

Critical Approaches to Better Managing Urban Violence for a More Secure and Peaceful World

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Abstract

Urban violence is a multifaceted challenge facing cities worldwide, with significant social, economic, and political implications. While this reveals the extreme complexity of the phenomenon, it also prompts the need to identify a comprehensive implementation area that allows for “greater convergence between citizen security policies in their most traditional sense and other state policies, especially social policies”¹. Indeed, following UNDP’s account of citizen security as “not simply the reduction of crime, but a comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy for improving the quality of life of a population (...)”², addressing the issue of urban violence using citizen security as the core principle guiding the definition of policy objectives can allow cities to take advantage of the multi-causalities, intersectoralism and multi-level governance such a target area comprises. This recasts traditional urban planning as an “SDGs multiplier”³ and creates a “policy environment”⁴ that facilitates the advancement of key commitments both states and local governments have already subscribed to through the UN 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) respectively.

¹ UNDP, Analysis on innovation in citizen security and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. A perspective from the public policies and institutional management, 2020, pg. 23.

² UNDP, Issue Brief: Citizen Security. Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 2013, pg. 1.

³ UN-Habitat, Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet. SDG 11 Synthesis Report, pg. 149.

⁴ UN-Habitat, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) Handbook, 2018, pg. 14.

Introduction

Several studies have analyzed the issue of urban violence and the potential factors leading to it⁵. However, due to one-dimensional, top-down approaches that miss the “linkages between physical intervention, social violence prevention, and community participation”⁶, deficient policy design often fails to target two critical dimensions of the urban sphere “in regard to the challenges of urban safety and security: urban spatial processes and institutional capacity at the metropolitan and municipal levels”⁷. In response to such a gap, this research project proposes to reframe city diplomacy as a catalyst for the enhancement of local agencies through the integration of these two dimensions, and explore the impact it could have in leveraging additional resources (economic, social and institutional) to tackle the issue of urban violence. To conduct such an analysis, the main research question has been formulated as follows:

How can city diplomacy (better) contribute to managing urban violence, rooted in socio-economic factors, in order to promote a more secure and peaceful urban future?

From this question, we have identified various sub-questions:

- What underlying factors contribute to the emergence of socio-economic tensions in urban environments, and how do these tensions manifest themselves?
- Are there factors that act as triggers for urban violence regardless of contingent elements such as geographical location or historical context?
- How can city diplomacy address these factors as part of an integrated programming effort?

⁵ See, for example, Marc, Alexandre; Willman, Alys M., *Violence in the City: Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence*, 2010. Washington D.C (3/6/2013). Available online at

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/524341468331181450/Violence-in-the-city-understanding-and-supporting-community-responses-to-urban-violence>; Winton, A. 2004. “Urban Violence: A Guide to the Literature.” *Environment and Urbanization* 16 (2): 165–84; Morenoff, J.D., R.J. Sampson, and S.J. Raudenbush. 2001. “Neighborhood Inequality, Collective Efficacy, and the Spatial Dynamics of Urban Violence.” *Criminology* 39 (3): 517–59.

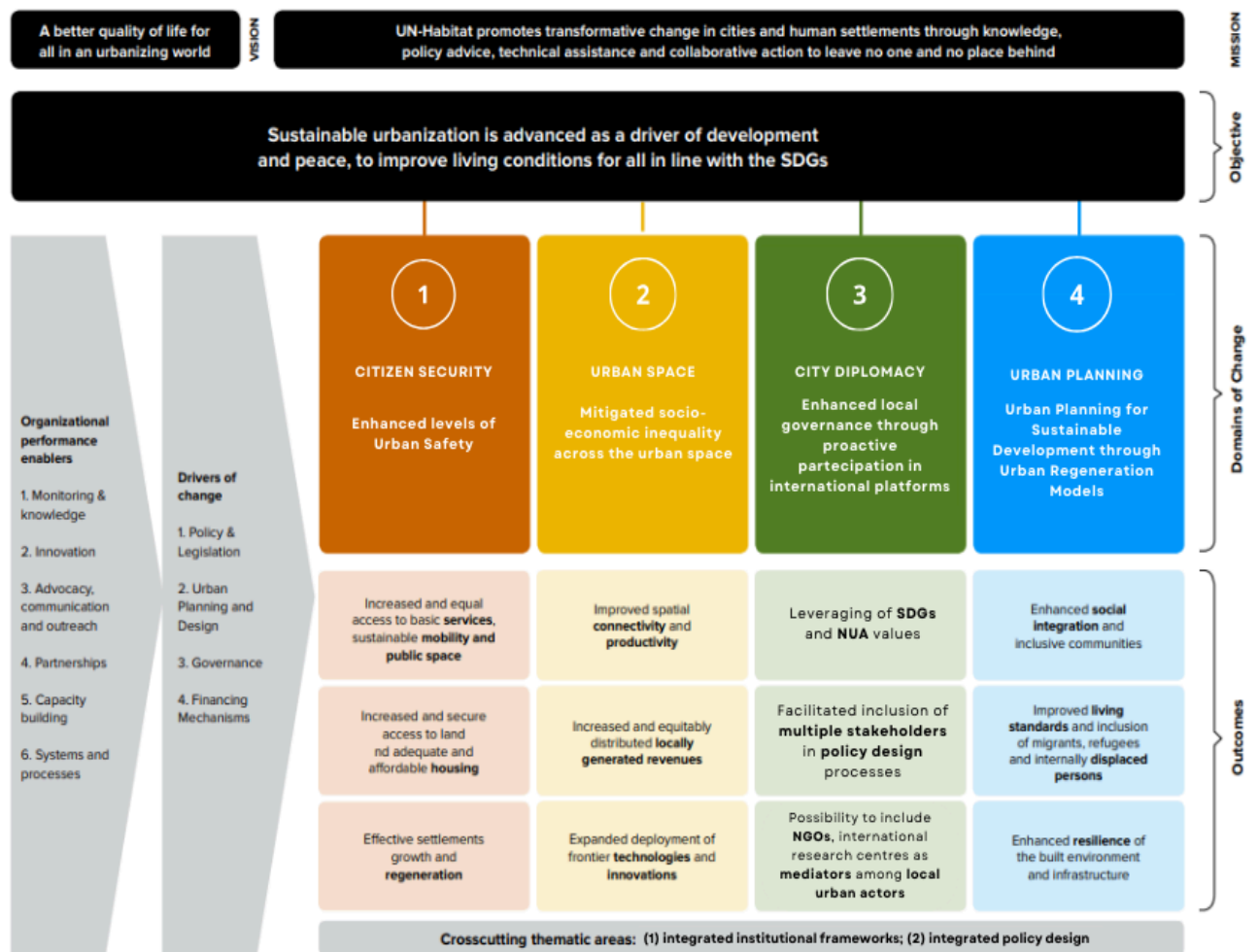
⁶ Kasang, Nicholas. "Violence, Cities, and Prevention: A Conceptual Framework for Reducing Violence in the Urban Realm" In *Community-Based Urban Violence Prevention: Innovative Approaches in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Arab Region* edited by Kosta Mathéy and Silvia Matuk, 24-40. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839429907.24> pg. 32.

⁷ UN-HABITAT, *Global Report on Human Settlements 2007: Enhancing Urban Safety and Security*, UNHABITAT/Earthscan, Nairobi, 2007, pg. 33.

- What correlations exist between governance structures, socio-economic disparities, and the prevalence of urban violence, and how can city diplomacy work towards bridging these gaps for sustainable urban peace?

FIGURE 1: Literature Review’s Structure

THE UN-HABITAT THEORY OF CHANGE APPLIED TO OUR LITERATURE REVIEW



In light of these questions, we have defined the scope of our literature review (Figure 1) by elaborating a multi-level logical trajectory linking concepts capable of maximizing the interaction between the two key dimensions of the urban sphere. More specifically, there is a problem to be addressed in the manifestations of urban violence and segregation⁸ rooted in socio-economic inequalities. Furthermore that issue is aggravated by factors such as unequal management of urban spaces, reduced institutional capacity at municipal level⁹, and a dependence on the national government's revenue flow. In order to address this issue, we propose city diplomacy as a catalyst for the local governments' empowerment, through processes of urban regeneration that would serve as opportunities for cities to enhance their agency through international engagement in fora and alliances, and additionally as an opportunity for violence prevention measures to be implemented.

Moreover, the concatenation of concepts outlined above has also informed the selection criteria for the case studies used in the research: as later sections will show, both Madrid and Nairobi have experienced increased rates of street violence in recent times. Both display patterns of urban segregation, and both have been quite active in international fora in terms of resource and knowledge exchanges aimed at the implementation of innovative, multi-stakeholder urban regeneration programs. Finally, we opted for one city from the Global North and one from the Global South to test our logical trajectory across different systems.

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id.

Literature Review

Deficient Citizen Security: The Case of Socio-Economic Urban Violence

As highlighted by UNDP, Citizen Security refers to:

“Numerous aspects inherent to organized social life, (and is) generally used in relation to issues of interpersonal violence and criminality. But behind this apparent simplification of the concept, there are hidden considerations that make citizen security a complex issue with relevant implications from the point of view of public management, and one of the most decisive areas for human rights, sustainable development, and the quality of democracy”¹⁰.

Since, always according to UNDP, the drivers of violence and insecurity in urban settings often include “simmering tensions and conflict over ethnic, religious or political differences, inequity and unfair resource allocation” and “internal stresses, such as high youth unemployment, war economies, growing income inequality, and perceived injustice”, we have decided to assess the issue of urban violence as the direct equivalent of citizen security, but in negative terms, trying to maintain the same “hidden considerations” that make citizen security such a complex and multi-dimensional policy area.

1. Urban Violence

Urban violence is defined as the interplay between representations and the reality that people experience in certain urban environments. In other words, the city is generally referred to as a dangerous place because, the discourse says, dangerous populations live there in dangerous neighborhoods and make life unbearable for others¹¹. Broadly, urban violence has been characterized as belonging to four different categories which often overlap and reinforce each other: political, institutional, economic and social. A large share of research on urban

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Analysis on innovation in citizen security and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. A perspective from the public policies and institutional management, 2020, pg. 20.

¹¹ Ferreira, M.A.S.V. (2020). Urban Violence and Crime. In: The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11795-5_64-2

violence focuses on criminal violence, and the actors associated with it, such as gangs, armed political groups and criminal cartels.

Global studies show that 60% of all urban residents in developing countries have been victims of crime at least once over the past five years, 70% of them in Latin America and Africa. Urbanization, particularly in the developing world, has been accompanied by increased levels of crime, violence, and lawlessness.¹² In some countries, crime and violence have been exacerbated by the proliferation of weapons, substance abuse, and youth unemployment. Crime and violence impact the everyday life of city residents.

According to UN-Habitat, urban violence is not a spontaneous occurrence. It is often the result of inadequate urban environments that exclude certain members of society from the benefits of urbanization and participation in decision-making and development.¹³ Urban violence, spanning robberies, drug trafficking, gender-based violence, gang-related incidents, and organized crime, worsens due to factors like weapon proliferation, substance abuse, and youth unemployment. UN-Habitat stresses the need for comprehensive solutions involving city-wide safety strategies and participatory plans. These approaches aim to create a safer, more equitable city by embracing social inclusivity and citizen participation.

2. Street Violence

Nowadays, levels of crime and violence appear to be much higher in large cities in developing countries. This is the result of several factors, such as: the speed of urbanization, the inability of cities to provide sufficient infrastructure and the widening disparities in income and access to housing and services. These levels of inequality can have negative consequences from a social, economic and political point of view, with a destabilizing impact on societies and higher risks for the most disadvantaged people, especially those living in informal settlements.

3. Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi is the largest city in Kenya, its capital, and an international hub in East Africa; not unlike various African cities, it has been subject to rapid urbanization for decades and while modern and cosmopolitan in its outlook, Nairobi displays significant inequality and

¹² "Urban Safety | UN-Habitat", <https://unhabitat.org/topic/urban-safety>. Accessed December 20th, 2023.

¹³ "Urban Safety - UN-Habitat", <https://unhabitat.org/topic/urban-safety>. Accessed December 6th, 2023.

separation between the wealthy and poor, hosting large informal settlements, where living conditions are dire. Nairobi is sometimes referred to as the city of no one and everyone, being a melting pot of cultures rather than historically belonging to a specific ethnic group¹⁴

In Nairobi street violence has been a significant issue. The city has been hit by massive demonstrations, resulting in violent clashes, looting, and burning barricades. Violent riots have broken out in the slums of the city, which were answered by the police with tear gas and water cannons. Violent gangs went on looting sprees in Kibera, the largest slum in the capital. They erected barricades that were set on fire and injured numerous police officers¹⁵. In 2017 president Uhuru Kenyatta issued the Nubian community with a title deed for the original perimeter of the settlement. However, the future development of Nairobi mobility shows the unbinding nature of the land deed. In July 2018 the construction of a new road started. The Missing Link #12 was announced in January 2016 by the government of Kenya as a part of the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master Plan by 2023, a new proposal that will improve the traffic conditions of Nairobi. However, during the decision-making process, the community has not been adequately involved, causing the forced eviction of 11,500 residents and the closure or relocation of 13 schools¹⁶.

A steep rise in violent crimes over the past two decades is singled out for attention by 2007's Global Report on Urban Settlements, which chose Nairobi, Kenya as its subject. Crime categories include armed robbery, murder and property offenses, making the city increasingly unsafe. Of particular interest is the Mungiki movement, which was originally a religious group that later turned into an organized criminal gang and became responsible for acts of extreme violence. It even came to wield control over Nairobi's informal settlements.

Adding to the city's security problems are criminal youth gangs and illegal trading in firearms. As well, there is the growing number of street dwellers involved in criminal activities, which poses a serious problem.

As a result, the Kenyan government founded the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund to provide assistance. Even as this initiative advanced, however, full interventions are needed to tame criminal youth gangs such as Mungiki and the street-dwelling populations that threaten urban security.

¹⁴ Author interview, journalist, Nairobi, 11 March 2018; Kimani, "Nairobi sio Gatundu, We Own Nairobi NOT Yo"; Mugendi and Karanja, 'Nairobi Past and Present'; Ojamaa, 'CS, All Kenyans'.

¹⁵ "Violence and protests on Kenya's streets – DW – 03/29/2023." 29 mars. 2023, <https://www.dw.com/en/violence-and-protests-on-kenyas-streets/g-65163091>. Accessed December 6th, 2023.

¹⁶ De Filippi, Francesca, Grazia Giulia Cocina, and Chiara Martinuzzi. 2020. "Integrating Different Data Sources to Address Urban Security in Informal Areas. The Case Study of Kibera, Nairobi". Sustainability 12, no. 6: 2437. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062437>

4. Madrid, Spain

Madrid, Spain's capital city, serves as a melting pot of diverse cultures, traditions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Its cosmopolitan atmosphere blends modernity with a deep-rooted historical legacy, creating a unique urban landscape. However, Madrid faces challenges typical of large metropolitan areas, with street violence being a notable concern.

Some studies show that street violence in Madrid encompasses various forms of aggression, ranging from minor altercations to more severe incidents involving gangs or organized crime¹⁷.

Factors contributing to street violence in Madrid are complex and multifaceted, often influenced by socioeconomic disparities, youth unemployment, drug-related activities, and territorial disputes among neighborhood groups¹⁸. Moreover, some research highlights the impact of urban planning and environmental factors on the prevalence of street violence. Poorly lit areas, inadequate public spaces, and a lack of social programs have been identified as contributing elements fostering an environment conducive to violent behavior¹⁹.

Jose Manuel's work, "Group Violence and Migration Experience among Latin American Youths," delves into socially conditioned youth violence in Madrid in 2015. This research grapples with defining and measuring gang violence, which varies in terminology globally and even within a single country. Spain's encounter with Latin American gangs like the name-takers and Trinitarios poses challenges in accurately defining these groups. Studies across Europe and the United States highlight that immigrant youth involvement in violent groups stems from social issues like disorganization, prejudice, and insufficient support. Acculturation stress significantly impacts gang membership among Latino adolescents, influencing different paths to affiliation for U.S.-born Latinos and first-generation immigrants. Breaks in affiliated youths' schools and family institutions reveal social gaps affecting Madrid's gang activity.

The study reveals connections between Latin American immigration and gang membership, emphasizing diverse organizational structures within immigrant communities. It emphasizes

¹⁷ Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca Rodríguez, "Consensus and conflict in the Spanish transition to democracy," in *Democracy and social democracy: homage to José María Maravall* (Democracy and social democracy: homage to José María Maravall, Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2012), 153–91,

<https://produccioncientifica.ucm.es/documentos/619ca3a2a08dbd1b8f9faf7e?lang=en>.

¹⁸ María-Jesús Martín et al., "Young People Belonging to Violent Groups in the Region of Madrid. Psychosocial Process Model on the Onset and Evolution of Violent Identity Behaviour," *Anales de Psicología* 33 (2017).

¹⁹ Kostas Mouratidis, "Urban Planning and Quality of Life: A Review of Pathways Linking the Built Environment to Subjective Well-Being," *Cities* 115 (August 1, 2021): 103229, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103229>.

that migration experiences and social settings are linked to violent behavior but are not the sole factors contributing to gang susceptibility. Further, the research advocates for culturally adaptable approaches in addressing youth violence and gang activity, considering Madrid's increasingly diverse sociocultural environment.

Inequality of Urban Spaces: The Case of Urban Segregation

If we are to measure and analyze urban violence rooted in socio-economic factors, it is essential to assess the circumstances or processes that promote the festering of social inequalities in the urban space; one of such processes of interest is urban segregation. If effective measures to reduce urban segregation could be identified, households and individuals would have more ease in succeeding in their professional or social endeavors. Socio-economic urban segregation is observed through the segregation of a population at the physical and residential level, dictating which residential urban area a sample of the population inhabits, which is in turn determined by the individual's profession, income, education or overall social standing. This process is a cause for concern, as income inequality is considered to be one of the main causes of socio-economic segregation²⁰, which creates a dichotomy between the different castes of the population in their opportunities, regardless of said opportunities being of a social or professional nature: "(...) it impedes social integration and social cohesion process[es], and does not create equal opportunity conditions in education and eventually in the access to the labor market."²¹

Nevertheless, the transition from economic inequality to socio-economic urban segregation is not instantaneous, as it is only the starting point for various societal and professional processes. When inequality is on the rise, policies can be enforced in order to improve certain neighborhoods, whereas others will be negatively impacted by the political agenda²². Furthermore, scholar Jesus Leal argues that another factor that might explain the delayed reaction of socio-economic urban segregation is related to the housing markets. Analyzing the issue under a purely pragmatic lens, for there to be segregation there needs to be a population migration movement, in other words the population will begin inhabiting different

²⁰ Maarten van Ham, Tiit Tammaru, Ruta Ubareviciene & Heleen Jassen. Part 1: Rising Inequalities. Urban Socio-Economic Segregation & Income Inequality, Springer International Publishing, 2021, pp. 4-20.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 4-20.

²² Ibid., pp. 4-20.

residential areas²³. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assess the state of housing markets as a defining factor, as the prices and various other factors (such as the location, accessibility levels, historic heritage, and more) also dictate which areas are the most affordable as well as the ones that are out of a part of the population's means²⁴.

Scholars Martori and Madariaga revisit the theory that we can distinguish between 5 distinct aspects that need to be scrutinized: the evenness, exposure, concentration, clustering and centralization of the sample population²⁵. While they specify that the quintuple aspects are not equal in importance, arguments can be found in the literature that support evenness and clustering as the main factors; evenness measures the representation of minority groups, whereas clustering detects the adjoining areas with high shares of minority groups. In other words, the quantity and density of certain groups in a chosen locality are the main factors by which we can assess the levels of socio-economic urban segregation.

1. Nairobi & Urban Diversity

While Nairobi might appear modern and cosmopolitan, there are significantly high levels of inequality and social separation between the wealthy and the poor, though numerous and wide informal settlement areas. It serves as an example to highlight the global trend of increasing urbanization, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and discusses the challenges and risks associated with rapid urban growth in the region²⁶.

The city is described as a melting pot of cultures, contributing to its nickname as the "city of no one and everyone." Elfversson and Høglund argue that the study of urban violence in Nairobi is essential for comprehending the distinct characteristics and unique manifestations of violence in the city. They identify four categories of urban violence in Nairobi: urban land conflict, election-related violence, state repression and extrajudicial violence, and terrorism

²³Jesús Leal. Segregation and social change in Madrid Metropolitan Region. *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών*, vol. 113, 2004, <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.9219>.

²⁴ Leal, 2004.

²⁵ Joan Carles Martori & Rafa Madariaga. Residential segregation by nationalities: A global and multilevel approach to Barcelona and Madrid (2008–2018). *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 29, no. 5, 30 May 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2655>.

²⁶ Elfversson, Emma, and Kristine Høglund. Violence in the city that belongs to no one: Urban distinctiveness and interconnected insecurities in Nairobi (Kenya). *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2019.1640493>.

and radicalization; we will however focus on the urban land conflict aspect, which is a factor supporting the increase in urban segregation in the city²⁷.

Violence in Nairobi is a complex issue, deeply intertwined with the city's rapid urbanization, political dynamics, socio-economic disparities and population growth, leading to challenges related to land conflicts, electoral violence, state repression, and terrorism. The city's growth has led to significant inequality, with a large portion of the population residing in poor and densely populated informal settlements. The informal nature of urban development, coupled with political and economic importance, contributes to the manifestation of violence in distinct ways²⁸.

2. Madrid & Urban Housing

Between 1981 and 1996, the city of Madrid was faced with a peculiar segregation process, as urban segregation was diminishing, partly due to a newfound social interest in peripheral areas²⁹. This change in status quo was brought about by mortgage tax relief policies promoting homeownership, which was especially effective within the middle class. However, these subsidies excluded the working class, contributing to economic burdens. The 2008 global financial crisis exacerbated housing difficulties and decreased stable employment opportunities, leading to social exclusion³⁰. The consequences included unreasonable standards for certain residential areas for working class households, evictions and forced mortgage arrangements, leading to urban dispersion³¹.

Southern European countries, notably Spain, relied considerably on policies concerning home-owning policies for economic growth, which shaped the urban diversity and density that we observe nowadays³². While these policies promoted the growth of Spanish economy, socially, they increased income inequalities, which has a relation of causality with urban segregation; “(...) rather than being an inevitable outcome or an organic phenomenon, segregation is the product of, and part of broader mechanisms and structures that (re)produce,

²⁷ *ibid.*, 2019.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 2019.

²⁹ Leal, 2004.

³⁰ Daniel Sorando, Pedro Uceda & Marta Domínguez. Inequality on the increase: Trajectories of privilege and inequality in Madrid. *Social Inclusion*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i2.3845>.

³¹ Sonia Arbaci. Paradoxes of segregation. *Wiley Online Library*, 18 Mar. 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118867365>.

³² Sorando et al., 2021.

social inequalities and (un)equal production of space (...).”³³. In other words, it is critical to address socio-economic inequalities to curtail the processes of urban segregation; on that matter, city diplomacy emerges as a localized answer to an issue possibly neglected by the national government, serving as a direct alternative to deal with urban segregation.

Historical City Diplomacy Practices

According to UN-Habitat in the 2022 World Cities Report, "Global City population share doubled from 25 percent in 1950 to about 50 percent in 2020; it is projected to slowly increase to 58 percent over the next 50 years³⁴". This fact, which illustrates the speed at which our planet is becoming urbanized, creating more and more globalized cities, points to the need for a new approach to global issues. In a globalized world undergoing rapid urbanization, cities need to play a greater role in multilateral decision-making and governance processes. Cities are on the front line against many global problems, such as industrial pollution and climate change, inequality, and poverty. Cities therefore have a legitimate claim to a central role in international affairs.

City diplomacy is a relatively new concept that has been defined in several ways. The Committee on City Diplomacy, Peace-building and Human Rights of United Cities and Local Governments³⁵, established in 2005, defined the concept as “the tool of local governments and their associations in promoting social cohesion, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction with the aim to create a stable environment in which the citizens can live together in peace, democracy and prosperity³⁶”.

Consequently, City diplomacy presents itself as the perfect vehicle to fill the gap. Through City Diplomacy, cities can create city networks that act as a platform that “offers cities the alluring possibility of channeling funding, drawing on and offering technical know-how

³³ Arbaci, 2019.

³⁴ « World Cities Report 2022 » . s. d. <https://unhabitat.org/wcr/>.

³⁵ UCLG. 2017. « Madrid’s Commitment to Peaceful Cities » . UCLG. avril 2017. Consulté le 20 décembre 2023.

https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/compromiso-de-madrid-de-ciudades-de-paz-version-21-abril-fin-al-eng-2_3.pdf.

³⁶ Leffel, Benjamin. "Animus of the Underling: Theorizing City Diplomacy in a World Society", The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 13, 4 (2018): 502-522, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191X-13040025>

support to further urban (re)development projects and giving cities the chance to have a say in national, regional and international politics³⁷”.

1. Madrid’s History of City Diplomacy

Madrid, which has a historical significance as Spain's capital and the second largest city by population, has played a crucial role in European and global affairs. The post Franco era and Spain's journey towards democracy have greatly influenced how Madrid approaches city diplomacy. Moreover Madrid strategically positions itself as a connection between Europe, Latin America and the Arab world leveraging its status as Spain's capital city. Madrid, positioning itself as a city deeply connected to Europe, embraced its membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) when Spain joined in 1986³⁸. Madrid viewed this phenomenon as the beginning of a new path leading to strong relationships with all levels of the European Union (EU). As a result EU institutions often turn to Madrid for collaboration on projects that can serve as models for other cities in the EU. This active involvement in city organizations reflects Madrid's commitment to working together and its important role in sharing best practices across the EU³⁹.

Moreover Madrid's significance is evident by its ability to attract international partner organizations and host their headquarters. In its role Madrid gives special attention to these entities, which is also extended to the 120 embassies located in the city⁴⁰. Furthermore Madrid generously provides spaces for housing public diplomacy institutions like UN-HABITAT associated with the Government of Spain demonstrating its support, for broader diplomatic objectives of the nation.

Madrid's strategic objectives in diplomacy revolve around promoting exchange through initiatives like the Cervantes Institute with the aim of projecting Spain's cultural influence

³⁷ Acuto, Michele, Mika Morissette, et Agis Tsouros. 2016. « City diplomacy : towards more strategic networking ? Learning with WHO Healthy cities » . Global Policy 8 (1) : 14-22.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12382>.

³⁸ « Ongoing Projects - MADRID IS INTERNATIONAL » . s. d.
<https://internacional.madrid.es/portales/inter/en/Ongoing-projects/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=2a76254544344810VgnVCM1000008a4a900aRCRD>.

³⁹ « Ongoing Projects - MADRID IS INTERNATIONAL » . s. d.
<https://internacional.madrid.es/portales/inter/en/Ongoing-projects/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=2a76254544344810VgnVCM1000008a4a900aRCRD>.

⁴⁰ « Ongoing Projects - MADRID IS INTERNATIONAL » . s. d.
<https://internacional.madrid.es/portales/inter/en/Ongoing-projects/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=2a76254544344810VgnVCM1000008a4a900aRCRD>.

worldwide. Additionally Madrid prioritizes goals by positioning itself as a business hub within the European Union. It also advocates for rights and democracy on an international scale. Madrid's objectives are also aligned with those of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, and as a result, the city is working on several development projects, in collaboration with NGOs, other cities, personalities involved in the sustainable development sector, international organizations and governments⁴¹.

To effectively achieve its goals Madrid takes advantage of its status as the capital city to host various international organizations and events. A prime example is hosting both the headquarters of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Union of Ibero-American capital cities. Moreover Madrid engages in partnerships and agreements with other cities to promote its identity and strengthen its global presence through international tourism.

Madrid also hosts major international events ranging from European summits to UN conferences, such as the 1991 Peace Conference or COP 25 amongst others⁴². Furthermore, Madrid has also been the venue for major conferences concerning urban violence, setting up the First World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace, fulfilling the commitment made at the UCLG World Council in Paris during the COP21 Summit, in December 2015⁴³, demonstrating the city's willingness to serve as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and innovative ideas for different international political entities. Madrid was the birthplace of many innovative treaties and initiatives that contribute to the advancement of diplomacy as a sector, as proven, in 2019, by the issuing of the Madrid declaration on Science Diplomacy⁴⁴. When it comes to city diplomacy, Madrid's impact on cultural and linguistic unity among Spanish speaking countries through cultural events like Hispanidad 2023⁴⁵, highlighting its influence on international relations. Moreover the city

⁴¹ UCLG. 2017. « Madrid's Commitment to Peaceful Cities » . UCLG. April 2017. https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/compromiso-de-madrid-de-ciudades-de-paz-version-21-a-bril-final-eng-2_3.pdf.

⁴² « Ongoing Projects - MADRID IS INTERNATIONAL » . s. d. <https://internacional.madrid.es/portales/inter/en/Ongoing-projects/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=2a76254544344810VgnVCM1000008a4a900aRCRD>.

⁴³ « Ongoing Projects - MADRID IS INTERNATIONAL » . s. d. <https://internacional.madrid.es/portales/inter/en/Ongoing-projects/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextchannel=2a76254544344810VgnVCM1000008a4a900aRCRD>.

⁴⁴ Kickbusch, Ilona, Haik Nikogosian, Michel Kazatchkine, et Mihály Kökény. 2021. « A GUIDE TO GLOBAL HEALTH DIPLOMACY » . The Geneva Graduate Institute. 2021. Consulté le 20 décembre 2023. <https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/sites/internet/files/2021-02/GHC-Guide.pdf>.

⁴⁵ El Ayuntamiento celebra Hispanidad 2023 en los mercados municipales - Ayuntamiento de Madrid. (s. d.). <https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/Actualidad/Noticias/El-Ayuntamiento-celebra-His>

serves as a platform for dialogue and cooperation through events like the Madrid Peace Talks further solidifying its significant role in global diplomacy.

In recent decades, mechanisms have been put in place for the development of Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations in several sectors that affect local life in Madrid. Madrid has collaborated with several local agencies, international organizations, private sector players and other cities in urban development projects such as MARES or Foros Locales⁴⁶. What sets these programs apart is their inclusivity of civil society and therefore the local population. It is in this spirit of collaboration that Madrid stands out for its city diplomacy. To create more sustainable projects, the Spanish capital makes the most of every sector of society, as well as the expertise of a wide range of actors, including actors stemming from the local dimension like civil society and local organizations.

2. Nairobi's History of City Diplomacy

Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya has emerged as a player in the field of City Diplomacy due to its hosting of international organizations (IOs) and non governmental organizations (NGOs). Its role as a host to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as UN Habitat, both institutions that have greatly contributed to Kenya's environmental and urban diplomacy traces back Nairobi's journey as a diplomatic hub. The city's development in City Diplomacy is closely tied to its engagement with IOs and NGOs which have contributed to its cosmopolitan nature. As the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi has a unique historical background that began from the colonization period. The colonial possession of Kenya with Nairobi as one of the main commercial and trading centers has become a crucial component of diplomatic development. Since then, Nairobi has become an essential realization of diplomacy-related issues. One of the most significant events in the history of Nairobi's diplomacy occurred in 1985 when the Nairobi agreement⁴⁷ was signed with the aim of ending the conflict in Uganda for National Resistance Army rebels and the Government.

panidad-2023-en-los-mercados-municipales/?vgnextfmt=default&vgnextoid=59a2fb4f6c40b810VgnVCM1000001d4a900aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=a12149fa40ec9410VgnVCM100000171f5a0aRCRD

⁴⁶ Medina-García, C., De la Fuente, R., & Van Den Broeck, P. (2021). Exploring the Emergence of Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations toward a Progressive Urban Regime in Madrid (2015–2019). *Sustainability*, 13(1), 415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010415>

⁴⁷ Lucima, O. (n.d.). Reaching the 1985 Nairobi Agreement (2002) | Conciliation resources. <https://www.c-r.org/accord/northern-uganda/reaching-1985-nairobi-agreement-2002>

This event presented Nairobi's diplomacy as a platform for mediation to regional conflicts. The further development of the city's diplomacy lies in the general idea of the city.

Over time Nairobi has transformed into a hub where cultures and ideas converge thanks to its hosting of various international conferences and diplomatic events⁴⁸. Its strategic location bridging Africa and the global community positions it as a destination for fostering diplomatic discussions⁴⁹.

Nairobi's approach to City Diplomacy goes beyond diplomatic functions and has strategic goals that transcend traditional boundaries. One of the aims is to establish Nairobi as a global hub for Multilateral Diplomacy by leveraging the presence of UN Habitat, UNEP and other international organizations in the city. To achieve this various strategies are being developed and implemented to solidify Nairobi's position as a central location for worldwide diplomatic activities.

Diplomatically, Nairobi pursues several objectives simultaneously. Firstly, it seeks to improve the development conditions by collaborating with neighboring countries. The second agenda promotes investments and attracts foreign partners to the country. Other ways they are using diplomatic ties is using them to show themselves as the best partners for business and industrial enterprises. Lastly, Nairobi is concerned with global initiatives. Nairobi city's city diplomacy, as highlighted in the County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027⁵⁰, focuses on areas like inclusive economic growth and wealth creation, poverty alleviation, job creation, incoming generation, improved and expanded service delivery, and business expansion. The city is working towards enhancing its competitiveness and deeper integration into the regional and global markets while enhancing governance and administration for sustainable development as well as quality of life.

Among the range of methods and approaches that Nairobi uses traditional, public, and economic diplomacy. The traditional means to maintain diplomatic ties are negotiations, treaties, and diplomatic missions. This category is used for elements that strive to realize the national interests of Kenya and co-work in order with the rest of the countries to provide the

⁴⁸ «Home – City Diplomacy Lab » . 2023. <https://www.citydiplomacylab.net/home/>.

⁴⁹ United Nations Environment Programme. s. d. « UN Environment Organises the First Dialogue on Environmental Diplomacy for African Diplomats » . UNEP. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/un-environment-organises-first-dialogue-environmental-diplomacy-african>.

⁵⁰ Nairobi City County. (2023, March). Nairobi City County County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027. Nairobi Assembly. <https://nairobiassembly.go.ke/ncca/wp-content/uploads/paperlaid/2023/NAIROBI-CITY-COUNTY-INTEGRATED-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN-FOR-2023-2027-1.pdf>

needed numbers of resources. The public direction becomes evident in engaging foreign publics, media, and civil societies to preserve and encourage favorable image and influence. The last category, economic diplomacy, applies to the part of the overall policy that manages the prosperity of Nairobi. Which means to strengthen its position in Kenya's economy, they use factors like trade, investment, and other areas where they make cooperation with foreign and local entities. Nairobi city county considers the aspect of working with various actors to achieve development goals by enhancing intergovernmental relations, resource mobilization from external sources, stakeholder engagement, and the monitoring of programs and projects funded by external resources. Additionally, the city of Nairobi is keen on ensuring global and international relations, which will capitalize on its global city status. In terms of integrated urban development approaches, Nairobi has lead successful

initiatives which gave birth to comprehensive projects with a particularity of being participatory and inclusive of the local civil society such as Mukuru SPA⁵¹ (Special Planning Area) project. In the framework of this project, the city of Nairobi has collaborated with several actors of different natures such as development agencies, private sector actors and investors, other cities and counties as well as the National government which shows the strength of Nairobi's diplomatic initiatives.

Urban Planning Models: The Case of Urban Regeneration

Urban Regeneration is defined as a “comprehensive and integrated vision and action which seeks to resolve urban problems and bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change or offers opportunities for improvement”⁵². The main objectives targeted by urban regeneration programmes are: (i) consolidating urban power through the strengthening of “urban central functions, the extension of employment, and the conservation of historic and cultural environments”; (ii) securing settlement stability through “the improvement of existing residential environments” and the “maintenance of established communities”; and, finally, (iii) improving the quality of the urban environment⁵³.

⁵¹ Mukuru Special Planning Area (SPA) Community mobilisation. (n.d.). <https://icscentre.org/innovationreport/2020/portfolio-item/mukuru-special-planning-area-spa-community-mobilisation/>

⁵² Hutchison, Ray, ed. *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412971973>.

⁵³ Kyu Hong Hwang, Finding Urban Identity through Culture-led Urban Regeneration, *Journal of Urban Management*, Volume 3, Issues 1–2, 2014, Pages 67-85, pg. 69.

Moreover, if earlier models of urban reconstruction and urban renewal, favored, respectively, top-down government governance in the post-war period and entrepreneurial governance in the neoliberal period, and were mostly focused on “resuming production and economic activity, clearing slums, providing social housing and eradicating poverty” and “attract capital, drive economic growth and reduce administration costs”⁵⁴, it is important to underline that what characterizes contemporary urban regeneration programmes the most is, above all, their focus on sustainable development, which targets not only the upgrading of decadent areas, but also the implementation of an array of socially desirable outcomes that often requires cities to level up their governance skills and to engage in complex decision-making processes.

Indeed, what these programmes call for is “civic urban governance”⁵⁵, a bottom-down, multi-level model involving several actors (residents, civic associations, social groups, NGOs, universities, media groups) in an all-encompassing, harmonized community effort. The effectiveness of urban regeneration, then, depends on balancing “the collaboration between stakeholders with different qualities, motivations and resources”, as “inappropriate governance arrangements”⁵⁶ produce often prohibitive “institutional, financial, organizational and managerial challenges”⁵⁷.

1. Urban Regeneration, Urban Governance & City Diplomacy

As mentioned above, city diplomacy can be defined as “institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another”⁵⁸; these processes and institutions, such as city networks and alliances (C40, NetZero Cities), have also been prompted by the development of broadening areas of defective state control, with central national institutions often failing to efficiently respond to “internationalized policy issues become[ing] evident to a wide range of domestic constituencies and their representatives at the local level”⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ Xie, F.; Liu, G.; Zhuang, T. A Comprehensive Review of Urban Regeneration Governance for Developing Appropriate Governance Arrangements. *Land* 2021, 10, 545. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10050545> pg. 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* pg. 13.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* pg. 2.

⁵⁸ Pluijm Rogier van der and Jan Melissen. 2007. *City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics*. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael".

http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070400_cdsp_paper_pluijm.pdf pg. 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* pg. 8.

Since, as highlighted in the previous section, contemporary approaches to urban regeneration governance require the empowerment of local actors, not only do they prove to be in line with city diplomacy emerging as a steadily more significant form of decentralized international relations, but, by calling for the involvement of a wide array of actors whose relevance is directly related to the “influx of foreign goods and global corporations and institutions”⁶⁰ experienced by cities as “denationalized platforms for global capital”⁶¹, they also, above all, require it. Indeed, the need to tackle such “glocalized” issues has further enhanced the strategic value of platforms like the C40, which, approaching cities’ interests “by building global multi-stakeholder alliances with key actors in the private sector, knowledge based institutions, and national and international agencies”⁶², enables them to “access knowledge, innovation, and funds and increase their capacity to set the agenda”⁶³. The case studies offered by Madrid and Nairobi will further prove the mutually reinforcing relationship between urban regeneration programmes, civic urban governance and city diplomacy.

2. Madrid & MARES

According to García, de la Fuente and Van den Broeck, who analyzed the “government of change” wave in Madrid (2015-2019)⁶⁴, there is a correlation between institutional and governance reforms which integrated the so-called “New Urban Activists” (NUA), namely “highly educated groups that use professional expertise for collaborative urban interventions in a context of social innovation”⁶⁵, and the development of pilot urban experiments and long-term strategies through the activation of “Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations” (IMACs)⁶⁶ which strategically capitalized on “the opportunities offered by international institutions and programs”⁶⁷, whilst also “seeking international partnerships and agreements to strengthen and legitimize the common agenda”⁶⁸. One of these pilot urban experiments is

⁶⁰ Id.

⁶¹ Id.

⁶² Fernández de Losada Agustí Marta Galceran-Vercher and Agustí Fernández de Losada. 2021. *Cities in Global Governance : From Multilateralism to Multistakeholderism?* Barcelona: CIDOB Edicions. pg. 22.

⁶³ Id.

⁶⁴ Medina-García, C.; de la Fuente, R.; Van den Broeck, P. Exploring the Emergence of Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations toward a Progressive Urban Regime in Madrid (2015–2019). *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 415. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010415> pg. 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid. pg. 10.

⁶⁶ Ibid. pg. 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid. pg. 19.

⁶⁸ Id.

the MARES project. The MARES project will establish four spaces called M.A.R.E.S. (M (mobility), A(food), R (recycling), E (energy) and S (social and care economy, common to the four MAR) in four of Madrid's city districts, Centro, Villaverde, Vallecas and Vicélvaro, These MARES will act as a prototype of urban resilience by applying a social and solidarity economy model on strategic sectors such as employment, regeneration of of disused common areas, local strategies development and optimisation of resources.

3. Nairobi & Mukuru SPA

As Boutueil, Levesten and Nermett underline, the “devolution of power”⁶⁹ brought by the 2010 Constitution laid the foundations for innovative initiatives such as the Integrated Urban Development Master Plan for the City of Nairobi, which represents the first time that planning “emanated from local rather than central government”⁷⁰. Launched in 2014 by Nairobi City County, the Plan includes projects like the Urban Renewal Plan for Eastlands, Nairobi (2016 -2036), which prompted community participation through several preliminary “public consultation activities including series of stakeholder workshops, technical consultations, focused group discussions and key sector consultative meetings”⁷¹. Another key example of such participatory urban planning is the Mukuru Special Planning (SPA) case, one of the largest ever informal settlement upgrading processes, which aims to transform a 689-acre slum affected by severe challenges such as poor housing, lack of access to clean water and flooding, into a healthy and functioning neighborhood for the 100,000 households who live there. Mukuru SPA is a large-scale, collaborative community planning project jointly led by Nairobi County government and community residents, supported by a partnership of third actors (40+ organizations from international and civil society, academia and the private sector) guided by the Muungano Alliance, constituted by Muungano wa Wanavijiji, the Kenyan federation of slum dwellers, Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT) and Slum Dwellers International Kenya (SDI - K).

⁶⁹ Boutueil Virginie, Lesteven Gaele, Nemet Luc. Toward the Integration of Paratransit in Transportation Planning in African Cities. Transportation Research Record, 2020, pp.036119812093327. ff10.1177/0361198120933270ff. fhal-02899394f, pg. 15.

⁷⁰ Id. pg. 14.

⁷¹ Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing & Urban Development of Kenya, Nairobi City County Government, NAIROBI METROPOLITAN SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT URBAN RENEWAL OF EASTLANDS, NAIROBI FINAL PLAN REPORT Plan Ref. No. UP/UPR&S/URP-E/ZONE8/178/09/19 Vol. 2 URBAN RENEWAL PLAN, pg. ii. <https://nairobi.go.ke/download/nairobi-metropolitan-service-improvement-project-urban-renewal-plan-eastlands-nairobi-final-plan-report-plan-ref-no-uprs-urp-e-zone8-178-09-19-vol-2-urban-renewal-plan/>

The Way Forward: Research Direction, Problem Statement & Main Gaps

1. Research Direction: Integrating Proactive Citizen Security Policies in Urban Planning Programs by Leveraging City Diplomacy’s Potential

As anticipated in previous sections, UNDP defines Citizen Security as:

“The process of establishing, strengthening and protecting democratic civic order, eliminating threats of violence in a population and allowing for safe and peaceful coexistence. It means effectively safeguarding inherent human rights, especially the right to life, personal integrity, inviolability of the home and freedom of movement. Citizen security is not simply the reduction of crime, but a comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy for improving the quality of life of a population, community action for crime prevention, access to an effective justice system, an education that is based on values, respect for law and tolerance”⁷².

Indeed, following a “public health approach”, violence prevention measures, at the core of citizen security implementation, can be divided into primary, secondary or tertiary type⁷³. As Kasang points out, although primary violence prevention “holds promise for reducing and ultimately eliminating the trauma and burden of violence”, it is often “under-utilized”⁷⁴, since it requires engaging “with the dense and diverse complexities of individuals, communities, cultures, and societies”⁷⁵; urban regeneration processes, generating opportunities for participatory civil urban governance on the one hand, and for knowledge and resource

⁷² UNDP, Analysis on innovation in citizen security and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. A perspective from the public policies and institutional management, 2020, pg. 20.

⁷³ Kasang, Nicholas. "Violence, Cities, and Prevention: A Conceptual Framework for Reducing Violence in the Urban Realm" In Community-Based Urban Violence Prevention: Innovative Approaches in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Arab Region edited by Kosta Mathéy and Silvia Matuk, 24-40. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839429907.24> pg. 29.

⁷⁴ Meade, Fiona (2009): Inside Out: An Organizational Map for Primary Violence Prevention. Adelaide (7/4/2013). Available online at http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/inside_out.pdf. quoted in Kasang, Nicholas. "Violence, Cities, and Prevention: A Conceptual Framework for Reducing Violence in the Urban Realm" In Community-Based Urban Violence Prevention: Innovative Approaches in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Arab Region edited by Kosta Mathéy and Silvia Matuk, 24-40. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839429907.24> pg. 30.

⁷⁵ Id.

mobilization through city diplomacy on the other, could therefore provide the best and most efficient way to fill this gap.

2. Problem Statement & Main Gaps

The aim of this research project is to determine *how city diplomacy could (better) contribute to managing urban violence, rooted in socio-economic factors, in order to promote a more secure and peaceful urban future.*

Urban violence is a multifaceted challenge facing cities worldwide, with significant social, economic, and political implications. Whilst on the one hand, this reveals the extreme complexity of the phenomenon, on the other, it also prompts the need to identify a comprehensive implementation area that allows for “greater convergence between citizen security policies in their most traditional sense and other state policies, especially social policies”⁷⁶. Indeed, following UNDP’s account of citizen security as “not simply the reduction of crime, but a comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy for improving the quality of life of a population (...)”⁷⁷, addressing the issue of urban violence using citizen security as the core principle guiding the definition of policy objectives can allow cities to take advantage of the multi-causalities, intersectoralism and multi-level governance such a target area comprises, recasting traditional urban planning as an “SDGs multiplier”⁷⁸ and creating a “policy environment”⁷⁹ that facilitates the advancement of key commitments both States and local governments have already subscribed to through the UN 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) respectively. As highlighted by UN-Habitat⁸⁰, two key features of such a policy environment are:

- **Multi-scale Continuum of Spatial and Territorial Planning:** starting from a multi-dimensional governance context, but also taking into account the subsidiary principle, decision-making and implementation should happen at each level of the institutional scale (1. Supranational level and transboundary level; 2. National level;

⁷⁶ UNDP, Analysis on innovation in citizen security and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. A perspective from the public policies and institutional management, 2020, pg. 23.

⁷⁷ UNDP, Issue Brief: Citizen Security. Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 2013, pg. 1.

⁷⁸ UN-Habitat, Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet. SDG 11 Synthesis Report, pg. 149.

⁷⁹ UN-Habitat, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) Handbook, 2018, pg. 14..

⁸⁰ Ibid. pg. 4.

3. City-Region and Metropolitan level; 4. City and Municipal level; 5. Neighbourhood and Community level). For instance, as highlighted by UN-Habitat's 2023 SDG 11 Synthesis Report, enhanced city-to-city networking has contributed to make cities more resilient, as those that are "embedded in transnational municipal networks also tend to be places that foster innovative practices"⁸¹. Moreover, transboundary regional strategies are an efficient way to attract investment and leverage international SDGs financing by using SDG implementation as an incentive to tackle issues contingent to the local level, such as urban violence.

- **Urban and Territorial Planning for Sustainable Development:** citizen security, requiring a comprehensive policy environment capable of addressing simultaneously objectives related to both sectorally and institutionally diverse fields, can be used as one effective "entry point"⁸² for urban violence policies to be integrated into holistic urban planning schemes designed for Social Development, Sustained Economic Growth and a healthy Environment.

In the dynamic landscape of rapidly developing urban areas, the pursuit of sustainable development encounters several multifaceted challenges, including urban violence. SDG 11, part of the UN Agenda 2030, serves as a critical framework for the achievement of an environmentally and socially sustainable urban development. However, as highlighted by the United for Smart Sustainable Cities' (U4SSC) initiative⁸³, significant gaps among policies and practices implementing SDG 11 still persist. More specifically, these gaps revolve around two essential aspects:

- **Sense of Place and Slum-Free Cities:** Urban settings must foster a strong sense of place, where residents feel connected to their environment. Simultaneously, cities must progress without perpetuating slums. Achieving this balance requires innovative approaches that integrate sustainability policies and social policies through holistic urban-planning schemes.

⁸¹ UN-Habitat, Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet. SDG 11 Synthesis Report, 2023, pg. 149.

⁸² UN-Habitat, Implementing the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning 2015-2017, 2017, pg. 17.

⁸³ U4SSC, Implementing SDG11 by connecting sustainability policies and urban planning practices through ICTs, 2017.

- **Security Challenges in Urban Environments:** Urban security is a complex issue characterized by multi-causality, territorial dynamics, and intersectoral dependencies. Traditional law enforcement measures alone are insufficient. Instead, a holistic approach is necessary—one that encompasses social policies, health initiatives, educational programs, and strategic urban management. Crucially, local governments and communities must actively participate in shaping security policies.

Methodology

Hypothesis

R.Q.: How can City Diplomacy (better) contribute to managing urban violence, rooted in socio-economic factors, in order to promote a more secure and peaceful urban future?

Sub questions:

- What underlying factors contribute to the emergence of socio-economic tensions in urban environments, and how do these tensions manifest themselves?
- Are there factors that act as triggers for urban violence regardless of contingent elements such as geographical location or historical context?
- How can city diplomacy address these factors as part of an integrated programming effort?
- What correlations link policies that combine multi-level governance structures and SDGs ?
- How can city diplomacy work towards bridging the gaps that may hamper integration and, consequently, hinder the achievement of a sustainable urban development ?

Hypothesis:

- City Diplomacy can contribute to urban violence management by catalyzing a shift from local, mono-sectoral policy designs, to global ones, in which Sustainable-Development-led urban planning schemes actively pursue Citizen Security, instead of only directly addressing urban violence.

This statement represents what we have called “City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus”, the pathway that will allow us to faithfully follow our research question(s) by:

- Evaluating whether city diplomacy, as a tool for cities to fully benefit from the whole spectrum of multi-level governance and its advantages, can prompt local governments to inscribe the issue of urban violence into unconventional, comprehensive policy frameworks.

- Evaluating whether city diplomacy can contribute to shift the focus of urban management policies from tackling contingent threats to actively pursuing citizen security over the long-run, by leveraging, most specifically, SDGs and NUA-based policy instruments.

Figure 2 displays a simplified graphical representation of our hypothesis. The diagram comprises all the different policy areas, policy implementation tools and policy strategies potentially related to our hypothesis statement.

FIGURE 2: The City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus

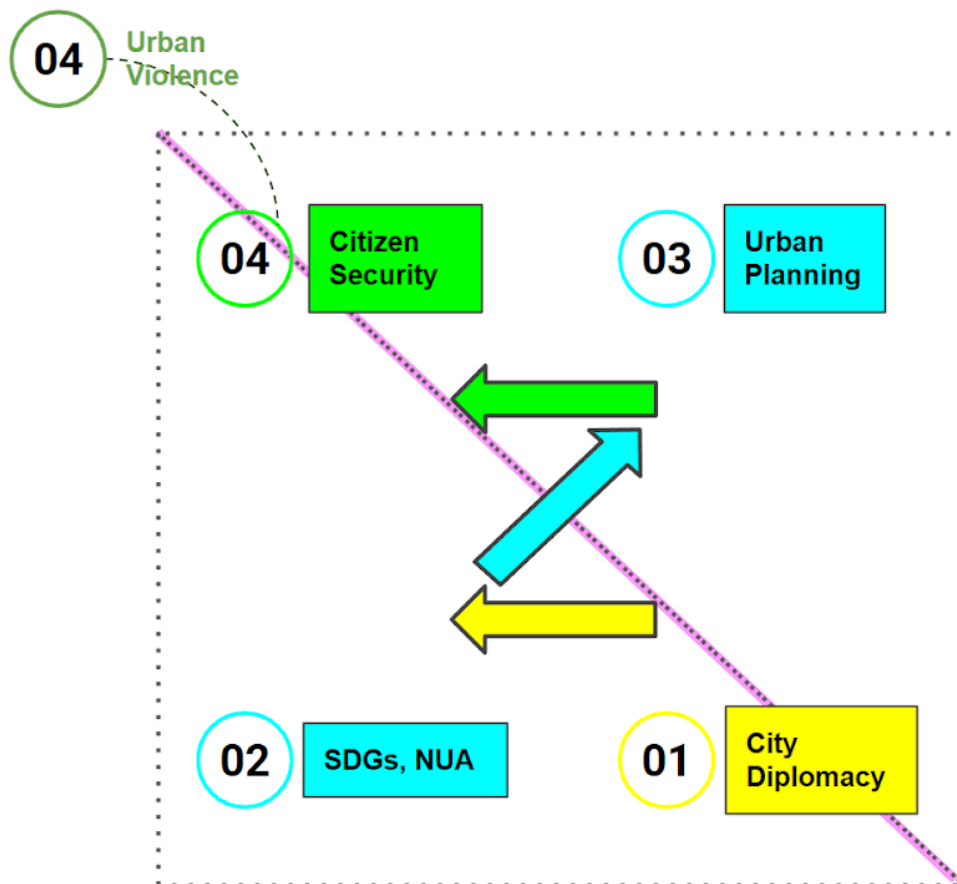


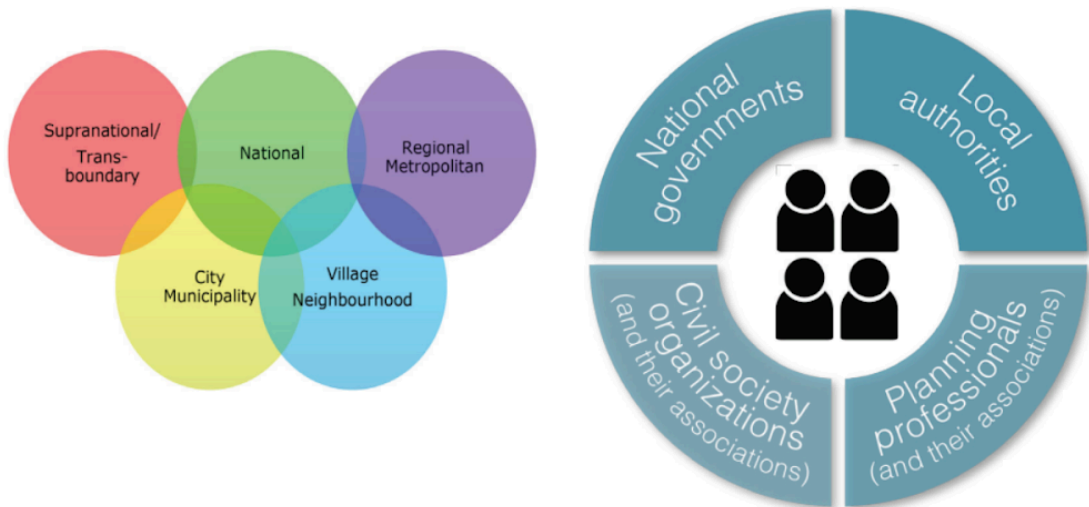
Figure 3 displays how our hypothesis is in line with UN-Habitat’s 2018 International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.

FIGURE 3: Multi-level Governance for a Sustainable Development-led Urban and Territorial Planning⁸⁴

Spatial and Territorial Planning at all levels

Taking into account the subsidiary principle – decision-making and implementation at the right level – the Guidelines are to be used through a multi-scale continuum of spatial and territorial planning:

The Guidelines furthermore promote the development of urban and territorial policies, plans and design by targeting a continuous dialogue and partnership between four key stakeholder groups:



⁸⁴ UN-Habitat, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning - A Synopsis, 2018, pg. 3.

Comparative Method

From a methodological perspective, “comparative analyses across countries would help qualitative studies become more broadly applicable”⁸⁵. As Jay Steinmetz underlines⁸⁶, when it comes to political science, the comparative method may be superior to statistical methodology in producing results allowing for wider inferences to be made, and it is exactly because of this potential for generalizations that we believe that this method will minimize the complexities behind applied research, which has to reconcile the need to make policies more relevant and applicable to the micro-social dimensions of the local level, and the inescapable reality of the increasing influence development principles coming from international fora have in shaping those very same policies. This approach is derived from Mill’s ‘method of agreement’. In MDS, the cases selected are different from each other, but result in the same outcome. By selecting Nairobi and Madrid as our case studies, we will try to show exactly this: that systems which significantly differ from one another, can yet arrive at the same outcome.⁸⁷

By identifying one common typology of urban violence between the two cities (deficient citizen security, in particular socio-economic urban violence, our dependent variable), we will then proceed backwards and attempt to locate a key common factor (socio-economically unequal urban space, our independent variable) correlated to the emergence of urban violence phenomena, and highlight the multi-dimensional areas of interventions policy design should target.

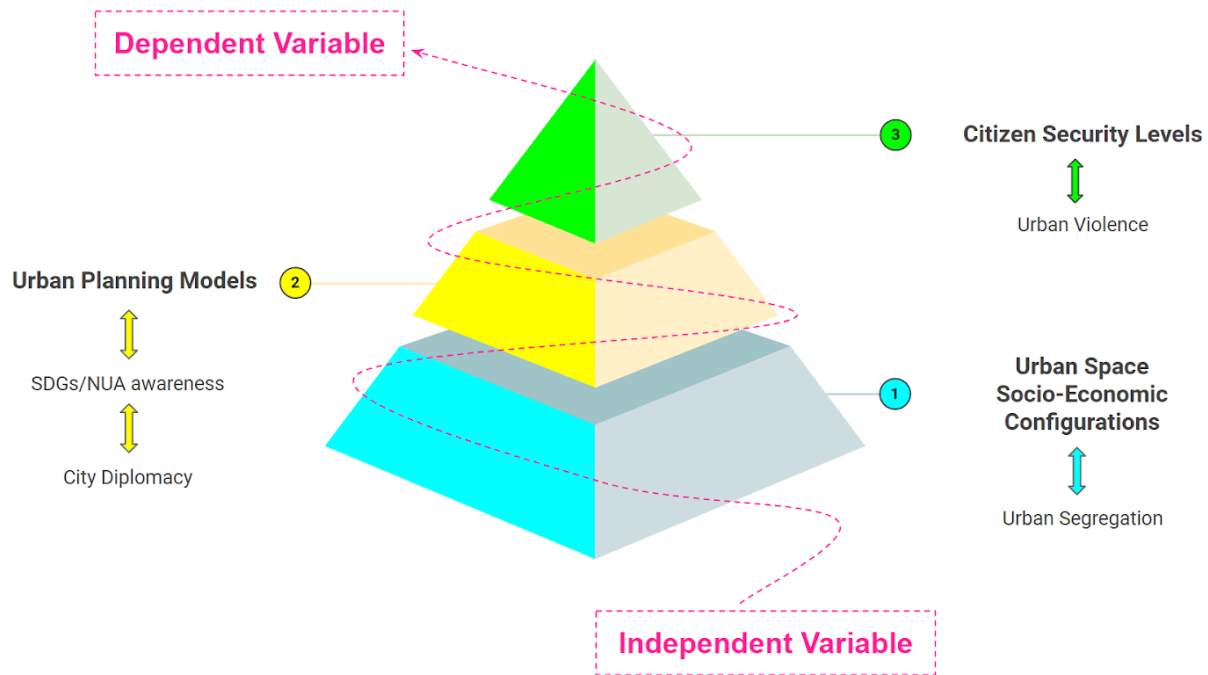
Figure 4 provides a graphical representation of what exactly is the nonlinear correlation between the two variables hereby selected (socio-economic urban violence, unequal urban planning) we aim to verify through our research project.

⁸⁵ Severine Autesserre, "Going Micro: Emerging and Future Peacekeeping Research," *International Peacekeeping* 21 (4), pp. 492-500, Fall 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2014.950884> pg. 496

⁸⁶ [Politics, Power, and Purpose: An Orientation to Political Science](#) Copyright © 2019 by Jay Steinmetz is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted. Chapter 8.

⁸⁷ “2.3: Case Selection (Or, How to Use Cases in Your Comparative Analysis),” *Social Sci LibreTexts*, February 22, 2022, [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Introduction_to_Comparative_Government_and_Politics_\(Bozonelos_et_al.\)/02%3A_How_to_Study_Comparative_Politics-_Using_Comparative_Methods/2.03%3A_Case_Selection_\(Or_How_to_Use_Cases_in_Your_Comparative_Analysis\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Introduction_to_Comparative_Government_and_Politics_(Bozonelos_et_al.)/02%3A_How_to_Study_Comparative_Politics-_Using_Comparative_Methods/2.03%3A_Case_Selection_(Or_How_to_Use_Cases_in_Your_Comparative_Analysis))

FIGURE 4: A non-linear approach to the Comparative Method



To evaluate these two specific gaps directly, this research project proposes an examination of urban management schemes with varying degrees of policy integration both in terms of “Multi-scale Continuum of Spatial and Territorial Planning” and of SDGs harmonization, by comparing two cities, similar in terms of size and population, which display them both: Nairobi, which has historically been fighting the long-lasting issue of slums and gated communities⁸⁸, and Madrid, which has recently started to face an increase of youth gangs in the streets⁸⁹. Analyzing their approaches, we aim to uncover more or less successful practices combining multi-level governance and Sustainable-Development-led urban planning in the achievement of citizen security.

⁸⁸ Jimmy, E.N., Martinez, J. & Verplanke, J. Spatial Patterns of Residential Fragmentation and Quality of Life in Nairobi City, Kenya. *Applied Research Quality Life* **15**, 1493–1517, 2020.

⁸⁹ Queirolo-Palmas, Gangs Policies: Youth and Migration in Local Contexts. The Case of Madrid and Barcelona. Final Report, YOUNGANG – Project N. IEF 272200, 2013.

Data Collection Methods

In order to extract relevant and valuable information, as well as to identify patterns and variations in the effectiveness of city diplomacy in managing urban violence. The two cities that we have decided to analyze for our comparative case-study approach are Nairobi and Madrid.

Given the range of disciplines involved in our research project on City Diplomacy and Urban Violence Management including international relations, urban governance, security studies and diplomacy it is crucial that our data collection approach aligns with the diverse aspects of this subject. To address limited public awareness and privacy concerns, we will employ qualitative methods, specifically conducting interviews with knowledgeable individuals across relevant domains.

We employed qualitative methods, primarily through semi-structured interviews with around 10-15 knowledgeable individuals spanning various relevant domains . We will engage in in-depth interviews with individuals, including experts in urban governance, city diplomacy and urban security, as well as representatives from organizations like UN Habitat, who focus on urban security and conflict resolution. These interviews will be semi-structured, allowing flexibility to explore emergent themes and perspectives. Conducting interviews with knowledgeable individuals across various relevant domains is appropriate given the limited expertise available on this topic. Through these interviews, we can delve into the subject matter, explore essential questions to test our hypotheses, and gather insights.

Drawing from interviews and literature, our goal is to evaluate how City Diplomacy impacts local urban violence management. Using Zoom or Microsoft Teams for hour-long semi-structured interviews, we aim for thorough insights into City Diplomacy's role in addressing urban violence.

Data Analysis Methods

Visualizing in a more direct way what we had to assess certainly helped us upstream, in the interview preparation phase, by allowing us to design straight-to-the point questions that targeted the exact correlations we wanted to draw, but, above all, it turned out to be fundamental in our interview interpretation phase, by allowing us to select effective indicators to analyze our interviewees' discourse and single out the most relevant data capable of supporting the correlations traced by our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus.

Indeed, as our research project is quite complex in terms of the variety of expertise areas it seeks to survey, making sure to consolidate its inner coherence by grounding each transition from one policy area to the other into the most relevant data we could acquire out of our interview's discourse analysis was necessary.

That is why, by adopting a multi-level thematic coding system⁹⁰, we have elaborated a set of coding indicators that mirrors the key areas constituting the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus directly. Indeed, Table 1 displays graphically the result of the process we followed to select (i) what were the key features related to the policy areas constituting our City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus we needed to assess, and (ii) which indicators we could use to account for them in a accurate and, above all, uniform way:

1. We identified the most relevant policy areas based on the hypothesis statement we sought to verify and we used them as the key themes constituting our coding system. Notably, as we sought to design indicators that could properly mirror both our hypothesis' and our comparative method's structures, we used the same colors we also used in Fig. 2 and Fig. 4 in order to be able to actually visualize the symmetry.
2. We identified similar indicators for all policy areas in order to assess their overall status in a comparable way.

⁹⁰ Coates WC, Jordan J, Clarke SO. A practical guide for conducting qualitative research in medical education: Part 2-Coding and thematic analysis. *AEM Educ Train*. 2021 Aug 1;5(4):e10645. doi: 10.1002/aet2.10645. PMID: 34585038; PMCID: PMC8457700.

TABLE 1 : Analysis Indicators

Green: Citizen Security/Urban Violence

Yellow: Urban Planning/City Diplomacy

Blue: Urban Space/ Urban Segregation

INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Community responses to urban violence	Community responses to urban violence: Understanding and supporting community responses to urban violence and their effectiveness in addressing the issue.
Community Engagement	Assesses the level of community involvement and engagement in addressing urban segregation.
Policy Implementation	Analyzes the effectiveness and type of policies and measures implemented to address urban violence .
International Cooperation	Explores the extent of collaboration and cooperation between cities, nations, and international organizations in addressing urban violence through city diplomacy.
Power Dynamics	Investigates the power dynamics and relationships between different stakeholders involved in urban violence and city diplomacy.
Impact of governance	Analyzing the correlations between governance structures, socio economic disparities, and the prevalence of urban violence.
Urban Violence Triggers	Identifies the underlying factors and triggers that contribute to the emergence of urban violence, regardless of geographical location or historical context.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Examines the alignment of urban violence, urban governance and design and city diplomacy initiatives with the UN's SDGs, particularly SDG 11
Power Dynamics	Investigates the power dynamics and relationships between different stakeholders affected by urban segregation
Policy Implementation	Analyzes the effectiveness and type of policies and measures implemented to address segregation
Effectiveness of city diplomacy	Assessing how city diplomacy can work towards bridging socio economic gaps for sustainable urban peace.

Analysis

City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus

Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: First Key Finding

After laying out how our hypothesis statement shaped both our data collection and our data analysis, delineating both *which* policy areas to survey (data collection) and, most importantly, *how* to present them as communicating vessels in light of shared, specific cross-cutting features (data analysis), we will now elaborate on the concrete data that allowed us to conclude that our hypothesis statement is corroborated by valuable evidence and can therefore be deemed as a satisfactory answer to our original main research question: “*How can city diplomacy (better) contribute to managing urban violence, rooted in socio-economic factors, in order to promote a more secure and peaceful urban future?*” Our answer: through a “City Diplomacy - Citizen Security (policy) Nexus”.

1. The “Cross-Cutting” Features

Finding the cross-cutting features potentially capable of linking the different policy areas of our hypothesis was the first task our discourse analysis had to carry out. After applying our indicators to our interviews’ transcripts, we have identified two recurring themes which pool together all the types of expertise surveyed through our semi-structured interviews (citizen security/urban violence, urban planning/city diplomacy and urban space/urban segregation) and, above all, which are closely related to many of the challenges they put forth: (i) the importance of integrated institutional frameworks and (ii) the importance of integrated urban policy design.

2. Two Strategically-Optimizing Cross-Cutting Features

After a deep analysis of our interviewees’ discourse we have identified “integrated institutional frameworks” and “integrated urban planning schemes” as being key elements for the sustainable development of cities and consequently the security of all its citizens.

Furthermore, one element that we came across frequently throughout our interviewing process is that these two recurring themes were often mentioned in contexts related to strategy-optimization; one notable example concerns Dr. Hagra's reflection on the advantages of designing types of integrated urban regeneration processes versus more standardized urban renewal plans:

"For us, having focus groups and thematic workshops based on the urban regeneration project, and including community representatives from the beginning, is a very important collaboration. This base then allows us to bring in the private sector and national government." Dr. Hagra highlights the advantages of an integrated approach that incorporates multiple stakeholders from the outset, enhancing the effectiveness and reach of urban regeneration initiatives compared to more siloed, traditional urban renewal efforts.

The transversal importance of these two cross-cutting features in planning sustainable urban development in the long-run is further supported by a number of core arguments we have repetitively encountered throughout our interview process and that for this very reason we have decided to highlight and list below.

2.1. Importance of International Collaboration for Successful, Long-Term Urban Planning

Dr. Assiago, Global Coordinator of UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme, underlines how municipalities, playing a proactive role in the international space and collaborate with all types of actors (NGOs, UN agencies, City Networks, Regional Platforms, Mayors Councils, etc), are those that often end up being the most successful in terms of sustainable-development-led urban planning schemes and urban regeneration policies, especially when it comes to the long-run hold (and therefore *actual* sustainability) of the initiatives themselves.

2.2. Importance of International Collaboration for Standard-Setting

"International cooperation is crucial to the extent that we set global standards. For example, the standards we refer to as the Trade Declaration for Sustainable Development or the Global Plan of Actions under the New Urban Agenda are advanced as a set of commitments, targets, goals, and indicators that governments put together."

"Cities can benefit from the expertise of the United Nations, as it has a wealth of expertise and funds (particularly in international Geneva). They can provide cities with global experience, but it is essential to enable the ability to connect and engage in agreement discussions that can help share information between stakeholders." - Ms. Dorina Xhixho

2.3. City-to-City Cooperation and its Benefits

"In this perspective, city diplomacy comes into play because there is an international recognition, increasingly today, that cities are able to interrelate more than national governments can on development trajectories. We have seen this mantra being developed across many fields of city development, on the basis that these cities are capable of doing that."

"We have also seen that exchanges or sister city initiatives, while they lack diplomatic teeth in the context of how national governments operate on these issues, are able to build new pathways for cooperation in how they are implementing their practices to address a shared challenge they have established." - Dr. Assiago

2.4. The Role of Cities in Driving Sustainable Development

"The truth of the matter is that in today's world, no city can act as an island unto itself. The issues around safety and security are intertwined and they cut across both the Global South and the Global North. In fact, among the many development issues, it is safety and security that can raise the bar."

"Those cities that are able to innovate more effectively are those that leverage existing best practices and do not reinvent the wheel. Cities that have opened up to this type of diplomacy, both in the Global South and the Global North, are obviously advancing faster than those that have not." - Dr. Assiago

2.5. Impact of Decentralized Financing and Integrated Policies

Ms. Dorina Xhixho's considerations regarding the significant impact inclusive planning could have in optimizing the actual interdependent implementation of both Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda (NUA) are crucial (*verify whether she agrees to be mentioned in this context*):

"There needs to be an honest assessment of the situation in each locality to have fruitful exchange, to understand who contributes what to whom, and to achieve a win-win partnership. It is also important to be clear about the objectives, as this becomes political, and to be inclusive in the processes. The delegation of each stakeholder must be diverse, including people from civil society, the market, and those directly involved in the project for it to be sustainable".

3. Two (Mutually Reinforcing) Cross-Cutting Features

Another interesting finding is that “integrated institutional frameworks” and “integrated urban planning schemes” are mentioned not only in relation to strategically-optimizing policy approaches to the implementation in our nexus’ key four policy areas, but, most importantly, in relation to each other. As one of our interviewees pointed out:

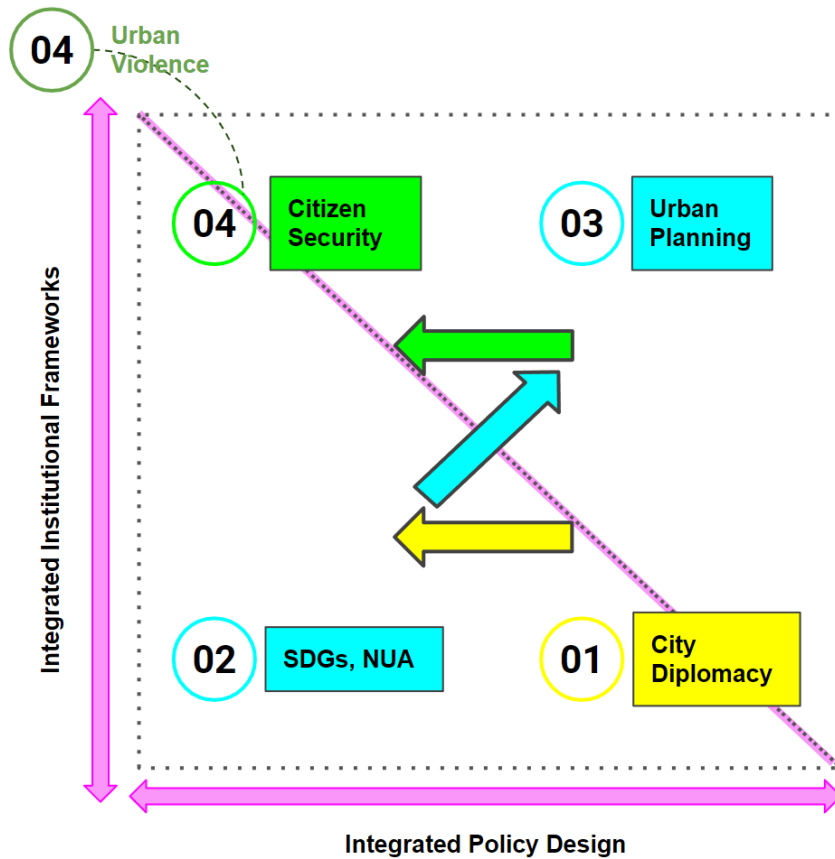
“If you want to have integrated policy design, you need to have integrated institutional frameworks first”⁹¹.

What seems to emerge, then, is that these two cross-cutting features are strategically-optimizing especially when applied to planning schemes in a mutually-reinforcing manner and as approaches informing such planning schemes *synergistically*.

In fact, as also highlighted by our desk research, not only is sustainable development unachievable without a localization of its goals, but another crucial point to keep in mind is that the localization of SDGs is unachievable without the application of a holistic, sustainable-development approach to urban policy-design. In other words, the strategically-optimizing, mutually-reinforcing character of the city diplomacy-citizen security nexus seems to be particularly visible and evident when urban planning gets to be directly informed by SDGs and NUA principles, which both require, in order to be effectively implemented in the long run, both integrated institutional frameworks and integrated policy design. Figure 5 displays the updated visual representation of our simplified hypothesis:

⁹¹ This interviewee preferred to remain anonymous.

FIGURE 5: The City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus (post-Data Analysis)



As Figure 5 shows, “integrated institutional frameworks” and “integrated urban planning schemes” shared by the four key areas constituting our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus (City Diplomacy, SDG’s and New Urban Agenda, Urban Planning and Citizen Security) seem to be strategically-optimizing tools thanks to their mutually-reinforcing nature. When urban planning gets to be informed by a sustainable-development-led integrated policy design model, and sustainable development goals get to be localized at the city level through the unconventional partnerships of multi-level actors that contemporary urban regeneration schemes require, and that simultaneously city diplomacy facilitates urban governance practices as a whole, it is much more likely to shift from traditionally mono-sectoral, and often top-down approaches, to to global ones, in which the design and implementation of truly Sustainable-Development-led urban planning schemes sees, for instance, policies positively pursuing citizen security replacing policies only addressing urban violence. As highlighted by Dr. Daniel Sorando:

“Urban segregation is seen as a social fact essentially tied to the way in which a society—in this context the specific arrangement of socio-economic and institutional factors—inhabits the urban space.”

This indicates that the integration of sustainable development goals into local policies through city diplomacy can transform urban areas from mono-sectoral and top-down approaches to more globally integrated and sustainable ones.

Dr. Sorando also underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing urban segregation to improve overall urban health and safety. He elaborates, *“Residential segregation, largely a result of social inequality, creates mechanisms that enable its own reproduction in a sort of chain—this is how you define it—this chain of inequality processes that takes the form of a vicious cycle.”* This perspective supports the argument that sustainable development-led urban planning can fundamentally change how cities approach citizen security, shifting from merely reacting to urban violence to proactively fostering urban safety through holistic, integrated strategies.

4. Beginning to Build the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus

The fact that according to the experts we have interviewed these two themes are not only simply linked to all four domains, but, most importantly, oftentimes prove to be strategically relevant to address synergistically multiple phenomena originating out of the dysfunctional dynamics of one of the four domains in particular, could represent a novel, but nevertheless solid, indication: if, as highlighted by one of our interviewees, “in order to have integrated urban planning schemes you first need to have integrated institutional frameworks”, laying out all urban policies, regardless of the specific sector they may have to target specifically, according to a holistic framework of strategic design may very well produce significant comparative advantages compared to traditional methods. Indeed, a vertically and horizontally transversal framework capable of thoroughly mapping out all multi-level actors and multi-dimensional fields whose agency-scopes may overlap with a specific policy’s implementation area, may produce a “strategy-multiplier effect”.

Dr. Hagra’s considerations help us elaborate on how such an effect, by highlighting how applying these two cross-cutting features synergistically, is visible when it comes to (i)

needs-assessment accuracy; (ii) implementation efficiency; (iii) long-term monitoring and evaluation:

“The moment you miss the participatory part of the process of urban regeneration, you miss the whole sustainability. You may implement something great within five years, but if it was not implemented in a participatory approach, it will not last.”

"If you're working on a regeneration project on any of the levels you have defined in these two best practices, conducting the socio-economic impact assessment from the beginning would allow the sustainability of the project to go through different directions."

5. Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: Next Steps

After laying the foundations for what we have called the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus by establishing the mutually-reinforcing cross-cutting features that link the four policy areas it comprises in a shared, strategically-optimizing policy implementation space, we will now turn to exploring the specific segments that integrated institutional frameworks and integrated planning schemes create among these three main domains: (i) city diplomacy, SDGs and NUA; (ii) SDGs, NUA and urban planning; (iii) urban planning and citizen security; (iv) citizen security and urban violence (where citizen security is considered as the equivalent of urban violence but in positive terms).

We will explore the first three⁹² of the correlations listed above through our case studies, namely Nairobi and Madrid. Indeed, thanks to these two scenarios, we will present, on the one hand, practical examples of policies that fully leverage the strategic multiplier effect brought about by cross-cutting, integrated institutional frameworks and integrated policy design and, on the other, of policies that only suboptimally take advantage of such implementation synergies and still favor traditional, mono-sectoral, and often top-down, approaches.

⁹² The fourth connection (citizen security & urban violence) is a conceptual connection that we have already presented in our problem statement section.

What we found particularly interesting is that overall, in both case studies, the segment in which suboptimal strategies still seem to dominate in terms of policy implementation approaches is the third one: urban planning & citizen security.

Exploring the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus

As anticipated in the previous section, we will now explore the different segments constituting our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus by turning to our case studies, Nairobi and Madrid. Although because of historical and socio-economic factors of different nature, both Madrid and Nairobi are affected by some type of urban violence which made them face increasingly urgent issues in recent times, both of them display patterns of unequal and unbalanced management of their urban space (urban segregation, gated communities, slums, gentrification), and both of them have been quite active in international fora in terms of resource and knowledge exchanges to leverage for the implementation of innovative, multi-stakeholder urban regeneration programs. Moreover, representing the Global South and the Global North respectively, they allow us to assess our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus across different systems and designs.

"Residential segregation, largely a result of social inequality, creates mechanisms that enable its own reproduction in a sort of chain—this is how you define it—this chain of inequality processes that takes the form of a vicious cycle." - Dr. Daniel Sorando

1. City Diplomacy, SDGs & NUA

As anticipated in the previous section, we will now turn to our case studies, Nairobi and Madrid. Based on our desk research, out of the many urban planning schemes the two cities have implemented throughout the years, we have selected two best practice-projects we found suitable to test and assess the first two segments of our City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus (City Diplomacy & SDGs, NUA; SDGs, NUA & Urban Planning) and, failing to find specific best-practices examples to present the third segment (Urban Planning & Citizen Security), we have instead proceeded to select two “worst-practice” projects to highlight what applying our City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus approach would have changed. Throughout the next sections we will combine findings from our initial desk

research with findings we obtained by having our interviewees examine the features of the projects we had selected and elaborate on whether they matched and displayed aspects related to the interconnection of policy areas our Nexus sought to demonstrate.

1.1. Beneficial Involvement of Third Actors & International Platforms: Mukuru SPA & MARES

As shown by our literature review, city diplomacy can act as a catalyst for policy design processes at the urban level to be able to reach a wider array of stakeholders and therefore rely on diverse, multi-dimensional expertise, deriving from multi-level actors. This fact is supported, for example, by Espiñeira-Guirao's research work on the impact of international tools in European cities' local governance:

“Our research produced a framework to add missing resources to urban planning by including available international tools. We called this strategic lever new urban diplomacy. This concept hinges on active subsidiarity making cities act as entrepreneurs that exploit European/international law and policies. New urban diplomacy relies on a set of transnational instruments targeted in relation to the objectives of the urban project.”⁹³

As far as our research is concerned, we have had the opportunity to verify that such findings hold both in Nairobi's Mukuru SPA case and in Madrid's MARES case.

1.2. Nairobi's Mukuru SPA

We have decided to select the Mukuru SPA case because of the transformative type of “city-making” it displays, one that through the enhanced type of public participation promoted by CSOs and NGOs operating in the area allowed for the development of an urban planning scheme that “helped marginalized groups realize key outcomes”⁹⁴ by leveraging the

⁹³ Espiñeira-Guirao, Tamara. 2022. “Rola instrumentów międzynarodowych W zarządzaniu Lokalnym: Nowa Dyplomacja Miejska”. *Rozwój Regionalny I Polityka Regionalna*, nr 60 (grudzień), pg. 107, <https://doi.org/10.14746/rrpr.2022.60s.09>.

⁹⁴ Ouma, S. (2023). Participation as 'city-making': a critical assessment of participatory planning in the Mukuru Special Planning Area in Nairobi, Kenya. *Environment and Urbanization*, 35(2), pg. 14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09562478231175031>

“cross-fertilisation of ideas between communities and these external actors”. Indeed, as underlined by Jane Weru, Executive Director of the Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), because of some absentee landlords forcing them to purchase the land they were living on, Mukuru slum dwellers initially reached out to the AMT to request loans, as a way to avoid having to face eviction; and it is here that the first instance of “cross-fertilisation of ideas between communities and external actors” is evident: the “key outcomes” sought by the slum dwellers (preserving their rights over their houses) merged with the wider objectives of sustainability AMT, with the support of the Katiba Institute, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the University of Nairobi, the Strathmore University and Slum Dwellers International Kenya (SDI-K), realized it could advocate for at the City County’s level. Indeed, after getting Nairobi County City (NCC) government to declare Mukuru as a “Special Planning Area” (SPA), (County governments in Kenya can declare an area as an SPA only if it has unique environmental and development challenges), ATM and the institutions it collaborated with, realized that

*“because Mukuru is such a large, densely populated area, we would not be able to undertake planning alone. So, along with NCC, we formed eight interdisciplinary planning consortia — one for each priority sector. These included housing and road infrastructure; water, sanitation and energy; health; education; environment; and land. We also formed two support consortia, one to mobilize and coordinate residents and another to coordinate financing. The consortia convened expertise from 42 local and international civil society and private sector organizations”.*⁹⁵

As a matter of fact, then, the fact that these third actors were active in the Nairobi area and NCC was open to collaborating with them, allowed Mukuru residents to benefit from these actors’ awareness of the wider sustainable development related challenges but, at the same time, opportunities, the Mukuru area presented and, instead of recurring to loans to purchase their land, collaborated with the consortia aiming to

“co-produce the Mukuru upgrading plan through a series of community consultation forums held with representatives throughout Mukuru. This included plan formulation and plan validation meetings for all the key sectors. This co-planning process resulted in sector plans

⁹⁵ Locally Led Planning: A Guide for Building Climate Resilience in Urban Informal Settlements - The Mukuru Approach, pg. 2

for all the thematic areas, bundled together as the Mukuru Integrated Development Plan (MIDP)”.⁹⁶

1.3. Madrid’s MARES Project

As underlined by Dr. Alessandro Coppola⁹⁷, the principles of social solidarity economy have been part of the Spanish political discourse even before the MARES project was launched in 2017; indeed, in 2011, the national legislature unanimously promoted a new law recognizing for the first time the role of the social economy in several policy-making areas, facilitating on a legal level the emergence of social economy actors. Moreover, years later, thanks to the European Social Fund’s (ESF) budget allocated for 2014-2020, the national legislature institutionalized such efforts by establishing a National Program to foster the social economy and an Operational Program for social inclusion and the social economy.

Already here, at the national level, we can see how participation in international fora can catalyze the adoption of policies that are much more compatible with Sustainable Development principles; what Madrid would do with MARES years later could very well represent a transposition of the strategy employed by the national legislature in relation to external additional resources, on the municipal level, with the city of Madrid launching and implementing a social and solidarity economy strategy thanks to the additional funding it could rely on having won the Urban Innovative Action’s (UIA) first Call for Proposals in 2015.⁹⁸

The fact that the municipality of Madrid, in order to be able to set up an innovative and comprehensive urban planning strategy, crucially, used city diplomacy as a tool and leveraged internationally-derived additional funding is a significant indicator that city diplomacy can indeed act as a catalyst that facilitates and fosters the adoption of policies that more closely align with Sustainable Development and New Urban Agenda’s principles.

It is not by coincidence that April 18th, 2023 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/77/L.60, titled “Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development”, which openly recalled the following past resolutions:

⁹⁶ Ibid. pg. 12

⁹⁷ Coppola, The MARES Project Journal N°1, Urban Innovative Actions (UIA), 2017, pg. 5.

⁹⁸ <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/call-proposals/1st-call-proposals>

- Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**”;
- Resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third **International Conference on Financing for Development**;
- Resolution 71/256 of 23 December 2016 on the **New Urban Agenda**, the annex to which contains a commitment to supporting micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives throughout the value chain, in particular businesses and enterprises in the social and solidarity economy, operating in both the formal and informal economies;
- Resolution 76/135 of 16 December 2021, entitled “**Cooperatives in social development**”, in which it recognized that cooperatives, in their various forms, promoted the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and all people, whose inclusion strengthened social and economic development and contributed to the eradication of poverty and hunger.

As highlighted by by Espiñeira-Guirao, city diplomacy can “help filling in the gap between supranational opportunities and local needs”⁹⁹, leveraging the potential of international tools and platforms (SDGs, NUA, International Conference on Financing for Development, ...) to empower, as noted by the Secretary-General’s report entitled “Our Common Agenda”, “a broader range of businesses, from multinational corporations to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises”, whose participation “in the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action, including through business models that aligned with efforts to rethink measures of progress and prosperity” is fundamental in order to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda¹⁰⁰.

Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: Second Key Finding

In both Madrid’s and Nairobi’s cases, city diplomacy, understood as the city deciding to access and fully leverage the additional tools and resources international actors and/or

⁹⁹ Espiñeira-Guirao, Tamara. 2022. „Rola instrumentów międzynarodowych W zarządzaniu Lokalnym: Nowa Dyplomacja Miejska”. *Rozwój Regionalny I Polityka Regionalna*, nr 60 (grudzień), pg. 109, <https://doi.org/10.14746/rrpr.2022.60s.09>.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), A/77/L.60, April 18th, 2023.

networks could provide, has proven to be highly beneficial to catalyze progress on key SDGs related to the urban sphere, most notably:

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Furthermore, the involvement of international third actors into local urban dynamics has also favored the application of UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda (NUA), in particular the following points:

51: “We commit ourselves to promoting the development of urban spatial frameworks, including **urban planning** and design instruments **that support sustainable management** and use of natural resources and land, appropriate compactness and density, **polycentrism** and mixed uses, through infill or planned urban extension strategies, as applicable, to **trigger economies of scale** and agglomeration, strengthen food system planning and **enhance resource efficiency**, urban resilience and environmental sustainability”¹⁰¹.

81: “We recognize that the realization of the transformative commitments set out in the New Urban Agenda will require **enabling policy frameworks** at the national, subnational and local levels, **integrated by participatory planning** and management of **urban spatial development** and effective means of implementation, **complemented by international cooperation** as well as efforts in capacity development, including the sharing of best practices, policies and programmes among Governments at all levels”¹⁰².

Indeed, as highlighted by the 2018 World Public Sector Report, despite the great progress made compared to the 1990s¹⁰³, there still are considerable obstacles to achieving a “vertical integration of SDG policies and programmes” or, in other words, the design and implementation of SDG policies linking different levels and scales of governance, from local to international, as well as institutions across different levels of social organization¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰¹ United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), A/RES/71/256, New Urban Agenda, 2016, pg. 15.

¹⁰² Ibid. pg. 22.

¹⁰³ United Nations, Working Together: Integration, institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, World Public Sector Report 2018, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DPADM), New York, April 2018, pg. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. pg. 37

Among these challenges, one of the most pressing is “*the difficulty to mobilize support of local governments around the SDGs given the nature of local politics and the fact that in many contexts, local authorities have the autonomy to decide over local priorities. This can be compounded by a lack of awareness of local governments about the SDGs.*”¹⁰⁵

Once again, then, city diplomacy could prove to be a key addition to municipalities’ urban governance toolbox, a remarkably useful instrument capable of acting as a catalyst for the localization of the SDGs and the actual operationalization of the NUA. A very clear example of how such an instrument could be leveraged is the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) network, which “supports sub-national governments to better understand the nature of the global agenda and to increase ownership” through knowledge sharing and international advocacy. Indeed, as the preface to the UCLG’s publication “The SDGs: What local governments need to know” reads:

“The UN carried out the largest consultation in its history on the Post-2015 Agenda. Throughout the process, UCLG, facilitating the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, advocated for a stand-alone goal on sustainable urbanization and called for all goals and targets to take into account the different contexts, opportunities and challenges at sub-national level. The inclusion of Goal 11 to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” is, in large part, the fruit of the hard-fought campaign by local governments, their associations and the urban community. SDG11 marks a major step forward in the recognition of the transformative power of urbanization for development, and of the role of city leaders in driving global change from the bottom up. However, the role of local administrations in the achievement of the Agenda goes far beyond Goal 11. (...) Local governments should not be seen as mere implementers of the agenda. Local governments are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities. UCLG’s members are committed to actively contributing to a new global partnership between international institutions, national governments, civil society, the private sector and, of course, local and regional governments. We will continue to use global platforms to speak out for the potential of local action to drive development and to call for appropriate legal and financial

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pg. 39

*frameworks to support all local and regional governments in playing our part in the achievement of this ambitious, integrated and universal agenda”.*¹⁰⁶

The importance of using global instruments to address local issues (city diplomacy-urban violence) is further supported by a set of key arguments we have identified throughout numerous interview transcripts. You can find the most indicative ones below.

1. Role of International Collaboration and City Diplomacy

“It is essential to leverage the UN in these multilateral partnerships, as they are experts in finding prolific specialists from varied sectors to make the necessary changes.”

“International cooperation is crucial to the extent that we set global standards. For example, the standards we refer to as the Trade Declaration for Sustainable Development or the Global Plan of Actions under the New Urban Agenda are advanced as a set of commitments, targets, goals, and indicators that governments put together.”

“Cities have created their own networks - urban forums and amalgamations of experts that are effective, but they operate parallel to international and national decisions, rather than in conjunction. Admittedly, cities need their spaces and states do too, but there must be consultation and cooperation before making decisions that affect everyone, whether at the national or local level” - Ms. Dorina Xhixho

2. Effectiveness of City Diplomacy in Implementing Urban Safety Monitoring Tools

“The UN helps cities advance these commitments, goals, targets, and indicators toward global standards based on practices that have been proven effective. In the case of safer cities, we advance these global plans of action into what we call the UN system-wide guidelines for safer cities and human settlements, which were adopted in 2019.” - Dr. Assiagio

¹⁰⁶ United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), The SDGs: What local governments need to know, 2019, Preface

3. Enhancing Urban Safety through City-to-City Collaborations

"City diplomacy comes into play because there is an international recognition, increasingly today, that cities are able to interrelate more than national governments can on development trajectories... We have also seen that exchanges or sister city initiatives... are able to build new pathways for cooperation in how they are implementing their practices to address a shared challenge they have established."

"You suddenly have very influential mayors and mayor's offices who can also be interacting with each other and who do interact with each other on the international scene, bypassing, so to speak, their country's governments, and so the city diplomacy might also be about how cities learn from each other. They collaborate with each other to deal with issues that are on the one hand transnational, but that could also certainly be learning lessons from how they've dealt with their respective issues of violence or insecurity or service delivery or climate change or flooding or whatever it might be." - Anonymous Interviewee 2¹⁰⁷

4. Urban Planning, SDGs & NUA

As highlighted in the previous section, City Diplomacy acting as a catalyst for the localized implementation of SDGs and the NUA is deeply connected to Urban Planning, as where City Diplomacy often shows to be the most effective is in shaping urban planning schemes towards more participatory and, indeed, Sustainable-Development-led approaches.

In this section we will delve into such a connection more in detail, highlighting what the main differences between on the one hand, traditional, mono-sectoral and often top-down *Urban Renewal* schemes and, on the other, comprehensive, participatory, Sustainable Development-led *Urban Regeneration* schemes are. Moreover, we will also display the impact of such differences by further analyzing our two best-practice-cases: Nairobi's Mukuru SPA case and Madrid's MARES project.

¹⁰⁷ This interviewee preferred to remain anonymous.

a. Sustainable-Development-led Urban Planning Schemes: from Urban Renewal to Urban Regeneration Models

In the last section of our literature review we have already presented, although only briefly, the difference between Urban Renewal schemes and Urban Regeneration schemes; indeed, recalling Xie, Liu and Zhuang's work, urban planning schemes can be divided into four main models:

*“post-war reconstruction, renewal for providing public welfare, redevelopment owing to globalization and regeneration for sustainable development. Different Urban Governance (URG) modes emerged in light of the different features of each period. These modes reflected the transformation of URG from top-down to bottom-up and from unitary to multiple. According to the partner, power and procedure, the URG can be split into three main modes: government governance, entrepreneurial governance and civic governance”*¹⁰⁸.

Interestingly enough, as UN-Habitat's highlights in the 2018 International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) Handbook, one of the factors that prompted the transformation of urban governance from top-down to more participatory processes was the changing “policy environment” in which urban planning schemes were evolving. A policy environment is “the sum of the external impacting factors on urban and territorial planning and policies although they do not belong to urban and territorial laws, rules and policies”¹⁰⁹ and could very well define the “changes in societies, urban growth and problems in applying Western modernist approaches to the reality of rapidly growing and poor cities” which “signaled a need for innovative approaches”. It is in this overall policy environment shift that SDGs and NUA principles play a very influential role in shaping urban and territorial planning. Indeed, as the Handbook goes on to show,

“even though there is no intention to develop any binding urban and territorial planning treaty, the NUA provides the first universal platform to exchange best practices and to enable and enhance review and reform of urban and territorial planning (including through

¹⁰⁸ Xie, F.; Liu, G.; Zhuang, T. A Comprehensive Review of Urban Regeneration Governance for Developing Appropriate Governance Arrangements. *Land* 2021, 10, 545, pg. 8, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10050545>

¹⁰⁹ UN-Habitat, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) Handbook, 2018, pg. 14

*city-to-city cooperation and capacity building) to increase the performance of urban and territorial planning”.*¹¹⁰

The case studies we have selected will show concretely what a civic urban governance model actually translates into and will highlight how SDGs principles and NUA indications facilitate such participatory approaches.

b. Nairobi’s Mukuru SPA

When it comes to Mukuru SPA, it was the complexity of development challenges faced by the area that prompted the development of the so-called Inter-disciplinary Consortia, and it was the awareness that

*“interdependent challenges require integrated planning. (...) The conventional small-scale, piecemeal investments made by residents and civil society partners tend to focus on one sector and one location in isolation without considering its relationship to other sectors and locations. Consortia enable an array of experts, officials and community stakeholders to develop sectoral plans in tandem, working together across disciplines. Working with community leaders, CBOs and locally-rooted NGOs, consortia also provide opportunities for deeper community engagement by sectoral experts”.*¹¹¹

Such interdependent challenges are so clearly identifiable and, therefore, translated into opportunities, also thanks to tools such as the SDGs indicators and NUA principles: it is Muungano Alliance, the coalition of NGOs and CSOs guiding the Mukuru SPA initiative, that recommends on the one hand, to thoroughly assess the involved players’ incentives in order to be able to speak to their interests (“for government departments, this could be their statutory obligations and commitments to national and international development targets”¹¹²); and, on the other, to “align consortia to national (e.g. countrywide 2030 or 2050 plans) and international goals (e.g. the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals)”¹¹³.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pg. 13

¹¹¹ Locally Led Planning: A Guide for Building Climate Resilience in Urban Informal Settlements Method: Forming Interdisciplinary Consortia, pg. 3

¹¹² Ibid. pg. 10

¹¹³ Id.

SDGs, NUA, then, can act as powerful indicators to identify challenges, identify potential stakeholders capable of and interested in addressing them, and, ultimately, succeed in turning a development challenge into a development opportunity by shaping the urban planning effort through the empowerment and leverage of local talents and skills.

c. Madrid's MARES Project

Madrid's MARES project showcases a slightly different side of how SDGs and NUA principles have shaped the urban planning model designed for the project. In particular, MARES displays a novel type of leadership governance at the local government level, namely a joint leadership governance. Indeed, as Medina-García, de la Fuente, Van den Broeck, MARES was the product of Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations (IMACs) created to

*“Take advantage of the opportunities offered by international institutions and programs. (...) The same principle inspired the project MARES Madrid, a rare socio-spatial and economic experiment in which neither City Hall or a private or social entity held exclusive ownership or leadership. Instead, it was jointly designed and run by a consortium of seven NGOs and organizations from the SSE (TxP, VIC, SIC, Tangente, Ecooo, Dinamia, and Acción contra el Hambre) together with different agencies from local government, co-financed for four years by the European Union as an Urban Innovative Action”*¹¹⁴

Differently from Mukuru SPA, in Madrid's case the “initiative for change” did not come from the grassroots level per se or, better, even if it originated at the civil society level, it then materialized at the governmental level, during the so-called “governments of change” wave that characterized Spanish municipal politics between 2015 and 2019. Indeed, what is interesting in the MARES case study is that a higher sensibility towards issues related to socio-economic justice, equality of opportunity and citizen participation, which are all related to Sustainable Development Goals, actively shaped Madrid's Urban Governance model and, by doing so, also its approach to Urban Planning. The emergence of the MARES

¹¹⁴ Medina-García, C.; de la Fuente, R.; Van den Broeck, P. Exploring the Emergence of Innovative Multi-Actor Collaborations toward a Progressive Urban Regime in Madrid (2015–2019). *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 415, pg. 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010415>

proposal, in fact, seems to display UN-Habitat's considerations on how governance models change when planning to implement policies related to the 2030 Agenda:

*“The 2030 Agenda must rely on a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development (UN ECOSOC, 2018). They represent the universal norms, values, and basic rules of the game through which decisions on the SDGs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive, accountable, and responsive. These principles are articulated into governance-related sub-goals in all SDGs, and SDG 16 includes a specific focus on effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions as an intrinsic component of sustainable development processes. **These elements provide a powerful and unprecedented impetus for governments at all levels to devote specific attention to designing and implementing governance mechanisms that effectively support the implementation of universally-set objectives.**”¹¹⁵*

Indeed, such considerations seem to be compatible with the remarks made by Mr. Bernardino Sanz, General Director for Economy in the Municipality of Madrid at the time of MARES' launch, who, being asked what were the main changes he expected to achieve with this project, answered:

*“The main change would be that the social economy will be visible to the whole citizenship and would constitute a benchmark for **sustainable development** in addition to those more traditional corporate forms”¹¹⁶.*

Moreover, what is also important to mention is that even though the citizenship's mobilization dynamics in Madrid's case were from certain points of view different compared to Mukuru SPA's case, SDGs have been used as challenges/opportunities mapping tools in both contexts: indeed, as noted by UIA Expert Dr. Alessandro Coppola, “one of the fundamental tools of the MARES Initiative”, designed and implemented by two NGOs specialized in urban planning part of the MARES partnerships (Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas (VIC) and Dinamia), were the so-called “Laboratorios de competencias ciudadanas” (Laboratories for Citizens skills); these laboratories had multiple, highly

¹¹⁵ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Accelerating Progress Towards the Localization of the SDGs and Post-Pandemic Recovery through Enhanced Multilevel Governance, 2022, pg. 12

¹¹⁶ <https://uia-initiative.eu/en/news/project-side-interview-mares-project>

integrated, aims, but one in particular turns out to be poignantly relevant for the present discussion:

*“to identify and map citizens’ skills in specific territories and the ‘value chains’ that connect them through already existing social economy and informal practices to **involve citizens in the empowerment of these skills through the development of new social economy enterprises**”.*¹¹⁷

It is thanks to the definition of the essential imperatives these new social economy enterprises had to achieve that the mapping of citizens’ skills can actually be carried out, as such parameters represent the unit of measurement to use in order to assess the relevance of such skills accurately, and therefore understand where to locate them, among the interconnected and interdependent “value chains” they are part of, in order for their potential to be leveraged in the most efficient way. Indeed, as Dr. Coppola goes on to underline,

*“public laboratories have been held during which participants could **localize on neighborhoods’ maps all grassroots initiatives, formal and informal, that could be associated to the five main thematic cores of Mares: energy, mobility, food, recycling and care.** Participation was open to the universality of inhabitants with a **proactive search of key stakeholders responsible for relevant services, projects and practices on the territory and of people potentially interested in being directly involved in new social and solidarity economy projects**”.*¹¹⁸

Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: Third Key Finding

SDGs awareness is fundamental to stimulate the emergence of Urban Planning schemes that replicate Urban Regeneration models rather than Urban Renewal ones; as highlighted by the 2018 World Public Sector Report,

“the set of goals and targets provides a common map or platform for all actors – in particular but not only at the national level – to interact (...) This can drastically enhance the prospects for integration, both across sectors and across scales, and for engagement. (...) As

¹¹⁷ A. Coppola, The MARES Project Journal N°1, Urban Innovative Actions (UIA), 2017, pg. 10.

¹¹⁸ Id.

a by-product, mappings of linkages among SDG targets translate quite naturally into stakeholder maps, which can facilitate consultation and engagement in institutions in charge of specific issues”¹¹⁹.

Indeed, by stimulating consultation and engagement in institutional processes, SDGs contribute directly to the integration of different policy areas, a process which does not only refer to these policies’ objectives and strategies being merged, but, above all, constitutes their reformulation in terms of their capacity to:

- *Systematically identify relevant and important linkages of particular issues across the SDGs and include those linkages in their design;*
- *Be consistent across scales of implementation;*
- *Involve all the relevant stakeholders throughout all stages of their enactment: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;*
- *Provide adequate resources for implementation at all relevant levels.*¹²⁰

The catalyzing potential held by SDGs awareness, together with the innovative multi-stakeholder maps and partnerships it allows to uncover, is further supported by the experience our interviewees have shared with us throughout the data collection process. You can find selected extracts from their interview-transcripts in Table 2.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ United Nations, Working Together: Integration, institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, World Public Sector Report 2018, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DPADM), New York, April 2018, pg. 5.

¹²⁰ Ibid. pg. 7: “(...) **the term “integration” is considered in a broad sense. Integrated policy-making is used to refer to policy processes that: (i) systematically identify relevant and important linkages of particular issues across the SDGs and consider those linkages in design of policies; (ii) are consistent across scales of implementation (and in particular, given the focus of this report on the national level, from the local to the national); (iii) involve the relevant stakeholders in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and (iv) provide adequate resources for implementation at all relevant levels**”.

¹²¹ Aside from Dr. Coppola, who kindly allowed us to use his publications on Madrid’s MARES project but who unfortunately did not manage to make himself available for a full interview, the other experts mentioned have been interviewed by the research team directly.

TABLE 2

Theme	Quotes
Urban Violence and Citizen Security	<p><i>"The moment you miss the participatory part of the process of urban regeneration, you miss the whole sustainability. You may implement something great within five years, but if it was not implemented in a participatory approach, it will not last."</i></p> <p>- Dr. Mohamed Hagraas</p>
	<p><i>City Diplomacy and International Organisations can even be detrimental to local communities because they pursue SDGs without giving them an actual context, without having them socially and economically translated into concrete ameliorated life conditions. I wish there was a way to have City Diplomacy and still keep communities alive. Maybe if there was a way to have a direct City Diplomacy with Nairobi communities learning from Madrid communities without having to pass through high-level institutions.</i></p> <p>- Dr. Wangui Kimari</p>
City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus	<p><i>City diplomacy can contribute to urban violence management by catalyzing a shift from local mono-sectoral policy designs to global ones in which Sustainable-Development-led urban planning schemes actively pursue Citizen Security instead of only directly addressing urban violence.</i></p> <p>- Dr. Daniel Sorando</p>

a. Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: From Theory to Praxis

What the confirming evidence acquired from the interviews shows us is that when it comes to urban governance and urban planning there seems to be a robust correlation between, on the one hand, institutional and policy integration and, on the other, SDGs awareness sponsored and fostered by the exercise of city diplomacy and NUA's principles.

But how can the “vertically and horizontally transversal framework” capable of thoroughly mapping out all potentially relevant multi-level actors and multi-dimensional fields we mentioned earlier be delivered by a “whole-of-sustainability-approach” to the design, implementation and monitoring of urban planning projects?

In order to show in practical terms how the multi-dimensional Integration continuum traced by the two mutually reinforcing, cross-cutting features identified in the previous sections is better achieved when informed by an enhanced awareness of how local needs may be more than just context-specific challenges, we will merge the three main findings highlighted by our research so far with a model elaborated by Niedja de Andrade e Silva Forte dos Santos, from the University of Lisbon.

Indeed, focusing their research on the operational dimension of city diplomacy, the two authors tried to establish a conceptual framework based, among other factors¹²², on cities' interests as the main drivers of a polity's diplomatic actions. The so-called “3-Ps” framework (People, Place and Policies) represent the three key elements that “frame the sustainable city referred to in goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda”¹²³, namely the city capable of linking its local interests and their global ones by leveraging the resourceful overlaps between (i) human-centered cities (**P**eople), (ii) sustainability goals (**P**lace) and (iii) innovative governance arrangements (**P**olicy).

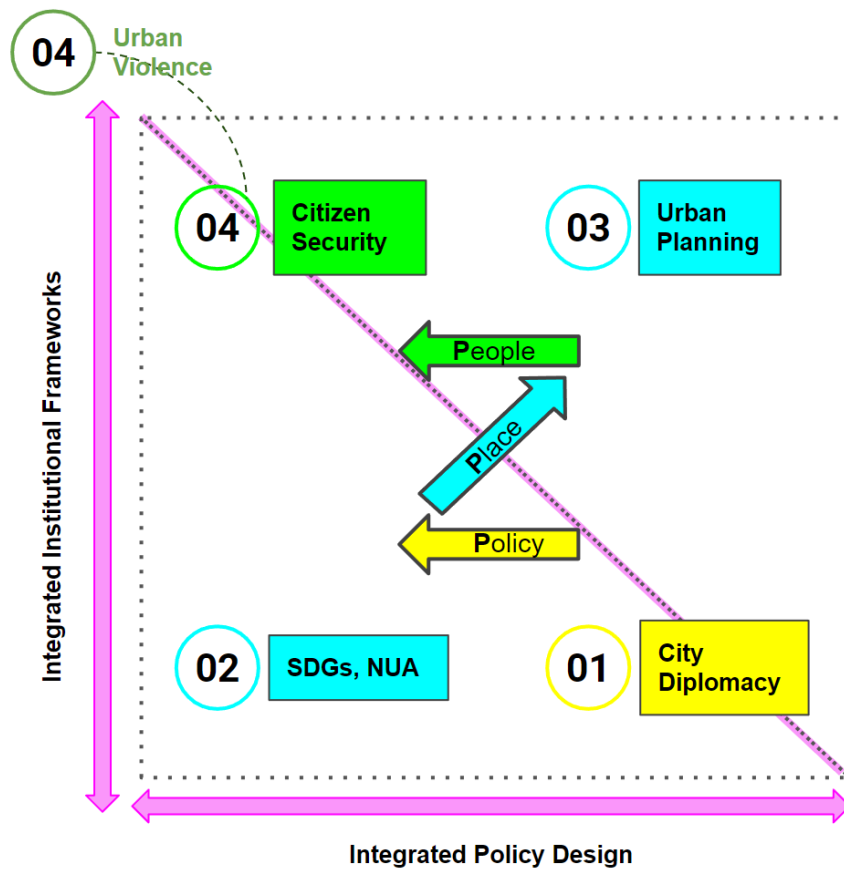
As shown by Figure 6, in fact, the integration between the People-Place-Policy dimensions is also very closely related to the two cross-cutting, mutually-reinforcing and

¹²² Santos, Niedja de Andrade e Silva Forte dos. "Towards a Conceptual Framework for City Diplomacy: a Practitioner's Perspective", *Diplomatica* 3, 1 (2021), pg. 160.

¹²³ *Id.*

strategy-optimizing features we have highlighted as recurring themes throughout our interviews (Integrated Institutional Frameworks and Integrated Policy Design) that we have interpreted as an essential element to corroborate our hypothesis statement, the City-Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus:

FIGURE 6: The City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus (after Interpretation of Findings)



If de Andrade and dos Santos’ framework highlights the gains coming from having an integrated policy approach in place strengthened by exercising city diplomacy, Spencer’s so called “people-place dichotomy”, instead, highlights what failing to achieve such integration might imply.

Spencer talks about the so-called “people-place dichotomy”¹²⁴ in relation to anti-poverty policies, uncovering the basic assumption, often uncritically taken for granted, such a framework depends on: as shown by Table 3, anti-poverty policies are usually believed to be *either* people-based policies, such as housing, transportation, and educational vouchers for the poor (supply side), and low-income worker tax credits for businesses (demand side), *or* place-based policies, such as improvement of local social services, public-private partnerships to improve supply of neighborhood labor (supply side), and local business development incentives to stimulate the demand for labor in poor neighborhoods (demand side)¹²⁵.

Table 3. Policy Mechanism

	Supply Side	Demand Side
Policy Target	Places “Assist poor places”	“Move jobs to workers” “Move workers into jobs”

Source: Spencer, J.H. (2004), People, Places, and Policy: A Politically Relevant Framework for Efforts to Reduce Concentrated Poverty. Policy Studies Journal, 32, pg. 550.

One of the key drawbacks of implementing policy schemes in silos that is pointed out by the authors and is also extremely relevant to the verification of our hypothesis statement is that

“(…) the people-place debate diverts attention away from the development of approaches that simultaneously improve both people and places in favor of falsely binary people-place policy decisions. (...) Simultaneously, it leads to policy evaluation that focuses narrowly on intended benefits, at the expense of examining program impact on both people and places (...) ***Without an evidence-based theory of how antipoverty policy is developed and implemented, scholars***

¹²⁴ Spencer, J.H. (2004), People, Places, and Policy: A Politically Relevant Framework for Efforts to Reduce Concentrated Poverty. Policy Studies Journal, 32, pg. 547.

¹²⁵ Paraphrased from Spencer, J.H. (2004), People, Places, and Policy: A Politically Relevant Framework for Efforts to Reduce Concentrated Poverty. Policy Studies Journal, 32, pg. 550,

and practitioners become trapped in debates about whether to support “people or places,” tend to overlook unintended outcomes in policy evaluation, and *miss opportunities to form logical coalitions*”.¹²⁶

b. Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: towards a New Evidence-Based Theory of Sustainable Urban Safety

We introduced de Andrade and dos Santos’ framework (combined with our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus) and Spencer’s criticism of what he calls “people-place dichotomy” because we believe that they both exemplify, although from opposite perspectives, how practicing city diplomacy can leverage the overlaps and interdependencies traced by the “*common map or platform provided by the same set of goals and targets*”, whose enhanced “*prospects for integration, both across sectors and across scales, and for engagement*”¹²⁷ are instead often disregarded by traditional policy approaches (above all those stemming from the people-place dichotomy). Indeed, the main takeaway we hope our research helped shed light on is that city diplomacy is a formidable *policy instrument* (not just a display of “city soft-power”) capable of offering alternative and more effective ways to tackle local issues by (i) highlighting the potential benefits brought by Sustainable Development Goals’ interdependent integration (in terms of both resource-mobilization and expected longevity of the project), (ii) triggering a more in-depth, inclusive and accurate mapping of all stakeholders potentially involved and, as a direct result, (iii) increasing participation and integration among different institutional levels. This holds true also because in any case, as highlighted by Lamin M. Manneh, Director of the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa,

*“Development goals can, however, only be achieved if local actors fully participate in their implementation and monitoring. Top down policies have revealed their limitations in promoting sustainable and equitable development. In many cases, public policies, in the context of such approaches, lead to increased individual and territorial disparities”*¹²⁸.

¹²⁶ Ibid, pp. 547-548.

¹²⁷ United Nations (UN), Working Together: Integration, institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, World Public Sector Report 2018, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DPADM), New York, April 2018, pg. 5.

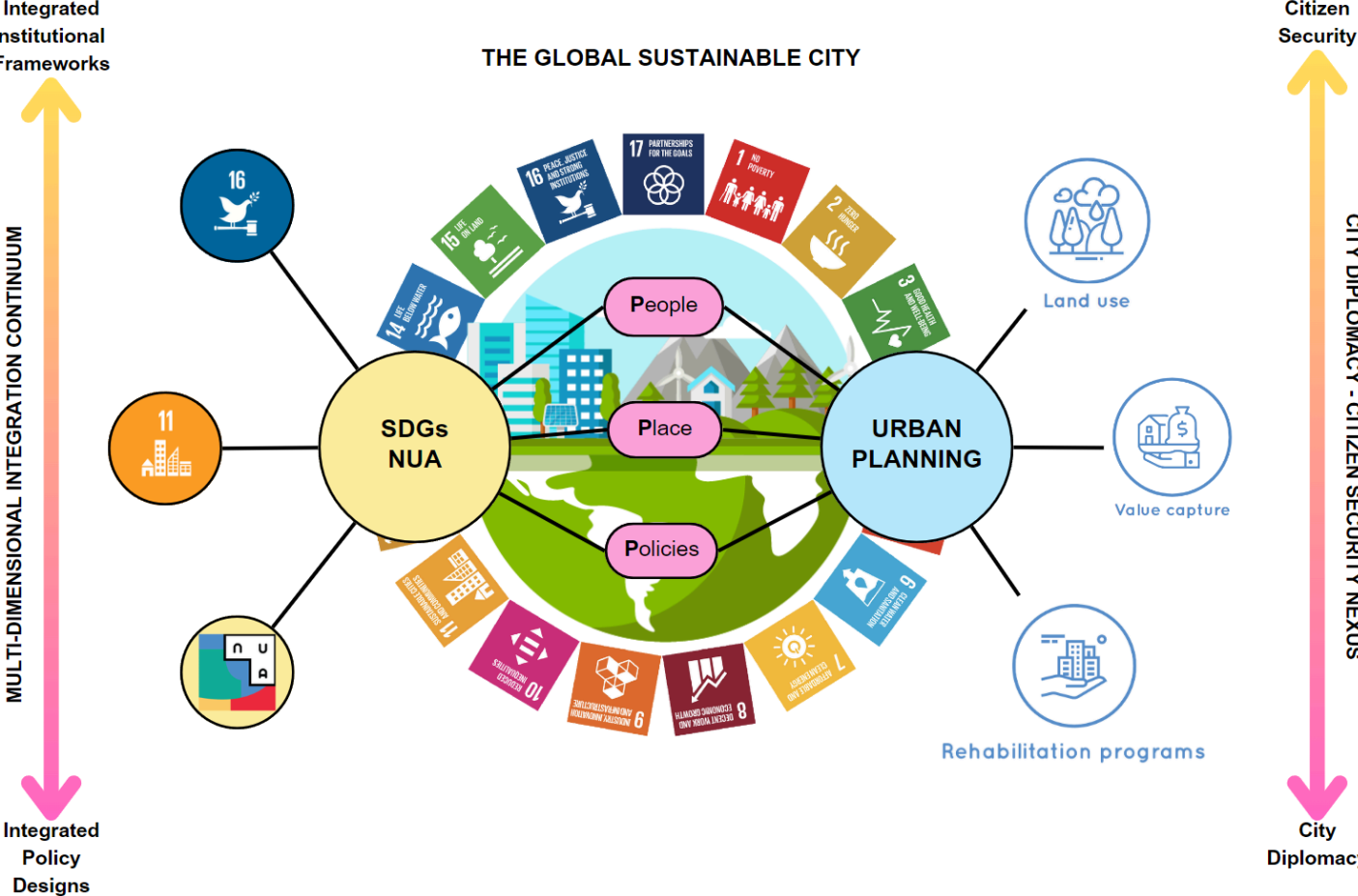
¹²⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Regional Service Centre for Africa, Localizing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Strengthening Local Government Action in Central Africa, 2018, Foreword.

Indeed, if according to Spencer “*without an evidence-based theory of how antipoverty policy is developed and implemented, scholars and practitioners (...) tend to overlook unintended outcomes in policy evaluation, and miss opportunities to form logical coalitions*”¹²⁹, we believe that without an evidence-based theory of how citizen security is developed and implemented, all relevant stakeholders, from local governments to neighborhood associations, will miss opportunities to form the logical coalitions of resources, skills and opportunities city diplomacy is able to catalyze by contributing to sponsor and materialize the “*common map or platform provided by the same set of goals and targets*” and its enhanced “*prospects for integration, both across sectors and across scales, and for engagement*”¹³⁰; a common map that in the context of citizen security we understand to be structured in the following way (Figure 7):

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp. 547-548.

¹³⁰ United Nations (UN), Working Together: Integration, institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, World Public Sector Report 2018, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DPADM), New York, April 2018, pg. 5.

FIGURE 7: The “Common Map” for enhanced “Prospects of Integration” according to the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus (authors’ own elaboration)



1. Putting the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus to test: Urban Planning & Citizen Security

In light of the main findings our interviews have produced and of the final framework we elaborated to evaluate urban security-related projects and their level of effectiveness in terms of enhanced “*prospects for integration, both across sectors and across scales, and for engagement*”¹³¹ they manage to synergistically leverage through city diplomacy (Figure 7), we will now test our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus as a method to assess the quality of two of Nairobi’s and Madrid’s urban plans against urban violence: the Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area and URBACT’s Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Madrid.

Traditional, Mono-Sectoral approaches to Citizen Security: The Case of the Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area

1. Background of the Project

In 2012, Nairobi started to experience increased insecurity, crime, heavy traffic congestion within its Central Business District (CBD) and, above all, a series of major terrorist attacks carried out by al-Shabab militants. Pressed by a traumatized and angry wave of discontent, Nairobi’s politicians decided to act and seize the Digital Silk Road’s (DSR) financial resources China was trying to invest in Africa: on 14 September 2012, the Government awarded M/s Nanjing Les Information Technology Ltd (Huawei) the contract for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of an Integrated Urban Surveillance System (IUSS) for Nairobi City Business District (CBD). Indeed, with its nearly 2000 CCTV cameras capable of providing the police with real-time surveillance tools, Nairobi became Huawei’s first “Safe City” project in Africa. Yet, despite the deployment of such innovative technologies, in its June 2023 report, Edgeland Institute, a research center that studies the

¹³¹ United Nations (UN), Working Together: Integration, institutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, World Public Sector Report 2018, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DPADM), New York, April 2018, pg. 5.

digitalization of urban security, has highlighted that between 2014, namely when IUSS was officially launched, and 2023 there has been a steady rise in criminal activity.

In order to assess what could have determined such disappointing outcomes, we will use our hypothesis statement as an interpretative framework through which to analyze the policy scenario that led to the IUSS in the first place, and underline, in particular, which of the features our City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus requires in order to be established, were not implemented in this specific instance.

2. Analysis of the Project

In order to show how this mono-sectoral and monolithic approach prevents the whole multi-dimensional integration continuum constituting the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus from being established and, on a contrary, created nonoptimal institutional and policy arrangements, we will use a series of “questions” UN-Habitat lists as effective indicators to measure how far-reaching a specific project’s vision is in terms of enhancing indigenous “capacity to cope”, a fundamental factor in determining the resilience of urban governance systems, especially when considering urban violence management.

To answer these questions, we will use the Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area 2017 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, an official document published by a technical, super-partes office which, acting under the Public Audit Act, 2015, Section 229 (6) of the Constitution and Section 36 of the Public Audit Act, 2015, has the mandate to conduct Performance Audits and report to Parliament on the effectiveness in the use of public funds.

The comparison between UN-Habitat’s indicators and the Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area 2017 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General can be found in Table 4.

TABLE 4: UN Habitat’s principles vs. Nairobi’s IUSS (authors’ own elaboration)

UN Habitat’s “questions”	Nairobi’s IUSS Performance Audit Report
<p>Are the skills needed to support initiatives of this kind available to the process of governance in the city, and where there are shortfalls of this nature, are these identified and addressed?¹³²</p>	<p><i>“No accountability and local competency developed for maintenance of the IUSS: Effective maintenance of the IUSS project is crucial given the significant amount of taxpayers funds used in the project and the key role the system can play in enhancing the country's security and traffic systems if properly used. (...) However, by April 2015, (...) no competencies had been developed locally for maintenance of the IUSS project as contracted (...)”</i>¹³³</p> <p>Type of Policy: only Place-based; indigenous “capacity to cope” not considered as key policy target (Fig. 7).</p>
<p>Is there a willingness to recognize the importance of community-based initiatives in tackling crime and violence issues, and a consequent willingness to make resources available to support community-level activities and to consult with communities fully and openly?¹³⁴</p>	<p>As <i>“adequate planning was not done before its implementation”</i>¹³⁵, the project encountered several obstacles throughout the implementation, including facing resistance from the local population and business-owners, who were not willing to have cameras installed in their properties. That is why the Office of the Auditor General recommended to design: <i>“comprehensive plans, policies and frameworks during planning to tackle key aspects of interagency projects during and after implementation. These should address issues like project ownership, handling and ownership of information generated from</i></p>

¹³² United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements, 2007, pg. 91.

¹³³ Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area 2017 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, pg. 11.

¹³⁴ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements, 2007, pg. 91.

¹³⁵ Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area 2017 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, pg. 15.

	<p><i>the system, roles and responsibilities, funding and maintenance.</i>"¹³⁶</p> <p>Type of Policy: only Place-based; communities and citizens, the first who would experience the policy's effects, are not considered as key interlocutors throughout the policy design phase (Fig. 7).</p>
<p>Is there an acknowledgement that tackling urban crime and violence has to be seen as a long-term commitment and is not the territory of 'quick fixes'?¹³⁷</p>	<p>Despite the Government's huge budgetary allocation (Kshs.437 million which was 13% of Directorate of Metropolitan Development's 2012/13 development allocation), "<i>by March 2015, there were still increasing levels of insecurity and heavy traffic congestion within Nairobi's CBD</i>"¹³⁸.</p> <p>Type of Policy: only Place-based; no commitments have been made to earmark funds to foster indigenous capacity building in the long-run and systematically engage with local communities to develop a more accurate awareness of citizens' security needs and co-create a new bottom-up, solid culture of safety (Fig. 7).</p>

These "answers" help us understand how the project's shortcomings could be related to dysfunctional dimensions developing within what we have defined as the "segments" constituting our City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus, namely City Diplomacy & SDGs, NUA and SDGs, NUA & Urban Planning: if both dimensions had actually been considered and properly taken into account throughout the policy design stage, Nairobi's urban security plan could have been resembled another model, promoted and implemented by UN-Habitat, that could have been used as a base to initiate a more comprehensive and sustainable (in terms of the actual feasibility of the plan itself in the long-run) set of policies: the Safer Nairobi Initiative. It is true that the initiative's main features, summarized in Box 1 below,

¹³⁶ Ibid. pg. 16.

¹³⁷ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements, 2007, pg. 91.

¹³⁸ Integrated Urban Surveillance System for Nairobi Metropolitan Area 2017 Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, pg. 1.

may not be able to address terrorist threats themselves, but it is also true that they are still crucial to create the “capacity to cope” conditions upon which complex and multi-level projects can stand steadily and develop over time in a sustainable and manageable way.

BOX 1: UN-Habitat’s Safer Nairobi Initiative (2002)¹³⁹

The Safer Nairobi Initiative

The strategy involves a two-year action plan based upon four pillars:

- better enforcement of existing laws and by-laws;
- improvement of urban design and the environment;
- community empowerment; and
- socially oriented measures providing support for groups at risk, including children, youth, women and street families.

The major elements of the strategy are:

- the adoption and implementation of a local safety action plan;
- local diagnoses of insecurity, involving a crime victimization study, youth offender profiling and a study of violence against women;
- extensive discussion of survey findings with stakeholders groups, including communities, the private sector, women groups;
- a city-wide residents convention held in 2003 that approved the city-wide crime prevention strategy, later endorsed by the City Council;
- the establishment of an interdepartmental committee on safety and security within the city council under the auspices of the mayor;

- safety audits conducted in key locations;
- launch of a Safer Spaces and Streets Campaign with two pilot projects;
- publication of a quarterly newsletter on city safety and security;
- establishment of a local coordinating team and office;
- progressive development of action-oriented partnerships;
- broad-based stakeholder consultations and reviews;
- training and exchange visits; and
- lighting up of Nairobi’s slums and streets.

It is still too early to draw overall conclusions on the success of the programme since it is trying to combat what are, in some cases, quite long-term trends and since it is seeking not merely to undertake specific projects targeted at specific problems, but also to change the ways in which crime and public safety issues are tackled in Nairobi. But what is already clear is that there have been some specific successes – for example, the programme of lighting Nairobi’s streets and slums is seen as a success both in aesthetic terms and in addressing some of the people’s fear of crime and violence. In addition, the problems of youth-related crime (including its street-life elements) are not only better understood, but are also being tackled through a longer-term strategy.

Source: Masese, 2007

¹³⁹ Source: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements, 2007, pg. 87.

Traditional, Mono-Sectoral approaches to Citizen Security: The Case of URBACT's Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Madrid

1. Background of the Project

In order to face issues such as increase of urban population, higher density of people sharing the same public spaces, in 2019 Madrid decided to join the UrbSecurity European Project, one of URBACT III Action-Planning Networks developed under the motto “Planning safer cities” and aimed at increasing the provision of urban security services.

As stated by Madrid's Municipal Government, although one of the main challenges cities face in contemporary times is, indeed, that of increasing security and preventing criminal growth, “this challenge comes not only by ensuring security, but it goes beyond. Public leaders must be able to foster changes in public space regulations to increase citizen security and to build up new technological systems aimed at crime prevention”¹⁴⁰.

Since UrbSecurity proposed to design a specifically-tailored integrated and participatory Action Plan for each city involved in the project, cities had ample freedom to set their own specific targets and select the most suitable strategy accordingly. Indeed, the fact that what Madrid's Municipal Government wanted to gain in terms of skills and resources out of this EU-funded project was very much more focused on environmental design rather than social development, is pretty clear, as stated in Madrid's URBACT's Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Report:

“Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design's (CPTED) role is to reduce vulnerability by placing the pieces of our physical environment in a sensible way. To achieve this, some very simple principles are employed: Natural Surveillance; Reinforcement of the Territory; (...) Lighting and Police Presence; Technological Assistance. Crime prevention in urban environments depends on the emphasis we place on the nature of the spaces we create

¹⁴⁰<https://www.madrid.es/portales/munimadrid/es/Inicio/English/Planning-safer-cities-UrbSecurity-European-Project/?vgnnextfmt=default&vgnnextoid=4bcc75ed9e4e5710VgnVCM1000001d4a900aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=29367421ee261510VgnVCM2000000c205a0aRCRD>

*between buildings. (...) Careful observation of people's behavior in public spaces is an essential part of creating safe environments".*¹⁴¹

The secondary role of non-traditional crime prevention measures addressing social development is even more evident by comparing Madrid's Integrated Action Plan with Unione della Romagna Faentina's (Italy) Integrated Action Plan which, acknowledging that "urban security policies built upon integrated and participated approaches have shown how repressive responses to crime – or anti-social behaviors – represent a limited strategy that cannot be the winning strategy in the long term", set completely different targets and, accordingly, selected completely different strategies. The IAP included key actions such as: (i) "fostering the development of an integrated culture for urban security issues, by engaging the local stakeholders and community in capacity building activity"; and (ii) "developing a specific communication strategy, leveraging the power of social media. Exchange of information and experiences on local criticisms contribute to identifying priorities on the basis of real and concrete issues"¹⁴².

2. Analysis of the Project

In order to show in which terms URBACT's Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Madrid fails to reproduce the whole multi-dimensional integration continuum constituting the City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus, and the missed opportunities that this implies, we have this time decided to turn to UrbSecurity's Report "Planning Safer Cities, design, implementation and evaluation – Guidelines", which pinpoints the project's greatest successes and the key "lessons learned" that made them possible:

- Focusing on awareness-raising activities for citizen engagement in urban safety and security
- Reaching critical mass of participants and representatives

¹⁴¹ URBACT's Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Madrid, 2019, pg. 3.

¹⁴² UrbSecurity's Report "Planning Safer Cities, design, implementation and evaluation – Guidelines", 2023, pg. 14

- Promoting an integrated approach
- Providing a combined socio-economic impact assessment

Interestingly enough, indeed, the last point (“Providing a combined socio-economic impact assessment”) is one of the principles also Dr. Hagrais, urban planner working at UN-Habitat’s headquarters in Nairobi, advocates for and which can be contextualized as one of the key features of a “Urban Planning For Sustainable Development” scheme. Indeed, as he underlined during one of our interviews, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is fundamental for two main reasons: public participation and evaluation;

“(First), community participation (...) it's crucial, (...) the moment you miss the participatory part of the process of urban regeneration, you miss the whole sustainability, you may implement something great, but within five years, if it was not implemented in a participatory approach, it will not last. So this is something I would highlight. Second, (...) If you're working on an urban regeneration project, conducting the socio economic impact assessment from the beginning would allow the sustainability of the project (...) through different directions. So for me, these two issues are the most crucial”. Dr. Hagrais

Nevertheless, despite these positive aspects, Madrid’s URBACT Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP), especially compared to other European Pilot Cities that designed and implemented their own security plans at the same time, still presents some criticalities in all the “lesson learned” we have listed above. In particular (Table 5):

TABLE 5: UrbSecurity’s Guidelines vs. Madrid’s IAP key activities and partners (authors’ own elaboration)

LESSONS LEARNED	MADRID URBACT IAP (action 1) ¹⁴³
<p>“Focusing on awareness-raising activities for citizen engagement in urban safety and security”¹⁴⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 1: monitoring of information through social networks. A great tool that can help eradicate this problem is to follow up on social networks and groups created by young people. Social networks are a great source of information that provide information about these gatherings of young people. <p>Type of Policy: mostly Place-based; youth is never directly involved, if not as a surveillance target for police forces (Fig. 7).</p>
<p>“Reaching critical mass of participants and representatives”¹⁴⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 2: coordination with other police agencies <p>Type of Policy: mostly Place-based; civil society is not directly involved and, in general, the array of sectors involved is pretty limited (only other police agencies are mentioned). (Fig. 7).</p>
<p>“Promoting an integrated approach”¹⁴⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 3: creation of an action plan. Since the vast majority of these young people are minors, an action protocol should be created, such as contacting the parents and informing them of the situation in which their son or daughter has been found and, once they have been informed, reporting the parents themselves for their child’s behaviour. <p>Type of Policy: mostly Place-based; once again, youth is never directly involved (apart from being a surveillance target this time for their parents) and parents involved still contribute to the same, monolithic</p>

¹⁴³ URBACT’s Design for Security: Creating Safer Cities - Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Madrid, 2019, pg. 10.

¹⁴⁴ UrbSecurity’s Report “Planning Safer Cities, design, implementation and evaluation – Guidelines”, 2023, pg. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. pg. 4.

¹⁴⁶ Id.

	strategy: surveillance (Fig. 7).
<p>“Providing a combined socio-economic impact assessment”¹⁴⁷</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 4: involve citizens in prevention (alerts, incidents, warnings). Good preventive behaviour would be to involve the neighbours themselves in alerting the police before young people meet up in a fixed location. <p>Type of Policy: mostly Place-based; once again, youth is never directly involved (apart from being a surveillance target this time for regular citizens) and citizens involved still contribute to the same, monolithic strategy: surveillance (Fig. 7).</p>

What is striking from Table 5 is that policy-evaluations aimed at guaranteeing the integrative character of the whole project (the “lesson learned”) that in order to be duly fulfilled required likewise an equally integrative arrangement of actors and partnerships, in Madrid’s case are at least partially disregarded: for example, if, on the one hand, a “lesson learned”-approach would necessitate “focusing on awareness-raising activities for citizen engagement in urban safety and security”, which could also mean, for instance, leveraging the influence and potential of social media platforms as outreach tools to engage with the youth, on the other, instead, Madrid’s plan totally excludes (in all four key activities actually) one of (if not) the most important stakeholder category(ies) to take into consideration in order to solve the issue of unrest and disorder in the streets at night: young people.

Indeed, deflecting the youth from activities that turn out to be incompatible with a peaceful and pleasant urban environment, also requires understanding what are the socio-cultural motives behind that particular lifestyle, which has to be analyzed, first and foremost, through the eyes of those who practically enact it. In fact, even though this is a specific case, Martín, Martínez, García-Sánchez, Aramayona, Begoña; Almendros, Jiménez do not simply acknowledge the fact that teenagers or young adults who belong to gangs often make consumption of alcohol and drugs, but attempt to reconstruct the many intricacies such an apparently basic or “mainstream” behavior can comprise:

¹⁴⁷ Id.

“Maybe the largest study on youth gangs, performed using qualitative methods, is that by Laidler and Hunt (2012) who summarized the results obtained with the application of interviews to young gang members along two decades. (...). Drug trafficking or abuse of drugs, alcohol or other type of substances would act as a “social lubricant” that maintains cohesion and solidarity in the gang, promotes masculinity and comradeship, while acquiring a significant symbolic value in initiation rites and becomes an element that promotes intergroup fights; in this consumption young gang members look for satisfaction on the short term and a method to avoid family conflicts, school problems and lack of job prospects on the long term (...)”¹⁴⁸

The lack of this type of integration-informed policy evaluations is also evident when it comes to how the UrbSecurity APN IAP REPORT August 2022 describes Madrid’s version of the project:

“Here the main concern was to coordinate the urban design of the space to have in mind security issues, such as terrorist attacks or controlling mobs, establishing a collaboration channel with city officials to tackle the problem, for instance removing physical barriers and “blind” spots, following the CPTED rules. Different situations led to different approaches but with a common goal, to fill in the existing gaps in planning for safer cities”.¹⁴⁹

Given that the urban planning effort focused almost entirely on implementing a pretty clear “law-and-order” approach, it is not by chance that when it comes to Action 1 (Prevention of alcohol consumption in the street by young people) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures are mentioned, whilst Crime Prevention Through Social Development (CPTSD) are not; even when Madrid is one of the Pilot Cities for this UrbSecurity project that subscribed to the specific section of the experiment that aimed at assessing the role of social cohesion for urban crime prevention. This perspective claims that

“ (...) The broader the base, the more effective harsher security measures will be. Focusing only on security and control without giving people a voice in the creation of rules, without

¹⁴⁸ Martín, María-Jesús; Martínez, José-Manuel; García-Sánchez, Rubén; Aramayona, Begoña; Almendros, Carmen; Jiménez, Cristina Young people belonging to violent groups in the Region of Madrid. Psychosocial process model on the onset and evolution of violent identity behavior *Anales de Psicología*, vol. 33, núm. 1, enero, Universidad de Murcia Murcia España, 2017, pg. 121.

¹⁴⁹ UrbSecurity APN IAP REPORT, August 2022, pp. 10-11.

*informing citizens about their rights, without paying attention to specific needs of minorities does not feel like a free, sustainable and safe society. If ‘the other’ is constantly perceived as a threat or a risk, people will feel constantly insecure and ‘the other’ will constantly be insecure about their living conditions or the protection of their (human) rights”.*¹⁵⁰

Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: Fourth Key Finding

We decided to analyze these two specific projects because we thought they effectively represented both the potential benefits a City Diplomacy - Citizen Security Nexus-approach to urban policy design could yield and the potential disadvantages severing such a process of policy-integration could bring. Moreover they seem both to support the need to implement the long-forgotten recommendations included in UN-Habitat’s 2007 Global Report on Human Settlements, which advocated for the adoption of approaches which considered urban violence as one specific aspect of the overall health status of the city eco-socio-system, underlining how this necessarily implied that policy aimed at addressing urban violence had to be designed not as short-term, “quick-fixes” responses to likewise specific, contingent manifestations of urban violence, but as policies actively promoting the enhancement of urban health status as a whole, by targeting all the diverse dimensions it comprises:

*“to deflect youths from a life of crime and to offer them more attractive alternatives, the city needs to become a place where opportunities abound for young people to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and sporting activities. The importance of this is that it is not a traditional ‘crime and violence policy’, but essentially about addressing the social and economic circumstances that cause young people to choose a life of crime and violence”*¹⁵¹

International cooperation encourages the adoption of innovative, out-of-the-box approaches a specific municipalities may not have been experienced in their traditional URG models, but comparative advantages they may instead learn to appreciate after being actually exposed to

¹⁵⁰ Urban Agenda for the EU, The importance of social cohesion for urban crime prevention Final report & recommendations of Action 5 – measure the impact of social cohesion on security in public places, October 2021, pg. 23.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements, 2007, pg. 107.

them by interacting and, possibly, cooperating with external actors (NGOs, IOs, City Networks, Mayors Councils, international platforms such as the UIA, etc).

Indeed as highlighted by UN-Habitat in 2007 and reiterated by **Dr. Assiago** during one of our interviews,

"The truth of the matter is that in today's world, no city can act as an island unto itself. The issues around safety and security are intertwined and they cut across both the Global South and the Global North. In fact, among the many development issues, it is safety and security that can raise the bar. There is a lot in common between the Global South and the Global North regarding the approaches to these issues, and in many cases, there are significant areas of synergy.

Those cities that are able to innovate more effectively are those that leverage existing best practices and do not reinvent the wheel. Cities that have opened up to this type of diplomacy, both in the Global South and the Global North, are obviously advancing faster than those that have not.

The measure, or indicator, of this progress, is the level of institutional positioning of safety within their structure and hierarchy, the extent to which their policies have become integrated across various departments of the city, and not just isolated within a standalone department. Another indicator is the extent to which financing has been decentralized from national governments to support local governments. These elements, from a planning, legislation, and financing perspective, are manifestations of those practices that are embraced in both the Global South and the Global North."

Limitations

1. Building the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus: An Important Caveat

It is important to underline that we may have portrayed our “City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus” in such a way as to make it appear as nothing more than a deterministic, “positivism-like” optimistic policy arrangement, failing to account for the fact that since there is no “Invisible Hand” behind the functional dynamics of progress, believing in linear, Sustainable-Development-led rearrangements of power favoring the development of integrated institutional frameworks and integrated policy designs is actually the very first huge impediment to the creation of a multi-dimensional, “three-Ps” integration continuum.

What this caveat implies, crucially, is that sophisticated technologies, avant-garde digital tools and forward-looking urban planning schemes will never be enough if not conceived as, first and foremost, an answer to concrete, measurable and identifiable citizens’ needs.

In other words, the only way to lay the foundations for a City-Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus is conducting a thorough, attentive and accurate needs assessment of society’s grassroots, which represent the only categories of actors throughout the whole urban governance context capable of (i) guaranteeing their long-lasting effects by actively participating in an authentic co-ownership of their design and implementation processes which in turns allows them, therefore, to (ii) trigger these policies’ social reproduction by successfully transferring and materializing their potential benefits into their own individual situations.

That is why we would like to end our interpretation of findings with a very powerful quote we extracted from the interview we had with Dr. Wangui Kimari, researcher at the African Cities Research Consortium:

“Wangui Kimari: I mean, ultimately, often on the table there are not the people who don't have water. And so that's a challenge with these processes. If it was diplomacy between the poor of Madrid and the poor of Nairobi, maybe, for sure; but if it's representatives of large institutions, I'm not so convinced. I'm not saying it's not possible, but I'm not so convinced.”

Research Team: *So, for example, you would find city networks more effective than just having the headquarters of an international organization in the city.*

Wangui Kimari: *Yes. 100%.”*

We believe this last comment to be of extreme value, as it issues a key warning to keep in mind when assessing the seemingly enabling conditions produced by the “two cross-cutting features” we have identified: indeed, what this last interview excerpt reminds us is that in order to have City Diplomacy acting as a catalyst to introduce and sponsor SDGs and NUA principles as tools to leverage because of the additional resources they are able to provide and of the shift from traditional, top-down approaches to urban planning to more contemporary, Sustainable-Development-led urban regeneration projects they are able to produce, City Diplomacy, meant as a political strategy followed by a specific municipalities when interacting with international actors directly, bypassing the national level, has to be the faithful reflection of an inclusive urban diplomacy first; indeed, such urban diplomacy may very well be defined as a type of negotiation among communities’ main actors that is carried out through horizontal, institutionalized communication channels capable of equally representing all stakeholders involved in a specific policy by effectively conveying their autonomously set needs and priorities: it is only in this way that City Diplomacy will be able to act as an effective tool to localize SDGs and tailoring their abstract generality into concrete, beneficial answers to (all) citizens’ needs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a rapidly urbanizing world, cities are the first to be affected by several global problems. One of these is violence in urban settings that affects the day to day in the life of local citizens. Logically, cities should play an increasingly important role on the international stage in the future. This research sought to examine the potential of city diplomacy as an instrument for managing urban violence, rooted in socio-economic factors, to foster a more secure and peaceful urban future. This study's findings highlight the complex nature of urban violence and urban governance as well as the necessity for a comprehensive, integrated approach to citizen security that transcends traditional crime reduction strategies.

Our research team has established a link between socio-economically driven urban violence, urban segregation, citizen security and finally city diplomacy. Through qualitative interview methods with experts from several relevant fields such as city diplomacy, city governance, urban violence and urban planning, we got insights from a diverse array of experts that we carefully coded and analyzed in a second phase. The research's findings posit that city diplomacy can significantly contribute to urban violence management by promoting integrated policy frameworks that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). This approach shifts the focus from reactive measures to proactive, long-term strategies that prioritize citizen security and sustainable urban development. The study identifies key socio-economic factors contributing to urban violence, such as economic disparities, urban segregation, and inadequate institutional capacity. By addressing these issues through city diplomacy, cities can create more inclusive and equitable urban environments.

We have also done a comparative analysis study of the cities of Nairobi and Madrid that illustrate the practical application of the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus. Both cities, despite their differing socio-economic contexts, have successfully implemented innovative urban regeneration projects with strong community participation and international support. The MARES and Mukuru SPA case studies demonstrated the potential of city diplomacy to foster sustainable urban development and reduce violence.

Through our analysis we found that city diplomacy facilitates international collaboration, enabling cities to access additional resources, technical know-how, and best practices. This

collaborative approach not only enhances local governance capacities but also attracts investors and stakeholders who are crucial for sustainable urban development. This paper makes a significant contribution to the existing body of research on urban violence, security, and diplomacy by introducing the City Diplomacy-Citizen Security Nexus. This innovative framework integrates multiple policy areas, including urban planning, socio-economic development, and citizen security, offering a holistic approach to urban violence management. The study also emphasizes the evolving nature of city diplomacy, which is becoming more institutionalized and inclusive, allowing for a diverse range of actors to participate in urban governance.

City diplomacy strengthens local governance by fostering multi-level governance structures and can serve as a platform for collaborative and inclusive integrated urban planning schemes. This enhances the ability of cities to address complex urban challenges effectively. Safe and secure cities are more attractive to investors. City diplomacy can help cities showcase their potential for impact and development, particularly in areas that are currently unsafe. By highlighting the opportunities for profit and development in these regions, cities can attract investors who are willing to take on the challenge of transforming these areas. City diplomacy promotes the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector actors. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in policy-making, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions. Investing in city diplomacy and integrated urban planning can be more cost-effective in the long run compared to the high costs associated with managing the consequences of urban violence. By proactively addressing the root causes of violence, cities can reduce the financial burden on the state and create a more stable environment for development.

Future research shall be done because there is enough of a necessity in current society for more perspectives to be compared regarding this emerging and innovative approach. Our research team was limited by time and resources but we do believe that there is substance for further research. Especially, in the case of drastic political change of local governments when opposing parties succeed each other and what impact can it have on sustainable urban planning projects.

As mentioned by an interviewee : “We need to look at things on a global level, as global competencies vary from country to country and community to community. We must

strengthen civil society because it can champion causes with local authorities, as it is directly concerned and legitimate to participate in processes and projects aimed at helping communities according to their needs. Given their particular interest in seeing their environment and daily conditions improve, they are probably more capable of visualizing what the project should accomplish in all its forms and repercussions.” - Dorina Xhixho. Understanding what each group of actors requires and how the collective force of varied stakeholders can achieve the collective goals set is of paramount importance, and leveraging the abilities and skills of all involved is primordial in progressing towards a more secure and peaceful world.

In conclusion, this research shows the transformative potential of city diplomacy in managing urban violence and promoting sustainable urban development. By fostering integrated policy frameworks, enhancing institutional capacities, and attracting investment, city diplomacy can play a pivotal role in creating safer, more inclusive, and prosperous urban environments. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and international organizations, highlighting the need for a collaborative, multi-faceted approach to urban violence management. Through city diplomacy, cities can harness the power of cooperation between diverse actors and local innovation to build a more secure and peaceful urban future.

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Appendix

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

No	Interviewees name	Title
1	Daniel Sorando Ortín	Professor at the University of Zaragoza and doctor in Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid
2	Dorina Xhixho	Member of the Executive Management at the Department of Culture and Digital Transition of the City of Geneva
3	Interviewee 1	Expert in City Diplomacy and Peace Mediation
4	Joy Mutai	Associate Programme Management Officer at UN-Habitat, Nairobi
5	Juma Assiago	Global Coordinator of the Safer Cities Programme at UN-Habitat
6	Interviewee 2	Researcher on the interconnections between Peacebuilding, Conflict and Development
7	Miguel Angel Munoz Juan Claudio de Ramon Jose Herrera	General Directorate of International Relations of the Madrid City Council
8	Mohammad Hagraas	Urban and Regional Planner UN Habitat Nairobi
9	Wangui Kimari	Researcher at the African Cities Research Consortium

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