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Crossroads between city diplomacy and city branding towards the future: case study on the film cities at UNESCO Creative Cities Network

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Abstract

The paper holds twofold purpose. First, the study seeks to find potential synergies between public diplomacy and place branding at city level. Second, from that standpoint, it pursues to identify potential contributions of the city of film title for developments on branding and diplomacy of cities. The research is designed to answer the questions: (1) what is the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy? and (2) how can cities' titles potentially contribute to the future from the intersection of city diplomacy and city branding? Thus, the literature review investigates city diplomacy in the public diplomacy perspective, outlined by the multilayered diplomacy approach, while city branding is analyzed through place branding. Then, a case study is performed on the film cities at UNESCO Creative Cities Network, specifically Galway, Bradford, Busan, and Sydney. The analytical frame named 'CBCD crossroads matrix' is an outcome of this research consisting of the intersection between Cull's components of city diplomacy and Kavaratzis' components of city branding. Data were collected from reports and interviews, then examined by content analysis and soft systems methodology. Findings indicate potential opportunities for improvements and bring evidence that the crossroads of city diplomacy and city branding flows towards a joint future avenue.

Keywords City diplomacy · City branding · Creative cities · UNESCO · Titles of cities · Film cities

Introduction

In the globalized world, cities have increasingly attracted attention, driven by competition for human, economic and financial resources. Indeed, cities are *powerhouses of nations* (Anholt 2006b, p. 18), where public policies are tangible. Notably, about 72% of them are wealthier than nations (World Bank 2015, p. 2), for instance, London has a higher gross domestic product than the United Arab States and Switzerland (World Bank 2020; Dobbs et al. 2011, p. 12). Similarly, there are cases of strong city brands, even when the positioning conflicts with the nation brand positioning (Insch 2014, p. 252). Amsterdam ranks 8th in the city brands index (GFK 2018), while Holland doesn't appear among the

10 top countries (Ipsos 2019). In reality, global issues are concretely addressed locally.

Currently, at least 200 global networks and organizations gather cities worldwide (Acuto et al. 2018, p. 3). This is the case of United Cities and Local Governments, Eurocities, UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), and so forth. In addition, international organizations have created titles emphasizing cities' features, like the capital of culture, creative city, and film city. In those arrangements, subnational governments make public diplomacy and foster international distinctiveness.

In this regard, the close relationship of public diplomacy and place branding had already been pointed out (Anholt 2002, pp. 230–231). Likewise, the influence of local governments in nation branding has been studied (Wang 2006, pp. 32–34), as well as the relevancy of creative titles (Dudek-Mánkowska and Grochowski 2019). Recently, a paper focused on the shared goals between Chinese public diplomacy—national scale—and Ningbo branding—local level (Zhang et al. 2020). In this regard, Dinnie and Sevin highlighted *the pervasive influence of social media and*

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the rise of cities as global actors as the main contemporary changes, which impacts on nation branding and claim integrated strategies of city brands and diplomacy (2020, pp. 141–142). However, the analysis of cities' titles at the intersection of branding and diplomacy at the local level is understudied. As well, components of place brand remain an open-ended question (Ashworth et al. 2015). Similarly, theoretical models developed for city brand management, such as the Kavaratzis' framework needs testing (2010, p. 48).

Hence, the study aims to find synergies between public diplomacy and place branding at city stage. Additionally, it seeks to identify potential contributions of film title for future developments on branding and diplomacy of cities. The comprehensive analysis of the film title at the crossroads of diplomacy and branding fills a scientific gap and contributes to synergistic performance of subnational governments. In this regard, two research questions are addressed: (1) what is the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy? and (2) how can cities' titles potentially contribute to the future from the intersection of city diplomacy and city branding?

To achieve the objectives, a case study is performed on creative cities of film at UNESCO. Namely, it spotlights Bradford (United Kingdom), Busan (South Korea), Galway (Ireland), and Sydney (Australia). The theoretical framework is the intersection of diplomacy (Cull 2019) and branding (Kavaratzis 2009) at city level. Data were collected from reports and interviews, then the content analysis and the soft systems methodology were used as analytical techniques. Finally, recommendations arise from findings and discussion. In the last section, conclusions and opportunities for future developments are exposed, achieving the research's purpose.

The compass: literature review

City diplomacy: public diplomacy at local level

Cull argues that *humans seem hardwired to think in terms of cities*, opening *an opportunity for a new kind of city-to-city politics* related to soft power, that is the future of public diplomacy (2017, p. 107). In fact, trust among nations is best built at local level (Cull 2017, p. 107; Wang 2020) since sovereign states face the credibility challenge (Wang 2006, p. 36) and carry negative stories of war (Cull 2017, p. 107). Additionally, global issues like climate change, global diseases among others are effectively addressed locally (Curtis and Acuto 2018, p. 11; Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 6). Those factors rose the influence of city diplomacy, defined as *institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage, with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one*

another (Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 33). Thus, this section focuses on components of city diplomacy which are part of the analytical framework.

When cities make public diplomacy to advance the international agenda, in support of national government, city diplomacy is within the multilayered diplomacy approach (Hocking 1993). In other words, central and local governments integrate the *complex diplomatic environment, which does not recognize the exclusive territories of the domestic and the international* dimensions (Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 9), therefore, results in an integrative diplomacy (Hocking et al. 2012, p. 5). Markedly, the global agenda is set by states (Curtis and Acuto 2018, p. 17). As a matter of fact, usually cities don't have formal foreign policy (Acuto et al. 2017, p. 15; Santos 2019, p. 18), therefore, they must comply with the national foreign policy (Melissen 2005, p. 15). Under the circumstances, cities enter the international stage especially as parts of global organizations and networks. In those arrangements, they develop actions of advocacy (Curtis and Acuto 2018, p. 12), listening, communication (Acuto 2016, pp. 511–515), cultural exchange (Pluijm and Melissen 2007, p. 27), and others that fall under the concept of public diplomacy. Hence, city diplomacy is public diplomacy with emanation of soft power at local level.

Nye states that public diplomacy is *an effort to appear attractive and to create soft power* (2019, p. 11), featuring the role of influence. Gilboa focused on engagement and argued that public diplomacy is the *management of foreign policy through a government engagement with a foreign public* (2015, p. 1). Melissen prefers the Sharp's definition (2005, p. 11) that spotlights on people and put public diplomacy forward as the *process by which direct relations are pursued with a country's people to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented* (Sharp 2005, p. 106). Succinctly, Cull gathers those points and states that public diplomacy *is about listening to the other side and working to develop a relationship of mutual understanding* (2019, p. 23).

Pioneer scholars in the field, Signitzer and Coombs identified two components of public diplomacy: (1) political information, aimed at political advocacy, through radio, television, newspapers, etc. and (2) cultural communication, focused on mutual understanding, using films, exhibitions, language, exchange, among others (1992, pp. 140–142). Leonard distinguished three dimensions of components: (1) news management of daily communication, (2) strategic communications, referring to political advocacy, and (3) relationship building, which makes use of tools like exchange diplomacy (2002, pp. 13–20). The author also mapped instruments used in those dimensions: NGO diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, political party diplomacy, brand diplomacy, and business diplomacy (Leonard 2002, pp. 54–71). Truly, those frameworks would improvements to fit

in the new public diplomacy which features two-way communication, relationship building, and engagement as main characteristics (Melissen 2005, pp. 3–6; Szondi 2008, p. 8). Notably, Gilboa proposed a threefold scheme: (1) immediate term, which comprises advocacy, international broadcasting, and cyber public diplomacy, (2) intermediate, with public relations, corporate diplomacy, and diaspora diplomacy, and (3) long range, which consists of cultural diplomacy, exchange, and branding (2008, pp. 72–73).

On the main road, Cull created a foundational framework for public diplomacy, with five components (Table 1). First, 'listening', is a mechanism of engaging foreigners

Table 1 City diplomacy components (Cull 2019). *Source* Author's work on referenced sources

Component	Definition	Technical tools
Listening	Data about publics to redirect policy (assessment of foreign opinion)	Intelligence reports, department for brand promotion, rolling surveys in key countries, polling, media analysis, global public engagement, public relations to build trust, day-to-day basis communication, contact with local media, attention to the output of academic research, data mining, social media monitoring, proxy indicators in social media, digests of world editorials, international focus groups, radio's keywords analysis, international listening tour, big data analysis, networking power, audience's reaction to content, metrics of social media casual engagement (Cull 2019, pp. 38–45; Martino 2020, pp. 23–25)
Advocacy	Management of foreign public by particular policy, idea or interests to a foreign public	Sister cities, rhetoric, strategic narratives, policies, political communication, direct messaging (telling), messages by NGOs partnerships with credible authors for messaging, celebrity diplomacy, campaign, strategic messages for communication channels, cartoons, citizen diplomacy, speeches, open letters, financial help, official commissioned reports, infrastructure for conferences, publications, multimedia products (e.g. films, radio, poems), diaspora diplomacy, logo, images, slogan, press releases, press conferences, messages in social media, think tanks (Cull 2019, pp. 49–61; Leonard 2002, pp. 14–18; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, pp. 141–142; Gilboa 2008, pp. 72–73)
Cultural diplomacy	Management of international system by facilitating the export of actor's life, belief or art	Arts, festivals, exhibits, partnerships with cultural institutes, painting, calligraphy, photography, costumes, theater, video installation, music, orchestra, artistic exchange, society's beliefs and practices (high culture), language, cultural organizations overseas, sports diplomacy, libraries, cultural distribution facilities (e.g. film studios), architectural splendor, faith diplomacy, gastronomy diplomacy, intangible cultural heritage, cultural capacity-building (Cull 2019, pp. 64–73; Goff 2020, pp. 31–34; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, p. 142; Gilboa 2008, pp. 72–73)
Exchange diplomacy	Sending and accepting citizens overseas for studies or acculturation	Higher educational exchange, short-term acculturation trips of leaders, professional exchange, military exchange, third-party facilitated exchange, youth exchange, online exchange, work experience, volunteering, tourism (short-term travels for leisure, schools for nationals living overseas (Cull 2019, pp. 77–84; Scott-Smith 2020, pp. 42–46; Leonard 2002, pp. 18–20; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, p. 142)
International broadcasting	Engagement of foreign public by objective picture of the world at large	Radio, private news agencies, international broadcasters of print, surrogate broadcasting, websites, podcasts, films, social media, commercial international TV broadcasters (Cull 2019, pp. 87–103; Arceneaux and Powers 2020, pp. 52–59; Leonard 2002, pp. 12–14; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, pp. 140–141; Gilboa 2008, pp. 72–73)

by understanding expectations through intelligence reports, rolling surveys, media analysis, international listening tour (Cull 2019, pp. 38–45), big data analysis, networking power, audience's reaction to content (Martino 2020, pp. 23–25), etc. Second, 'advocacy' is the international defense of arguments, that consists of rhetoric, strategic narratives, policies, direct messaging, messages by NGOs, official commissioned reports, multimedia products (e.g. films, radio, poems), diaspora diplomacy, logo, images, slogan, press releases, think tanks, sister cities, and others (Cull 2019, pp. 49–61; Leonard 2002, pp. 14–18; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, pp. 141–142; Gilboa 2008, pp. 72–73). Third, 'cultural diplomacy' involves tools like festivals, calligraphy, society's beliefs and practices (high culture), cultural organizations overseas, sports diplomacy, cultural facilities (e.g. film studios), architecture, intangible cultural heritage (Cull 2019, pp. 64–73; Goff 2020, pp. 31–34; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, p. 142; Gilboa 2008, pp. 72–73). Fourthly, 'exchange diplomacy' refers to hosting or sending citizens abroad for studies or acculturation, which refers to high education, professional, and online exchange, among others (Cull 2019, pp. 77–84; Scott-Smith 2020, pp. 42–46; Leonard 2002, pp. 18–20; Signitzer and Coombs 1992, p. 142). Finally, the fifth component 'international broadcasting' is transmitting news abroad at large scale using radio, news agencies, surrogate broadcasting, websites, podcasts, and other tools (Cull 2019, pp. 87–103; Arceneaux and Powers 2020, pp. 52–59).

The Cull's pattern (Table 1) is widely used for the public diplomacy analysis (Pamment 2013; Hartig 2019, p. 1; Schindler 2018, p. 28; Velikaya and Simons 2020, p. 9; Villanova 2017, p. 9; Snow and Cull 2020, pp. 19–75). Probably, it is due to consistency and coherence. Thus, from diplomacy perspective, it composes the analytical framework of this study.

City branding: application of branding to cities

City branding is the application of the philosophy and methods of branding to the development of cities (Kavaratzis 2019, p. 1). Usually, the outcomes are twofold: (1) achievement of competitive advantage, increasing investments and tourism, and (2) social development and inclusion (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 70; Fan 2014, p. 253; Merrilees et al. 2014, p. 268). Fan, the guest editor of the special issue over city branding of 'Place Branding and Public Diplomacy', highlighted the relevancy of city branding for the future of cities (Fan 2014, pp. 253–254).

Researches in the 1990s were embryos of current studies. At the beginning, the urban perspective prevailed alongside tourism marketing approach (Ashworth and Voogd 1990, 1994b) under titles like city marketing (Ashworth and Voogd 1994a) or city selling (Ward 1998). The first attempts to connect 'branding' to cities date back to the 2000s, moving

from place product to place branding approach, which boosts differentiation, preference and loyalty (Hankinson 2010, pp. 15–17).

In the beginnings, Hankinson pointed out the role of branding to cities' from the perspective of product branding (2001, pp. 132–136). Greenberg had identified the *branded city in-miniature* in the urban lifestyle sold by magazines under the quality of life notion (2000, p. 256). Evans looked at the impact of cultural brands as source of differentiation and sense of belonging to cities (2003, pp. 420–421). Rainisto highlighted the need for adjusting branding principles to places (2003, p. 63). Notably, the period 1998–2009 witnessed the exponential growth of papers about city branding (Lucarelli and Berg 2011, p. 11).

Then, in the first issue of 'Place Branding and Public Diplomacy', Kavaratzis presented a framework to analyze city brand and management (2004, p. 67) which sets off five elements grounded on the corporate branding approach (2004, p. 63): (1) landscape, (2) infrastructure projects, (3) organizational structure, (4) city's behavior and (5) intentional communication (2004, p. 67). The author clarified that corporate brands imply an umbrella of individual brands benefitting the overall image of corporations (2004, p. 65). This perspective considers a *broader, large-scale philosophy of developing bands and not the small-scale tactics of product branding* (Kavaratzis 2020, p. 25).

In reality, that paper was the precursor of the seminal work co-authored by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2006), which is considered classical (Hospers 2020, p. 18) and inspired the special issue 'Revisiting City Branding' of the Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie in February 2020 (Kavaratzis 2020). In that research, Kavaratzis and Ashworth developed the 'responsible city branding' idea, supported by corporate branding (2006). From this point of view, the *whole organization is branded, not each product* (2006, p. 191). This makes messages more consistent (2006, p. 191), especially due to the multidisciplinary roots, intangibility, complexity, multiple groups of stakeholders and identities (2006, p. 189). It is difficult to cities to project *a single, clear corporate identity because most democratic political systems encourage the open expression of alternatives rather than concealing them within a spurious communal unanimity* (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2006, p. 190).

Anholt described the city branding as *a handful of qualities or attributes, a promise, some kind of story* that impacts on *decision to visit the city, to buy its products or services, to do business there or even to relocate there* (2006b, p. 18). On this wise, he created a model for measuring city brands based on the hexagon of the 'Nation Brands Index'. The city brands hexagon is composed by: (1) *presence*: international standing, (2) *place*: people's perceptions, (3) *potential*: economic and educational opportunities, (4) *pulse*: vibrant lifestyle, (5) *people*: warmth of residents and safety,

and (6) *prerequisites*: the basic qualities of the city (2006b, pp. 19–20). Later, Anholt renamed the concept to 'competitive identity', a term he used to *describe synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion* (Anholt 2007, p. 3). Nevertheless, the cities' hexagon remained the same (Anholt 2007, pp. 59–62).

Beyond Kavaratzis (2004) and Anholt (2006b), there are other frameworks. Rainisto created the 'success factors of place marketing' to guide cities in marketing strategies, consisting of: (1) planning group, (2) vision and strategy analysis, (3) place identity, (4) place image, (5) public–private partnerships, (6) political unity, (7) global marketplace, (8) local development and (9) process coincidences (2003, pp. 64–65). In a later co-authored work, Rainisto ratified the concept (Moilanen and Rainisto 2009). Additionally, Trueman and Cornelius created the 'place brand toolkit' (2006, p. 9). The pattern is known as 'five Ps': (1) presence: natural, built and emotional landscape, (2) purpose: borders and levels, (3) pace: speed in responding do internal and external conditions, (4) personality: made up by presence, purpose and pace, and (5) power, a kind of empowerment of change embedded in local communities that supports the brand ownership (Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32).

In the same way, Hankinson developed the 'relational network brands' model (2004, p. 115), based on behaviors of consumers and stakeholders (2004, pp. 114–118). He took into account the need for *development of place brands apart from classical, product-based branding theory* (2004, p. 110), identifying four elements: consumer relationships, primary service relationships, media relationships and brand infrastructure relationships. Later, Hankinson updated it based on the emerging literature on corporate brands (2007, p. 246), with five elements: (1) leadership, vision, strategy, (2) internal brand identity, (3) external brand identity, (4) consistent brand communications, and (5) multiple stakeholders.

Supported by corporate-level marketing theories, Kavaratzis consolidated those frameworks, in face of the similarities and the multi-dimensional nature of place brands (2009, p. 34). The integrated approach to managing city brands has eight components (Table 2): (1) vision and strategy, (2) internal culture, (3) local communities, (4) synergies, (5) infrastructure, (6) Cityscapes, (7) opportunities, (8) communication (Kavaratzis 2009, pp. 33–35). In this regard, Kavaratzis states that the city's shared 'vision' guide the 'strategy', which ideally prioritizes demands from 'local communities' and is supported by city's management, with cultivation of 'internal culture' and city's 'stakeholders' (2010, p. 46). In addition, the 'infrastructure' that makes the city a *place to live* need to be addressed in alignment with the natural and built environment to provide the symbolic character of 'cityscapes and gateways' (2010, p. 47). The

author also emphasizes the need to ensure 'opportunities' for target publics, besides the creation of successful brand 'communications', grounded on place story (2010, p. 47).

More than 10 years have passed since then and new studies came to the corner. Hence, they were analyzed in face of the Kavaratzis' framework and showed it remains updated (Table 2). Specifically, three new models were covered: the 'multidisciplinarity framework' (Hankinson 2010), the 'strategic place brand management' (Hanna and Rowley 2011, 2013) and the 'ICON model' (Dinnie 2016).

The 'multidisciplinary framework' is grounded on diversity of perspectives over place branding (Hankinson 2010, p. 28). This scheme comprises: (1) places as products: experiences, heritage, architecture and partnerships, (2) places as images: consistent elements of communication, (3) places as corporate brands: multiple stakeholders, (4) place as services: internal brandings, processes, and (5) brand management: coordination and spreading commitment (2010, pp. 28–34).

In addition, the 'strategic place brand management' (SPBM) developed by Hanna and Rowley (2011, 2013) presents: (1) brand evaluation: methods for feedback control, (2) brand infrastructure: functional and experiential, (3) stakeholder engagement: identification and interaction, (4) brand leadership: commitment towards stakeholders (5) brand architecture: association with place, (6) brand identity: qualities that make brand what it is; (7) brand articulation: visual and oral identity, (8) brand communications: mix of techniques, (9) word-of-mouth: communication by consumers, and (10) brand experience: engagement with brand (Hanna and Rowley 2011, 2013). Hanna and Rowley also released the '7Cs' framework, as an adaptation of the SPBM model to cyberspace (2015, pp. 90–96) which was not taken into account due to the goals of this research.

Ultimately, Dinnie created the ICON Model as a compass for nation branding (2016, pp. 252–254). The frame is flexible and can be applied to other contexts, such as cities (Dinnie and Sevin 2020, pp. 140–141). This features four elements: (1) integrated: collaboration among public and private actors, (2) contextualized: focus on audience's values and stakeholders' needs, (3) organic: roots in culture and place identity, (4) new: attention to innovative experiences, narratives tools, services and products.

This research does not aim to investigate trends that contributed to the development of city or place branding, such as 'place of origin', 'destination branding' or 'culture branding' (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2010, pp. 4–6, Kavaratzis 2005, pp. 2–3), rather it assumes the perspective of expanded place management with techniques borrowed from corporate branding that guided the Kavaratzis' framework. As a matter of fact, the *common elements in one way or another relate to notions developed within the corporate branding literature* (Kavaratzis 2010, p. 46). The author clarifies that became

Table 2 City branding components (Kavaratzis 2009). *Source* Author's work on referenced sources

Component	Definition	Technical tools
Vision & strategy	Vision for the city's future and development of a clear strategy to realize it	Balance of perspectives, vision, strategy, strategic planning (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 10; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 70–73; Hankinson 2007, pp. 246–247; Hanna and Rowley 2011, p. 464; Hanna and Rowley 2013, p. 1788; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)
Internal culture	Spreading a brand orientation through the city management	Working groups, committees, managed relationships by the top (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 10; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 69–70; Hankinson 2004, p. 117; Hankinson 2007, p. 244; Hanna and Rowley 2011, p. 464; Hanna and Rowley 2013, p. 1788)
Local communities	Prioritizing local needs, involving local residents, businesses and entrepreneurs in developing the brand	Traditions and beliefs, community networks, participation of citizens in decision making, communities supporting regeneration, ownership of city brands, trust on city branding, communities sharing language and culture, focus on long-term residents, activities for residents and employees (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 9; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Hankinson 2004, p. 117; Hankinson 2007, p. 244; Anholt 2006b, p. 20; Anholt 2007, pp. 60–61; Hanna and Rowley 2011, pp. 464–466; Hanna and Rowley 2013, pp. 1787–1788; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)
Synergies	Gaining agreement and support of all relevant stakeholders and providing for balanced participation	Public–private partnerships, external contribution on culture, feedback on branding experience, methods to identify stakeholders' interests and interactions, external contribution on science, headquarters of multinational companies in the city, stakeholders' networks (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, pp. 19–20; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 77–78; Hankinson 2004, pp. 116–117; Hankinson 2007, pp. 248–249; Anholt 2006b, p. 20; Anholt 2007, p. 61; Hanna and Rowley 2011, pp. 465–466; Hanna and Rowley 2013, pp. 1787–1788; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)
Infrastructure	Providing basic needs without which the city cannot attempt delivering the expectations created by its brand	High streets, monuments, facilities, transportation (sea, air, land, rail), public transportation, car parking, infrastructure for inclusion, cultural centers, sports facilities, hotels, housing, schools, hospitals, conference facilities (Kavaratzis 2004, pp. 67–68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 10; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 73–74; Hankinson 2004, pp. 116–117; Anholt 2006b, p. 20; Anholt 2007, p. 61; Hanna and Rowley 2011, pp. 466–468; Hanna and Rowley 2013, p. 1787)
Cityscape & gateways	The ability of the built environment to represent itself and reinforce or damage the city's brand	Public art, heritage, accessibility, vibrant urban style, urban design, urban regeneration, iconic symbols, landmark buildings, brand experiences for residents, brand experiences for visitors, city's storytelling, services according to brand (retailers, events, leisure, hotels,…), feedback on infrastructure, identified quarters, international visits to city (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 67; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, pp. 10–11; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 73–74; Hankinson 2004, pp. 116–117; Anholt 2006b, p. 19; Anholt 2007, p. 60; Hanna and Rowley 2011, pp. 468–469; Hanna and Rowley 2013, p. 1789; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)

Table 2 (continued)

Component	Definition	Technical tools
Opportunities		Services provided by cities, cultural events, sports events, leisure events, festivals, jobs, business incentives, higher education (Kavaratzis 2004, p. 68; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 10; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 80–83; Hankinson 2007, pp. 248–249; Anholt 2006b, p. 20; Anholt 2007, p. 60; Hanna and Rowley 2011, p. 471; Hanna and Rowley 2013, pp. 1787–1788; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)
Communications	Intentional communication; significance of symbolism; multidisciplinarity of city branding; branding as a general philosophy	Advertising, public relations, logos, design, graphic design, slogan, brand's symbols, communication channels, social media (Kavaratzis 2004, pp. 68–69; Trueman and Cornelius 2006, p. 10; Kavaratzis 2009, p. 32; Rainisto 2003, pp. 75–77; Hankinson 2004, p. 117; Hankinson 2007, pp. 243–245; Anholt 2006b, p. 19; Anholt 2007, p. 60; Hanna and Rowley 2011, pp. 464–65, 469–471; Hanna and Rowley 2013, pp. 1786, 1789–1791; Dinnie 2016, pp. 252–254)

easier to understand city branding through the corporate branding theory (2010, p. 47). The perspective gave rise to the city branding theory (2010, pp. 47–48). Thus, from branding side, this paper relies on the Kavaratzis' theoretical approach (Table 2).

Traffic signs to crossroads: relationship between city diplomacy and city branding

The intersection of city diplomacy and city branding is within the scope of public diplomacy and place branding. In order to understand the coverage of the analytical framework built in this paper, the commonalities and distancing points are briefly discussed. In this section, from the branding side, there were analyzed works addressing nations and places (cities and regions), terms often used interchangeably (Papadopoulos 2004, pp. 36–37). Even Anholt, when supposed to discuss the link between public diplomacy and place branding, in reality wrote about nation branding (Anholt 2006a). Thus, the analysis considered the distinction and the fact that this paper rests on the connectivity between branding and diplomacy, not on the comparison between nation and place branding. Notably, nation branding has more variables, is more complex, more difficult to manage and is perceived as representational. On the other side, places (regions and cities) have functional features (Caldwell and Freire 2004, p. 59; Herstein 2012, pp. 148–149). Therefore, this perspective guided the analysis.

Wang declared public diplomacy is a way to cultivate image and reputation by disseminating policies and culture to international publics, matching with the 'culture element' of the 'Nation Brands Hexagon' (2006, p. 32). This corresponds to the 'presence element' of 'City Brands Hexagon' (Anholt 2007, p. 60). Anholt pointed out the need for harmonizing diplomacy and branding practices (Anholt 2002, pp. 230–231) and declared that *it is public diplomacy, twinned with brand management, that underpins the idea of Competitive Identity* (2007, p. 12).

Likewise, Melissen named them *sisters under the skin,* because of the common goal of transmitting ideas to foreign publics, relying on listening (2005, p. 19) to get better results from long-term approaches (2005, p. 21). However, he distinguishes public diplomacy from place branding as the first is focused on international relationships while the second concentrates on identity projection (2005, pp. 19–20). This distinction requires efforts on coordination. Melissen also warns that branding and diplomacy can undermine each other whether working on contrary views because although *aimed at foreign publics,* they have a *vitally important domestic dimension* (2005, pp. 20–21). Pamment et al. say that both underpin the communication management of nation states *in order to attract trade, investment and tourism, as well as generate broader interest in their policies*

and values (2017, p. 326). This analysis can be transferred to cities' context by melting city branding and diplomacy in order to get best economic and social results. To sum up, scholars identified differences, but recognize the equal importance of public diplomacy and branding to advance policies of places.

On balance, the premise of the papers' analytical framework needs to be clarified. In this regard, Szondi studied in-depth the similarities and differences between public diplomacy and nation branding. The last is taken as specialization of place branding (2008, p. 4), allowing transferability to cities. In this scenario, five types of relationship were mapped: (1) unrelation, (2) public diplomacy as part of branding, (3) branding as part of public diplomacy, (4) exactly same concepts, and (5) partial overlapping (2008, p. 14). In the conclusion, Szondi stated that the integration of the two concepts would accomplish synergy (2008, p. 37). Notably, the fifth hypothesis, 'city branding partially overlapping with city diplomacy' describes the analytical framework of this study, which is further used to the empirical examination of the cities of film.

Crossroads of city diplomacy and city branding: the analytical framework

The analytical framework has two purposes. First, it answers to the first research question, defining the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy. Then, it serves to the empirical analysis on the contributions of cities' titles, supporting the second research question. The literature review on Kavaratzis (2009, pp. 32–35) and Cull (2019, pp. 38–108) paved the way to the analytical framework that aligns the approaches.

First, technical tools were identified from components of both sides (Tables 1 and 2). Secondly, the scheme of the analytical matrix was built (Table 3) by plotting the Kavaratzis' components in the first column of a spreadsheet and the Cull's components in the first line. Thirdly, categories were set up at the intersection cells by clustering the technical tools of components according to their commonalities (Krippendorff 2003, p. 208). As an illustration, the intersection cell between 'vision and strategy' (Kavaratzis) and 'listening' (Cull) in Table 3, named 'diagnosis' gathers technical tools of Table 2 (vision and strategy), like 'balance of perspectives', as well as technical tools from Table 1 (listening), like 'intelligence reports'. Similarly, the technical tools 'working groups' (Table 2 – internal culture) and 'sister cities' (Table 1 – advocacy) were clustered into 'representation', at the intersection of 'internal culture' (Kavaratzis) and 'advocacy'(Cull), and the list goes. Finally, each cluster (category) received a name, for instance, the previously mentioned 'diagnosis' and 'representation'. Due to the terminological issues

raised by Anholt related to marketing and branding (2004, p. 4; 2007, p. 4), as well as the Kavaratzis' concerns about vocabulary (2010, p. 7), the categories preferably received names from the diplomacy glossary.

The outcome is the 'CBCD crossroads matrix', which comprises the theoretical common ground of city branding and city diplomacy, therefore answers the first research question, 'what is the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy?'. The matrix indicates 40 points of intersection between public diplomacy and city branding. References and tools are identified in 31 of them (Table 3) according to literature review (Tables 1 and 2). In other words, 31 categories (78%) are already explored by cities in the branding and/or public diplomacy perspectives (Fig. 1). Specifically, two categories feature only instruments of city branding, that are 'public participation' and 'feedback on infrastructure'. In the same way, categories hold only tools of city diplomacy: 'engagement', 'representation', 'international listening', 'broadcasting facilities', 'partnerships for international broadcasting', international cooperation', 'online exchange' and 'glocal culture' (Govers and Go 2009). In the final analysis, according to literature review, 21 categories are currently operated by both city diplomacy and branding.

To put it differently, 53% of the categories (Fig. 1) are already addressed by cities in the diplomacy and branding spheres. Also, there is a high potential to handle the 25% of categories which are already explored by cities, but only in one of the disciplines, branding (5%) or diplomacy (20%). For instance, 'engagement', that refers to opportunities for involvement of global publics, is at the core of city diplomacy and may be useful for city branding, especially in an era of competition in the international arena. Therefore, the integrated focus on diplomacy and branding will deliver synergistic results. In the same way, the 'public participation' of citizens in decision making, observed in city branding, could be useful for diplomacy, especially for empowering citizen diplomats (Samuel-Azran et al. 2019; Pisarska 2016).

Important to realize that the premise for building the matrix is that city branding and diplomacy overlap partially. Therefore, each one will always keep own particularities out from the common ground. This can be seen in the white intersection cells. Nevertheless, the nine white cells which corresponds to 22% of the matrix constitutes a route for future advancements in the field. As an illustration, the international broadcasting of city diplomacy performed by transmissions through social media may offer feedback for improving vision and strategy at city branding. This could fill the white cell at interaction of 'international broadcasting' (Cull) and 'vision & strategy' (Kavaratzis) in Table 3.

Lastly, the analytical framework which answers the first research question and guides the empirical examination is operationalized in the map of the common ground of city diplomacy and city branding (Fig. 1).

Table 3 The matrix crossroads of city branding and city diplomacy (CBCD crossroads matrix). *Source* Author's work on Kavaratzis (2009) and Cull (2019)

Components		City Diplomacy Components (Cull 2019)				
		Listening	Advocacy	Cultural diplomacy	Exchange diplomacy	International broadcasting
City Branding Components (Kavaratzis 2009)	Vision & strategy	**DIAGNOSIS** Intelligence reports, balance of perspectives, diagnosis, international focus groups or output of academic research taken into account for defining vision and strategy ●	**POLICIES** Vision, strategy, strategic planning, rhetoric, strategic narratives, policies ●	○	**INTERNATIONAL LISTENING** Benchmarking from international listening as part of building vision and strategy ▥	○
	Internal culture	**MANAGEMENT** Department for brand promotion, management by the top ●	**REPRESENTATION** Working groups, committees, Sister Cities, international networks ▥	○	**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIZATION** Short-term trips of leaders for acculturation and benchmarking ▥	○
	Local communities	**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** Community networks, citizens participation in decision making ▤	**CITIZEN DIPLOMACY** Long term residents promoting trust and ownership of city brands, advocating it internationally ●	**HIGH & POPULAR CULTURE** Shared language, beliefs, traditions, practices, intangible heritage, faith diplomacy, arts diplomacy (painting, costumes, music, photography, calligraphy) ●	**INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE** Activities for residents and employees, youth exchange ●	**GLOCAL CULTURE** Podcasts and films produced by local communities for online sharing ▥
	Synergies	**LISTENING STAKEHOLDERS** Methods to get feedback from stakeholders on branding experience, rolling surveys in key countries, polling, public relations to build trust ●	**STAKEHOLDER ADVOCACY** Partnerships with credible authors for messaging (e.g. private sector, NGOs, think tanks), stakeholders' networks, celebrity diplomacy ●	**CULTURAL EXCHANGE** Partnership for contribution on culture, including local and overseas cultural Institutes ●	**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** Third-party facilitated exchange on military issues, sciences, and headquarters of multinational companies in the city ●	**PARTNERSHIPS FOR BROADCASTING** Private news agencies, surrogate broadcasting ▥
	Infrastructure	**FEEDBACK ON INFRASTRUCTURE** Listening users about experience in the city ▤	**CONFERENCES** Conferences facilities ●	**CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE** Cultural centers, Facilities for culture distribution (e.g. film studios) ●	**GENERAL FACILITIES** High streets, housing, car parking, hotels, schools including those for foreigners, sports facilities, hospitals, public and private transportation (all means) ●	**BROADCASTING FACILITIES** Radio, TV and print national and international broadcasters ▥
	Cityscape & gateways	○	○	**CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT** Public art, heritage, city's storytelling, libraries, architectural splendor, gastronomy diplomacy ●	**GLOBAL IMAGE** Accessibility, landmarks, urban design, vibrant urban style, urban regeneration, iconic symbols, monuments, brand services and experiences (retailers, hotels, …) for residents and visitors, international tourism	○
	Opportunities	**ENGAGEMENT** Opportunities for engagement with global publics ▥	**PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** Financial incentives, opportunities for creating products for advocacy (multimedia, cartoons, films, radio, novels, poems, publications) ●	**CULTURE & LEISURE** Cultural and sports events, sports diplomacy, leisure, festivals, artistic exchange, cultural capacity-building ●	**RESOURCES** Services provided by cities, jobs, business and higher education exchanges, international volunteering ●	○
	Communications	**TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION** Social media, media and radio's key words analysis, proxy indicators, public relations, digests of world editorials, data mining, day-to-day basis communication ●	**COMMUNICATION TOOLS** Advertising, graphic design, logo, slogan, brand's symbols, direct messaging (telling), communication channels, campaign, logo, images, open letters, official commissioned reports speeches, slogan, press releases & conferences ●	○	**ONLINE EXCHANGE** Knowledge exchange in the cyberspace ▥	**BROADCASTING** International communication channels, websites, social media, commercial international broadcasters ●

● Shared by city diplomacy and city branding; ○ Neither city diplomacy nor city branding feature; ▥ Only city diplomacy; ▤ Only city branding

The roadmap: research design

This study seeks to identify synergies between public diplomacy and place branding at city level and to identify potential contributions of city of film title for future developments on branding and diplomacy of cities. In this particular, the research design aims to answer: (1) what is the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy? (2)
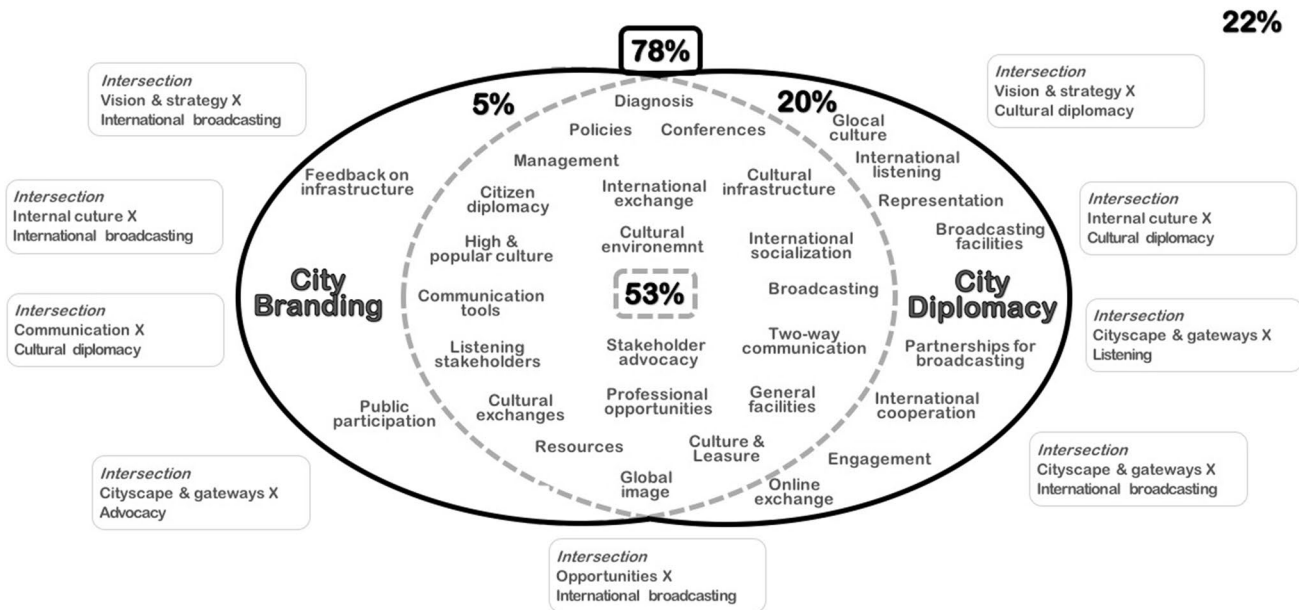
Fig. 1 Image of commonalities of city branding and city diplomacy

how can cities' titles potentially contribute to the future from the intersection of city diplomacy and city branding? Notably, the first research question is answered in the previous section by the 'CBCD Crossroads Matrix' built from the literature review. In the next section, the matrix is the analytical framework. Hence, the empirical analysis considers the 'city of film title' as the subject and the 'CBCD Crossroads Matrix' as the object of this research (Thomas 2016, pp. 15–16).

In order to get the answer to the second question, which is a 'how' query and to gain detailed understanding about the potential contributions of cities' titles, the case study is adopted as strategy of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p. XII), given it is an effective tool to understand details of a situation (Yin 2002, pp. 2–5; Thomas 2016, p. 37). As Thomas states, there are three hypothesis guiding the choice of a case study subject: the 'key case', consisting of a classical example, the 'outlier', which shows difference from the norm and the 'local knowledge case' related to the researcher's personal experience (2016, pp. 98–110). In this study, the chosen subject is the creative cities of film at UNESCO, in view that the author had been its deputy coordinator for two years. This condition gives easier access to the situation. Besides that, the author's knowledge about specific actions facilitates the connection between theory and practice.

In view that case studies raise issues related to the *lack of scientific quality* given they are a qualitative research strategy (Flick 2007, pp. 2, 15–16), some measures were adopted to overcome the limitation. To promote objectivity and consistency, this paper considers: (1) multiple case study, (2)

triangulation of sources and (3) logic model for data analysis (Yin 2002, pp. 32–35).

Currently, there are 18 cities of film at UNESCO (Table 4). The criteria for selection cities to integrate the multiple case study were: (1) more than five years of membership to UCCN, and (2) submission of monitoring report until 2018, which were already presented at the annual conference. Since 2015 cities should submit a four-year monitoring report, according to guidelines (UNESCO 2019). Annually, the reports are presented by UNESCO at the UCCN conferences (UNESCO 2020a).

According to criterion, Bradford, Busan, Galway and Sydney were selected. Sofia was not included because did not submit the report. Bradford, United Kingdom is located 302 miles from London, hosting 600,000 inhabitants. Sydney, with 5.4 million dwellers, is the most populous Australian city, located 178 miles from the capital, Canberra. Galway is a 70,000 inhabitants Irish city, situated 130 miles from Dublin. Busan, with 3.5 million people is situated 200 miles from Seoul, capital of South Korea. The cities of different sizes and cultural backgrounds have the film city title as a common element that makes them part of a whole: the UNESCO cities of film. The multiple case study is developed in the embedded style (Yin 2002, pp. 52–54), which considers cities as *subunits fitting in with a larger unit* (Thomas 2016, p. 177): the UNESCO cities of film. The set of cities provide information on differences and similarities leading to more consistency.

The data collection was guided by the analytical frame comprising 31 categories (Table 3) and used the triangulation of sources (Flick 2007, pp. 22–26, 75–90). They were

Table 4 Creative cities of film at UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). *Source* Author's work on UNESCO (2019, 2020a)

City	Country	Year of acceptance	Monitoring report (MR)	Presentation of MR at annual conference
Bradford	UK	2009	2016	2017
Sydney	Australia	2010	2017	2018
Galway	Ireland	2014	2018	2019
Busan	South Korea	2014	2018	2019
Sofia	Bulgaria	2014	NS	NA
Santos	Brazil	2015	2019	NAY
Rome	Italy	2015	2019	NAY
Bitola	Macedonia	2015	2019	NAY
Qingdao	China	2017	2021 TBS	NA
Bristol	UK	2017	2021 TBS	NA
Yamagata	Japan	2017	2021 TBS	NA
Terrassa	Spain	2017	2021 TBS	NA
Łódź	Poland	2017	2021 TBS	NA
Mumbai	India	2019	2023 TBS	NA
Sarajevo	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2019	2023 TBS	NA
Valladolid	Spain	2019	2023 TBS	NA
Potsdam	Germany	2019	2023 TBS	NA
Wellington	New Zealand	2019	2023 TBS	NA

TBS to be submitted, *NAY* not analyzed yet, *NA* not applicable, *NS* not submitted until deadline

collected from the unique monitoring report submitted by each city to UNESCO between 2016 and 2018 (Table 4). Additionally, it was complemented by semi-structured interviews based on the following topics: (1) city's branding strategy, (2) relationship between branding and film city title, (3) benefits of city title to city branding, (4) vocation for film (previous or developed), (5) dwellers' awareness of film city title, (6) stakeholders. The interviews also provided clarification about specific content of each report. The interviews were conducted by the author through the cross-platform messaging service 'whatsapp' by voice or text messages. The content was transcribed and organized in reports of each interview. The interviewees are representatives of cities to UNESCO, namely the director of Bradford City of Film, the manager of screen industry development at Create NSW in Sydney, the manager of Galway Film Centre and the Coordinator of UNESCO Creative City of Film Task at Busan Cinema Center.

The data analysis was grounded on a logic model. The content analysis technique was used for categorizing information (Krippendorff 2003). Then, the soft systems methodology (SSM) (Dick 2002; Checkland 2003) was applied. This method makes a *comparison between the world as it is and some models of the world as it might be* [,offering] *better understanding of the world ("research"), and some ideas for improvement ("action")* (Dick 2002). In this research, the 'world as it is' is in the snapshot of data collected from reports. The 'world as it might be' is the 'CBCD Crossroads Matrix'. The SSM provided insights on the potential

contributions of film city title to the future of city branding and diplomacy which are exposed in the next sections.

Film city title at crossroads of city diplomacy and city branding: findings and discussion

Potential contributions of city title to city diplomacy and city branding

The second research question, related to the potential contributions of city titles to the future from the intersection of city diplomacy and city branding is answered in this section. The actions of cities collected with the lens of the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' (Table 3) are summarized in Table 5.

On receipt of the film title, cities commit to the objectives of UCCN (UNESCO 2020b) which, in short, focus on creativity to promote sustainable development. The selected cities fulfilled the mission with mastery. In fact, they have developed actions that also boasts branding and diplomacy effects, although it was not the original goal. This was verified in the analysis with the 'CBCD crossroads matrix'. Therefore, the matrix is a helpful tool to identify the full potential of actions to advance branding and diplomacy while addressing the UCCN goals. Furthermore, shedding light on synergy opportunities, the matrix may support the definition of efficient strategies addressing simultaneously UCCN objectives, branding and public diplomacy goals that integrates theory and practice.

Table 5 Actions developed by film cities at UCCN in the common ground of city branding and city diplomacy. *Source* Author's work on Bradford (2016), Sydney (2017), Galway (2018), Busan (2018), Carew-Reid (2020), Duggan (2020), Wilson (2020) and Kim (2020)

CBCD crossroads matrix ('world as it might be')	Data from cities ('world as it is')				Findings (clues for future improvement)
	Bradford	Sydney	Galway	Busan	
1. Diagnosis	Balance of perspectives: 'Bradford for everyone'	Not observed	Balance of perspectives: 'film for sustainable development' (focus on professionals)	Brand research showed BIFF linked to modernity, culture and international 'Long history on film' as balanced perspective	Opportunity for expanding the toolkit, which includes formal instruments, intelligence reports, output of academic research, etc. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
2. Policies	Vision: heritage on film Strategy: mid-term plan Narrative: long history on film Policy: film city title at city plan	Vision: film and TV production hub Strategy: film city title at creative industries action plan Policy: diversity, inclusion plan	Vision: 'Culture—heart of life' Strategy: 'Everybody Matters' Planning: technology sector Narrative: heritage Policy: capital of culture	Vision: 'Film for all' Strategy: mid-term action plan Policy: film as keyword of city branding	The vision and strategy are clearly set. Strategic and integrated actions may impact simultaneously on branding and diplomacy
3. International listening	Host Bradford International Film Summit, 2015: on how to attract business, film and TV productions Three applicant cities assessed	Eight applicant cities assessed	Host Film Subnetwork Meeting in 2018 16 applicant cities assessed	Host 2018 UCCN Korea BIFCOM Asian Film Polity Forum ASEAN-ROK film incubator Seven applicant cities assessed	Conscious practices towards international listening, methods for benchmarking of practices and aligned theory/practice may favor improvements
4. Management	Bradford City of Film Ltd managing the film city title	Create NSW (province agency) managing the film city title	Galway Film Centre managing the film city title	Busan Cinema Center managing the film city title	Conscious focus on diplomacy and branding and aligned theory/practice may favor improvements
5. Representation	Founding member of UCCN steering group, 2014–2016	Member of UCCN steering group, 2016–2019	Member of UCCN steering group, 2016–2018	Member of AFCNet (Network of film commissions)	International roles due to film title. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
6. International socialization	Received Kanazawa (2013 and 2014), Galway (2014) Visit to Kanazawa (2015), Rome (2015/16), Paducah (2015), Galway (2014)	Received Galway (2017) Visit to Beijing (2017)	Visit to Rome (2018) to discuss criteria for cooperation and to Sydney (2017)	Visit to Yamagata for the Creative Cities International Conference (2019),collaborative projects	Methodological lessons learned approach and good practices benchmarking, besides aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
7. Public participation	'People's Panel' in Small World Film Festival Actions for visitors, residents and community development	Large participation from the film community	Working group stakeholders for FiS TV Summit organization Participation mostly from the filmmaking community	The Corner Theatre (community film movement) City still deals with people's awareness	Insights could be given by stakeholders in a committee linked to city title management. Strategic action may favor stakeholder involvement
8. Citizen diplomacy	David Wilson and the Bradford clapperboard	The Australian Peter Poulet in Beijing in 2017	Filmmakers of Galway (GMTBA) in Rome	Filmmakers of East Asia Doc Production Residency' and Yamagata Project, etc	Cities have one-off initiatives. In Bradford, David Wilson is a permanent action to be benchmarked

Table 5 (continued)

CBCD crossroads matrix ('world as it might be')	Data from cities ('world as it is')				Findings (clues for future improvement)
	Bradford	Sydney	Galway	Busan	
9. High and popular culture	Memory Bank Bradford app featuring film heritage Forward Arts: films of youth's poems at libraries	Projects targeting aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Heritage scheme Writing mentorship scheme Screen Talent Europe iDÁNA (doc in Irish arts)	Busan Food Film Festa	Citizen diplomacy and branding can be impacted by films that highlights high and pop culture, with impacts on stakeholder involvement
10. International exchange	Opportunities at film festivals, such as in San Francisco, Busan, Rome and Paducah	Screening of Australian film-makers with disability at Small World Film Festival	Students from Galway in Rome (Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia)	International Network Convergence and its Industrialization	Actions could be linked to capacity building in citizen diplomacy, with impacts on stakeholder involvement
11. Glocal culture	Plan ENJOY: filmmakers across social media and platforms Youtube channel	360 Visions Hub Virtual reality content platforms	Get to the point: online content Baboro Festival online Youtube channel	Busan Movie Database Busan Location Database Youtube channel	Opportunity for film content internationalization. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
12. Listening stakeholders	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Methodological feedback (survey, poll, PR) on film services could be insightful and involves stakeholders
13. Stakeholder advocacy	Steve Abott as chair of board Ranveer Singh at Befikre launch Bradford City of Film Ltd	Lynette Wallworth and Hal Kirkland as guests at 360 VISION	Francesco Frigeri and Roberto Perpignani at Student Exchange Galway Film Centre	Busan Cinema Center	Conscious action of city title management entities on stakeholder advocacy may favor stakeholder involvement
14. Cultural exchange	Bollywood screening at Bradford Family Film Festival	In My Neighbourhood at Singapore Design Week	Rome Video Game Lab at Cinecittà in 2018	2018 Busan-Fukuoka Cinema Exchange Project	Linkage with citizen diplomacy would impact on stakeholder involvement
15. International cooperation	UCCN conferences: Montreal, 2012, Bologna 2013, Beijing 2013, Chengdu 2014, Kanazawa 2015, Beijing 2016, Östersund 2016, Rome 2016	UCCN conferences: Kanazawa 2015, Östersund 2016	UCCN conferences: Kanazawa 2015, Östersund 2016, Enghien-les Bains 2017, Krakow-Katowice 2018 Science on Screen	UCCN conferences: Kanazawa 2015, Östersund 2016, Enghien-les Bains 2017, Krakow-Katowice 2018 Cine Asia (filmmakers' network)	Link with citizen diplomacy impacts on stakeholder involvement. Citizen diplomacy of Bradford may be benchmarked
16. Partnerships for broadcasting	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Partnerships with news agencies and press releases on a regular basis could improve branding and diplomacy
17. Feedback on infrastructure	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed	Methodological feedback (survey, poll, PR) on film services could be insightful and involves stakeholders
18. Conferences	Hotels and University of Bradford	Several	Halls and hotels	Busan Cinema Center and others	In general, cities have needed facilities

Table 5 (continued)

CBCD crossroads matrix ('world as it might be')	Data from cities ('world as it is')				Findings (clues for future improvement)
	Bradford	Sydney	Galway	Busan	
19. Cultural infrastructure	Bradford Big Screen Institute of Film and Visual Literacy	World-class studios, e.g. Fox Production facilities Postproduction facilities	There is a plan to develop the region as a destination for inward productions	Visual Industry Center, Cinema Venture and AZWORKS The Corner Theatre	Cities have cultural and educational infrastructure which could be used to improve stakeholder involvement
20. General facilities	National Media Museum Bradford university and college Chamber of Commerce Bradford Library Service Titus Salt Grammar School	Australian Film, TV and Radio School at She Shoots	VR Story Studio Galway Film Centre	Cinematheque Busan (art films) Busan Cinema Center Cinemahouse Hotel in Busan (hotel for film professionals) Regular School Education	Cities have general facilities which could be useful to improve stakeholder involvement
21. Broadcasting facilities	Partnership with BBC Partnerships fostered by Bradford Film Office	Relevant broadcasters of Australia in Sydney	Not observed	Not observed	Partnerships could provide access to broadcasting facilities which are more common in capitals or metro cities
22. Cultural environment	Movie locations Saltaire historical town Bradford libraries and Forward Arts Foundation	Movie locations International landmarks, such as the Opera	Movie locations	Movie locations Historical downtown Busan Cinema Center Food Film Fest and Film Concert Outreaching Screening Service Senior Theatre	Heritage, film locations and landmarks can be strategically used for branding and diplomacy
23. Global image	Venues of Drunken Festival Film festivals Signs at train station Tourism Sector using film title	Movie locations International landmarks, such as the Opera Film festivals	Movie locations Film festivals	Moonlight Cinema Busan Peace Film Festival Busan Cinema Center Film Festivals	Assets can strengthen global image. The UCCN is a great opportunity in this regard. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
24. Engagement	Several film festivals International conferences International visits	Melbourne, Adelaide and Singapore at My Neighbourhood Film festivals	Rome City of Film as partner of International Student Exchange GMIT as partner of International Student Exchange	Partners: UNESCO National Commission, foreign institutes (embassies and cultural institutes)	Conscious use of opportunities for engagement with foreign publics. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements

Table 5 (continued)

CBCD crossroads matrix ('world as it might be')	Data from cities ('world as it is')				Findings (clues for future improvement)
	Bradford	Sydney	Galway	Busan	
25. Professional opportunities	Film Surgeries; Bradford Film Office; Mentoring of local filmmakers; Technical support and funding from British Film Institute; National Agency Creative England as partner for films; Heritage Lottery Fund	Made in NSW (RoI); Sydney UNESCO CoF Award; Screenability NSW Internship, Employment and Fund; 50/50 by 2020 Funding (gender); Industry development; Annette Kellerman Award; She Shoots; Funding: Singapore Design	Film fund and Creative hub; FíS TV Summit; Funding: WRAP, Science on screen, Dig where you stand; Creative Enterprise West; ÍDANA (doc support); Schemes: Mentoring and Heritage; RTÉ Short Film Commission; Training partners in: SI, GMIT, etc	Several film awards, e. g. Buil Film, Busan Film Critics; Support: Film Commission, Film InvestFund, Lotte Fund, ACF; Asian Film Market; E-IP Market; Im Kwon Taek Research Barrier Free Pictures Forum; Asia Film Archive and Museum	Resources for support, funding and capacity building can enhance citizen diplomacy. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements, especially on stakeholder involvement
26. Culture and leisure	Film festivals: Golden Years, Small World, Bradford Family, Drunken, Into, etc; Neighbourhood Film Project (Diaspora)	360 VISION VR Lab; Film festivals: Screenability NSW, Sydney International, etc; Screenwave and Queer Screen Audience Development	48Hr Filmmaking Challenge; One Minute Film Festival; Film Screenings	Film festivals: BIFF, BISFF, BIKY, AD Stars, BUFF, BFFF, BITMF, film festivals on India, Arab, Sweden, Brazil, China and at least more 15 initiatives	Cultural and leisure assets can be useful for stakeholder involvement and awareness of city title, with impacts on branding and diplomacy
27. Resources	Bradford Film Literacy; Workshops and hands-on activities at Bradford Family Film Festival; Talks, seminars and events on topics related to film industry; Volunteers at Memory Bank	Masterclasses at 360 VISION; She Shoots (training on camera and sound) NSW Department of Family, Community Services at Screenability NSW Film Festival; 360 VISION: opportunities for VR developers, filmmakers, etc	GMIT partner of CEW; Northern Peripheries Camp; Workshops at FíS TV Summit; Baboro Children's Festival; Animation and Live Action Camps; Workshops and Seminars; Student exchange in Rome	AD-School/AD-Talent at AD Stars; Universities at BUFF; Workshops at Busan Film and Pet; KAFA / FA; Busan Asian Film School; BFC Film Academy; Dong-eui University and DCTI	Resources for businesses support and professional development can promote citizen diplomacy. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements, especially on stakeholder involvement
28. Two-way communication	Contact us (website) and email; Twitter (@bfdcityoffilm); Facebook (Bradford City of Film)	Twitter (@SydCityOfFilm); Facebook (@SydCityOfFilm)	Contact us (website) and email; Twitter (@GalwayCityFilm); Facebook (@galwaycity-offilm)	Email; Twitter (@BusanCityofFilm); Facebook (@busancityoffilm)	Communication tools can provide feedback. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements
29. Communication tools	Slogan: 'Bradford for Everyone' (a city to live); Websites: City of Film, Heritage; Logo; BRADFORD CITY OF FILM A UNESCO CREATIVE CITY	Website: Screen NSW; Logo; SYDNEY CITY OF FILM	Website Galway City of Film; Slogan: 'Galway 2020' (capital for culture); Logo; Galway	Website: UNESCO Busan; Slogan: 'Film for All'; Campaign: Slogan Proclamation Ceremony and Brand Committee; Logo; B4 BUSAN CITY OF FILM	Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements. Particularly, theoretical insights (Florek et al. 2006; Florek 2011) can support the renovation of websites

Table 5 (continued)

CBCD crossroads matrix ('world as it might be')	Data from cities ('world as it is')					Findings (clues for future improvement)
	Bradford	Sydney	Galway	Busan		
30. Online exchange	Sydney: exchange of films focusing on disability in the Small World Film Festival	Screening of Australian film-makers with disability at Small World Film Festival	CFilm Subnetwork Meeting in Galway: online participation of Busan, Rome, Terrassa	Busan Sesion at Curta Santos 18 Santos-Busan Screening Program 2018		Online tools can potentially reach a huge audience and involve stakeholder in diplomacy and branding
31. Broadcasting	Film heritage app Opera Carmen in BBC TV Outside Broadcasting Shorts at Sky Arts TV BBC Radio Leeds Column at Telegraph and Argus Braford BCB 106.6 FM Film pages at Bradford Review Twitter (@bfdcityoffilm) Facebook (Bradford City of Film)	Vogue Australia at Annette Kellerman Award Twitter (@SydCityOfFilm) Facebook (@SydCityOfFilm)	Twitter (@GalwayCityFilm) Facebook (@galwaycityoffilm)	Twitter (@BusanCityofFilm) Facebook (@busancityoffilm)		Film is the ideal product to be explored through broadcasting. New channels can be developed in the near future with impacts on diplomacy and branding. Aligned theory and practice may favor improvements

As an illustration, with the focus only on the film title management, structured actions towards 'listening stakeholders' (Table 5, category 12) were not addressed. Meantime, cities have developed measures with involvement of stakeholders like the 'people's panel in Small World Film Festival' in Bradford (Table 5, category 7), the Corner Theatre in Busan (Table 5, category 7), mentorship in Galway (Table 5, category 9) and the screening of filmmakers with disability in Sydney (Table 5, category 10). Aware that listening is a technical tool for city branding and city diplomacy, cities could take advantage of ordinary actions and strategies by linking listening techniques to them. In like manner, cities may address 'partnerships for broadcasting' (Table 5, category 16) by cooperation with news agencies and press releases on a regular basis.

In essence, the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' is a valuable apparatus for analysis of city title, city diplomacy and city branding, whereas tender the detection of gaps and opportunities for future developments. By and large, the examination supported by the matrix showed potential prospects for cities in three main aspects: alignment between theory and practice, stakeholders and citizen diplomacy.

Alignment between theory and practice

Interviews demonstrates that becoming a city of film has benefitted the reputation as a filmmaking destination. Indeed, the title expanded training programmes on film, opportunities for international collaboration (Wilson 2020), bridged access to national funding (Duggan 2020), as well as raised the city's image as a global city of film (Kim 2020). On the other side, the city title brings the need for understanding the UNESCO priorities in order to increase brand equity and promote engagement by buy-in to the brand (Carew-Reid 2020). Coupled with information collected from reports and analyzed through 'CBCD crossroads matrix', it seems that an overarching strategy, that aligns theory and practice would leverage simultaneously the three aspects: film title, city branding and diplomacy.

For instance, methodological active listening borrowed from theory (Martino 2020, pp. 22–24; Cull 2019, pp. 86–91) could be applied to the practice of 'international listening' (Table 5, category 3). That is the case of the International Film Summit 2015 promoted by Bradford, which was an opportunity for listening partners on how to attract business and film/TV productions (Bradford 2016). Similarly, the 2018 UCCN Korea meeting hosted by Busan could provide feedback from other Korean cities for advancing specific projects (Busan 2018). Another demand for linking theory to practice is the systematic benchmarking. In this case, 'international socialization' (Table 5, category 6), which refers to short-term professional exchanges like the visit of Galway Film Centre to Sydney in 2017 (Galway

2018), the of Bradford City of Film to Paducah in 2015 (Bradford 2016) and the visit of NSW Government Architect to Beijing in 2017 (Sydney 2017) are opportunities to get insights from lessons learned and good practices by benchmarking methodologies. Another case in point is 'diagnosis' (Table 5, category 1) that may be favored by the output of academic research.

Cities highlighted partnerships with universities, which is an ideal scenario to align theory and practice in the integrated management of the film title, city branding and diplomacy. Another key point is that the film title is under management of specialized agencies in the public sector (Sydney 2017) or institutions supported by the public sector in one way or another (Bradford 2016; Galway 2018; Busan 2018), that is the political element (Kavaratzis 2012, p. 12). Hence, the way is paved for city-wide strategic decision-making, informed by the integration of theory and practice.

Focus on stakeholders

The film title guide a wide range of activities involving stakeholders. Namely, referring to 'public participation' (Table 5, category 7), Galway gathers the working group for building the programme of the FíS TV Summit (Galway 2018). In 'professional opportunities' (Table 5, category 25), cities hold actions like mentoring of local filmmakers and writers (Bradford 2016; Galway 2018), funding for gender equality in film sector (Sydney 2017) and research centers (Busan 2018). Moreover, cities have important 'cultural infrastructure' (Table 5, category 19), where people with common interests usually meet. That is the case of the Institute of Film & Visual Literacy (Bradford 2016), the Visual Industry Center (Busan 2018) and world-class studios and production facilities (Sydney 2017). Similarly, cities provide services and actions to advance jobs, businesses, volunteering and education, like the volunteers at the Memory Bank Bradford (Bradford 2016), the Screenability NSW Film Festival involving professionals with disabilities (Sydney 2017), the Northern Peripheries Talent Camp (Galway 2018) and the AD-School & AD-Talent at AD Stars (Busan 2018), which fall under 'resources' (Table 5, category 27). Thereupon, the management of film city title is a convenient path to gather stakeholders around branding and diplomacy.

As a matter of fact, *abridging multiple identities* is a key issue for city brands (Parkerson and Saunders 2005, p. 259). In this regard, there are three target groups: visitors, investors and residents (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2010, p. 12). Cities has carried out actions aimed at residents, like the University Film Festival (Busan 2018), the Baboro Children's Festival (Galway 2018), the Neighbourhood Film Project, designed for immigrants (Bradford 2016) and the She Shoots, a technical training for women in filmmaking (Sydney 2017). Additionally, attention has been given to

visitors, with measures like the visual elements installed at the Bradford train stations (Wilson 2020) and the film festivals that attract visitors (Bradford 2016; Sydney 2017; Busan 2018; Galway 2018). Similarly, activities centered on investors were developed, such as the Bradford office in China (Wilson 2020) and the 'FíS TV Summit' promoted by Galway (2018).

On the other side, making citizens aware of the film city title remains a challenge. Notably, filmmakers and people engaged in the film sector are more involved with cities' activities (Carew-Reid 2020; Duggan 2020; Kim 2020). In this regard, the use of methods for getting feedback, like surveys, rolling polls coupled with cities' actions and services could generate insights for advancing stakeholders involvement. Furthermore, the creation of committees and working groups is a tool to engage residents, professionals, public officials, scholars and other stakeholders. In this regard, the people's panel created by Bradford (Table 5, category 7) is an inspiration.

In summary, the participation of stakeholders, which is widely promoted by film cities, is a must for city branding and city diplomacy. From the branding perspective, Kavaratzis declares that the role of stakeholders have changed the place branding approach mainly due to the *recent turn towards a participatory branding* (2012, p. 13), also because of the fact that *place branding is public management activity and such activities need to have support from the public for various social and political reasons* (2012, p. 12), as well as on account of the *advancement of digital and online technologies* (2012, p. 14). Alongside, from the diplomacy perspective, Cull declares that public opinion is the only superpower left in the international system (2020). Therefore, the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' is a potential tool to indicate strategies to create synergies in stakeholders' involvement with positive outcomes not only for city title management, but also for city branding and diplomacy.

The pivotal role of citizen diplomacy

The advocacy by citizens is highly effective in building trust, as *face-to-face relations have more cross-cultural credibility than do government* (Nye 2010). In this regard, the film city title offers opportunities for international interaction, in which laypeople may become city's ambassadors. Mainly filmmakers, producers and photographers may perform simultaneously in the diplomacy and branding fields by participating in international exchange or through their films, photographs and cultural works. For instance, within the category 'international exchange' (Table 5, category 10), residents of Bradford participated in film festivals at San Francisco, Paducah and Rome (Bradford 2016). Equally, Sydney could screen their films at the film festival

in Bradford (Sydney 2017) and students from Galway were studying at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome (Galway 2018). In the same way, 'cultural exchange' (Table 5, category 14) has examples like the '2018 Busan-Fukuoka Cinema Exchange Project' involving filmmakers and producers (Busan 2018). The director of Bradford City of Film is an ideal illustration for 'citizen diplomacy' that is constantly promoting city branding and city diplomacy (Wilson 2020), with the clapperboard of the city as a brand important symbol.

It should be mentioned that, nowadays, cyberspace facilitates online interaction. Attentive to this trend, Busan developed the 'Santos-Busan Screening Program' in 2018, Galway hosted the film subnetwork meeting in 2018 providing the online participation of representatives from Busan, Rome and Terrassa, as well Bradford and Sydney organized virtually the screening of Australian films of professionals with disability at 'Small World Film Festival' (Table 5, category 10).

Citizen diplomacy can be exploited to the full potential if theoretical knowledge about it is coupled with practice. The analysis with the 'CBCD Crossroads matrix' shed light on shortfalls and on room to move forward. Possibly the film itself could give another dimension for citizen diplomacy, making people aware of high, popular culture and the city features. In this regard, Insch and Florek noted that usually cities appeal to outsiders and forget the residents, *their loyal supporters,* thus the city management should be attentive to the *perceived satisfaction* [of citizens] *with the city where they work, live and play* (Insch and Florek 2010, p. 191). Therefore, the activities and tools used and developed by cities in the realm of the city title management may contribute for future development of citizen diplomats.

Avenue to the future: conclusion

The city diplomacy grounded on multilayered diplomacy is a contemporary trend. From this perspective, UNESCO cities of film network is an effective case to observe the phenomenon. The receipt of the city of film title demands development of actions and strategies at the local level towards sustainable development. Somehow, this bears out that international accountability is an important factor for strengthening local programs, plans and actions.

The 'CBCD crossroads matrix' is an important outcome of this research. Built from the literature review on Cull (2019) and Kavaratzis (2019), it outlines the common ground of city diplomacy and city branding. Specifically, the commonalities were found in 31 categories of tools which may be used to promote the goals of both fields. Moreover, the matrix shed light on potential points of intersection still unexplored that may be a route for future developments.

While answering the first research question, those categories unfold mechanisms useful not only for city diplomacy and city branding, but also for promoting the titles of cities, such as the city of film. In this particular, bringing awareness about the potential synergistic use of tools to promote simultaneously diplomacy and branding, the matrix is a relevant apparatus for cities' management. By all means, the matrix is an effective procedure of diagnosis, analysis and planning. In other words, the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' offers advantages and support identifying gaps to be addressed by strategies of cities.

Importantly, the analysis through the matrix unveiled that specific strategies adopted for handling cities' titles can potentially contribute to the future of pleasant management of city diplomacy and branding. This finding meets the answer to the second research question. in fact, the city of film title demands a wide range of activities that may promote harmoniously branding and diplomacy. Therefore, this made evident the huge potential of cities' titles to enhance branding and diplomacy by the integrated and strategic management.

In this particular, the structured analysis of cities' activities through SSM with the lens of the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' led to three main points that may expand the potential of city titles in the future. First, the integration of theoretical methods and practice may improve the city title management in favor of city branding and city diplomacy. Secondly. the city title offers several opportunities for stakeholders engagement, specifically residents, visitors and investors. Therefore, the engagement of stakeholders induced by city title management may be integrated to the city branding and diplomacy actions. Finally, since citizens are constantly involved with activities related to the city of film title, like exchanges and film production, cities may empower them to be real citizen diplomats.

Further analysis on a wider range of cities from diverse geographical locations is an interesting future development, as well as it is the study of the city title management on city branding and city diplomacy outcomes. In the same way, comparative studies of the best and the weakest cases using the 'pairs of contrast' method can be useful for getting additional insights on the potentialities of city titles. Also, future research may explore the present findings more specifically by the perceptions of residents and extending it to other cities' titles like the European capital of culture.

All considered, the matrix revealed that city titles offer relevant opportunities for positioning cities in the global scene. Therefore, the integrated management of the city title from the perspective of city branding and city diplomacy will add effective and huge contributions to the future of cities. In this regard, the 'CBCD crossroads matrix' is an effective apparatus of analysis and strategy design that indicates the potential opportunities for improvements and

brings evidence that from crossroads, city diplomacy and city branding flow towards a joint future avenue.

Compliance with ethical standards

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