

Exploring the evolution of City Diplomacy: through the case of Nagasaki

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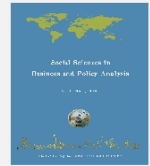
ABSTRACT

City diplomacy is actively engaged in transnationally coordinated efforts to address critical global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and terrorism. This phenomenon has garnered substantial scholarly attention within the fields of international relations, urban studies, and security studies. However, the pioneering initiatives of the mayors of Nagasaki in their Mayors for Peace campaign and related efforts to advocate for a nuclear-free world since the 1970s have been insufficiently examined in the context of city diplomacy research. This article, drawing extensively on archival research from Nagasaki, addresses a pivotal issue in the field: the profit of city diplomacy. The mayors of Nagasaki have consistently, sometimes jointly and sometimes individually, endeavored to establish their legitimacy at local, national, and international levels. Each register manifested through cooperation with the national government, confrontation with the national government, and collaboration with cities, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals outside Japan is relational and has involved distinct spatiotemporal reconfigurations. City diplomacy researchers have convincingly argued that the rise of city diplomacy symbolizes a structural transformation of the global order, where actors and issues transcend local, national, or global boundaries. How do cities participate in diplomacy? This article explores contemporary theories of city diplomacy and various aspects of International Relations theory by examining the case of Nagasaki's city diplomacy. We recommend further investigation into Nagasaki's diplomatic activities, including its involvement in the Mayors for Peace organization, its domestic public diplomacy initiatives, and its sister city relationships.

KEYWORDS

City diplomacy; Japan politic; Nagasaki city

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1.Introduction

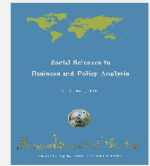
At the beginning of the 21st century, foreign affairs are still mainly managed by national governments and their foreign ministries. However, the state is no longer the only player in diplomacy. While a lot of attention has been given to new actors like NGOs and multinational corporations, less focus has been on the growing role of cities in diplomacy. Today, global cities are becoming major players in international politics. They form networks, create partnerships, share information, sign cooperation agreements, help draft national and international policies, provide development aid, assist refugees, and promote themselves through city-to-city cooperation [1]. Cities have been the main actors, and they might once again become the primary units of international communication[2].

Mayors worldwide are increasingly participating in global policy discussions on climate change, international security, public health, and other pressing issues. This involvement in city diplomacy raises critical questions of legitimacy at local, national, and international levels. Why do mayors, whose primary responsibilities are centered on local governance, seek to extend their influence globally? How do they justify using their city hall's limited resources—such as tax revenue and staff time—for international travel and engagement in global policy debates on issues that seem to fall outside their jurisdiction?

The current global prominence of the mayors of Nagasaki is unsurprising, given the profound historical significance of these two cities. As the only cities to have suffered nuclear attacks, their legacies and memories are deeply embedded in the global historical consciousness through a myriad of moral, philosophical, religious, literary, and other representations of the bombings. Perhaps more importantly, many citizens of and Nagasaki have long been actively involved in various forms of local, national, and international peace activism. Within this context, the mayors of Nagasaki have endeavored to serve as “moral witnesses” to the horrors of nuclear warfare on the global stage.

The involvement of the mayors of Nagasaki in UN diplomacy was not a direct consequence of the atomic bombings of August 1945, nor was it merely the result of vigorous civic activism stemming from their personal experiences with the bombings (several past mayors were atomic bomb survivors). Rather, their entry into UN diplomacy was a carefully and strategically orchestrated endeavor. Furthermore, these mayors have consistently worked to cultivate, maintain, and demonstrate the legitimacy of their diplomatic efforts at local, national, and international levels.

In this article, it will explore an agenda for exploring the city diplomacy of Nagasaki, with a particular focus on the Mayors for Peace organization, its domestic public diplomacy efforts, and its sister city relationships. Such an investigation holds the potential to yield new insights into international relations theory broadly and city diplomacy theories specifically.



2. City Diplomacy's development

2.1 The origin of the modern diplomacy

It is often asserted that modern diplomacy, characterized by the establishment of permanent missions' resident in the capital of a foreign country, finds its origin in the Peace of Westphalia. However, the basics of diplomacy were already in place long before 1648. Back then, the idea of a nation-state didn't exist, and city-states were the main players in international relations [3]. So, diplomacy is older than the modern state system. For instance, in ancient Greece, city-states like Athens and Macedon often sent and received embassies for specific purposes, appointing ambassadors to negotiate and represent their interests. Later, during the Renaissance, powerful Italian city-states like Venice and Milan were the first to set up permanent diplomatic missions abroad and develop an organized system of diplomacy. Following the Treaties of Westphalia, cities such as Venice could no longer maintain their monopoly over foreign policy. Diplomacy became the prerogative of the newly established European nation-states. The standardization of diplomatic practices after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, along with the concurrent evolution of state sovereignty and diplomacy, further entrenched the state-centric nature of both international relations theory and diplomatic practice [4].

Diplomacy is how countries and other groups represent themselves and their interests to each other. When cities do this, it's called city diplomacy. Cities use city diplomacy to engage in international relations, representing themselves and their interests on the global stage [5].

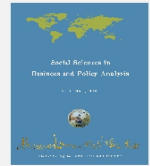
City diplomacy involves cities taking on roles in international relations and foreign policy that used to belong only to countries. Cities use their economic, cultural, and political power to build international networks, strengthen economic ties, solve global problems, and promote cooperation and understanding. Key parts of city diplomacy include economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, sustainable development, public health projects, and educational collaborations. Through these activities, cities help shape global affairs and support the efforts of countries.

2.2 The determinants in city diplomacy

Traditional definitions of modern diplomacy are usually based on three principles: conducting peaceful relations, between mutually recognized sovereign states, and expecting long-term relationships. These state-centered ideas are theoretically valid because the state plays a significant role in diplomacy [6].

Since the end of World War II, new actors have appeared on the diplomatic stage beyond traditional nation-states. These include non-state actors like NGOs, multinational corporations, and cities. The rise of these territorial non-state entities in diplomacy is due to globalization. Globalization, defined as the spread and movement of products, people, images, and ideas across borders, has made this possible.

Global issues like global warming become national concerns when droughts threaten crops, and national issues like the nuclear weapons threaten multiple countries. The responsibilities between states and territorial non-state actors have shifted. As globalization reduces some state functions, new opportunities arise for non-



state actors to engage in economic, cultural, and political activities. Advances in information and communication technologies have also increased the ability of these peripheral actors to stay informed and influence decision-making at the center. This evolving diplomatic mode presents an interesting paradox [7].

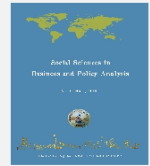
Globalization and decentralization are powerful forces that empower cities as international actors. Globalization changes the role and functions of states by altering the relationship between a state's components (territory, population, government) and the international environment. Neil Brenner explains that globalization has reconfigured state territorial organization, making cities more global while states become more local[8]. The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that by 2025, 136 new cities from developing countries will join the 600 cities with the highest GDP, with 100 of these cities in China. Tokyo, with a GDP-PPP of \$1.6 trillion, is nearly as large as all of South Korea's economy and would rank as the 15th largest economy in the world if it were a country. New York City's \$1.5 trillion GDP places it among the world's twenty largest economies, just below Spain and Canada [9].

Globalization increases the influence and importance of cities in international economic relations. Unlike states, cities can form cooperative networks more easily because they lack sovereignty and are not constrained by national interests. Mayors are often more pragmatic and willing to compromise than state leaders, focusing on effective management and practical problem-solving. This pragmatic approach helps mayors gain significant social trust, allowing them to operate more efficiently and with greater public confidence than state authorities.

Common traits of cities worldwide include citizen trust, participation, a disregard for national borders and sovereignty, a drive to create networks, creativity, innovation, and cooperation.

On one hand, global politics are becoming more international and unified, as national governments struggle to address transnational challenges like climate change and cross-border crime on their own. On the other hand, there's a growing focus on local engagement, with sub-national actors taking on more roles as these global issues become relevant to local communities [10].

Territorial non-state actors, such as regions, states, and cities, are both participants in and influenced by globalization. Increased global migration, driven by technology and conflicts, has made these areas more international. They are affected by policies from the World Bank, the IMF, and development plans from global institutions. They also see an influx of foreign goods, multinational corporations, and international organizations. Global cities like New York, London, and Tokyo, which attract diverse populations and global capital, exemplify this trend [11].



2.3 The forms of city diplomacy

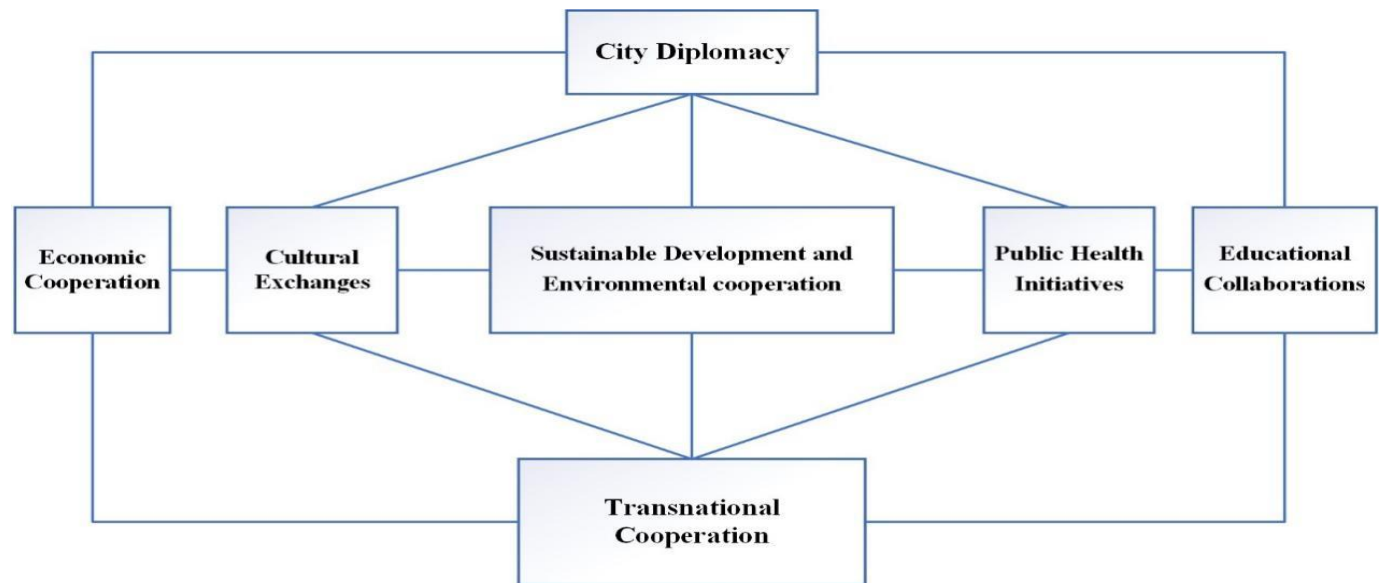
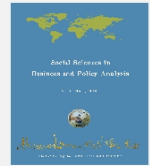


Figure1 The cooperation in city diplomacy

Economic Cooperation. Cities engage in international economic cooperation to attract foreign investment, stimulate local economies, and create employment opportunities. For example, a city might host international trade fairs, business forums, and investment summits to showcase its economic potential. Cities like New York, London, and Shanghai have dedicated agencies that promote the city as a prime location for business. These agencies work on building relationships with foreign investors, facilitating business ventures, and providing incentives for companies to set up operations in the city. Such economic cooperation often involves signing Memoranda of Understanding with other cities to foster mutual economic growth.

Cultural Exchanges. Cultural aspects plays a crucial role in city diplomacy, where cities promote their cultural heritage and diversity on an international stage. This includes organizing cultural festivals, arts exhibitions, and performance tours. For instance, the city of Paris might organize a French film festival in Tokyo, showcasing French cinema to Japanese audiences, thereby promoting cultural exchange and mutual appreciation. Cities also enter into sister city agreements, which often include cultural exchange programs. These programs can involve student exchanges, artist residencies, and joint cultural projects, aimed at fostering long-term relationships and understanding between different cultures.

Sustainable Development and Environmental cooperation(SDEC). Cities are at the forefront of tackling global environmental challenges. Through city diplomacy, urban centers collaborate on sustainability initiatives and climate action plans. For example, cities participating in the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sharing best practices for urban sustainability. A city like Copenhagen might collaborate with San Francisco on renewable energy projects, exchange knowledge on efficient waste management systems, or co-develop green building standards. These



collaborations often result in pilot projects, joint funding applications, and the development of innovative technologies that are shared across the participating cities.

Public Health Initiatives. In the realm of public health, cities work together to combat global health crises and improve health outcomes for their residents. This can involve sharing data on disease outbreaks, coordinating responses to pandemics, and collaborating on public health research. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, cities like Seoul and Milan exchanged information on containment strategies, testing protocols, and vaccination rollouts. Public health partnerships can also include joint initiatives to tackle issues such as air pollution, obesity, and mental health, leveraging the unique resources and expertise of each city to develop comprehensive health policies and programs.

Educational Collaborations. Cities foster international educational collaborations to enhance learning opportunities and promote cross-cultural understanding. This can include student and academic exchanges, joint research projects, and the establishment of international campuses. For instance, a university in Boston might partner with a university in Singapore to offer dual-degree programs, facilitate faculty exchanges, and conduct collaborative research on topics like urban development or technology innovation. Cities also host international conferences and workshops that bring together scholars, students, and professionals from around the world to share knowledge and address global challenges through education.

By focusing on these aspects, city diplomacy demonstrates how urban centers can leverage their unique strengths to address global challenges, foster international cooperation, and enhance the well-being of their residents and the global community.

3. The development of Nagasaki's city diplomacy

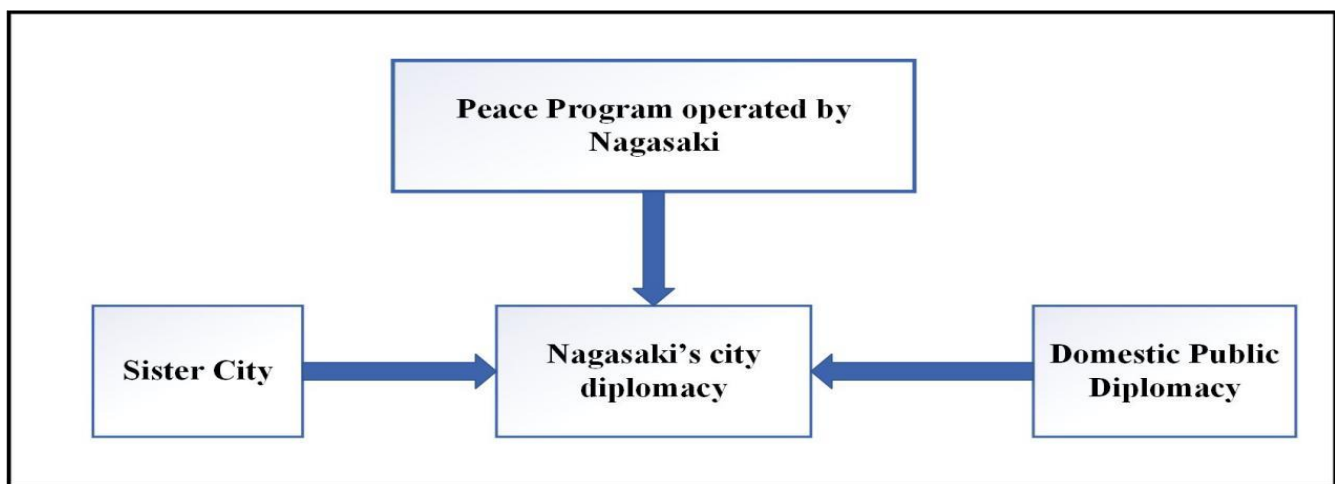
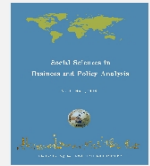


Figure2 The Nagasaki's city diplomacy



3.1 Peace Program operated by Nagasaki

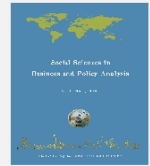
Japan's economy rebounded after the war, allowing it to re-enter the global stage and actively engage in foreign exchanges. In the 1970s, Tokyo seized the opportunity of the Olympics to establish sister city relationships with cities like Beijing and New York, making it a pioneer in Japan's city diplomacy. As globalization deepens and diplomatic forms diversify, the role and nature of city diplomacy, and its relationship with national diplomacy, keep evolving. In Japan, where central and local governments share power, Tokyo stands out as a highly autonomous city. It operates as a unique political entity, different from the state, using its economic strengths to participate in regional and international coordination, showcasing its influence on multiple levels.

Cities frequently draw upon their local histories to speak with moral authority on global issues. Nagasaki's participation in the Mayors for Peace program exemplifies this approach. As a Vice President City and a co-founder alongside Hiroshima, Nagasaki plays a crucial role in advocating for a nuclear-free world. The organization's covenant states its primary objective is to "contribute to the attainment of lasting world peace by fostering global concern for the total abolition of nuclear weapons through the solidarity of cities worldwide." In 1982, Hiroshima's mayor Takeshi Araki addressed the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament in New York, USA, and called for "the solidarity of cities throughout the world which share a common cause with Hiroshima"[12]. As an atomic bomb survivor from the August 6, 1945 attack, he envisioned cities transcending national borders to unite in the pursuit of nuclear abolition. During the same session, Nagasaki's mayor, Hitoshi Motoshima, declared that "Nagasaki has to be the last city of the planet ever destroyed by nuclear weapons". In 1986, the organization was reconstituted as "The World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity." It underwent another transformation in 1991, becoming "Mayors for Peace," an NGO with Special Consultative Status in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

On the surface, the Mayors for Peace Program aligns with two key principles of city diplomacy theory. First, it exemplifies how a city can leverage its unique history as a platform to engage with the global community and advocate for change. This mirrors initiatives in other Japanese cities that have become centers for international agreements and efforts, such as Kitakyushu's Initiative for a Clean Environment, Sendai's Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (stemming from the March 11, 2011 triple disaster), and Minamata's Convention on Mercury (based on its experience with mercury pollution). Second, the organization aims to use networks and coalitions at various levels to maximize its influence on a single issue.

However, questions remain about how the organization operates across different levels. The Mayors for Peace program functions on multiple scales: it engages citizens through letter-writing campaigns and events, enrolls cities as members, interacts with United Nations organizations, collaborates with NGOs, and pressures national governments. Despite the extensive activity recorded on the organization's website, measuring the impact of these actions remains challenging.

A case study approach could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of Mayors for Peace in promoting nuclear abolition beyond Japan. For instance, a case study on Mayors for Peace France would enhance our understanding of the organization's international influence. Additionally, research could be conducted to explore the motivations behind cities joining the Mayors for Peace program. In terms of global impact, it



would be beneficial to examine how the Mayors for Peace organization has influenced ongoing multilateral negotiations regarding the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons. This could offer a clearer picture of the organization's role in shaping global disarmament policies. Furthermore, an in-depth look at Nagasaki's domestic public diplomacy efforts would shed light on the local strategies that contribute to the broader goals of Mayors for Peace [13].

3.2 The style of transnational relationship—Sister City

There are significant advantages to studying aspects of city diplomacy often overlooked by mainstream international relations. Sister city relationships, or city twinning, have a longstanding history. While notable examples existed before World War II, the concept gained prominence post-war as a means to foster connections between former adversaries. The core idea was that strong people-to-people relationships would decrease the likelihood of future conflicts. This initiative expanded rapidly after 1956, following the establishment of a structured sister cities program initiated by U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower. This program eventually evolved into the nonprofit organization Sister Cities International [14].

Although the initial goal of sister city projects was to strengthen interpersonal ties to prevent war, these relationships now also serve to promote commerce, tourism, and cultural exchange. This evolution mirrors the dynamics of globalization and the pursuit of global competitiveness.

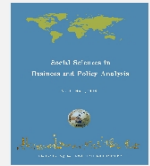
Nagasaki holds a unique place in the history of sister city linkages. The first sister city relationship between the United States and Japan was established on December 7, 1955, between Saint Paul, Minnesota, and Nagasaki, coinciding with the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor[15]. Over the 75 years of their partnership, Saint Paul and Nagasaki have exchanged city officials, sponsored student exchanges, and hosted public events such as concerts and cultural performances.

Currently, Nagasaki has sister city relationships with numerous cities worldwide, including Fuzhou, China; Leiden, Netherlands; Porto, Portugal; Saint Paul, United States; Santos, Brazil; and Vaux-sur-Aure, France. Additionally, Nagasaki maintains a less formal "Citizen Friendship Relationship" with Aberdeen, Scotland, dating back to the time of Scottish merchant Thomas Glover in the Meiji period. Each of these partnerships has fostered numerous connections that have strengthened ties between peoples across nations.

The study of sister city relationships has often been overshadowed by the exploration of more recent phenomena such as city networks and coalitions. However, the longevity and consistency of sister city relationships warrant renewed attention, particularly for their potential to address twenty-first-century challenges. The widespread nature of sister-city relations presents ample opportunities for primary data collection through surveys and semi-structured interviews for an example of using semi-structured interviews in studying sister city relationships [16]. Within the geographical boundaries of Nagasaki Prefecture alone, there are numerous opportunities to explore how sister city relationships benefit and internationalize medium, small, and very small cities.

3.3 Nagasaki's Domestic Public Diplomacy

A relatively new field of practice and study is domestic public diplomacy, which can be described as



encompassing "a series of initiatives which serve to inform, and acquire the assistance of, citizens within a nation. It is these citizens who play a powerful participatory role in the formulation of their nation's foreign policy and its interests overseas"[17]. Nagasaki, with its cosmopolitan history, is uniquely positioned to leverage domestic public diplomacy to promote local tourism, advance research on nuclear abolition, and highlight its historical openness to the world. Examples of domestic public diplomacy in action include Peace Boat's Hibakusha Project and the efforts of Nagasaki University's Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition.

An important avenue of domestic public diplomacy is Peace Boat's Hibakusha Project. Peace Boat, a Japan-based NGO founded in 1983, travels the world with a crew of volunteers dedicated to promoting peace, advocating for human rights, and fostering sustainability in partnership with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals campaign. In the context of Nagasaki, Peace Boat's activities center on highlighting the city's unique history and promoting its message of nuclear abolition and peace. This initiative serves not only to educate international audiences but also to engage and inform local citizens, reinforcing their role in the formulation and support of Japan's foreign policy objectives.

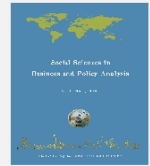
Another significant form of public diplomacy is undertaken by Nagasaki University's Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA). Established in 2012, RECNA operates as both an extension of Nagasaki's official diplomacy and an independent entity. The center conducts extensive research on nuclear disarmament and disseminates its findings through newsletters, policy papers, and educational pamphlets that simplify complex issues related to nuclear weapons. Describing itself as a Think tank of citizens. RECNA emphasizes its position outside traditional public policy channels [18].

Located in a medium-sized city outside the Tokyo metropolitan area, RECNA offers a unique contrast to the more established think tanks in Tokyo's Kasumigaseki district, such as the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA). Historically, these Tokyo-based think tanks have maintained close relationships with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, often staffed by former bureaucrats[19]. While these think tanks provide valuable support to Japan's central government, their close ties can sometimes hinder their ability to propose innovative foreign policy alternatives. In contrast, RECNA's geographical and institutional independence allows it to formulate more diverse and potentially groundbreaking policy alternatives. However, the extent to which RECNA leverages its outsider status to its full potential remains an open question.

4.Conclusion: the profit brought by the city diplomacy in Nagasaki

Nagasaki exemplifies active city diplomacy through its global advocacy, domestic public diplomacy, and various initiatives that reinforce its global identity. Nagasaki's involvement in the Mayors for Peace program highlights two key aspects of city diplomacy theory. First, cities primarily operate through networks and coalitions, partnering with other cities, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs. Second, cities carve out essential niches by leveraging their unique experiences and local expertise[20].

While Nagasaki's role in the Mayors for Peace program is the most prominent and well-publicized element of its city diplomacy, other, less visible aspects might hold significant theoretical value. The domestic public



diplomacy efforts of Nagasaki, although previously overlooked in scholarly literature, present a promising area for future research. Additionally, the longstanding and widespread practice of sister city relationships has not received the attention it deserves, despite its potential to offer valuable insights into city diplomacy.

The field of city diplomacy is still in its early stages, underscoring the need to expand our current understanding. By investigating beyond major urban centers, scholars can gain deeper insights into the human drive to forge connections across national borders, both for social interaction and collaborative problem-solving. As global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and political instability persist, studying the diplomatic efforts of smaller cities can provide valuable perspectives on how local initiatives contribute to addressing these issues on a broader scale [21].

Expanding the scope of research to include diverse cities enriches the discourse on city diplomacy and highlights the multifaceted ways in which communities engage with the world. This approach not only broadens our knowledge but also underscores the importance of local actions in the global arena.

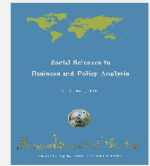
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