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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ISSUE 18, SUMMER/FALL 2017

Former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O’Neil once commented that “all politics is local.” Diplomacy, on the other hand, has traditionally been conducted at the state level, with local actors playing a supporting, if any, role. But that is quickly changing. In an age when populist national governments have turned inward and abdicated many of their global responsibilities, mayors and other local players have filled the diplomatic void. Never was this more apparent than in the immediate aftermath of President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord, when mayors across the country, including many Republicans, publicly reaffirmed their commitment to meet the global emission reduction targets set in Paris—with or without the support of Washington. This is but one example of city and regional governments taking a leadership position on issues that used to be solely under the purview of the state, a trend that highlights the growing importance of “city diplomacy.”

City diplomacy is not new; it is a concept that has existed in some form for centuries. But only recently has city diplomacy entered the popular lexicon of international relations and public diplomacy scholars as a result of two divergent trends: the growth of megacities and the rise of populism. As nationalist movements from the United Kingdom to the United States have undermined the post-war international order, cities are increasingly bypassing national and state-based organizations to create city-based global networks. This is especially true in the realm of public diplomacy. While hard power continues to be wielded almost exclusively at the state level, soft power is a product of people who, in ever increasing numbers, are residing in cities. Now, coordination on many issues is just as likely to occur between Los Angeles

INTRODUCING OUR SUMMER/FALL 2017 ISSUE: “CITY DIPLOMACY”

and Shanghai as it is between Washington and Beijing.

This issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine* examines the growth of city diplomacy, and investigates both the limitations and potential of cities to influence national and international dialogues. Our contributors cover a range of topics, from the role of cities in creating cultural movements to the importance of cities in combatting climate change and violent extremism. Our selection of this theme emerged from discussions with staff members who felt that city diplomacy was both a timely and yet largely understudied topic. It is our hope that this issue shines some light on the broader discourse.

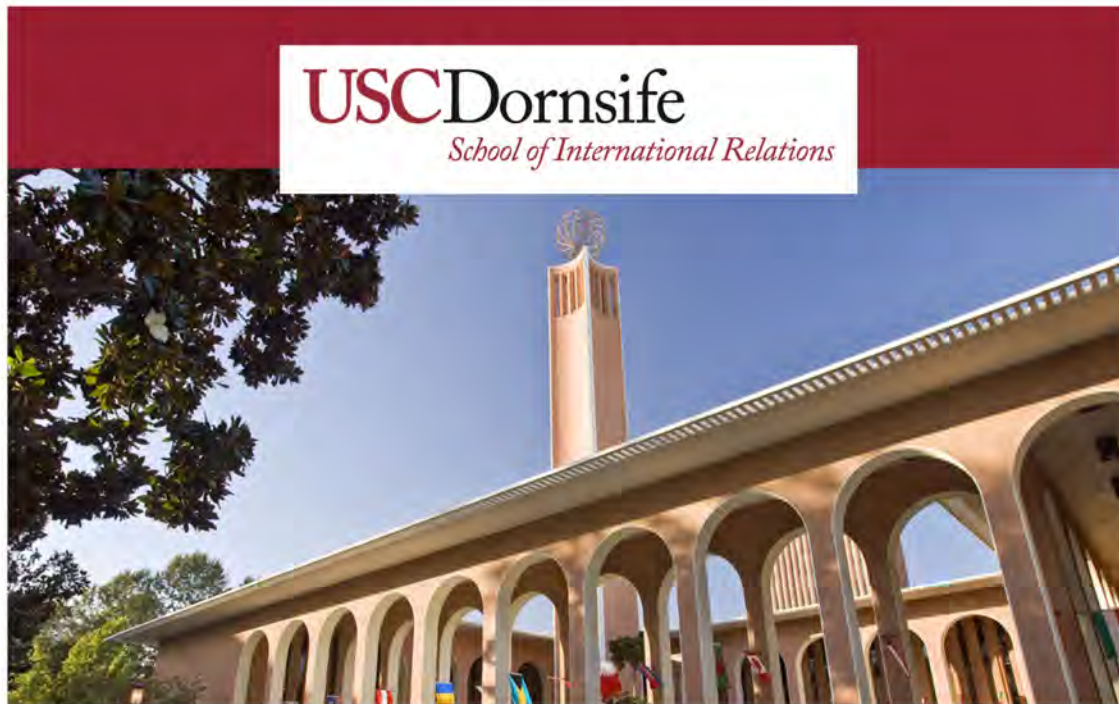
We would like to express our deep gratitude to our authors for their contributions and patience throughout this process. In addition, we would like to thank the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the USC Dornsife School of International Relations, and the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program for their continued support of *Public Diplomacy Magazine*. I would also like to personally thank the 2016-2017 *Public Diplomacy Magazine* staff for their hard work over the past year, and wish the best of luck to the incoming Editor-in-Chief, Justin Chapman, and the new 2017-2018 staff.



Bret Schafer
Editor-in-Chief

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SUMMER/FALL 2017



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Photo by Andrew Collins on Unsplash

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of Public Diplomacy Magazine.

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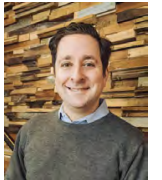
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City Hall in Los Angeles—Photo provided by Mayor Eric Garcetti, Flickr Creative Commons

City Diplomacy in the Age of Brexit and Trump

Benjamin Leffel and Michele Acuto

Imagine a football game. The majority of those in attendance are in the stands, mere spectators to the game being played on the field before them. Populating the field are the few: the designated uniformed players, referees, and coaches—an apt metaphor for “traditional” diplomacy. In centuries past, world affairs have been conducted by designated national-level players—heads of state, diplomats, ambassadors, and so forth—while the remaining majority, the vast populations and local leaders representing them, look on as spectators. However, the globalizing forces of the latter half of the 20th century have brought those who once were mere spectators to world affairs—local leaders—onto the field as new and often very effective players.

It is from this context that “city diplomacy” has emerged: city government leaders, on an individual or collective basis, have progressively been engaging in social, political, and/or economic activity aimed at achieving outcomes beyond their own jurisdictions. Tangible evidence shows that city diplomacy in its modern form has been occurring for over a century, but much more clearly observable is the accelerated city diplomacy that has taken place over the past three decades, which showcases city interactions whose impact spans not only a domestic, nation-wide scale, but also a transnational scale reaching beyond the borders of nations. A playing field once exclusive to

nation-state actors now is significantly more populated with mayors and other city leaders, making the “game” of diplomacy itself more complex. The study of city diplomacy seeks to discern order from the seeming chaos of this diplomatic playing field now flooded with new and non-traditional actors. It also questions whether the game is in fact much bigger and much more complicated than what we’ve long thought, spanning a multitude of fields across the whole public-private spectrum of global governance.

City diplomacy is not (yet) equivalent in its power to bring about political-economic outcomes as traditional diplomacy. It is often used to assist nation-states to better achieve a range of goals, as was the case under the Clinton State Department’s creation of the Office of the Special Representative of Global Intergovernmental Affairs, to which Secretary Hillary Clinton appointed Reta Jo Lewis as special representative. Lewis then carried out multiple commercial, capacity building, and other interactions between U.S. subnational governments and multiple other countries.¹

City diplomacy has also been used to counterbalance actions of the federal government, from the Cold War-era global nuclear free zone movement to sanctuary city movements in the United States—those providing safe-haven to Central American refugees in the 1980s and those doing the same for Syrian refu-

The globalizing forces of the latter half of the 20th century have brought those who once were mere spectators to world affairs—local leaders—onto the field as new and often very effective players.

tion-states to better achieve a range of goals, as was the case under the Clinton State Department’s creation of the Office of the Special Representative of Global Intergovernmental Affairs, to which Secretary Hillary Clinton appointed Reta Jo Lewis as special representative. Lewis then carried

gees (and others) today. Further still, city diplomacy is used to fill the void of nation-state leadership in global governance issues: City governments organize into Transnational Municipal Networks (TMNs) like C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) to improve urban capacity to fight climate change and coordinate global urban efforts to that end. A common mistake has been to think of the global phenomenon of city diplomacy as a force undermining or even attempting to supplant the nation-state. In reality, city diplomacy represents increased collective capacity to solve a range of problems spanning the local and global levels.

In the age of Brexit and Trump, city diplomacy becomes particularly relevant in filling the void of the nation-state leadership and does so in distinctly economic and political terms. The following two sections describe the relevance and context of city diplomacy as it pertains to economic issues of the sort brought about by Brexit, and as it pertains to the political issues of the sort incurred by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Brexit, the Global Economy, and City Diplomacy

City diplomacy exists on a political-economic foundation. The global expansion of productive processes following the end of the Second World War saw cities become the primary sites for transnational capital inflows and outflows. The post-1970s rise of neoliberal trade and relative fall in protectionism accelerated this process, drawing cities directly into world markets, as nation-state intermediaries to the global economy became increasingly obsolete. Advances in and global spread of information communication technology in subsequent decades combined with increased urban global economic competitiveness resulted in a significant improvement in the foreign affairs competency of cities.² The national governments of different countries grant varying levels of autonomy to locales for participation in foreign affairs, but foreign commercial engagement is generally acceptable.³ Equally, coalitions based on proactive agendas that, at least throughout the 1990s and 2000s, do not directly undermine state sovereignty have faced similar reactions—with environmental and climate campaigning by the likes of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and

C40 Cities being prime examples.

Economically, the label of a “global city” is an increasingly desirable title for many cities around the world for marketing purposes.⁴ City government leaders in recent decades also have used myriad means to attract investment and promote exports and tourism, such as by establishing trade representative offices abroad, leveraging sister city connections, and other forms of formal and informal economic networking. City diplomacy of the commercial variety, then, can be understood as the use of such foreign affairs competencies to maximize the competitiveness of cities in the global economy. This does not mean that city diplomacy lacks cultural, environmental, or other traits, but rather that many of the drivers that spur (red) city diplomacy in the late 1990s and early 2000s are of a political-economic nature.

It was clear to early city diplomacy scholars in the late 1980s that potentially negative political reactions to the very globalized trade liberalization that brought cities such economic prominence could have a powerfully negative impact on the cities of the world.⁵ This is true today in Europe, as the member nations of the European Union (EU) suffer the economic consequences of the protectionist-inspired exit of Britain from the EU, or “Brexit.”

That cities today are both the principal sites for transnational capital flows and have the capacity to directly compete in the global economy begs the question: Can commercial city diplomacy in European cities help slow the negative economic impacts from Brexit, or mend broken economic linkages? Whatever the answer, it is clear that the strength which European nations hold in the global economy is such that negative economic shocks experienced in that region will be felt the world round.

Trump, Political Leadership, and City Diplomacy

A key bit of wisdom often repeated by practitioners and scholars of city diplomacy is that while cities cannot enter into treaties with foreign entities, they can do virtually everything else: sign memoranda of understanding with foreign governments, make binding and non-binding political declarations and resolutions, and organize to form new bodies and influence virtually any social, political, and/or economic matters under the sun. Much as with the multilateral nature of in-

ter-national relations, cities around the world network with one another to negotiate and achieve a range of sought-after goals. This points to the fact that, while perhaps not on the (multilateral) field where national diplomats have been playing, cities have nonetheless engaged in the “game” of global governance for quite some time now. There are many examples of city diplomacy playing a role in these activities, from the Mayors for Peace campaign, to C40’s advocacy for the Paris Agreement and local action beyond states on climate change. City diplomacy even reaches into the domains of health, security, and cultural relations.

Beyond the exchange of economic flows such as capital described in the previous section, cities also network in ways that can be typified as political, as in diplomatic or quasi-diplomatic functions, people-to-people or cultural exchanges, and social flows such as foreign aid.⁶ As a result, city leaders in the past three decades have increasingly identified with the global community, claiming political authority in foreign affairs with growing frequency.⁷

It is through these capacities that cities take counterbalancing action to national government mis-handling of foreign or domestic affairs when deemed necessary. The criteria for “necessary” most often involves conditions in which federal government action, or lack thereof, negatively impacts the safety, health, or otherwise well-being of a domestic, foreign, and/or global population.

The crowning example of city diplomacy during the Trump administration thus far is President Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, which resulted in several hundred cities and several states committing to enforce the Accord in the federal government’s absence through a new body called the U.S. Climate Alliance. In so doing, American city and state leaders filled the void of political nation-state leadership left by Trump’s withdrawal.

A more institutionalized means of “counterbalancing action” is the ability for individual sub-national entities to pose legal challenges to federal governments, which is slightly beyond the purview of city diplomacy, but can be efficacious nevertheless. This year, several U.S. states posed legal challenges

to President Trump’s temporary travel ban from seven majority-Muslim countries, followed soon thereafter by higher courts blocking the ban. The city of San Francisco sued the Trump administration for its executive order seeking to penalize sanctuary cities, resulting in a higher court halting the executive order.

The city diplomacy embodied in the U.S. Climate Alliance has strong historical precedent. During the 1980s, President Reagan fought the Cold War in part by shifting federal funds away from local aid and toward the defense budget. Reagan also funded anti-communist forces in Central America, leading to civil war and death, and the U.S. federal government also collectively failed to sufficiently penalize South Africa for continuing apartheid. This resulted in direct U.S. city-level intervention in all of these areas and more, in what came to be known as the “municipal foreign policy movement.”⁸

This points attention to the criticality of the networked topography of city diplomacy. Much as today’s U.S. Climate Alliance is an organized network of subnational entities, the cities of the municipal foreign policy movement of the 1980s advanced several causes by forming

networks, thereby increasing their capacity to take action. As chronicled in newly available digital archives of the former Center for Innovative Diplomacy, in the early 80s, then-Irvine, California, Mayor Larry Agran established a national network of local officials advocating for nuclear disarmament called Local Elected Officials for Social Responsibility (LEO-SR), which merged with a similar network called the Center for Innovative Diplomacy (CID).⁹

Together, CID and LEO-SR grew to a network of over 6,000 U.S. local officials and activists engaged on virtually every city diplomacy issue of the time, arming cities with such information as model ordinances for sanctuary cities, nuclear free zones, and apartheid divestment action, and convening cities to that effect.

As thousands of cities from around the world advocated nuclear disarmament by establishing Nuclear Free Zones (NFZs), they organized and met at several annual international conferences on NFZs. When one of these conferences was held in Oregon, attend-

Can commercial city diplomacy in European cities help slow the negative economic impacts from Brexit, or mend broken economic linkages?

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PUBLIC PRESSURE HELPS SAVE TOWNSHIP OF LAWAAIKAMP
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CAN A SISTER COMMUNITY relationship with a South African black township make a difference? Just ask the people of Lawaai Kamp, the sister community of Saint Paul, MN. They're liable to answer with a deafening "yes."

Source: *Bulletin of Municipal Foreign Policy* (1989) | escholarship.org/uc/uci_cid

A 1989 article highlights the success of St. Paul, Minnesota's efforts to aid its sister community in South Africa during apartheid.

ing American city leaders established the U.S. Nuclear Free Zone Association to further network domestic efforts and thus bolster NFZ efforts nationwide.

Similar city diplomacy networking efforts took place in other issue areas: The Central American Sister City Task Force formed by several mayors to better coordinate the sending of aid to embattled Central American communities, and the U.S.-South Africa Sister Community Project formed to similarly help better coordinate efforts by U.S. cities to both divest from South Africa and to assist suffering black communities.¹⁰

It has been on this historical foundation of city government and civil society leadership that American city diplomacy of today has developed, and has shown this year that it continues to stand at the ready—particularly in light of the networked efforts among subnational entities to form the U.S. Climate Alliance. If the capricious political leadership of President Trump yields yet more voids of political leadership, city diplomacy and associated network formations acting as a counterbalance can be expected in response.

Global Governance and City Diplomacy

In the nation-state centric framework for global power that Hans Morgenthau put forth in the 1940s, subnational entities had no role—but he was *not* writing in a time when most of the world's population lived

in cities, as is the case today.¹¹ It is because of this massive demographic shift that the global population now articulates itself through cities—hence the oft-repeated label of the 21st century as the “century of the city.” The governance issues faced by city government leaders are now the concern of most of the world's population, and necessarily become a global governance issue.

Global governance refers to collective efforts by government and non-governmental entities to solve problems of security, environment, health, and other issues shared globally by all governments. Global

governance is understood to take place at the *supranational* level, as it transcends the scale of individual nation-states. Formal global governance institutions such as the United Nations would be limited in their impact were they to only work through national governments, hence subnational leaders have increasingly become incorporated into global governance structures.¹²

The original system of post-Second World War global governance was dominated by nation-states through global institutions, in which city governments had only a passive, indirect role through their respective national governments. Through the last two decades of the 20th century and afterward, greater global connectivity and concentration of political-economic power at the local level coincided with a similar expansion of power at the supranational level.¹³ As greater global governance efforts through formal institutions took place at the supranational level, so too did efforts among the world's cities—both in tandem with existing supranational structures and independently in their own new city-based global governance structures.

From this context, Transnational Municipal Networks (TMNs) emerged: TMNs are non-governmental organizations whose membership is comprised of city government leaders from around the world, and which facilitate knowledge and resource-sharing on governance issues among member cities. TMNs can operate independently from formal institutions of global governance, serving specific urban needs, but

many also operate in collaboration with formal institutions to advance collective efforts to solve global problems—in both cases, TMNs have allowed distinctly networked bodies of city government leaders to contribute directly to matters of global governance in ways previously not possible.

Several supranational framework agreements and goals provide an ongoing role for cities in global governance: The United Nations' New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goal on cities (SDG 11), the Sendai Framework, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the role of cities in the Paris Agreement, and so forth. In this environment, TMNs are evolving and strengthening both in their capacity to work in tandem with existing formal global governance institutions, and in their operations independently from those structures. TMNs seek to democratically address the concerns of local governments worldwide while also facilitating networking and best practices sharing among them.

TMNs focused on broad governance issues include UCLG, Metropolis, and the Global Parliament of Mayors, among others. Similarly, there are TMNs focused on more general aspects of environmental protection. Standing chiefly among them is ICLEI, which works directly in tandem with the UN.

There are also TMNs focusing on specific environmental issues. The Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia Network of Local Governments (PNLG) is a marine ecosystem protection TMN, and climate change-focused TMNs include C40, Regions of Climate Action (R20), and the Global Compact of Mayors. There are also TMNs whose focus is specific both to region and issue, such as the European Forum on Urban Security and the World Health Organization (WHO) European Healthy Cities network.

TMNs are capable of helping thousands of cities make carbon emission reductions and other governance-related commitments that may otherwise not have occurred, or at least not have occurred as quickly,¹⁴ contributing a *sui generis* impact on global governance. In this way, TMNs constitute new, consequential structures for global governance, fitting

within the larger existing global governance structure of formal institutions, nation-states, civil society, non-government organizations, and other actors.¹⁵ While city diplomacy of the sort enabled by TMNs impacts global governance, not all city diplomacy has this wide an impact. We might think of the magnitude of the impact of city diplomacy as being relative to the scale(s) at which it operates.

Dyadic city-to-city relationships such as international sister city relationships pair city governments of different countries and facilitate bilateral flows of information, personnel, commerce, and other resources. These relationships are considered city diplomacy because they involve cooperation between city leaders and entities far outside their jurisdictions, and because the greater inter-societal understanding they collectively achieve is understood to decrease the likelihood of conflict between nations.

However, sister city relationships are normally either fully auton-

omous or subservient to hierarchal jurisdictions of government, do not involve cooperation between cities that are *not* sister cities, and do not extend beyond the scale of the city level. In this sense, city diplomacy of this sort is *scalar*. This kind of activity does achieve beneficial social,

If the capricious political leadership of President Trump yields yet more voids of political leadership, city diplomacy and associated network formations acting as a counterbalance can be expected in response.

political, and economic outcomes, but they are highly localized. City diplomacy of the TMN variety, however, involves all participating cities interacting with one another and penetrates through multiple scales beyond the city level, as TMNs organize cities at the regional, national, and international level, and it also incorporates their capacity building efforts with that of larger formal global governance institutions.

TMNs are *multiscalar* in this way, and can, by way of penetrating multiple scales, be understood as having a grander impact than that of *scalar* city diplomacy. The total population of cities around the world which may be eligible for membership in TMNs currently exceeds the capacity of the TMNs to manage member cities, but this structural limit may loosen as TMNs evolve and adapt to the growing collective needs of the world's cities. The city diplomacy of the sort used during the “municipal foreign policy move-

ment” of the 1980s elevated from scalar to multiscale as networking efforts gave way to new collective bodies of city leaders focused on specific diplomatic causes.

The same dynamic is true today (e.g. the formation of the U.S. Climate Alliance in response to Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement). It should be understood that city diplomacy does not exist solely as a response to national level stimuli. Broadly, city diplomacy helps advance problem-solving capacity at the local and global level in the areas of commerce, security, health, environment, and other aspects of societal well-being.

However, as political and economic problems of the sort created by Brexit and Trump rise to the level of global governance issues, city diplomacy also offers the means to help fill voids in national leadership.

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City Diplomacy and Urban Difference

Sam Tabor

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the institutional positions of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Not all cities have the same resources. Not all cities have the same clout. Not all cities have the same needs. Differences like these create a problem for universalizing conversations about the supposedly shared urban agendas and priorities that motivate cities to engage with each other on a global level. Broadly speaking, arguments in favor of the value and power of cities interacting with their international counterparts and engaging in global governance processes—loosely defined as the collective practice of city diplomacy¹—often overstate the shared interests and priorities of cities dealing with very different economic, geographic, and political realities. This is a problem for the still nascent and, in the eyes of many, unproven field of city diplomacy. For an urban leader to be convinced of the potential benefits of international engagement and to subsequently mobilize resources to support external engagement efforts, that leader needs to see city diplomacy as speaking to the needs and priorities of his or her local context and not just to the generalized needs of an undifferentiated “urban agenda.”

These types of differences are borne out in the practical work of facilitating international engagement between cities. As an organization that is as much interested in studying the *process* of how

cities interact with each other as it is in studying the *content and subject matter* of those interactions, the global cities research team at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, of which I am a part, is in a unique position to glean insight about how differences are (or are not) successfully accounted for in city diplomacy efforts.

Based on experiences directly observing international urban engagement efforts as well as working with representatives of city network

It is a legitimately debatable premise whether local leaders should have any interest in exerting influence beyond their immediate jurisdictions.

organizations—often thought of as hubs of contemporary city-to-city engagement²—I have found three broad areas of difference that are under-discussed and under-considered in processes of city diplomacy. Those areas include: (1) differences

in mayoral outlook regarding the role of a city in the international arena, (2) differences in resources and political clout, and (3) differences in nationally determined governance norms and political values.

First, when considering differences in mayoral outlook, these are fundamentally about whether a mayor understands or prioritizes his or her position as having an internationally facing role at all. It is a legitimately debatable premise whether local leaders should have any interest in exerting influence beyond their immediate jurisdictions. A common critique of city diplomacy is that mayors have plenty to worry about at home before setting their sights internationally. Even for those of us already convinced of the link between international urban engagement and the ability of city leaders to deliver results locally,



President Barack Obama participates in a Q&A session during the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in the East Room of the White House, Jan. 21, 2010—Official White House Photo by Pete Souza.

it is important to explicitly and publicly entertain the possibility that not all mayors see value in such engagement. Acknowledging disagreement on the fundamental premise of city diplomacy encourages more rigorous and considered analysis of the benefits of city diplomacy, an effort which could ultimately help build a stronger case for why city leaders should put resources behind such efforts. If a long-term goal of those who support city diplomacy is to build a broader community of practice, there is no better way to build a bigger tent than by more rigorously proving the value proposition that city diplomacy has to offer.

A second area of difference revolves around the resources and political clout that cities have at their disposal to put behind the policy stances they take as part of their external and international engagement efforts. These differences manifest at two levels: within national urban systems and across international urban systems. In any national context, it is well established that cities will fall at different points along the hierarchy of their national urban system, often as a function of population concentration and overall economic importance.³ The position that a city holds within its national system

will realistically affect how that city engages with the general practice of diplomacy. For instance, when the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York choose to publicly engage and take a stance on consequential topics of the day like trade or immigration, they generally have the clout and resources to command a greater degree of attention than do mayors of secondary or tertiary cities. In part, this is because the size of the population and economy that they oversee and that would be affected by any such stance is generally much greater. It is also in part because of the larger pool of city resources in absolute terms that they might have at their disposal to follow through on actions associated with any such stance.

That said, a city's less prominent position within the hierarchy of its national urban system can also act as a catalyst for engagement efforts as a way to potentially raise that city's profile and position within its respective national hierarchy. In part to balance the influence of London as the United Kingdom's only megacity, 10 secondary cities formed the "Core Cities" network as an urban advocacy coalition capable of taking policy stances on issues of national and international importance.⁴ This prompted

21 tertiary cities (more or less surrounding those secondary cities) to form the "Key Cities" network as a similarly constituted advocacy coalition.⁵ There is a diplomatic and engagement role for each of these types of cities to play, but it is unhelpful to pretend that all of these cities have the same resources, clout, or even interests when it comes to pursuing external engagement and taking policy stances on national and internationally relevant issues.

Differences in resources and political clout also emerge *across* international urban systems when looking at cities in dramatically different stages of physical and economic development. At a recent international mayoral dialogue among city leaders considering urban action on strategic infrastructure investments, the mayor of a megacity from a developing country context made the comment that just as there are high, middle, and low income residents of a city, so too are there high, middle, and low income mayors around the world. The comment was part of a larger conversation about how efforts to mobilize collective urban action and engagement across cities should more directly speak to the priorities of a broader range of mayors, some of whom are still trying to meet basic service needs for their residents.

Finally, there are differences in national political context that will affect how and when cities choose to engage internationally. As a practical concern, the degree to which a national political system is highly centralized or decentralized will influence the ways in which authority, both formal and informal, are delegated to cities. This in turn will affect the legal and normative environments that determine whether a city is inclined to independently engage on the international stage.

At a more principled and ideological level, however, differences in national political values are also relevant. Much of the discussion that happens between and among cities on international platforms involves peer-to-peer knowledge sharing on particular subject matter areas. These conversations are often rooted in normative "best practices," which in turn are often rooted in academic and policy analysis that privileges liberal democratic values: public participation, free expression, administrative

transparency, etc. Rightly or wrongly, a privileging of these types of values will inevitably make certain international urban engagement conversations less relevant for cities embedded in national political contexts where these type of political values are not the norm. Just as in state-to-state diplomacy, there are sensitivities to issues of human rights, good governance, and democratic values that can complicate the landscape of which cities will engage with which topics on which types of platforms.

All of this discussion of "difference" matters because city diplomacy and increased urban global engagement requires individual city administrations to make conscious decisions to mobilize actual resources. For a mayor to mobilize those resources, he or she must see something in it for their cities—that engaging internationally will tangibly advance local priorities and speak to the concerns of his or her local administration. More explicitly acknowledging and accommodating difference within spaces

Just as in state-to-state diplomacy, there are sensitivities to issues of human rights, good governance, and democratic values that can complicate the landscape of which cities will engage with which topics on which types of platforms.

of international urban engagement increases the chance that a given city will see their own specific needs and priorities reflected in that conversation.

There is good work being done to this end. For example, the Brookings Institution has developed a typology of global cities to emphasize that there are different types of urban areas specifically with regard

to the role they play vis-à-vis the global economy.⁶ On the practitioner end of the spectrum, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has specifically distinguished larger megacities and smaller-scale innovator cities as discrete urban forms that each come with distinct advantages, risks, and challenges.⁷

There needs to be more of this type of differentiation, not less. As the field of city diplomacy continues to grow and mature, practitioners and observers alike should get used to the idea of cities organizing themselves into caucuses, cohorts, coalitions, and working groups that operate underneath larger platforms and fora that champion international urban engagement.

Advocates for city diplomacy should consider ways in which both current and future systems of global urban engagement can more meaningfully account for and ultimately harness the power of diversity across cities. The field—and its

prospects for enhancing urban prosperity—will be better for it.

(Endnotes)

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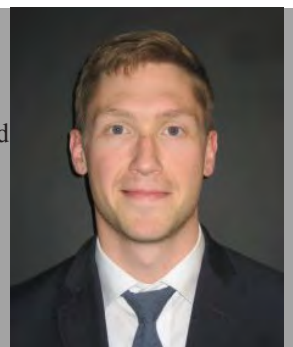
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Let the First Strike be a Knock at the Door

Mary Kane

*"Every bomb we can manufacture, every plane, every ship, every gun, in the long run has no purpose but the negative: to give us time to prevent the other fellow from starting a war... The billions we pour into that ought to be supported by a great American effort, a positive, constructive effort that leads directly toward what we all want: a true and lasting peace... I am talking about the exchange of professors and students and executives, the providing of technical assistance, and of the ordinary traveler abroad. I am talking about doctors helping in the conquering of disease... if we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and to leap governments, if necessary to evade governments—to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other."*¹

On September 11, 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower convened the White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy to discuss those thousands of methods. He brought together 40 representatives of government, industry, business, labor unions, education, law, and medicine from all over the country to discuss the "most worthwhile purpose there is in the world today: to help build the road to peace, to help build the road to an enduring peace."² With the majority of the world's population living in cities, Eisenhower dreamed of a program that would facilitate the creation of links between people of one city to another, so friendships could be established. By becoming friends, he reasoned that people of

different cultures could celebrate and appreciate their differences, instead of deriding them, fostering suspicion, and sowing new seeds for war.

Sister Cities International (SCI) has a membership of over 550 U.S. communities with 2,100 partnerships in 145 countries. Our members engage in

youth and educational exchanges; arts and culture exchanges; business, trade, and economic development opportunities; and municipal, professional, medical, and humanitarian assistance programs. In 2015, this network engaged 1.13 million U.S. residents and contributed over \$500 million to the U.S. economy. Approximately 50 percent of the cities within the SCI network have populations under 50,000 and 79 percent have a budget of less than \$25,000 per year. SCI is considered a public private partner of the U.S. Department of State and receives about \$400,000 in grant funds. The impact of this global network demonstrates that an investment in citizen or city diplomacy yields long-term results in both peace building and economic development.³

We were all watching as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe and U.S. President Donald Trump met to discuss our respective countries' relationship. Let's put ourselves in the place of many older Americans who were watching this interaction and

With the majority of the world's population living in cities, Eisenhower dreamed of a program that would facilitate the creation of links between people of one city to another, so friendships could be established.

CITY DIPLOMACY

who were also remembering that terrible day when President Franklin Roosevelt announced that Pearl Harbor had been attacked and that we were going to war. Japanese residents in the United States were brought out of their homes and sent to internment camps. Hitler was racing through Europe, intent on making Germany the world's most powerful nation. After the war was over, Americans held out our hands and offered our help to rebuild.

Today, just 70 years later, Japan and Germany are two of our strongest allies. This happened not just because we helped to rebuild these countries, but also through programs like SCI, which educate Americans and others around the world that the majority of people want the same basic things—a better life for their children and a peaceful world.

Here are just a few examples of city diplomacy over the past 60 years:

In the 1950s, rebuilding and healing was our priority. Denver, Colorado, high school teacher

Amanda Knecht visited Brest, France, after the war. When she returned, Knecht told her students in Denver about the devastation. Over the next year, her students raised more than \$32,000 in nickels, pennies, and dimes. The funds were presented to the city of Brest to be used to rebuild the children's wing of the Brest City Hospital. This relationship remains strong to this day with student, municipal, cultural, and business exchanges. In fact, wine tastings are common.

In the 1960s, America did not always see people of different races break bread together. That was not the case with SCI. During this turbulent decade, we were developing relationships in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through student and municipal exchanges leading to substantial benefits for each community. Civil rights leaders used Montego Bay, Jamaica, as a base to plan their strategies on pursuing many of their civil rights goals. It was therefore fitting that in 1972 Atlanta and Montego Bay saw the need to formalize a partnership under the umbrella of SCI. In the 1970s, the Technical Assistance Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State was started in conjunction with SCI. The first exchange occurred

between Hialeah, Florida, and Managua, Nicaragua, when they began a paramedic-training program. Today emergency response training programs are common between sister city communities. Just last year Virginia Beach developed a fire emergency training exchange program with their partner, Olongapo, in the Philippines.

As we approached the 1980s—in 1979, specifically—St. Louis signed the first Chinese sister city relationship with Nanjing immediately following the reinstatement of diplomatic relations. There are close to 200 sister city relationships with China that have evolved from humanitarian assistance to student exchanges and economic development. In fact, President Xi Jinping is leading the China friendship cities (a.k.a. sister cities) movement.

How did the president of China get involved in a local grassroots citizen diplomacy program? In 1985, President Xi made his first trip to the United States on a sister state delegation to Muscatine, Iowa,

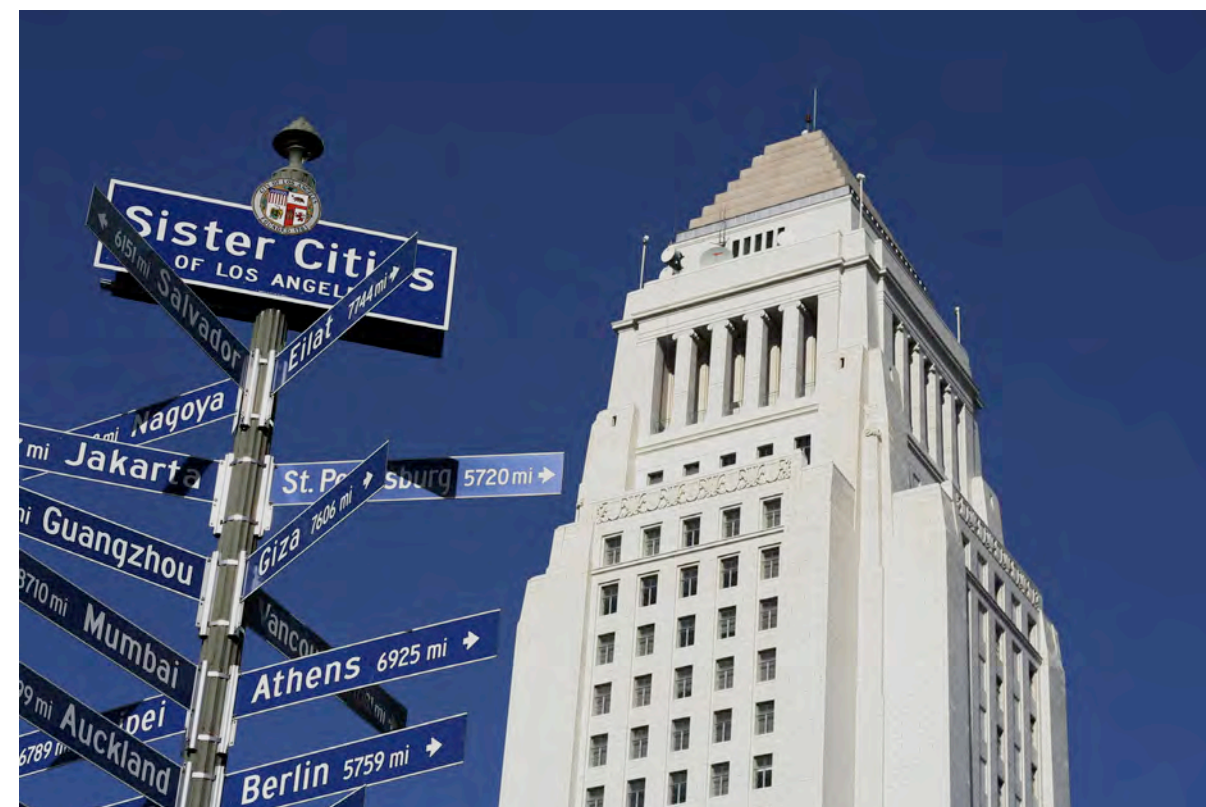
as part of an agricultural exchange. He returned in 2012 to have tea with his host family and also signed a \$4.3 billion agreement to buy soybeans from Iowa farmers. On this trip he stood up at a dinner in Des Moines and said, “When I think of America, I think of my host family.” The

governor at the time of his visit in 1985 and again in 2012 was Governor Terry Branstead, the next U.S. ambassador to China.

In 2015, President Xi once again traveled to the United States and unbeknownst to many went to visit his friends in Tacoma, Washington, after meeting with tech officials in Seattle. It was President Xi who signed the sister cities agreement between Fuzhou and Tacoma 22 years ago. His motorcade arrived at Lincoln High School with books on Chinese culture, language, and history, five Ping-Pong tables, and an offer to host 100 students in Beijing last year. His goal was to give American students the opportunity to build personal relationships with citizens in his country just as he was able to 32 years ago.

Also in the 1980s, the Cold War was in its final throes. SCI stepped up to build partnerships with in the Eastern Bloc. In 1988, Council Bluffs, Iowa,

The mission of Sister Cities International to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation is just as relevant today as it was 60 years ago.



A sign indicates the distance and direction of Los Angeles' various sister cities—Photo by Jim Winstead, Flickr Creative Commons

and their sister city of Tobolsk, Russian Federation, initiated a project called, “Let the First Strike Be a Knock on the Door.” After a number of exchanges, a dinner between the communities was held in Russia in 1992. The mayor of Tobolosk, Sergei Belken, stood up and reflected on his visit, saying, “I have been thinking very hard about this all week. On your first day here, I met Ridge [Hein-Snyder]. We discovered that we not only are the same age, but also served our military service at the same time—I in Moscow, Ridge in Vietnam. I thank God that we never had to clash on the field of battle.”

In the meantime, our original partnerships with Germany and Japan that began in the 1950s and 60s had evolved into strong economic development opportunities as evidenced by Toyota building their first plant in the United States in 1998 due to the sister city partnership between Kumamoto and San Antonio. Why such an evolution from assistance to commerce? Trust was built due to long-term, personal, international relationships.

On September 11, 2001, exactly 45 years

after the White House conference on Citizen Diplomacy, terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York. The outpouring of support from New York's sister cities was incredible. Tokyo sent \$5 million to the city and another \$5 million to New York State. Jerusalem sent supplies for the first responders. The mayor of Rome withdrew their bid for the 2012 Olympics and urged that New York City be awarded the honor.

But one thing we did not do was to follow Eisenhower's recommendation about looking for a lasting peace—we should have started building sister city relationships immediately with our neighbors in the Middle East and North Africa. We currently have only four partnerships with Afghanistan and eight with Iraq.

In this current decade, Sister Cities International is encouraging our members to stretch beyond their comfort zones and grow, to take on something uncomfortable—which is why we have seen relationships with Cuba strengthened, and the first signed partnerships with Somalia and Myanmar. We are



Sister cities of Eilat, Israel displayed on a board in the city—Photo by Banja-Frans Mulder, Creative Commons

challenging our communities, as Eisenhower did, to become active in building world peace instead of watching helplessly as attacks unfold on television. The mission of Sister Cities International to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation is just as relevant today as it was 60 years ago.

In other words: peace through people.

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The Role of Cities in Countering Violent Extremism

Mike Duffin

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.

Cities around the world are under threat from terrorist organizations and individuals that plan, direct, and carry out attacks against landmarks, large gatherings, and other soft targets. These horrific acts are meant to instill fear, advance political agendas, and establish the strength of the terrorist organization. For all the perceived vulnerabilities of a city, there are an equal – if not greater – number of assets that keep cities safe, strong, and resilient.

Terrorism in an urban environment is not a new phenomenon. Dating back to the Sicarii – a group that used assassination as a tactic to encourage resistance against the Roman occupation of Jerusalem nearly two millennia ago – groups and individuals often select cities as their preferred theater of operation to employ terror. In modern times, cities like Beirut, London, Mumbai, New York, and Paris have each seen terrorist organizations and individuals of varying ideologies attack their people, buildings, and infrastructure.

Cities have responded to the threat of terrorism by installing barriers and closed-circuit cameras in strategic areas, as well as hiring additional law

enforcement personnel. However, even with increased security budgets, cities will likely still face some level of threat, particularly in the age of “Do It Yourself Terrorism,” where anyone could plan an attack based off instructions found on the Internet. To prevent such attacks, cities can work with the federal government and their communities to develop effective countering violent extremism (CVE) programming.

The goal of CVE is to empower communities to recognize the warning signs of radicalization to violence, to develop methods to prevent it, and to intervene when it does occur. Until recently, most cities and other local governing bodies had left CVE efforts to national governments, but they are perhaps the best positioned of any entity to mobilize stakeholders and

CVE is a relatively new practice, but it borrows heavily from the decades of work done on prevention and intervention related to gang recruitment.

resources. These efforts are sometimes misunderstood, largely because of the conflation between CVE and surveillance. In the United States, federal law enforcement agencies have safeguards in place to ensure there is an appropriate

separation between community outreach and intelligence gathering and criminal investigations.

CVE is a relatively new practice, but it borrows heavily from the decades of work done on prevention and intervention related to gang recruitment. Lessons learned from suicide prevention and alcohol and drug recovery efforts are also invaluable. One challenge in dealing with violent extremism is

justifying the resources against other priorities when, for many cities, attacks by violent extremists are relatively rare. By connecting with counterparts with similar experiences, cities can learn from each other and develop effective and cost-efficient CVE strategies that respect the civil liberties of all people. This is why initiatives like the Strong Cities Network, a global network of cities united in countering all forms of violent extremism, are so important.

Launched in September 2015 with seed money from the U.S. Department of State, as well as funding from the governments of Denmark and Norway, the Strong Cities Network is run by the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue. The network features capacity-building workshops, exchanges involving local policy makers and practitioners, innovation grants, and a password-protected online library and forum to exchange good practices on CVE. The founding members serve on the Steering Committee, which oversees network policies. The network has grown to more than 120 members across six continents, including cities like Beirut, Berlin, Dakar, Dhaka, London, Los Angeles, Medellin, Mombasa, Mumbai, New York, Paris, and Tunis. There are also smaller members like Kacanik that have experienced a high per-capita number of cases of radicalization to violence. This city of about 30,000 people in south-central Kosovo has seen at least 30 of its residents depart for Iraq and Syria to become foreign terrorist fighters.

Large or small, many cities want more help in preventing the stabbings, shootings, bombings, and vehicular homicides perpetrated by ISIS, its followers, and other terrorist groups over the last few years. Strong Cities Network members from Colombia and Peru share lessons learned from their decades of experience countering terrorist organizations such as FARC and the Shining Path, respectively. Other members also look to Los Angeles for insight from the Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), which is a public-private partnership that conducts prevention and intervention programming, as well as the city's long-standing efforts to address violent extremism through community partnerships.

Community resilience is another major theme

of the Strong Cities Network, which members such as Chattanooga and Orlando clearly demonstrate. Even before the Pulse nightclub attack in June 2016 – perpetrated by an individual who did not live in the community – Orlando had gone to great lengths to encourage social cohesion. Police coached vulnerable youth in sports leagues and the city engaged community groups on a regular basis. At Mayor Buddy Dyer's press conference in the wake of the attack, he was flanked by members of the Muslim and LGBTQ communities who wanted to show solidarity with each other. Similar to the "Boston Strong" campaign in response to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, Orlando has turned its resilience into civic pride. On the one-year anniversary of the attack, the city sponsored "Orlando United Day – A Day of Love and Kindness," which featured a series of events to commemorate those killed and the survivors.

When an attack cannot be prevented, it is critical that cities do everything possible to ensure that the cycle of violence is broken. After a former Muslim resident of Chattanooga returned in July 2015 to kill five members of the military, Mayor Andy Berke vowed to prevent acts of retaliation against Chattanooga's Muslim

community. Mayor Berke had experienced discrimination growing up as a Jewish-American and knew that the actions of one individual did not reflect the views of an entire faith community. There were no reported hate crimes against the 1,200 Muslim Americans living in Chattanooga, many of whom participated in an interfaith vigil for the victims. Mayor Berke shared his personal account of that day with 200 other mayors and city officials at the Strong Cities Network's inaugural Global Summit in Antalya, Turkey, in May 2016.

Internationally, cities are developing innovative ways to counter violent extremism. In Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city, law enforcement officials, educators, social workers, and mental health professionals work together to engage vulnerable individuals. Known as the "Aarhus Model," young people on the path to radicalization to violence are partnered with mentors who have faced similar challenges. This program was originally designed to deal

When an attack cannot be prevented, it is critical that cities do everything possible to ensure that the cycle of violence is broken.



Chattanooga, Tennessee Mayor Andy Burke speaks about his city's experience with terrorism at the Strong Cities Network Global Meeting in Aarhus, Turkey, in 2016. He is seated between Anaheim, California Mayor Tom Tait (left) and Vilvoorde, Belgium Mayor Hans Bonte (right)—Photo courtesy of Mike Duffin.

with violent right-wing extremists, but with the rise of al-Qa'ida and ISIS, the program expanded its focus. Aarhus and other cities in Western Europe including Copenhagen, Rotterdam, and The Hague have been critical to mobilizing mayors on this topic. On May 17-19, Aarhus hosted about 500 mayors, policy makers, and practitioners from more than 40 countries for the Strong Cities Network's second annual Global Summit. The three days of workshops allowed dozens of cities around the world to share good practices on CVE, and it also highlighted several partnerships that have formed between Strong Cities Network members. Danish cities, for example, have been working with their counterparts in Jordan and Lebanon to help them develop prevention networks of their own. Norway will support a similar endeavor between its cities and counterparts in the Middle East and Kenya, which will be run through the Strong Cities Network and the Youth Civil Activist Network (YouthCAN). Cities have also been building their CVE capacities by participating in State Department-funded exchanges.

The State Department's CVE-focused city-pair program started in 2011 as a partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and involves a two-way

exchange of local policy makers and front-line practitioners. One such exchange took place in December 2016 when officials from Marseille visited Orlando and Tampa. They met with Mayor Dyer and Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn, officials from other branches of the government, community leaders, religious leaders, and CVE practitioners. In April, a U.S. delegation from Orlando and Tampa visited Marseille to learn more about the French experience countering violent extremism. These exchanges emphasize peer learning and are structured so that participants hear a range of perspectives on ways to keep communities safe. Once exchange participants return home, they often try to enhance current programming or develop new initiatives.

The most dramatic example of the positive effects of a State Department-funded exchange program is Vilvoorde, a Belgian city just north of Brussels. This city was once responsible for the highest per capita number of foreign terrorist fighters in Western Europe. After visiting Columbus in September 2014 to learn more about the U.S. experience with social integration, Mayor Hans Bonte and his police chief leveraged lessons learned from the exchange to fine-tune the police department's community engagement



City Solidarity: The National Gallery in London lit with the colors of the French flag after the terror attacks in Paris – Photo by Christiaan Triebert/Creative Commons.

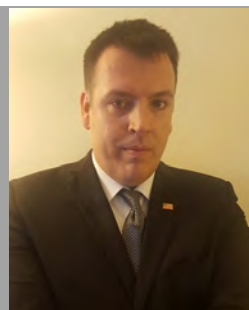
Network, has promoted vertical integration, which is an approach that welcomes input from communities and national governments. It has even put some mayors on the forefront of U.S. diplomacy. In addition to traveling to Turkey last year, Mayor Berke participated in a State Department-funded exchange in the Netherlands, and he attended this year's Strong Cities Network Global Summit in Aarhus along with Mayor Tom Tait of Anaheim. He, along with other mayors whose cities have come under attack by terrorists, demonstrate the impor-

tance of resilience in the wake of tragedy.

strategy. Encouraging closer cooperation between police officers and the local community led, in part, to a drop in the number of foreign terrorist fighter departures from Vilvoorde. These exchanges also encourage collaboration among delegates, who may not have known each other prior to the exchange. Such was the case with a Strong Cities Network exchange that brought representatives from 10 member cities from Kosovo and Macedonia to the United States this past spring and the Strong Cities Network International Visitor Leadership Program in March 2016 that brought 19 participants from Canada, Europe, and North Africa to the United States. This past summer, British and U.S. cities participated in two-way exchanges, including London with Los Angeles and Birmingham with Aurora and Denver, Colorado.

The exchange of good practices on CVE among cities, especially through the Strong Cities

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On Public (and Private) Tango Diplomacy

Melissa Fitch

On January 21, 2017, in the final moments of the Obama era, I was dancing tango with a Mexican diplomat in Delhi, India. I watched over his shoulder as Donald Trump's inauguration was displayed on every screen in the hotel café where we danced, the sound muted. Tango is connected to Argentina's history of immigration from Europe in the late 19th century and the pervasive feelings experienced by the new immigrants upon arrival: rootlessness, sadness, nostalgia, and melancholy, as well as the need for connection and belonging.¹ As a recent arrival in South Asia, after having spent seven months living in Buenos Aires, there were few things that mattered to me more. And yet, in the more than a

century that tango has existed, these overriding associations so common in Argentina have been all but lost in the global imaginary. Tango became relegated to the realm of caricature. A perfect illustration of this misperception took place almost one year before, when outgoing U.S. President Barack Obama was derided by political pundits for dancing the tango in Argentina. The dance was labeled, predictably enough, "steamy," "frivolous," and "sultry." Rush Limbaugh even chastised the president for having danced the tango in Buenos Aires with a woman "who was not his wife."² Limbaugh's outrage was reminiscent of the scandal that greeted the start of the tango craze at the beginning of the last century, one which included efforts by the Vatican to prohibit the dance on the grounds that it was "offensive to the purity of every right-minded person."³

Rush Limbaugh even chastised the president for having danced the tango in Buenos Aires with a woman "who was not his wife."

President Obama hadn't exactly been slipping into smoke-filled rooms down dingy back alleys in Buenos Aires to dance tango with women of ill-repute, as the cliché would have it. He was at a formal state dinner with the president of Argentina, Mauricio Macri. Macri spoke to the Obamas at length about the tango as they watched a professional couple perform. After the display, Obama, when asked repeatedly to dance by the ballerina, politely refused. She insisted. He finally acquiesced. Her male partner did the same with Michelle. The entire tango moment was over within two minutes. But the brevity was irrelevant. The images and video circled the globe almost instantly, and with them all of the clichés that circulate regard-

ing tango in the popular imaginary: sex, deception, and scandal. A similar storm of tango controversy had engulfed yet a different U.S. politician the decade before, former South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford.

Sanford had told his staff that he would be hiking the Appalachian Trail for a couple of weeks in 2009, but then disappeared. His aides were unable to locate him. When he finally surfaced, arriving in Atlanta from Buenos Aires early on the morning of June 24, reporter Gina Smith was waiting for him at the airport. He had changed his mind about the hike, he told her, opting instead to go someplace "exotic."⁴ Later that day he gave an emotional press conference, saying that he had spent "five days crying" in Argentina about an ill-fated love affair he was having with a woman there. While there had been no mention of tango in anything the governor had said, numerous

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journalists, bloggers, late-night comedians, and readers were quick to make tango part of the story. *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd mocked the statesman, saying that Buenos Aires had transformed Sanford into someone altogether different, “Marco, international man of mystery and suave god of sex and tango.”⁵

These characterizations have little to do with the role the music and dance serve in the lives of people around the world. Obama’s tango took place at a formal event sponsored by the Argentine government. That notwithstanding, it had included almost every salacious cliché associated with the dance. His partner for the brief dance was dressed in a shimmering gold dress slit provocatively up one side. She lifted her leg seductively next to the president’s hip as he stood there looking visibly uncomfortable. Why would the Argentine government intentionally propagate such a hackneyed image of the dance? The answer is simple: in large part to cater to global expectations. In countries such as Argentina that have a history of economic

instability, tourism is one key, though by no means the only one, to economic survival. The government had watched the growing interest in dance following the international success around the world of the

show “Tango Argentino” in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It witnessed the renewed interest in the dance after its inclusion in popular films such as *Scent of a Woman* (1992), *True Lies* (1994), and *Evita* (1996), the last of which featured none other than a tango-dancing Madonna in the title role. Argentine politicians realized the economic benefits that an influx of dance-related global tourists could bring to the city and they acted accordingly.

The equation was simple: tango is about fantasy. Tourists want to have their tango fantasies confirmed. An entire infrastructure was put in place by the late 1990s to do just that. Tango became more visually present in the city than perhaps ever before—much of its presence revolving around the stock tango semiotic cues that circulated globally. The slinky dress. The fishnet stockings. The impeccably dressed man with slicked back hair, dressed in a black tuxedo. The overly serious facial expressions. Tango demonstrations became part and parcel of official visits by

dignitaries to Argentina. It formed an integral part of the country’s pavilions in World Expos. Argentine embassies and consulates around the world sponsored local events and dance classes when the touring tango shows came to town. Tango began to play such an important role in the national economy that a neologism was coined, *tangonomía*, a combination of tango and *economía* (economy). The infusion of money that entered the city of Buenos Aires as a result of dance tourism went into many different goods and services. The tourists, mostly from Europe and the United States but increasingly from Asia, spent money on classes and clothing, shows and shoes, massage therapists for their weary feet, and “taxi” dancers (semi-professional dancers who accompany a dance tourist in the evenings so that she or he does not have to wait to be asked to dance or suffer potential rejection of an invitee). In 1998, Law 130 was passed that defended the promotion of tango in the country.⁶ In 2003, Argentina held the first tango world championship and festival, a three-week event in August

that quickly became a focal point for a yearly influx of global tango tourists. In 2009, UNESCO declared the tango part of the intangible cultural patrimony of Argentina and Uruguay.

The cityscape was trans-

formed as old tango bars that had been closed or fallen into disrepair were renovated and opened. Statues of the tango greats—the singers, composers, and musicians—were erected in the city. The Argentine government’s aggressive global marketing campaign paid off. Tango tourists today form the backbone of the entire tourism industry in the city, accounting for the vast majority of all travelers.

To be sure, much of the new infrastructure was designed to educate tourists regarding the tango luminaries of yesteryear. But it also catered to a view that associated the dance and music almost exclusively with lust. And while lust is one dimension of tango, it is not the only dimension. It would be more accurate to say that tango is about longing. Sometimes the longing is sexual, no doubt. But just as often it is a longing for one’s childhood home, a nostalgia for the corner café, for one’s beloved mother, or for the old *barrio* (neighborhood). It is a wistful longing for one’s youth. As a social dance, tango is not characterized by

Tango tourists today form the backbone of the entire tourism industry in the city, accounting for the vast majority of all travelers.



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama dance the tango with tango dancers during the State Dinner at the Centro Cultural Kirchner, Wednesday, March 23, 2016, in Buenos Aires, Argentina—AP Photo by Pablo Martinez Monsivais, Creative Commons.

flamboyant displays done by scantily-dressed women with their suave partners on a stage, but instead by a silent conversation that takes place between two individuals on the dance floor, both of whom are responding to each other’s subtle cues. Tango dancers find their artistic expression through the music, at times pausing completely in a song to appreciate a particular moment of musical virtuosity or of lyrical poignancy. In a third difference from the tango cliché, those who dance tango in Argentina and around the world encompass a range of ages and body sizes—tango

is not merely the dance of the young and beautiful. Indeed, it is often the oldest dancers who are most revered at gatherings. I try to imagine if Rush Limbaugh’s moral outrage would have been as intense had he seen Obama dancing with the country’s *grand dame* of tango, 82-year-old Maria Nieves. But that, of course, would never happen. The Argentine govern-

ment is careful to provide the global consumer and future tango tourist with an image that will always cater to the fantasy. It is an essential part of the country’s soft power on the global stage. The elderly, portly, or unattractive need not apply.

Yet it is this “other” tango, not the fantasy, that has provided an alternative channel for public diplomacy. Private tango diplomacy is quite literally heart-to-heart, and it happens between individuals from countries around the world. Like public diplomacy, it involves a constant negotiation. In

Buenos Aires I danced with a Pakistani diplomat who had learned to tango while working at his country’s embassy in Argentina and has danced in every city where he has subsequently been posted. The Muslim country of Pakistan is not often associated with tango in the global imaginary, and yet there is a tango dancing community there, just as there is in many Muslim

Private tango diplomacy is quite literally heart-to-heart, and it happens between individuals from countries around the world.

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countries, including, until the onset of the Civil War, in Syria.

It makes sense that the longing for home and the melancholy of tango's origins would resonate with so many individuals today. People are crossing and crisscrossing the globe today for myriad reasons, including work, study, and leisure, as well as due to political and economic upheavals. Thanks to social media, tango provides these individuals who are new to a city with an instant community and a common



The author dances the tango with a Mexican diplomat in Delhi, India—Photo courtesy of Melissa Fitch.

language. According to the UN Population Fund, by 2030 nearly 80 percent of the world's population will live in cities of the developing world.⁷ This mass migration, both within countries and around the world, leads to a sense of loss and displacement, the most prevalent sentiments that led to the birth of tango more than a century ago.

Diplomats dance tango, to be sure, but so do bus drivers, school teachers, film directors, maids, construction workers, engineers, waiters, students, doctors, and journalists. Sadly, the dance may also be associated with terrorists,⁸ arms dealers,⁹ and even Nazis.¹⁰ Most of the time no one will ever know of the profession of the person with whom one is tangoing. What one does off the dance floor is irrelevant, as is how much money one makes, his or her race, language, or, in most cases, religion. The only thing that matters is if you can dance. In some ways tango serves as the ultimate equalizer. The global connections that have evolved over the last three decades rooted in a shared love of tango have in numerous cases also become a source of solidarity in difficult times, including those brought on by natural disasters, political strife and/or uncertainty, or when members of the global community suffer health-related emergencies. For all of the trolling and negative aspects that the internet has wrought, social media has also provided sublime moments of shared humanity. One example took place in Turkey in 2013.

In June of that year in Istanbul's Taksim Square, protesters demanded the right to keep the beloved Gezi Park from demolition. The park was one of the last open public spaces in the city, and it was scheduled to be demolished and turned into yet another one of the monolithic shopping centers that dot the Turkish capital. But the protest wasn't just about Gezi, it was about the sense that civil rights were being eroded in the Muslim majority country, a nation that seemed to be slipping further and further away from its secular roots.

As the protests wore on, images circled the globe of Turkish tango dancers, dancing in gas masks with protest signs on their backs. Within days, solidarity *milongas* were organized through social media in Italy, France, Germany, and the United States. Photos and videos of each event were posted to YouTube and Facebook and were immediately viewed not only in Turkey, but on every continent around the world. The videos, photos, and signs of solidarity, along with the

posted messages to social media sites, offered a virtual embrace to the Turkish activists. "We stand (and dance) with you," as one sign read.

The world's first tango dancing politician was, perhaps surprisingly, the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938). A photo of him dancing with his niece ran on the front page of major newspapers and a reproduction is often framed and found hanging in tango schools or dance venues in the country. Atatürk saw public dancing between men and women as part of the modernization effort following the demise of the Ottoman Empire. He was anxious to distance the country from the backward, Orientalized images related to that period that often depicted harems. With Atatürk's encouragement, Muslim singer Seyyan Hanim (1913-1989) became the first woman to ever appear on stage in Turkey without a veil, singing a Turkish tango, "Mazi."

It should be noted that Atatürk is not the only world leader to date known to have openly embraced the tango. Indeed, in December 2015, hundreds of tango-dancing couples converged upon the square in front of the residence of the current tango-loving leader of the world's smallest nation, a man who had shared proudly with reporters, only years earlier, that the tango "comes from deep within me."

And who was the tango-obsessed fanatic that the dancers were honoring?

Pope Francis, the Argentine-born sovereign of the Vatican City and leader of the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹

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Photo by Luca Dugaro on Unsplash

Game on? Public Diplomacy of the Olympic Bid¹

Aaron Beacom

On November 29, 2015, following a referendum in which citizens of Hamburg, Germany, registered their opposition to hosting the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Hamburg withdrew its bid. Less than a year later, the Italian Olympic Committee joined Hamburg and officially withdrew its Rome 2024 bid.² And on February 22, 2017, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced the withdrawal of Budapest's bid for the 2024 Games. Reasons given for these withdrawals were wide-ranging and included escalating costs, doubts over funding, lack of certainty over legacy benefits, concern about corruption within sports organizations, and anxiety over security.

Two bids now remain to host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games—Los Angeles (chosen after the U.S. Olympic Committee withdrew Boston as the bid city because it felt that “resistance from local residents was too great to overcome”³) and Paris. The initial figure of five cities bidding for the 2024 Games contrasts starkly with the 11 cities that entered the bidding process for the 2004 Summer Olympics, the first Games to implement a revised two-stage application process. Similar difficulties were evidenced in relation to the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the number of cities bidding

for the 2022 Winter Games also reduced to two—Almaty, the former capital city of Kazakhstan, and the eventual winner, Beijing—from an initial six in the wake of Oslo's decision to withdraw in October 2014, following similar decisions from Stockholm, Lviv, and Krakow. Whatever the reasons, public appetite for such projects appears to be draining away.

There is a long history of debate relating to the capacity of international sporting events to deliver a range of benefits—including diplomatic benefits—to

There is a long history of debate relating to the capacity of international sporting events to deliver a range of benefits—including diplomatic benefits—to the host city and nation.

the host city and nation.⁴ Nauright (2013), while voicing concerns regarding the “subversion of local community interests and democratic practices” commented in this journal that mega-events have “become high demand focal points that have symbolic value well beyond the results on

the fields of sporting competition.”⁵ There is much to support contentions regarding the power of sport to contribute to national and municipal development. The bid for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was built around the promotion of tolerance, multi-culturalism, and diversity, underpinning the idea of London as an open “world city.”⁶ In addition to enhanced infrastructure and economic regeneration, the communication of these core messages internationally became part of the legacy narrative associated

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with the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.⁷ Yet despite claims regarding both “hard” legacy benefits (for example, infrastructure improvements) and “soft” legacy benefits (for example, enhanced place branding, commonly associated with public diplomacy), momentum appears to be moving away from the mega-event as a conduit for development, whether at the national or the local level.

The experience of hosting the most recent Summer Olympic Games provides little by way of comfort. To the consternation of Brazilian politicians and diplomats, global media coverage focused on a range of significant operational challenges, including security problems relating to the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Domestic and international media coverage of protesting citizens, police officers on strike, fears about the Zika virus, doping by Russian athletes, and the threatened loss of funding for Paralympic events undermined efforts by the Brazilian authorities to use the Games as an opportunity to project a positive image of Brazil and Rio on the international stage.⁸ Given the long-standing association of such events with public diplomacy, these developments are clearly of relevance to scholars seeking to understand the trajectory of the diplomatic process.

The question of what constitutes the parameters of public diplomacy and how it relates to the subject of place branding inevitably arises in such discussions, but it is not the purpose of this short article to engage at length with this conceptual debate.⁹ While in some cases writers address issues that differentiate between place branding and public diplomacy (for example, the range of actors engaged in the process and the rationale for their engagement), in others the focus is on shared concerns with image promotion as the ultimate goal.¹⁰ For the purposes of this paper, the concerns of public diplomacy in attempting to directly shape the opinion of “publics” toward a political entity involves engagement with a range of activities that address the central concern of enhancing image; in

particular, the image of a city. Enter the mega-sporting event as an aspect of public diplomacy.

The role of the city in regional and international politics has a long history, from the influence of Greek city-states in shaping regional relations during the ascendancy of ancient Greek civilization to the role of Italian city-states as a feature of the Renaissance period.¹¹ More recently, European and North American cities have begun asserting themselves as entities in international relations, developing as hubs for industrialization, trade, and technological advancement. The convergence of a number of wider geopolitical trends—namely globalization—from the 1980s onwards caused the acceleration of regional integration and the decentralization process. Martins (2004) argues that these forces weaken the state and enhance the potential for other actors to engage in the

international arena.¹² He identifies the significance of European institutions, in particular the Council of Europe, in helping to create the institutional and legislative framework within which cities could develop as entities distinct from states. One example of this is the European Charter of Local Self Government, a treaty that promoted political and financial autonomy for local authorities.¹³ Martins (2004) argues

that these shifts are reflected in attempts by cities to “re-write their history free from states by carrying out their own strategies to enhance their competitive advantage,” and it is against this backdrop that hosting mega-events “emerged as a significant focus of global inter-urban competition.” Notwithstanding debate about the extent to which tangible material legacies, such as infrastructure improvements and new venues, could be realized through hosting mega-events, such as the Olympic Games, cities hoped to enhance their prominence as international actors in their own right. Yet the city itself is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that may be constituted politically and economically in a variety of ways, which is reflected in its engagement with such events. The dynamics of the bidding process and related diplomatic discourse

Given the challenges facing cities in an uncertain global economic environment, with new security realities and the need to balance municipal with national and regional interests, it is unsurprising that their relationship with the mega-event is in transition.



Construction of the Olympic Stadium and Olympic Park prior to the 2012 Games in London—photo by supermoving, Creative Commons.

will, for example, be influenced by the relationship between central and local governments. At the same time, their structure will reflect their approach to the bid. For example, in relation to London, the footprint of the 2012 Games bid stretched across five metropolitan boroughs, and underlines the point that cities are much more than unitary political entities. Each of these boroughs engaged in developing plans to maximise the impact of the Games.

The extensive support infrastructure of the Games also requires planning as part of the bidding process. A network of Pre-Games Training Camps (PGTCs) are one of the few opportunities to take the Games beyond the confines of the host city and showcase a range of regional towns and cities. Surprisingly little research has taken place in relation to this area. Cooper, De Lacy, and Jago (2006) consider this in the context of leveraging benefits from the hosting process through exploitation from a “destination marketing” perspective.¹⁴ One key aspect of the London 2012 bid was the commitment to develop a network of PGTCs throughout the UK, with a financial incentive

to base teams in the UK in the lead-up to the Games. This was not just about providing enhanced support for Olympic and Paralympic teams arriving in the UK. It also, through encouraging the development of camps beyond London and its immediate environs, heightened regional interest and linked the process to the nationwide “legacy agenda” which was central to the bid rationale. At the same time, the role of the state remains central to the bid process despite the fact that the Olympic Charter identifies the city as the organization that must submit the bid, and does not formally require the state in question to underwrite the bid.¹⁵ Beyond the economic realities of hosting such an event, the state is the only institution with the capability to mobilise and to coordinate the resources necessary to ensure appropriate conditions of security are met. The state also, through its diplomatic infrastructure and extensive networks based on membership in international organizations, has lobbying power at the international level, which is critical to the bidding process.

The Olympic Games as a microcosm of

international society reflects geopolitical fault lines (through boycotts and other forms of sanctions), the rise and decline of actors operating in the international arena (including the emergence and disappearance of states, and the increasing influence of a range of transnational and global non-state actors), and shifts in the international policy agenda (for example, through the enhanced focus on the environmental agenda and the accommodation by the IOC, in conjunction with the UN, of athletes with refugee status). Given the challenges facing cities in an uncertain global economic environment, with new security realities and the need to balance municipal with national and regional interests, it is unsurprising that their relationship with the mega-event is in transition. The influence of cities has become as much associated with the rejection of proposals to bid for the Olympic and Paralympic Games—at times in defiance of national sentiment—as with any other aspect of the Games cycle. In this, the impact of civil society groups articulating opposition through independent referenda and other forms of protest, while mobilising social media as a route to communicating opposition, should not be underestimated.

At the same time, for cities wishing to engage sport as part of their promotional strategies, there are alternatives, such as international (as opposed to mega) sporting events that present many of the benefits without the same level of financial and other risks. In the context of the UK, the Commonwealth Games of 2002, which took place in Manchester, were widely held as contributing significantly to the rejuvenation of that city and the greater Manchester-Merseyside region as it grappled with a range of post-industrial challenges. The Glasgow Commonwealth Games of 2014 were similarly credited with making a significant contribution to the strategic development of the city and region, and for some, fed into calls for more regional autonomy. The non-departmental public body UK Sport's "Gold Event Series," while linked to a wider attempt to secure a legacy from London 2012, supported (and in some contexts resourced) the relevant sports bodies together with municipal authorities to secure a number of regional and international sporting events across the UK between 2013 and 2019.¹⁶

Finally, the IOC is unsurprisingly going through a period of soul-searching itself. As a significant player in international relations (the IOC has observer status at the UN) it has its own concerns

regarding the capacity to engage in successful diplomacy as a means of effective interest representation. This process of review includes a re-assessment of the bidding process that has left it so exposed in recent years—including awarding the 2024 and 2028 Games simultaneously, revisiting the formal two-stage bidding process (originally aimed at challenging corruption), and encouraging a more open dialogue with potential bidders.¹⁷ Perhaps from this will emerge greater efforts by the IOC to respond directly to the concerns of citizens in cities embarking on the bid journey, something lacking at present.¹⁸ One issue is clear: the reduced engagement of cities in the process of bidding for the Olympic and Paralympic Games constitutes a significant challenge for all actors who promote the Games as conduits for development.

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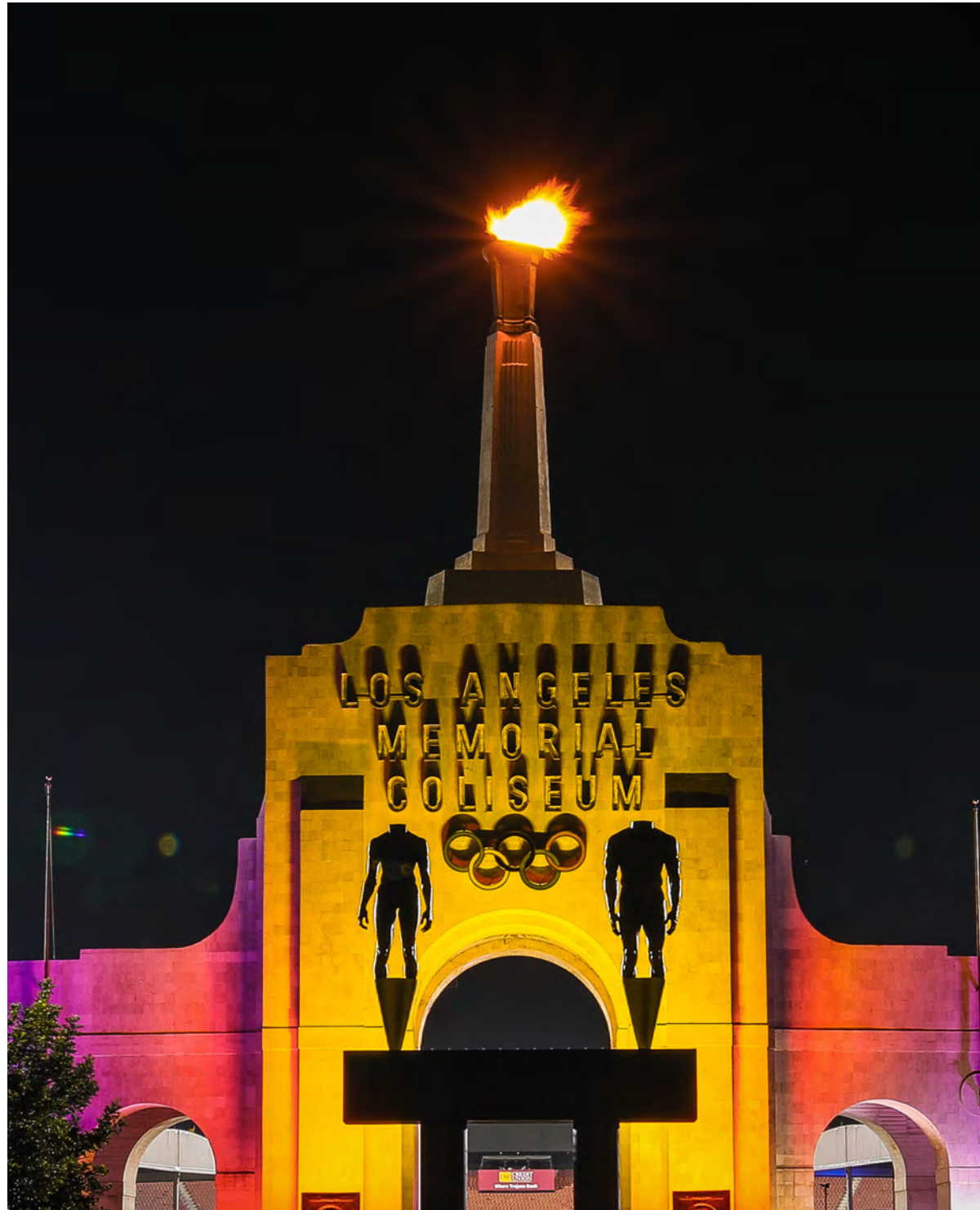
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Third time around: After playing host to the 1932 and 1984 Olympics, Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum will again host events at the 2028 games—Photo courtesy of Mayor Eric Garcetti, Flickr Creative Commons.

LA 2028

An Interview with LA Bid Committee CEO Gene Sykes

Interviewed by Justin Chapman

On July 31, 2017, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Bid Committee announced that the 2028 Summer Games will be held in Los Angeles under the theme “Follow the Sun.” In an unprecedented agreement, both the 2024 Games—which will be held in Paris—and the 2028 Games were awarded at the same time. The IOC officially ratified the deal in September.

Under the terms of the host city contract, the IOC will contribute \$1.8 billion to Los Angeles to increase participation and access to youth sports programs in the city in the years leading up to the Games.

“This is an historic day for Los Angeles, for the United States, and for the Olympic and Paralympic movements around the world,” said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Today, we take a major step toward bringing the Games back to our city for the first time in a generation and begin a new chapter in Los Angeles’ timeless Olympic story. This agreement with the IOC will allow us to seed a legacy of hope and opportunity that will lift up every community in Los Angeles—not in 11 years’ time, but starting now and continuing in the years leading up to the Games. LA 2028 will kick-start our drive to make LA the healthiest city in America, by making youth sports more affordable and accessible than ever before.”

LA 2028 Bid Committee CEO Gene Sykes recently discussed the impact this announcement

will have on Los Angeles’ role as a global city with *Public Diplomacy Magazine* Managing Editor Justin Chapman.

PD Magazine: Cities have increasingly been asserting themselves as entities in international relations. How do the Olympics strengthen Los Angeles’ place branding, city diplomacy efforts, and image as a global city?

There are a lot of very good things associated with the memory, the history, and the interaction of LA and the Olympic Games.

Gene Sykes: Even the campaign to win the Olympic Games has done that to a degree. LA’s presentation to the IOC in Lausanne last month was an example of this. Our

mayor, Eric Garcetti, was head to head or nose to nose with Emmanuel Macron, the new president of France. It was very clear that Los Angeles has demonstrated its capacity to be a world class city to host the Olympic Games, and frankly, from the perspective of almost everybody who viewed it, to also have the advantage in being able to actually pull it off. So we have already established ourselves as a credible host for the Olympics, the biggest mega sporting event in the world, and all of the decision makers around the Olympics—the leaders and members of the IOC—all believe it and confirmed it. If that doesn’t help project Los Angeles in the most positive international light with every very large city, I’m not sure what will.

So I think we’re persuaded that LA is going



Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti speaks at a press conference after the city was awarded the 2028 games—Photo courtesy of Mayor Eric Garcetti, Flickr Creative Commons.

to be of the first rank of cities, and to the degree that cities are perceived to be the sources of innovation and community and inspiration for people in the future to an increasing degree, it's very reassuring and positively affirming to the image and importance of Los Angeles to see that happen in real time.

In many cities the public seems to be skeptical about some of the benefits of hosting the Olympics outweighing the costs, security concerns, traffic issues, and other concerns. Has that been the case in Los Angeles, and how has LA 2028 addressed those concerns?

LA is of course very well equipped to do the Olympic Games whenever they want to do the Olympics. The mayor said we could host the Olympics in two months or 20 years. We're not trying to be smug about it, it's just that we have all the advantages of infrastructure and community support that some other places don't

have. We have great public support in Los Angeles and I think a lot of it has to do with the success of the 1984 Olympic Games. And we like to say that the support for the Games is in the DNA of our community.

But I don't think that's a stretch, and the evidence comes almost every single day when we talk to people who recall some direct personal experience from the '84 Games. And then of course we have LA84 as an organization that has funded almost a quarter of a billion dollars in youth sports programs throughout the community.

So there are a lot of very good things associated with the memory, the history, and the interaction of LA and the Olympic Games, which I think make it easier for us to have broad-based support for the Olympics and Paralympics in our own campaign. All the polling that either the IOC has done or we have done or other people have done independently confirms that.

Will the city of Los Angeles lose money by hosting the Olympics, and if so, is that offset by other benefits?

We've shared a project budget with the city for the 2028 games that the city reviewed and had an independent auditor, KPMG, review. They declared that it was reasonable and conservatively prepared. [The budget] shows a contingency of almost half a billion dollars, which means that the costs are expected to come in below the revenues we think we can generate, and we expect no city contribution from taxpayer funds to host the Games. LA is bidding for the Games and would organize the Games on a private enterprise model, not a government model like most other cities, including Paris, do.

What message or story does LA want to tell about itself to the world through the Olympics?

We have a great slogan: "Follow the Sun." And you've seen our image of the angel, representing the City of Angels, reaching to the sun. It's very future-oriented. What we believe about Los Angeles is that this is the home of innovation and creativity, and it's essentially a very optimistic community. And what we have made our pitch about is that you follow the sun of the future when you think about Los Angeles. We're not about the past. While history is very important to all of us, we're trying to help society and help sports move to the future.

And we think we can do it. That's built on both our own capabilities, what we see in our community, and the fact that this is the home to one of the most diverse communities of people anywhere

Gene Sykes is the chief executive officer of LA 2028 and supervises all aspects of the bid committee's business, operations, and activities. Prior to joining the bid committee, Sykes was co-head of global mergers and acquisitions, co-chairman of the global technology, media and telecom group, and a member of the management committee and the firm-wide client and business standards committee of Goldman Sachs. A native Angeleno, Sykes is a trustee of the California chapter of The Nature Conservancy, a board member of Common Sense Media, a member of the Advisory Council of the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and a member of the Stanford board of trustees. He received a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University and an M.B.A. from Stanford Graduate School of Business.



on the planet—certainly the most diverse big city in the United States, and maybe one of the most diverse big cities anywhere in the world. When you listen to how the mayor describes Los Angeles and the wide range of people and backgrounds of people in this community, I think that comes through as well.

How will hosting the Games benefit the residents of Los Angeles?

We've certainly talked about the benefit that comes from greater visibility for Los Angeles to the entire world. So Los Angeles essentially has more impact by being a host of the Games, but more tangibly, the real benefit of the '84 Games that people measure day in and day out was this financial legacy that came with the LA84 Foundation. And there was a real positive contribution into the community from the surplus that was generated by the Games. The mayor likes to point out that Venus and Serena Williams began their careers playing tennis in a program in Compton that was funded by LA84.

So we know that we cannot just inspire but we also need to help finance and create and endow the capacity in our community to do that, and we believe a vigorous and healthy community and a future-oriented, open-minded perspective are the qualities that we would hope to increase or emphasize and help stimulate by virtue of what we do here. And I think those will all create big benefits for the community.



Photo by Matthew Kirby, Flickr Creative Commons

Trump's Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement Shines Light on City Climate Leadership

Emmanuelle Pinault and Agathe Cavicchioli

The decision by U.S. President Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change announced on June 1, 2017, could have been disastrous. Instead it triggered an inspiring wave of pledges in support of the Paris Agreement and reinvigorated the drive for climate action. For mayors and governors who have been championing climate action for decades and are committed to a climate safe future, this may be the beginning of a new era in global climate leadership.

By announcing his decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, President Trump could have jeopardized decades of climate negotiations and dampened global efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Such efforts have mobilized thousands of diverse stakeholders, not least of all cities, states, and regions who have been key advocates of climate action, persistent contributors to climate negotiations, and ambitious decision-makers at their level. Unsurprisingly, their response to President Trump has been the most resounding. To understand the importance of this paradigm shift, it is crucial to look at the history of the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement: A Landmark Tool in the Global Response to Climate Change

The Paris Agreement is the result of a long and complex process started at COP15 in 2009 when nations were tasked to negotiate and adopt a successor to the

Kyoto Protocol. However, negotiations failed when parties opposed assigned emission reduction targets. The only outcome was a nonbinding agreement with weak ambition and commitment mechanism. Projections at the time put the planet on a trajectory that would see global temperatures rise more than 4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures, with catastrophic consequences for the future.

Whilst the outcome of the conference was disappointing, COP15 marked an important milestone for cities and local governments. They had been acting on climate change for years in their cities, but COP15 was their first opportunity to speak out on the global stage, with over 80 mayors present in Copenhagen. From then onwards, it became clear that cities were committed to climate action and would push their national governments for greater ambition in negotiations back home. A series of COP decisions then slowly and gradually gave some recognition to local governments (decisions 1/CP16 and 1/CP19), albeit



A protestor responds to President Trump's decision to remove the United States from the Paris climate agreement—Photo by Ken Fager, Flickr Creative Commons.

sometimes resulting in strong resistance from nation states.

In the run-up to the decisive COP21 in Paris, over 500 mayors from around the world signed on to the Compact of Mayors to show “the impact of cities” collective actions through standardized measurement of emissions and climate risk, and consistent, public reporting of their efforts.”¹

The Compact of Mayors was launched in 2014 at the United Nations Secretary General’s (UNSG) Summit on Climate Change, by Ban Ki-moon and the UNSG Special Envoy for Cities and Climate

Change, Michael R. Bloomberg. The commitments of Compact cities presented at COP21 showed that they could deliver half of the total global urban emissions reduction potential by 2030.² To continue growing this movement, the Compact of Mayors merged with the European Covenant of Mayors in 2016 to create the

Global Covenant of Mayors bringing together over 7,400 cities and towns to keep driving climate ambition higher.

Just days before the Agreement was adopted, over 400 city leaders met at the Paris City Hall Summit for Local Climate Leaders. This massive gathering of mayors helped to demonstrate their unity and com-

mitment to tackle climate change, as well as their readiness to implement transformative actions. Thanks to this, among other reasons, the climate deal that the world needed was adopted at COP21 in Paris in 2015.

The Paris Agreement is a true landmark in the global response to climate change. The deal succeeds where others had failed, in creating a delicate balance between an internationally legally-binding agreement to keep global average temperature increase within the margins that scientists

calculate as “safe” and a framework of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to register each country’s self-determined climate goals for 2020 or beyond. Finally, it formally calls for the engagement of non-party stakeholders including local and subnational governments, marking a great victory for cities, states, and regions that had so actively advocated for an ambitious climate deal.

The Agreement came into force in record time. Today it counts 197 signatories, of which 153 have already ratified it.³ The reason behind this rapid entry into force is manifold, but the mobilization of cities and local governments and their collective commitments to address climate change helped set high expectations and reinforce the sense of climate urgency.

Mayors Lead the Global Response to Trump’s Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement

It is a mistake to believe that that the U.S. withdrawal from the deal will halt what has been set in motion in Paris. As Ban Ki-moon put it, the Paris Agreement “(...) once unthinkable (...), is now unstoppable.”⁴

National leaders of the European Union, China, India, and many others have made clear that the Paris Agreement is not up for renegotiation and reaffirmed their commitment to climate action through individual and collective statements. In May and July 2017, the G7 and G20 communiqués^{5,6} reaffirmed the commitment of the world’s most powerful nations to the Paris Agreement. In both cases, the U.S. federal government was unprecedentedly marginalized and isolated.

The G20 Summit in particular was the first multilateral meeting after Trump’s announcement on the Paris Agreement and a crucial test for the strength of global action on climate change. Ahead of the Summit, C40 mayors and their citizens, through a joint statement, petition, and global campaign with states, investors, businesses, and NGOs, called for an

ambitious G20 position on climate and clear signals that delivering the Paris Agreement is a priority. As a result, the G19 included strong and united language in their communiqué defining the Paris Agreement as “irreversible” and agreeing on an action plan⁷ to implement it through 2050 strategies, investment, and in coherence with the Sustainable Development Agenda. The United States chose to not support this paragraph of the communiqué, nor did they adopt the action plan, but the commitment of the other G19 signatories signals the rise of new climate leadership in the vacuum left by the United States.

However, the most overwhelming reaction to Trump’s announcement came from the diverse group of “non-state actors” in the United States and globally: cities, regions, businesses, investors, and philanthropies committed to defend the transformational change that the Paris Agreement has set in motion.

In the United States, many are willing to step in and do what the White House will not: Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York City

and C40 board president, generously pledged to give \$15 million to the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat to compensate for the U.S. share of the UN budget. Hundreds of U.S. cities, universities, and businesses declared “We Are Still In”⁸ and committed to “pursue ambitious climate goals, working together to take forceful

action and to ensure that the U.S. remains a global leader in reducing emission.” An influential group of leaders are now working on the creation of the “America’s pledge,”⁹ an unprecedented effort to aggregate the emission reductions of cities, regions, businesses, and other social actors to ensure that the United States achieves its Paris Agreement pledge, comforting further the idea that “leadership in the fight against climate change in the United States had shifted from the federal government to lower levels of government, academia, and industry.”¹⁰

Unsurprisingly, mayors are leading the way of this cross-sectorial, bottom-up, and policy-shaping movement that will certainly have long-term impacts on global diplomacy and the U.S. political order. At

In the immediate aftermath of the White House announcement, statements and messages of support poured from all corners of the world affirming the commitment of cities to delivering the goals of the Paris Agreement.



Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg with fellow mayors at the Rio+20 event in 2012—Photo by C40 Cities, Flickr Creative Commons.

the time of writing, under the leadership of Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles, 359¹¹ American “Climate Mayors” have committed in a joint statement to “adopt, honor, and uphold Paris Climate Agreement goals,”¹² and have gone as far as creating a toolkit on how to adopt the goals of the Paris Agreement, including a template council resolution.

In the immediate aftermath of the White House announcement, statements and messages of support poured from all corners of the world affirming the commitment of cities to delivering the goals of the Paris Agreement. C40 Chair and Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo has resolutely condemned the decision of President Trump and asserted that C40 cities will continue to pioneer and implement bold climate action: “regardless of Donald Trump’s definitive decision, the great cities of the world, in particular the twelve American C40 cities, remain resolutely committed to doing what needs to be done to implement the Paris Agreement.”¹³ In all, 50 cities around the world, from Stockholm and Cape Town to Melbourne and Mexico, expressed their support through public statements or

lit up city halls and landmark monuments in green.

More strikingly, cities and states in the United States are taking matters into their own hands, passing legislation, delivering policies compatible with the Paris Agreement, and striking cooperation agreements at the highest level with nation states. The mayors of Portland and Pittsburgh have announced the adoption of 100 percent renewable energy targets for their cities, and the mayors of New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., have signed Executive Orders to make the goals of the Paris Agreement their own. Many more mayors are set to follow.

The outpouring of support for the Paris Agreement, especially from city leaders, resolutely shows that local governments are leading the way to a cleaner, more resilient, and sustainable future for their cities and the world. Mayors and local leaders are now the uncontested champions of climate change. C40 is intensely proud of the leadership shown by our mayors in the United States and around the world and we are more committed than ever to support them.

Now everyone needs to get behind those

mayors and the governors, businesses, philanthropists, and civil society groups that have committed to ensure that America plays its part in delivering a climate safe future. Through partnerships with businesses, states, regions, and many other committed non-party stakeholders, they can and they will deliver on the Paris Agreement. Indeed, they are unstoppable.

(Endnotes)

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Emmanuelle Pinault serves as the head of City Diplomacy – Political Engagement at C40. In this role, she is responsible for assessing and implementing C40’s city diplomacy strategy in the climate global political agenda, as well as engaging C40 member cities into the Compact of Mayors. Prior to joining C40, she worked for twelve years as an independent consultant on international relations and cooperation with national and local governments in Africa and Latin America. She also managed the Cities and Climate Change Bogota Summits in 2012 and 2015, and delivered Bogota City Marketing Strategy 2013-2015, working closely to the private sector. Emmanuelle holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science, from the Institute of Political Studies, Lyon (France), and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sociology, from the School of High Studies in Social Sciences – EHESS, Paris.



Agathe Cavicchioli is the City Diplomacy Manager, Agathe’s role is to engage C40 members in the C40 City Diplomacy Strategy and support C40’s engagement and participation in intergovernmental climate, urban and development policy-making processes. Agathe works closely with the Head of City Diplomacy to drive strategic and effective engagement of the C40 network in global climate policy dialogue and to maximize its impact in the global political stage. Prior to joining C40, Agathe managed low-carbon development projects for an international local government network and supported the network’s global climate advocacy strategy and engagement in the UNFCCC process. Agathe holds a MA in Climate and Society from Columbia University and joint Master degrees in European Affairs and Urban Sustainable Development from Sciences Po Lille and Lille University of Science and Technology.





"A winter's day in Detroit" by Mike, Flickr Creative Commons

Revitalizing the Rust Belt

An Interview with Steve Tobocman

Interviewed by Bret Schafer

Since 2009, Steve Tobocman has spearheaded Global Detroit, a regional economic revitalization strategy for the Detroit area focused on immigration. He also created and leads the We Global Welcoming Economies (WE) Global Network at Welcoming America. This first-of-its-kind, ten-state regional network of local immigrant economic development initiatives is helping to make the Rust Belt a leader in immigrant innovation.

Public Diplomacy Magazine's Editor-in-Chief, Bret Schafer, e-mailed with Steve to discuss the importance of local initiatives to attract and maintain immigrants, particularly in the face of a less hospitable immigration climate at the national level.

PD Magazine: Can you briefly describe the mission of the WE Global Network?

Steve Tobocman: The mission of the Welcoming Economies (WE) Global Network is to strengthen the work, maximize the impact, and sustain the efforts of local economic and community development initiatives across the region that welcome, retain, and empower immigrant communities as valued contributors to the region's shared prosperity. The Network consists of over 20 "core" economic development initiatives across a 10-state region from St. Louis to Syracuse and their supporters. WE Global and its members embrace the following Core Values:

- Immigrant communities are central to expanding economic opportunity and revitalizing the entire region.
- Welcoming immigrants into the economic and social fabric of a region helps to make that region more socially vibrant for everyone.

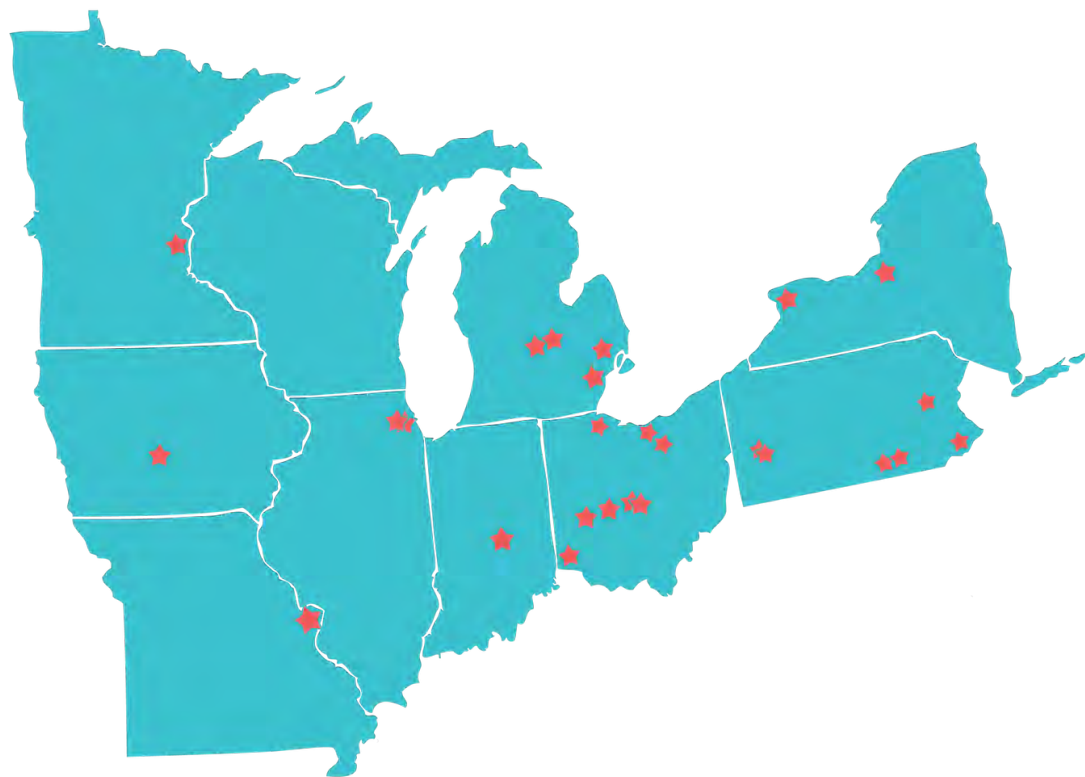
- Regional economic development initiatives can play a role not just in attracting immigrants, but also in retaining them and in enhancing their role in the community's economic and social fabric.

Philadelphia, for example, has shown the positive economic and social impacts of being a welcoming city. Immigrants there have significantly contributed to the reversal of a 60-year population decline, and since 2000 are responsible for 96 percent of small business growth and 75 percent of workforce growth. Policies that break down barriers for immigrants also do so for other residents as well. Other cities have modeled programs after some of those in Philadelphia, such as a hub that helps entrepreneurs transform an idea into a feasible business opportunity.

Where did the idea for immigrant economic development initiatives start? At what point was the decision made to create a network that would allow various cities and regions to share best practices and experiences?

Between 2010 and 2013, no fewer than eight (Detroit, Dayton, Cleveland, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Toledo, Chicago, Macomb County, and the state of Michigan) Rust Belt initiatives focusing on immigrants as a source of community revitalization and economic growth were launched independently and developed their own unique vision and programming.

These efforts began to connect via other networks and discussions, and, in 2013, Global Detroit sought and secured funds to bring 11 of these programs together for a public conference and structured an internal conversation about the possibilities that collaborating might bring. In 2014, Global Detroit



The geographic footprint of the more than 20 regional economic initiatives in the WE Global Network—Courtesy of Steve Tobocman.

worked with Vibrant Pittsburgh, GlobalPittsburgh, and Welcoming America to create a second convening modeled on the first. Some 18 local initiatives and 225 attendees participated. At that second convening, the group agreed to ask Welcoming America to lead the emerging network in partnership with Global Detroit.

In April 2015, the Welcoming Economies Global Network was launched. Additional convenings have been held in Dayton and Philadelphia, each attracting over 300 attendees, and the Network has grown to over 20 core members. WE Global also hosts joint days of action to facilitate multi-city communications on topics like Welcoming Week, Immigrant Heritage Month, annual H-1B application closing, and more; has published *Ideas that Innovate* to chronicle promising public policy practices that impact the field; and has engaged in original research on immigrant housing potential in Rust Belt cities. WE Global also

has facilitated and underwritten about a dozen city-to-city peer learning exchanges to build mutual understanding among initiatives.

Other than geographic location, what are some of the characteristics shared by the cities or regions that compose the Network?

Immigration experienced by Rust Belt metros is somewhat unique among the American immigration experience. Rust Belt metros benefit from a highly-educated and affluent immigrant population. In states like Michigan and Ohio, adult immigrants are approximately twice as likely to possess a four-year college degree than the overall population. A deep analysis of immigrant labor in the nation's largest metros in 2009 by the Fiscal Policy Institute noted that most Rust Belt cities in the study possessed immigrant households

with substantially higher earning power than other households in the metro (between 125% and 150% of the overall population).

Rust Belt metros also tend to have immigration rates lower than the national average and have regional economic growth rates that are more sluggish than the rest of the nation.

Given that these cities and regions are all vying for new immigrants, is there a sense of competition between and among cities in the Network? How much emphasis do cities place on creating unique brands that are attractive to new arrivals?

There is not a deep sense of competition for a limited pool of immigrants. Immigrants are hardly choosing their migration patterns based upon the offerings of local immigrant economic development strategies, but are extremely more likely to make migration decisions based upon family ties, work opportunities, and a

desire to be located among other immigrant residents from one's home country and region. While St. Louis attracts large numbers of Bosnians, Dayton attracts the Ahiska minority from Turkey. Detroit has large numbers of Chaldean Iraqis, Bangladeshi, and Indians. Columbus is home to large numbers of Somalis.

That said, each program desires to be the best it can be and there is a sense of friendly competition to excel, but each participant believes there is far more to be gained from collaborative learning than from a more traditional sense of competition. After all, these are very innovative and pioneering programs, few of which existed even seven years ago.

Obviously, many Rust Belt communities are experiencing declining or slow population growth and would economically benefit from an infusion of new residents, but for the native-born populations of those areas, who may be unemployed or underemployed, how do you combat the notion that new immigrants will take their jobs, or that resources should be spent on them rather than new arrivals?

Economies are not fixed, zero-sum entities. There is not a finite supply of jobs. Adding population to a local economy creates more economic activity and more jobs. Developed economies like Japan and Europe that have stagnant population growth or regions that lose population—including many Rust Belt cities like Detroit and Cleveland—experience unemployment and economic distress.

No American city has been able to stabilize population loss or reverse such loss without significant immigration growth. From New York City to Boston to Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia and Minneapolis/St. Paul, American cities that saw population loss and rebounded have depended upon immigration as a means to revive their economies.

Resources should be spent on the unemployed and under-employed. None of the cities in the WE Global Network are offering specific tax incentives or benefits for immigrants. Instead, they are seeking to expand the opportunities for workforce

In states like Michigan and Ohio, adult immigrants are approximately twice as likely to possess a four-year college degree than the overall population.

development, housing, and entrepreneurship to include immigrant groups—often with limited English language proficiency. Moreover, programs like ProsperUS Detroit and the Neighborhood Development Center in Minne-

apolis/St. Paul provide services to immigrants and African-Americans. ProsperUS Detroit, the largest program to emerge from the Global Detroit strategy, is a micro-enterprise training, lending, and support effort that has graduated 640 low-income Detroit residents from a rigorous 20-week business planning program and lent some \$750,000 in micro-loans to approximately 50 Detroit entrepreneurs. Eighty five percent of the graduates of the ProsperUS training are African-American.

These initiatives are not about choosing between immigrants and U.S.-born citizens, but are striving to find ways to serve both communities and to revitalize neighborhoods and create economic opportunities that serve all residents. In fact, many WE Global programs include specific programs to foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding to build stronger neighbor-to-neighbor relations.

CITY DIPLOMACY

For the organizations in the Network, what's the bigger challenge: convincing immigrants to migrate to economically depressed cities, or convincing residents of those cities that immigrants will be a benefit to their community?

The question presupposes that these things are a challenge. Immigrants are moving to Rust Belt cities and metros and most of the regions are experiencing immigration growth over the last five years at rates stronger than the national average. Few, if any, of the WE Global members are experiencing any form of organized opposition to their efforts and, in fact, the vast majority enjoy support from their local mayors, city councils, county commissions, and other elected officials. In fact, the most anti-immigrant voters in America are those who live in regions without immigrants, while those with immigrants tend to have far less opposition.

What tools do you use to try to attract immigrants to new communities, particularly those that do not have large immigrant populations?

In short, most programs focus on immigrants already present in their communities as the prime method for attracting and growing their immigrant populations. Making existing residents feel welcome, addressing their needs and concerns, and linking them with asset-building opportunities (entrepreneurship, career development, homeownership, etc.) can help immigrant communities thrive and be a source for attracting newcomers.

Most initiatives working to serve immigrant populations realize that their community possesses a variety of asset-building and service opportunities, but they often find immigrants shut out of these programs and services because of language and cultural barriers. Often the solution that an initiative pursues is to make existing programs linguistically accessible and culturally competent. Sometimes that involves developing a new initiative, while at other times it simply means

altering the delivery mechanism of existing programs.

What role do private corporations and educational and cultural institutions play in that process?

The most profound and lasting impacts that a local immigrant economic development initiative can have often involves working with existing institutions in the private, public, and nonprofit sector in their region to make these organizations more inclusive of immigrants. For example, Global Detroit's international student retention program (the Global Talent Retention Initiative of Michigan) and the state of Michigan's skilled immigrant integration initiative (Michigan International Talent Solutions) work to educate private sector employers about the talent pools that international students and underemployed college

educated immigrants represent and the value of hiring these immigrants. Similar efforts are being employed by the St. Louis Mosaic Project and are being discussed in the state of Ohio's Chancellors Office. (For example, over 70 percent of the masters and Ph.D. students in the United States in electrical engineering are

international students—these talent pools can be quite deep and vast.)

Colleges and universities are a critical component for those programs operating international student programs. International students now represent about 5 percent of all college and university students in America and provide some \$32.8 billion annually to the U.S. economy in the form of tuition, room and board, and local spending. More importantly, however, international students predominate the STEM fields and amount to 40 to 70 percent of the graduate students in the United States in most STEM disciplines. Educating employers about the legal pathways to hire these students and connecting them to this talent represents a largely untapped talent strategy. Additionally, many local immigrant economic development programs work with their community college systems to create workforce skills development through ESL, GED, and credentialing and education opportunities targeting immigrants.

From New York City to Boston to Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia and Minneapolis/St. Paul, American cities that saw population loss and rebounded have depended upon immigration as a means to revive their economies.



A family walks past an ethnic grocery store in Dearborn, Michigan—Photo by Plaubel Makina, Flickr Creative Commons.

How much of an effort is made to connect new arrivals to diaspora networks in the Midwest, such as the Bosnian community in St. Louis or the Arab-American community in Detroit?

Several initiatives have recognized that diaspora networks represent a significant opportunity to help their community develop and grow foreign direct investment and international trade opportunities. St. Louis Mosaic Project is a regional initiative within the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership and the World Trade Center St. Louis. It helps connect foreign investment opportunities with the local diaspora community, as well as to help integrate foreign nationals who are part of a foreign investment into the local community.

There is strong evidence that diaspora communities help grow a region's foreign investment and trade. Yet, formalized economic development initiatives that leverage these opportunities are just getting underway. WE Global members are well poised to help their local economic development, foreign investment, and trade initiatives to connect with the diaspora communities within their region.

During the 2016 election, the Rust Belt was a region where an anti-globalization message resonated with voters. As an organization that focuses on bringing immigrants into the region, have you seen any change, positively or negatively, in the wake of the election?

As previously mentioned, immigrants are moving to

Rust Belt cities and metros and most of the regions are experiencing immigration growth over the last five years at rates stronger than the national average. Few, if any, of the WE Global members are experiencing any form of organized opposition to their efforts and, in fact, the vast majority enjoy support from their local mayors, city councils, county commissions, and other elected officials.

Certainly, there are some who believe that immigrants are destroying America and taking jobs away (something that is suggested by the fact that Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania voted for Trump when they had supported Democratic presidential candidates in the past). But those statewide votes represent a large margin of difference between votes from suburban and rural areas compared to urban and inner ring suburbs. Moreover, many may feel that federal immigration and homeland security laws need to be reformed, but have a more positive feeling about new immigrant neighbors in their community.

In fact, most WE Global members report experiencing increased numbers of donors since the first travel ban Executive Order, as well as increased media attention. Little of it has been negative towards the immigrant economic development agenda.

In today's political climate, has there been any pushback at the state or federal levels to immigrant-friendly policies initiated at the local level? Has it become more difficult to convince immigrants that America is an inclusive nation?

The election and the federal policies sought through Executive Orders—as well as the various leaked draft orders and media coverage of the Trump administration and the current Congress—have made America a less welcoming place and this has had a negative impact on local economies. Early survey research

Steve Tobocman has spearheaded Global Detroit since 2009 and has played a leadership role in creating, growing, and managing the Welcoming Economies (WE) Global Network at Welcoming America. For the past 20 years, Steve has launched innovative nonprofit enterprises in community development, economic development, politics, and other arenas. In addition to his leadership in the nonprofit sphere, from 2003-2008, Steve served as a State Representative from Detroit and ended his term as the Majority Floor Leader, the second-ranking position in the Michigan House of Representatives.



indicates that international student applications to U.S. universities are down 40 percent, while anecdotally the numbers are much greater. (Again, this is a \$32.8 billion annual export product of the United States). International tourism declines are estimated to cost the U.S. economy another \$18 billion.

In Detroit, there have been incidents where a recent startup company has paused its launch while the Muslim immigrant owner considers the viability of moving his family to Canada. Local realtors have reported that immigrant professionals have walked away from home purchases—deciding that returning to their home countries was a better pathway than pursuing a life in America post-Trump.

Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

The Welcoming Economies Global Network represents some of the most innovative and important economic and community development initiatives in America. Its members have come to the shared belief that immigrants can help power Rust Belt cities and economies and have developed insights and innovative programs independently, only to later realize that other communities are pursuing similar efforts. The Network is at the forefront of some of the most creative and impactful programs to revitalize urban neighborhoods and spark regional growth.

Branding Vilnius

Darius Udrys

Vilnius is a charming, not-so-small European capital (population: c. 680,000) with a burgeoning tech economy and a UNESCO-listed Old Town nestled among the green fields and woodlands of Lithuania. As I sometimes like to joke when returning from points west through Poland, where the road to the Lithuanian border takes one through dense primeval forests: “Trust me, there is a country back here.”

Not that many people know this. For decades, Lithuania was literally not on the map. Though the U.S. policy of not recognizing the annexation of the Baltic countries by the USSR was significant in policy circles, the country rarely showed up on conventional maps—until 1990, that is, when Lithuania's independence was reestablished. Growing up as a Lithuanian-American in the United States, I remember having to work pretty hard to convince classmates that there is, in fact, such a country: “Trust me, it's just not on the map.”

Even today, simple name recognition remains a challenge for Lithuania as well as its capital, Vilnius. And, in addition to all the ordinary issues that make place branding a challenge, the city and the country both have an additional disadvantage to overcome. Various stereotypes associated with East European-ness (not many of them flattering) are still the first thing many people think of even if they know the place names “Vilnius” and “Lithuania.” Thankfully, most of these old stereotypes do not apply, as anyone who has visited will attest.

And yet, our own feelings about our recent past and associated stereotypes, and our desire to shape an appealing contemporary identity of which we can be proud still too often lead us to glom onto

nationalist tropes more suited to self-affirmation than communication with a broader, global audience. Tourists and businesspeople may find it interesting that Lithuania was the largest state in Europe five centuries ago, but this isn't likely to inspire them in the way it inspires many of us. Yet this factoid still features prominently in presentations to foreign audiences, often at the cost of things that might be more relevant and appealing. As we know, one of the most important tasks when it comes to successful branding and marketing is to make sure you are communicating with your target audience about things that matter to them.

Fleeing “Eastern-European-ness” in its own way, Lithuania's Baltic counterpart, Estonia, tries to brand itself as something of a cousin to our Nordic neighbors across the Baltic Sea. For Estonians, who share cultural and linguistic similarities with the Finns, this is perhaps not as much of a stretch as it is when some Lithuanian nation-branders suggest we hop on the bandwagon and

Even today, simple name recognition remains a challenge for Lithuania as well as its capital, Vilnius.

rebrand Lithuania as “Nordic” too. This is understandable as a “quick fix” to a marketing problem (“Made in Lithuania,” alas, is not yet a major selling point, so some of our exports are successfully repackaged as “Made in Norway”). But, while Nordic values and culture certainly have much to recommend them and Nordic cooperation has been a boon for us, it is simply not plausible to pitch Lithuania as “Nordic” in any real or meaningful sense of the term. Nor is place branding primarily about labeling. It's much deeper than a label or logo. It is about our core values and how we communicate them.

So what are the values of Vilnius?

It took the informal volunteer advisory group “Brand for Vilnius,” a group I was asked by Mayor

Remigijus Šimašius to lead, about a year to develop, define, and refine the answer. We invited our city's top marketing specialists as well as expatriates who have made a home for themselves here to a series of deliberations on these questions. This diverse group included Vilnians with communications experience and expertise; government, business, and civil society leaders; tourism and business development experts; and other interested parties. Bringing relevant stakeholders and interested parties into the process from the outset proved key to the necessary insights and buy-in for the direction we would take. Luckily, we already had a detailed analysis in hand that was commissioned by the previous mayor, Artūras Zuokas (of viral car-crushing video fame), and identified many of the characteristics of Vilnius that both residents and visitors value. Luckily, both mayors understood the importance of place branding to the success of the city, and so, importantly, work on developing the city's brand is continuing in a consistent and coherent way.

Those Vilnius Values, reduced to five, were defined as follows:

1. **fast and open** (especially when it comes to starting and doing business, FinTech licensing, getting online and connected, and navigating what is an extremely compact capital city where travel takes minutes, not hours; openness also encompasses our traditions of tolerance and multicultural heritage that we aim to cultivate),
2. **green and clean** (nearly half of the city is green space, with clean air and water, and you're never more than a few steps from nature),
3. **livable and lovable** (a cozy, safe, and affordable city that is ninth in the world for work-life balance, according to Business Insider), where:
4. **old is new** (our Old Town is alive and buzzing with locals and visitors alike), and:
5. **a little bit quirky** (that's shorthand for our particular, not to say peculiar, artistic sensibility and general outlook on things that makes our city so captivating and charming).

After additional study, we now know that among those who have heard of Vilnius, our artistic and cultural offerings are major attractions, and not just for tourists. Talent and business also want to be in a city that is

more than just an economy. As Aristotle once wrote, "The city comes into existence for the sake of life, but it continues to exist for the sake of the good life."

So what is that "good life?" It is more than economics and is highly dependent on culture—much like the "added value" we expect our businesses to increasingly create. A recent KPMG report on magnet cities indicates that the key demographic a city must attract to be viable—so-called "young value creators"—expect the city to reflect their concerns about sustainability and the environment, offer diverse opportunities for physical fitness and outdoor pursuits, and artisanal food, drinks, and cocktails, as well as strong neighborhood and civic networks. We also know they use multiple electronic devices simultaneously, so a fast and resilient IT infrastructure is important. Luckily, we can honestly say Vilnius scores well on almost all of these measures, with civic and neighborhood networks needing the most work.

Experiences and the good emotions they generate are key to our strategy as we move forward with branding Vilnius and promoting business, tourism, and talent attraction. It's not just tourists who are looking for good emotions and memorable experiences. Business leaders whose companies are locating and expanding offices in Vilnius tell us that, while a competitive business and regulatory environment is important, it is hardly sufficient to attract the kind of business and talent they want. Business and talent need to feel welcome and taken care of. Who doesn't want to feel they belong? And, at the end of the day, like anyone else, they are looking for a place with a vibrant cultural scene where an evening out is a pleasant experience.

Experiences are key. We want people not only to come see Vilnius (and then cross it off their list), but to really experience and feel it, to fall in love with it in a way that will keep them coming back. And love is usually not about facts or arguments. Facts are dry, technical things, and it's rarely the case that someone can be persuaded by argument to fall in love. As a result, we use facts and arguments secondarily, sparingly, and only to support our values and the emotions we hope Vilnius inspires. Values come first. Because values are what really communicate who we are and what makes us attractive. Now, this does not mean embellishment or exaggeration, neither of which is a winning long-term strategy. Of course, we highlight the best our city has to offer, but the rule at



View of the old town from St. Bernadrinu Church—Photo courtesy of Darius Udryš.

Go Vilnius—the agency I lead—is that no one, having seen and acted on an invitation from us, should feel misled after arriving here.

Marketing hyperbole is old hat anyway, and not even very effective any more. We are down-to-earth, realistic, and sincere in our communication about our values and what they mean to those of us already here or who have already had a taste of them. With rare exceptions, almost no place is the "greatest" anything (okay, our public Wi-Fi really is the fastest in the world) and it's not our goal to persuade others that Vilnius will make all their dreams come true. No place is everything to everybody, and no place is without flaws. Especially in today's media-saturated world, the people we want to attract are too sophisticated for exaggerated claims and hyperbole. We focus on identifying and reaching those who already like or will probably like what we are or are fast becoming. And we warmly invite them to come experience the Vilnius we know and love. As the famous quip goes: "For those who love this sort of thing, this is the sort of thing they will love."

And love it we do. According to a recent Eurostat survey, 98 percent of Vilnians are satisfied with life in Vilnius. This in itself is good advertising for the city. We maintain that frame as we promote Vilnius, talking about what it is that makes it so livable and lovable in our own eyes. In short: a "pull" rather than a "push" strategy. From what we hear, visitors are not disappointed and interest in Vilnius is growing.

Of course, we must do our best to deliver on our promise of hospitality. While Vilnians are generally friendly people who are growing more open and cosmopolitan as Vilnius booms and the past recedes, we are somewhat slow in shaking off our stoicism when it comes to public displays of emotion (conditioned, no doubt, by our turbulent history). This can sometimes appear to visitors as unfriendliness. Go Vilnius is working closely with our city's tourism department as well as our national tourism agency to raise awareness of this as well as standards of hospitality and friendliness among service staff, in particular. Go Vilnius is directly responsible for our city's Tourism Information Centers as well as the Vilnius

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Convention Bureau. Both are first points of contact for many visitors and businesses, so having them under the Go Vilnius umbrella makes it simpler to promote friendly service.

Obviously, the major challenge when it comes to place branding and marketing is that the agency or institution responsible for it hardly ever really controls the “product.” Most of the influence we have over its development, as well as the legal and political framework within which it takes place, is indirect. Changes in legislation, a dip in the economy, bureaucratic obstacles, and myriad other factors can easily outweigh the impact of our efforts and even undermine our messaging if reality doesn’t live up to the values we communicate.

Making a difference requires both political

and social savvy to exert the necessary “soft” influence when it comes to working effectively with the municipality as well as the large group of stakeholders and ordinary citizens whose behavior will, to a large extent, determine how others experience our city. We do not currently have the resources for a large-scale

domestic campaign along the lines of India’s “The Guest is God” campaign. It was launched domestically with the goal of improving hospitality in tandem with the well-known and highly successful external marketing campaign “Incredible India.” We do, however, participate and promote

various initiatives that partners like Friendly Vilnius (an organization that emphasizes LGBT-friendliness, disabled access, and other aspects of hospitality), Hospitable Vilnius (which provides training as well as awards that recognize our most hospitable establish-

The major challenge when it comes to place branding and marketing is that the agency or institution responsible for it hardly ever really controls the “product.”



A hot air balloon above Vilnius’ old town—Photo courtesy of Darius Udryš

ments), and others conduct annually. We have a team of trained volunteer greeters who are out and about in the city during the summer helping visitors and being good ambassadors for our city in general. Similar volunteer ambassadors help us with outreach to the meetings industry, and a board of volunteer advisors helps us understand the needs of businesses and talent. The volunteer group “Brand for Vilnius” continues to serve as a focus group for our branding and marketing ideas and efforts.

It’s important to establish multiple channels that engage the public and provide valuable and necessary feedback that keeps us attuned to realities.

We work intensively with politicians at both the municipal and national level as well as business leaders and business and civic associations to push for improvements so that Vilnius lives up to its brand promise. Go Vilnius is responsible not only for city branding and marketing, but for working directly with businesses and talent choosing to locate in Vilnius—to make them feel at home here, and to help them with any issues they may have. This can be particularly challenging when it comes to navigating bureaucratic procedures (especially with agencies that do not answer to the municipality, such as migration). Go Vilnius has dedicated professionals who can help. While we cannot solve every problem, the knowledge that there is an agency to turn to for assistance and



A view down Stikliu Street—Photo courtesy of Darius Udryš

guidance is important in and of itself.

Our task—not only putting Vilnius “on the map” but also making it a world-class magnet for business, talent, and tourism—is by no means an easy one. Our goals are ambitious and our budget modest. Defining our values, getting our strategy right, and staying focused on targeted communication with our three key audiences is paramount. As Vilnius Mayor Šimašius likes to say, most people when they come to Vilnius for the first time are pleasantly surprised. Our job is to make it less of a surprise and more of an expectation that good things are happening in Vilnius.

(Endnotes)

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-IWN0FmcIU>

Darius Udryš, Ph.D., was the founder of Go Vilnius – an agency chartered by the city of Vilnius to develop the Lithuanian capital’s brand and attract business, talent, and tourism. He served as its director until 2017. Dr. Udryš is also a founding partner at Neue Unica branding agency. His experience includes work with corporate clients and in broadcast journalism (Radio Free Europe and Lithuanian State Radio), as well as development and communications work with NGOs and higher education institutions. Dr. Udryš holds a Ph.D. in political science from Claremont Graduate University and teaches at Vilnius University.





Photo by Doug, Flickr Creative Commons

Positioning Brisbane as a New World City: an Interview with John Aitken

Interviewed by Matthew L. Essex

John Aitken is the former CEO of Brisbane marketing—Brisbane’s economic development board. Public Diplomacy Magazine Staff Editor Matthew Essex interviewed Aitken over e-mail to discuss Brisbane’s efforts to establish itself as a global city and an international tourist destination.

PD Magazine: Can you explain to our readers what the tagline “Australia’s New World City” means, and how it can be used to promote the city to foreign audiences?

John Aitken: The New World City term is one that Brisbane adopted because it perfectly encapsulates what our city represents and aspires to be.

New world cities have certain traits in common such as affordability, agility, livability, and safety. They are mid-sized, benefit from efficient infrastructure, are recognized for expert specializations, and offer quality education and employment opportunities.

A key element of being a new world city is demonstrating leadership in areas of global importance. That’s why our city’s blueprint for economic growth—the Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan—identifies a range of industry sectors that offer the greatest opportunity for international competitiveness.

These sectors include: knowledge-based and corporate services; accommodation and visitor economy; higher and international education; energy and resources; creative and digital; property development

and construction; advanced manufacturing; and food and agribusiness.

Brisbane aspires to be a place that supports industries that trade globally, are driven by high-tech innovation and research, and deliver the products and services that the world needs. Our new world city identity is therefore the basis for all the different ways in which we promote Brisbane to foreign audiences.

In 2014, Brisbane hosted the G20 Summit. Would you say that put the city back on the world stage after being “forgotten” since the Expo in 1988?

The G20 Summit was an enormous opportunity for Brisbane to demonstrate to the world that we were a globally orientated, modern, and welcoming new world city. It was arguably the most successful hosting of

a G20 Summit, and that came down to the different approach that Brisbane took.

While in previous years the G20 had been an exclusive event for leaders and diplomats, Brisbane worked hard to make it inclusive for the local community, business, and industry.

Alongside the G20, Brisbane hosted the inaugural Global Café. This initiative brought together 75 of the world’s brightest minds to speak on important issues around improving human life, future cities, powering the economy, unlocking the opportunities of the digital age, and exploring the emerging frontiers

A key element of being a new world city is demonstrating leadership in areas of global importance.

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of tourism. The Global Café social media hashtag was the number one hashtag in Australia during the event, proving the impact of Brisbane's inclusive approach.

With so much of the world seeing Australia's cities as either Sydney or Melbourne, how do you promote the fact Brisbane does exist, and is one of the world's fastest growing cities?

Sydney and Melbourne are globally recognized in their own right. The world doesn't need another Sydney or Melbourne, but it does need a Brisbane. This is why we are focused on growing world-class industries underpinned by technology advancements, which produce products and services that the world needs.

One example is the mining and resources industry. Queensland is renowned for its bountiful natural resources including coal, base metals, and coal seam gas. As the closest eastern seaboard capital city to Asia, Brisbane is perfectly positioned to capitalize on the world's growing demand for these resources and has become a hub for company headquarters and expertise in mining equipment, technology, and services.

Increasing tourism to Brisbane is also important. In 2016, international visitors to the city reached an all-time high, and we want to keep building on this by developing tourism infrastructure, attracting major events, and promoting our thriving urban environment and surrounding natural assets.

Another point of difference for Brisbane is our long-term approach to driving economic growth, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region. This is supported through Brisbane-run initiatives including the Asia-Pacific Cities Summit and Mayors' Forum, the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, and the Asia-Pacific Screen Awards, which all strengthen Brisbane's position as Australia's new world city and a leader in the region.

Brisbane is home to the Asia-Pacific Screen Awards. How does this bringing together of filmmakers, culture, and the city showcase Brisbane to a vast audience in the Asia-Pacific Region?

Managing the Asia-Pacific Screen Awards and bring-

ing together hundreds of the region's most respected names in film is an incredible honor and responsibility.

Filmmaking is one of the most powerful storytelling mediums and by hosting the Awards, Brisbane takes the lead in promoting cultural diversity and showcasing the importance of the region to global prosperity.

The Awards certainly shine a spotlight on Brisbane, but the real value lies in the opportunity it presents to align with the future success of the region—culturally, socially, and economically. In this respect, APSA is about more than building the Brisbane film industry, it's about building the Asia-Pacific industry.

One way for a city to attract global attention is through foreign investment and partnerships. What has Brisbane done to compete with not only Asian cities, but other Australian cities to attract investment, businesses, and to stimulate growth?

Brisbane is a proven leader in our approach to attracting foreign investment. In the past two years our city's foreign direct investment strategy was ranked number one in the Asia-Pacific and fourth in the world by fDi Magazine—a division of the London-based Financial Times.

Brisbane's foreign investment strategy is founded on the strategic needs of the city, and is based on visibility, authenticity, and certainty.

We do this by working with investors, local industry, and government to make investment opportunities visible, build partnerships, create procurement opportunities, and align with incentive programs.

The city has successfully implemented several fixed-term incentive schemes that support the growth of strategic sectors including hotel investment, purpose-built student accommodation, and more recently, aged care retirement living.

The city's hotel investment incentive has helped to deliver a significant increase in quality accommodation in Brisbane, with 18 new hotel developments ranging from 3.4–5 stars opening doors since 2013, and another nine under construction.



Photo by Andrew Sutherland, Flickr Creative Commons to access employment opportunities and pathways.

How has the University of Queensland and others, including Griffith, attracted such a diverse and intelligent group of global students who see studying in Brisbane as an investment in their education?

Brisbane is home to three of Australia's top universities, which are also ranked within the top 300 globally: the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, and Griffith University.

These and other world-leading institutions attract students from across the globe due to their reputation for providing high quality education and training with access to some of the world's top thought leaders and research projects.

In addition, international students are attracted to Brisbane because it is a safe, secure, and friendly city where they can enjoy a high quality of life and go

The world doesn't need another Sydney or Melbourne, but it does need a Brisbane.

Attracting international students is a key element of Brisbane's new world city strategy. Brisbane boasts over 75,000 international student enrollments annually and these students are critical to diversifying our community and economy.

Aside from taking a leading role in nurturing and developing global talent, as a city we are also

hopeful that international students will go on to establish their careers in Brisbane or keep connections with our city in some way.

What is your message for an American considering a holiday to Australia, who might consider Brisbane, but see it as less "thrilling" than the Great Barrier Reef, the Outback, or Sydney?

Brisbane is a destination for holiday makers seeking

an authentic Australian experience.

In Brisbane, visitors will discover a thriving and progressive multicultural metropolis that is steadily building its reputation as Australia's new world city while keeping its quintessential warmth and welcoming spirit.

Brisbane is an open and easily accessible city serviced by one of Australia's fastest growing airports. We have a flourishing, eclectic bar and dining scene, unique urban precincts, quality accommodation options, a rich diversity of leisure experiences, and some of the friendliest locals in the world.

While Brisbane is a destination of its own, the city is also an ideal gateway to some of Queensland and Australia's most iconic natural wonders, including the Great Barrier Reef, surf beaches, idyllic sand islands, outback landscapes, and Heritage-listed rainforests.

I would invite any holiday maker to come and discover everything happening in Brisbane now.

Being centrally located between the Americas and Asia, how does Brisbane brand itself in so many diverse and different locations in the Pacific?

As a long-haul destination, we are mindful that Brisbane must present a compelling proposition for travelers. Whether it's from a leisure, business, or education perspective, much of the destination positioning around Brisbane focuses on our iconic attributes and the life-changing experiences that are unique to the city.

John Aitken is the former chief executive officer of Brisbane Marketing, the city's economic development board. Prior to joining Brisbane Marketing, John was general manager events and marketing for Australia's oldest event tradition the Sydney Royal Easter Show. He is currently the managing director of Inspiring Cities, an international consultancy providing city governments, investors, asset owners, precincts and districts, operators and businesses insights and advice on how to compete and trade globally. He is a member of a number of prominent boards and committees including: TTF (Tourism and Transport Forum) Advisory Board member and Chairman TTF Business Events Panel, former chairman of Australia Trade Coast; and former board member of Australian Association of Convention Bureau, Asia Pacific Cities Summit Organising Committee, Brisbane City Council Sister Cities Advisory Group and Queensland Exploration Council.



Where do you see your international marketing working the best, and where do you need the most improvement?

The success of Brisbane's destination positioning can be seen in the areas which we are already globally recognized such as higher education, sustainability, medical research, creative and digital capabilities, talent attraction, natural resources, and tourism.

The greatest opportunities lie in building our competitive advantage across a diversity of growth sectors: corporate services; visitor economy; international education; energy and resources; creative and digital; property and construction; advanced manufacturing; and food and agribusiness.

Brisbane's focus will remain on strengthening these growth sectors, facilitating collaboration between them on a local level, and supporting them to compete globally.

101 for Amman

An Interview with Nabeel Abu-Ata

Interviewed by Maria Lattouf Abou Atmi

In 2013, Nabeel Abu-Ata ran for mayor of Amman—a position that is appointed rather than elected. This act, along with his larger 101 for Amman organization, was designed to instill a sense of citizenship and create a cohesive identity within the Jordanian capital. *Public Diplomacy Magazine's* Submissions Editor, Maria Lattouf Abou Atmi, e-mailed with Nabeel to discuss the larger implications of this movement.

PD Magazine: In 2011, you launched 101 for Amman, a movement to tackle and resolve some of the city's major shortcomings and issues. Can you tell us a little more about why you created 101 for Amman and your goals for the initiative?

Nabeel Abu-Ata: I launched 101 for Amman back in 2011 coinciding with the outbreak of the Arab Spring. In Jordan, reform was imminent, and I realized that the fundamental protection against calamity in any healthy community lies in consecrating the concept of rights, starting from personal freedoms up to equal rights to receive services in the community and rights to participate in the decision-making process.

With that in mind, I simply decided in 2011 to publicly announce my candidacy for the vacant (un-elected) mayor post just 27 days before the prime

minister was about to appoint the "approved" candidate for the position. I started this process by creating a fictional online election campaign. My message was short and clear: "My name is Nabeel Abu-Ata, and I am running for mayor"—just like the western politicians do it with their 30-second campaign ads. I, however, presented a 4.5-minute video. Unleashing my passion for filmmaking, I wrote, produced, and directed the short video addressing a number of issues that I believe call for our engagement as concerned citizens to reform the way we live and do things in the city. The video lists a number of problems that the people of Amman face on a daily basis; simple issues that irk the locals—issues that we the people who live in the city can do something about. Whom do we hold accountable and why are we apathetic towards our city when we can enable growth and change?

When I was asked about the reason that made me want to run for mayor, I always answered that I have 101 reasons. This wasn't only a figure of speech. I took it so seriously, and inked 101 actions that I pledged to take—had I been an "elected" mayor—in order to effect change in the city. One hundred and one reasons as catalysts of change. One hundred and one reasons embodying all the pressing issues and shortcomings that our city suffers from, and from which we pledge to end them and seek collective community solutions. I categorized them and published them, in laymen terms, on a portal—www.amman101.com—declaring them as my

Borders around countries will not define people anymore, rather they will be defined by the urban settings in the cities in which they live.

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doctrine for a better administration of the city.

This video and website, which capitalized on functions of social media, went viral online on the first day as an effect of people sharing them, not by paid advertising. They became an eye-opening public forum instigating constructive dialogue towards enhancing the standard of living, and enticing all citizens to take on their responsibilities and embody the role of “elected” mayors.

Amman is a modern city surrounded by ancient ruins, which seems to reflect your ideas on its political workings. Why was the direct election of a mayor (rather than the current system, which appoints a mayor) such an important part of your platform? Why did you decide to launch a mayoral campaign in 2013?

My campaign was intended to provoke the sentiments of Ammanis towards change considering that the mayor in Amman, unlike all other Jordanian and international cities, is appointed rather than elected. One third of the council members are also appointed; the rest are selected through direct provincial elections.

The intention of 101 for Amman is to empower the people of Amman and engage them in the decision-making processes in their city and to gather the people of Amman to voice their opinions in a structured manner. However, to answer your question, it is unfortunate that no more than 9 percent of the voters participate to elect the two-thirds of the current municipality council. Such voter turnout is by far the lowest percentage among the cities of Jordan and, according to international records, amongst the lowest percentage in the world. And this stems from the fact that citizens believe that all important matters are decided by the mayor and not the two-thirds elected segment of the council; hence, they are apathetic about participation and frustrated about the issue of lacking a “voice.”

It is said that the opposite of love is not hate but apathy. And despite the great patriotism that my countrymen have for Jordan, the low turnout at the ballot boxes reflect exactly the current state of apathy towards the city that we must shake off our backs to start the new feeling of caring, belonging, and own-

ership. Thus, and in order for the voices of Ammanis to be heard, I thought that we must take action in a collective manner, and it was essential to find a way to attract people’s attention with untraditional publicity—the mayor candidacy served the purpose well.

101 for Amman was providing the answer to the ownership question by enticing everyone to embody the role of a mayor in the city, and not wait to elect one. We are owners and not temporary tenants, and this is the recipe to turn this city back to greatness: a position enjoyed historically across all civilizations that passed by Amman, to which the ancient ruins stand as living proof.

You describe your movement as an act of “culture-jamming.” What exactly did you mean by that, and how can Amman 101 help reshape the identity of Amman’s citizens?

This courageous move as described by many, in Middle-Eastern standards, was seen as a daring challenge of the status quo. While the Arab Spring winds were waning away from Jordan by 2013, many of the opposition forces as well as the pro status quo incremental reformists united behind my discourse, which turned into a culture jamming act that left people wondering why on earth the city mayor is not elected, and what exactly are the city council’s jurisdictions and what is the real potential of the city. Is depriving people of the right to elect a mayor and the entirety of the city council a statement meant to undermine the intelligence or the preparedness of the Ammani citizens? I called my act “culture jamming” because it leveraged media tools; however, a more precise term for this action is “disruption,” and this is exactly what the movement has caused to the status quo in the city. Citizens who interacted with us started asking questions about rights, living standards, accountability, innovation, potential, excellence, and culture, and they influenced others to do so as well.

Cities around the world are finding it more important than ever to connect and work on both local and global issues. How important is it for Amman to communicate with other cities to share best practices and experiences?



Sunrise over Amman reveals a mix of old and new architecture—Photo by Andrew Moore, Flickr Creative Commons.

Resilience is a universal language among many cities in the world facing similar challenges in the areas of affordable housing, gentrification, exponential urbanization, transportation, environment protection, population growth, refugee influx, and job opportunity creation. It is estimated that 66 percent of the world’s population will be living in urban areas by 2050. This global trend is calling for cities to learn from each other’s small successes in confronting the big challenges, which is equally as important as adopting best practices.

With this growth of population in urban areas, it is the convention now to consider cities as the economic blocks of civilization and not countries. Borders around countries will not define people anymore, rather they will be defined by the urban settings in the cities in which they live. The geographical proximity isn’t going to matter in inter-trade as much as cities’ transportation and communication infrastructure, technological innovation, energy independence, and freedom of mobility.

It is essential for cities to become smart communities to maintain a healthy expansion to accommodate for the rapid urban and population growth. Thus, learning from each other is crucial given that the answers to most challenges are becoming applicable and adoptable across the globe, particularly when the gaps in the social behavior and customs of the citizens in different cities are lessening by the hour.

On that note, do you view Amman’s problems in the context of larger Jordanian or regional issues, or do you see Amman as a global city whose problems are more closely related to those facing other large metropolises around the world?

Many people view Amman’s challenges as exceptional, particularly when considering the continuous refugee influx that is causing an unnatural growth of Amman’s population and expansion of its borders, as well as the difficulty of conducting any proper future

planning that relies on organically extrapolated growth statistics. However, this is not totally exceptional and Ammanis must admit that these conditions are ubiquitous and can be seen in China, Western Europe, and many cities in the Americas.

Having said that, it doesn't mean that challenges facing cities are all equal in magnitude or exist because of the same root causes. By that I mean that the economic situation in Jordan is different than elsewhere, and the geopolitical factors that determine the medium we live in are specific to Jordan and its surroundings, and consequently Amman feels this heat. There is no value to any rhetoric that discusses the city's development without considering the diversity, complexity, and competitiveness of Amman's economy—taking into account the revealed comparative advantage of its locally produced goods and what know-how the citizens possess and share with the world.

Based on the above, I believe some of the deep problems in Amman lie in the political will to affect change, and the capabilities and courage of the local government to introduce innovative and investment-intensive solutions to solve problems, diversify the economy, and empower the citizens with distinctive means to raise living standards over time. In this regard, Amman shares the same pain felt in smaller and developing countries' cities; however, on most urban challenges, comparing metropolises is very relevant.

Are there any cities, either in the region or elsewhere, that you view as models for the development and future growth of Amman?

Every city has something we can learn from and aspire to, and a great innovation to adopt. But I am of the school of thought that each city should develop and grow according to its own citizens' desires based on a plan that its own citizens establish collectively, and not to simply mimic another city's model in its

entirety.

Of course, there are great success stories that one needs to learn from other cities. As a global citizen, I like to expand the horizon beyond the region. I like to look at Medellín's innovative transportation solution in interlacing the city's fractured mountainous neighborhoods, among many other things that can be learned from that particular city.

I view Los Angeles' contrast of its "diversity without adversity," combined with the division between the wealthy and the unfortunate, as a model worth studying and learning from while trying to build bridges in the not very harmonious social fabric of Amman. As a metropolitan city, Los Angeles also faces challenges of rapid population growth and scarcity of water, making integration of newcomers to the city difficult and relevant.

The story of how hosting the Olympics or a major global event in a city can contribute to creating a better transportation system, dealing with long-standing infrastructure problems, and boosting an economy are lessons to be learned from Rio, London, and Seoul.

I can learn from examples about business efficiency in landlocked cities such as Johannesburg, and how they can strive for economic growth—or how Madrid and Prague manage a strong tourism economy despite being far from the ocean.

There are many other lessons that can be learned from small or big cities that might not have best practices, but that make serious and innovative attempts at proactive crime rate reduction and law-enforcement tactics such as in Karachi, Pakistan or Gurgaon, India; or others dealing with creative poverty alleviation approaches such as in Yiwu, China; or in civic engagement, culture, and arts society development such as in Vilnius, Lithuania; or in smart city solutions such as in Zaragoza, Spain. So to answer your question, I don't see one model in one city, but rather many best practices and new innovative ideas and endeavors, each of which can be reviewed and localized to fit the parameters of Amman's growth aspiration, citizens' capabilities, and spirit. The list never ends, and each idea that can be introduced with

the citizens' consensus will play a role in the city's development and growth.

In the Arab world, Amman is a key player in discussions around refugees, Islamic culture, and green growth. What potential do you see for the city in this area?

I see a missed opportunity on the refugee issue. The city's policies are governed by the central government's policies on giving work permits for refugees. I have hoped that policy makers in Amman would turn this refugee challenge into an opportunity by creating incubators for different industries on the peripheries of the city, and other incubators for artists, performers, and entrepreneurs in the center, allowing refugees to work and transfer know-how essential for the city's growth. To be honest, I think the knowledge transfer and brain gain from refugees that could support economic growth is a missed opportunity.

On the Islamic culture question, I see a lot of potential when it comes to Islamic heritage sites. Amman is surrounded by Islamic palaces, castles, and shrines that are fine examples of Arab and Islamic architecture, and the tombs of many of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) companions, some of which have been cited in the holy Quran. Further, Prophet Mohammad mentioned Amman when describing heaven when he said: "My Pool (in heaven) stretches for the distance like that which is between Aden and Amman of Al-Balqa." This is an untapped opportunity to start a specialized Islamic tourism trail, to which Amman can serve as the logistics and hospitality center. H.M. King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein launched the "Amman Message." Its goal was to clarify the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam—seeking to declare what Islam is and what it is not, and what actions represent it and what actions do not. Hence, Amman is considered the center of and the real representation of modern Islamic culture. This, in addition to the closeness of the local dialect to standard Arabic, can turn the city into an educational hub, attracting students who wish to study Arabic from all over the world. There is a great opportunity there for the city, and whatever I mentioned on the Islamic heritage sites apply to the numerous biblical sites and churches of Christianity surrounding Amman.

As for green growth, this is a domain that Amman can boast about. We have one of the best policy frameworks backed by a well-studied national strategy on renewable energy, which has positioned Jordan as a major hub for foresighted energy policy in the region. Many businesses and households are turning to solar energy aiming to eliminate the electricity bills and reduce the carbon footprint. Jordan and Amman in particular are trendsetters in this domain that are bound to export such know-how to neighboring countries and the region.

If you were to be elected mayor today, what would your municipal foreign policy priorities be?

There are many twinning agreements signed with Amman that need to become effective. There are plenty of ideas and solutions that can be instantly localized and adopted, hence my policy would be to be ready for immediate adoption and implementation of select ideas in the city. There are also many resilience and co-existence lessons that Amman can teach other cities, so it will be a two-way policy aimed at promoting Amman as much as aspiring to learn from others. The municipal foreign policy will be to open up Amman for a real and unprecedented cultural exchange with as many cities around the world as possible; we should design programs to promote Amman as a tourist destination in itself, and not just an airport destination for Petra. We have what it takes to host regional and international conferences that would bring participants from all over the world. The priorities will be for Amman to become a central convention center, a touristic destination, and a cultural hub that hosts international festivities, sports and arts events, and exchanges all year long.

In the years since 101 for Amman was launched, you have earned a graduate degree in public administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government before returning to Amman. How has that experience shaped or reshaped your vision of 101 for Amman?

The experience at Harvard humbled me. It taught me

that change is not achieved by voicing an opinion, writing a paper, or delivering a speech. Harvard, with its tradition of excellence, served as an incubator for me to learn from professors and classmates who have struggled with similar problems clad in clothes of another country or time, and it taught me that embracing collective action on behalf of our communities should no longer be portrayed as the problem, but a necessary part of the solution. At Harvard, of all places, I learned the true meaning of an Arab proverb which states, “Only the tent pitched by your own hands will stand.” Indifference to the problems of those around us builds no tents. Apathy will break the ribs of our governments when we are in need of the strongest and deepest stakes bolted to the ground. My vision of democracy is to believe that a democratic government is only as strong as the leaders who fill those elected positions; if we as citizens don’t exercise leadership and mobilize communities then no one will. After earning this degree, my vision was reshaped to seek to affect change on the ground with real technical solutions that aim to touch the lives of people in communities instead of purely campaigning for an elected office.

What’s next for you and for your movement?

Technical solutions to existing problems need to come from the people who are advised by knowledgeable individuals and entities. 101 for Amman will focus more on a real social audit of the citizens—learning more about them, their demographics, habits, expenses, built environment, and challenges, as well as identifying the influencers, employers, and leaders amongst them. It is important to start a real districting

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exercise for the city to be determined based on the development needs of the people, and not based purely on geography. In my view, Amman is one city and its city council shouldn’t be elected or selected based on elections happening in small provinces. Instead, there should be a general election for the entire city, which will allow for the most competent individuals with a clear development agenda on issues relating to transportation, sanitation, city economic diversification, job creation, tourism attraction, energy conservation, environmental protection, and cultural rejuvenation. A city council that answers to the serious development needs of the city at large and improves each citizen’s life through a systematic change process that connects the neighborhoods would cause real transformation, instead of small and disconnected modifications around some of the provinces.

I will be looking for the next disruption activity along those lines, away from rhetoric and with an aspiration to lead the city and the Ammanis to become richer in all aspects.

Benjamin R. Barber (1939-2017) An Appreciation

By Nicholas J. Cull

Of the recent writing on the city as an emerging diplomatic actor, perhaps the most exciting was the 2013 work by political theorist Benjamin Barber, provocatively titled *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*. The book concluded by proposing that, given the inability of national leaders to respond to the challenges of an era in which, as Kofi Annan memorably noted, we face “problems without passports,” a Global Parliament of Mayors be established to pool experience of cities around the world and strengthen the practice of the one level of government which seemed to be capable of moving forward. Barber turned this proposal into a reality, chairing the first meeting of the Global Parliament of Mayors in London in September 2016. This important work and the follow-up book published this spring, *Cool Cities: Urban Sovereignty and the Fix for Global Warming*, made Ben Barber an obvious choice to be included in any discussion of city diplomacy.

As an early supporter of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and guest professor in the Master’s Program in Public Diplomacy at USC, Ben enthusiastically agreed to deliver a keynote at the City Diplomacy Conference in March 2017 and to be interviewed for inclusion here. Sadly, this was not to

be. As the conference drew close, Ben apologetically sent word of personal health difficulties. This turned out to be an aggressive cancer of the pancreas, which claimed his life just a couple of months later. In the absence of the planned interview with Ben, this appreciation is offered as both a tribute and a response to his final book.

Benjamin Barber was born in New York in 1939. His parents were both political and creative; his father was a leader in the Federal Theatre Project—one of the people behind Orson Welles’ famous Voodoo-themed production of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* in Harlem in 1936—while his mother wrote radio dramas. Barber inherited a flair for language, for dramatic delivery and an attention to

social justice, which took him first to a political science bachelor’s degree at Grinnell College, Iowa, and on to masters and PhD degrees in the same discipline at Harvard. He also studied in Switzerland and at the London School of Economics along the way. His specialization was in political theory, with an emphasis on democracy and, having secured a job teaching at Rutgers, he became a tireless advocate for and citizen of that field, launching and then editing the journal *Political Theory*. His early publications included a study of democratic practices in Switzerland. It was

Ben Barber’s final book, “Cool Cities,” returned to the great issues of his career: democracy, citizen-engagement, and solutions to the most profound challenges facing our future.



Benjamin Barber passed away on April 24, 2017—Photo courtesy of www.Benjaminbarber.org

characteristic of Barber to cast his net wide in search of inspiring models of political practice.

Barber's breakout academic work was *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Published in 1984, the book provided a vision of what democracy could be if citizens were truly built into its fabric. It inspired a generation of thinkers and many practitioners also, and turned Ben into a bona fide public intellectual. Barber regularly advised progressive politicians in the United States and further afield, including President Bill Clinton and presidential candidate Howard Dean. His eventual account of his experiences advising Clinton, *The Truth of Power: Intellectual Affairs in the Clinton White House*, is not wholly flattering to that administration. As the 1990s unfolded, Barber became alarmed by the emerging split between the world of consumer capitalism, riding high in the post-Cold War boom, and those who defined themselves in opposition to it. His book on the subject, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World*, became a best seller when first published in 1996 and was widely read in the aftermath of 9/11.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the backlash against civil liberties which followed prompted Barber to write *Fear's Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy in an Age of Interdependence*, but his first reaction was not solely to write but also to organize. He saw the antidote to both the politics of jihad and to the corrosive western love-affair with the unrestrained free market as being an acknowledgement of the way in which all people in the 21st century were profoundly interconnected. To mark and to celebrate this world of interconnection, in 2002, he launched an annual conference around the observance of "Interdependence Day," scheduled to fall around the same time as the September 11 anniversary. The annual celebration included a ceremonial signing of a declaration of interdependence and recognition of prominent advocates of global social justice. The series of conferences was especially strong in the field of cultural interdependence, bringing together figures from theatre and dance as well as the liberal arts. Mentorship of emerging scholars and advocates was a major element of the proceedings. Host cities included Amsterdam, Dublin, London, Mexico City, and Los Angeles. The series eventually lapsed as Barber's attention switched to the Global Parliament of Mayors, but the network of transnational thought and practice lives on.

Ben Barber's role at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy began around the time of the launch of the master's program in 2005. His vision of global interdependence was in step with that of the founding director, Josh Fouts, who took part in some of the early interdependence gatherings. USC Annenberg was a partner in the interdependence day meeting in LA in September 2012. The students welcomed Professor Barber's regular guest lectures when he came to town to visit his LA-based son and his family. He was especially ready to guide student research work. It was a pleasure to host him after the working day was done. I have a happy memory of his spring 2007 visit, dazzling students with a discourse on the perils of consumer society during the day, then jumping straight in the car for dinner at my home in the evening, and finishing the day by reading a Thomas the Tank Engine story to my then-four year old—and doing it all with irrepressible enthusiasm. For me his articulation of interdependence and his choice to seek to express that through culture and the performing arts was a vital contribution, which, when applied to public diplomacy, provided a greater goal over a single nation's interest. Public diplomacy has to be more than simply advancing the narrow ends of whichever international actor happens to be picking up the bill for the work.

Ben Barber's final book, *Cool Cities*, returned to the great issues of his career: democracy, citizen-engagement, and solutions to the most profound challenges facing our future. While the book is thematically linked to *If Mayors Ruled the World*, its tone had shifted. In this book, he characterizes the nation state not simply as dysfunctional and unproductive but as being the problem. This is a book for the era of the Trump administration, the Brexit vote, and multiple other national level follies, which Barber enumerates as he goes. More than this, Barber does not simply present local democracy as a good idea, he articulates a rights-based theory of sovereignty by which, because of the failure of the nation state to protect its citizens (in this case from the dangers of climate change), the social contract has been violated. In this circumstance, sovereignty reverts to the cities, which, he notes, comprise humanity's original polity. He argues that citizens have a right and a duty to take control of their destiny. Barber supplements his appeal to rights with an appeal to simple justice. He notes that some rights of self-determination must come from

the fact that 80 percent or more of global GDP originates in cities.

Having made his case for the sovereignty of the city, Barber writes with an infectious enthusiasm about ways in which some of the great cities of the world are embracing the role of political actor. Since the publication of *If Mayors Ruled the World*, he has acquired some terrific new examples of city action, like the tenure of Sadiq Kahn in London or Anne Hidalgo in Paris, to flesh out his argument. He enumerates the many networks that already link progressive cities committed to addressing environmental issues, including the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the Climate Alliance, and the European Union's Covenant of Mayors. There is much here to inspire, even if the technical mechanisms which Barber proposes to actually reduce carbon emissions are for the most part familiar.

Barber is clear on where things have gone wrong: the role of money in politics. In the United States, he blames the double whammy of Supreme Court decisions extending the protection of free speech to campaign contributions and then recognizing corporations as enjoying the same protections as individual citizens for the purposes of campaign finance. Barber is able to show how local democracy is flourishing regardless, with mayors earning mandates that allow decisive action against the preferences of corporate interests. However, one must presume that if the national level of politics declines that the forces of political distortion and vested interest will turn their attention to the succeeding institutions, whether cities or supranational bodies. There is an old anarchist joke often rendered as a graffito: "If voting changed anything they'd abolish it." The danger is that the hope in Barber's account may spring from a lag in vested interests—the "they" of the anarchist slogan—notic-

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BENJAMIN R. BARBER

author of *Jihad vs. McWorld*

IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD



Cover photo courtesy of www.Benjaminbarber.org

ing where best to exercise their efforts. The city-level battle for the climate is coming, and the cause of sanity and security will require both intellectual insight and organizational energy in order to prevail. We will face that battle without Benjamin Barber in person, but at least we have his words.

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