

# CITIES, PROSPERITY AND INFLUENCE

The role of city diplomacy in shaping soft power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the first time in history most people now live in cities. Cities are fundamental to economic and cultural development. They produce 80% of world GDP. They act as significant sources of soft power. Their influence is the organic product of many actors, but is no less significant for that.

They are also increasingly important to political issues, as they more and more make connections between themselves, including through various international cities networks. In recent years diplomacy conducted by cities and their contribution to national influence has grown greatly in scale and importance. This trend is important, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges of creating prosperous and stable societies around the world cannot be addressed by nation states alone. With globalisation, cities - long sources of prosperity and culture - will increasingly become important players in their own right in addressing international political, social, and security issues.

Cities derive their power from their density and diversity, acting as meeting points for goods, people and ideas. They are attractors and connectors in an increasingly networked world. The rise of digital technology may allow many of the functions traditionally provided only by cities to happen anywhere, but there is little sign of the increasing growth or power of cities slowing down.

This paper examines how cities can shape their own destinies and help address urban, national and international challenges. It explores the increasingly important balance between nations - which must give their cities the autonomy and support they need to prosper - and cities - which need to ensure that their pursuit of city-led agendas do not run counter to national interests and diplomacy. These conclusions have significant implications for organisations and individuals within cities, as well as for cities and nations themselves.

The policy implications include the need for national governments to understand the role cities can play in supporting foreign policy and soft power strategies and supporting them in this, while at the same time respecting their autonomy in how they project and engage around their very considerable soft power assets.

City governments and policymakers need to consider their options for global influence, developing international strategies where appropriate, making the most of opportunities to build international ties. It is important too that they pursue their international engagement and city-level diplomacy alongside national strategies and ensure they do not directly counter national public diplomacy and foreign policy interests.

An important conclusion is that city promotion and diplomacy is most effective when it is consistent with the reality of a city's citizens. City strategies succeed when they prioritise quality of life as a measure of success and enhance that quality of life for all its citizens by encouraging prosperity, openness, and equal access to the benefits of city life. City dwellers can be made better aware of the growing number of ways in which they benefit from their cities' international engagement and how they can contribute to that engagement and their cities' soft power through their own international relationships and networks.

## INTRODUCTION

For the first time in history the majority of people now live in cities. While industrialized countries have been predominantly urban for decades, the trend towards an increasingly urban world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is being driven primarily by urbanization in low and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.<sup>1</sup> Throughout history, cities have played a crucial role in social, economic and political transformation. Cities are social melting pots, centres of economic innovation, political engagement and cultural interchange. They represent the most eloquent expression of human beliefs, ideals and ambitions. The physical environment of the city is the product of the ingenuity of people as well as an important arena in which human activity thrives.

Urban centres offer economies of scale in the delivery of public goods and services and in most countries contribute disproportionately to the national economy. Cities are an increasingly important economic and cultural force in world affairs. Growing rapidly, they often outweigh countries in economic scale and importance. It will be common to find previously little known cities with economies the size of countries - such as Tianjin in China with by 2025 a GDP of \$625 billion, approximately that of all of Sweden. This is a global pattern, with World Bank figures showing that 80% of world GDP is generated in cities, and McKinsey estimating that 60% of world GDP is generated by just 600 cities.<sup>2</sup>

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the phenomenon of so-called 'world cities' or 'global cities', which constitute the locations and marketplaces for leading contemporary economic activities. Saskia Sassen traces their ascendancy to the late 1980s, moving beyond the original major financial centres - the original global cities of London, New York, Hong Kong and Tokyo – to include many more urban centres participating in the global economy.<sup>3</sup>

Given these changes it is vital to understand the economic importance of cities and the rise of their social and political influence on world affairs. In this paper we ask how cities can shape their own destiny and develop their own international profiles and responses to contemporary global challenges? What role can cities play not only as economic contributors to metropolitan, national and global prosperity but also in shaping good societies, characterized by stability, peace and security? As we look towards addressing these questions we examine the role of city diplomacy in the promotion of urban fortunes as well as the exercise of soft power in international relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Urbanization refers to the proportion of a country's population living in urban areas; urban growth refers to the growth in the absolute size of a country's urban population.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-four-global-forces-breaking-all-the-trends>

<sup>3</sup> Saskia Sassen (2000) *Cities in a World Economy*, Pine Forge Press, Sage Publications Inc.

## WHY CITIES?

The American historian Lewis Mumford famously observed that ‘there is not a single function performed in the city that cannot be performed – and has not in fact been performed – in the open country’.<sup>4</sup> So what is so special or unique about the urban context? In his book *The City: A Global History*, Joel Kotkin answers this question by following the progression of cities from the early religious centers of Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and China to the imperial capitals of the classical era, through the rise of Islamic cities and the centres at the heart of European international commerce, ending with reflections on the contemporary post-industrial suburban metropolis. He concludes that, despite their infinite variety, all cities serve essentially three functions: economic, political and spiritual. In more secular contexts we might call the last ‘social’. To flourish, he argues, cities must remain sacred, safe and busy. He posits that the greatest challenge to our urban future is that posed by present day religious and cultural struggles that in their most extreme form are reflected in terrorist attacks, which are increasingly an urban phenomenon.<sup>5</sup>

While history provides one clue to the importance of cities over time, contemporary analysis has also demonstrated the benefits that accrue by virtue of large numbers of people living in close *proximity* and in relative *density*, in centres characterized by social *diversity* and under conditions of the *dynamic* social change accompanying urban growth.<sup>6</sup> It is this concentration, or congregation of human activity, energy and ingenuity that brings a space to life and gives it a distinctly urban character.

From their earliest forms to the present day, cities have been focal points for the exchange of information, knowledge and ideas and the accumulation of goods and capital. They serve as nuclei for trade and public administrations around which city-regional economies and socio-political orders evolve. Cities also have political influence that extends way beyond their immediate environs and hinterlands. In other words, cities deserve a particular focus but to focus on cities is not to ignore the regions and countries of which they are a part.

Cities are the spatial and organizational expression of social relations.<sup>7</sup> They are cosmopolitan centres of social engagement and cultural interchange. However, as a result of the rapid pace of urban change, in recent decades metropolitan governments have not always kept pace with the demands being made upon them. Particularly in low- and middle-income countries many national governments have woefully neglected the urban context in their policy and planning priorities. As a result, across the world today one third of all urban

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis Mumford (1937) ‘What is a City?’ *Architectural Record*, reprinted in Richard Le Gates and Frederic Stout (Eds) *The City Reader*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London: Routledge, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Joel Kotkin (2006) *The City: A Global History*, New York: Modern Library.

<sup>6</sup> Jo Beall, Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis and Ravi Kanbur (2010) ‘Beyond the Tipping Point: A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Urbanization and Development’ in Jo Beall, Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis and Ravi Kanbur (eds) *Urbanization and Development, Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 3-16.

<sup>7</sup> Jo Beall (1997) ‘Valuing Difference and Working with Diversity’ in Jo Beall (ed.) *A City for All*, London: Zed Books, p. 3.

dwellers live in slums and without adequate shelter or basic services. Cities in the advanced economies have seen the vibrancy, edginess, security and safety of urban life rocked by acts of terror.<sup>8</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many contemporary commentators emphasize the negative aspects of city life, focusing on crime and violence, social fragmentation and breakdown and the negative impact of growing social exclusion and differentiation.<sup>9</sup>

Cities are sites of innovation, creativity and social dynamism. Urban centres offer economies of scale in the delivery of public goods and social services and in most countries contribute disproportionately to the national economy. Nevertheless, it is also important to recognize that cities are literally concrete manifestations of ideas on how society was, is and should be. Historically the emergence and growth of cities was predicated on social hierarchy and cities remain highly unequal: sites where expressions of wealth and power exist side by side with social exclusion and marginalization. So as we explore the importance of cities we cannot ignore what is challenging and bleak about city life, alongside the enormous opportunities and benefits that arise out of the encounters between the robust, diverse, creative and ingenious people who inhabit them.

## THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CITIES

It is the elements of proximity, density and diversity that underpin what economists call 'agglomeration effects' being the clustering of people and economic activity in space, allowing access to larger and more diverse talent pools and encouraging the more ready exchange of information, knowledge and ideas.<sup>10</sup> While it is extraordinarily difficult to accurately measure and assess the effects of diversity empirically, several studies provide robust evidence that diversity does encourage growth at both the industry and city level.<sup>11</sup>

Underpinning the economic value provided by cities is also the fact that the delivery of public goods and services benefits enormously from the economies of scale offered by concentrated populations.

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<sup>8</sup> Jo Beall and Sean Fox (2009) *Cities and Development*, London: Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> A companion piece to this paper on Cities and Security is currently in production.

<sup>10</sup> Henry G. Overman and Anthony J. Venables (2010) 'Evolving City Systems' in Jo Beall, Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis and Ravi Kanbur (eds) *Urbanization and Development, Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 103-123.

<sup>11</sup> See Ed Glaeser, H.D. Kallal, J.A. Scheinkman and A. Schleifer (1992) 'Growth in cities', *Journal of Political Economy*, 100: 1126–1152; J.V. Henderson, A. Kuncoro and M. Turner (1995) 'Industrial development in cities', *Journal of Political Economy*, 103: 1067–1085. Henderson et al. 1995; Rosenthal, Stuart and William Strange (2004) 'Evidence on the nature and sources of agglomeration economies', in J.V. Henderson and J. Thisse (eds) *Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics*, Vol. 4, Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are vastly different from those that characterized the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Globalization has significantly reduced the costs of transporting goods, people, information, knowledge and money, leading to the question as to whether cities will remain as important as in the past.

Yet some have argued that cities are as important if not more important than nations in the context of contemporary economic globalization. At its heart are a network of internationally connected cities, linked by way of innovations in telecommunications and the ascendancy of the information age. These so-called 'world cities' or 'global cities' are the command and control locations and marketplaces for leading contemporary economic activities, especially in sectors that require a concentration of professional and skilled labour.

Accompanying this process has been a decline in the fortunes of those cities with economies based mainly on heavy manufacturing industry and a concomitant reduction in demand for unskilled or semi-skilled labour. Hence some cities in the old industrialized world are declining in economic importance, contributing to a shrinking proportion of national and regional wealth, while remaining home to large and increasingly impoverished populations. While some cities have seen their economic functions shrink or disappear – Detroit at the time of the decline of the American car industry would be the iconic case - others like those of the United Kingdom's 'Northern Powerhouse' are adapting to shifting economic trends and prospering. A key to the continued economic success of such cities is their ability to connect internationally as part of a process of adapting and appealing to new economic opportunities and markets.

The 'world cities' paradigm has preoccupied itself with mapping an international hierarchy of cities based on the concentration of global service sector firms in each city, the transport and communications connections between and among them, as well as the concentration of financial capital to be found within them. At the top are those that are dubbed 'global cities', including New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich, Amsterdam, Sydney and Hong Kong. These cities, which are estimated to number about 40 increasingly interact and have transactions with so-called emerging 'world cities' such as Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Mumbai, and Seoul. It has been suggested by some commentators that global cities have managed to free themselves from national constraints and operate almost independently of nations, while at the same time leading to a radical reorganization of the 'international space economy'.<sup>12</sup>

The ongoing work of the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) group reveal big changes in the number and type of cities that are taking on international functions. Today, of the one hundred most globalized cities according to GaWC data, 44 are middle-income and lower-income cities with a real GDP per capita of below US\$25,000. This data refers primarily to cities becoming international nodes of finance.<sup>13</sup> There is a consistency of experience that

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<sup>12</sup> John Friedmann and G. Wolf (1982) 'World City Formation: An agenda for research and action', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 15(1), p. 310.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Taylor, P.J., Beaverstock, J.V., Derudder, B., Faulconbridge, J., Harrison, J., Hoyler, M.,

can be mapped across this variety of cities facing intense exposure to global economic trends and developing international functions. However, there are a large number of cities around the world, which 'do not register on intellectual maps that chart the rise and fall of global and world cities'.<sup>14</sup>

Such 'ordinary cities' are also relevant to the global economy in various ways, playing an important role as centres of production, consumption and service provision for city-regional economies and beyond. The economic conditions and livelihood opportunities for the world's city dwellers vary enormously and for some the lack of opportunities leaves them no option but to seek a living in other, larger and more distant urban centres. The phenomenon of international migration is overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon.

What is clear from the discussion above then, is that not all cities are similarly connected or positioned in the global economy. Nor are they equally well placed to engage in city diplomacy or the exercise of soft power. To help us navigate and understand the breadth of contrast amongst the economic and social character of cities as well as help us understand the variety of approaches to soft power and city diplomacy available to cities, it is useful to employ a typology of cities. The JLL Cities Research Centre provides a taxonomy of cities aimed at measuring investment performance:<sup>15</sup>

- a) **Established World Cities** are highly globalized and competitive metropolitan economies with the deepest and most settled concentrations of firms, capital and talent. This would include the 'Big Six' 'super cities': London, New York, Paris and Tokyo, more recently joined by Hong Kong and Singapore.
- b) **Emerging World Cities:** business and political capitals of large or medium-sized emerging economies that function as gateways for international firms, trade and investment. This category includes the likes of Shanghai, Beijing, Istanbul and Sao Paulo. However, in this group, shape and growth are uneven: Shenzhen, Dubai and Bangalore, for example, are globalizing at breakneck speed; Jakarta, Manila and Sao Paulo are making notable improvements in key competitiveness measures; but other cities, like Dhaka struggle to cope with global change.
- c) **New World Cities:** these are small or medium-sized cities that have an attractive infrastructure and strong quality of life, and deliberately specialize in a limited number of global markets. Brisbane, Melbourne and Boston are archetypal 'New World Cities'. Many possess high-tech, innovation or research capabilities, such as Vienna, Munich and Tel Aviv. Others like Barcelona, Berlin, Miami and Cape Town are cultural,

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Pain, K. and Witlox, F. (eds) (2013) *Global Cities: Critical Concepts in Urban Studies*, London: Routledge. [4 volumes; Joseph Parilla, Jesus Trujillo, Alan Berube and Tao Ran (2015) Brookings Global Metro Monitor, An Uncertain Recovery 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Robinson (2002) 'Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26(1), p. 531.

<sup>15</sup> JLL Cities Research Center (2015) *Globalisation and Competition: The New World of Cities*, <http://www.jll.com/cities-research>.



entertainment and tourist hubs. The majority feature at the top of the various 'quality of life' and 'sustainability' indices and has had notable success in attracting fluid capital, companies and talent (see for example Auckland, Copenhagen, Vancouver and Vienna).

## CONNECTING CITIES INTERNATIONALLY

In the sphere of international relations the rules of engagement conventionally have been primarily fashioned by military and economic strength. However, this order is often underpinned by the exercise of soft power: the world of ideas and values: the art of attraction through sharing of cultures and ways of life. Although soft power is usually identified with nation states, cities can and do exercise soft power. This sometimes works in tandem with the desires and interests of the nation-states of which they are a part and indeed, city diplomacy may well be an extension of broader state power. It is also possible, however, that the values, ideas and interests of cities can be exercised on their own account and even stand in contrast to the hard power of nation states. Furthermore, we can discern a commonality between cities and they are increasingly forming international networks based around shared concerns. These have the potential to define 21st century attitudes towards a range of national and global challenges.

The soft power of cities is manifested both directly and indirectly. We can classify the direct expressions of city soft power - the international policies and actions of the Mayor and City Hall - as *city diplomacy*. In order to secure the economic benefits of globalization, city diplomacy has tended to include activities ranging from international relations with other cities, such as city twinning or fora of mayors and local government associations, to the promotion of the city as a destination for inward investment and tourism. City diplomacy also includes bidding for and winning major events such as the Olympics and international festivals as well as myriad other cultural and brand positioning activities.

Indirect expressions of city soft power radiate from the character of the city itself. A city, just like a nation, is more than its governing body or political leadership; it is made up of many institutions - educational, cultural, and commercial – that constitute its soft power assets. A city's soft power is also the sum expression of civil society, the character of the people and institutions that define the experience of working, living and being in the city. Cities contain many of the soft power assets that give states (and indeed cities) comparative advantage in world affairs. These include historic landmarks, artistic and sporting spaces and events, educational bodies, cultural centres such as museums, theatres and public spaces, as well as a range of other activities and institutions that go to make up a country's cultural heritage.

Cities are natural *attractors* as proven by their continued growth in population size and economic importance. Their inherently cosmopolitan nature attracts ideas, inventions, creative minds, art, culture, food and commerce. Every city that has experienced a 'golden age' from 5th BC Athens, to 15th century Florence, 16th century London, 19th century

Vienna, has drawn in ideas, people and commerce from as wide a circle as the technology of their day would allow.<sup>16</sup> Cities have always been hives of ambition and activity, explosive expressions of culture, trade and economy. The more open and inviting, the more cosmopolitan a city, the more its soft power expands and is reinforced.

Cities are also *connectors*. In an age of globalization the shape of the world economy is increasingly being defined by and mediated through cities. Cities are the physical ports and the virtual nodes through which national economies connect and it is this international connectivity that is creating greater interdependency and generating shared interest and purpose through the interactions of citizens globally. With increased connectivity and economic interdependence among cities a new kind of global cosmopolitanism is emerging, one in which a young citizen of Shanghai may have a greater commonality of experience and outlook with a young person in London than with someone in rural parts of their own country.

## SOFT POWER AND CITY DIPLOMACY

Soft Power is understood as the ability of one actor to influence the perceptions and behaviour of another through attraction rather than through force or coercion.<sup>17</sup> Soft power has generally been seen as the preserve of nation-states. However, it is no longer just nation-states that exercise soft-power values. Traditional state-to-state international relations and diplomatic initiatives now operate alongside supra- and sub-national actors, many of which espouse their own values and assert their own soft power agendas.

### Public Diplomacy and Citizen Diplomacy

*Public Diplomacy* is a component part of soft power, being the attempt by a government to systematically direct the values and ideas it embodies towards external audiences. The idea of soft power is not without its critics. Nye himself points out that the concept has its limitations and discusses the views of critics of soft power who believe the exercise of hard power to be a more effective instrument of foreign policy. Nye also identifies those who consider soft power to be best exercised outside the control of government policymakers, that is, emanating primarily from civil society. He cites by way of example the influence of Hollywood, Harvard and Microsoft on the international popular imagination of America.

Non-state actors often do provide a more accurate manifestation of soft power than governments. The deliberative actions of civil society organizations are sometimes characterized as *citizen diplomacy*, a concept used to refer to ordinary citizens engaging as country representatives either by default or design, informally or through official channels. The term is in widest currency in the United States where: 'Citizen Diplomacy is the concept

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Hall (1998) *Cities and Civilisation: Culture, Technology and Urban Order*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Nye (1990) 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, 80 (Autumn), p. 153-171.

that the individual has the right, even the responsibility, to engage across cultures and create shared understanding through person-to-person interactions.’ Citizen diplomats can be students, teachers, athletes, artists, business people, humanitarians, adventurers or tourists.<sup>18</sup>

## **Cultural Relations**

We prefer the term *cultural relations* to refer to the fostering of global intercultural dialogue and cooperation through science, education, language and the arts. Close to citizen diplomacy, ‘cultural relations’ has a stronger focus on mutuality and reciprocity. They are built on sustained dialogue over long periods of time and leading to the establishment of stronger and deeper relationships between cultures and can include state institutions alongside non-state actors. A cultural relations approach can be distinguished from state-led activities such as public diplomacy and nation branding because it does not originate with the policies of governments or from the directives of state actors.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, they remain a tangible and increasingly important element of international relations, whether they operate with or against the grain of national interests in the respective countries involved.<sup>20</sup> The exercise of cultural relations is not overly engineered and is more organic than public diplomacy or citizen diplomacy.

## **City Diplomacy**

We use the term *city diplomacy* to refer to the widest range of international activity on the part of cities, including some activities that might be better categorized as pure economic advancement such as tourism promotion, or efforts to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). However, we make a distinction between activities aimed at advocating on behalf of a city’s economic or political interests and those initiatives that harness the intrinsic soft power of the city: the cultural relations activities of civil society which are in effect a summation of the city’s ideas and values.

There are some important distinctions to make between the nature of soft power exercised by nations and that of the city. City diplomacy, as a manifestation of soft power, charts a different course from national diplomacy. City diplomacy has less structure, less direct influence and fewer formal tools at its disposal. As a result city diplomacy and city-to-city dialogue operate inside a framework that lends itself more easily to collaborative approaches and cooperation: cultural relations if you will. Cities can form an important part of national strategies as well as developing their own international engagement initiatives. States may therefore co-opt cities to become part of their diplomatic toolkit; the question is the degree of autonomy a city can or needs to have from nation state agendas in order to be effective

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.centerforcitizendiplomacy.org>

<sup>19</sup> Simon Anholt (2003) *Brand New Justice: The upside of global branding*, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

<sup>20</sup> Yudhishtir Isar (2014) *Preparatory Action: Culture in EU External Relations*, Brussels: European Union.

agents of soft power. To what extent can a city's soft power compliment or counteract a contradictory set of nation state values?

Globalization processes increasingly challenge the effectiveness of both the hard and soft power of states. The nature of borderless problems such as terrorism, migration, health pandemics and financial risk highlight the inadequacy of purely hard power responses.

## **INSTRUMENTS OF CITY DIPLOMACY**

Most cities engage in international activity with the primary aim of securing economic benefit. Whether by the promotion of the city as an inward investment destination or by hosting a major event, the stated aims of city leaders usually emphasize that improving the profile of the city will help boost economic growth. In a globally fluid economy cities thrive by their ability to capture investment and so it is important for city leaders to respond to global economic opportunities and attempt to capture a portion of the global flows of trade, investment and talent. Since the early 1980s the interconnectedness of the world economy has been determined more by FDI than by trade.<sup>21</sup> This is a significant factor for cities, which are primary recipients of FDI. In addition, world tourism continues to grow and to be an important source of income for many cities. International tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million in 2015, according to January 2015 UNWTO World Tourism Barometer<sup>22</sup>. Some 50 million more tourists travelled to international destinations around the world last year as compared to 2014. These trends can determine the economic success of a city and often the economic success of their host nations often depends upon them as well.

### **Investment, Economic Promotion and Place-branding**

The basic economic promotion toolkit includes promotion of inward investment, trade missions and trade shows, tourism promotion and talent attraction. But cities undertake multiple forms of economic promotional activity including bidding for and hosting major events such as the Olympics, cultural investment, best practice policy exchange, engaging in international networks of various kinds as well as through urban design and architecture statements and infrastructure investment. Mayoral speeches, media articles and the web presence and profile of cities also play their part. These tools of the trade are used in different ways by different types of cities and all are not always available to everyone.

Economic promotion is often undertaken directly by City Hall or by a city leader such as the Mayor but city governance varies significantly within and across territories and such activities can also be undertaken by the private sector as well as civic and cultural institutions that are at arm's length or entirely separate from government. The often informal

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Dicken (2016), *Global Shift*, London: Sage Publications. p18

<sup>22</sup> UNWTO, Tourism Highlights, 2015. <http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284416899>

and sometimes organic nature of cities can mean that no one single voice 'owns the brand', so that many collaborating and competing groups might contribute to the goal of developing a city's international profile.

*Established World Cities* are more likely to make grand statements on the world stage such as undertaking Olympic bids, alongside subtler approaches of city diplomacy such as cultural exchange.

*Emerging world cities* have similar aspirations but have to work harder to achieve them. The most tangible measure of talent attraction is in the number of overseas students registered to study in a city but it can also include the total proportion of a city's workforce or professional cadre that is foreign-born.

Perhaps the most sophisticated cities in the realm of economic promotion are within the grouping of *New World Cities* - medium sized cities that have had to develop their international profile in order to attract investment. Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Berlin are cities with incredibly strong 'brand' recognition, not only because of their important and recognized histories but because they have also developed a sophisticated promotional apparatus, including both profile-raising infrastructure and brand messaging. Each of them shares a common underlying message in their brand 'call to action', whether it is 'Copenhagen', 'I Amsterdam', or 'Be Berlin'. The message is directed at the individual and the desire to pursue one's own interests. In other words, the brand message is less about the specific characteristics of the city and more 'you', the person 'invited' who can become anything you want to be, by being 'here'.

It's hard to make a quantitative measure of ephemeral indicators such as culture and brand, but we can look to various indices and perception studies to gain a sense of their impact. Copenhagen's international reputation as a progressive, forward-looking city is well established amongst aspiring and ambitious cities - demonstrated by New York imitating its bicycling strategy in 2012 - and the strength of the idea of Copenhagen as a policy innovator spills over into the popular imagination with Copenhagen consistently topping 'quality of life' indices, such as quantitative studies such as Mercer (9th in 2016)<sup>23</sup>, as well as more subjective popular surveys such as Monocle magazine's Quality of Life index (3rd 2016)<sup>24</sup>.

Similarly, Amsterdam, although a small city has a global brand reputation, which punches above its weight for good quality of life, cultural offer and buzz, as also reflected in its entry into the Monocle rankings (20th). Perhaps significantly for cities like Amsterdam this index attempts to measure cultural factors as an important indicator of livability. The 'buzz' of the city is measured in how late nightclubs stay open, something which may seem ephemeral

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<sup>23</sup> Mercer Quality of Life Index, (2016), <http://www.mercer.com/newsroom/western-european-cities-top-quality-of-living-ranking-mercero.html>

<sup>24</sup> Monocle Quality of Life index (2016) <https://monocle.com/film/affairs/top-25-cities-2016/>

but is integral to the city' brand management strategy of projecting an image of openness, tolerance, livability and a centre for nightlife.<sup>25</sup>

The city of Berlin is part of this cohort of mid-sized cities which is increasingly extending its soft power reach through investment in culture and prioritization of quality of life measures, and significantly challenging the cultural reputation and status of more established world city brands, ranking second in Monocle's survey after Tokyo.<sup>26</sup> The link between culture and global financial centre status and their reinforcing soft power reach may be of greater relevance than is widely recognized. A recent GaWC study has highlighted the importance to the arts and culture to sustaining and developing financial 'global city' status, asking if they are in fact 'two sides of the same coin'. The evidence points to the importance of Berlin's reputation as a global arts centre, perhaps enhancing Berlin's long-term economic prospects.<sup>27</sup>

The city of Medellín in Colombia offers an interesting example of how imaginative city leadership has transformed the image of the city internationally. Once known as home to Pablo Escobar, the notorious narco-trafficker and his cocaine cartel and formerly wracked by violence perpetrated by armed conflict with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and other paramilitary forces, it is now possible to enjoy civic spaces, consumerist delights in middle class neighbourhoods and to visit the city's surrounding working class *comuna* by way of the city's new cable-car network. In 2013 Medellín was hailed as the 'most innovative city in the world' by the influential Urban Land Institute<sup>28</sup> and this year, it won the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, awarded in recognition of innovative and sustainable urban solutions. An important part of this transformation, which has been described as nothing short of a 'metropolitan miracle',<sup>29</sup> was the foresightedness of ambitious city level politicians and officials for both locally generated and focused policies addressing social inclusion, efforts towards sustaining and growing the economic base of the city, and internationally, the pursuit of profile and partnerships,<sup>30</sup> including the hosting of the prestigious UN-Habitat World Economic Forum in 2014.

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<sup>25</sup> M. Kavaratzis & G. J. Ashworth (2006), *Changing the Tide: The campaign to re-brand Amsterdam*, Urban and Regional Studies Institute, University of Groningen.

<sup>26</sup> Monocle Quality of Life index (2016) <https://monocle.com/film/affairs/top-25-cities-2016/>

<sup>27</sup> M.J. Skórska\*, R.C. Kloosterman (2012), *Performing on the Global Stage: Exploring the Relationship between Finance and Arts in Global Cities*, GaWC. <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/rb/rb412.html>

<sup>28</sup> Chris Moss (2015) 'Medellín Colombia: A Miracle of Reinvention', *The Guardian*, 29.09.15.

<sup>29</sup> Francisco Guitierrez, M.T. Guitierrez, T. Guzman, J.C. Arenas and M.T. Pinto (2012) 'Of Guns, Ideas and Taxes: Understanding the political logic of violence-reducing policy innovation in three Colombian cities' in Dennis Rodgers, Jo Beall and Ravi Kanbur (eds) *Latin American Urban Development into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Towards a Renewed Perspective on the City*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 186-204.

<sup>30</sup> Jo Beall conversation with Sergio Fajardo, Governor of the Province of Antioquia (2013) and British Council engagement with the city of Medellín and Antioquia Province.

## **From Student Attraction to City Alumni**

The value of foreign students to cities goes way beyond the fees they pay to universities or the spending they generate in city economies. The value for the city also lies in the long-term relationship that is built so a student's experience can shape their lifelong affinity to that city. City diplomacy strategies increasingly focus on student recruitment, working with universities to outline the benefits not just of studying a given course but also to enhance the totality of the experience of living there and taking part in city life. As international students integrate into the life of the city beyond their college or university they are likely to build a shared commonality of values and long-term relationships.

There has been a definitive trend for both established cities and new world cities seeking to attract students from emerging market cities and countries. The established cities often attract internationally mobile students by virtue of the strength of their profile and the world-class reputation of their universities.

New World Cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Montreal, and Berlin not only make it into the top ten of the QS Survey of 'Best Cities to Be a Student', but are close behind established cities in the top six, such as London, Hong Kong, Paris and Singapore. Melbourne, being geographically well placed in Asia has intently focused on building a reputation as a study destination and the fact that it ranks high in various 'livability' indices has helped. Yet Melbourne has also had the foresight to recognize these qualities and shape them as part of its economic promotion strategy, building in the process a long-term cultural relations strategy through attracting students. Cities such as Melbourne are actively welcoming and educating people who will one day become future business and political leaders in fast growing emerging markets. As such they are deliberately investing in their long-term prosperity.

## **Tourism Promotion**

As an internationally traded service, tourism has become one of the world's major trade categories, ranking fourth after fuels, chemicals and food. Globally, cities like London and Hong Kong remain top tourist destinations.<sup>31</sup> Many European cities such as Rome, Florence and Milan attract tourists as religious, cultural and fashion centres. Because tourism is an important economic tool for cities there are many examples of cities that have transformed their economies by deliberately focusing on the promotion of the city as a tourist destination.

For example, Barcelona significantly transformed its economic prospects by hosting the Olympic Games in 1992. At that time it attracted just over 1.5 million visitors annually while today it attracts over eight million and is one of the top city tourist destinations in the world. It remains to be seen whether Rio de Janeiro will be able to achieve the same long-term

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<sup>31</sup> UNWTO (2012) *Global Report on City Tourism*, Madrid: United Nations World Tourism Organisation

benefits and much will depend on sustained and coordinated national and metropolitan policy agendas that can build on the profile the Games provided the city in 2016.

Since the first democratic elections in 1994 South Africa has moved from global pariah to one promoting itself as a tourist destination, as has the city of Cape Town in its own right, projecting its natural and cultural resources, its man-made attractions and culturally diverse and vibrant population. It has a tourism development framework that specifically includes a focus on how tourism can benefit the people of Cape Town, while also working on calculating the economic value of tourism specific to the city.

## **CITIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Cities also engage in international relations for reasons that go beyond their immediate economic interest, in particular, through major events, policy exchange and cultural exchange. A city hall needs an international relations department to define policy responses on a range of international issues that are often within the city's sphere of influence, such as climate change and environmental policies, as well as outside of it, for example solidarity with other cities experiencing natural disasters or in the wake of acts of terror. These departments might be required to develop funding bids to supra-national bodies such as the World Bank, United Nations and the European Union, to undertake policy responses.

### **Major Events**

The top three prizes in terms of being at the most significant scale and generating the greatest exposure are the Olympic Games, the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) World Cups and World Expos. Major events can have multiple impacts on the soft power, perceptions and international relations of host cities.

A number of benefits remain economic, including the alignment of the event in question with sectoral and business growth strategies in the city or nation, increased co-operation between public and private sectors through investment partnerships; enhanced image and identity impact attracting greater investment and trade; and the structural expansion of the visitor economy and supply chain development and expansion.

The evidence that major events generate direct economic benefit is contested, although it is generally agreed that they can have an internal catalyzing effect that generates an economic legacy over the longer-term, even if immediate economic returns remain elusive. It is for this reason that it takes a certain amount of wealth and capacity to be able to host such events, which in turn become the preserve of those cities that can afford to wait for returns on the external legitimacy these events confer.

Thus the long-term economic benefits are a mix of internal catalyzing activities and external promotional value. The former gear up domestic businesses to undertake international activity and are ultimately harnessed in the service of the latter, being international brand or image promotion actions.



## The Olympic Games and World Expos

The Olympic Games are now a major globalizing force in both economic and cultural terms with their own stated set of public diplomacy objectives. The experience of and reception for hosts of the Olympic Games in an established world city such as London in 2012, a new world city such as Vancouver in 2010, an emerging market world city such as Beijing in 2008 and an emerging market city such as Rio de Janeiro in 2016 is inevitably going to be very different. To judge the soft power effect of these events requires scrutinizing a variety of factors such as the opening and closing ceremonies, the visitor experience, the Torch Relay and the Cultural Olympiad. It is possible to discern a clear difference between the public diplomacy objectives of the organizers of each of these Olympics and their reception by foreign observers.

In Beijing in 2008, the universal message of the organizers was apparent in the Olympic slogan 'One World, One Dream'. The public diplomacy aim was simply to put Beijing at the heart of a globalizing world but the month long global promotional tour of world cities that was the Torch Relay attracted significant controversy, and by the time it reached London had to be abandoned in advance of reaching Paris.<sup>32</sup> This was due to the focus on China's human rights record and international criticism from multiple pressure groups.<sup>33</sup> The Opening Ceremony of the Games had been intended as a display that would capture the overall ambition to show China's citizens and the rest of the world that the country was reclaiming its rightful place in the global order, as well as showcasing China's 'strong governing capacity and exceptional organizational skills'.<sup>34</sup> Transparency and rights may well have been sacrificed on the altar of national unity and pride.

The London Olympic Games in 2012 was no less controversial. For home audiences the Opening Ceremony was celebrated as 'irreverent and idiosyncratic',<sup>35</sup> indicative of the sense of pride and confidence that many in the UK took in the ceremony and the staging of the Games themselves. Yet in other parts of the world that very idiosyncrasy may have been greeted with a degree of surprise. Back in Beijing:

An online survey conducted by Xinhua News offers a broad-brush perspective. Of all the participants, a majority of 51 per cent liked London's opening ceremony because of its surprising elements, not least the Queen appearing to parachute into the Olympic Stadium from a helicopter as part of a James Bond sketch, as well as its more traditional British features. However, 49 per cent said they were not impressed,

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<sup>32</sup> The Daily Telegraph, (2008) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1584227/Olympic-torch-extinguished-three-times.html>, 18.09.16

<sup>33</sup> Amnesty International (2008) <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/china-amnesty-open-letter-urges-president-hu-jintao-take-five-steps-improve-human> 18.09.16

<sup>34</sup> Yongnian Zheng, Ly Lian Fook (2008) 'China Post Olympics Rising Confidence amidst Challenges', China Policy Institute, The University of Nottingham, Briefing Series, Issue 42. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/briefings/briefing-42-china-post-olympics.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Marina Hyde, '(2012) Olympic Games opening ceremony: irreverent and idiosyncratic', *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/jul/28/olympic-games-opening-ceremony-british> 18.09.16

primarily due to the deployment of outdated technology and the less stringent approach than Beijing's to its overall presentation. Some also stated that they could not grasp the story behind it at all.<sup>36</sup>

In the end the internal domestic messaging may well have been more important to the city and country.

The first World Expo took place in Britain in 1851 - The Great Exhibition and was an attempt to remind Britain's subjects that the country was the world's pre-eminent industrial power. The recent trend for Expos, more than the Olympics, has been for emerging world cities to bid to host the events. With Astana hosting in 2017, and Dubai in 2020, emerging market cities are seeking to develop greater global profile, they are often seeking to project an image of strength or national pride back to their own populace, although the nature of these events means that when the world is invited in, a broader and more cosmopolitan dialogue and exchange of values takes place.

### **Policy Exchange**

International policy exchange is today dominated by the engagement between emerging and established market cities. In the past and in a less globalized world, the largely municipal functions of a city required it to focus on the day-to-day business of running infrastructure and utilities, restricting international engagement to geographically close partners or the somewhat unfathomable activity of sister-city and twinning activities. Today the legacy of those sorts of initiatives, while arcane, continues to facilitate policy exchange - particularly, between established and emerging market cities.

The origins of sister-city partnerships can be found in the post-War policies of the United States and United Kingdom in a drive towards encouraging exchanges for the sake of fostering greater peace and prosperity. For instance after the Second World War, Coventry in the UK was twinned with Dresden in Germany as an act of peace and reconciliation, with both cities having been heavily bombed during the war. In both the UK and the US many cities during this period also engaged not only with each other but also with more distant capitals across Asia.

In many of these agreements one side of the partnership has often taken the partnership more seriously than the other. This was particularly the case with China following the 'opening up' policies of by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s when many Chinese Mayors followed in the footsteps of national political and business leaders to establish international city-to-city partnerships. Chinese traditions of doing business are more oriented towards fostering long-term cooperation and friendships than is the case in the European tradition, which meant that for many United Kingdom and European cities the act of establishing partnerships with China, at first perceived as no more than a cursory friendly handshake, subsequently came

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.theworldofchinese.com/2012/07/chinese-thoughts-on-londons-olympic-opening-ceremony/> 18.09.16

to take on much greater importance. When Chinese cities with their vastly larger economies, populations and growth rates, turned to smaller European cities to discuss economic and cultural exchange, the dust was blown off various memoranda of understanding that had languished in municipal filing cabinets, as the growth of the Chinese economy increasingly captured the imaginations of city leaders.

For many city leaders especially in Asia, Singapore stands for efficiency and economic success and the desire to imitate Singapore is strong. Singapore recognizes this but also has to acknowledge that as a small city-state surrounded by multiple economic and demographic giants its economic sustainability relies upon good international relations. In 2012 Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities established the World Cities Summit with the aim of sharing best practice in city management worldwide. Part of the Summit programme was to establish the much-coveted Lee Kwan Yew Prize for Sustainability City development. This prize demonstrates the soft power of Singapore in the Asian region and increasingly, globally, the extent of the reach of its city diplomacy and its power to encourage others to move towards a shared mission of environmental protection.

One of the most daring, strange and controversial policy exchanges between two cities was that in 2006 by the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who had developed strong links with Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela, sharing as they did an internationalist socialist outlook.

In return for offering transport, planning and tourism advice to Caracas, London would receive the equivalent of £16m worth of fuel. The plan was that London would actively promote the image of Venezuela in the UK in return for a deal that would subsidize the fuel bill of London buses, thereby relieving the Transport for London budget and freeing up funds for Livingstone to offer reduced bus fares to 250,000 low-income Londoners. The whole effort brought considerable policy disarray and confusion as the exchange was at odds with national government policy towards Venezuela and there were no constitutional rules in place to say that this kind of city-to-city exchange was permissible. However, neither were there rules in place to say that it was not, so Mayor Livingstone marched on in pursuit of his goal. The final scheme never reached fruition as Livingstone lost the 2008 election just as he was bringing the deal to a close. The new Mayor scrapped the whole project immediately.

### **Cultural Exchange**

Cities do not only seek economic growth through their city diplomacy. When they undertake international activity they are also seeking cultural enrichment that will reinforce the projection of their overall character and quality of life. The inherent cosmopolitanism of cities requires that they continually seek international talent and ideas to maintain and enhance their chances of economic success. In the World Cities Cultural Report produced by the Mayor of London, the traditional notion that culture is a happy by-product of economic success has been brought into question and an attempt has been made to show that

actually 'culture is a critical requirement for social and economic progress: cultural vibrancy and city success share a common DNA'.<sup>37</sup>

The soft power reach of city cultural relations is made possible by multiple institutions and activities. In the broadest definition of cultural relations we capture every officially hosted city event, the activities and output of artists, the visitor experience as well state-led investment in cultural institutions. In Doha, capital of Qatar, the establishment of the Museum of Islamic Art by the Qatari Museums Authority (QMA) is one of the most significant investments in culture in the region. Under the leadership of Sheikha Al Mayassa, the QMA has set out to establish the Museum of Islamic Art as a shrine to Islamic culture; collecting historical Islamic artifacts from across three continents. In a statement piece of architecture, the museum is a testament to the cosmopolitan history of Islam.

The soft power strategy of the Qatari Royal family has sought to position Doha as an important regional and relevant global player through a range of activities. These include the establishment of Al-Jazeera TV network, hosting the World Cup in 2020 and bidding to host the Olympic Games in 2022. These global promotional strategies may benefit from the 'halo effect' lent by association with the soft power values of the Olympic or the World Cup: a kind of international legitimacy. But, they might just as easily attract criticism and controversy from those concerned with the human rights of construction workers employed on stadia, or allegations of rigged voting and corruption with a scandal infected FIFA. As a propaganda strategy there is a huge mountain to climb in overcome established perceptions of Doha and Qatar but there is also an inexorable globalizing impact from engaging in these cosmopolitan conversations.

## **CITY DIPLOMACY AND INFLUENCE THROUGH NETWORKS**

### **Supranational Bodies**

The growing importance of cities and city diplomacy is testified to by the fact that many supra-national bodies are turning their attention to cities. For example, the World Bank has established a Resilient Cities Group, aimed at helping cities to develop responses to crises such as climate change and manage difficult challenges and share best practice and has established a useful series of urbanization reviews to help city leaders. In the process it has established itself as an important resource for facilitating city diplomacy across established, emerging and new world cities.

Such supra-national bodies share an agenda on the importance of cities, in particular focused on their resilience and sustainability, and represent a recognition that international connections and networks extend beyond inter-national bodies and fora and involved a

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<sup>37</sup> BOP Consulting (2015) *World Cities Culture Report*, p. 15.

wider range of actors than national governments. They represent a crucial network for cities themselves to develop and engage with if they are to shape and strengthen their own city diplomacy and offer potential points of policy leverage and cooperation in the face of national policies that eclipse or contradict specifically urban interests and agendas.

### **Transnational City Networks**

The contemporary experience of urbanization has required many global institutions to pay increased attention to the importance of cities. The *World Cities Cultural Forum*, for example, is a relatively new network of over thirty world cities that come together to emphasize the importance of culture in city life and is an example of cities taking the initiative to create their own city diplomacy channels. Established in London in 2012, it is creating an evidence base and channels for collaboration and policy exchange. As a soft power initiative the World Cities Cultural Forum has the potential to become an important tool for dialogue in coming years, alongside other state-to-state relations, and broader soft power approaches to keep dialogue open with Russia at a time of challenging regional geopolitics.

### **City-led Agendas**

An interesting contemporary example of independent city led city-to-city influencing is that of New York in relation to policy and attitudes towards immigration. Major global cities rely on people and most have foreign-born populations of near or greater than forty per cent. Yet cities rarely control immigration or have the level of fiscal control to be able to manage all the challenges population inflows and outflows may present. New York is one of the preeminent established world cities and thrives on immigration. Moreover, despite being a city with significant budgetary income and control to manage its business, it still depends on centralized legislation and funding. Nevertheless, this has not stopped New York from seizing the initiative and developing programmes to integrate its immigrant population, creating a municipal identity (ID) programme for all New Yorkers, regardless of their immigration status.

This example of leadership by New York constitutes an influential approach to city diplomacy that co-opted and influenced other cities in the process and which is also influencing other national governments in their development of policies that work for people and for cities. In the UK this example would have given ballast to the London is Open Campaign of London Mayor Sadiq Khan.<sup>38</sup>

### **Philanthropic City Networks**

As yet there does not exist a specific city diplomacy network that champions the broad range of interests, themes and challenges that cities face. As they continue to grow and align, we

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/pReSs-rEIEaSeS/MaYoRaL/MaYoR-SeNdS-WeLcOmE-MeSsAgE-To-tHe-wOrLd>

may see a move towards a systematic network to advocate specifically on city diplomacy. Alternatively, their increasing economic competitiveness may mitigate against this, confining city-to-city engagement to the sharing of best practice.

## ART, CITIZENSHIP AND THE PUBLIC REALM

Alongside the deliberate attempts at promoting and advocating for cities it is important for us to also understand how the actions and activities of citizens influence cities. Increasingly, we need to understand how and why the activities of civil society organizations and ordinary citizens in cities are helping drive their international relationships and engagements, as well as those of the nations of which they are a part.

Cities are arenas for broader institutions and processes, whether in politics, business, education or arts and culture. However, cities also give shape to these activities through the significance of place and space, as well as the energy and innovation that derives from people living and working in proximity, density and diversity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the public realm. The dynamic interaction between cities and arts and culture contributes to the shaping of the public realm and to how cities use arts, culture and the public realm to project themselves nationally and internationally. At its most simple the public realm can be defined as 'a place where strangers meet'.<sup>39</sup>

Important though new digital spaces might be, such physical places remain relevant – gathering together people not known to one another, engaging in activities that are novel or unfamiliar and that expand their horizons.

Art and culture has been used to inspire hearts and minds throughout history, underpinning nationalist movements, celebrating religious passions and reflecting cultural identity. Attempts to harness the soft power of art and culture can be crass and lose meaning, potency and attraction if it borders on propaganda. The challenge for public and city diplomacy initiatives drawing on the arts and the public realm is to find ways of allowing civil society organizations speak for themselves, to foster cultural relations which do not risk undermining the intended profiling and projection of a city by over-engineered broadcast and messaging.

City branding and promotion is ultimately a signposting activity aimed at convincing the onlooker and viewer that this is a great place to live, visit, study, and invest. Art, culture and the public realm can be an intrinsic part of this. Signposting is fine so long as it is accurate - signposting that is false is likely to have significantly detrimental effects and in the end 'actions speak louder than logos'.<sup>40</sup> The majority of cities, when they undertake international activity, are still engaged in brand promotional activities and there is a need for cities to

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Sennett (2016) 'Quant: The Public Realm', <https://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=16&cc=gb>

<sup>40</sup> David Adam (2012) 'Trends in Place Branding', keynote address, Open Festival, Minsk.

become more sophisticated in their approach to move towards forms of city diplomacy in which actions and spaces speak for themselves. It is sharing these ideas, spaces and places that will unlock the power of attraction and generate broader alliances and networks than simple self-promotion. The challenge for city diplomacy is to develop sophisticated approaches that utilize but do not control or overly orchestrate the whole spectrum of the arts, culture and politics of citizenship.

Ultimately the power of city diplomacy is best realized when it is an expression of the values of civil society. Where there is an inconsistency between political rhetoric and local reality then city diplomacy efforts will likely be undermined. We cannot project an image of a city as the 'greatest place on earth to live' if the reality is only that for some of our citizens. City government international relations strategies must priorities quality of life as a measure of success, and seek to enrich the lives of citizens. A good city diplomacy strategy builds international networks to enhance the cosmopolitan experience of being in that city for its citizens, as well as its investors and visitors and this may be the best route to realizing the benefits of soft power.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

There are a number of policy implications that emanate from the preceding analysis. For national governments and policymakers they need to develop their understanding of the ways in which cities can play a central role in supporting their foreign policy and soft power strategies. They need to provide cities with the necessary support on the one hand and sufficient autonomy on the other, to enable them to maximise their international influence and attraction. The international pre-eminence of major world cities needs to be protected, while ensuring that the many benefits such cities bring are shared widely across the rest of their countries.

City level governments and policymakers would benefit from deliberately considering their objectives for global influence, developing international strategies when appropriate. Recognising that their international engagement and diplomacy form an important part of their countries' national strategies is important, as well as how they serve their own metropolitan needs. City governments can make the most of the many activities available to build international ties, including economic promotion, place-branding, attracting students and tourists, and hosting major sporting, cultural, and economic events.

Critically, city diplomacy is most effective when it is organic and consistent with the reality and interests of a city's citizens. Citizens themselves could do more to use city networks in support of their own international activities, while cultural, educational and civic institutions based in cities can contribute to their city's soft power through incorporating a city perspective in their strategies and work, advancing their own and their city's international strategies and engagement in tandem. From a policy perspective it is key that the pursuit of city-led agendas does not run directly counter to national public diplomacy and interests, or those of other less urbanised areas of their region or country.

In conclusion, the 21st century challenges of creating prosperous and stable societies will not be addressed by nation states alone, even with the support of supranational organizations of global governance or multinational and transnational businesses. The former tend to rely on and engage with those actors with the greatest political and economic relevance, often at the expense of other sub-national levels of government. Cities are increasingly networking among themselves and being recognized more and more as important contributors to the management of global public goods and the international economy.

In a world where economic, social, and cultural flows are multidirectional and fluid, cities have been shown to be firmly at the heart of economic globalization. As nation-states struggle to retain control within and across their sovereign boundaries over borderless socio-political trends such as population movements, climate change, infectious diseases and terrorist acts, cities may have much to contribute towards achieving greater stability and security alongside their recognized disproportionate contribution to national prosperity in all but the most agrarian economies. If they are to be allowed to play their part, their more informal dynamics, collaborative and cosmopolitan approaches to society and their integrative and open cultural strategies must be allowed to flourish. The challenge is for host nation-states to give cities the relative autonomy to exercise influence and to exercise the power of attraction necessary to help foster both prosperity and security as well as influence.

As the primary sites of innovation and with their naturally open outlook, hunger for international talent, ideas and engagement, cities may well generate many of the solutions to contemporary national and global problems. The challenge is for cities to have the relative freedom to lead discussions, share ideas and develop the political and economic processes, mechanisms and networks to deliver impact, while at the same time enabling cities to be part of structures that are able to respond at scale. For their part, cities have a responsibility to advance the opportunity to develop their own diplomatic and international relations initiatives to extend their cultural relations reach in ways that contribute not only to their own soft power but also that of their respective countries, forming a significant and intrinsic part of national public diplomacy initiatives.







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