories about “precarious values” which are necessary to fulfill an organization’s mission but are at risk of being overwhelmed by other primary values (Selznick 2011). MOIA’s mission includes enhancing a city’s international leadership, representation, and global influence IA. In this regard, the value that is necessary to fulfill MOIA’s mission is diplomatic engagement, including representation, collaboration, and negotiation, with international actors. However, while MOIA embody this value, other routine tasks, such as those related to international trade and investment, often dominate the offices’ priorities and, thus, undermine the precarious value of global or diplomatic engagement. An indicator of this is the ratio of MOIA staff members dedicated to trade versus diplomatic engagement. As mentioned above, in the Atlanta MOIA, most staff focus on trade and investment issues. Additionally, and as explained below, city governments at large might lose sight of the strategic necessity of global engagement and ultimately reduce its resources in favor of other real or perceived values of MOIA.

Precarious values are distinctive within institutions but are challenged by other dominating objectives (Selznick 2011). MOIA’s distinctive value of diplomatic engagement seems to include diplomatic representation, collaboration, and communication. Phrases such as global engagement and international affairs are also used by MOIA officials to refer to the same precarious value. However, this value is often overwhelmed by the primary goals and dominant culture of the Mayor’s Office as a whole. For instance, the budget to collaborate with global counterparts on an issue, such as migration, often gets much lip service but is ultimately compromised by inadequate allocations to allow for other pressing policy issues, such as homelessness to receive more funding (Smith 2018). Similarly, city funding toward programs such as Sister Cities or International Visitors, while understandably small, are at risk of being further reduced or cut; this is the case even in cities with MOIA, such as Los Angeles and New York (International Visitors Council of Los Angeles). Over time, other non-diplomatic tasks that get prioritized at MOIA could endanger the distinctive capabilities and value of MOIA in advancing a city’s global policy

interests through diplomatic representation and strategic communication. In other words, the distraction of MOIA staff from tasks related to global engagement may undermine MOIA's long-term relevance, effectiveness, and integrity.

The "irrevocable commitments" that the NYC MOIA has to the United Nations and its missions has established a "distinctive competence" for NYC MOIA that dominates other cultures and values within the office (Selznick 2011). This factor not only supports the precarious value of diplomatic engagement to some degree, but also threatens the sustainability of the NYC MOIA as the focus of the office, and its name and de facto mission may become solely UN-centric. Furthermore, NYC MOIA has had a critical experience and critical tasks, and its distinctive competence is known. However, not all cities and MOIA benefit from the context within which NYC MOIA was developed, being host to the United Nations. Additionally, NYC, LA, and Atlanta benefit from the cities' size, demographic, mayors' vision and support, and the critical experience of hosting large-scale international events. These are power assets that other cities may not have. Additionally, even in LA and Atlanta, other non-diplomatic tasks that are of priority for the city as a whole, such as trade or an issue such as homelessness, as important as they are, dominate and undermine the tasks that are related to international affairs.

How can MOIA protect their precarious value of global engagement and diplomatic affairs? The following section further utilizes the organizational theory-based framework to suggest ways that MOIA can more systematically protect their precarious value of diplomatic representation, negotiation, and global communication and ensure a sustainable presence as they work toward the mission of enhancing their global influence and impact.

## 11.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Currently, MOIA tasks predominantly consist of economic development, diplomatic representation and protocol, international collaboration, and negotiation. Some MOIA assume additional tasks, such as civic empowerment and hosting of special sporting or other large-scale international events. These tasks, as evidenced by common practices in diplomatic institutions, are great mechanisms to uphold the offices' value of global engagement and influence, but they are often used as avenues to achieve other dominating objectives of the city, such as transportation and

infrastructure improvement or trade. As discussed in the sections above, when MOIA's precarious value is threatened, their long-term relevance and effectiveness become vulnerable, hence MOIA become unsustainable. The four recommendations outlined below are policies that MOIA can adopt to ensure a sustainable presence through protecting its precarious value.

#### *11.4.1 Have an Institutional Leader During Incubation and Maturation*

The LA, Atlanta, and New York MOIA benefit from leadership attention and access. It can be argued that if the State Department, or a similar federal entity, does not create a sustainable structure to establish, support, and effectively work with MOIA, these offices can emerge and survive through strong mayoral leadership. Lacking overarching governmental support endangers the sustainability of MOIA, and one way to overcome this challenge is to have a supportive and powerful leader with the authority to protect and prioritize the work of the MOIA. This is also true about the ability to create a distinctive identity and protect the integrity and efficiency of the offices.

Mayors, as institutional leaders, can select missions and programs that can help enhance the distinctive capabilities of MOIA within the changing political context, both domestic and foreign. Doig and Hargove in Jones (1988) list characteristics of entrepreneurial and institutional leaders to include the following: identifying new missions and programs, establishing external and internal constituencies, developing the organization's technical expertise, providing training for members of the organization, and systematically scanning for and diagnosing vulnerabilities and potential solutions. The city of Atlanta's former mayor, Kasim Reed, is a good example of an institutional leader. This is evidenced by his acknowledgment of the mission of collaborating with networks for "urban resiliency and sustainability in the face of our changing climate" (Atlanta Mayor's Office of International Affairs 2017). As an institutional leader, Reed seems to have given an "impetus" to the organization (Wilson 1989). For instance, under his leadership, the office has taken part in "the 100 Resilient Cities Initiative's inaugural Cities Exchange Summit to learn about leveraging smart cities technologies" (Office of International Affairs 2017). Reed also participated in the "Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy as a board member" (Atlanta Mayor's Office of

International Affairs 2017). These decisions have helped make Atlanta be recognized as an important global actor (ATKearney 2019).

Similar to the Atlanta mayor, the LA mayor has a political vision that includes diplomatic and global engagement. The newly formed Los Angeles MOIA is a manifestation of the mayor's vision and highlights the significance of having a visionary leader during incubation and maturation phase of the office. Mayor Garcetti's own political views and network, as an institutional leader, have perhaps led to his critical decision of changing the Mayor's Office of International Trade to the Mayor's Office of International Affairs. Therefore, an important factor in the creation of LA MOIA is the presence of a leader who comes from a strong background in international affairs and champions global policy advocacy, from green energy to immigration. When the federal government may not initiate and support MOIA, a visionary and powerful mayor can undertake that endeavor.

#### *11.4.2 Strategically Identify Functions and Programs*

For MOIA to maintain their relevance, effectiveness, and integrity, they need to strategically define functions and programs. MOIA need to define tasks with stronger ties to their mission and values. Other than tasks, the strategic definition of programs and having a vision statement can help enhance the distinctive capabilities of MOIA within the changing political context. It is not sustainable if only the senior leadership has the vision and conviction for enhancing the international role and presence of the city. Such vision needs to trickle down into office-level policies. Currently, there seems to be a disconnect between the vision and the tasks that MOIA prioritize. This is particularly evident in Los Angeles and Atlanta, where trade-related tasks or local political engagement dominates other global and diplomatic engagement tasks.

The policy areas that are closely tied to MOIA's precarious value have a global dimension. However, too often MOIA deviate from those policies to focus on immediate local needs. An example of this is the Los Angeles MOIA prioritizing homelessness over other policy areas, with a sole focus on the topic as a domestic issue. As important as a policy issue such as homelessness may be, it is imperative that a MOIA's involvement be strategic and mindful of its precarious values and distinctive competence. A good example of strategic program selection is a focus on globally interdependent issues, such as climate change, or environmental policies. Due to

the nature of these international policies, they allow MOIA to develop their network of global collaborators and enhance their international role and influence. In this regard, MOIA can form a research, development, and evaluation arm to help with strategic program development to advance the international interests of their constituents and to better define the mission and tasks.

Focusing on global challenges that are timely and tying them to a city's expertise will allow MOIA to develop their network of collaborators and enhance their international role and reach. The LA MOIA can also define public diplomacy programming related to special events, such as the 2028 Olympics, which will establish its global image and influence. This way, MOIA will prevent selective attention going toward the sole provision of services and undermining the public diplomacy gains of hosting the special international events. Without a strategic identification of missions and programs, capacity-building and receiving support and funding will prove to be challenging. Additionally, a clear definition of tasks and unique competencies of the office will help create a firewall between MOIA and other offices, to allow them to prioritize the policy areas that are closely tied to their mission, thereby ensuring their long-term relevance and integrity.

#### ***11.4.3 Build and Maintain External and Internal Constituencies***

While it is important to create firewalls and boundaries between MOIA and other government entities, another factor that helps protect MOIA's precarious value is developing and nourishing both internal and external constituencies to support the organization, new programs, and objectives. A Mayor's Office of International Affairs is an entity that can connect and collaborate with a wide range of global and local stakeholders. On one hand, MOIA can become officially integrated with the Department of State as the "foreign office of receiving State"; on the other hand, MOIA can collaborate with local diplomatic corps, nonstate actors, and other stakeholders (Cabral et al. 2014). MOIA are unique because they can leverage their close ties to local and global, as well as public and private actors. Being this in-between power as discussed above gives MOIA access to more comprehensive information, which enhances their global influence. MOIA are also unique in that their ties allow them to more effectively facilitate collaboration and affect change on a global scale. Having such strong external and internal constituencies is vital for protecting the

precarious value embodied by MOIA. Therefore, having a well-defined function that aims to develop and maintain these constituencies is advantageous.

The crucial role of having external constituencies in protecting the precarious value of diplomatic engagement is evidenced by the short-lived example of the Detroit MOIA, which opened under President Obama and was shut down as soon as the administration changed in 2017 (ClickOnDetroit 2015). In 2015, the Department of State launched its “Cities@State” initiative to strategically capitalize on the growing role that cities can play in international affairs. The initiative died with the change in administration. As a result, Detroit also shut down its MOIA. Even though the Detroit MOIA lacked a strong sense of mission due to not having a strong critical task, the support of the Department of State sustained the office. It seems imperative that the US Department designates an office to oversee, coordinate, and improve city diplomacy across the nation.

The political nature of the US government has a distinct effect on the ability of the diplomatic corps to function as a collaborative international society. Cities are well positioned to interact with the consular corps and their extended networks, to allow for smooth collaboration and ongoing dialogue. Additionally, the division of power among government branches as well as nongovernmental stakeholders in the United States presents a rather challenging web of interactions that a foreign diplomat must master to negotiate and advance the interests of the country that they represent. Traditionally, this web of interactions only included interest groups, lobbies, and the media. But local actors have become more relevant because of the impact they have on policies, from influencing policy decisions to implementation of policies. Local governments and stakeholders are potentially faster routes to action. City governments can easily be the bridge between various local actors and the consular corps. In return, they will receive valuable information and more easily influence policies and their implementation.

Once external and internal constituents are identified, MOIA need to actively pursue and solidify such connections. The New York MOIA cleverly have staff members who are dedicated to public relations and marketing efforts and who work closely with the staff members who are in charge of policy and protocol. Developing and nourishing external constituencies to support the organization, new programs, and objectives ensure that MOIA can sustain its integrity and pursue its long-term goals and critical

tasks (Selznick 2011). While creating internal audiences will primarily be the job of MOIA nationwide, having the external constituency requires policy change at the federal level to ensure that the Department of State oversees and supports MOIA nationwide.

#### *11.4.4 Ensure Competence and Commitment of the Operators*

The importance of having skilled staff members to advance international affairs goes beyond maintaining internal and external constituents. The “operators” of any institution are key for its success and failure. Currently, most MOIA staff have backgrounds in trade and relatively little training in diplomatic affairs. This means that, even if an organization’s leadership sets its mission and values to underscore diplomatic affairs and global influence, staff members may not share the sense of identity and mission. To ensure the long-term relevance, efficiency, and integrity of MOIA, their operators need to be committed to the mission and the precarious value of global engagement and be competent to undertake the tasks necessary to realize the mission. It is, therefore, important to first understand the factors that influence the decisions and behavior of employees at the operator level to be able to design policies to ensure their commitment and competence (Simon 1997).

One way to understand the decisions and behavior of employees is to look at their sets of beliefs that have been shaped by circumstances and experiences over the course of their past careers and training. Wilson refers to these sets of beliefs and schema as “situational imperatives” and underscores their role in shaping staff “perceptions of tasks and responsibilities” (Selznick 2011). Simon further explains that these perceptions influence the decisions and behavior of employees at the operator level (Simon 1997). It is therefore important to make the recruitment process more strategic to account for and leverage existing situational imperatives and plan for other potentially necessary trainings to complement existing perceptions and level of commitment to the value of global engagement.

Overall, it is important to make sure that the vision and values are truly infused throughout the office and adopted by all members of the institution (Selznick 2011). A sense of mission should be realized by having a shared understanding and an endorsement of it among an agency’s operators (Wilson 1989). This is important for several reasons such as maximizing efficiency, proving MOIA’s distinctive contributions, and making MOIA immune to internal and external influences that deviate the offices



from their mission. To maximize “social efficiency” there needs to be agreement and harmony between the social and organizational values (Simon 2013). This can be achieved when an agency’s staff members fully identify with the organization. When there are policies in place to help infuse the sense of identity and a shared sense of mission within staff members, MOIA can better avoid internal and external conflict and protect itself from unsolicited political pressure and influence. In turn, this will allow tasks related to global engagement and diplomatic affairs to be prioritized over other tasks, such as service to the homeless.

The commitment and competence of staff members can be achieved in two ways: selective recruitment and training. A selective recruiting and training process can help ensure having the right skills at the MOIA protect their values and distinctive competence in conducting international affairs (Selznick 2011). MOIA leaders can develop a system so that recruitment happens after the completion of a rigorous and long enough professionalization process in the field of international and diplomatic affairs. However, given limited funding and resources, the recruitment process can become more selective by taking advantage of an employee’s already existing worldview toward the importance of international affairs for local governments. In other words, MOIA can recruit operators who have a strong sense of affiliation and identity connected to diplomatic affairs conducted by subnational and city governments. Another way to gradually infuse the values and visions in employees is through training that is combined with the right set of incentives. Training is a way of creating internal constituency that is loyal to the vision and identity of the institution (Selznick 2011). MOIA can provide sustained training to staff to instill in them the sense of pride, identity, and commitment necessary to protect its precarious value.

MOIA’s mission is to enhance a city’s international role and global influence. In order to realize their mission, MOIA officials emphasize the importance of prioritizing tasks such as diplomatic representation, collaboration, and communication over other needs of the office or of the city at large. They express concerns about what challenges their ability to prioritize these tasks. MOIA staff seem to be too caught up in day-to-day paperwork and tasks necessary for re-election campaigns, political objectives, and tasks related to international trade or other city-specific matters. Over time, these tasks could undermine the unique role of the office in advancing a city’s international policy objectives. Currently, to prove effectiveness, MOIA staff are focusing on short-term results, which may

challenge MOIA's sustainability by undermining its distinct competence and effectiveness. Ensuring that MOIA's mission is acknowledged and valued by their constituents, and that they remain relevant and sustainable, will allow them to advance the global interests of their local constituents. This is a strategic necessity to ensure the prosperity and security of citizens.

## 11.5 CONCLUSIONS

To effectively conduct international affairs and diplomacy in the twenty-first century, and for the advancement of the interests and prosperity of the citizens of any nation, we must appreciate some contextual and technical factors. One such factor is how the changes in political, cultural, and technological contexts are affecting our needs for new or improved government structures, systems, and entities that can best accomplish diplomatic missions; another is why and how government organizations do the things they do, as well as their strengths and limits. The delegation of some diplomatic tasks and missions to local governments, such as cities, has been recommended by foreign policy and international affairs scholars and practitioners. Following such recommendations, this chapter used organizational theories to look at existing institutions within cities, to understand what is currently being done, the strengths and weaknesses of MOIA, and opportunities for sustainable growth to ensure the long-term relevance and integrity of these offices. The most important need of these institutions is to have a well-defined and strong statement of mission, vision, and values that gets buy-in from larger city government, the Department of State, and from local stakeholders. Given that a city's diplomatic and global engagement becomes a precarious value, it is important for offices to identify how they intend to protect this value against the dominant culture(s) of the office.

Taking a step back, it is important to acknowledge that the dynamics witnessed in the United States are an example of a broader global trend that is captured in the international relations literature which looks at the city as a unit of analysis in diplomatic affairs. In terms of a country's soft power and global influence, as seen during the Cold War, city brands were strategically utilized to enhance the United States' image abroad and to extend its soft power. The Sister Cities program is a traditional example of acknowledging the role of cities in global affairs. Today, the Sister Cities program is only a small component of what cities do to claim their global role. Cities are trying to engage global and local actors on a wide range of

policies through “facilitating communication, negotiating agreements, gathering information, preventing conflicts, and taking part in international society” (Acuto et al. 2018). Cities may have been doing this for years, but the speed and nature of policy needs require cities to act more strategically to stay relevant and influential in a globalized society. Therefore, having a robust office and personnel dedicated to this mission are necessary. This chapter reviewed US MOIA and found that they embody the precarious value of global engagement and diplomatic affairs. It then provided policy recommendations for MOIA to protect their precarious value and ensure their long-term relevance, integrity, and effectiveness.

Currently, MOIA are mostly trade-centric. Therefore, the mission of “conducting international affairs, increasing global influence and leadership” may not be fulfilled as they are sometimes overwhelmed by a variety of conflicting or short-term goals. Thus, MOIA leaders and decision makers need to consider selectively recruiting staff to ensure that they possess a level of professionalization and commitment to the precarious value, in addition to their relevant technical expertise. Having strong institutional leaders is important, but MOIA should be able to be sustainable despite changes in leadership. This will require a strong external constituency, especially the support of the Department of State. It will also require sustainable funding for the office, as well as other strong internal and external constituencies and supporters which include local nongovernmental entities. These policies will allow MOIA to achieve their long-term objectives by protecting and promoting their distinctive capabilities in conducting international affairs for the cities they serve.

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## SECTION IV

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# Case Studies



# The Branding of Singapore as City of International Peace Dialogue

*Hun Shik Kim and Seow Ting Lee*

## 12.1 INTRODUCTION

On June 12, 2018, Singapore hosted a historic meeting between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. The bilateral meeting was unprecedented. Under Trump and Kim, the relationship between the US and North Korea has edged closer to a crisis than at any time since the Korean Armistice of 1953, sparking fears of a nuclear war. Through its longstanding acts of provocation, the communist regime of North Korea has been widely regarded as a pariah state by the international community even after the end of the Korean War in 1953. Between 2016 and 2018, North Korea successfully tested a series of nuclear weapons and demonstrated its capabilities by firing long-range

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missiles targeted at its neighbors South Korea and Japan. Pyongyang next provocatively declared that its first hydrogen bomb and intercontinental ballistic missiles could reach major cities in the US. In response to this US-directed threat, President Donald Trump swiftly warned that any further provocation from Pyongyang would be met with “fire and fury.”

The two leaders stepped up the rhetoric with no sign of following through on threats, but after a period of heightened hostilities North Korea unexpectedly softened its stance by participating in the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. During the games, North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un engaged in talks with South Korea and expressed a desire to meet President Trump. Kim’s request sparked off a flurry of diplomatic activities as officials began scouting for a venue for the meeting. In May 2018, news media reported several competing venues for the summit, including Mongolia, Sweden, and Singapore, before the White House officially announced that the summit would be held in Singapore on June 12, 2018.

By playing host to a summit that marked the first-ever meeting between a sitting US president and a North Korean leader, the tiny Southeast Asian city-state of Singapore scored a major public relations and city branding feat. As the world’s cameras captured the two leaders’ 12-second handshake executed against a backdrop of undulating American and North Korean flags, Singapore officials could not but rejoice at their momentous role in staging the public diplomacy event of the year. Singapore’s name is now permanently inked in history through its role as host of the “2018 North Korea-United States Singapore Summit,” or what was widely reported by media as the “2018 Singapore Summit” for short—another benefit reaped by the city-state, as host, when “Singapore” is strategically inserted into the very name of the summit.

This chapter examines the concerted negotiation and interactive processes that post-colonial Singapore has undertaken to emerge as a key player in international conflict resolution and the manufacturing of peace—a role traditionally associated with Geneva, Oslo, and other European cities. While there is a modest body of literature that has analyzed the city branding of Singapore as a tourist destination (Henderson 2007; Ooi 2004), an events and entertainment capital of Asia (Foley et al. 2012), an arts/creative city (Chang 2000; Ooi 2008), and a global hydro-hub (Joo and Heng 2017), no study has directly examined the role of Singapore as an international peacemaker, specifically the former British colony’s branding to assert its national and international identity beginning in 1963 after 144 years of British rule.

This chapter utilizes a case study approach (Yin 1984). Yin (2014) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context” (p. 16). We analyzed multiple sources of evidence including government documents, international convention statistics, press releases, media interviews, and news reports. The case study approach is appropriate here, given our interest in answering the *how* and *why* questions “especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (Yin 2002, p. 13).

## 12.2 TRACK TWO DIPLOMACY

Singapore’s role in supporting the international efforts to achieve peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula can be understood within the framework of Track Two diplomacy. The city-state assumed the role of public diplomat to facilitate a dialogue and collaboration as diplomatic mediators or peace negotiators engaged in Track Two diplomacy. Former US diplomat John McDonald (2004) posited that Track One diplomacy is official government-to-government negotiations between designated representatives of sovereign states. Track Two diplomacy, on the other hand, is informal negotiations facilitated by a third party or citizens, aiming to reduce or resolve conflict by decreasing the anger, tension, and fear between peoples by improving the communication and understanding of the other side’s point of view (McDonald 2004, p. 4). McDonald suggested that Track Two is in no way a substitute for Track One. Instead, it complements and parallels the goals of Track One diplomacy. According to McDonald, a synonym for Track Two diplomacy is “citizen diplomacy” in which broad-based participation of governments’ public affairs personnel, non-governmental entities, and private citizens is a vital condition.

In the dialogue between the US and North Korea, the welcoming stance shown by Singaporeans was such an example of private citizens participating in Track Two diplomacy. Many Singapore citizens and residents participated in the celebratory mood by cheering and welcoming the two foreign heads of state, injecting a festive atmosphere into a summit on weighty issues. There were numerous reports describing how hundreds of onlookers gathered to cheer the North Korean motorcade, excitedly snapping photographs of Kim sitting inside his Mercedes-Benz limousine. Many restaurants and businesses jumped on the summit



bandwagon by celebrating the event through their products and services, including steep discounts and giveaways. During the summit, the five-star Royal Plaza on Scotts Hotel introduced an affordably-priced grilled Trump-Kim Burger (S\$12 or about USD8.70), comprising a minced chicken, seaweed, and *kimchi* patty, served with Korean rice rolls and French fries. On the day of the summit, June 12, the hotel gave away a total of 500 mini-burgers to customers on a first-come-first-served basis. Many gift shops promoted and sold numerous Trump-Kim-themed accessories and memorabilia. These overt displays of “citizen diplomacy” by Singaporeans are a vital component that contributed to the success of the summit. Kim, heartened by the excited crowds who lined the streets of Singapore to see him, thanked Singapore for the organization of the summit as if it was “their own family affair” (Tarabay 2018). He also thanked Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee for the “excellent conditions provided” by the city-state, and remarked that “for this historical summit, Singapore has provided the necessary conditions for it to take place” (Tarabay 2018). For Kim, the leader of a country viewed as an international pariah, such a warm welcome by citizens in Singapore must have been an agreeable experience. Trump, who also met Lee at the summit, thanked Singaporeans for their hospitality, professionalism, and friendship (Tan 2018).

Singapore relied on a “whole of government” approach in hosting the summit, as shown in this characterization of the city-state’s role by its foreign minister Vivian Balakrishnan:

[H]osting the Summit highlighted the importance of a whole-of-government effort. While MFA was the lead coordinating agency, an undertaking of this scale and nature is not something that MFA can do alone. We worked closely with other Ministries and agencies, including MHA, MINDEF, and MCI, amongst others, to organise the Summit. The various agencies had to deal with the major security and logistical challenges, as well as facilitating the large global media presence. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of Team Singapore who made this Summit possible. I am also grateful to all Singaporeans for your understanding and patience during the Summit. (Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan’s Written Reply to Parliamentary Question, August 6, 2018)

Balakrishnan’s “whole-of-government” remark highlighted not only the participation of Singapore’s governmental agencies but also the roles played by non-governmental entities and private citizens that are integral

to Track Two Diplomacy. The reference to “Team Singapore,” a widely used catchphrase in the Singapore context, emphasizes a shared identity for all Singaporeans.

Track Two citizen-based diplomacy also involves a dialogic or collaborative role carried out by groups of participants and stakeholders. According to McPhail (2014), Track Two diplomats typically view their roles as cultural mediators or peace negotiators. Consequently, Track Two diplomacy often brings those who are rivals or enemies together and requires mediation. What is important in this process is for Track Two practitioners to put their egos and interest aside, maintain patience, and listen well (McPhail 2014).

A Track Two diplomatic role is not new for Singapore. Former Singapore Deputy Prime Minister S. Jayakumar once pointed out that Singapore’s role should be an initiator of multilateral dialogues among larger and powerful neighbors (Jayakumar 2011). Jayakumar stresses that, in such international diplomatic negotiations, Singapore must ensure that it achieves its substantive objectives, while as a third or a neutral country, the city-state can enjoy reaping public accolades. For instance, Jayakumar cited as examples Singapore’s initiatives in actively inviting heads of state, diplomats, and groups of NGOs to the city-state to a series of international and global governmental and non-governmental dialogues and peace forums. Since as early as the mid-1990s, the Asia-Europe Meetings, Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation, and Asia-Middle East Dialogue were held in Singapore. Due to the city-state’s concerted efforts, Singapore has continued to build a successful track record and reputation as an “international meeting city” and a top contender venue of global dialogue.

Based on the 2018 statistics from the Union of International Associations (UIA), Singapore was ranked as the top international city in 2017 by hosting 802 global governmental and non-governmental meetings in the city-state (UIA releases 2018). The number of meetings held in Singapore comprised 8.5% of all international meetings organized or sponsored by international organizations that are included in the UIA’s Yearbook of International Organizations. The same data show that the second and third top international meeting cities are Brussels, Belgium (757 meetings or 8.0%), and Seoul (639 meetings or 6.8%). Hosting the Trump-Kim summit clearly reflected Singapore’s continued efforts and successes in staging international meetings at various levels, and demonstrates its popularity as a venue of choice for international dialogue. An

analysis of the city-state's previous roles and engagement in Track Two diplomacy suggests a systematic and strategic development in branding that helps illuminate our understanding of Singapore's efforts to brand itself as a public diplomat, or more specifically a Track Two Diplomat.

The public diplomat perspective is evident in how Singapore's leaders viewed their role in the summit. In an interview with CNN on June 11—one day before the summit—Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was asked by CNN chief international correspondent Christiane Amanpour "How important is it for Singapore to be hosting the summit?" Lee responded in the following way:

We are the host, we are the tea and coffee pourers. We do not participate in the summit, we do not have an influence on what is discussed or the outcome, but we hope that by providing a venue which is neutral, which is agreeable to both sides, we enable a productive summit to take place which will turn around the negative trend of events in Korea over the last few months and set Korea on to a new and positive trajectory – for them and for the world. (PM Lee Hsien Loong interviewed by CNN's Christiane Amanpour, June 11, [2018](#))

Lee's remark aptly captured the key ideas behind Singapore's branding as an international peace broker and host of high-profile political summits. As one of the three sovereign city-states in the world (aside from Monaco and Vatican City), Singapore offers a compelling branding case study for understanding the roles and functions of cities vis-à-vis an expanded stakeholder model of public diplomacy and international relations.

In the last century, dozens of other cities have etched their names in the list of venues for political summits that addressed peace processes and negotiations. These include Cairo, Potsdam, Nuremberg, San Francisco, New York, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Paris. Most of these cities, including Tokyo and New York, were selected based on their established urban, economic, and communication infrastructures, as well as on logistical convenience for the representatives from various nations. Several cities, for instance Paris and Cairo, were picked for their political and diplomatic neutrality at the time of a conflict or dispute, rendering themselves the ideal spots for international talks and negotiations. The Paris peace talks (1968–1973) between North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the US produced the official signing of the Paris Peace Accords to end the hostility in Vietnam. By the time Paris hosted the US-North Vietnam peace talks, France had

already been a neutral party, as a former colonial master but a defeated nation in the independence war by the Vietnamese communist regime in the north, for almost two decades.

The Cairo Conference (November 22–26, 1943) produced a joint declaration to confirm the Allied nations' intention to continue to fight Japan until its unconditional surrender in World War II. US President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Chinese 'Generalissimo' Chiang Kai-shek attended the historic international summit. The host city of Cairo was used by British troops as a base for Allied operations in the Middle Eastern and North African region during World War II. Although Egypt was regarded as a friendly nation to the Allied powers, the country was pursuing a neutral path during the war.

The Singapore government downplayed any suggestion that it overtly sought out the role of host, as seen in Singapore foreign minister Balakrishnan's explanation of how the city-state was chosen to host the Trump-Kim summit. He said: "We did not put our hands up, but we were asked" (Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan's Written Reply to Parliamentary Question, August 6, 2018). Contrary to this assertion, we argue that Singapore proactively sought to pursue the role of international peace broker through systematic branding efforts at multiple levels of governance.

Shen (2010) suggested that Singapore's city branding exercise was done in a substantial and transformative manner featuring both marketing and infrastructure building content. This integrative approach offers an important conceptual direction for understanding city-focused branding strategies, which have been characterized in the scholarly literature as simple and predominantly focused on slogans, messaging, and promotion-oriented communication (Ashworth and Kavaratzis 2007; 2015; Green et al. 2016; Govers 2013; Hospers 2010; Kapferer 2011; Kavaratzis 2007; Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013). Kavaratzis (2007) observed that every European city seeks to brand itself as the cultural hub of its region. Kavaratzis (2004) outlined three forms of communication of understanding related to city branding. Primary communication describes the communicative effects of a city's actions, when communication is not the main goal. Secondary communication relates to formal, intentional communication, and occurs through established marketing practices including indoor and outdoor advertising, public relations, graphic design, and the use of a logo. Finally, tertiary communication is based on word-of-mouth and is reinforced by media and competitors.

Taking a different approach, many cities in Asia focus on aligning their cultural and political ideologies through communication as well as infrastructure development. Dynon (2011) showed how the 2010 Shanghai World Expo was used by Beijing to promote Shanghai as a harmonious city to align with the country's ideologies and its vision for Shanghai's future. Since 2001, Hong Kong has branded itself as "Asia's world city" in the wake of its 1997 establishment as a Special Administrative Region of China. Shen (2010), who examined Hong Kong's branding efforts, observed that the Chinese city's efforts were lacking in comparison to those of Singapore, a city that is often viewed as Hong Kong's direct competitor. According to Shen, the term "world city" used to promote Hong Kong "looked more like a lay branding, marketing and image constructing exercise rather than an affirmation of most of the defining features of world cities as identified by academics" (pp. 206–207). Chang (2000), who examined the factors that define the success of image construction in the formation of world cities, cited Singapore as an example of how a city combines world-class facilities with unique local flavors to successfully construct an image of a cultural destination by cultivating arts businesses and attracting foreign investment.

### 12.3 WHY SINGAPORE?

Contenders for the Trump-Kim summit venue included Sweden, Mongolia, the Korean DMZ, Switzerland, and North Korea. The choice of Singapore is not a surprising one, if one understands the psyche of this "little red dot"—a nickname used deprecatingly but now increasingly with pride by Singaporeans to refer to how small (and vulnerable) their city-state of 5.6 million people appears when visually depicted on maps of the world and of Asia. As an island with a total land area of less than 300 mile<sup>2</sup>, it is smaller than all of its Southeast Asian neighbors.

Before and during the Trump-Kim summit, many Americans and world citizens were compelled to look for more information about Singapore. On June 11, 2018, the most searched term on Google in the US was "Singapore," with more than two million hits, including the top search phrase "Where is Singapore?" In an incident that prompted some social media attention, the US State Department, in a statement it issued in connection with the summit, mistakenly considered Singapore a part of neighboring Malaysia.

According to a *Straits Times* analysis, Singapore spent S\$16.3 million (about US\$12 million) on the 2018 Trump-Kim summit, but it reaped coverage worth more than ten times that amount (“Where is Singapore?” 2018). In the same report, media intelligence firm Meltwater estimated that the publicity and media coverage that Singapore received over the three days around the June 12 summit amounted to \$270 million in advertising value, while the month leading up to it was worth US\$767 million. Andrew Darling, CEO and founder of communications agency West Pier Ventures, said it would cost more than S\$200 million to generate the kind of publicity Singapore had received so far by hosting the summit. Media analysts were positive about the publicity that Singapore received from hosting the summit. Jason Tan of media advertising agency Zenith Singapore stated that “The Trump-Kim Summit has arguably been the single most important event that brought Singapore to the attention of the most people around the world” (Where is Singapore? 2018). Oliver Chong, executive director of communications and marketing capability at Singapore Tourism Board, was quoted as saying: “It places Singapore on the map for international audiences” (Where is Singapore? 2018).

Compared to the other contenders such as Sweden and Switzerland, Singapore has a distinct geographic proximity to North Korea. European cities such as Stockholm and Zurich were reportedly favored venues for the US delegation, but it was speculated that North Korea’s aging planes were not capable of delivering a long-distance flight for Kim and his delegation. North Korea reportedly favored Mongolia, which is a shorter distance away. However, Singapore is a relatively short plane ride from North Korea. Singapore also is not as remote as Mongolia, and has the advantage of international connectedness, as a global city-state and hyper-modern metropolis that offers excellent facilities for such a meeting. The Korean DMZ, given its paramount significance as a buffer zone established by the provisions of the 1953 Korean Armistice, would have been a natural choice for the summit venue. However, given the mixed—and perhaps even low—expectations for the summit’s outcomes, it was probably wise to steer clear of such a high-profile and dramatic venue for this particular summit.

While pragmatic reasons such as physical distance and quality of facilities may rule out other contenders (there was speculation that Pyongyang would prefer not to confront a situation where its aging planes would be forced to refuel before reaching the summit venue; to attend the Singapore summit, Kim used a chartered Air China airliner from Pyongyang), one of

the biggest advantages of Singapore is the city-state's excellent track record and experience as host. For decades it has hosted numerous regional summits and increasingly high-profile major bilateral meetings and summits involving leaders from around the world. In November 2015, Singapore hosted a milestone meeting between former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou and Chinese President Xi Jinping. In 1993, Singapore also hosted the Wang-Koo Summit, a historic attempt at a cross-strait meeting between Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits chairman Wang Daohan and Straits Exchange Foundation's chairman Koo Chen-fu. The event marked the first such meeting since 1949 and paved the way to trade and people-to-people exchanges between Taiwan and China.

South Korean news media reported that Singapore had one distinct advantage as the venue for the Trump-Kim summit. Singapore made remarkable economic achievements in transforming itself from an unremarkable developing country to a developed economic powerhouse under authoritarian leader Lee Kuan Yew. When it gained independence in 1965, Singapore had a small domestic market, high rates of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty, and a GDP per capita of about US\$500. The Singapore government under Lee embarked on an aggressive economic development drive that turned the city-state into a country with one of the highest savings and investment rates in the world, and into one of the richest nations in the world based on GDP per capita. Singapore thus presents a significant appeal to Kim as a model of economic reform for his own Marxist-Leninist country (Park 2018). The city-state, as a tightly controlled country that practices soft authoritarianism, was more than able to exert strict legal and systematic measures, if needed, to effectively control and manage any potential civic and political protest against Kim, who has a blemished track record of human rights violations in his country and whose provocative rhetoric and actions with regard to nuclear weapons have consistently riled his country's neighbors and the international community for years.

There are other distinct advantages. Singapore has carefully managed a reputation, well-deserved no doubt, of efficiency. Its diplomatic corps and security and intelligence personnel have a proven track record in hosting major summits where tight security is a top priority. As one of the top tourist destinations and convention venues in the world, the city-state's hotel and convention industry is an internationally respected and well-oiled machinery. Tourism contributes around 4% to Singapore's GDP

yearly. In 2018, visitor arrivals hit a record 17.4 million (remarkably, in a country of only 5.6 million people) due to a boost from China, its top market, and India.

In another event that captured the public's attention, Kim Jong-un himself had a chance to play tourist on the eve of the summit, on June 11. Unexpectedly, he decided to take a night tour of Singapore's iconic tourist sites. Escorted by Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and Education (Higher Education) Minister Ong Ye Kung and a team of bodyguards, Kim toured Gardens by the Bay and Marina Bay Sands integrated resorts (Lai, June 11, 2018). Onlookers at the sites cheered raucously as Kim smiled and waved at them. In what appeared to be Kim's first-ever public selfie, Balakrishnan took photographs with his cellphone and posted them on his Twitter account, leading them to be widely shared online and generating immense publicity for Kim, Singapore, and the summit. Kim was also seen strolling on the Jubilee Bridge, which overlooks the Marina Bay area and the Esplanade—the jewels of Singapore's economic development.

Later that night, Kim visited the Marina Bay Sands Hotel—owned by the Las Vegas Sands Corporation—and went up to its observation deck that soars 57 levels overlooking the panoramic views of Marina Bay and the city's gleaming skyline. News about Kim's two-hour tour of the city featured prominently in international news stories. Cellphone videos taken by stunned onlookers and other tourists were quickly uploaded on social media, including numerous YouTube and Instagram postings. Within a matter of minutes, Kim Jong-un and his tour of Singapore were featured as one of the most interesting celebrity news items around the world that day. Although unexpected by many, this seemingly whirlwind city tour by the North Korean leader showcased the iconic spots of Singapore to global audiences. For Kim, this event was significant from an image management perspective too; it was the first time that he had posed for a selfie. His grins and waves and his friendly and relaxed demeanor would seem to contradict his image as a nuclear-armed tyrant from a pariah state, and were calculated—with the help of his image-grooming sister Kim Yo-jong—to transform him into a global statesman in Singapore.

Panda (2018) suggested that the coverage of Kim's night out in Singapore was unprecedented. Images of Kim surveying Singapore's Marina Bay skyline featured prominently on the front page of North Korea's national newspaper and mouthpiece, the *Rodong Sinmun*. The coverage "was once unimaginable in North Korea, where official



propaganda is well-known to have doctored images of the Seoul skyline, to underplay the prosperity of the world outside of *juche* Korea's borders." According to Panda, "If North Koreans had seen Kim's efforts at Ryomyong Street in Pyongyang as an impressive bout of modernization under *byungjin*, then Singapore arguably sets in place an objective for North Korea's eventual economic betterment under the 'new strategic line.'"

In the case of the 2018 Singapore Summit, the wealthy city-state (one of the highest GDPs per capita in the world) was more than willing to assume some of the costs of the summit, a distinct advantage that other contenders for the summit venue, such as Mongolia, may not have been able to manage (MFA spokesperson's comments, June 12, 2018). The \$16.3 million it spent on covering the costs including the hotel bills for Kim at the six-star Capella was a worthy investment. Although the Singapore government spent S\$16.3 million—the largest part of which was spent on security—the sum was less than the \$20 million initially anticipated to host the meeting. After hearing the initial estimate, some in the city-state complained about the high cost and inconveniences. On June 12, the day of the summit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press statement clarifying the amount spent.

The summit entailed a massive security operation as the city-state deployed thousands of police, setting up road-blocks and banning flares and loudhailers near the summit and the hotels where the delegations were housed. Apart from paying for security, the Singapore government also footed the bill for the North Korean delegation's expenses, including Kim's stay at the luxury St Regis hotel where a night's stay can easily set one back by US\$7000 to \$9000—not an easy sum to muster for the impoverished country further buckled by international sanctions. Apart from security and hotel bills, the Singapore government also spent a substantial amount of money on media facilities for the 3000 journalists who covered the summit. For the summit, the government refurbished a 23,000-square-foot international media facility built for the annual Formula One race, and treated journalists to a gastronomic spread of local and international delights (Liang 2018).

### 12.3.1 *Pragmatic Neutrality Pays*

When the search was initiated to find a venue for the summit, news media speculated that the US would prefer to avoid Beijing (China), Ulaanbaatar

(Mongolia), and Vladivostok (Russia) because these cities, which were top on Kim's list, are associated with North Korea's communist allies. Clearly in this case, the political and diplomatic neutrality of the city (or nation) is a key consideration when selecting a venue for such a high-profile international peace summit.

As soon as Singapore was announced as the venue for the Trump-Kim summit, news media analyzed why the city-state was selected among several candidate cities. Singapore beat out several contenders such as Zurich, Beijing, Pyongyang, and New York because it has diplomatic relations with both the US and North Korea, and is a host to the two countries' embassies. Singapore thrives on pragmatism; it aims to be "neutral and free from alliances, even in its close relations with both the United States and China" (Klingler-Vidra 2012, p. 67). Singapore is a key strategic security ally and a major trading partner of the US. US officials have worked closely with Singapore on a wide range of strategic issues across different administrations. It is unsurprising that Washington has a high level of trust in Singapore's intelligence corps, diplomats, and political leaders, and favored Singapore as a venue for the summit.

As an ally of the US and China, Singapore has also had diplomatic ties with Pyongyang for more than four decades. The history of ties between Singapore and Pyongyang is not unsubstantial. Singapore businesses have operated fast food outlets and stores selling Singaporean beverages and processed food in Pyongyang. North Koreans are also not unfamiliar with Singapore. With an embassy in Singapore since 1975, many North Koreans—mostly ruling party officials—have visited Singapore for business, shopping, education, and medical care. In 2016, it was reported that North Korea moved its "hidden" embassy from the less savory fringes of the city to a prominent location opposite the Singapore Parliament building ("North Korea moves 'hidden' embassy" 2016). North Korean citizens could enter Singapore visa-free until mid-2016, when the rules were changed to require North Koreans to possess a visa.

In February 2017, Kim Jong-un's older brother Kim Jong-nam was assassinated—allegedly at the behest of Kim himself—in Malaysia (a neighbor of Singapore), leading the US to exert more economic sanctions on North Korea. Like many of its Southeast Asian neighbors, Singapore has cultivated economic ties with North Korea, although Kim Jong-nam's assassination prompted sanctions that led Singapore to eventually suspend trade relations with Pyongyang in November 2017. China, an ally of North Korea, also has strong ties with Singapore. Although Singapore's

foreign policy toward the US and China is premised on security concerns, economic liberalism, and pragmatic non-alignment, Singapore “hedges its cultural, spatial and economic proximity to China with robust diplomatic, military and economic relations with the U.S” (Klinger-Vidra 2012, p. 67). It seems reasonable that given the close political and economic ties between China and Singapore, Beijing preferred to see Singapore host the summit.

For the US, Singapore has been a strategic partner in both economic and security cooperation. Moreover, Singapore has reliably demonstrated its position as a neutral actor in global affairs by hosting a number of high-profile diplomatic events on short notice, including Chinese President Xi Jinping’s 2015 meeting with his then-counterpart from Taiwan Ma Ying-jeou. As a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, ASEAN, APEC, and the Non-Aligned Movement, Singapore also has established a unique status as a friendly and neutral actor in global politics. Some diplomats have attributed Singapore’s openness and neutrality to its distinct makeup as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious society. Sustained by decades of open immigration policies and a heavy reliance on foreign talent and labor, pluralism and tolerance are fundamental virtues in Singapore (Hefner 2001; Sinha 2005).

It is instructive to understand Singapore’s role, as envisioned by Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan. In addressing the question on Singapore’s role in the dialogue between the US and North Korea, in a written statement in Parliament after the summit, Balakrishnan wrote:

We were not involved in the direct bilateral discussions between the US and the DPRK that led to the signing of the Joint Statement between the two leaders in Singapore. Neither are we party to the ongoing discussions between the US, Japan, ROK, China, Russia and the DPRK. Singapore welcomes the Joint Statement at the Singapore Summit, which is an important step forward, and we wish the US and the DPRK success in implementing it...Although Singapore is not party to the ongoing negotiations on the Korean Peninsula, anything that happens on the Peninsula will affect the rest of the region, including Singapore. It is in our collective interest to see a peaceful, stable and denuclearised Korean Peninsula, and we will continue to support efforts to these ends. (Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan’s Written Reply to Parliamentary Question, August 6, 2018)

This statement further explicates Singapore’s role as a neutral party in the US-North Korea negotiations, but it also highlights Singapore’s

opportunity and efforts to brand itself as a dispassionate contributor to global affairs.

South Korean Ambassador to Singapore Ahn Young-jip commented that the significance of Singapore's initiative to host the Trump-Kim summit is a demonstration of the country's "role as an honest broker with the willingness and capacity to contribute to regional peace and security" (Kim 2018). As seen in Ahn's praise, the city-state was touted as the ideal host that provided excellent security for the landmark summit between the US President and the North Korean leader. Most of all, the success of Singapore as the host for the historic summit lies in its ability to maintain "the key principle of aiming to be a friend to all, as it strives to be a reliable, credible and consistent partner, while promoting the rules-based global order with international laws and norms" (Kim 2018).

### 12.3.2 *The Branding of Singapore*

Regarding the Trump-Kim summit, some of the remarks made by Singapore leaders seem to suggest a passive role in branding. CNN's Christiane Amanpour, in her interview with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on the eve of the summit, asked how Singapore was chosen to host the summit. Mr. Lee's self-effacing response, consistent with Foreign Minister Balakrishnan's assertion ("We did not put our hands up, but we were asked"), seems to belie the consistent and strategic efforts of the city-state to establish Brand Singapore over decades. Lee said:

I do not know how the decision was made. We know that they were looking at possibilities and they sounded us out. We said, well, if you think we can be a good venue, we are prepared to step up, and we will be helpful. Then we did not hear anything more for a while. After some time, they narrowed it down and eventually they said, "Yes, we would like to come to Singapore," which I presumed both sides said, "Yes, we would like to come to Singapore" because this is a joint decision. So we started preparing. Then the Summit was off, but we did not call off our preparations, and the Summit is on again, and we think we will be prepared by the time it happens. (PM Lee Hsien Loong interviewed by CNN's Christiane Amanpour, June 11, 2018)

Such a remark in fact reflects judicious branding by Singapore's leaders, in asserting the neutrality and impartiality of Singapore. Furthermore, the notion that Singapore did not actively seek out the hosting role but was

approached by the US and North Korea is an endorsement of the city-state's track record and reputation. Brand Singapore, Lee implies, already exists.

In fact, branding has always been central to Singapore's economic success. Singapore has always utilized public relations and branding to promote its brand image on the global stage (Koh 2011, 2017; Ooi 2008, 2011). For the Singapore government, hosting cultural, economic, and political summits would definitely serve as a means to achieve economic and societal objectives of transforming the country into a distinctive global city-state (Cai 2012).

Since independence in 1965, Singapore has undergone many government-led branding and reimagining campaigns. The earliest campaigns targeted domestic audiences to promote social behaviors, but soon expanded internationally into country image management beginning in the early 1970s. Campaigns are part and parcel of Singapore life, to the extent that the city-state is known as a campaign city. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB, formerly Singapore Tourist Promotion Board) promoted Singapore as "Uniquely Singapore." Another campaign, led by the Singapore National Parks Board, marketed Singapore as a "City in the Garden." Singapore is also known as "Lion City"; Singapore, or *Singapura*, traces its name to *Singa* (lion) and *pura* (city). It was also branded as a "Medical Hub" and an "Education Hub" (Goh 2006). In September 2006, Singapore set up a National Marketing Action Committee to "guide government agencies in designing marketing campaigns that balance the harder aspects of Singapore, like efficiency and technology, with the nation's softer side, such as lifestyle and innovation" (Goh 2006).

One could argue that Singapore had no choice but to brand itself as strategy. For instance, through branding, the city-state seeks to compensate for its minuscule size through a loud voice reaping significant returns from its public diplomacy campaigns. Paul Wolfowitz, World Bank president between 2005 and 2007, noted that Singapore is a country that "punches way above its weight" (Goh 2006, p. 216).

For Singapore, branding is the aggregation of conscious and deliberate actions undertaken to influence perceptions and generate awareness, with nation brands typically incorporating public diplomacy into branding strategies (Koh 2011). In an effort to establish the city-state's branding power, the Singaporean government has been proactive in taking a leading role in communicating and promoting the image of the country as an economic powerhouse which transformed itself from a developing

country into a developed nation (Roozen et al. 2017). Lee (2012) observes that geopolitical structures in any particular region are products of cumulative diplomacy exchanges and branding exercises that have transpired within long and defined historical periods.

Koh (2011, 2017), who views nation branding as the lifeblood of Singapore, suggested that nation branding in Singapore's case is a national strategy of international branding to compensate for the city-state's shortcoming in size. Koh traced the city-state's diplomatic reinventions since self-governance in 1959 to show how government efforts focused on branding and reinventing the city-state internationally: from tourism campaigns, to the hosting of major international events like the Formula One Grand Prix, to the export of expertise to countries like China (e.g. the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City and the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park) and the opening of two integrated resorts (Marina Bay Sands and Resorts World Sentosa) designed to serve as part of Singapore's overall and comprehensive tourism strategy to enhance its destination appeal.

One example is how the positioning of Singapore as a "Garden City," using the metaphor of a clean, peaceful, and orderly city, banks on the shaping of international perceptions of a highly regulated economic and political environment with a spotless reputation. In later years, to align with the global trend of growing environmental consciousness, "Garden City" morphed into "City in a Garden," a brand positioning that reshapes the notion of an orderly society into the idea of an urban landscape in a natural setting.

It is worth noting that the brand positionings of Singapore have largely focused on the notion of "city" rather than "country," as seen in other reiterations of its public diplomacy efforts, in "Renaissance City," the city-state's vision and plan for the promotion of arts and culture. As with many of Singapore's strategic plans, it is effectively designed to achieve more than one objective. The first objective is to establish Singapore as a global arts city conducive to creative, knowledge-based industries and talent. The second focuses on strengthening national identity and belonging among Singaporeans by nurturing an appreciation of shared heritage.

The concept of Renaissance City was seeded in 1989, and in 1995, the STB and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (formerly Ministry of Information and the Arts) took the initiative to make Singapore a "Global City for the Arts" (Chang 2000; Ooi 2002). Based on a multi-pronged strategy, the city-state would develop its arts trading

sector and invite world-famous artists to perform in Singapore. In addition, the government established three museums: the Asian Civilizations Museum, the Singapore Art Museum, and the National Museum of Singapore. According to Ooi (2004), the aim then, and still today, is to make Singapore the arts and cultural capital of Southeast Asia.

Building upon that brand message, Singapore continued to demonstrate its modern efficiency and to show off its Asian attractiveness by hosting high-profile events including the 2005 International Olympics Council meeting, the 2006 annual International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings, the world's first Formula One night races in 2008, the first Youth Olympics in 2010, and the 2010 Singapore Global Dialogue (Toh 2010). Synergistic strategies include hosting the 2006 Singapore Biennale as an international event with a distinctively Asian flavor. This inaugural event, financed by the IMF and World Bank, generated tremendous publicity as it was widely reported by the journalists who traveled to Singapore to cover the IMF and World Bank meetings (Ooi 2004).

In line with a transformative approach to city branding that includes both marketing and infrastructure building content (Shen 2010), the city-state also actively pursued infrastructure that directly positions Singapore in the global media limelight by establishing itself as a regional hub for media organizations including MTV, the Discovery Channel, HBO, and the BBC. This approach, observed Ooi (2008), is geared at promoting the Singapore brand by producing and disseminating Singapore-centered and Singapore-slanted content in the international media—efforts that have continued to pay off, as can be seen in how the city-state was selected to host the Trump-Kim summit.

## 12.4 CONCLUSIONS

Our study is significant for its contribution to understanding the linkages between city branding and city diplomacy. Using a case study approach (Yin 1984), we examined the role of Singapore as international peace-maker to address a gap in the literature that has hitherto analyzed the city branding of Singapore through the lenses of tourism, events and entertainment, the arts, and hydrohub (Chang 2000; Foley et al. 2012; Henderson 2007; Joo and Heng 2017; Ooi 2004, 2008). As far as we know, our study is the first to examine the Trump-Kim summit through the conceptual lens of city branding and Track Two diplomacy.

By hosting the 2018 Trump-Kim Summit, Singapore successfully branded itself as a top international venue for peace negotiations. The city-state's role in hosting the summit is yet another example of a larger branding strategy and direction by this tiny island to assert its identity on the global stage. Reaping the fruits of its labors, the city-state leveraged its longstanding reputation of being a safe, controlled, secure, and established venue for high-profile political summits to be chosen as the venue of this historic summit. As far as we know, there was only one negative incident during the summit: five South Korean women shouted anti-Pyongyang slogans several blocks away from the St. Regis, Kim's hotel. They were quickly removed by Singapore police. Unlike other summit cities such as Seattle, Cairo, Paris, London, and New York where activists and protesters would take to the streets in large numbers to express dissent, anger, or partisan voices, sometimes violently, Singapore remained orderly and peaceful during the summit. Singapore's size, often touted as a weakness, is also a strength. As a city-state, Singapore could play host without the infrastructural support of (or perhaps interference from) a larger centralized government. And without a hinterland, the city-state is driven by a hunger to survive and succeed through other means. Its tiny size and lack of a hinterland have also been beneficial for ensuring control and efficiency.

As shown in this case study, Singapore leveraged its existing brand to engage in diplomacy, which in return further strengthened its brand. Thus, city branding and city diplomacy in the case of Singapore and the Trump-Kim summit connect seamlessly as a cohesive and collaborative framework involving a multitude of actors and influencers including government actors, business leaders, and private citizens. It is important for city leaders, planners, and branding practitioners to emphasize the interplay of city branding and Track Two diplomacy, and its synergistic potential. Singapore's positive experience serves as a precedent for scholars and practitioners in highlighting how hosting international political summits or diplomatic talks could contribute tremendously to a city's branding efforts not only as a business, travel, and cultural destination but also as a diplomatic platform to bolster a country's soft power. Singapore relied on its decades of centrally orchestrated branding labor to successfully expand its city brand into the realm of city diplomacy through the Trump-Kim summit to strengthen international news media attention, and to heighten global public interest in the city-state. For practitioners, the Singapore



case also offers key lessons for host cities in dealing with security, diplomatic protocol, and the media.

The Trump-Kim summit in itself perhaps did not produce any tangible outcomes, although it marked the beginning of a long and likely arduous peace negotiation process for Washington and Pyongyang. The second US-North Korea summit in Hanoi eight months later in February 2019 failed to produce a deal to denuclearize North Korea. The two countries hit an impasse over the sanctions imposed on Pyongyang, and abruptly cut short the summit after talks collapsed. To the disappointment of their Vietnamese host, Trump and Kim and their delegations left the meeting site in Hanoi without sitting for a planned lunch or participating in a scheduled signing ceremony. As a direction for future research, a comparative city branding analysis of Singapore and Hanoi as hosts of the Trump-Kim summits would be insightful. At this time, there is no clear indication that a third summit will materialize. Regardless, the resounding winner here is Singapore. The summit helped tiny Singapore—tea and coffee pourers notwithstanding—to reach out to global audiences, elevating its brand by conveying positive information about the city-state and reinforcing its international image as a peace broker in global affairs.

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## Paradiplomacy and City Branding: The Case of Medellín, Colombia (2004–2019)

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

The city of Medellín, Colombia, has undergone drastic changes in recent decades. Known as “the most dangerous city in the world” (Vulliamy 2013; Bylehn 2016) in the 1990s, it was nominated “the most innovative city in the world” in 2013 (BBC 2013). Toward the end of the twentieth century, the situation in Medellín was bleak; in addition to the industrial crisis that directly affected the core of the economy, there was an unprecedented rise in the level of violence. At the end of the 1980s, the homicide rate increased exponentially and led to the image of Medellín as one of the most dangerous and violent cities in the world, a title that persisted for several years (Sánchez 2013). Since then, several local governments have

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begun to change the image of the city. The city administrations have tried to give Medellín a new image, based on local development plans, programs and projects.

The analysis of this research starts in 2004, with the administrative term of Mayor Sergio Fajardo Valderrama. This is when Medellín began to generate new ideas that have been implemented over the years. With the articulation of the new proposals, the local governments were taking the first steps toward the development of the city and its subsequent change of image (cf. Development Plans of Medellín, 2004–2019).

This positioning of the city image has been achieved thanks to the technological, social, cultural and educational projects and programs that have been proposed in the local development plans. All this change, of course, could only happen with public policies and social programs that have managed to affect the inhabitants of the city through a process of citizen participation (cf. Development Plans of Medellín, 2004–2019).

In 2013, Medellín won the “Most Innovative City” award in a contest organized by the *Wall Street Journal* and Citigroup. The award highlighted Medellín’s city projects such as the public transportation system, the Explora Park (a center for science and technology), the Botanical Garden, the Metro and social investment through projects such as library parks and a cultural center. These projects are exemplary of the strength and social transformations for which Medellín was chosen as the most innovative city in the world (La República 2013). Medellín was also awarded the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, which is considered the highest award for urban planning in the world and the “Nobel Prize for cities” for its constant urban transformation and for its outstanding contributions to the creation of vibrant urban communities throughout the world (Alcaldía de Medellín, Medellín Cómo Vamos 2017).

Due to this changed image, Medellín has managed to attract foreign investors, international companies and tourists from all over the world (Bureau Medellín 2018). The city has even become a model city for social and economic progress, and organizes workshops for people who want to learn more about the transformation that the city undertook in order to implement measures in their home cities (Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín – ACI 2018). The developments have been carried out to respond to the needs of the community, recognizing the progress in the city and working toward its sustainability. Additionally, Medellín decided to direct its economic development toward the generation of

knowledge, leveraged in innovation, as a strategy to generate wealth (Sánchez 2013, p. 205).

This research project analyzes the development plans and management reports of Medellín between 2004 and 2019 to identify the city's paradiplomacy and city branding strategy. During this time, several projects and programs were developed that allowed the image of the city to improve.

## 13.2 PARADIPLOMACY AND CITY BRANDING

To achieve higher levels of local development, consecutive local administrations should work hand in hand, continuing each other's projects and following a joint strategy. This objective can be met if within the city's paradiplomacy an internalization strategy is elaborated that aims at improving the city brand. Therefore, the theoretical concepts of paradiplomacy and city branding are expounded in this section.

### 13.2.1 *Paradiplomacy*

Along with recent globalization processes, states have been losing their diplomatic monopoly and, at the same time, cities have become important agents in the international arena (Zeraoui and Castillo Villar 2016, p. 227). The term "paradiplomacy" was introduced in the 1980s and, although it has been widely used, it is still not clearly defined. In general, it describes the international activities of sub-state entities (Lequense and Paquin 2017, p. 188).

In this chapter, paradiplomacy is understood as diplomacy that is exclusive of the federal political power and not of private entities. Non-governmental organizations, companies or universities can have international relations, but these should be differentiated from diplomacy or paradiplomacy. Paradiplomacy of the city can be defined as "the institutions and processes through which cities engage in relations with actors in the international political arena to represent themselves and their interests before others" (Van der Pluijm, Melissen 2007, p. 11), but two criteria must be met: (1) the actor who performs the activity must be institutionalized and (2) this actor must have political objectives (Gutiérrez-Camps 2013). Paradiplomacy originally served as a means of cooperation between cities to prevent conflicts and the consolidation of peace, but its purpose has been extended recently and its functions have expanded toward other

objectives; today, its purpose also includes the strengthening of the brand of the city (e.g. Bontenbal 2010; Viltard 2010).

Paradiplomacy can be positive or negative: positive paradiplomacy refers to regional/urban activities that are in line with national interests; negative paradiplomacy describes activities that contrast with national interests (Zeraoui 2016, p. 19). Duchacek (1984) differentiates between direct and indirect paradiplomacy, where direct paradiplomacy directly interferes with the international arena, while indirect paradiplomacy aims at influencing the national government's international agenda.

Lecours sees paradiplomacy as a “multifunctional vehicle for the promotion of interests and identity” (Lecours 2008, p. 2). He distinguishes between three different layers of paradiplomacy: the layer of economic issues, the layer of cooperation and the layer of political considerations. He sees the economic component as including all paradiplomacies, and regions then decide if they want to add layers to address further concerns or interests, such as the development of an international image or cultural projects. Strong cooperation can then lead to a political relationship that strengthens local political institutions. Zeraoui (2016) describes identity paradiplomacy as the efforts of a region or city to mold its image:

The sub-national entity wants to project a certain territorial brand or certain characteristics of the territory. The identity strengthening might have its origin in the development of a regional image to promote the territory or simply as a tactic to facilitate the rescue of local values. The regional brand is connected with this paradiplomacy, which does not only have a symbolic value, but can represent an own brand to promote the region for tourists or generate a brand for local products. (Zeraoui 2016, p. 20)

Based on this understanding, paradiplomacy can serve as a starting point to influence the image of a city or region. How cities can shape their image has also been researched from the theoretical perspective of city branding, which is going to be outlined in the next section.

### 13.2.2 *City Branding*

The concept of branding consists of the idea that a product has a higher value if it can be connected with a name that promises a certain quality or characteristics of that product. It comprises a set of instruments and methods that companies apply, such as logos and trademarks, to create a



branding strategy (Jobber and Fahy 2015). In the globalized world, countries and cities also apply branding strategies in order to compete internationally when attracting tourists and investors (Kotler and Gertner 2002). While place branding is often understood as the creation of a new logo, a new slogan or a whole advertising campaign, Kavaratzis (2009) suggests that branding should encompass other fields of activity and intervention (p. 27). The main objective of city branding is to improve the city residents' quality of life (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 66). For him, city branding is understood as the means for achieving competitive advantage in order to increase inward investment and tourism, as well as for achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city, and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 70).

While at the beginning of city branding the main focus was on the tangible elements of a city (e.g. architecture, industry, leisure areas), it has evolved toward promoting the whole image of the city. The branding of places has therefore shifted from being function-based to being emotion-based: places serve as a source for imagination of a brand and thus create the basis for a consumer experience (Vidal Auladell 2014).

The emotions created in the customer are also understood as the added value of the city brand. The literature distinguishes four different sources of added value (Winfield-Pfefferkorn 2005). The first is People's Experience of the City: this refers to the experiences people have in one particular place and how they are going to communicate their experience afterwards. The second is Perception: this aspect has to do with how the population of the place is perceived. The third is Belief in the City: this aspect refers to the associations made with the city. Finally, the fourth is Appearance: the physical aspects of the city are also important in branding.

Kavaratzis (2004) provides a more complex theoretical framework for analyzing a city's image, which focuses on the city's residents. He differentiates between primary, secondary and tertiary communication. Primary communication includes (a) the landscape, urban design and architecture of the city; (b) the infrastructure in terms of accessibility and facilities such as cultural centers and conference venues; (c) organizational and administrative structures, such as community development networks and public—private partnerships; and (d) the city leader's vision and the strategy adopted for the city. Secondary communication comprises the formal, intentional communication of a city, and tertiary communication

comprises the unintentional communication, such as word-of-mouth and media coverage.

Taking recent research into account, Kavaratsis (2009, p. 34f.) amplifies his framework and identifies eight relevant categories to manage place branding: (i) Vision and Strategy (the vision of the city's future and the strategy to achieve it); (ii) Internal Culture (creating the brand); (iii) Local Communities (involving the residents); (iv) Synergies (inclusion of relevant stakeholders); (v) Infrastructure (provision of basic needs); (vi) Cityscape and Gateways (representation of the city itself); (vii) Opportunities (for individuals and companies); and (viii) Communication (intentionally communicated messages).

### 13.3 METHODOLOGY

Based on the theoretical foundation, the case of Medellín, Colombia, is analyzed to carry out the practical stage of the investigation. The research follows a qualitative approach. The data to be considered in the analysis are official documents obtained through scientific databases and online documents provided by Medellín city administration and public institutions. The main objective of this study is to analyze, define and outline the internationalization strategy of the city of Medellín during the period 2004–2019, taking the concepts of paradiplomacy and city branding into consideration.

#### 13.3.1 *Objective and Focus of the Empirical Research*

The empirical part of this study follows a descriptive and analytical approach, with relational emphasis. The objective is to answer the central question of the research, using the empirical approach: How can internationalization strategies be identified through the paradiplomacy of the city of Medellín to build a sustainable city brand during the period 2004–2019? Based on the analysis of this relationship, we aim to deduce the relationship between paradiplomacy and city branding.

From the descriptive perspective, we identified and characterized the internationalization strategies proposed in the development plans of the administrations between 2004 and 2019. In a next step, we analyzed the impact reflected in the reports of the aforementioned governments.

### 13.3.2 *Data Collection and Data Analysis*

Secondary information sources were used to carry out the documentary review, in which the development plans and management reports of local governments were taken as a reference during the period of 2004–2019. In addition, a bibliographical review was carried out which yielded some works and articles written on the subject that served as theoretical support for the writing of this chapter.

We used qualitative content analysis in this research, identifying the relevant content of the documents with regard to paradiplomacy and city branding.

### 13.3.3 *About Medellín*

Medellín is a city located in the state of Antioquia, Colombia. It covers 380.64 square kilometers, consists of 16 neighborhoods (“comunas”) in the urban region and has a population of approximately 2.5 million inhabitants. Its state, the Department of Antioquia, comprises 12% of the Colombian population and contributes 15% of Colombia’s Gross Domestic Product (Alcaldía de Medellín 2019). Antioquia is Colombia’s main producer of energy. Additionally, it grows and exports bananas, coffee and flowers and produces gold. Important industry sectors are commerce, housing construction, public works, financial intermediation, and agricultural and livestock activities.

Due to its location between the center of the country and the Pacific and Caribbean regions, Medellín holds a privileged position that fosters the development of economic activities and exports. Its infrastructure fosters this competitive advantage (Alcaldía de Medellín 2019).

## 13.4 STRATEGIES OF CITY DIPLOMACY IN THE CITY OF MEDELLÍN

In the city of Medellín, the paradiplomatic phenomenon begins to take shape as a result of the proposed change of the city. This phenomenon is analyzed by Ribeiro (2009) from the classical paradiplomacy perspective, where “...regions and cities, which have the means to do so, begin to act on the international stage in order to [...] attract investment” (p. 60).

### 13.4.1 Overview

Thus, starting in 2004 a space for intergovernmental relations was created in the state of Antioquia, called the *Comisión Tripartita*.<sup>1</sup> It was composed of the Governor's Office, the Mayor's Office and the Metropolitan Area of the Aburrá Valley, which sought the internationalization and strategic positioning of Antioquia, through the articulation of their territorial agendas, by means of a paradiplomatic pact (Zapata-Cortes 2016). Within the framework of these internationalization goals, the Mayor's Office of Medellín, under the administration of Sergio Fajardo (2004–2007), pronounced the strategy “Medellín Integrated with the Region and with the World”. Alonso Salazar (2008–2011) followed this approach and called his administration's strategy “Medellín a city of the world”. The succeeding mayor, Anibal Gaviria Correa, worked with the strategy “Medellín connected with the world”, and Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga elaborated the strategy “Medellín innovating” (see Table 13.1).

Table 13.1 shows the different legislative periods with the titles of the development plans, the mayors, the strategies and the main activities concerning paradiplomacy.

From different strategies and perspectives, it is possible to shape a new approach to the city brand based on collaboration between cities to achieve a contribution to the sustainable development of the city. With these new strategies, the city brand has the potential to reinforce a previous plan of local development and to contribute to the participation of the city in different networks and strategic alliances of an economic, social, cultural and political nature. It is important to emphasize that the sustainable development of a city is not a static and uniform phenomenon that can depend on a single dimension of the city, but is achieved when the city negotiates its diverse positions in a globalized world (cf. Zeraoui and Rey 2016).

Within this context and as a result of the negative image inherited by the violence and drug trafficking that emerged in the early 1980s in the city of Medellín, local administrations identified the need to transform their image and identity through a comprehensive marketing strategy. The aim was to recognize a new city with characteristics that emphasize the

<sup>1</sup>The Comisión Tripartita was created in 2004, and reaffirmed in September 2008, as an agreement of wills between the Government of Antioquia, the Mayor's Office of Medellín and the Metropolitan Area of the Aburrá Valley, which seeks to combine efforts in the promotion of development, territorial ordering and regional competitiveness (Zapata and Vásquez 2012) cited by (Zapata-Cortés 2016).

**Table 13.1** Summary of Medellín's development plans 2004–2019

<i>Period</i>	<i>Development plan</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>Strategy of city diplomacy</i>	<i>Description</i>
2004–2007	Medellín, Compromiso de toda la ciudadanía (Medellín, commitment of the whole population)	Sergio Fajardo Valderrama	MEDELLÍN, INTEGRATED WITH THE REGION AND THE WORLD	To launch territorial marketing programs that build an image of our city and region. To facilitate the participation of the city in national discussions related to economic and physical integration processes. To influence the formation of a global culture and a multicultural sensibility. (p. 144)
2008–2011	Medellín es solidaria y competitiva (Medellín is solidary and competitive)	Alonso Salazar Jaramillo	MEDELLÍN, A CITY OF THE WORLD	"We want Medellín to consolidate as a good platform for business. We will strengthen international fairs, captivate foreign investment accompanying the one that is already here and attracting new, and strengthen the current business network".
2012–2015	Medellín, un hogar para la vida (Medellín, a home for life)	Anibal Gaviria Correa	MEDELLÍN, CITY CONNECTED WITH THE WORLD	<b>Internationalization program</b> Bilingualism for internationalization. Management for international and national cooperation. Support to attract events, fairs and national and international conventions. Attraction of investment. Youth Olympic Games. (p. 119)

*(continued)*

Table 13.1 (continued)

<i>Period</i>	<i>Development plan</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>Strategy of city diplomacy</i>	<i>Description</i>
2016–2019	Medellín cuenta con vos (Medellín counts on you)	Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga	MEDELLÍN INNOVATING	<b>Internationalization program</b> Regionalization and internationalization of sport To encourage the promotion and marketing of the city as a tourist destination. Medellín city of major events, conventions and fairs. Medellín, laboratory of live practices. Promotion of the city as an investment destination. Strengthening of the Antioqueños Network abroad (SosPaísa). International cooperation alliances. (p. 256)

Source: own elaboration based on the development plans under study

social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of the city as well as a high-quality infrastructure: *“for this new millennium, the municipal administrations have allocated part of their investment in the transformation of the city”* (Trujillo-Urrego 2017, p. 11).

The city of Medellín began to adopt image planning strategies through the development plans between 2004 and 2019 (compare Tables 13.2, 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5). City brand strategies are not limited to the promotion of the image, but extend to much more: to convert the city into an experience for the interests of investors, politicians, real estate, construction projects, planners, architects and other groups that stand to benefit from the improvement of the role of their cities (Helmy 2008). There are also different city brand strategies that could be developed with diverse objectives and visions of the development of the city. Thus, the city brand becomes a means to build a competitive advantage that allows for the distinguishing and positioning of the image of the city internationally.

The following section describes the key strategies of the development plans under study that have allowed the city of Medellín to stand out as a financial, industrial, commercial and service center in Colombia, primarily in the textile, garment, metalworking, electrical and electronic, telecommunications, automotive, food, and health industries (Alcaldía de Medellín, Medellín Como Vamos 2017).

### 13.4.2 *The Brand Medellín: A City Process Through Development Plans*

The development plans have been a starting point to plan the city strategies for Medellín. These plans have allowed the city not only to develop in several economic sectors, but also to be considered a model city of urban development. In addition, Medellín managed to attract foreign investments (Revista Dinero 2017).

In the following, the main proposals made in the development plans between 2004 and 2019 will be analyzed in chronological order: Sergio Fajardo Valderrama, Alonso Salazar Jaramillo, Anibal Gaviria Correa and Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga. The authors were also the mayors of the city when the respective plans were published.

#### *Development Plan 2004–2007: “Medellín, Compromiso de Toda la Ciudadanía” (“Medellín, commitment of the whole population”) – Sergio Fajardo Valderrama*

The need to transform the image of Medellín emerged as a part of the administration of Sergio Fajardo in the period 2004 and 2007 with its development plan “Medellín, commitment of the whole population”. It was focused on the community and took as its premise solving their own problems under the principle of “co-responsibility”, that is, the articulation of the efforts of all (Fajardo Valderrama 2004). This government program established five lines of work where the following issues were addressed: problems of human development, social urbanism, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, and the integration of the region with the world in a comprehensive manner.

This period was framed in a context of violence and insecurity, with a lack of governability mainly in areas of urban territory controlled by armed groups that had imposed their law, collected taxes, limited mobility and developed a scenario of fear that did not allow free community development (Fajardo Valderrama 2007).

Sergio Fajardo was prepared to combat the stigma of Medellín as “the most violent place on earth” characterized by a context of insecurity, fear and inequality. His administration agreed that the city should promote Integral Human Development and, in this way, fight against poverty, exclusion, inequality, violence and intolerance (Fajardo Valderrama 2004). Sustained and sustainable economic growth should be the consequence of human development, as well as optimism and hope for citizens.

Fajardo’s development plan included the reconstruction of the social fabric through a peace and reconciliation program with 3884 beneficiaries, of which 72% were incorporated into a study program. The strengthening of socio-affective ties, the link to the productive sector, the generation of legal income and inclusion in social life were decisive in the outcome of the program (Fajardo Valderrama 2004).

Regarding the mobilization of inclusion and the quality of education, the city and flagship project “Medellín la más educada” (“Medellín the most educated”) was created with the social urbanism program through the PIU (Comprehensive Urban Projects) that hosted urban interventions in housing, education, sports, recreation and culture (Trujillo-Urrego 2017). These projects were implemented in the areas of the city with less possibility of development due to their conditions of abandonment, violence and poverty. Among these projects were five library parks, the renovation of the Botanical Garden, the Explora Park (a center for science and technology), the House of Children’s Reading, a Cultural Development Center and a theater that became a cultural center in the heart of Medellín (Agency for Cooperation and Investment, ACI, 2014, p. 149). To foster art projects, incentives and scholarships were introduced, and events such as the Speaker Festival and the Book and Culture Fair were held (Trujillo-Urrego 2017).

As part of the PIU, the Mayor’s Office developed sustainable road mobility programs that sought to improve the quality of life for citizens, by enabling the construction of more vehicular traffic routes and urban walks (bike paths), the planning of new sections of Metroplús (integrated subway lines through buses) and new Metrocable stations. These last two projects were launched in the succeeding administration by Alonso Salazar (Fajardo Valderrama 2004, p. 107).

Another part of the strategy of this mandate included fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of the region and the ability to generate wealth through productive, supportive and equitable work, thus creating an



efficient, dynamic and competitive economy that would allow the region to be connected with the world and to develop its capabilities within the framework of innovation and globalization (Fajardo Valderrama 2004). For this purpose, different organizations and incubators of entrepreneurship, employment generation programs and accompaniment to companies for greater sustainability were developed and promoted.

Medellín was planned as a city that is integrated with the region and with the world and as a city that can be projected internationally, from an integral perspective. It articulated the economic, social, political and cultural processes, in order to achieve greater use of opportunities and a more equitable distribution of the territory (Fajardo Valderrama 2004).

As part of the city's diplomacy, the administration of Sergio Fajardo elaborated the strategy "Medellín integrated with the region and the world", which states as its objectives: to launch territorial marketing programs, to build an image of the city and region, to facilitate the participation of the city in national discussions related to the processes of economic and physical integration, and to influence the formation of a global culture and a multicultural sensibility (see Table 13.1), with the following purpose: "the development of Medellín finds itself intimately linked to the future of the region, the country and the world" (Fajardo Valderrama 2004, p. 144).

*Development Plan 2008–2011: "Medellín es Solidaria y Competitiva"*  
(*"Medellín is solidary and competitive"*) – Alonso Salazar Jaramillo

The mayor of this period decided to give continuity to the strategic lines implemented by his predecessor Sergio Fajardo, focusing on human development, entrepreneurship, education and competitiveness (Salazar 2008). In addition to the above, the development plan proposed the following guidelines that aimed to improve the image of the city. Urbanism and the environment for the people: Making Medellín a city with territorial equity, with high-quality equipment for the whole population and generous public space, with functional balance of the territory, with a model that addresses and mitigates the problems of congestion, accidents and environmental impacts, and with public services accessible to all, which contribute to improving the quality of life of the population (Salazar 2008, p. 66).

In line with the previous strategy, the development plan proposed a city with regional and global projection (Salazar 2008, p. 75). The Medellín

Digital Program<sup>2</sup> was implemented, with the aim of making Medellín a city connected with the world through modern technological systems that allow exchange. The projects that strengthened this line aimed to promote and position Medellín as a destination for foreign investment, to create an international cooperation program, to promote the city to key international actors, to position fairs and events as showcases for the city, and to create a culture for internationalization (Salazar 2008, p. 80).

In this regard, it is worth noting that the city diplomacy strategy of Alonso Salazar's administration is called "Medellín, a city of the world", with a special emphasis on consolidating the platform for businesses, hosting international fairs and attracting foreign direct investment.

*Development Plan 2012–2015: "Un hogar para la vida" ("A home for life") – Anibal Gaviria Correa*

Within this plan, the slogan "Medellín ciudad inteligente" ("Medellín smart city") was proposed. This component was articulated with the initiatives of the Medellín Digital Program that started in 2007 where the leap toward the appropriation of a new digital culture in the city was achieved, expanding access and connectivity and encouraging the development of relevant content and services to improve the quality of life for all (Gaviria Correa 2012).

In addition, Medellín tried to continue to attract political, urban and social projects as well as foreign investment.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it showed its worth as a tourist destination. Its exports, human capital and privileged geostrategic location would serve together in a coordinated way to promote Medellín and Antioquia. To enhance the internationalization of the city, the ACI of Medellín was fostered (Gaviria Correa 2012, p. 508).

In this way and articulated with the ACI of Medellín, this administration proposed the city diplomacy strategy entitled "Medellín, a city

<sup>2</sup> Medellín Digital is a program implemented in Medellín that seeks to bring technology to the daily life of people. It is seen as one way of making Medellín a city connected with the world. Medellín Digital was initiated and carried out by the Mayor's Office of Medellín, the Ministry de Comunicaciones, the company UNE and the EPM Foundation (Mdigital 2019).

<sup>3</sup> In the most recent ranking of Ibero-American Hubs of FDI presented by FDI Intelligence, a division of Financial Times Ltd. (largest information center on foreign direct investment in the world), Medellín ranks first in Latin America due to its growth rate in the reception of projects of FDI between the periods 2005–2009 and 2010–2014. This development shows the increasing confidence of regional companies in the process of transforming the city (Management Report 2015, p. 124).

connected with the world". This strategy was implemented with the following internationalization plans: bilingualism for internationalization; management for international and national cooperation; support to attract events, fairs and national and international conventions; attraction of investment; and Youth Olympic Games (Gaviria Correa 2012, p. 119).

*Development Plan 2016–2019: “Medellín cuenta con vos” (“Medellín counts on you”) – Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga*

Under the current administration, the city has been giving continuity to the positioning of the Medellín brand. In its development plan, the “Cities for Life” project is proposed. “Cities for Life” is a global open innovation strategy that seeks to connect cities via a platform where challenges and solutions to urban problems are assembled so that they are available to others. By being part of the network, Medellín benefits from solutions found by other cities, and other cities can learn from Medellín’s experiences.

This project also generates strong connections with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and well-known international cities including New York, Paris, Tel-Aviv and Barcelona (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016, p. 106).

Within the context of “Medellín Innovating”, a strategy of city diplomacy is proposed in this program, which is committed to innovation and investment in telecommunication and IT, to ensure that regions, societies and countries obtain better conditions in their quality of life (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016).

Within the “Medellín Innovating” strategy, the current Mayor proposed to develop the following programs that will help consolidate the city diplomacy of Medellín: regionalization and internationalization of sport; enhancing the promotion and marketing of the city as a tourist destination; Medellín, city of great events, conventions and fairs; Medellín, laboratory of life practices; promotion of the city as an investment destination; and strengthening of the Antioqueños Network abroad (SosPaísa) and international cooperation partnerships (see Table 13.2) (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016, p. 256).

Since the beginning of its internationalization process, the image of Medellín has changed drastically. Today, the city is recognized for its transformation and its capacity to establish innovative solutions to local problems (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016). It has managed to become an international agent. The decisions to invest in internationalization strategies have allowed the city to become visible to the world. Its approaches, among

others, have been the attraction of direct foreign investment, the generation of key alliances for international cooperation and knowledge exchange, and the positioning of Medellín as a tourist destination and as a venue for major events (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016, p. 257).

Today, this development plan continues with the strategy of city diplomacy with a strong focus on internationalization, in order to foster local development through global connections. This goes hand in hand with the leading role that cities currently have in the global sphere. Today, local governments are the main actors in making proposals for territories that call for networking and for the search for a more intense international connectedness.

With regard to local networks, this local administration proposed the project “Strengthening of the Antioqueños Network abroad (SosPaisa)” (“You are Paisa”). Paisas are people who live in the district of Antioquia, whose capital is Medellín. The network has more than 10,000 members who want to maintain their link with the city despite living abroad. This is an example of dissemination of the transformation of Medellín and a network for the search for allied citizens, who want to contribute from wherever they are to the well-being and development of the city. The current development plan proposes to strengthen this network, so that each of the actions that these countries carry out in coordination with the ACI Medellín can add to the local development (Gutiérrez Zuluaga 2016, p. 259).

### 13.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITY DIPLOMACY IN MEDELLÍN

Some of the goals reached regarding city diplomacy between 2004 and 2019 in Medellín are described in Table 13.2. They are highlighted actions taken in favor of increasing the internationalization of the city as a final goal of interconnection with the world.

#### 13.5.1 *Report 2004–2007: “Medellín, Compromiso de Toda la Ciudadanía” (“Medellín, commitment of the whole population”) – Sergio Fajardo Valderrama*

This report outlines the achievements in the context of International Relations, International Business and Territorial Marketing.

**Table 13.2** Summary of Medellín's development plans 2004–2019

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Strategy: Medellín integrated with the region and the world</i>
<b>International relations</b>	<p>A network of allies was built with more than 500 members. The following countries were established as markets for cooperation: Spain, the Netherlands, European Commission, Brazil, the USA, Japan, China, Switzerland and Chile; and for investment: the USA, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, Peru, Spain, France, Chile, Argentina and Costa Rica.</p> <p>The SosPaisa network has 6500 members: people from Medellín (and the region) living abroad.</p> <p>Seven communities of people from the state of Antioquia that are currently living abroad helped to develop strategic projects of the Municipality of Medellín. They are located in Barcelona, Madrid, Miami, Chicago, New York, Washington and Mexico D.F.</p>
<b>International business</b>	<p>The city's trade fair calendar expanded from 3 to 14 international fairs backed by the Municipality of Medellín, which are a valuable showcase to attract national and international buyers and investors.</p>
<b>Territorial marketing</b>	<p>While reaching 38th position in 2003 among the best cities in Latin America to do business, Medellín went up to 25th position in 2007 (América Economía 2007).</p> <p>One hundred and one foreign investors are settled in the city, and the city counts 80 potential investors, mainly in the following industries: Electric Power, Construction, Business Tourism and Textile/Clothing, Design and Fashion.</p> <p>The Latin American Business Networks (so-called Macroruedas) and the negotiation rounds of the FTA with the Northern Triangle of Central America were developed in the city for three consecutive years.</p> <p>The Marketing Plan pointed to the promotion of the city, both nationally and internationally; and an extensive program of diffusion was executed on the occasion of the visit of the King of Spain in 2007.</p> <p>The "Ruta Medellín se Transforma" ("Medellín is transforming") was launched with the assistance of nearly 2500 people, as well as the "Discover Medellín" television program, the website and the Tourist Indicators System. City events of great city image projection that were implemented in this period: the International Tango Festival, the International Poetry Festival, the Flower Fair and the Silleteros Parade (Silleteros refers to a tradition of carrying flower baskets on one's back).</p>

Source: own elaboration based on the development plans under study

**13.5.2    Report 2008–2011: “Medellín es Solidaria y Competitiva” (“Medellín is solidary and competitive”) – Alonso Salazar Jaramillo**

This management report highlights the connection with international visitors, as well as people from the state of Antioquia who are currently living abroad.

**Table 13.3**    Summary of the report 2008–2011

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Strategy: Medellín, a city of the world</i>
<b>MEDELLÍN AND THE WORLD TODAY</b>	<p>During this period, guests and delegations from countries around the globe visited the city, and the management of attention to validators was improved.</p> <p>The SosPaisa network, the network of people from Medellín and the region living abroad, was strengthened, making them ambassadors of Medellín in the world.</p> <p>The management of meetings between people from Medellín and the region living abroad was advanced, as well as strategic alliances with organizations of Colombians abroad, private companies and universities. Thus, during this period, 1737 people from Medellín and the region living in 72 countries supported the transformation of Medellín as ambassadors of their city.</p> <p>The number of international journalists in Medellín increased significantly, counting more than 900 representatives of international media who worked in the city between 2008 and 2011.</p> <p>The city was integrated into several international networks, such as the International Association of Educating Cities, the Iberamerican Center for Strategic Urban Development (Cideu), Sister Cities - Red of Local Governments, Cities for Mobility (a global network for urban mobility based in Stuttgart, Germany), the Strategic Coordination Platform: Urban planning and Security in the city (led by Peñalolén, Chile, and the deputation of Barcelona); and the LUCI Association (an international network of cities of urban lighting).</p>

Source: own elaboration based on the report under study

### 13.5.3 Report 2012–2015: “*Un hogar para la vida*” (“*A home for life*”) – Anibal Gaviria Correa

In the management report corresponding to Anibal Gaviria Correa, the increase in foreign direct investment and the realization of world-class events are highlighted.

**Table 13.4** Summary of the report 2012–2015

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Strategy: Medellín, a city connected with the world</i>
<b>CONNECTED WITH THE WORLD</b>	<p>The plan “Medellín city connected with the world” made an investment of 6% of resources to promote “Medellín, a home for innovation and competitiveness”.</p> <p>The Medellinnovation Festival is an event to foster the culture of innovation in the city. The festival is held annually and has attracted more than 12,000 people in more than 24 events in the field of innovation.</p> <p>The ACI of Medellín supports the fairs and strategic events that boost the economy of the city, such as Colombiamoda, Colombiatex, Expoartesano, Emtech, Expoagrofuturo, Medesalud and Fise, among others, in its different versions. The execution of these fairs and events created business investment expectations above US\$3845 million between 2012 and 2015. In the same period, Medellín hosted 273 major world-class events, with the most important ones being the World Urban Forum, the General Assembly of the International Tourism Organization, Medellinnovation Festival, Innovation Land, Felaban Annual Meeting, MeetLatam, Global Entrepreneurship Week and Colombiamoda. With the events came 204 international speakers, some of whom were Steve Wozniak, Uri Lavine, Steven Johnson, Chris Anderson, Jay Rao and Joseph Stiglitz.</p>

Source: own elaboration based on the report under study

**13.5.4 Report 2016–2019: “Medellín cuenta con vos” (“Medellín counts on you”) – Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga**

The results shown in the administration of Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga can only partly be analyzed, as the administration is still ongoing and there are no data on the final goals achieved in terms of city diplomacy. Partial results are shown in Table 13.5.

**Table 13.5** Summary of the report 2016–2019

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Strategy: Medellín innovating</i>
<b>INTERNACIONALIZATION</b>	<p>Three major events in the context of books and reading took place in this period: the Fair “Book Days” (Feria Popular Dias del Libro), the Youth Reading Stop (Parada Juvenil de la Lectura) and the Book and Culture Festival (Festival del Libro y de la Cultura). The last one, in 2016, counted approximately 420,000 visitors, 353 invited guests, 45 talks, 104 book launches, 66 activities with allied entities and 80 hours of artistic and cultural programs. The city highlights 2400 reading promotion workshops and 85,185 visits to the Living Reading Garden (Jardín Lectura Viva) aiming to promote a love for books in children.</p> <p>In 2016, the International Association of Congresses and Conventions published the results of the evaluation of 2015, in which, with the completion of 36 events, Medellín ascended from 72nd to 70th position (in comparison to 2014), surpassing other cities such as Abu Dhabi, Moscow, Cancun, Miami and Panama City.</p> <p>In 2016, more than 80 events were captured for the city, surpassing the goal set for the year. Among the events held, the World Economic Forum, the Flower Fair, Colombiamoda, Expocamacol and Expoartesano stand out. Additionally, the economic valuation of the city freepress strategy reached more than 48 billion pesos in 2016.</p>

(continued)



**Table 13.5** (continued)

<i>Programs</i>	<i>Strategy: Medellín innovating</i>
	Among the most important international cooperation actions are the recognitions given to the city: Lee Kuan Yew World Prize, considered worldwide as the Nobel City Prize; the cooperation granted by the Canadian Embassy to local initiatives on health, social inclusion and family; and the technical advice of the government of South Korea for the elaboration of the Integral Master Plan for Smart Mobility of Medellín.

Source: own elaboration based on the report under study

### 13.6 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the management reports presented by the governments during the period 2004–2019, we can see the increase in the development of paradiplomacy and the city brand, in terms of programs that were directed toward international relations, international business and the internationalization of the city. These allowed a greater boost to the visibility and connectivity of the city with the country and the world.

Some additional conclusions can be drawn. As the development plans show, there have been continuous efforts to connect Medellín with the region, the country and the world. The development plans under study show the internationalization and interconnection of the city as one dominant common element throughout the different administrative periods.

From the perspective of city branding and bearing Kavaratsis' (2009) framework for place branding in mind, Medellín managed its place branding in various forms throughout the legislative periods under study. In their development plans, the administrations clearly formulated the vision and strategy for the city, especially focusing on internationalization, connectedness and civil engagement. They created an internal culture by establishing organizations and (cultural) events in the city, promoting Medellín as a city of education and business. They strengthened the participation of local communities and of local entrepreneurship, for example, by creating networks, events and institutions that support civil engagement. They improved relationships with stakeholders, for example with the people from Medellín living abroad, with cities all over the world, and via memberships in international networks.

Concerning infrastructure, Medellín improved its public transportation system and managed to connect more distant parts (and parts that are more difficult to reach) to the Metro system; additionally, it invested, for example, in parks, library parks and museums to improve the citizen's living conditions and provide access to education. These libraries and museums also contributed to improving the image of the city itself, which also became more attractive to tourists, companies and foreign investors. With the convention center and the increase in fairs held in the city, foreign direct investment also increased between 2004 and 2019, proving that Medellín has become attractive for companies and businesses. The communication about Medellín's change is both intended and unintended, only partly managed by the city (e.g. via the institutions dealing with the internationalization of the city that were established in recent years), and partly promoted by the increasing numbers of visitors to Medellín.

Not answered yet is how this internationalization process can be supported through changes in public institutions, such as schools and political institutions, mostly with regard to the challenges connected to a foreign language, and the inclusion of intercultural aspects in education and working life.

To sum up, the local governments of Medellín have undertaken great efforts to change the image of the city and, in terms of paradiplomacy, to create a new identity for Medellín and the region. This process is expected to continue also after the upcoming elections in October 2019. It will be interesting to see how the city manages to solve the still existing social problems to attract even more visitors and investors.

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## City Diplomacy in Young Democracies: The Case of the Baltics

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### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

The current processes of urbanization and globalization have resulted in new challenges and opportunities (Stren and Friendly 2017) for cities around the globe. Despite some people believing the current dawn of cities to be nothing more than the “*new Medieval*” (Herschel and Newman 2017), or, on the contrary, raising the question of whether “*the cities are the new states*” (OECD 2016), cities do play a significant role. They are the new *actants* (Acuto 2013) of global affairs and have led to the rise of quite a new phenomenon—city diplomacy.

Previous research and studies on city diplomacy might be divided into five categories, focusing on: (i) city-twinning, (ii) city networks and the possibilities they provide, (iii) the smart city concept, (iv) the impact of

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mayors on city diplomacy and the internationalization of cities, and (v) the broader topic of paradiplomacy. The statistical analysis reveals city diplomacy to be used for the cooperation of cities at horizontal level rather than for hierarchical diplomatic relations. Cities cooperate and collaborate with the aim of solving common self-governance problems, implementing common projects, and establishing long-term partnerships to share knowledge and competencies.

It is not possible, however, to assert that the city diplomacy discourse is comprehensive while it mainly covers the world's cities or large metropolitan areas, namely in the countries of the *old* or *matured* (Biswas and Ofori 2015) democracies (e.g. United States, Western European countries) that have longstanding democratic traditions warranted by democratic government, which can be achieved when a government fulfills its political responsibility and accountability by showing the capability to undertake institutional reform (Heo 2018). The rapidly changing world, however, has pushed to the forefront the countries of the *young democracies* (e.g. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, South Korea, and Indonesia) that have been undergoing or have recently undergone dynamic social, legal, and political changes (Harašta 2013; Heo 2018).

In this chapter, we state that young democracies are a project structure that means the research object constantly changes: some elements disappear, while new ones appear. Even though their cities are participants in various cross-border projects, networks, and alliances, the scope of participation and the magnitude of the city diplomacy discourse in these activities are not clear. It is not yet known how this participation corresponds to the city diplomacy discourse in the young democracy countries.

For closer investigation, we chose to analyze the Baltic states as representatives of the young democracy countries, more specifically the four cities that participate in the major *Eurocities* network: the capitals Vilnius (LT), Riga (LV), and Tallinn (ES) as full members, and Klaipėda (LT) as an associated partner. Empirical research unites both the view of the inside experts (i.e. from the respective cities) as well as outside profiling (i.e. statistical investigation). First comes the survey of the internal experts conducted in the respective cities with the aim of revealing the specific variables for city diplomacy in the young democracies. The generalized results of the research are provided using factor analysis. Second comes the comparative statistical analysis based on the content analysis of press reports and information from public web pages. The systemized data helped to individualize and to reveal a more detailed city diplomacy

picture of the respective cities, including the partnership geography and the categories which were marked either as not important by the experts or not available in the *Eurocities* network. Additionally, the results of both research efforts enabled the authors to show the Baltic cities in the context of the European Union (EU).

The article concludes that cities of the young democracies do not consciously seek to create long-lasting diplomatic relations as it refers to a theory of diplomacy (Constantinou and Sharpa 2016; Berridge 2015; Pouliot and Cornut 2015) for either solving common global problems or buffering serious tensions. Cities mostly create diplomatic ties via town twinning, city networking, and smart city categories for the purposes of knowledge development, cultural or economic affairs (which are based on the performance of NGOs) within the EU. Mayors play a significant role, which can be viewed as representative of the features of paradiplomacy. However, the categories of *mayors' impact* and *paradiplomacy* are difficult to evaluate with no in-depth inside view and perhaps require another approach.

## 14.2 CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND DEBATES ON CITY DIPLOMACY

Trends and debates on city diplomacy have shaped the phenomena over time. Here we highlight five interrelated major trends of contemporary city diplomacy: *city twinning*, *city networks*, *smart cities*, *the impact of mayors on city diplomacy*, and *paradiplomacy*.

The academic discussion on city diplomacy usually starts with **city twinning**. The idea of twin relations between cities was introduced during the Cold War (Jańczak 2017). From the perspective of foreign policy studies, initiating the twinning regime requires the involvement of the representatives of state-level foreign affairs. However, Joenniemi (2014) argues that, in the context of twinning ties, foreign affairs are not governed by the state and are expanded by involving local actors. Nowadays, in fact, the value of twinning governance has declined (Joenniemi 2014). According to Joenniemi (2014) and Jańczak (2017), city twinning is a process involving at least two towns, or city pairs, through the shared togetherness and the feeling of mutual belonging. The core idea of twinning is based on two distinct ideas. On one hand, it could be understood as spatial—historical features, common origin, shared “genes” related to specific spaces



(e.g. joint city centers), and shared social, geographical, political, and economic processes. On the other hand, it could be understood as the strategy of towns related to the organization of their current international relations, or the relationship between cultures and individuals (Yamin and Utami 2016; Jańczak 2017). As reported by Joenniemi (2014), twin cities support tight trans-border agglomeration that is capable of utilizing the effects of economies of scale. Leffel and Acuto (2018) interpret twinning as an alternative to networking.

The second important approach in city diplomacy is *city networks*. Numerous authors including Acuto et al. (2017) perceive the concept of city networks either in the form of city-to-city and city-to-other-actors cooperation or as city diplomacy across a variety of networks. Membership in the city network supports a mindset oriented toward economic criteria (e.g. GDP or purchasing power increase). Leffel and Acuto (2018) distinguish the number of possibilities that cities gain through networking with other cities: (i) learning from other cities about policy implementation, (ii) sharing one's own best practice with other cities, and (iii) knowledge production from the experience of cities in the network. There are authors (e.g. Gutiérrez-Camps 2013; Acuto et al. 2017; Leffel and Acuto 2018) who emphasize several positive effects of city networking, such as: sharing resources for the creation of reputation, gaining international recognition, identifying partners for cooperation projects, peer-to-peer learning, offering online courses for members and local leaders, exchanging information and communication, transferring knowledge, and influencing legislature. According to Leffel and Acuto (2018) the position of the city in the hierarchy influences its economic growth potential. The application to networks, furthermore, requires motivation, capacities, and opportunity. Van Overbeek (2007) analyzed the issue and observed that city diplomacy very often relates to projects. In such circumstances, cities which are more connected with other cities, regions, or even different governmental bodies—either national or supranational—have a greater chance to become involved in projects and be involved in networking. However, participation in networks can be limited due to the membership fee and desire to contribute to the common events.

A more novel approach to city diplomacy is the concept of the *smart city*. Cities should in fact start looking for “silver bullets” in order to become smart cities. Contemporary self-governance practice has given rise to the approach that a city should be run as a company. The rise of this form of creative city stimulates connections, relationships, and

interrelations between cities and other actors. City diplomacy in such a context is highly stimulated by knowledge, creativity, and innovations. Technologically creative cities become a benchmark for other cities as they find creative solutions for better infrastructure, transport, housing, water supply, and cultural heritage projects (Dvorak et al. 2019). According to Bogilovic and Pevcin (2018), three conditions play the core role: creative hardware (i.e. infrastructure for possible creative industries), creative software (i.e. the ambience and vibrancy which enables creative industries), and creative orgware (i.e. policies and governance for creative industries).

A parallel approach to city diplomacy discusses the *impact of mayors on city diplomacy*. The promotion of a centralized approach by means of austerity measures during the global financial crises<sup>1</sup> (2008–2012) led to a higher democracy deficit, lack of autonomy, and shallow thinking at the local level. There are several reasons for the change, and municipal democrats argue that local democracy may be enhanced by active intercity collaborations. Therefore, local governance led by the influential mayor would function effectively. The impact of mayors helps to create networks, initiate new international priorities, provide regional and international expertise, project-based actions, construct clusters, and share infrastructure. This partly results from mayors learning from each other and transferring initiatives to their own cities. Of course, the state has many ways to block city initiatives (legislature, budget reduction, lobbies) and create unnecessary temptation. This is well reflected in Barber's (2013) rhetorical question: are the interests of the cities and of the state to which cities belong in harmony or in conflict?

The final approach is that of *paradiplomacy*. Several scholars (see La Porte 2013; Terruso 2016) raise doubts about the efficiency of national governments and the weakness of international law in the case of frozen conflicts. According to Chan (2016), national government is no longer the only legitimate and effective political institution within national boundaries in the age of globalization. What are the reasons for concern in terms of paradiplomacy? A few of the main concerns relate to the national government's detachment from the management of local self-governments and the misleading role of democratization in foreign policy (Yamin and Utami 2016; Stren and Friendly 2017). Powerful and rich

<sup>1</sup> The crises started with the bankruptcy of investment bank Lehman Brothers which led to the global banking crisis and increased the debt levels of many countries throughout the world.

states can promote their own transactional approach through foreign policy, and thus reject many of the main tenets of the democratic international order (Schweller 2018). This critique is grounded on the arguments that cities can act together in peace and harmony for the greater good and promote discussion during disputes. Cities have sufficient capacity to redefine many scales of international politics; they can provide tangible solutions for citizens to achieve specific interests and develop public diplomacy initiatives (Chan 2016; Yamin and Utami 2016; Terruso 2016). We found evidence of that in the work of Van Overbeek (2007) who analyzed the role of city diplomacy in peacebuilding. The findings confirm that city diplomacy can play an important role in the

developing of twinning methodology, technical assistance, advising on municipal policy development, cooperation with citizens and civil society organizations, awareness raising activities, promoting mutual understanding, capacity building programs, and advocacy and lobby activities at the level of national governments and sometimes the international community. (Van Overbeek 2007, p. 63)

### 14.3 APPLICATION OF ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CASE OF THE BALTICS

The diverse topic of city diplomacy has attracted numerous researchers around the world. Nonetheless, the discourse mainly covers the countries of the so-called old democracies, leaving the *young democracy* countries quite aside. Even though their cities are participants in various cross-border projects, networks, and alliances, the scope of participation and the magnitude of the *city diplomacy* discourse in these activities are not clear. In other words, it is not clear how this participation corresponds to the city diplomacy discourse in the countries of the young democracies. For the purpose of revealing the processes taking place on this *terra-incognita*, we chose to analyze the four cities of the three Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), that participate in the major *Eurocities* network: the capitals Vilnius (LT), Riga (LV), and Tallinn (ES) as full members, and Klaipeda (LT) as an associated partner. *Eurocities* was formed in 1986 as a network uniting the mayors of six large European cities: Barcelona, Birmingham, Frankfurt, Lyon, Milan, and Rotterdam, for the purpose of enabling and promoting local governments in a multilevel governance framework. The prerequisite for becoming a member of the network is

having a population of at least 250,000 inhabitants (Niederhafner 2013). If the city is not eligible for full or associate membership, it is eligible to become an associate partner. Today the network covers over 140 cities and over 45 partner-cities throughout Europe. *Eurocities* is empowered to distribute the opinions of the respective cities to the EU institutions and stakeholders in order to shape the EU legislation which responds to the needs of local governments while tackling strategic challenges at the local level (Eurocities 2019). The main executive body of 12 members is the *Eurocities* Executive Committee, which consists of mayors or leaders of the city councils (Niederhafner 2013). The work is organized through a variety of working groups, projects, and events where city members can exchange and share information, knowledge, and know-how and learn from each other (Eurocities 2019).

Membership in *Eurocities* covers the seven main areas of partnership: culture, economy, environment, knowledge society, mobility, social affairs, and cooperation (Eurocities 2019). These particular areas serve as the analytical framework for the empirical research. One new additional area of urban governance is included in the research as statistical analysis revealed it to be important for the development of the respective cities, as it was included in many developmental programs. Being full members of the network, the three capital cities are eligible to participate in all areas of the partnership. The city of Klaipeda, as an associated partner, is only covered by the spheres of culture and cooperation.

All these areas have respective work groups within: the three capital cities have the possibility for active participation in a total of 41 work groups, while an associated partner may participate in only 14 work groups. As presented in Table 14.1, evaluating the activity rate of the respective cities, Tallinn is the most active; but surprisingly the associated partner (non-capital city) Klaipeda is as active as the capital city Riga, leaving the capital city Vilnius behind.

**Table 14.1** Activity rate in work groups

	<i>Vilnius</i> (Lithuania)	<i>Riga</i> (Latvia)	<i>Tallinn</i> (Estonia)	<i>Klaipeda</i> (Lithuania)
Number of work groups the city participates in	12 of 41	14 of 41	20 of 41	5 of 14
Activity percentage	29.27%	34.15%	46.34%	35.71%

The situation described above calls a natural curiosity to dive deeper and analyze which factors impact diversity in activity: the skills and leadership of mayors, consistent implementation of the strategy, or perhaps private initiatives. For developing an analytical framework, it is appropriate to investigate these respective cities while using the prism of the five major trends of contemporary city diplomacy described earlier: *city twinning*, *city networks*, *smart cities*, *the impact of mayors on city diplomacy*, and *para-diplomacy*. This framework is suitable for revealing the dominant categories and areas of the development of city diplomacy in the Baltics. Finally, the applied framework helps to reveal the development of city diplomacy in the cities of the so-called young democracies.

#### 14.4 METHODOLOGY

The construction of the empirical research is composed of two stages, covering both the view of internal experts and empirical investigation. This approach helps not only to obtain more reliable data but also to examine the phenomenon from the comparative perspective.

In order to reveal how cities themselves value their efforts in the area of city diplomacy, the survey of the local authorities of the respective cities was conducted. We identified the members of local authorities as experts possessing all the necessary information about the actual implementation of city diplomacy efforts in practice. As the typical structure of most self-governing cities consists of the representative body, executive body, and the administration, the research sample is formed from the respective members of the representative body such as the mayor, deputy mayors, and their political advisers; from the respective members of the executive body such as the directors of administration and their deputies; and, finally, the responsible administrative staff members from the departments responsible for international relations. As such, we selected six experts for the survey from each city, or a total of 24 experts. Each expert received a prepared questionnaire where she/he had: (1) to evaluate (i) the main means used, (ii) skills needed, and (iii) areas covered in the context of city diplomacy, and (2) to evaluate the selected city diplomacy factors according to their impact on each represented city.

Twenty-four questionnaires were provided to the experts, of which, 22 were completed and returned, so the rate of response was 91.6%. For the first part of the survey, a simple ranking tool was used whereby experts had to evaluate the means, skills, and areas of city diplomacy using a six-point

scale ranging from 1 to 6 (i.e. from 1=not important at all to 6=very important). As described earlier, contemporary trends in city diplomacy reveal *city twinning*, *city networks*, *smart cities*, *the impact of mayors on city diplomacy*, and *paradiplomacy* to be the main developed categories. Thus, for the second part of the survey based on scientific analysis, each category is related to the respective statements (see Table 14.2) and later each statement is converted into the variable for the survey. A total of 30 statements were selected. These statements were revised by five additional experts from Lithuania and abroad: three experts in the area of city diplomacy from non-researched cities and two scientists with a professional interest in city diplomacy. None of the statements was excluded after the revision; only the re-construction of several items followed in order to make all the statements relatively simple in terms of language construction and neutral in wording, as well as fairly brief. All the statements (or items) were rated for the purpose of the research using a six-point scale ranging from 1 to 6 where the experts of the survey had to indicate how relevant each statement was for the city they represent (i.e. 1=not relevant at all, 6=very relevant).

The factor analysis is used in order to reveal the dominant categorization of city diplomacy in the Baltics. For reasons of accuracy, the variables are transformed into z-scores and these z-values are used for the factor analysis, which is conducted using the principal component analysis and the Varimax rotation with the Kaiser criterion.

For cross-checking purposes, as was mentioned above, the comparative statistical investigation is used for the research. We conducted a content analysis of press reports and information from cities' web pages available on the Google platform revealing the activities of the respective cities that apply city diplomacy to cover a wider geographic area than the Eurocities network. The information analyzed covers the period of the last 10 years. For methodological purposes, an assumption is made that the most important information about the partnerships should be announced in the media and, therefore, available on the Google platform (if there is no information available on the formal websites of municipalities). All the information provided in English and Russian was used for the research, thus excluding the information provided in national languages. This could be viewed as a limitation of the research; however, bearing in mind that all forms of partnerships in the case of city diplomacy, usually cross-national borders, this is a suitable approach for the analysis. The systemized data helped to individualize and to reveal a detailed picture of city diplomacy

**Table 14.2** Scholarly categories to describe city diplomacy

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Description</i>
City twinning	<p>City twinning assumes at least two towns, city pairs, a shared togetherness, a feeling of mutual belonging (Joenniemi 2014; Jańczak 2017)</p> <p>Two ways of understanding: (a) spatial–historical features, common origin, shared “genes” related to specific spaces (joint city center), shared social, political, and economic processes; (b) strategy of towns, related to the organization of their current relations. (Jańczak 2017)</p> <p>Tight trans-border agglomeration able to utilize the effects of economies of scale (Joenniemi 2014)</p> <p>City twinning began to be promoted during the Cold War, however nowadays the value of twinning relations has declined (Joenniemi 2014)</p> <p>Conceptually, initiating the twinning process requires the involvement of foreign affairs ministers; whether foreign affairs are extended in order to make room for the engagement of local actors (Joenniemi 2014)</p> <p>In fact, twinning is an alternative to networking (Leffél and Acuto 2018)</p>
City network and possibilities	<p>City-to-city and city-to-other-actors cooperation, city diplomacy across a variety of networks (Acuto et al. 2017)</p> <p>Membership involves economic criteria (GDP, purchasing power)</p> <p>Possibilities: to learn from other cities how to implement something and to share their own experience, to get the desired knowledge from other experienced city governments (Leffél and Acuto 2018)</p> <p>Sharing resources builds reputations, networking helps to gain international recognition, to identify partners for cooperation projects, peer-to-peer learning, offer online courses for members and local leaders, exchange of information, communication, knowledge transfer, influence legislature (Gutiérrez-Camps 2013; Acuto et al. 2017; Leffél and Acuto 2018)</p> <p>Position of the city in the hierarchy influences a city’s economic growth potential. Application to the network requires motivation, capacity, and opportunity (Leffél and Acuto 2018)</p>
Impact of mayors on city diplomacy	<p>Democracy, independence, and autonomy arguments (local) against power (central). Municipal democrats are attuned to how local democracy is enhanced by intercity collaborations. Mayors learn from different cities and transfer to their own cities. The state has many ways of blocking cities’ initiatives (legislature, budget, lobbies). Singapore the city and state are two in one. Are the interests of cities and of the states to which cities belong in harmony or in conflict? (Barber 2013)</p>

(continued)

**Table 14.2** (continued)

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Description</i>
Smart city	City runs as a company. Creative city initiatives stimulate connections, relationships, and interrelations between the cities and other actors. Knowledge, creativity, and innovation are highly stimulated. Technological creative cities become a benchmark for other cities because they find creative solutions for good infrastructure, transport, housing, and water supply. Three conditions are important: creative hardware (infrastructure for possible creative industries), creative software (ambience and vibrancy enabling creative industries), and creative orgware (policies and governance on creative industries) (Bogilovic and Pevcin 2018)
Paradiplomacy	National government is no longer the only legitimate and effective political institution within national boundaries in the age of globalization (Chan 2016) It is disconnected from urban management (Stren and Friendly 2017) Cities can act together in peace and harmony for the greater good. Cities have the capacity to redefine many scales of international politics and public diplomacy initiatives (Chan 2016)

by the countries and cities as well as by categories that were marked as either not important by the experts in the survey or not available in the Eurocities network. This part of the research also enabled the authors to present the Baltic cities in the context of the European Union.

The content analysis method was used to search for appropriate information (the respective cities' names and the words *cooperation*, *partnership*, and *mayor* in English and Russian were used for search purposes) in the first ten pages of Google search results. Some categories of partnership in this part of the research cover more activities and areas than the categories of Eurocities' analytical framework, but the main line of interpretation is followed congruently to the survey. Inscriptions for "sustainable development" are related to the environment area; "knowledge society" includes experience in exchange and education (in general and in public administration/local municipality), e-government, science, and smart cities; "urban governance" includes architecture, city development/planning, communal services, welfare, and cyber security. Partnerships of transport companies (trains, buses, and airlines) as well as banking networks were excluded from the research. Finally, a general summary of the combined research results is provided.



## 14.5 FINDINGS

### 14.5.1 *Survey of Experts*

Firstly, experts had to evaluate (i) the main means used, (ii) skills needed, and (iii) areas covered in the context of city diplomacy. We asked the experts to identify what means are most often used to develop the city diplomacy activities in their respective cities (Fig. 14.1). The survey revealed that individual initiatives of mayors and participation in various international projects tend to be the most used ways to develop city diplomacy. Private and NGO initiatives tend to be seen as the least important.

Furthermore, we inquired about the competencies and skills that are, in the opinion of the experts, needed for the effective development of city diplomacy. As presented in Fig. 14.2, communication skills and knowledge of languages are the most valued; breadth of knowledge about different sectors is important as well. Interestingly, the least valued among experts were skills related to project activities as well as the abilities and skills to foster trade and investments.

In terms of different areas of partnership, networking, and cooperation, the survey reveals that experts tend to claim that their activities cover all the areas analyzed almost equally (Fig. 14.3), with some exceptions when it comes to the city of Tallinn.

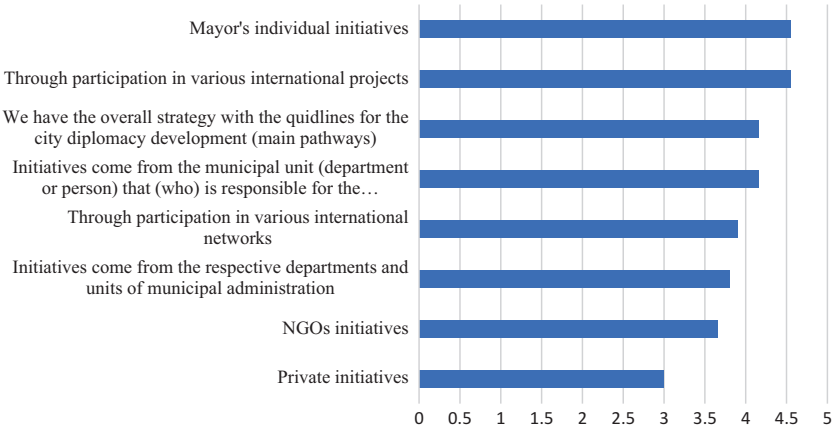


Fig. 14.1 Ranking of the means used for city diplomacy

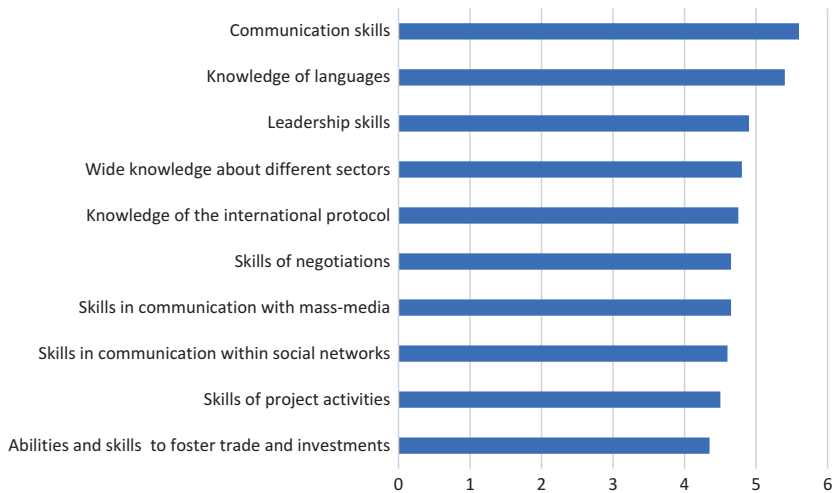
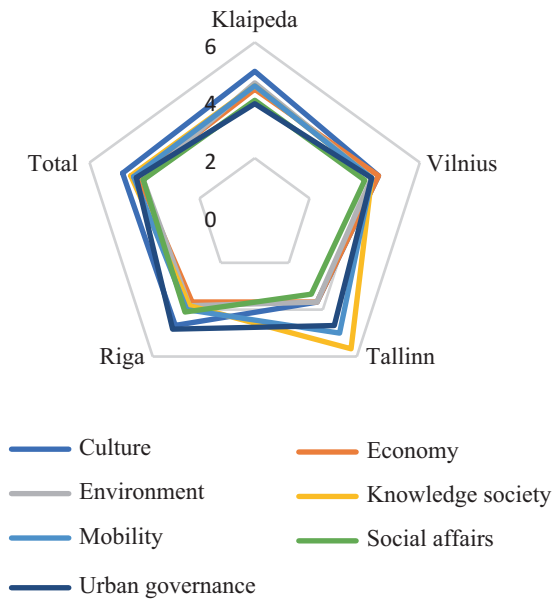


Fig. 14.2 Skills for effective city diplomacy

Fig. 14.3 Areas of the Baltics’ networking as identified by experts



Additionally, we asked experts to identify the most relevant categories for their respective cities, and they almost unanimously identified mayoral leadership to be most important for their cities, while the smart city category was ranked second. The third- and the fourth-ranked factors were city networking and city twinning. Paradiplomacy was viewed as the least important category.

The second part of the survey aimed to evaluate the selected city diplomacy factors according to their impact on each city represented. Factor analysis was used for this purpose. In general, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha revealed all the statements to be reliable for the purposes of general research (0.94). However, the reliability analysis and correlation analysis of the main statements about city diplomacy revealed some of the items to be unsuitable particularly for the factor analysis due to multicollinearity or, on the contrary, due to the loose relationship to the other statements provided. As a result of the calculations, statements representing two categories were eliminated from the factor analysis, that is the impact of mayors on city diplomacy and paradiplomacy. The statements of the last category were eliminated due to the loose relations and the corresponding impact on research (scale reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha proved the research to be more reliable without these statements) and it perfectly corresponds with the survey results, whereby paradiplomacy in the Baltics was revealed to be the least developed category. The statements pertaining to the impact of mayors on city diplomacy were eliminated due to multicollinearity, which is not acceptable for factor analysis but reveals the importance of the category in terms of the city diplomacy of the Baltic cities to be true. The remaining statements were filtered using the correlation matrix in the factor analysis; some of them showed correlation coefficients to be less than 0.2 which resulted in their elimination from the factor analysis as well. For the rest of the items, the KMO measurement of sampling adequacy is 0.747 and Bartlett's spherical value is significant while  $p=0.000$ . All the communalities are higher than 0.6%, which means that items are correct and suitable for the factor analysis. Finally, by means of the principal component analysis and using the Varimax rotation method with the Kaiser normalization, a total of three factors were extracted (Table 14.3). The amount of total variance of these factors accounts for almost 84%.

The factor analysis of city diplomacy in the Baltics revealed networking, twinning, and smart city to be the three categories which were the most valuable for experts.

**Table 14.3** The main factors of city diplomacy in the Baltics

	<i>Factors</i>		
	<i>1</i> <i>Networking</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Twinning</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Smart city</i>
Networks help to gain the desired knowledge from other experienced city governments	0.896		
Sharing resources builds reputations, networking helps to gain international recognition	0.841		
Networks help to identify partners for cooperation projects, peer-to-peer learning, offer online courses for members and local leaders	0.823		
Twinning means shared social, political, and economic processes	0.716		0.477
City-to-city and city-to-other-actors cooperation		0.884	
Twinning has common origins, shared “genes” related to specific spaces (joint city center)		0.870	
City networks and the possibilities they provide are most important for our city	0.442	0.721	
Twinning is the strategy of towns related to the organization of their current relations	0.590	0.609	
Cities exchange creative solutions which are tested in the real world			0.896
Creative software (ambience and vibrancy enabling creative industries) is a condition for the development of smart cities			0.836
Twinning is a tight trans-border agglomeration able to utilize the effects of economies of scale	0.538		0.646

Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization

### 14.5.2 Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the respective cities’ partnerships revealed certain similarities and dissimilarities with the findings of the survey. Firstly, statistical analysis revealed city diplomacy to be used mostly in the categories of city twinning and city networking in all four cities analyzed. The remaining three categories of mayoral impact, smart cities, and paradiplomacy were not so evident. This might be explained as a lack of expert knowledge of the real situation as regards the partnership. Our investigation revealed that only Riga provides detailed information about town twinning on the municipality web page (Municipal Portal of Riga 2019). Information from

Klaipeda only goes as far as 2014 (Klaipėda City Municipality 2019). Vilnius' information is available on the specific website (Vilnius City Municipality 2019). Tallinn provides only partner city names with no further information (Tallinn City Municipality 2018).

The analysis of the Baltic cities in the area of *city twinning* revealed that cities feel quite flexible when defining city twinning. The usage of a variety of names such as town twinning, sister cities, partner cities, brotherhood, and so on appeared to be a common practice in all four cities. In accordance with Joenniemi (2014) we may say that the Baltic cities cooperate in spatial (culture, economy, education, science, sustainability, etc.) and territorial (urban, transport system, port, etc.) development. Table 14.4 represents the variety of city twinning by the total number of partner cities and the geographical area they cover.

According to the data collected, Vilnius has the most partner cities while Klaipeda has the least (16). In terms of geographical coverage of the partnership, it is obvious that the main partners of Riga and Vilnius are in the former post-Soviet countries while Tallinn has moved slightly toward cooperation with the Central EU countries. The distribution of Klaipeda's partners is almost equal among the cities of the EU (with the exception of the South) and the post-Soviet countries. The Baltics are not much interested in partnerships either in the South or outside the EU.

The analysis of the *city networking* initiatives by the areas covered revealed that relations rely heavily on the knowledge society, culture, and

**Table 14.4** Partnership by the global regions

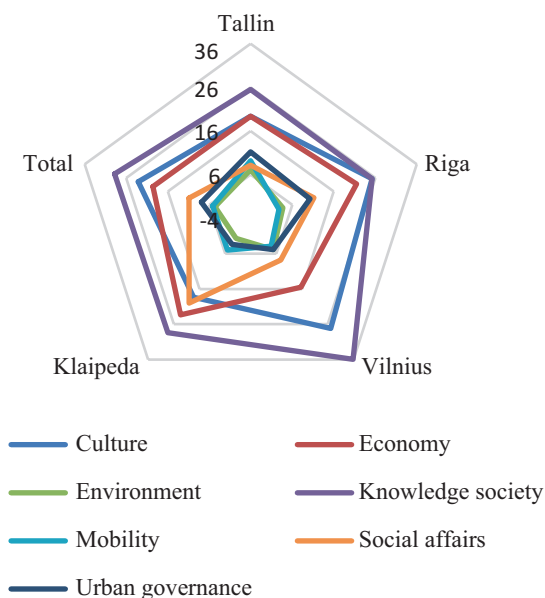
<i>Partnership regions</i>	<i>Tallinn</i>	<i>Riga</i>	<i>Vilnius</i>	<i>Klaipeda</i>
<i>Total partner cities</i>	30	30	35	16
Oceania	0	1	0	0
Asia/Eurasia <sup>a</sup>	3	5	3	2
S America	0	1	0	0
N America	1	1	2	1
Post-Soviet <sup>b</sup>	7	9	10	3
EU North	7	7	5	3
EU Central <sup>c</sup>	9	4	6	4
EU East	0	1	5	3
EU South	2	1	2	0
Europe (non-EU)	1	0	2	0

<sup>a</sup>Post-Soviet countries not added; <sup>b</sup>Estonia, Latvia & Lithuania excluded; <sup>c</sup>Great Britain is included

economics (see Fig. 14.4). Scientists acknowledge that city diplomacy starts in most cases with cultural exchanges among cities (Terruso 2016). High economic rates allow us to confirm the statement that *cities compete with one another, with crucial implications for contemporary Western economies* (Barnes and Christopers 2018). These results also reveal the importance of NGOs (education, culture, and business organizations/associations) as these types of partnership are mostly driven by NGO actors, despite the leading role played by local governments or administrators while starting the contracts.

The data presented in Fig. 14.4 reveals that all cities understand the importance of the knowledge society and have many partnership relations covering the development of smart cities and e-government, as well as the exchange of experiences in education for the further development of the rapidly changing environment. Despite the novelty in future development, we regrettably notice that the Baltic cities have very weak cooperation in the field of environment (e.g. environment protection, climate change, waste disposal, management and sanitation, sustainable energy, and transport) with a slightly higher rate in the case of Tallinn. This seems to contradict previous research done by Niederhafner (2013), who stated that

**Fig. 14.4** City networking by areas



*“environmental protection – is the one with which cities seek transnational cooperation strongest”*. Constantinou and Sharpa (2016) suggest that acknowledgment of the current ecological crisis and recognition of different modes of sustainability might lead to negotiations for the reformulation of the ideal future “above all”, based on diplomatic methods. We may conclude, therefore, that the Baltic cities hardly cooperate in a diplomatic way to solve environmental problems nor plan common sustainable development—with the slight exception of Tallinn’s cooperation in the field of development of sustainable transport systems (data of transport systems is related to the mobility category).

Cooperation in social affairs seems to be the most active in Klaipeda municipality and exceeds analogical cooperation in the capitals of the Baltics by a factor of two or even more. However, this happens due to sport events (active participation of Klaipeda in *The Tall Ships’ Races*<sup>2</sup> sailing regatta in particular) which compose a major part (75%) of that category. In general, it seems that social affairs are not a serious problem and cities do not lack partnerships in the field. Also, enjoying considerable autonomy, the cities do not tend to develop international partnership relations in the field of urban governance, which in our case contains architecture, city designing and planning, communal services, citizens’ welfare, and cyber security. The data analysis revealed that Tallinn is the only city that seriously collaborates in the area of cyber security (four EU partner cities and one in the USA).

Statistical analysis revealed partnerships to be more diverse than did the survey of experts. These differences might be explained quite simply: experts, as the internal participants in the processes, try to cover all important areas equally; the outcomes of these efforts, however, tend to be quite different. This helps to explain the difference between the data provided in Figs. 14.3 and 14.4. In general, we may state that the Baltic cities have developed city-to-city and city-to-other-actors cooperation or city diplomacy across a variety of networks that provide a number of development possibilities in a rapidly changing world. Common strategies and actions allow cities to learn from each other, to exchange information and innovations, to implement best practices, and to influence both governance and legislature. The analysis corresponds with the conclusions by Leffél and Acuto (2018), that the position of the city in the hierarchy (the status of

<sup>2</sup> *The Tall Ships’ Races* is the regatta that designed to promote international friendship and training for youth in the art of sailing, held annually in Europe.

the capital city) influences the economic growth potential and the networking intensity of the city. None of these networks, however, is institutionalized in local governance structures. Berridge (2015) points out structuring institutions of international societies that frame relations of politics as a very important aspect in professional diplomacy (as defined in the theory of diplomacy; see in Constantinou and Sharpa 2016; Berridge 2015; Pouliot and Cornut 2015). Therefore, we may argue that partnerships between the respective cities have no features of professional diplomacy.

If we follow the theory above, there is no doubt that all objectives concerning the future of the *smart city* (e.g. sustainable development, creative and technological solutions for the infrastructure, transport, and housing) are integrated into the valid municipal strategies of the respective cities. None of the cities, however, has any special smart city strategy. The analyzed capital cities might be valued as benchmarks in smart city development for their respective countries; however, they do follow the benchmarks of the other more developed cities in the EU (particularly in the northern part). According to the 2017 Smart City Index Tallinn ranks ahead of the other Baltic cities in terms of digitalization of the city government, urban planning, and waste management. The weaker scores of Tallinn in construction, education, clean energy, and standard of living, however, mean that Vilnius is higher in the overall ranking (L24 2017).

Finally, the statistical analysis undertaken on the categories of *mayors' impact* and *paradiplomacy* reveal these categories to be quite difficult to evaluate without an inside view. The case of the Baltics confirms the argument by Acuto et al. (2017) that cities are increasingly capturing the attention of major international actors and now regularly feature in multi-lateral processes. Data analysis revealed that all mayors have meetings with ambassadors from both EU and non-EU countries, as well as leaders of global organizations, where they discuss global as well as state-level problems.

Foreign affairs have been expanded to the local authorities by personal initiatives, either from the mayors or from the foreign affairs sector. In addition, it was acknowledged that city mayors might speak out in the name of the entire country or even oppose the official state policy. Confrontation with the official state policy occurs entirely in the cooperation with Russia (Moscow) and Belarus (Minsk) (see samples below):

However, when speaking on the visit of Yuri Luzhkov (former mayor of Moscow) to Riga and the prospective thaw in the Latvian-Russian relation-



ships, Latvian politologists agree that the visit was ignored by Latvian government officials, therefore there is more ice left to break (Pavuk and Tuzhikov 2003).

The Mayor of Tallinn touched on the issue of direct interaction between cities under any “climate” of political relations between states. “Even in the most intense years of political differences between states, contacts between cities have not been interrupted. In addition, it is difficult to overestimate the value of people’s diplomacy. We must also remember that crises do not last forever, and after they have been resolved, the full cooperation of cities and countries must develop again in a normal manner, especially if the countries we are talking about are neighbors (Studneva 2014).

This situation may be explained by common spatial–historical features or a sense of mutual belonging remains (Joenniemi 2014; Jańczak 2017). From the perspective of the theory of diplomacy, such behavior shows the weak diplomacy skills of the mayors. Constantinou and Sharpa (2016, p. 19, citing Butterfield 1966, Sharp 2003) opine that “good diplomats would recognize that the wider interests of their states were best served by pursuing them with restraint so that they would not damage the international system or society as a whole”.

Several instruments have been used in practice that may also reveal slight features of *paradiplomacy*: the establishment of representative offices in Brussels for EU affairs (Riga and Tallinn); a General Consular of Russian Federation (in Klaipeda, which has a significant Russian-speaking population); the public forum “What brings us together?” of Lithuania and Belarus (Klaipeda); and the center of Eastern and Eurasian research (Klaipeda) for future economic cooperation between Lithuania and the Eurasian Economic Union. At the same time, all cities are interested in creating a positive image by arranging public places and squares dedicated to the partner cities. The key focus for these initiatives has been the interests of the mayors (political paradiplomacy).

Both research efforts revealed that the Baltic cities mostly partner up in the town twinning, city networking, and smart city categories for the purposes of knowledge development, cultural or economic affairs within the EU. Mayors play a significant role in developing paradiplomacy. However, the categories of *mayors’ impact* and *paradiplomacy* are difficult to evaluate with no deep insight. Therefore, these two categories (which indeed are closely interrelated) should be evaluated additionally, perhaps using another type of approach.

## 14.6 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The case of the Baltics confirms the argument by Acuto et al. (2017) that cities are increasingly capturing the attention of major international actors and now regularly feature in multilateral processes. Cities in the respective young diplomacy countries cooperate and collaborate with the aim of solving common self-governance problems, implementing common projects, and establishing long-term partnerships to share knowledge and competencies.

City diplomacy in the Baltics was mostly observed in the categories of city twinning, city networking, and the smart city. None of the cities, however, has any special smart city strategy. The cities also do not tend to develop partnerships in the area of urban governance (e.g. architecture, city designing and planning, communal services, and citizens' welfare). Tallinn is the only city that seriously collaborates in the area of cyber security.

The Baltic cities cooperate on spatial and territorial development and mostly prefer partnerships within the European Union (with the exclusion of the southern region of the EU). Somewhat active partnerships still exist with the post-Soviet countries.

Research showed that the mayors of the respective Baltic cities play an active role in city diplomacy. In meetings with ambassadors and the leaders of global organizations, they represent not only the city but the state as well. In some cases, the mayors take a position contradictory to state policy for the sake of their cities.

Pouliot and Cornut (2015) state that diplomacy matters to the theory of international relations and constitutes a key element of global politics. Our case studies have revealed that foreign affairs in the respective cities of the Baltic states have been expanded to the local authorities only by means of personal initiatives, either of the mayors or from the foreign affairs sector. But these initiatives do not come under professional international relations (or, in other words, professional diplomacy) and may have only a slight impact (if any at all) on the decisions of the central power.

Therefore, the analysis revealed city diplomacy in the Baltic states to be used for the cooperation of cities at horizontal level rather than for hierarchical *diplomatic relations*, which are governed by ministries of foreign affairs. According to Berridge (2015), these ministries take the major responsibility both abroad and at home.

The abovementioned conflict between mayoral and official state policies occurs entirely in cooperation with the countries of the former Soviet Union that have a common spatial and historical past. According to Constantinou and Sharp (2016), who state that diplomats need to recognize the wider interests of their states and use restrictions in order not to have a negative impact on foreign policy, such behavior of the mayors may be treated as a weak form of diplomacy or a bad example thereof.

However, a more in-depth view from inside is needed for an evaluation of *mayors' impact* and *paradiplomacy* (the categories being closely inter-related). A different approach for research into these categories should be developed.

Filho (2013) argues that municipal governments are representatives of non-governmental actors that are the economic base for development. The case of the Baltic states revealed that knowledge society (including cooperation with universities), culture, and economy are the most intensive areas for partnerships. These areas are represented and undertaken mostly by NGOs. Local authorities tend to take credit for most of the initiatives but need to acknowledge the lack of important skills in project activities and in fostering trade and investments. In the discourse of diplomacy, NGOs may be viewed as paradiplomats who have valuable but limited usefulness and only need to work together with professional diplomats (Berridge 2015, p. 254).

The absence of traditional diplomacy in the Baltic cities also appears in the attitudes toward the solution of global problems. Constantinou and Sharpa (2016) suggest common negotiation for the modeling of the ideal future, but the respective cities do not treat partnerships seriously in the area of sustainability and therefore do not unite (in a diplomatic way) to solve common environmental problems nor for sustainable development, either amongst themselves or with other sister cities. Only Tallinn may be treated as a slight exception in the field of common development of sustainable transport systems.

The data analysis also revealed that Tallinn is the only city that seriously collaborates in the area of cyber security. Riga, Vilnius, and Klaipeda failing to do so might be explained by a lack of knowledge of local governments about the benefits of global cooperation. However, proving this hypothesis would require further research.

The young democracy countries of the Baltics have developed active partnerships based on city-to-city networking that provides various capabilities for city diplomacy. However, none of these networks is

institutionalized in local governance structures as yet. This also shows the absence of professional diplomacy in the city diplomacy of the Baltic states. Berridge (2015) states that structuring institutions of international societies is very important in framing political relations. Therefore, we may conclude that young democracy cities do not consciously seek to create long-lasting diplomatic relations (as it refers to a *theory of diplomacy*) for either solving common global problems or buffering serious tensions.

On the other hand, we may agree on the features of the *practice of diplomacy*, which according to Pouliot and Cornut (2015) is just the other side of the same coin. We agree with the authors who argue for a broader definition of diplomacy including interaction not only between official agents but also between non-state representatives. This is obvious in city diplomacy. Municipal authorities who are engaged in relations with actors on the international stage may support or even influence bottom-up social processes and international practices related to diplomacy, and in this way represent themselves and their interests to one another or complement the state diplomacy (Van der Pluijm 2007).

With this study we were not able to unpack the entire complex reality of city diplomacy in the young democracy countries. Some questions also should be answered in future research: for example, why are the Baltics not much interested in partnerships with countries either from the south EU or outside it altogether? How do they really treat collaboration in the areas of urban governance and cyber security? What reasons impact weak cooperation in sustainable development and how to foster cities for stronger global negotiation?

The findings would be useful for those interested in studying city networking and cooperation (academics) as well as for those responsible for a better future both in the global world and in the local communities (decision-makers).

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# Turku (Finland) as a Case Study in the City Diplomacy of Small Urban Centers, 1971–2011

*Louis Clerc*

*Turku is an old town. I know it sounds ridiculous, but I can feel it. Old towns, you know, somehow they take a life of their own.*

Marko Järvinen, *Yksikätinen rosvo* (Järvinen (2018, p. 105).

Translation LC (*“Turku on vanha. Mä tiedän, että pidät siitä järjettömänä, mutta minusta tuntuu, että vanhat kaupungit alkaa tavallaan elää omaa elämäänsä.”*)).

## 15.1 INTRODUCTION

On 21 January 2011, an audience of 50,000 gathered in Turku, Finland, on the banks of the Aura river. The pitch darkness of the night contrasted with the snow and ice of the frozen river. Hushed voices, shouts, the many noises of an expectant crowd could be heard. At the set hour, a refurbished industrial site on the southern bank of the river exploded in

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lights and songs, music and fireworks. Turku's year as a European Capital of Culture had started. The hour-long opening ceremony featured professional acrobats but also hundreds of local residents and schoolchildren, choirs, shipyard workers, circus performers, and puppetry students. In tourism pieces for the English-speaking press as well as in official reports, emphasis was laid on the show's local inclusiveness and international quality. Turku, a small town in a peripheral country of Europe, aimed to brand itself as an international, attractive, multicultural city engaged in globalization and connected through transparent processes to the European Union (EU) and its values (Miller 2010; Walk the Plank 2011; *European Capital of Culture* 2011).

Other places in town and other moments in Turku's history could have suggested other aspects of the city's international contacts. One such place is a hill in the center of town, where in the shadow of the massive Museum of Fine Arts stands a meter-high bust of the Russian Bolshevik leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. The statue speaks of different times and a different setting in which Finland, and in its midst the city of Turku, conducted their contacts with the world in the shadow of the Soviet Union. Leningrad's twin city since 1953, Turku remains the only town in Finland to host a Russian consulate general (Kurvinen 2015; Erjamo 2014; Kolbe 2018b). Relations with Leningrad took place from the 1950s to the 1990s through intricate networks of personal contacts and drew Turku's administrators into the intricacies of Soviet, then Russian, politics: heavily politicized up to the early 1990s, then more recently dominated by business interests, oligarchs, and the networks of Vladimir Putin's neo-authoritarian Russia. Other places could be the Varissuo suburb, where extra-European immigrant groups have concentrated since the 1980s (Rasinkangas 2013), Turku's numerous language kindergartens, from the French-speaking *L'Hexagone* to the Russian-speaking *Mishka-talo*, and obviously the town's harbor, with its ferry connections to Sweden and its German-owned shipyards. Turku's universities and museums also speak of international contacts of a different nature.

Pertti Joenniemi and Jarosław Jańczak (2017) emphasized the way city twinnings, like most city diplomacy, present such a variety of cases and patterns that theoretical approaches often tend to simplify things too much. Likewise, a theoretical approach to these relations runs the risk to streamline historical evolutions. This chapter's first intention is thus to describe the historical evolutions of Turku's international contacts from the early 1970s to the early 2010s. In essence a piece of historical study,

this chapter will first present Turku's case before taking aim at general questions linked to the international contacts of a small, peripheral city. There is no shortage of research on city diplomacy, but most of it has concentrated on obvious cases of global or capital towns: mega-cities, border-towns, diaspora, or communication hubs located in the world's great powers. Turku stands at the other side of the spectrum, a small town in a peripheral position, with limited resources and limited interests—a side of things less researched, with recent exceptions including Sergunin and Joenniemi's (2017) work covering the same region.

While studying small cities' diplomacy, one is tempted to see analogies with the description provided by IR studies of the smaller states' international behavior (cf. Browning 2006; Keohane 1969; Katzenstein 1985; Rainio-Niemi 2008). Small cities, like small states, seem to have local and limited interests to defend. They hold limited resources and agency, and depend on the evolutions of their environment. Their decision-making systems are tighter, often ad hoc and unformal, based on personal relations, and they make use of international structures in order to enhance their capabilities. Turku's case will provide the possibility to test whether or not these classical features of small states' international behavior can be found in a small city's management of its international contacts.

A reader interested solely in modest insights on the way small peripheral towns manage their international contacts will be able to jump directly to the conclusion. For others, willing to engage in more detail with the case, the chronological exposition will be the main fare of this chapter. In the first part, we will present a few contextual elements necessary to understand the development of Turku's foreign contacts. We will then consider the town administration's international activities in the 1970s–1980s, through support for infrastructures, trips abroad, and city twinings. We will then consider the early post-Cold War period, with the influence of Finland's EU accession on Turku's international contacts. After that, we will look at the developments of the town's international contacts in the early 2000s up to 2011, when Turku became the European Capital of Culture for a year.

Turku is a small and tight political setting, where public and private interests are often difficult to disentangle. However, the city's administration gives us the broadest view on Turku's international contacts, and it will be our focal point for the purpose of this chapter. Focusing on the city's government and council will also provide us with a sound empirical basis in the town's archives (TKA, *Turun kaupungin arkisto*, Turku City

Archives), reports and official documents, as well as a variety of secondary literature. We will see how the town was allowed in different historical settings (the Cold War, the immediate post-Cold War, the early 2000 and post-2008 period) to pursue different types of international contacts, and consider long-term trends, from the role of local identity to decision-making patterns.

## 15.2 HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, AND ADMINISTRATION

Turku is a middle-sized coastal town, situated in a country one can easily see as peripheral to the main centers of European power (Browning and Lehti 2007). Inside Finland, the town is itself peripheral to the region of the capital-city Helsinki.<sup>1</sup> Despite this position and its modest size, the town has a wide range of international links. Its industries and economic activities, from the harbor and its shipyards to services, cultural industries and pharmaceuticals, find their place in regional and international contexts. The town is a hub of communication by sea, land, and air (Laakso 1980, pp. 329–370): the harbor of Turku is the second biggest harbor in Finland, with four million travelers crossing it yearly on ferry trips to Sweden; the Turku airport is the fourth most used airport in Finland with more than 300,000 travelers crossing yearly. The city hosts two full universities (the Finnish-speaking University of Turku and the Swedish-speaking Åbo Akademi), a University hospital, and an Arts Academy. It has a vibrant artistic and cultural scene, museums both private and public, theaters, concert halls, and sport venues as well as two of the oldest buildings in Northern Europe: the Turku castle and the Turku cathedral. In their depiction of urban networks in the Baltic Sea region, Hanell and Neubauer (2005) describe Turku as a middle-sized, interstitial town linked to Helsinki on the one hand and to Stockholm on the other hand.

The memories of the city's past and an oft-emphasized sense of estrangement from Helsinki, the city's nature as a harbor and as a maritime border, its varied cultural and scientific life, and its internationally connected economic sectors have formed since the 1970s the bedrock of a strong rhetoric of international openness, especially amongst Turku's economic,

<sup>1</sup> In, 2018, Turku is the fifth most populated city in Finland, with about 180,000 inhabitants (Statistical data about Turku 2018), in a country and a region ripe with small- to mid-sized cities (Hanell and Neubauer 2005).

political, and cultural elites. In its official communication, Turku presents itself as a bridge between East and West (through its contacts with Leningrad/Saint Petersburg and its proximity to Stockholm), or as Finland's "gateway to the West". This can also be seen in interviews with local leaders who emphasize the importance of international outreach activities (Lohikoski 2019; Rantasaari 2018) and in strategy documents published by the city (*Turun kansainvälisen toiminnan suunnitelma 1998–2000* 1998; *Turku maailmassa – maailma Turussa* 2002). A good example of this rhetoric can be found on the first page of the city's 2002 international strategy document that reminds the reader that "the reception and adaptation of international trends is still nowadays Turku's most significant contribution to the Finnish nation" (*Turku maailmassa – maailma Turussa* 2002, p. 3).<sup>2</sup>

If Turku's fate is linked to its regional environment, it is also linked to changes in the Finnish legal and administrative context presiding over relations between state and municipal authorities. The Finnish model of municipal politics, with elected councils designating a caretaker government and city manager,<sup>3</sup> tends to produce a difference between political debates in the council and a more consensual, technical city administration. However, political nominations of civil servants in the context of "packages" negotiated between political parties were the norm until the end of the 1990s. Turku is also ripe with internationally connected personalities and organizations, which work through tight personal networks in connection with the city's administration, from universities to individuals, private companies to museums, friendship societies to language kindergartens, student associations to political parties. Their initiatives are often important in pushing the city to act at the international level or pointing it toward new trends. The University of Turku for example has an important international role since the 1970s, often in connection with the city (Torttila 1975).

In her studies, Laura Kolbe (2002, 2018a) described a continuous movement in Finland toward more leeway for towns and municipalities in the way they organize the tasks delegated to them by central authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Translation LC: "*Kansainvälisten virtausten vastaanottaminen ja suodattaminen on edelleen Turun tärkein anti kansakunnalle*".

<sup>3</sup> Finnish city managers are local government officers, operating subordinate to the local executive, who direct their municipality's administration, financial management, and other activities. Finnish towns rarely have elected mayors, with the elected councils representing the element of democratic control.

If the Finnish Higher Court of Justice could still in the 1980s for example remind the members of municipal councils of their national duties while traveling abroad, European integration widened the range of international contacts available to Finnish cities (Ryynänen 1997). The Finnish state decentralized a number of important and broadly defined tasks to cities: social services, culture and education, police, and rescue services, communications, trade arrangements and protection of consumers, and justice (Nyholm et al. 2017, pp. 119–134). In 2000, a revision of the Constitution enshrined in it the principle of local self-government (*itsehallinto*). Finland also joined the Council of Europe's Charter on Local Self-Government in 1991. While the 1995 new municipal law forbade municipalities to become involved in security and foreign policy, it also left them with wide margins of maneuver in the way they fulfil their legally defined duties (Harjula and Prättälä 1996).

### 15.3 INTERNATIONALIZATION AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL DURING THE 1970s–1980s

Finland has had a peculiar international position during the Cold War, which influenced Turku's possibilities for international contacts. During the 1970s, the strong influence of the Soviet Union in the country's environment had political, geopolitical, and economic consequences (Meinander 2011). It affected also local politics, even if politics in Turku were marked mostly by the importance of local interests and a strong culture of cooperation in the center of the political field: strong political polarization in the 1970s–1980s and the insularity of some economic sectors were compensated by a consensual political culture and local identity.

In research dealing with spaces of cooperation in the Cold War, the role of small states and cities as bridges between the blocks has been emphasized (Pizzi and Hietala 2016). Turku naturally found its place in this context, with international contacts present both at the grassroots level and at the highest political level through, for instance, city twinnings. International contacts in the 1970s–1980s were linked to both local (the furtherance of specific cultural or economic interests represented in the city, the outburst on the international scene of local political debates), national (Turku in the frame of Finland's foreign policy position during the Cold War), and international elements (Turku in the frame of regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea region). The 1970s–1980s thus witnessed a number of practices through which the city administration worked to

develop international contacts in an environment constrained by the status of municipalities and by Finland's geopolitical position.

The most obvious way in which the city administration aimed at supporting Turku's international contacts was through the use of funding and infrastructures. Throughout the 1960s–1980s, the city was involved in a series of infrastructure projects, from the development of the Turku airport to the expansion of the ferry terminal that were meant to facilitate the town's position as a communication hub (Laakso 1980, pp. 336–368). As well, Turku provided funding for a host of organizations in order to support their international contacts.<sup>4</sup> Friendship societies are the most obvious example of such support, but one could add companies, the town's universities, kindergartens, student associations, or sports' clubs engaged in competitions abroad. Funding was always debated both in government and in the city council: in a context of limited resources, the use of public funding was under close scrutiny. At the same time, a careful balance had to be kept between organizations supposed to represent the Western bloc and those representing the Eastern bloc. During the 1980s however, the town became more generous as more emphasis was laid on widening the range of international contacts.<sup>5</sup>

Official travels and visits abroad were also an essential part of these international contacts. The archives of Turku's government contain the record of decisions taken regarding the funding of administrators' trips abroad and the compensation to be given for these trips. In the 1970s–1980s, most travels were linked to the management of twin city relations, contacts with regional organizations or technical study trips.<sup>6</sup> These trips were regularly criticized, especially in the municipal council,

<sup>4</sup>For example, in 1981, the city government decided to provide funding to (amongst others) the Finnish-Soviet Society (TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the City Government's Debates, year 1981, decision number 3553), the local branch of the *Pohjola-Norden* organization (decision, 2995, 3082), the German-Finnish Society (2097, 2976), the Finnish-Polish Society (404, 488, 1524, 1818), the kindergarten of the English Club of Turku (58, 1549, 3096, 4283, 3763).

<sup>5</sup>The example of funding for sports societies is especially revealing. One can see the change in the early 1980s toward more generosity on the part of the city (see TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the Sports and Leisure Committee (*Urheilun-/liikuntalautakunta*), 1971–2000).

<sup>6</sup>In 1970, for example, Turku administrators traveled 17 times, 12 abroad. In 1982, different groups and individuals inside the city's administration traveled more than 50 times abroad. These numbers have been gathered from the lists of matters treated by the city government and indexed each year in the first book of its records (TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/*

often because they seemed to focus on the wrong side of the bipolar conflict. They were also denounced as a costly way to finance boozy holidays for political friends. They are however still today emphasized by administrators as one of the most efficient ways to build networks, look for new ideas, acquire technical know-how, and lobby for Turku's visibility and economic contacts (Lohikoski 2019).

Tourism and economic promotion were also important activities through which Turku reached out abroad. The city administration tried already in the 1970s–1980s to develop tourism through various activities. An organization of local tourism guides was created in 1957 (Lahtinen 2007), and efforts to advertise the town were coordinated by committees inside the city's administration. Tourism promotion was aimed mostly toward the West, but also after the early 1980s toward the East and the Soviet Union<sup>7</sup>: Turku and its region organized then regular seminars on "Soviet trade", aiming at developing economic and tourism relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The city produced films and communication material from the 1970s on, often in connection with the Finnish state's official communication activities and tourism promotion. In 1969, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Press Bureau Matti Tuovinen reminded an audience that the state was not, in Finland, the only agent doing international communication (Lähteenmäki 1969, p. 34).

## 15.4 TWIN CITIES AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE BALTIC SEA AND BEYOND

Twin city relationships and contacts with regional organizations in the Baltic Sea area were more open-ended, less well-defined forms of international contacts. Bussmann and Nickel (2018) showed that Finland was at the heart of Cold War twinings in the Baltic Sea region up to the late

*kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the City Government's Debates, year 1970, book 1; year 1982, book 1).

<sup>7</sup>TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the *Tiedotustoimintaa kehitävä toimikunta v 1981–1983*, 385,345 III, kotelo 81–83; TKA 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the City Government's Debates, year 1986, decision numbers 724, 813, 3693, 3800 (tourism promotion between the Soviet Union and Southwestern Finland).

<sup>8</sup>TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus*, Records of the City Government's Debates, year 1987, decision numbers 3362 (seminar on Soviet trade and Finnish municipalities), 3703 (Soviet trade).

1980s. In 1988, the country had 609 city twinnings, linking it to 22 different countries,<sup>9</sup> and Turku was one of the most active towns in this respect.<sup>10</sup> Kirsi Ahonen (2016) reminds one of the origins of city twinnings in World War II and humanitarian help from neutral Sweden to Finland. Turku entered then into contacts with the Swedish town of Goteborg, which participated financially in Turku's reconstruction, the construction of a concert hall, and the provision of health services. After the war and in the difficult years of stabilization coming from 1944 to 1950, these contacts were part of the reconstruction of Finland's links with the West (Tyyni-Ilta 1993; Lohikoski 2019; Korppi-Tommola 1982). In the late 1940s, various organizations in Finland and abroad worked to encourage twin city relations: the *Pohjola-Norden* association tried to enhance relations between Nordic twin cities, while the *Finnish-Soviet Society*, a powerful organization working toward more cultural relations with the Soviet Union, developed contacts with Soviet towns (Kolbe 2018b; Mikkonen 2015). The *Association of Finnish Municipalities*, on the other hand, worked to foster contacts with both Eastern and Western towns (Ahonen 2016, p. 110; Aronen and Berghäll 1998, p. 44). Twinnings were also supported by the state, with the organization of conferences and seminars in Helsinki, like for example the second Finno-Soviet meeting of twin cities, organized in July 1971.<sup>11</sup>

As Turku rebuilt and prospered after the 1960s, city twinnings became a way to foster contacts in culture, sports, education, and professional and technical assistance with both the Western and Eastern blocs. Hungary remained somewhat a special case because of the traditional cultural links existing with a country sharing linguistic ties with Finland. With the Soviet Union, and in the specific case of Turku, these links took a particular turn. Incentives on the Soviet side were clearly political and ideological, and relations were tightly scripted, marked by a liturgy of peace, friendship, and Soviet infallibility. Laura Kolbe reminds us that, while Leningrad's first goal in its contacts with Turku was foreign political propaganda toward audiences overseas, contacts over the long term could also transform into genuine cooperation between municipal leaders (Kolbe 2018b).

<sup>9</sup> In 2013, these numbers were respectively 1300 and 40 (Ahonen 2016, p. 109).

<sup>10</sup> In 1995, Turku had 12 twin cities, mostly from the Baltic Sea area: Bergen, Gdansk, Goteborg, Constanța, Köln, Saint Petersburg, Rostock, Szeged, Varna, Aarhus, Bratislava, and Firenze. It was a rather large number, Tampere having the most in Finland with just 15.

<sup>11</sup> UKA, Series *Politiikka, Neuvostoliitto, N-Liitto-Suomi, 1969–72*, box, 21/38.



On the side of Turku, incentives were more varied, from concrete commercial interests amongst Turku-based industrialists to ideological incentives in a town dominated up to the 1980s by the left. Politics and trade were often entangled. The Turku shipyards, for example, had been re-developed after the war and directed toward the Soviet market (Matala 2019; Teräs 2017), but its activities also had political ramifications: it was known as a hotbed of political activism and strikes that the city tried to keep under control (Pääkkönen 2016). In the 1950s, Turku leaders also explained the twin city program with Leningrad through the position of both cities as their own country's second biggest urban centers and their past as former capital cities (Laitinen 2000, p. 39). Finally, there was a desire on Turku's side to emphasize the position of the city regarding its competitors in Finland and the central state: considering the importance of relations with the Soviet Union at all levels, twin city relationships with Leningrad gave Turku leverage also in domestic politics regarding central authorities.

The archives of the town government allow one to follow the state of concrete relations with Turku's twin cities.<sup>12</sup> In terms of concrete content, twin city relations were in the 1970s–1980s mostly marked by meetings between town administrators, education trips, exchanges of knowledge, sport activities and tournaments, as well as cultural exchanges (Keinänen 2017; Virmavirta 2013). Relations with Leningrad, marked by town meetings and the “Leningrad days” organized yearly in Turku, had a specific flavor, while relations with the Nordic Countries were more normalized. While city administrators tended to see all contacts as at least potentially beneficial, discussions regarding twinnings in the city's municipal council often had a political tinge, with the left emphasizing contacts with the Eastern bloc.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Most archives related to twin city relationships up to the 1990s are located in the special file TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus* (up to, 2000), *Ystävyykskaupungit (erilliskansiot)*. However, specific decisions noted in the city government's records give a better view of the content of routine relations. For example, for the year 1970: TKA, 9. *Kaupunginkanslia/kaupunginhallitus* (up to, 2000), decision numbers, 2489, 2644, 3233 (Twin city relationships).

<sup>13</sup> See for example the April 1973 discussion on city twinnings in the municipal council: TKA, Records of debates in the Turku City Council, April, 2, 1973, 402, 946–948. In February 1971, the communist city councillor Eino Laine proposed that the next Finno-Soviet city twinning conference be held in Turku, a proposal that triggered heated debates on the Soviet Union's human rights record (TKA, Records of debates in the Turku City Council, January, 22, 1971, 172–175).

Another important way of organizing international contacts was Turku's participation in regional, multilateral city networks and organizations. Turku was, for example, a founding member of The Union of Baltic Cities, and later joined the Eurocities network (Lähteenmäki 1994, pp. 68–71; Aronen and Berghäll 1998, pp. 64–66). For a small town, these networks worked as aggregators of influence, information and funding opportunities, and provided leverage for the city to manage and develop local interests. Here again, things became quickly political in the municipal council, where the left was quick to oppose Nordic contacts to Soviet contacts: in 1976, a discussion concerning city funds allocated to the *Pohjola-Norden* Society saw an attempt by the local left to paint the association as a front for Western interests and to ensure that its funding would be compensated by funding for a variety of local leftist cultural organizations.<sup>14</sup>

Debates on these matters are difficult to explain without reference to their local ramifications, but they were also expressed in terms relevant to the wider national and international context of the times. The left was quick to mention Finland's "official foreign policy line" of good relations with the Soviet Union in order to strengthen its position and demand more funding for contacts with the Eastern bloc (cf. Uusitalo 1982). After the early 1990s, on the other hand, local business interests used European contacts and the inevitability of globalization as leverage to get more support from the city. Furthermore, international relations were not always seen as positive in nature. In the council, worries for public finances and regular bouts of anger against a group of city administrators seen as self-centered easily transformed into demands for less overseas travels or more protection for the city against external perceived or real threats, from refugees to the Chernobyl radioactive cloud.

## 15.5 TURKU'S PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-COLD WAR

While the 1980s were a decade of economic growth and rapprochement with integrated European organizations, the early 1990s saw dramatic changes in Finland's geopolitical environment. The country experienced one of the worst economic crises of its history, which put into question the very structure of its welfare state. Rapid liberalization of the economy also

<sup>14</sup>TKA, Records of debates in the Turku City Council, May, 21, 1973, 603–607.

questioned the country's consensus and corporatist culture as well as the role of public authorities, moving to a more liberalized economy and a different role for the state, from consensus-builder to enhancer of competitiveness (cf. Wuokko 2016). The geopolitical environment also changed with the end of the Cold War and the crumbling of the USSR. Finally, in 1992–1995, Finland lived through three years of intense debate regarding accession to the EU, which ended with a referendum won by the partisans of Finland's accession. These changes had an effect on Turku as well, as the town's international contacts grew in volume (Söderlund 1997; Aronen and Hartikainen 1995, pp. 39–40). Rantanen (1995) calculated in 1995 that 35% of all Finnish cities' international contacts had developed in the years 1990–1994, which amounts to the same than all contacts developed since the 1940s.

In a 1991 answer to the Finnish government concerning Finland's international communication,<sup>15</sup> Turku's city administration tried to make sense of a rapidly changing context. Insisting that the tasks devoted to regional authorities by Finnish laws had increasingly international spill-overs, the town described an international activity channeled especially through twin city agreements and tourism promotion (with a project to extend Turku's tourism season by branding the city as a "Christmas city", cf. Halme 2008), hosting of international conferences on technical matters, such as the 1991 Baltic Sea environment conference, and traffic infrastructures. A new geopolitical environment was bringing uncertainties but also more opportunities for towns to develop their international relations.

In the context of the early 1990s, such optimistic views about the possibilities for Finnish cities to expand their international outreach were expressed in a series of reports and in a questionnaire organized by the Association of Finnish Municipalities. In her answer, the Head of Turku's Communication Unit Cay Sevön presented Turku as a city with a long history of international links, especially at the regional level (Savolainen 2000, p. 29). Sevön developed the notion that the end of the Cold War would mean more international contacts and that Turku had to reorganize its administration and activities in order to cope. In 1999, all Finnish towns emphasized in a report the idea that by 2005 cities would foster their contacts through other means than twin city relations: branding,

<sup>15</sup> UMA, *Kantinen kokoelma*, 8, letter from the Turku city government (*kaupunginhallitus*) to Finland's governmental chancellery (*Valtioneuvoston kanslia*), 22.4.1991.

participation in international and European projects, festivals and fairs, and cooperation in environmental affairs (Savolainen 2000, p. 71).

At the same period, the town drew two wide strategy documents negotiated with and accepted by the municipal council, and tried to formulate new directions in its international contacts. These two documents emphasized roughly the same things: the necessity to develop international networks of cooperation and a capacity to apply for EU funding and take advantage of EU resources, the necessity to support local organizations in their internationalization efforts, and the importance of attracting foreign investments and skilled workers by developing an attractive and multicultural environment susceptible to function as a source of innovation. These reports were written by a group headed by the city manager Armas Lahoniitty, and comprised of a series of prominent members of the city's administrative staff. External experts were brought in, mostly from the town's two universities and from the local private sector (*Turun kansainvälisen toiminnan suunnitelma 1998–2000* 1998; *Turku maailmassa – maailma Turussa* 2002).

Aronen and Berghäll (1998, pp. 12–13, 38–44) show that these demands for internationalization strategies were emphasized at the same time amongst several Finnish cities, and that the Association of Finnish Municipalities played a role in accompanying change and emphasizing the main areas of development: people and innovation (product development, research, entrepreneur spirit), culture and education (develop social skills, multiculturalism), and networking (develop international networks). Turku's strategy documents emphasized the same ideas for the period 1997–2000: find ways to develop the position of Turku in the frame of the Northern Dimension,<sup>16</sup> develop the network of twin cities, create liaison bureaus in Brussels and Stockholm, develop contacts with the Baltic States, improve Turku's visibility in the EU, enhance contacts and projects with Saint Petersburg, create a working group for international affairs to think through the competence of the personnel managing the city's foreign affairs, and develop the role of Turku as a base for technical knowledge (Savolainen 2000, p. 175).

<sup>16</sup>The Northern Dimension was an attempt by the Finnish government, launched in 1997, to emphasize at the European level a regional policy for Arctic and sub-Arctic regions (Arter 2000).

## 15.6 INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND CONTINUITY

Although change was emphasized in these strategy documents, only limited evolutions happened in the institutional arrangements through which international relations were managed in Turku. Lohikoski, who replaced Sevón in 2001 as the head of the Communication Unit, describes a fluid administrative apparatus still based on individuals and on personal relations with the city manager and various private and public local and national stakeholders. There was, however, an attempt at professionalization and systematization of relations, especially following Finland's presidency of the European Council in 1999 (Savolainen 2000, p. 158): Lohikoski was recruited on the basis of his contacts and experience of international affairs, especially as a member of Finland's representation in the Council of Europe. He was given a wide brief revolving around the town's visibility abroad and the attraction of international projects, direct access to the city manager, large margins of maneuver, and a generous travel allowance (Lohikoski 2019).

The Communication Unit had been since the early 1990s the center of these activities, shared in between international affairs, communication, society relations, tourism, and all affairs linked to multiculturalism or what was called "domestic internationalization". The Unit's avowed goal was to enhance Turku's "soft" power potential, in order to advance the interests of the city and its private interests (Lohikoski 2019; Savolainen 2000, pp. 149–159; Aronen and Berghäll 1998, p. 6). The specificity of leadership in a small town, the proximity of stakeholders but also the unwillingness of the local civil society to be controlled too tightly brought a management based on informal relations—as well as various degrees of nepotism and opacity in the processes (Savolainen 2000, pp. 154–155). Lohikoski, however, underlines a new concern with the evaluation of the city's international activities' effects, which forced changes toward more systematic, more strategically planned activities (Lohikoski 2019). This is part of a process, described by Anne Haila (1994), through which towns in Finland adopted the vocabulary of innovation and internationalization, the range of technics and strategies of the private sector. This is also linked to a change in rhetoric in which towns and regions presented their international action as a competition for resources, both inside Finland and with foreign towns (cf. Söderlund 1997, pp. 53–55).

Turku also developed its institutional apparatus through the creation of a liaison office in Brussels. Aronen & Berghäll (1998, p. 37) describe the

development by several Finnish towns of liaison bureaus in Brussels in order to gather information, lobby for regional interests, and help local actors to secure funding and manage European projects. In 1999, four Finnish regions had such bureaus, including Turku (Tuomisto 2000). The Turku office was created in September 1998, with an employee on a consultancy contract and little other resources. Its main function was information gathering and contacts, as well as the monitoring and defense of the interests of local stakeholders. A similar office was planned for Stockholm, but it never materialized (Lohikoski 2019).

In this context, networks and personal relations remained important, as can be seen in twin city relationships. Considered maybe too quickly as a remnant of the Cold War, city twinnings experienced a flare in the early 1990s through the opening of contacts with the Baltic States and towns in Poland and the former DDR (Busmann and Nickel 2018). Relations with Stockholm and Saint Petersburg endured (Aronen and Berghäll 1998, p. 60), Turku even developing a reflection on ways to “position itself at the level of representations and through new cooperation schemes as a part of Stockholm’s economic area, as a satellite on its outer rim” (*Turun kansainvälisen toiminnan suunnitelma 1998–2000* 1998, p. 7).<sup>17</sup>

Kerttu Erjamo (2014, pp. 20–22) describes the late 1980s–early 1990s relations between Turku’s leadership and Anatoly Sobchak, Saint Petersburg’s first post-Cold War mayor, as marked by personal contacts amongst very small circles, mixing business leaders, city administrators, local politicians, oligarchs, and ex-KGB officers such as Sobchak’s right hand, Vladimir Putin. In the late 1990s–early 2000s the Russian city still showed clear interest in cooperation with Turku, going sometimes beyond what the city was ready to accept without risking overlaps with the competencies of the Finnish state (Savolainen 2000, p. 108). Turku-based protagonists insist in their self-narration on the way contacts with the Russian city basically extended from Soviet times without much trouble (Virmavirta 2013). In the specific atmosphere of 1990s Russia, most things were managed behind closed doors through ad hoc deals and with the ends justifying the means. Erjamo describes one such episode in 1996, when Turku asked Saint Petersburg to lobby for Turku to become a host-harbor for the Tall Ships’ Race. In order for Saint Petersburg to be able to pay the participation fee and bring Turku with it, the city manager Juhani

<sup>17</sup>Translation LC: “*positoitumassa mielikuvatasolla ja uusien yhteistyöpyrkimysten myötä osaksi Tukholman talousaluetta, eräänlaiseksi satelliitiksi sen ulkokehälle*”.

Leppä paid the entire participation fee for the Russian city out of his own credits, without submitting the idea to the municipal council (Erjamo 2014, pp. 64–65).

## 15.7 TURKU AS AN INTERFACE BETWEEN THE EU AND THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The late 1990s and early 2000s were years of “europhoria”, where Finland made its way to the EU’s institutional core, adopted the euro, and enjoyed economic growth and a stabilized geopolitical situation. Turku’s population became more mobile and more varied (Rasinkangas 2013). Globalization brought changes in the structures of economy and trade as well as in the contours of local identities. While the state remained the main actor, towns managed increasingly essential matters, from fostering the competitiveness of the local economic life to managing immigration, from social policy to education (Lähtenmäki 1994, p. 73).

Accession to the EU brought new possibilities for cities the size of Turku to come into view internationally. Local discourse on EU engagement developed at different levels through porous relations between the town’s universities, political networks, local business circles, and administrative decision-makers. The town had been one of the first places in Finland to welcome an academic and political debate about relations with European organizations, and in the 1980s–1990s this transformed into a series of local initiatives aiming at opening up the city and developing its international profile toward the EU. Incentives were varied but oscillated between support for the local economic life and a cultural drive toward improving the visibility of the city abroad and the international engagements of the city’s elites and population. Strategies drawn in municipal reports were supported and inspired by studies and policy briefs published by academic departments, companies, and other stakeholders. The University of Turku had already set up in 1975 a working group for integration research (Korhonen 2012, p. 33, 76–81, 139–147). In a form of echo loop, reports and research reinforced a general conviction that the barriers between domestic and international politics were going down, and that several sub-national actors would be allowed to develop their international relations (Lähtenmäki 1994, p. 63; Antola 1996, p. 6<sup>18</sup>;

<sup>18</sup>The political scientist Esko Antola was instrumental in these developments. His personal archives in the University of Turku show the extent of his activities in the 1990s, especially

Savolainen 2000, p. 8; Aronen and Berghäll 1998, p. 11). The main characters of this development (Korhonen 2017, pp. 349–352) were a cast of local entrepreneurs, university researchers, and local politicians from the center right to the center left, who activated in the late 1980s around matters of European integration (Korhonen 2012, 2017, p. 21).

This activism crystallized around the creation of think tanks aiming at fostering the European education of local journalists and business leaders: the *Eurooppa-Akatemia* in 1988 was meant as a crash course for business leaders, while the *Eurooppa-Instituutti* was planned as a lobby organization for European contacts (Korhonen 2012, pp. 39–50). Turku's Junior Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in this process, emphasizing the importance of internationalization and European integration for Finland and Finnish companies (Korhonen 2017, pp. 141–142). A declaration from 1988 (Korhonen 2012, pp. 44–46) gives an interesting vision of the spirit of the time: strong words on Western European integration and the necessity to “be part of it” were matched with equally strong words on the development of the Eastern bloc. While the Berlin wall would fall a bit more than a year after this document was drafted, the context was still marked by high hopes for the success of Mikhail Gorbachev's reform movement in the Soviet Union.

In a new context of European integration and economic globalization, one of the most visible aspects of this increase in Turku's foreign contacts was the town's participation in the EU's Baltic Sea region policy. Through personal relations and networks with José Manuel Barroso's European Commission, the city administration involved Turku into plans for an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR). This strategy was the EU's first macroregional strategy, which ranged from environment to neighborhood relations with Russia. It was adopted in June 2009, and Metzger and Schmitt (2012) describe the strategy as an attempt of the DG Regio to bypass the states in a process of institutionalization of strong regional solidarities. Lehti (2009) and Joenniemi (1993, p. 163) highlight the way Baltic nations saw the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to re-emphasize regional cooperation around regional concepts but also around EU policies and strategies. In early 2008, a special EUSBSR task force

in the organization of study courses and seminars on the EU and European integration meant for politicians, administrators, business leaders, and journalists (TYA, Box *Tampereen yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskuksen Eurooppa-koulutus 1988–1996, Kurssiohjelmat*).



traveled in the region to meet different actors, amongst which Turku-based agents.

Mikko Lohikoski, who managed these aspects, describe a process through which the town of Turku worked to position itself as an interlocutor for the EU at three levels: the management of concrete regional projects, relations with Helsinki and the Finnish state, and relations with regional authorities in Northwestern Russia (Lohikoski 2019; Eronen 2016). He insists on the fact that the Turku administration was especially important in bringing a concern for Russia to the EUSBSR, something Turku was eager to call the “Turku-process”: the city’s administration indeed played a role in trying to coordinate relations with Saint Petersburg in order to define the EUSBSR<sup>19</sup> as a four-way dialogue where Turku was involved with the Finnish MFA (*Ulkoasiainministeriö ja Centrum Balticum...* 2014; Erjamo 2014, pp. 62–64), the EU Commission, and Russian regional authorities. Tensions in the region after 2013 and the invasion of Crimea by Russian troops made these contacts with Russia more complicated.

## 15.8 TURKU WAS THE EUROPEAN CAP OF CULTURE IN 2011

The application for and the preparation of Turku’s year as a European Capital of Culture dovetailed with these efforts to open up the city, connect it to the EU (Lohikoski 2019), support its development through international contacts, and improve its visibility in Europe. Finland had already been chosen in 1999 by the European Council and Parliament to be the host-country of the European Capital of Culture 2011, and a competition was organized between Finnish towns (Helsinki had already been a European Capital of Culture in 2000) (for further information: Rampton et al. 2012, pp. 36–63). In September 2000, Turku’s city council appointed a committee to start preparing the application. A report was drawn to assess the cultural potential of the city and to bring together the partners

<sup>19</sup>The Centrum Balticum’s website develops these elements at length in the presentation of their activities, from the Turku-process (<http://www.centrumbalticum.org/hankkeet/turku-prosessi>, accessed 15.2.2019) to the “Neighbours”-part of the EUSBSR dedicated to Russia ([http://www.centrumbalticum.org/hankkeet/turku-prosessi/ha\\_neighbours](http://www.centrumbalticum.org/hankkeet/turku-prosessi/ha_neighbours), accessed 15.2.2019) and to the role of the Southwestern Finland region ([http://www.centrumbalticum.org/hankkeet/paattyneet\\_hankkeet/varsinais-suomen\\_itameri-roolin\\_vahvistaminen](http://www.centrumbalticum.org/hankkeet/paattyneet_hankkeet/varsinais-suomen_itameri-roolin_vahvistaminen), accessed 15.2.2019).

to be involved in the preparations. The report emphasized possible visibility gains for the city inside and outside Finland, the importance of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC)-title for social and economic development as well as the development of contacts in the Baltic Sea region. Finally, it emphasized the ECoC as “a way to strengthen the self-esteem of the city and its citizens by proving to themselves and nationally that Turku can deliver big events” (Rampton et al. 2012, p. 37).

In June 2006, Turku was selected by the Finnish ministry of Education, then nominated a year after that at the EU level. The application (Helander 2006) emphasized international connections, the Baltic Sea region, creative economy, and the role of culture in the population’s well-being. The main goal was to increase the visibility of Turku and change expectations about the city amongst local people, in Finland at large and abroad (Rampton et al. 2012, p. 49; Helander 2006). The preparation involved stakeholders at the local but also at the national level: Turku engaged with Finnish embassies in Germany, Russia, and Sweden in order to support the preparation and the advertisement of the ECoC. The EU panel in charge of the application emphasized also the involvement of citizens in the project (Rampton et al. 2012, p. 39).

The Turku 2011 Foundation was established in 2007 to work on the cultural program, secure funding, and communicate at all levels. The selection attracted a host of cultural agents locally, nationally, and internationally. Overall budget was about 55 million euros from 2008 to 2012, and while ample funding came from the city and the state of Finland, private contributions were much smaller than expected, which could be linked to the 2008 crisis and over-ambitious expectations (Kojonkoski 2009; Rampton et al. 2012). Németh (2015, p. 10) underlines the way Turku’s preparation was mostly local, with a high degree of participation by citizens. Despite disputes in the allocation and the selection of projects, the main idea got by Németh in interviews is that the process was transparent and most of the projects well embedded in the local fabric of artistic and cultural actors. However, while the city emphasized its multiculturalism, Németh found that non-European minorities were not brought forward or associated as such to the ECoC. In an interview, Lohikoski points into the same direction: Turku’s non-European minorities are still today considered first of all as a social issue, and not as much as a resource to be used to support the city’s international outreach (Lohikoski 2019).

Recent changes have curbed the optimism characteristic of the early 2000s. The rise of populism and EU-criticism has accompanied a series of crises that have either complicated international relations, made them more tensed, or changed the nature and the general tone of discussions on international matters and international contacts. After the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, a combination of political and social factors brought Islamic terrorism to Europe. Turku was not spared in that, and after a small-scale knife attack in August 2015 conducted by a radicalized refugee and ending in one dead and several wounded, the town became the symbol of Finland's possible vulnerability to the terrorist threat. Debates on immigration became more tensed, moving between outright racism, demands for tighter borders or criteria, humanitarian concerns, cultural concerns, and economic angst. The economic and financial crisis starting in 2008 also raised economic tensions in the country and fed euro-criticism. Finally, Russia's invasion of Georgian territory in 2008, then of Crimea and territories in Eastern Ukraine in 2013 brought more tensions in the Baltic Sea region, with a more assertive and paranoid Russia, and the effect of EU-backed sanctions on Finland's economy.

### 15.9 CONCLUSIONS: LOCAL INCENTIVES, AD HOC DECISION-MAKING, AND LIMITED AGENCY

As a case study looked at from the 1970s to the current day, Turku shows the pertinence and persistence over time of the categories and incentives of city diplomacy emphasized by van der Pluijm and Melissen (van der Pluijm and Melissen 2007): the town's incentives to develop international contacts are mostly local, linked to economic and commercial promotion, cultural and scientific relations, city branding, networking, information gathering, and lobbying. Incentives are also linked to identity, nested in the self-conception of the city as an interface between Finland and Europe. Goals are achieved through means available in evolving regional and national contexts, which makes of Turku's case during this period one of both limited agency and increasingly expanding possibilities for autonomous international action. In this regard, the main change is the end of the Cold War and Finland's integration in the European Union, both developments that allowed Turku to increase the range and volume of its international relations. Finally, contacts are managed mostly through

informal patterns, with an emphasis on the role of individuals and personal networks.

Amongst locally grounded incentives for the development of international contacts, culture and identity appear as much as economy and politics. The interests of local companies but also the natural attraction felt by political forces toward either the Eastern or the Western blocs strongly frame the need for international outreach. At the same time, Turku's administrators emphasize the importance for the city to come into view, to compensate through international contacts its perceived marginality both regarding the region's main centers of power and also regarding Helsinki. One cannot avoid the thought that the city's administrators also saw themselves as interfaces between the world and their own country's people, translators of external developments for the domestic audience (cf. Jalava 2012, p. 13). This is what lies behind the expression of a will to "develop the town", to improve the well-being of Turku's citizens, to "open up the city", and to internationalize.

However, if these incentives—economic, political, and cultural—are mostly rooted in local ramifications, the diplomacy of a city such as Turku also depends on its environment, both national and international. Small cities are more influenced than bigger ones by geopolitical developments but also by the intrusion in the city's life of international trends, from movements of population to the spread of technological or organizational models, from economic booms and busts to the developments of regional organizations. A smaller city has less means to be proactive regarding these trends or to resist them, and must in some way adapt to or, in the terms of Pertti Alasuutari and Ali Qadir (2013), "domesticate" them. This work takes a huge part of the diplomatic efforts of small cities: they need to monitor trends, lobby, acquire expert knowledge from abroad, work through personal and institutionalized contacts to come into view, and defend their interests. In that respect, while Turku is not fully an "agent" of its own fate, international and national contacts, activism in various forums, and the vivacity of its cultural, political, and economic life allow it to be more than a "reactor", to preview and adapt to new trends and changes (on agents and reactors, see Joenniemi and Jańczak 2017). This mix of agency and dependence on wider developments is especially visible, as we saw, in Turku's efforts to influence the EUSBSR.

Small cities also accompany and find their place in national trends, often working as complements to the activities of their state or working in close cooperation with national organizations. During the Cold War, political

and economic incentives mixed in the development of city twinnings. A city like Turku became an intermediary between the blocs but also the center of transnational cooperation schemes in which various organizations, from the Finnish state to friendship societies, from private companies to cultural organizations, worked to build contacts between blocks. After the 1990s, Turku's international outreach became part of Finland's adaptation to the context of European integration and globalization.

Administratively, this international outreach is managed in a small town such as Turku mostly through personal contacts and networks flowing from the city government to other agents. The handy and obvious links between private and public sector, economy and politics, compensate the smallness of Turku's resources. This also means a minor role for democratic institutions such as the municipal council, apart from some specific high-octane political issues such as relations to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and nowadays anything remotely linked to movements of population. A lot of what is happening is based on non-institutional cooperation, personal contacts, and ad hoc decision-making. This informality, especially in relation to Soviet Union/Russia, in dealings with the Finnish state, or in dealings with the EU, is emphasized by the administrators themselves (see Erjamo 2014, pp. 66–68). It often blurs the lines between free time and work, personal relations and town business, and vested interests and the general interest (Erjamo 2014, pp. 70–71). Small town diplomacy tends to work in unorthodox ways, without the constraints, legal and cultural, limiting state diplomacy.

Turku's international contacts are thus both reactions to its environment, attempts at improving concrete elements and finding capacity enhancers, and the city's fight against its perceived marginality by rising its profile and pushing its inhabitants to adapt and to internationalize. If we look at Marc Bonneville's (1994) study, Turku appears as a "gateway city", a hub through which international influences flow. Despite its limitations, such a town has wide range of activities to manage, and can be in the early 2000s described as a "regional city", significant if not dominant in the context of the Baltic Sea (Savolainen 2000, pp. 65–66), and more active than many other Finnish towns in terms of international outreach. This activism is not a recent invention or a consequence of post-Cold War globalization. In the case of Turku, current practices have their roots in older ways: for example, the recent emphasis on cities' communication and image policies (e.g. La Porte 2013) tends to hide the historical roots of present-day practices in tourism and economic promotion.

In a long policy paper dedicated to the future of municipalities written two years ago (Nyholm et al. 2017, pp. 133–134), the authors drew two scenarios for the future of municipalities in Finland that can serve as a final note to our article. One of these scenarios emphasized the possibility for Finnish municipalities to strengthen their self-government through the devolution of more competencies and resources from the central state. The second scenario described a global context increasingly tensed and fraught with geopolitical threats, where Finnish towns would remain semi-autonomous agents dependent of the central state. The report also emphasizes the way public authorities, both national and regional, have lost their monopoly on foreign relations. One way or the other, efforts by Turku's city administrators to expand and control their town's international contacts will endure as a persistent structure. In a small city, the need to pool limited resources in defense of local interests will probably continue to pull together a variety of local agents in the management of international contacts.

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