

SINGAPORE'S ROLE IN CITY DIPLOMACY: LESSONS FROM ITS LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING THE ASEAN SMART CITIES NETWORK

Melinda Martinus

Lead Researcher, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Introduction

Transnational city diplomacy refers to the active engagement of cities in international relations. It enables urban governments to pursue shared interests, address transnational challenges, and build cross-border coalitions, outside from national foreign policy frameworks. While international diplomacy has traditionally been the purview of sovereign states, the past few decades have seen its increasing decentralisation. Cities, empowered by their growing economic influence and interconnectivity through global flows of infrastructure, technology, and information, are asserting agency on issues of direct relevance to their urban development agenda, including climate change, digital governance, and infrastructure expansion.

This trend can be seen in Asia. Cities across the region have raised their international profiles. For instance, with the rise of mass rapid transit funded by the Chinese-backed Belt and Road Initiative, land-locked Laotian cities such as Luang Prabang and Vientiane are now connected to several cities in China, particularly Kunming, integrating them more closely into global trade corridors (Chanthevivanh et al., 2023). At the same time, some Asian cities have gained recognition for their innovation and governance capacities. In the 2025 Smart City Index developed by the International Institute for Management and Development, Singapore (9th globally), Seoul (13th), Beijing (14th), Shanghai (15th), and Hong Kong (19th) are among the world's top performers, underscoring how Asian urban centres are increasingly influential on the global stage (IMD, 2025). Cities across Asia also pursue their own forms of diplomacy to advance their economic interests and showcase their expertise globally. This includes Seoul's Global Metropolitan Partnership (GMP) programme, which provides technical support and training for international city officials (Lee, 2023). Tokyo likewise leads initiatives on urban disaster resilience, particularly after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, offering lessons and its expertise to other Asian cities (Ranghieri & Ishiwatari, 2014).

In Southeast Asia, city diplomacy has gained momentum in tandem with rapid urbanisation and the growing recognition of cities as engines of regional economic integration and innovation. Cities across the region, such as Jakarta,

ASEAN has been influential in facilitating city-to-city cooperation, even though its agenda has traditionally focused on security and geopolitics and facilitating state-to-state cooperation.

Manila, Singapore, Bangkok, and others, have been actively engaged in various *paradiplomacy* platforms, including ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), WeGO (World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization), the Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities, formerly 100 Resilient Cities), and the Strong Cities Network (SCN) (Martinus, 2020).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as the region's sole multilateral organisation, also has been influential in facilitating city-to-city cooperation, even though its agenda has traditionally focused on security and geopolitics and facilitating state-to-state cooperation. Within this framework, Singapore in particular, as a founding member of ASEAN, plays a distinctive role. As both a city and a sovereign state, Singapore blurs the line between national and municipal diplomacy, making city diplomacy a central component of its international relations (Martinez & Bunnell, 2024). This dual identity enables Singapore to advance its interests simultaneously at the state and city levels.

Singapore's influence has been further reinforced through its turns in ASEAN's rotational chairmanship. The chairmanship, which is rotated among the ten member states in alphabetical order, gives each country the opportunity to shape the regional agenda. Singapore has consistently used this platform to introduce initiatives that reflect its own national priorities while also contributing to broader regional objectives.

During its chairmanship in 2018, Singapore launched the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)¹ (Centre for Liveable Cities & Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, 2018), a pioneering initiative designed to foster collaboration among city governments across the region, enabling them to articulate shared interests, co-develop smart urban solutions, and connect with like-minded partners across and beyond the region. This marked a new direction for ASEAN. The regional governance structure operates primarily at the state level, with coordination led by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MoFAs) of each member state and sectoral cooperation initiated through thematic mechanisms involving various ministries within each government. With the launch of the ASCN, now ASEAN is expanding its scope across localities in the region.

Singapore's role in the establishment of the ASCN is worth examining. Its strategic motivations are driven by both national and regional interests: nationally, the city-state aims to showcase its expertise, export technological capacities, and expand its homegrown industries' footprints into Southeast Asian markets; regionally, it seeks to connect ASEAN cities with potential partners and investors. The paper explores the formation of the ASCN and the challenges encountered in implementing such a regional platform, and is structured around three interrelated themes. The first section establishes the theoretical context by examining how spatial dynamics and governance practices intersect with the study of international relations. The second section explores the operation of the ASCN, highlighting its institutional design, implementation challenges, and the key lessons that emerge from Singapore's leadership role. The third section considers the network's broader contribution to the evolving discourse on diplomacy and regional cooperation. It concludes by discussing the wider implications for Southeast Asia's regional architecture and the future of subnational diplomacy.

1. <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-smart-cities-network/>.

The nexus of geography, spatial governance, and international relations

The intersection of geography, spatial governance, and international relations provides a critical lens for understanding how space, scale, and political authority interact in shaping global urban processes. This interdisciplinary approach draws on insights from political geography, urban studies, and global governance scholarship to reveal how power is exercised and negotiated through spatial arrangements and territorial practices. Deploying this framework allows the analysis to move beyond state-centric perspectives and instead highlight the ways cities operate as autonomous yet interconnected actors within a multilayered global order.

The growing influence of urban actors in shaping multilateral arrangements has been well documented across numerous contexts. According to the most recent World Bank estimates, 57% of the world's population resides in cities or urban areas as of 2024, a figure projected to rise steadily in the coming decades (Trading Economics, nd). This demographic shift has positioned cities as critical actors in global governance, central to addressing transnational challenges such as sustainable development, climate change, and digital transformation. Increasingly, cities operate not only within national governance structures but also across borders, engaging in multilayered networks and partnerships that range from formal coalitions to informal forums connected with multilateral institutions (Acuto, 2013). Cities' growing significance can also be seen in Sassen's (2005) illustration of "global cities" like New York, London, and Tokyo, which function as command and control centres of the world economy, demonstrating how spatial concentration generates new forms of political and economic agency.

Building on this foundation, cities today are advancing their interests through *paradiplomacy* – subnational diplomacy that allows them to forge alliances, participate in international forums, and even negotiate agreements independent of their national governments (Tavares, 2016). This evolution is often explained through multilevel governance theory, which emphasises the dispersal of authority across national, regional, and local levels (Marks & Hooghe, 2004). Within such frameworks, cities are not merely implementers of national policies but proactive shapers of global governance outcomes. Scholarship drawing on relational geography and critical planning theory further underscores that urban knowledge, planning norms, and spatial imaginaries circulate across borders, revealing how city-level governance is as much political as it is technical (Massey, 2005).

The relevance of these theoretical insights is particularly evident in the face of contemporary urban challenges, including climate change mitigation, digital transformation, and infrastructure development, which demand cross-border coordination. City diplomacy has emerged as a practical mechanism for addressing these issues. One of the most compelling regions in which to examine the practice of city diplomacy is Southeast Asia, a region undergoing rapid urbanisation and where cities are increasingly recognised as engines of economic growth, innovation, and regional integration (Yap, 2017). The ASEAN region's urban population is expected to rise from 49% in 2018 to 66% by 2050, with countries like Singapore already fully urbanised (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022).

The practice of city diplomacy in Southeast Asia is shaped by considerable diversity in institutional capacity, urban governance, and political systems.

Yet the practice of city diplomacy in Southeast Asia is shaped by considerable diversity in institutional capacity, urban governance, and political systems. Singapore, for example, projects a highly centralised, technocratic, and infrastructure-driven urban model rooted in digital innovation and strategic land use planning. Cities like Jakarta (Indonesia), with extensive informal settlements, or Luang Prabang (Lao PDR), where heritage conservation intersects with resource constraints and shape the livelihood of most residents, require planning approaches that differ significantly from Singapore's. Adopting urban models in these cities is not a matter of following successful practices implemented elsewhere; it involves adapting ideas to fit local realities and negotiating what works in each unique context. It also entails contestation, negotiation, and adaptation as ideas travel across distinct sociopolitical and spatial contexts (Robinson, 2011).

Against this backdrop, city diplomacy must be conceptualised not merely as a tool for international engagement but as a spatial and political practice that reshapes how urban futures are imagined and governed. This theoretical framework foregrounds the entanglement of diplomacy with geography and spatial governance.

Singapore's experiences with the ASCN

The ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) was inaugurated in 2018 under Singapore's ASEAN chairmanship as a flagship initiative to institutionalise urban cooperation across the region. Conceived as a platform to leverage digital technologies and sustainable infrastructure, the ASCN seeks to enhance urban liveability, economic competitiveness, and environmental resilience. By formalising city-to-city collaboration, it embodies the principles of multilevel governance, integrating state and non-state actors – including municipal governments, private enterprises, academia, and international organisations – into ASEAN's regional architecture.

Singapore's regional leadership in urban governance predates the ASCN. Since 2008, the city-state had demonstrated international leadership through the establishment of the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) and the launch of the inaugural World Cities Summit (WCS). According to its official brochure, the WCS was created to gather and share knowledge on building liveable and sustainable cities worldwide (World Cities Summit, nd). Over time, the summit has expanded to include the WCS Mayors Forum, the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, and the WCS Young Leaders Symposium. These initiatives illustrate Singapore's broader strategy of positioning itself as a knowledge hub and innovation node in the region, as well as an important actor shaping urban agendas.

The ASCN reflects what Peck & Theodore (2015) with new ideas, fads, and fashions moving at social-media speed. New policy ideas, especially "ideas that work," are now able to find not only a worldwide audience but also transnational salience in remarkably short order. *Fast Policy* is the first systematic treatment of this phenomenon, one that compares processes of policy development across two rapidly moving fields that emerged in the Global South and have quickly been adopted worldwide?conditional cash transfers (a social policy program that conditions payments on behavioral compliance describe as *policy*

mobilities, whereby urban models are not merely replicated but strategically circulated and localised across different sociopolitical contexts. In doing so, it also exemplifies what Acuto (2013b) terms *urban diplomacy*, where cities influence international agendas through networks that operate alongside – and sometimes beyond – state-centric mechanisms.

There are several motivations for Singapore’s pursuit of the ASCN:

1. Strategic regional influence: Singapore consolidates its leadership within ASEAN’s evolving governance ecosystem, exercising global entrepreneurship by shaping urban policy agendas and institutional practices beyond traditional intergovernmental diplomacy.
2. Economic competitiveness: The network fosters regional connectivity, innovation ecosystems, and technology diffusion, aligning with Singapore’s developmental trajectory as a knowledge-intensive, post-industrial economy and enhancing its regional economic centrality.
3. Exporting governance models: The ASCN functions as a vehicle for disseminating Singapore’s technocratic, infrastructure-driven urban governance paradigm. This projection of governance practices constitutes a form of soft power (Nye, 1990), embedding Singaporean policy frameworks into regional urban imaginaries.
4. Addressing transnational challenges: Recognising that climate change, digital transformation, and urban resilience are border-transcending issues, the ASCN provides a platform for coordinated regional responses.

City diplomacy must be conceptualised not merely as a tool for international engagement but as a spatial and political practice that reshapes how urban futures are imagined and governed.

When it was launched in 2018, the network included 26 cities across ASEAN’s ten member states, primarily capital and secondary cities with rapid urbanisation profiles and strong potential for scaling urban leadership. The network has since grown to 31 cities (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024). Singapore played a pivotal role in its creation: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) provided strategic direction, while the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) acted as a key knowledge partner. Other contributing ministries and statutory boards included the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Enterprise Singapore, the Info-communications Media Development Authority (IMDA), and the Smart Nation and Digital Government Office (SNDGO) under the Prime Minister’s Office (Tan et al., 2021).

Beyond Singapore’s government agencies, the ASCN agenda was shaped and promoted by four additional stakeholder groups: (i) international and regional bodies, notably the ASEAN Secretariat through its Integration and Monitoring Directorate; (ii) private companies and government-linked corporations (GLCs); (iii) multilateral development institutions; and (iv) universities and think tanks providing research support and policy guidance (Tan et al., 2021).

Operationally, the ASCN functions as a platform for knowledge exchange and project matchmaking rather than a funding or regulatory body. According to the ASEAN Smart Cities Network Concept Note (2018), cities develop their own Smart City Action Plans, which outline priority projects and desired outcomes in areas such as mobility, energy, and digital governance. These plans are then presented to ASEAN member states and dialogue partners during annual meetings, where potential investors, technology providers, and development partners can engage directly with city representatives. This process facilitates the circulation of best practices and enables resource mobilisation, while allowing cities to

retain discretion over project design and implementation. The network also convenes thematic workshops and capacity-building activities to strengthen technical expertise among participating cities and foster peer-to-peer learning. In addition to Singapore's foundational contribution, the network has received substantial funding support from ASEAN dialogue partners, including the Republic of Korea, Australia, the United States, and Japan, to offset the institutional cost of the network (Martinus, 2020). This funding model, reliant on support from external partners, reflects a pragmatic response to the fiscal constraints commonly faced by regional initiatives. Yet it also exposes the delicate balance between maintaining operational viability and navigating the potential influence or competing interests of donor states.

Still, the ASCN remains a nascent and experimental initiative. Its reliance on voluntary participation and diverse city capacities generates uneven engagement and limits policy coherence. Many ASEAN cities lack the fiscal autonomy, technical expertise, and digital infrastructure required for meaningful participation. Administrative asymmetries hinder reciprocity and slow project implementation. In countries like Vietnam and Lao PDR, cities are directly subordinated to state government, limiting their autonomy. Even in member states with legal decentralisation, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, political fragmentation weakens city-level coordination and decision-making. Moreover, even when initiatives are widely endorsed by ASCN members, due to ASEAN's long-standing norms of consensus endorsed at the state level, city-to-city initiatives often require central government approval, reducing their autonomy and agility.

The transferability of Singapore's model of technocratic urbanism also poses significant challenges. Its highly centralised and well-resourced planning system is difficult to replicate in many ASEAN cities, where informality, land tenure disputes, weak enforcement of zoning and building codes, and fragmented governance dominate urban management. This raises critical questions about whether Singapore's influence is truly transformative or primarily symbolic. As Martinez & Bunnell (2024) argue, Singapore's dynamism in city diplomacy is distinctive because it draws on the political authority and decision-making powers of a sovereign state, coupled with its commercial interests. Through this unique position, Singapore promotes the circulation of its urban model not only to shape urban development but also to influence regional geopolitics and interstate relations.

Furthermore, planning paradigms rooted in Singapore's emphasis on order, efficiency, and control may conflict with the sociocultural and political realities of other ASEAN cities, requiring ongoing adaptation and contextualisation. For instance, unlike Singapore, many Southeast Asian cities prioritise balancing rapid urban growth with pressing socioeconomic challenges, such as poverty reduction, affordable housing provision, and inclusive access to basic services. Their planning agendas are often shaped by demographic pressures, migration, and the need to integrate large informal economies into formal governance frameworks. For example, cities like Jakarta, Manila, and Ho Chi Minh City must contend with flood management, public health vulnerabilities, and infrastructure deficits that affect low-income populations most acutely. These realities mean that smart city projects cannot focus exclusively on technological optimisation

or efficiency but must also address equity, livelihoods, and participatory governance. As a result, the ASCN's agenda requires contextual adaptation to ensure that its emphasis on digitalisation and data-driven governance does not exacerbate existing socio-spatial inequalities.

Finally, the ASCN operates within a competitive geopolitical environment due to the ASCN funding structure that allows the contribution of dialogue partners and donors. As a result, ASEAN cities are simultaneously courted by major external powers, including China's Belt and Road Initiative, Japan's Partnership for Quality Infrastructure, and US-led digital cooperation frameworks. This multipolar landscape complicates the ASCN's efforts to establish a cohesive regional vision, as city diplomacy becomes entangled with broader strategic rivalries and infrastructural competition.

This tension is evident in the case of Davao City and Metro Manila in the Philippines, which faced controversy over its decision to appoint Chinese technology company Huawei to supply a city-wide CCTV surveillance system (Romero, 2018). While the initiative promised enhanced public safety and smart monitoring capabilities, it triggered domestic and international debates about cybersecurity risks, data privacy, and the influence of Chinese technology in critical urban infrastructure. The episode illustrates the dilemma facing ASEAN cities: they must balance urgent local development needs with geopolitical sensitivities and national security considerations, often under divergent pressures from competing external partners.

ASEAN cities face a dilemma: they must balance urgent local development needs with geopolitical sensitivities and national security considerations, often under divergent pressures from competing external partners.

The ASCN as an alternative regional architecture and a model for post-Western diplomacy

The ASCN represents an emergent experiment in regional governance that partially decentralises ASEAN's traditionally state-centric framework by granting a formalised role to subnational urban actors. Unlike ASEAN's treaty-based instruments or consensus-driven decision-making, the ASCN relies on voluntary participation, informal norms, and networked coordination among cities. This institutional flexibility allows ASEAN to address transboundary urban challenges such as digital infrastructure, sustainable planning, and climate resilience more rapidly and adaptively than its conventional mechanisms.

In theoretical terms, the ASCN aligns with the concept of inclusive regionalism of Amitav Acharya (2014), where the legitimacy of regional governance derives not solely from sovereign states but from broader stakeholder participation and collective problem-solving. By formally recognising cities as diplomatic and developmental stakeholders, the ASCN creates what can be conceptualised as a horizontal diplomatic arena. This horizontal layer complements, and occasionally bypasses, ASEAN's vertical, state-to-state channels, enabling new forms of norm production, policy transfer, and peer-to-peer learning that are less encumbered by the principle of non-interference.

Nevertheless, the ASCN's transformative potential is constrained by structural asymmetries. Voluntary cooperation generates uneven engagement across member cities and limited follow-through on project

The ASCN should be read not merely as a technical initiative but as a prototype for a more distributed and adaptive form of ASEAN regionalism. Its long-term significance will depend on whether it can institutionalise city participation, mitigate capacity asymmetries, and navigate the geopolitical competition surrounding smart city infrastructure.

commitments. Well-resourced cities, such as Singapore, Bangkok, and Jakarta, tend to attract more attention from dialogue partners and are better positioned to influence agenda setting, while less-capacitated municipalities risk being followers, thereby reproducing the development disparities the initiative ostensibly seeks to reduce. Furthermore, ASEAN's consensus principle and respect for national sovereignty continue to mediate city participation, as most projects still require central government endorsement. Without institutional mechanisms to ensure inclusivity, build local capacity, and embed city-level initiatives into ASEAN's broader policy cycle, the ASCN risks becoming a showcase platform rather than a driver of structural transformation in regional urban governance.

From a diplomatic perspective, the ASCN exemplifies the ongoing reconfiguration of international relations in a multipolar, post-Western world. By elevating cities as legitimate actors, the initiative reframes diplomacy from a state-centred, high-politics activity to one focused on technical collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange. Its emphasis on pragmatic, solution-oriented engagement, guided by expertise, data, and technological standards, further underscores this shift.

This approach resonates with trends in Global South regionalism that emphasises pragmatic multilateralism and what Keshab Raj Acharya (2019) terms *localisation usability*: context-specific adaptations of global ideas into local practices. Rather than importing Western templates wholesale in terms of smart city concept and urban development imaginaries, the ASCN enables Southeast Asian cities to co-produce hybrid governance norms that reflect local developmental priorities while remaining globally connected. However, as noted in the previous section, the ASCN's funding model – reliant on external partners – reveals the persistent limitations of member cities in fully exercising their agency, underscoring the tension between maintaining operational viability and the potential influence or competing interests of donor states.

Crucially, the ASCN redefines the practice of diplomacy in Southeast Asia. Instead of formal treaties and binding commitments, influence is exercised through the ability to convene cities, diffuse planning norms, and mobilise finance and technical expertise for tangible urban solutions. This infrastructure- and technology-centric diplomacy reflects ASEAN's distinctive mode of regionalism – informal, consensus-based, and problem-oriented – while signalling a gradual broadening of its governance ecosystem beyond the state. However, certain limitations persist. Owing to ASEAN's practice of achieving consensus primarily at the state level, city-to-city initiatives, although regionally endorsed, often require central government approval, thereby constraining their autonomy and agility.

In sum, the ASCN should be read not merely as a technical initiative but as a prototype for a more distributed and adaptive form of ASEAN regionalism. Its long-term significance will depend on whether it can institutionalise city participation, mitigate capacity asymmetries, and navigate the geopolitical competition surrounding smart city infrastructure. If successful, it could offer Southeast Asia a model of post-Western, city-led diplomacy that expands the region's agency in shaping global governance and strengthens ASEAN's relevance in an era of increasingly multilevel and networked cooperation.

References

Acharya, A. "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies". *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(4), 2014, pp. 647–659.

Acharya, K. R. "Usability for Social Justice: Exploring the Implementation of Localization Usability in Global North Technology in the Context of a Global South's Country". *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 49(1), 2019, pp. 6–32.

Acuto, M. "City Leadership in Global Governance". *Global Governance*, 19(3), 2013a, pp. 481–498.

Acuto, M. *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy: The Urban Link*. London: Routledge, 2013b.

ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Report*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2022.

ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Smart Cities Network: Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2024*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2024. Available at: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024-ASCN-ME-Report-Final_25Sep2024-for-public.pdf.

ASEAN Smart Cities Network Concept Note. *ASEAN Smart Cities Network Concept Note*. 2018. Available at: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ASCN-Concept-Note.pdf>.

Centre for Liveable Cities and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore. *ASEAN Smart Cities Network*. Singapore: Centre for Liveable Cities / Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018.

Chanthevivanh, K., Li, K. and Inayoshi, N. "Railways Help Landlocked Laos Embark a Journey Beyond Borders". *ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO Asia)*, 12 January 2023. Available at: <https://amro-asia.org/railways-help-landlocked-laos-embark-a-journey-beyond-borders/>.

IMD. *Smart City Index Results*. 2025. Available at: <https://www.imd.org/smart-city-observatory/home/rankings/>.

Lee, M. "City Diplomacy in South Korea: Trends and Characteristics". Korea Consensus Institute, 7(1), 2023, pp. 171–200.

Marks, G. and Hooghe, L. "Contrasting Visions of Multi-Level Governance". In: Bache, I. and Flinders, M. (Eds.) *Multi-Level Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 15-30.

Martinez, R. and Bunnell, T. "National Sovereignty Across City Networks: Singapore and the Diplomacy of a Global City-State". *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 42(7), 2024, pp. 1170–1186.

Martinus, M. *ASEAN Smart Cities Network: A Catalyst for Partnerships (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Perspective)*. 2020. Available at: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_32.pdf.

Martinus, M. "ASEAN Cities: The Rise of Paradiplomacy". *Fulcrum*, 22 April 2020. Available at: <https://fulcrum.sg/asean-cities-the-rise-of-paradiplomacy/>.

Massey, D. B. *For Space*. London: SAGE Publications, 2005.

Nye, J. S. "Soft Power". *Foreign Policy*, 80, 1990, pp. 153–171.

Peck, J. and Theodore, N. *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Ranghieri, F. and Ishiwatari, M. *Learning from Megadisasters: Lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake*. Washington DC: The World Bank, 2014.

Robinson, J. "Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(1), 2011, pp. 1–23.

Romero, P. "Senate to Probe P20 Billion Chinese CCTV Deal". *Philstar.com*, 2018. Available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/12/17/1877632/senate-probe-p20-billion-chinese-cctv-deal>.

Sassen, S. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept". *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 11(2), 2005, pp. 27–43.

Tan, S.-Y., Taeihagh, A. and Sha, K. "How Transboundary Learning Occurs: Case Study of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)". *Sustainability*, 13(11), 2021, p. 6502.

Tavares, R. *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Players*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Trading Economics. *World — Urban Population (% of Total) — 2025* [online]. 2025. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/world/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>.

World Cities Summit. *About World Cities Summit* [online]. 2025. Available at: <https://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg/about-us/world-cities-summit>.

Yap, K. S. "Urbanisation Wave and ASEAN Regional Agenda". In: Tay, S. S. C. and Tijaja, J. P. (Eds.) *Global Megatrends: Implications for the ASEAN Economic Community*. Singapore: Singapore Institute of International Affairs and ASEAN Secretariat, 2017.