วารสารรัฐศาสตร์และรัฐประศาสนศาสตร์ ปีที่ 16 ฉบับที่ 1 (มกราคม-มิถุนายน 2568): 107-156

Unveiling Tokyo's Global Nexus: Analyzing the Driving Factors and Policy Alignment Behind Tokyo-London Strategic Partnerships[1]

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Received: **16 February 2024**
Revised: **8 March 2025**
Accepted: **11 March 2025**

Abstract

The findings reveal that TMG employs strategic city diplomacy to not only advance Tokyo's interests but also address global challenges. This is achieved through economic, political, and socio-cultural drivers that include advancing green finance, managing large-scale sports events, fostering sustainable urban development, and engaging in problem-solving on a global scale. These initiatives are aligned with broader policy initiatives such as TMG's City Diplomacy Strategy, Future Tokyo Vision, and commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals. The study recommends enhancing TMG's city diplomacy through stronger institutional mechanisms and deeper bilateral cooperation, extending beyond immediate mutual interests to long-term international partnership and problem-solving capabilities. This analysis contributes valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and scholars, illustrating the potential of city diplomacy as a strategic tool for urban development, global economic competitiveness, and sustainable international cooperation.

Keywords Driving Factors, Green Finance, Tokyo-London City Diplomacy, Urban Development

[1] This research article is part of the research project "Implementing Tokyo's Sister City Relations and Lessons for Thailand," financially supported by the Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS), Thammasat University (TU), for the fiscal year 2019.

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doi: 10.14456/pspajcmu.2025.5

1. Introduction

In the post-World War II landscape, cities have increasingly become pivotal actors in international relations. They leverage multilateral partnerships, issue-based cooperation, and sister-city relationships to advance urban interests and enhance their global presence. These collaborations are strategic tools for achieving environmental sustainability, cultural exchange, and economic development, underscoring the vital role of local governments in addressing global challenges.

Across Europe, North America, and Asia, local governments are increasingly recognized for their unique contributions to global diplomacy, employing strategies tailored to their regional and local contexts (Tavares, 2016, pp. 1-40; Ashbrook, 2023; Herrschel & Newman, 2017; Jain, 2005, pp. 19-20). As urbanization accelerates and cities face shared challenges such as climate change, economic resilience, and technological adaptation, city-to-city partnerships have become a powerful framework for fostering mutual growth, policy innovation, and cross-border collaboration. (United Nation Industrial Organizations [UNIDO], 2019). Cities now strategically employ city diplomacy, adapting their engagement to regional and local contexts to maximize influence and operational capacity (Amiri & Sevin, 2020). The Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) and London's governing bodies exemplify this approach by forging multifaceted partnerships. These alliances illustrate how sub-national governments strategically collaborate to enhance their international influence and tackle common challenges.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the Tokyo-London partnership, it is crucial to first examine the broader contexts in which both cities operate. An exploration of Tokyo's global positioning and international engagement illuminates the motivations behind its city diplomacy efforts. Similarly, an analysis of London's strategic importance and governance structure offers insight into why it serves as a key partner for Tokyo. An overview of the Tokyo-London partnership sets the stage for examining the factors that drive their collaboration, as well as its broader implications for city diplomacy and global urban governance.

1.1 Tokyo and London: Global Influence and Strategic Importance

Tokyo and London rank among the world's most influential global cities, with notable strengths in economic leadership, urban governance, and international engagement. Tokyo boasts a gross metropolitan product of USD 1.118 trillion (FY 2021), positioning it alongside New York and London as a top financial hub (CoLC, 2023a). This city hosts numerous multinational corporations and attracts substantial foreign investments (Invest Tokyo, n.d.-b.; FinCity.Tokyo, n.d.). Concurrently, London maintains its lead in the Global Power City Index (GPCI), excelling in

sectors such as financial services, global connectivity, and cultural influence (Institute for Urban Strategies, Mori Memorial Foundation, 2024). The enactment of the Financial Services and Markets Act and the Edinburgh Reforms has further bolstered London's status as a global financial powerhouse (City of London Corporation [CoLC], 2023a, 2024b).

Tokyo has broadened its international reach through initiatives like the Global City Network for Sustainability (G-NETS) and its participation in major global events, such as G7 Summits and the Olympic Games, enhancing its role in international dialogues (TMG, n.d.-f; G-NETS, n.d.-b). This raises the question: what enables TMG to maintain such a level of global engagement? Political backing, experienced personnel, and substantial financial resources empower TMG to actively engage on the international stage more than other Japanese local governments. Since the 1980s, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) have been instrumental in supporting local projects that align with national diplomatic objectives (Jain, 2005, pp. 43, 52-53). Currently, the Government of Japan's International Cooperation framework, which includes Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues, supports such alignment (MOFA, Japan, 2019). By synchronizing city strategies with national and international aims, TMG utilizes Tokyo's strengths to address shared global challenges like urban development and sustainability (MOFA, Japan, n.d.-b).

Similarly, London has exhibited leadership in sustainability and urban innovation, notably through initiatives like green finance projects and urban regeneration post-2012 Olympics (Acuto, 2013). They face common challenges such as congestion, pollution, and housing shortages, which present significant opportunities for collaborative policy innovation and knowledge exchange (Earth.org, 2023; Panmore Institute, 2023).

The governance structures of both cities bolster their capacity for international engagement. Tokyo's global outreach is supported by robust political backing, skilled personnel, and financial resources, with national policies coordinating local efforts with Japan's diplomatic objectives (MOFA, Japan, 2019). London's governance is facilitated by two principal entities: The Greater London Authority (GLA), which manages city-wide development, and the City of London Corporation (CoLC), which oversees the financial district and economic policies (CoLC, 2024a; Sandford, 2024; Sandford & Berry, 2024). These frameworks allow Tokyo and London to act as autonomous global entities in city diplomacy, furthering economic resilience and sustainability agendas.

With their aligned global ambitions and complementary strengths in finance, urban governance, and sustainability, the partnership between Tokyo and London exemplifies effective city diplomacy in the 21st century, demonstrating how megacities can shape global networks and influence international policies (Calder, 2021).

1.2 Partnership between Tokyo and London

The partnership between Tokyo and London represents a strategic collaboration between two of the world's leading global cities, capitalizing on their strengths to tackle shared urban challenges and promote sustainable economic growth. Formal cooperation began in 2015 with the signing of a Friendship City Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) and the GLA. This agreement focused on urban development, transportation, tourism, and sports administration, with a particular emphasis on preparations for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (Joint Declaration between Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Mayor of London, 2015; MoU between the GLA and TMG, 2015; Office of the Governor for Policy Planning, TMG, 2015; Tokyo 2020, n.d.).

In 2017, the scope of collaboration expanded with a new MoU between TMG and CoLC, which emphasized financial cooperation. The partnership's key areas of engagement now include green finance, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investments, and sustainable financial practices (Office of the Governor for Policy Planning, TMG; 2017). The cities have worked together to develop innovative financial instruments, such as green bonds and carbon trading, aligning their initiatives with shared goals of sustainability, economic resilience, and global financial leadership (British Chamber of Commerce in Japan [BCCJ], 2021; CoLC, 2017). Furthermore, the Japan Market Advisory Group (MAG)—established by TheCityUK—has been instrumental in fortifying financial sector links between the UK and Japan (MoU between CoLC and TMG, 2017).

Beyond financial cooperation, the 2017 MoU has also facilitated academic exchanges and professional development programs, fostering cross-border learning and capacity building for future leaders in finance and policy (CoLC, 2018). The ongoing collaboration in technology, sustainability, and governance is further strengthened by regular events, such as the Tokyo-London Financial and Green Finance Seminars (TMG, 2021a; 2022a).

This evolving partnership not only bolsters economic growth, urban development, and cultural exchange but also serves as a robust platform for addressing global challenges. By leveraging their mutual expertise in sustainability, finance, and innovation, Tokyo and London continue to reaffirm their commitment

to sustainable urban development and international cooperation (Office for Strategic Policy and ICT Promotion, TMG, 2018a). Through strategic alignment of their expertise in sustainability, finance, and urban innovation, Tokyo and London demonstrate the growing importance of city diplomacy as an effective mechanism for fostering international collaboration and addressing transnational challenges. These partnerships, such as those with London, underscore Tokyo's role in global collaborations by addressing shared challenges, advancing mutual goals, and serving as an example for cities aiming to enhance their international influence.

1.3 Statement of Research Problems

Despite Tokyo's stature as a leading global metropolis and its proactive stance in city diplomacy, scholarly research on TMG's international collaborations—particularly with London-based entities—remains sparse. Existing literature has yet to adequately explore the motivations, strategic alignments, and the broader policy implications of these partnerships. Moreover, critical aspects such as economic, political, cultural, financial, and sustainability-related factors driving these collaborations are underexplored in academic discourse.

This study aims to bridge these gaps by providing a systematic examination of TMG's partnerships with the GLA and CoLC. It investigates how TMG strategically utilizes city diplomacy to enhance its global positioning, strengthen urban governance, and bolster economic resilience. By assessing how these partnerships align with TMG's broader policy initiatives, this research contributes new insights into the efficacy of city-to-city diplomacy as a tool for advancing shared policy objectives, fostering sustainability initiatives, and enhancing international influence.

Despite these contributions, further research is necessary to evaluate the long-term impact of the Tokyo-London collaboration and to explore how its strategies can be adapted for other city partnerships. A significant research gap persists in assessing the effectiveness and scalability of TMG's city diplomacy efforts, particularly in addressing evolving urban challenges and influencing international governance. Understanding the sustainability and adaptability of these initiatives is crucial for guiding future city-to-city collaborations and refining strategies in global urban diplomacy.

1.4 Research Objectives, Significance of the Study, and Argument

This study is driven by two primary objectives:

(1) To identify the key factors that drive TMG's partnerships with London-based entities, particularly the GLA and the CoLC.

(2) To evaluate how these motivations align with TMG's broader strategic goals and urban policy initiatives at both domestic and international levels, emphasizing how these partnerships contribute to Tokyo's global positioning and long-term urban development strategies.

The significance of studying these objectives stems from the increasing influence of cities in global governance. City-to-city collaboration has emerged as a strategic tool for addressing shared urban challenges, fostering economic growth, and promoting sustainability. In the face of rapid urbanization, cities are at the forefront of navigating complex global issues such as climate change, financial resilience, and technological innovation. City diplomacy, therefore, serves as a critical mechanism for international cooperation, allowing municipal governments to exchange best practices, align policies, and strengthen global influence. By exploring the Tokyo-London collaboration, this study provides valuable insights into how cities actively shape international affairs, implement policy innovations, and enhance their economic and diplomatic influence.

Moreover, the study of international activities among megacities like Tokyo and London has grown in importance as global urban diplomacy undergoes significant transformations: (Kolykhalov, 2022). These cities serve as prime examples of how major urban centers navigate these changes, reinforcing their roles in global governance, economic resilience, and sustainability. Scholars like Acuto (2013) have emphasized that examining global cities introduces a multiscalar approach to global governance, highlighting the strategic diplomatic positioning of these cities in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change. By studying the Tokyo-London partnership, this research contributes to understanding how global cities act as proactive agents in shaping international cooperation and sustainability policies.

This research makes several contributions. Academically, it provides an empirical case study that expands knowledge in international relations, urban studies, and public policy. It offers an in-depth analysis of how subnational governments engage in international affairs and integrate diplomatic efforts with urban development policies. Practically, it provides policymakers and urban planners with valuable perspectives on strengthening city-level partnerships and refining strategic priorities. Although primarily focused on Tokyo and London, the insights derived from this study are applicable to other major urban centers seeking to enhance their international engagement.

This research argues that TMG strategically utilizes city diplomacy with London-based entities—the GLA and CoLC—to advance urban interests, drive economic growth, and enhance its global influence. This collaboration aligns with

Tokyo's broader policy initiatives, reinforcing its long-term vision for sustainability, financial leadership, and urban resilience. Leveraging green finance, digital innovation, and knowledge exchange, TMG not only strengthens its position as a global financial hub but also as a leader in sustainable urban governance. The Tokyo-London partnership exemplifies how subnational governments proactively shape international policies, fostering economic resilience and transnational cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.5 Structure of the Paper

This paper is organized into six key sections, each designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Tokyo-London partnership within the broader context of city diplomacy.

The Literature Review delves into key theoretical and empirical perspectives on city diplomacy. It covers the evolution and significance of city diplomacy, the driving factors behind it including economic, political, cultural, and sustainability-related motivations, Japanese local government's historical role in international diplomacy, and the alignment of Tokyo's international engagements with its urban policies, all while identifying critical research gaps that frame the study's analytical approach. The Research Methodology outlines the qualitative methods, sources, and analytical framework employed in this study, along with a discussion of the scope and limitations. The Research Findings analyze TMG's motivations for collaboration with London and evaluate how these efforts align with Tokyo's broader city diplomacy strategy and other policy initiatives. The Discussion examines the alignment of these findings with the existing literature and other case studies, placing the Tokyo-London partnership in the context of global city diplomacy. Finally, the Recommendations provides strategies for enhancing cooperation between Tokyo and London and proposes areas for future research. It highlights the practical applications of city diplomacy in fostering global cooperation, providing valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners on refining strategic priorities and enhancing governance mechanisms to tackle urban challenges more effectively.

2. Literature Review

This section synthesizes relevant literature across four key areas:

2.1 Overview of City Diplomacy in the Contemporary World

City diplomacy has emerged as a critical instrument for addressing global challenges and fostering international cooperation. The historical roots of intercity collaborations date back to the late 19th century, later formalized through initiatives

such as Eisenhower's sister-city agreements. By the 1970s, programs such as the Association of European Border Regions and the Four Motors for Europe underscored the role of cities in managing urban and regional challenges (Tavares, 2016).

In recent decades, city diplomacy has transitioned from bilateral agreements to multilateral engagements, with cities forming transnational networks to tackle global issues such as environmental sustainability, public health, and climate change (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2021). Today, cities actively shape international policies, advance sustainable development, and promote human rights, challenging traditional state-centric diplomacy models (Fulgenzi, 2024). Their increasing role in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and participating in post-conflict reconstruction highlights their growing influence. The COVID-19 pandemic further solidified cities' roles in global governance, demonstrating their ability to coordinate soft power strategies (Acuto, Kosovac, & Hartley, 2021).

However, the extent of city engagement in diplomacy varies. Marchetti (2017) categorizes cities based on their international roles, distinguishing between export-oriented cities, megacities, and cities with strong diaspora ties. These distinctions help explain why cities such as Tokyo and London have become dominant players in global urban networks, while others remain peripheral actors. Cities also use diplomacy for identity-building, with some, particularly in developing regions, leveraging city diplomacy to attract investment and foster cooperation (Utomo, 2020). Meanwhile, Balbim (2023) argues that cities increasingly function as geopolitical actors, influencing global economic strategies and regional political shifts. As city diplomacy continues to evolve, its increasing prominence in governance, economic networks, and sustainability initiatives underscores its vital role in shaping global affairs.

2.2 Driving Factors/Motivations behind City Diplomacy

City diplomacy, often framed within the broader paradigm of paradiplomacy (regional or subnational diplomacy), enables local governments to engage in international relations independent of their national governments. This approach supports their advancement of economic, political, and social objectives (Oddone, 2023). Introduced by Kincaid in the 1990s, paradiplomacy has highlighted the growing role of non-central governments in global governance, empowering cities to address regional challenges, share best practices, and develop localized solutions to transnational issues (Vision IAS, 2021).

The motivations behind city diplomacy are manifold, encompassing economic, political, cultural, and strategic considerations:

One of the primary motivations for city diplomacy is economic development. Cities engage in diplomacy to attract international investment, enhance tourism, and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), contributing to job creation and long-term prosperity. Alam et al. (2020) highlight the role of trade diplomacy in fostering economic growth, while Kusakabe (2013) underscores how localized policy implementation enhances urban resilience and sustainability.

Moreover, Hager and Hamagami (2020) illustrate how renewable energy partnerships enhance local capabilities by creating jobs and fostering technological innovation. Notably, economic partnerships are particularly effective when cities share similar economic structures or geographic proximity, facilitating natural collaboration (Aldecoa & Keating, 1999; Kuznetsov, 2015). Kuznetsov (2015) further elaborates that economically motivated constituent diplomacy is influenced by two key principles: geographical and functional. The geographical determinant emphasizes the advantage of common borders, which facilitate trade and economic exchange. Meanwhile, the functional determinant highlights how economic partnerships form based on structural similarities between regional economies, enabling smoother collaboration in trade, investment, and industry specialization. These evolving dynamics reflect the increasing emphasis on integrating economic, environmental, and technological goals in city-to-city collaborations (Espiñeira-Guirao, 2022; Zhao, 2016).

According to Marchetti (2017), major global cities such as Tokyo, London, and New York manage budgets comparable to the GDP of mid-sized countries, making economic diplomacy a strategic priority. Cities engage in attracting multinational corporations (MNCs), hosting international events like the Olympics, and implementing city branding strategies to position themselves as global hubs. This economic engagement is further reflected in trade partnerships and knowledge exchange, such as financial collaborations between Tokyo and London, reinforcing their status as key players in global urban governance.

Beyond economic incentives, cities also engage in diplomacy for political reasons, using international engagement to assert their influence and enhance their global standing. This is particularly relevant for cities with strong regional identities or aspirations for greater autonomy, which leverage city diplomacy to project their values and governance models internationally. Kuznetsov (2015) categorizes subnational governments engaging in diplomacy into two groups: secessionist regions aiming for sovereignty or increased autonomy and development-focused regions that use diplomacy to advance governance models and political legitimacy. Participation in global networks allows cities to promote democratic principles,

engage in governance discussions, and strengthen their role as influential global actors (Aldecoa & Keating, 1999). Some regions utilize paradiplomacy to gradually lessen their dependence on central authorities, using international engagement as a tool to gain greater political autonomy. This phenomenon is particularly evident in decentralized states, where local governments actively shape their own international policies despite national constraints (Mocca, 2020).

Moreover, the relationship between paradiplomacy and regional political aspirations is particularly notable in cases where subnational actors seek greater self-governance or even independence. Adistia et al. (2024) illustrate how Catalonia and Kurdistan have transitioned from paradiplomatic activities toward more independent diplomatic engagements, driven by strong nationalist movements and political aspirations for statehood. This suggests that city diplomacy can serve not only as a functional tool for economic and policy cooperation but also as a vehicle for regional identity and political differentiation.

Political structures and domestic conditions further influence the way cities and regions engage in international affairs. Mukti et al. (2021) argue that variations in paradiplomatic policies across different countries stem from internal political dynamics, particularly the presence or absence of regional movements advocating for autonomy. In some cases, local governments may be more active in international relations due to internal pressures for greater political agency.

Moreover, local governments engage in transnational activities such as developing networks, exchanging policy expertise, signing cooperation agreements, and even contributing to the drafting of national and international policies (Marchetti, 2017). Their roles extend beyond economic interests to include development aid, refugee assistance, and advocacy on global issues. These functions highlight the expanding role of subnational governments in international governance, reinforcing the argument that city diplomacy is not merely an economic endeavor but also a politically driven strategy. Finally, city diplomacy provides opportunities for local politicians to gain recognition, strengthen their electoral positions, and showcase leadership on global issues (Marchetti, 2017).

Kuznetsov (2015, p. 110), political goals as a rule are the attribute of two kinds of subnational governments. The first group includes secessionist regions with the intention to gain their own statehood or at least a high autonomous status. The second group of regions performs politically in the international arena in the capacity of development promoters.

Beyond political motivations, cultural and linguistic ties also drive city diplomacy, fostering identity preservation, mutual understanding, and stronger diplomatic engagement. Kuznetsov (2015) emphasizes that regions with distinct

languages, cultures, or religious identities often prioritize cooperation with foreign counterparts sharing similar traits. Similarly, Grandi (2020) highlights culture and creativity as fundamental to city diplomacy, shaping bilateral ties, economic strategies, and social cohesion. Over the past decade, cities have increasingly leveraged cultural policies to promote diversity, support economic growth, and integrate migrant communities, further strengthening their global influence through cultural diplomacy. Moreover, Grandi (2020) emphasizes that cities such as Tokyo and London leverage cultural diplomacy to integrate financial and cultural objectives, thereby enhancing the impact of their collaboration. Cities not only preserve their traditions but also foster long-term cooperation and trust.

Beyond cultural and linguistic ties, cities are increasingly motivated to engage in diplomacy as a strategic approach to addressing global challenges that transcend national borders. While cultural diplomacy fosters mutual understanding and strengthens bilateral relations, city-to-city collaboration serves as a critical mechanism for tackling pressing global issues. Municipalities are playing an increasingly significant role in global governance, particularly in responding to complex transnational challenges such as climate change, migration, urban resilience, poverty, and social inequality—issues that often surpass the capacities of national governments. Through city diplomacy, local governments develop localized and adaptive solutions, leveraging international partnerships to drive policy innovation and collaborative problem-solving (Cogan, 2021, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2020; Riegner, 2020; University of Melbourne, 2020). These efforts underscore the evolving role of municipal diplomacy in shaping international policies and reinforcing the importance of subnational actors in global governance. As cities continue to gain prominence as diplomatic entities, their influence on international decision-making processes and global policy frameworks is expected to expand, making them indispensable actors in addressing contemporary global challenges.

2.3 Japanese Local Governments in International Diplomacy: Evolution and the TMG Context

City diplomacy in Japan has evolved significantly since World War II, transitioning from primarily cultural and educational exchanges to active participation in global challenges. This shift has been supported by the central government agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Internationalization Consultation Centre and directives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, reinforcing local governments' roles in global governance (Jain, 2005).

Since the mid-1950s, Japanese subnational governments (SNGs) have participated in international relations mainly through sister-city partnerships, driven

by economic, political, and strategic motivations. Economically, these initiatives aimed to enhance trade and cultural ties, despite financial constraints. Politically, local governments sought greater autonomy from the central government, while strategically, they leveraged these collaborative initiatives to address shared challenges (Jain, 2005).

The conclusion of the Cold War, coupled with the forces of globalization and technological advancements, significantly expanded the capacity of Japanese SNGs to engage in international affairs. This era marked a transition from localized engagements to active participation in addressing global issues, as local governments aimed to mitigate the impacts of globalization on their economies and communities (Jain, 2005).

Within this historical context, TMG has been at the forefront of city diplomacy. Tambunan (2015) highlights the longstanding Jakarta-Tokyo sister city relationship, emphasizing how such partnerships contribute to urban development and enhance a city's global standing. This collaboration has facilitated the exchange of best practices in governance, infrastructure, and cultural exchange, strengthening diplomatic ties between the two metropolises. Furthermore, regional cooperation among major East Asian capitals, particularly Tokyo, Beijing, and Seoul, plays a critical role in fostering diplomatic and economic collaboration. Tong (2019) analyzes the China–Japan–South Korea Trilateral Summit, underscoring the importance of multilateral initiatives in regional stability and economic development. This trilateral cooperation has proven instrumental in addressing shared challenges, such as trade, environmental sustainability, and crisis management, highlighting the increasing role of cities as pivotal actors in international diplomacy. Nakamura et al. (2011) examine TMG's leadership in environmental management, particularly its role in setting global sustainability standards, aligning with its shared interests in sustainable development with cities like London. Jain (2004) provides further insights into TMG's historical influence and its potential to advance alternative diplomatic agendas.

2.4 The Alignment of International Engagements with Urban Policies and Strategies

City diplomacy has emerged as an essential mechanism for aligning urban policies with broader global objectives. Grandi (2020) highlights that city diplomacy not only fosters cultural exchanges and creativity but also integrates these elements into local economic strategies, thereby strengthening bilateral ties and supporting economic development. This dynamic is particularly evident in the Tokyo-London partnership, which effectively combines cultural and economic dimensions to foster mutual growth while ensuring alignment with global trends.

Espiñeira-Guirao (2022) introduces the concept of "new urban diplomacy," which describes how international cooperation is strategically aligned with local development priorities. This approach is akin to a 'noodle' think tank strategy, where Tokyo leverages local expertise and global partnerships to enrich its local policy-making and development agendas. This strategic alignment demonstrates the direct benefits of city diplomacy for local urban projects and broader global engagement.

Kavanoz, Erdem, and Yıldız (2024) describe the evolution of city diplomacy into "multi-actor governance." This model allows cities to engage a diverse array of stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, and civil societies, enhancing global influence while ensuring that urban policies remain inclusive, innovative, and sustainable. Furthermore, cities often reframe global issues as local challenges, using international partnerships to tackle problems that may be difficult to resolve at the national level. Kavanoz, Erdem, and Yıldız (2024) suggest that this dynamic is evident in the Tokyo-London partnership, which focuses on targeted cooperation to address critical global issues, such as climate change, urban resilience, and financial regulation. These joint efforts demonstrate how cities can strategically position themselves to tackle global challenges while enhancing local development outcomes. Moreover, cities often reframe global challenges as local issues, using international partnerships to address problems that may be cumbersome at the national level.

The literature review highlights the evolution of city diplomacy, emphasizing how cities have become influential actors in global governance. Driven by economic, political, and cultural motivations, subnational entities like cities have expanded their roles in international diplomacy. From Eisenhower's sister-city agreements to contemporary networked urban governance, city diplomacy has evolved into a structured and strategic tool for advancing local priorities while addressing global challenges (Aldecoa & Keating, 1999; Tavares, 2016). Cities increasingly leverage diplomacy to enhance global standing, promote economic resilience, and tackle transnational issues such as climate change and urban sustainability (Acuto, Kosovac, & Hartley, 2021). The evolution of Japanese local governments, including TMG, illustrates how city-level diplomacy has developed in response to both domestic and global challenges.

Identifying Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite extensive research on city diplomacy motivations, existing studies have yet to provide a comprehensive examination of Tokyo's specific driving factors and strategic incentives for engaging in city diplomacy. This study seeks to address

this gap by investigating the motivations behind TMG's collaboration with London, evaluating the key factors that influence this partnership.

Furthermore, while there is substantial literature on Japanese city diplomacy, research remains limited on Tokyo's partnership with London, particularly in terms of how these strategic engagements align with broader urban policy frameworks in a globalized context. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the underlying drivers of TMG's collaborations with London-based entities, particularly the GLA and CoLC, assessing how these diplomatic engagements align with Tokyo's broader policies and initiatives. By doing so, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of city diplomacy as a mechanism for global urban governance and policy integration.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative methodology, utilizing documentary research and secondary data analysis to examine TMG's international collaborations. The research follows a descriptive approach, providing an in-depth understanding of TMG's city diplomacy strategies without conducting interviews or direct fieldwork.

3.2 Data Collection

The study relies on multiple secondary data sources, including MoUs, policy documents, official reports, executive statements, and news articles related to TMG's partnerships with the GLA and CoLC. These materials were obtained from official websites, government portals, and reputable sources, such as TMG, CoLC, and the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC). Moreover, academic literature and theoretical frameworks were reviewed to contextualize TMG's engagement in international diplomacy.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study employs content analysis to systematically examine textual data, identifying key themes and patterns related to economic, political, cultural motivations, and global challenge-solving in TMG's city diplomacy. This structured approach ensures a rigorous assessment of TMG's strategic objectives in its partnership with London.

To guide the analysis, an integrative framework is adopted, synthesizing insights from two key perspectives:

(1) Paradiplomacy Framework: This framework provides a structured approach to understanding why and how subnational governments engage in

international relations beyond national governments. As outlined in the literature review, it helps assess how Tokyo strategically positions itself at the global level, aligns city diplomacy with economic and policy objectives, and fosters international collaborations to address shared urban challenges.

(2) Historical Context of Japanese Local Governments (Jain, 2005): Jain's work offers historical insights into the transformation of Japanese local governments, including TMG, into active international actors. This perspective underscores how Japanese local governments evolved to engage in global diplomacy, positioning themselves as proactive participants in city-to-city collaborations.

By integrating these perspectives, the study develops a comprehensive analytical lens for analyzing TMG's collaboration with London, highlighting its strategic positioning in global city diplomacy.

3.4 Scope and Limitations

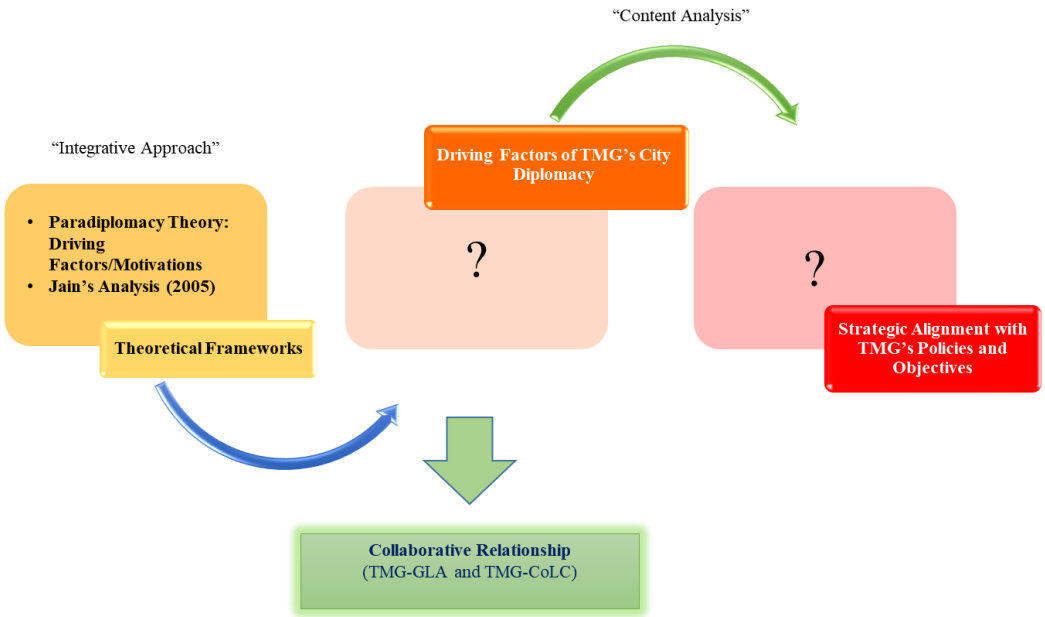
This study examines the driving factors behind TMG's cooperation with London-based entities, specifically the GLA and CoLC, from the establishment of formal agreements in 2015 and 2017 to 2024, assessing how these partnerships align with TMG's broader strategic goals.

However, this study does not analyze internal policy-making processes within local governments or the role of high-ranking officials and bureaucratic experts in shaping city diplomacy. Additionally, as the research relies on secondary data sources, it lacks direct stakeholder perspectives. Nonetheless, comprehensive government reports, policy documents, and academic literature provide valuable insights into institutional frameworks and strategic priorities. To minimize potential biases, a diverse range of credible sources—including official reports, academic studies, and policy analyses—was utilized to ensure a balanced and rigorous assessment. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

3.5 Conceptual Framework

As this study applies an integrative framework and employs content analysis, the conceptual model below visually represents how TMG's engagement with the GLA and CoLC aligns with Tokyo's long-term policies and initiatives, reinforcing its role as a key global actor.

Figure 1: Assessing Tokyo's Partnership Driving Factors with London: Alignment with Tokyo Policies and Initiatives (Conceptual Framework)



Source: Author

4. Research Findings

Building on the documentary research and the methodologies approach outlined above, this section examines the key driving factors behind TMG's partnerships with the GLA and CoLC. These factors span three primary dimensions: economic, where Tokyo sought to enhance its global financial and urban development status; cultural, highlighting shared values and historical ties; and political, reflecting strategic alignments with Japan's national goals, and to tackle global challenges. This analysis also explores how these motivations evolved before and after the signing of the MoUs, demonstrating the role of these partnerships in addressing shared urban challenges and strengthening Tokyo's global presence in city diplomacy.

4.1 The Driving Factors of TMG to Partner with the GLA, and CoLC

4.1.1 TMG-GLA

(1) Prior to signing the MoU in 2015

Firstly, TMG set the ambitious goal of making Tokyo the best city in the world, while London sought to address emerging urban challenges (Central London Forward, n.d.; TMG, 2014). Both cities recognized the necessity of adapting to

global trends, forming the foundation for cooperation in areas such as sustainability, urban development, and financial resilience.

Secondly, in preparation for the 2020 Olympics, TMG sought to leverage London's internationally recognized success in hosting the 2012 Olympics. London's expertise in managing a high-profile global event, combined with its status as a leading global city, provided Tokyo with a proven model for enhancing its Olympic strategy. TMG viewed the GLA's experience as a blueprint for utilizing the Olympics as a catalyst to elevate Tokyo's global reputation as a financial and cultural hub (TMG, 2014). Beyond event management, London's progress in urban sustainability and financial innovation aligned with Tokyo's broader strategic objectives, facilitating collaboration on initiatives related to sustainability, technological innovation, and global influence (Gonzalez Basurto, 2017; GLA, 2013).

Thirdly, despite geographical distance, Tokyo and London share key attributes as global financial hubs and democratic capitals balancing heritage preservation with urban development (Tokyo Updates, 2021; TMG, 2021a). Their collaboration in sustainability initiatives dates back to 2010, when London introduced Europe's largest hydrogen-powered bus fleet, further strengthened by Toyota's provision of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles in 2015, fostering eco-friendly transportation innovations (Toyota Europe Newsroom, 2015; London, 2015).

In terms of cultural and linguistic factors, Tokyo and London maintain distinct identities while reflecting their roles as capital cities. Both cities actively preserve and promote their linguistic heritage and rich cultural histories, blending tradition with modernity within their diverse, cosmopolitan populations (Ghazi, 2023; TMG, n.d.-a; The New York Times, 2016; the Warburg Institute, n.d.). This fusion is evident in their societal values, where politeness, respect, and sophistication shape daily interactions, reinforcing their global appeal. Today, Tokyo and London stand as symbols of economic strength, cultural richness, and urban vibrancy, shaping their influential roles on the global stage. Their shared emphasis on cultural preservation fosters ongoing collaboration, as they exchange experiences, implement best practices, and jointly advocate for safeguarding their distinctiveness in an evolving world (Britannia Airport Cars, n.d.; Faster Capital, n.d.; Invest Tokyo, n.d.-b.; Traphagan & Thompson, 2006; London, n.d.; World Cities Culture Forum, n.d.).

The fourth point highlights that the long-standing economic and diplomatic relationship between Japan and the UK serves as a critical foundation for Tokyo and London's collaboration. In 2014 alone, bilateral trade in goods and services exceeded £19 billion, reinforcing Japan's role as a key trading partner for the UK—

particularly for the City of London (Lord Mayor Jeffrey Mountevans, as cited in CoLC, 2016). This substantial trade relationship has fostered economic interdependence, particularly in finance and technology, while also aligning with both cities' commitments to urban sustainability. Moreover, Japan and the UK's deep-rooted diplomatic ties provide a framework of mutual trust, which is essential for advancing ambitious urban initiatives (MOFA, Japan, n.d.-a).

(2) Following the Signing of the MoU in 2015

Following the signing of the MoU, TMG and the GLA expanded their collaboration to address emerging global challenges. Tokyo Governor Koike emphasized in 2017 that the win-win relationship between the two cities exemplifies the role of city partnerships in fostering international stability amid uncertainty (Office for Strategic Policy and ICT Promotion, TMG, 2018b).

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified this partnership, fostering cooperation across key sectors such as retail, tourism, and knowledge-sharing. These joint efforts enabled both cities to exchange best practices in urban development, architecture, environmental sustainability, culture, education, and technology. This broad scope of collaboration underscores the potential of city diplomacy in enabling cities to adapt to global crises and drive innovative solutions (Freist-Held, J. 2020; Pappalepore & Gravari-Barbas, 2022; Shen & Gong, 2022).

4.1.2 TMG-CoLC

(1) Prior to signing the MoU in 2015

Firstly, the collaboration between TMG and CoLC originated from Tokyo's ambition to reestablish itself as a leading global financial hub. Historically, Tokyo ranked among the top global financial centers; however, its decline—falling to sixth place in the Global Financial Centers Index by 2017— underscored the urgency for revitalization (Yeandle & Wardle, 2019, p. 4). Concerned about this decline and its implications for Japan's economy, Governor Yuriko Koike championed financial reforms under the "Global Financial City: Tokyo" initiative, emphasizing entrepreneurship, foreign investments, and regulatory improvements (Amari, 2021; Pesek, 2020).

TMG recognized London's expertise in financial regulation, FinTech, and green finance as key areas for strategic collaboration. The partnership with CoLC allows Tokyo to leverage London's status as a global leader in financial innovation, facilitating reforms in tax policies, governance, digitalization, and human capital development. Furthermore, hosting the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games reinforced Tokyo's ambition to position itself as a Global Financial Center (GFC), with the Games projected to contribute ¥3.2 trillion to Japan's economy and create 1.94 million jobs (Bureau of Finance, TMG, 2018, p. 12).

Beyond financial collaboration, the TMG-CoLC partnership reflects shared challenges. While Tokyo seeks to revitalize its financial ecosystem, London similarly benefits from Tokyo's insights, particularly as both cities navigate increasing competition from emerging financial hubs such as Singapore and Shanghai. This cooperation highlights their mutual commitment to resilience, sustainability, and maintaining global competitiveness (Amari, 2021; Lord Mayor of the City of London, as cited in Nikkei Asia, 2017; TMG, 2022b; Tokyo Governor Koike, as cited in Nikkei Asia, 2017; Vo & Nguyen, 2020, p. 8).

Secondly, by 2015, Japanese companies had become major investors in London, driven by Japan's economic policies that encouraged foreign investments in real estate and smart city initiatives (JLGC, London, 2015). The financial relationship between the UK and Japan remained strong, with the UK exporting £4.6 billion in financial services to Japan in 2016, while importing £959 million. These figures reinforced London's role as a key global financial hub (Cheyney, 2018; CoLC, 2017).

This collaboration aligns with both cities' economic objectives, particularly in transportation and telecommunications, fostering investment, job creation, and economic expansion (JLGC, London, 2015). TMG's financial strategies focus on leveraging economic partnerships to generate employment and increase tax revenues, crucial for funding infrastructure and social programs. While TMG has historically managed its finances independently, the 2008 financial crisis underscored the importance of economic diversification. Strengthening ties with London enables Tokyo to mitigate financial risks, sustain economic growth, and reinforce its position as a leading global financial and economic hub.

Beyond Tokyo's urban development goals, national-level factors further reinforced this collaboration. At the 2024 Tokyo-London Financial Seminar, Japan's Ambassador to the UK underscored the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations, facilitated by key mechanisms such as the Japan-UK Financial Regulatory Forum and the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. These frameworks enable regular dialogues, joint initiatives, and knowledge exchange, fostering progress toward shared economic and financial sustainability goals (Hayashi, 2024).

Against this backdrop, TMG's collaboration with CoLC reflects a strategic effort to leverage London's strengths in financial regulation, digital finance, and global market competitiveness. By drawing on London's expertise, Tokyo aims to revitalize its financial ecosystem and cement its position as a premier global financial center.

(2) After signing MoU in 2017

The signing of the 2017 MoU between TMG and CoLC marked a pivotal step in formalizing their financial partnership, reinforcing their shared commitment to advancing global finance. This agreement prioritized joint initiatives in FinTech, green finance, asset management, and ESG investment, positioning both cities as international financial leaders (MoU between CoLC and TMG, 2017; JLGC, New York, 2017). One of its most significant outcomes was the establishment of the annual Tokyo-London Green Finance Seminars, along with regular information-sharing sessions, fostering deeper collaboration in sustainable finance and financial technology innovation (BCCJ, 2021).

Between 2017 and 2019, Tokyo successfully attracted 35 international firms, strengthening its financial ecosystem and improving its global ranking to 4th place in the Global Financial Centers Index (GFCI) by 2020 (Japan Today, 2020). This progress reflects Tokyo's strategic efforts to overcome financial stagnation, leveraging London's expertise in regulatory frameworks and sustainable finance to enhance its FinTech landscape. Joint initiatives in technology, green finance, and digital innovation have enabled both cities to navigate global uncertainties, expand their international influence, and mitigate geopolitical risks through collaborative financial strategies.

Moreover, the Tokyo-London partnership continues to drive mutual economic growth, particularly in high-value sectors such as transportation, telecommunications, and finance. Japanese firms remain major investors in London, with substantial financial imports and exports reinforcing London's role as a global financial hub (Cheyney, 2018; CoLC, 2017). These ongoing economic synergies align closely with TMG's broader economic expansion strategies, prioritizing job creation, investment attraction, and tax revenue growth—further strengthening Tokyo's resilience as a world-class financial center (TMG, n.d.-k).

4.1.3 Political Dynamics and Motivations

The Tokyo-London partnership between TMG and CoLC is shaped by key political motivations at both the urban and national levels, reflecting shared geopolitical and economic interests. This collaboration aligns with Japan and the UK's broader strategic priorities, strengthening their global influence while reinforcing regional stability. At the city level, the 2017 friendship agreement between TMG and CoLC formalized financial and sustainability cooperation, reinforcing both cities' roles as leading global financial hubs. The partnership prioritizes international competitiveness, sustainable urban development, and economic resilience, with joint initiatives such as the Tokyo-London Green Finance Seminar fostering financial information-sharing and knowledge exchange. These

initiatives directly support Tokyo's ambition to become a key center for green finance and ESG investments, allowing TMG to leverage London's regulatory expertise and financial networks to enhance its financial ecosystem (BCCJ, 2021; Reuters, 2022).

Beyond city-level objectives, the partnership aligns with national geopolitical strategies, strengthening bilateral ties between Japan and the UK. High-level platforms, such as the UK-Japan Global Seminar series, address shared regional challenges, including cybersecurity, geopolitical shifts, and climate change. By deepening financial and technological collaboration, Tokyo and London reinforce their strategic positions in global governance, contributing to stability and economic integration across Asia and Europe (Nilsson-Wright, 2019).

The Tokyo-London partnership exemplifies how urban cooperation can complement national policies, serving as a model for effective city diplomacy. By integrating London's expertise in finance and sustainable development with Tokyo's global leadership aspirations, this collaboration fosters resilience, regional stability, and shared economic growth.

4.1.4 Driving Economic Cooperation: Complementary Industries in Tokyo and London

Tokyo and London, with their distinct yet complementary economic landscapes, provide a strong foundation for collaboration across various sectors.

Both cities are global financial hubs, with Tokyo striving to regain prominence in Asia and London maintaining its leadership in international financial services. Their partnership leverages London's expertise in FinTech, green finance, and asset management, aligning with Tokyo's goal of revitalizing its financial sector. Collaborative efforts in cross-border investments, financial innovation, and regulatory practices have enhanced both cities' global competitiveness (Cheyney, 2018; CoLC, 2017). Since signing the 2017 MoU, joint financial seminars have contributed to Tokyo's rise in global financial center rankings and attracted new international firms (Office for Strategic Policy and ICT Promotion, TMG; 2018c).

Tokyo and London excel in technology and innovation, offering substantial opportunities for collaboration in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and green technology. These sectors enable joint research, technology transfer, and investment, accelerating advancements in emerging industries and driving economic growth. This cooperation positions both cities at the forefront of sustainable urban development (CNN, n.d.; Greater Tokyo Biocommunity; Grow London, 2022; n.d.; Kassens-Noor & Fukushige, 2016; London Biotech Show, n.d.; Nature Research Custom, n.d.; Paul, 2021).

In creative sectors such as film, fashion, and digital media, Tokyo and London collaborate to enhance cultural offerings and attract global audiences. Joint artistic projects and cultural exchange programs foster creativity, cultural preservation, and economic activity, benefiting the cultural economies of both cities (Durieux, 2023; Kidokoro, Fukuda, & Sho, 2022; Hope, 2023).

As global tourist destinations, Tokyo and London hold immense potential for tourism collaboration. Joint marketing campaigns, travel packages, and cultural exchanges can boost visitor numbers, support local businesses, and create jobs. These initiatives enhance economic growth and deepen cultural engagement, further elevating both cities' global appeal (Britannia Airport Cars, n.d.; Faster Capital, n.d.).

Both cities are home to world-class educational institutions and research centers (Cramer et al., 2019; Williamson & Stevenson, 2022). Collaborative initiatives, including student exchanges, joint academic research, and strategic partnerships, attract top talent and drive innovation (Enkhtur et al., 2021; Huijser et al., 2019; Oka et al., 2018). These efforts reinforce Tokyo and London's roles as global intellectual and cultural hubs while enhancing their knowledge economies (Clark et al., 2019; Salinas, 2019; Tsuji et al., 2022; Yoshioka-Kobayashi, 2019).

While the Tokyo-London partnership showcases significant economic complementarity and mutual benefits, challenges persist. Geopolitical tensions, competition from other global cities, and difficulties in aligning shared goals present potential risks. These issues are common across city partnerships, as noted in studies on global city networks and urban dynamics, which emphasize governance complexities, sustainability, and equitable urbanization (Kourtit, Glaeser, & Nijkamp, 2020).

By leveraging their complementary strengths across finance, technology, creative industries, tourism, and education, Tokyo and London can address common challenges, amplify their status as leading global cities, and foster economic growth and resilience.

While economic, political, and cultural factors, alongside the necessity to address global challenges, have collectively shaped TMG's partnership with London, economic considerations—particularly Tokyo's ambition to revitalize its financial sector and reclaim its position as a top global financial center—emerged as the most immediate and influential driver. This economic priority was closely followed by Tokyo's strategic goal of successfully hosting the Olympic Games, leveraging the event to enhance its global reputation and stimulate long-term urban development. Political alignment, including shared governance values and national-level cooperation, further strengthened the partnership by fostering institutional trust and policy coordination. Furthermore, cultural exchanges and common urban

challenges have played a complementary role, reinforcing the sustainability and depth of the Tokyo-London collaboration over time.

4.2 Alignment with the Policies and Strategies of TMG

The Tokyo-London partnership exemplifies how city-level collaboration aligns with TMG's core strategies as the following details.

4.2.1 City Diplomacy and Global Positioning

(1) Global Financial and Economic Strategies

Tokyo's Global Financial City (GFC) Strategy, launched in 2017, seeks to position Tokyo as Asia's leading financial hub by emphasizing regulatory reform, FinTech innovation, sustainable finance, and ESG investments. The partnership with CoLC has been instrumental in achieving these goals through initiatives like the Green Finance Initiative and Blockchain Business Camp, leveraging London's expertise in financial innovation and sustainability (Office for Startup and Global Financial City Strategy, TMG, n.d.; Shirai, 2017; TMG, 2017). These efforts align with Tokyo's broader Economy Strategy, which aims to position the city as the most business-friendly metropolis in Asia by 2030 (Invest Tokyo, n.d.-a., n.d.-c. TMG, n.d.l, p. 19).

Through this collaboration, Tokyo has gained valuable insights from London's financial models, enabling it to address urban and financial challenges while enhancing its international competitiveness.

(2) Tokyo's Vision as a Leading Global City

The partnership aligns with Tokyo's ambition to solidify its position as a global city. This vision is guided by strategic frameworks such as the Policy for the Promotion of the Global City Strategy and the Society 5.0 initiative. These policies emphasize digital innovation, inclusivity, and decarbonization to address global challenges. London's expertise in FinTech and its well-established a start-up ecosystem complement Tokyo's efforts to attract global talent and develop high-value industries, reinforcing its status as an innovative and resilient global city (JLGC, London, n.d.; TMG, n.d.-b; n.d.-e).

(3) Basic Strategy for City Diplomacy (2014-2020)

The Tokyo-London partnership closely aligns with TMG's Basic Strategy for City Diplomacy (2014-2020), which aimed to elevate Tokyo's global stature through strategic international collaborations. This strategy emphasized leveraging the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games to enhance Tokyo's international presence, attract foreign trade, investment, and tourism, and address shared urban challenges through partnerships with key global cities like London. (Office of the Governor for Policy Planning, TMG, 2023)

As part of its international network of 12 sister or friendship cities, the Tokyo-London relationship builds on a legacy of cooperation dating back to Tokyo's first agreement with New York City in 1960 (TMG, n.d.-f, p. 47). These partnerships focus on shared interests such as environmental sustainability, cultural exchange, and sports development, fostering meaningful global collaborations. Through its collaboration with London, Tokyo has enhanced urban resilience, advanced community welfare, and deepened international cultural exchange, aligning with its vision of enhancing diplomatic ties and global influence.

Moreover, the collaboration with the GLA supports TMG's ambition to enhance urban functions, including transportation, environmental preservation, and tourism. These efforts align with Tokyo's city diplomacy goals and underscore its commitment to addressing shared challenges. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics further reinforced these principles, showcasing how city diplomacy can integrate local and global objectives through cultural and urban development initiatives.

In addition, the partnership reinforces TMG's commitment to sustainability through its Global Financial City: Tokyo project and participation in the Global City Network for Sustainability (G-NETS), launched in 2022. (G-NETS, n.d.-b) G-NETS facilitates knowledge-sharing among global cities to address pressing urban issues, while the Tokyo-London collaboration in green finance and ESG investments highlights shared sustainability goals (Office for Strategic Policy and ICT Promotion, TMG, 2019). These initiatives position both cities as leaders in environmental innovation and urban resilience.

By fostering partnerships with global cities like London, TMG effectively applies the principles of its Basic Strategy for City Diplomacy to achieve sustainable urban development, economic innovation, and cultural vibrancy. The Tokyo-London partnership exemplifies Tokyo's approach to leveraging city-to-city collaborations for mutual growth and global influence. (JLGC, London, 2015; Office of the Governor for Policy Planning, TMG, 2023)

4.2.2 Future Tokyo: Tokyo's Long-Term Strategy

(1) Sustainability and Environmental Leadership

(1.1) Zero Emission Tokyo

Tokyo's Zero Emission Tokyo strategy targets achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, with intermediary goals of a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 50% renewable energy usage by 2030 (TMG, 2019). This ambitious vision is strengthened by its partnership with CoLC, which leverages London's expertise in green finance and ESG investments to support renewable energy projects and carbon reduction initiatives.

London's sustainable finance frameworks, including the issuance of green bonds and the development of carbon market mechanisms, offer valuable tools that complement Tokyo's efforts to meet its climate objectives. Collaborative initiatives allow Tokyo to adopt innovative financial strategies and strengthen its global capacity to address climate challenges. Together, Tokyo and London demonstrate the potential of city-level partnerships to advance sustainable urban development and tackle global climate issues.

(1.2) Green Urban Development: Tokyo Green Biz

The Tokyo-London collaboration strengthens the Tokyo Green Biz initiative, which promotes sustainable urban environments through green spaces, rooftop gardens, and green infrastructure (TMG, 2024b, p. 10). By leveraging London's expertise in green finance and ESG investments, Tokyo attracts international funding for sustainable urban development, enhancing both urban resilience and its global appeal.

This partnership also aligns with shared priorities in urban development, including sustainable transportation and environmental preservation. These efforts reinforce Tokyo's strategies to strengthen urban functions, adopt green urban practices, and position itself as a leader in sustainable city innovation.

(2) Technology and Economic Innovation

(2.1) Smart Tokyo - TOKYO Data Highway Strategy

The TOKYO Data Highway Strategy aims to establish a citywide digital infrastructure, including high-speed 5G networks, to drive digital transformation across sectors (Hiroike, 2022, p. 3). This initiative supports Tokyo's ambition to become a smart city by integrating advanced technologies into urban management and service delivery.

The Tokyo-London partnership complements this strategy by leveraging London's strengths in financial technology and innovation. Collaborative efforts foster FinTech advancements and enhance Tokyo's financial services, creating synergies between digital infrastructure and financial ecosystems. Together, these initiatives position Tokyo as both a leading smart city and a competitive global financial hub, advancing its vision for technological and economic leadership.

(2.2) Create Innovation and Support the Shift to a New Industrial Structure

Tokyo's strategy to foster a vibrant startup ecosystem and drive digital transformation aligns closely with London's expertise in building a dynamic financial and tech hub. Through collaborative knowledge-sharing in areas such as

GovTech and digital finance, the partnership advances Tokyo's smart city initiatives by integrating advanced technologies and enhancing public services.

This collaboration also supports Tokyo's broader goals of attracting foreign businesses, expanding global networks, and leading in sustainable finance. By leveraging London's experience, Tokyo strengthens its capacity for economic growth and innovation, positioning itself as a global leader in industrial transformation and sustainable urban development. (TMG, 2024a, p. 10)

(2.3) Elevate Tokyo's Global Presence through Technology and Innovation

The Tokyo-London partnership strengthens Tokyo's global competitiveness by advancing its Technology and Innovation Cooperation Strategy, launched in 2022 under initiatives such as the "Startup Collaboration Strategy" and "Sushi Tech Tokyo" (Sustainable High-City-Tech.Tokyo). These programs aim to position Tokyo as a global hub for technology and innovation, addressing urban challenges through advancements in FinTech, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence (TMG, 2022c).

Joint ventures and knowledge-sharing with London enhance Tokyo's efforts, leveraging London's expertise in sustainable finance, FinTech, and innovation to attract international talent and investment. Initiatives like Sushi Tech Tokyo 2024 and startup-focused events showcase Tokyo's commitment to fostering a dynamic ecosystem for technological growth (TMG, 2024a, p. 10). The Tokyo Bay ESG project complements these efforts by aligning with London's sustainable practices, advancing green finance, next-generation mobility, and eco-friendly urban development.

Moreover, Tokyo draws inspiration from London's success in creating a vibrant international cultural scene, applying these lessons to its own tourism and cultural economy initiatives. Focus areas such as animation, nightlife, and sports integrate with Tokyo's broader innovation agenda, enhancing its appeal as a global destination for cultural and technological excellence (TMG, 2024a, p. 10).

Through this collaboration, Tokyo is not only addressing urban challenges but also solidifying its position as a world-renowned hub of innovation, technology, and sustainable urban development, ensuring future economic growth and global influence.

(3) Urban Competitiveness and Connectivity

Enhance Urban Functions and Make Tokyo the World's City of Choice

Tokyo's focus on improving urban infrastructure, creating vibrant public spaces, and enhancing transportation systems aligns seamlessly with London's expertise in managing high-traffic hubs and developing distinctive urban areas. This collaboration supports Tokyo's ambition to transform regions like the Tama

area into globally attractive destinations, integrating sustainable urban practices and innovative design (TMG, 2024a, p. 10).

Key projects, such as carbon-neutral port initiatives at Haneda Airport and the Port of Tokyo, underscore Tokyo's commitment to environmental preservation and sustainable transportation. These efforts are reinforced by London's experience in advancing green urban practices, including its leadership in sustainable transport systems and environmental planning. This shared vision strengthens the Tokyo-London partnership, enabling Tokyo to achieve its goal of becoming the world's city of choice by adopting cutting-edge green urban strategies.

(4) Structural Reforms for Regional and Global Co-Prosperity

Tokyo's structural reforms focus on fostering coexistence and co-prosperity both nationally and globally, leveraging its role as a growth hub to address shared challenges in collaboration with other Japanese regions (TMG, 2024b, p. 14). These reforms emphasize strengthening ties with local and international governments, activating global exchanges, and building robust intercity networks within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (TMG, 2024b, p. 14).

The Tokyo-London partnership directly advances these objectives by facilitating the exchange of best practices in sustainable development, ESG investments, and financial innovation. Collaboration with CoLC promotes the creation of green business ecosystems, enhancing Tokyo's leadership in sustainable finance and innovation. Joint SDG-focused initiatives with London enable both cities to address local and global challenges collaboratively, reinforcing Tokyo's role as a driving force for regional and international partnerships.

By aligning structural reforms with the Tokyo-London partnership, Tokyo positions itself as a leader in technology, finance, and sustainable urban development. This collaboration not only strengthens Tokyo's global influence but also cements its role as Japan's gateway to international innovation and co-prosperity.

4.2.3 Tokyo's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Tokyo's commitment to the SDGs aligns closely with its strategic partnership with London, advancing shared goals in sustainability, economic resilience, and urban innovation. This collaboration strengthens Tokyo's vision of becoming a globally sustainable and innovative city by promoting green finance, sustainable urban development, and knowledge exchange.

(1) Sustainable Urban Development

The Tokyo-London partnership enhances Tokyo's goals for sustainable urban development by integrating eco-friendly infrastructure and urban resilience strategies. Under the Future Tokyo: Tokyo's Long-Term Strategy, Tokyo adopts London's best practices in low-emission transportation, green infrastructure, and urban planning. This alignment supports Tokyo's SDG targets for environmental sustainability and creates a replicable model for eco-friendly urban growth that benefits both cities (TMG, n.d.-i, pp. 3-4, 9, 14; TMG, n.d.-j).

(2) Green Finance and ESG Initiatives

The 2017 MoU between TMG and CoLC established a framework to promote ESG investments, aligning with Tokyo's Zero Emission Tokyo Strategy (TMG, 2021c). By collaborating on green finance initiatives, the partnership positions Tokyo as a leader in sustainable finance while leveraging London's expertise in ESG frameworks. Joint efforts, such as the Tokyo Green Finance Market and Sustainable Energy Fund, ensure that Tokyo's financial ecosystem integrates sustainability into its growth model, helping to address global climate challenges and foster resilient, low-carbon economies.

(3) SDG-aligned Project: Realizing "Global Financial City: Tokyo"

Tokyo's ambition to become the region's top financial hub is supported by its focus on sustainable finance through initiatives such as FinCity Tokyo and Team Invest Tokyo. These projects attract international firms and talent, particularly in green finance, and include key developments like the Tokyo Green Finance Market and the Sustainable Energy Fund, which position Tokyo as a global leader in sustainable investments (TMG, n.d.-m, p. 20).

The Tokyo-London partnership, formalized under the 2017 MoU with CoLC, directly aligns with this vision. By facilitating knowledge exchange in green finance and ESG standards, the partnership advances TMG's Global Financial City: Tokyo project, helping integrate sustainability into Tokyo's financial ecosystem. Leveraging London's established expertise in ESG frameworks and financial infrastructure, Tokyo strengthens its ability to address global environmental challenges while enhancing its competitiveness as a financial hub.

This collaboration is central to Tokyo's strategies for sustainable growth. Joint initiatives in green finance and financial technology allow Tokyo to benefit from London's global leadership, improving its capacity to attract foreign firms and expand its international financial market presence. Furthermore, the alignment in ESG investments and sustainability strategies supports the SDGs, enabling both cities to develop innovative solutions to shared environmental and economic challenges.

Despite these advancements, Tokyo must navigate competitive pressures from other Asian financial centers, such as Singapore and Shanghai, and the need for ongoing regulatory innovation. Adapting London's financial models to Tokyo's unique market dynamics and staying responsive to evolving trends in sustainable finance will be critical for achieving these ambitious goals.

(4) Strategy for Heritage Management and Sustainable Development

The Tokyo Sustainability Action Plan, launched in 2022, integrates sustainable practices into urban planning, drawing inspiration from London's successful repurposing of Olympic venues, such as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This collaboration emphasizes transforming Olympic sites into sustainable community assets that promote cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and long-term social value (JLGC, London, n.d.; TMG, 2022b).

The Tokyo Sustainability Action Plan, launched in 2022, incorporates sustainable practices into urban planning, drawing lessons from London's successful repurposing of Olympic venues, such as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This collaboration underscores the potential of transforming Olympic sites into sustainable community assets that prioritize cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and long-term social value (JLGC, London, n.d.; TMG, 2022b).

Aligned with Tokyo's SDGs, the Tokyo-London partnership advances sustainable development by integrating cultural preservation and environmental priorities into urban planning. These initiatives extend beyond infrastructure, illustrating how both cities effectively leverage their heritage to foster environmentally conscious growth and enhance community well-being.

The partnership with the GLA further bolsters Tokyo's Strategy for Heritage Management and Sustainable Development through cultural exchange programs and shared sustainable urban planning approaches. While these collaborations exemplify a strong commitment to sustainability, their success is shaped by the unique cultural, economic, and environmental priorities of Tokyo and London. These efforts offer adaptable insights for other cities seeking to address environmental and cultural challenges through strategic partnerships.

(5) Global Knowledge Exchange

The Tokyo-London partnership fosters a robust exchange of knowledge that accelerates progress toward achieving SDGs, particularly in public transportation, waste management, and green infrastructure. This collaboration enables Tokyo to adopt innovative urban solutions, strengthening its capacity for sustainable development and resilient city planning.

By leveraging London's expertise in these areas, Tokyo enhances its commitment to sustainable governance, positioning itself as a global leader in implementing eco-friendly urban strategies (TMG, 2023).

4.2.4 Tokyo's Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy

The Tokyo-London partnership aligns closely with Tokyo's cultural strategies, including the Tokyo Cultural Strategy 2030, the Cultural Exchange and Creative Industries Strategy, and the Strategy for Promoting Tourism and Cultural Exchange. These initiatives collectively aim to position Tokyo as a global hub for arts, tourism, and creative industries, fostering sustainable cultural and economic growth (TMG, n.d.-b, n.d.-g, n.d.-h, n.d.-m, n.d.-n).

(1) Tokyo Cultural Strategy 2030

The Tokyo Cultural Strategy 2030 (FY2022–FY2030) envisions Tokyo as a globally recognized center of arts and culture by the 2040s. Its goals include promoting international cultural exchange, supporting emerging Tokyo-based artists, and creating global cultural networks (TMG, n.d.-b, n.d.-m, n.d.-n). Collaborating with London, a renowned cultural capital, provides Tokyo with insights into hosting impactful cultural programs and festivals for international audiences, enhancing Tokyo's global cultural identity and tourism.

(2) Cultural Exchange and Creative Industries Strategy

Aligned with the Cultural Exchange and Creative Industries Strategy, which integrates Tokyo's traditional heritage with modern creative industries, the partnership with London supports Tokyo's aspirations to lead globally in creative sectors. Drawing from London's expertise in arts, fashion, and design, this collaboration enriches Tokyo's cultural innovation and promotes economic growth. This strategy is further connected to the Tokyo Vision for Arts and Culture and Japan's Cool Japan initiative, strengthening Tokyo's role in the global creative economy (TMG, n.d.-b, n.d.-b, n.d.-m, n.d.-n).

(3) Strategy for Promoting Tourism and Cultural Exchange

The Strategy for Promoting Tourism and Cultural Exchange leverages the legacy of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games to boost Tokyo's international reputation (Tokyo 2020, 2020). Through joint marketing campaigns, tourism promotion, and cultural exchanges with London, this initiative attracts global visitors, celebrates Tokyo's heritage, and fosters cross-cultural understanding. These efforts enhance Tokyo's global appeal as a destination for both cultural and creative experiences (TMG, n.d.-b, n.d.-m, n.d.-n).

(4) Broader Impacts

Through these interwoven strategies, the Tokyo-London partnership strengthens Tokyo's cultural presence globally while advancing sustainable cultural and economic development. By promoting Tokyo's cultural identity, fostering artistic collaborations, and enhancing tourism, the partnership demonstrates how TMG effectively leverages international collaborations to achieve urban policy objectives and cultural diplomacy.

4.2.5 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Sports Promotion Strategy

The Tokyo-London partnership has been instrumental in shaping Tokyo's Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Strategy by leveraging London's experience from the 2012 Olympics. (TMG, n.d.-d). This collaboration has focused on urban development, cultural exchange, and sports diplomacy. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics served as a cornerstone for TMG's partnership with the GLA, with London's expertise providing valuable insights into urban renewal, sports management, and sustainable practices. These efforts enabled Tokyo to develop a comprehensive legacy framework aimed at delivering long-term social and economic benefits.

By integrating London's approaches, Tokyo refined its strategies for event hosting and urban planning, enhancing its reputation as a premier destination for business, tourism, and international sporting events. Knowledge-sharing initiatives facilitated by the partnership have strengthened Tokyo's ability to implement sustainable urban growth practices and expand its global influence in sports diplomacy.

The Tokyo Sports Legacy Vision, launched in 2022, builds on Tokyo's Olympic legacy by promoting sports participation and fostering healthy lifestyles (TMG, 2021b). Through continued collaboration with London, Tokyo applies Olympic values and capitalizes on infrastructure improvements from the 2020 Games to inspire future athletes, enhance community well-being, and strengthen urban vibrancy.

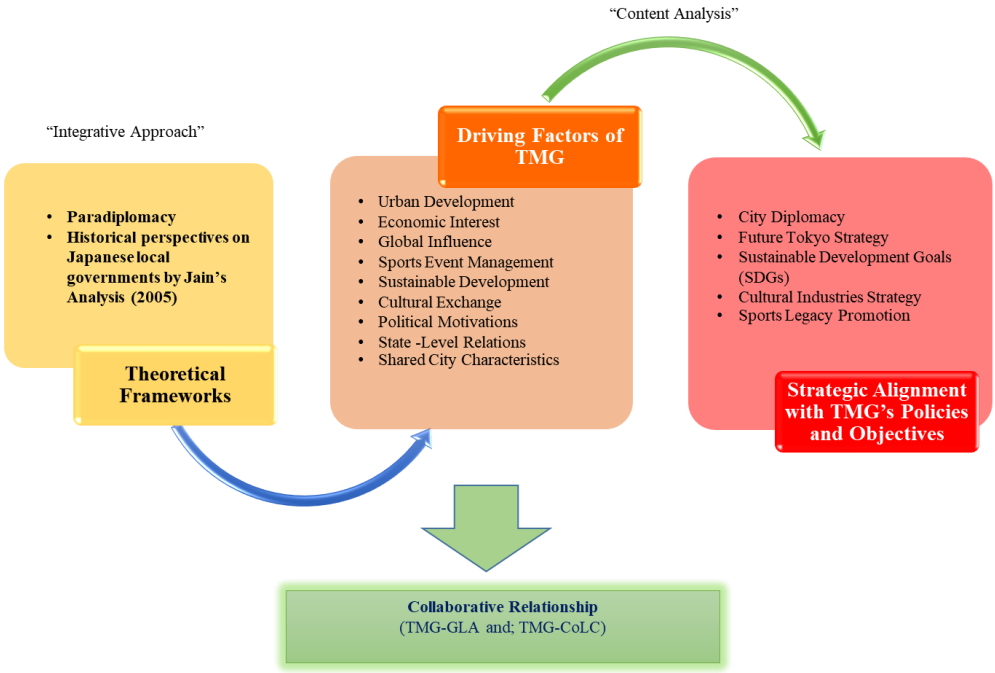
This partnership illustrates how international cooperation can drive sustainable urban development and improve quality of life, ensuring that Tokyo's Olympic legacy contributes to its broader goals of urban renewal, social development, and global leadership in sports diplomacy.

Based on TMG's driving factors and alignment with its policies and strategies, a key aspect of the Tokyo-London partnership is the strategic alignment between TMG's priorities and London's expertise. Tokyo's Zero Emission strategy, which targets net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, aligns with London's leadership in green finance, enabling the adoption of innovative financial tools such as green

bonds and ESG investments (TMG, n.d.-o). Similarly, Tokyo's preparation for the 2020 Olympics drew heavily from London's success in leveraging the 2012 Olympics for urban redevelopment, showcasing how cultural exchange and event planning can contribute to long-term urban sustainability. Furthermore, Tokyo's ambition to strengthen its global profile through urban diplomacy benefits from London's extensive experience as an international financial hub. These alignments not only reinforce TMG's policies but also enhance the partnership's ability to address shared global challenges effectively.

Based on the research findings, the following diagram illustrates the alignment between Tokyo's partnerships with London and the TMG's policies and initiatives.

Figure 2: **Assessing Tokyo's Partnership Driving Factors with London: Alignment with Tokyo's Policies and Initiatives (Research Findings)**



Source: Author

The research findings reflect Tokyo's ambition to establish itself as a leading global city through strategic collaborations with London's GLA and CoLC. By aligning urban strategies with city diplomacy, Tokyo leverages London's expertise in urban management, finance, and sustainability to address shared challenges and advance its strategic goals. These partnerships demonstrate Tokyo's

adaptability in navigating crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and its proactive approach to global interconnectedness. Aligning with TMG's policies—including city diplomacy, SDGs, and cultural promotion—these collaborations enhance Tokyo's economic, environmental, technological, and political leadership. Through these efforts, Tokyo strengthens its position as a globally connected, innovative, and resilient city.

5. Discussion

The research findings align closely with the paradiplomacy framework, highlighting the expanding role of subnational governments in international affairs. TMG's proactive engagement in city diplomacy, as demonstrated through its partnerships with the GLA and CoLC, reflects the economic imperatives underlying paradiplomacy. These partnerships aim to enhance Tokyo's global financial status by leveraging London's expertise, positioning Tokyo as a leading financial hub in Asia.

The multifaceted nature of paradiplomacy is evident in TMG's cooperation with London in urban development, technological innovation, and environmental sustainability. Jain's (2005) insights into the importance of policy vision, historical context, and complementary industries resonate with TMG's strategic alignment of international partnerships with broader policy objectives. The Tokyo-London collaboration demonstrates a shared commitment to sustainable urban growth, innovation, and resilience, reflecting Jain's perspective on the strategic motivations behind city partnerships.

The Tokyo-London partnership further aligns with Acuto's (2013) perspective on city-to-city diplomacy, which highlights both the potential benefits and inherent challenges of international engagement. Tokyo and London's collaboration in FinTech and digital infrastructure demonstrates awareness of these risks and the proactive use of advanced governance frameworks to mitigate them. These efforts enhance global competitiveness while protecting economic and digital infrastructures, underscoring Acuto et al. (2017) assert that robust governance is essential in international city partnerships.

Furthermore, the partnership reflects broader trends in city diplomacy described by Grandi (2020) and Espiñeira-Guirao (2022). Grandi emphasizes the integration of cultural exchange and creativity into economic strategies, a goal achieved by TMG's incorporation of cultural elements into economic and urban planning. Espiñeira-Guirao's new urban diplomacy framework is evident in the collaboration, where local expertise merges with global best practices, particularly in sustainability initiatives. Kavanoz, Erdem, and Yıldız's (2024) multi-actor

governance paradigm is also exemplified as Tokyo and London create cooperative frameworks addressing local and global issues, effectively bypassing national limitations to achieve shared objectives.

Ashbrook's (2021) observations on cities as autonomous actors in global governance illuminate the significance of the Tokyo-London partnership. The collaboration exemplifies urban diplomacy's ability to challenge traditional power structures by addressing transnational issues like climate change and sustainable development. By acting independently of national governments, Tokyo and London strengthen their global influence and contribute to reshaping governance through city-led initiatives, reinforcing Ashbrook's view of cities as motivated and dynamic global actors.

The Fukuoka-Bangkok partnership offers another relevant example of how cities balance economic interests with strategic international engagement. Mesupnikom (2018) finds that Fukuoka's engagement with Bangkok is a hybrid between friendship and interest-driven relations. Fukuoka pursues economic interests—outgoing investments and business opportunities—while simultaneously using Bangkok as a strategic gateway to expand its influence in ASEAN and India. This reflects a broader pattern seen in Tokyo's engagement with London, where economic ambitions intersect with broader global positioning strategies. Just as Fukuoka leverages Bangkok to expand regional connections, Tokyo utilizes its London partnership to enhance its status in global finance and sustainable urban development. This demonstrates how city diplomacy extends beyond direct bilateral cooperation, influencing regional and global networks.

Moreover, comparative cases provide further insights into strategic city partnerships. The London-New York partnership exemplifies financial diplomacy, with over £120 billion in trade in financial and professional services annually. This collaboration addresses shared challenges such as climate change, technological adaptation, and regulatory alignment. Initiatives like the British American Finance Alliance demonstrate the potential for financial hubs to collaborate for prosperity and sustainability (Hayward, 2024). Similarly, the London-Singapore partnership focuses on green finance, FinTech innovation, and regulatory alignment. The agreement between CoLC and Singapore's Monetary Authority prioritizes sustainable finance taxonomies and aligns global standards, mirroring Tokyo and London's shared urban sustainability goals (CoLC, 2023b).

By contextualizing the Tokyo-London partnership within broader theoretical frameworks and comparative case studies, this analysis underscores that city partnerships extend beyond economic or political engagements. Instead, they

function as dynamic and adaptive mechanisms that evolve in response to global challenges.

6. Conclusion

The Tokyo-London partnership represents a compelling example of international collaboration, formalized through the sister-city relationship between TMG and the GLA in 2015 and the city-level partnership with CoLC in 2017. These collaborations highlight the shared commitment of two global capitals to addressing urban challenges while leveraging their complementary strengths.

Factors driving cooperation between TMG and GLA, as well as TMG and CoLC, are diverse yet interconnected. These partnerships are shaped by economic, political, and cultural dimensions that reinforce each other.

For the TMG-GLA collaboration, key driving factors include addressing shared urban challenges such as sustainable development and environmental resilience, leveraging London's expertise in Olympic planning for the success of Tokyo 2020, and capitalizing on the natural similarities between the two cities as global capitals. These shared characteristics—such as their roles as financial hubs, centers of cultural heritage, and leaders in innovative urban planning—have provided a strong foundation for cooperation. The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of this partnership, fostering collaboration in tourism, public transportation, and knowledge exchange.

Meanwhile, the TMG-CoLC partnership is driven by Tokyo's ambition to reestablish itself as a leading global financial hub, enhance economic and investment ties with London, and align with the strong national relationship between Japan and the UK. Following the signing of the 2017 MoU, the partnership expanded to include joint initiatives in sustainability, technology, and green finance, enabling both cities to strengthen their international influence and navigate emerging global risks together.

These driving factors underscore the instrumental role of city diplomacy as a strategic mechanism for fostering targeted partnerships that address transnational challenges.

The Tokyo-London partnership aligns closely with TMG's policies and strategies, reinforcing its global positioning and long-term objectives. By integrating initiatives such as the Zero Emission Tokyo strategy, Smart Tokyo Data Highway, and the GFC strategy, TMG effectively aligns local priorities with broader international trends in sustainability, financial innovation, and urban resilience. Moreover, TMG's commitment to cultural diplomacy and creative industries—particularly through the Olympic and Paralympic legacy strategy—

demonstrates how international partnerships can enhance cultural exchange and global competitiveness.

This analysis offers both practical and theoretical contributions. For urban planners and policymakers, the findings provide actionable insights on leveraging city-to-city collaborations to enhance urban planning, city diplomacy, and sustainable development. For academia, this study deepens the understanding of how city-level partnerships align with broader global strategies, contributing to research on city diplomacy, economic resilience, and urban governance. The Tokyo-London partnership exemplifies a strategic model of international city collaboration, demonstrating how targeted cooperation enhances global connectivity, fosters urban innovation, and facilitates joint solutions to shared global challenges.

Moving forward, Tokyo's proactive approach to city diplomacy offers critical insights for other cities seeking to expand their international influence while addressing complex urban challenges. By leveraging partnerships like those with the GLA and CoLC, TMG demonstrates how cities can strengthen economic resilience, foster technological and financial innovation, and enhance global competitiveness. Nevertheless, the sustainability of such collaborations hinges on their capacity to adapt to shifting global dynamics while remaining flexible in responding to the distinct priorities and contextual needs of each city.

7. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance city diplomacy, strengthen urban partnerships, and guide future research.

7.1 Recommendations for Strengthening Cooperation between Tokyo and London

To enhance city diplomacy and ensure long-term sustainability, Tokyo and London should adopt adaptive strategies to navigate governance differences, policy misalignments, and global uncertainties while expanding collaboration.

(1) TMG and CoLC should expand ESG investments and establish a permanent financial dialogue to align Tokyo's cap-and-trade policies with London's net-zero commitments. Strengthening cooperation in FinTech, AI-driven finance, blockchain, and cybersecurity through joint frameworks would mitigate regulatory differences.

(2) Active participation in global city networks (e.g., C40 Cities, ICLEI) would position both cities as leaders in climate policy, urban sustainability, and digital governance. Expanding cultural and educational diplomacy through

academic exchanges and creative industry collaborations would build institutional trust.

(3) Japan's MOFA and economic agencies should proactively support TMG's city diplomacy, ensuring alignment with national diplomatic and economic strategies to reinforce Tokyo's global leadership.

(4) Strengthening periodic reviews of Tokyo-London MoUs, establishing a dedicated city diplomacy task force, and holding regular bilateral dialogues would enhance policy coherence and strategic oversight.

(5) Both cities should develop a decade-long roadmap, including city diplomacy summits, integrated sustainability and financial regulations, and green energy technology initiatives.

By proactively addressing these areas, Tokyo and London can strengthen their partnership's resilience, drive innovation, and shape the future of adaptive city diplomacy.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should assess the long-term impact of Tokyo's city diplomacy in sustaining international partnerships and shaping global urban governance. A longitudinal study on the Tokyo-London partnership's effectiveness in economic development, sustainability, and governance would offer policy insights.

(1) Studies should explore strategies for aligning sustainability, finance, and regulatory frameworks. Research on geopolitical resilience can examine how cities maintain stable collaborations despite shifting national policies, while cultural and institutional analyses would help address governance misalignments.

(2) Examining similar partnerships (e.g., New York-London, Singapore-Hong Kong) would highlight key success factors and governance adaptations to global challenges. Research on institutional mechanisms should focus on structured review frameworks, policy dialogues, and dedicated task forces.

(3) Incorporating primary data from government officials, policymakers, and organizations would provide deeper insights into decision-making, policy implementation, and intergovernmental coordination in city partnerships.

(4) Studies should analyze the role of high-ranking officials and bureaucratic experts in city diplomacy, particularly in decentralized governance structures like Japan and the UK. Interviews with policymakers could reveal how bureaucratic leadership shapes strategic collaborations.

(5) Research should explore how smart city platforms, blockchain-based finance, and AI governance enhance international cooperation and regulatory coordination. Examining Tokyo's city diplomacy within Japan's broader foreign

policy could assess its alignment with national objectives and the potential benefits of greater local government autonomy.

(6) Research should evaluate how Tokyo's city diplomacy strategies can be adapted by smaller cities or developing economies, providing practical recommendations for expanding global partnerships.

Addressing these areas would advance city diplomacy as a tool for sustainable international collaboration, economic resilience, and urban governance.

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