

New York edges out London as the world's "smartest" city

New York has passed London to take top spot as the world's "smartest" city. American and European cities clearly dominate the Cities in Motion Index 2016.

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Smarten up, London. New York is now one notch above the British capital, taking first place in IESE's annual ranking of the world's "smartest" cities, while American and European cities vie for overall dominance, with nine cities each in the top 2.

Paris remains in third place, while San Francisco, Boston, Amsterdam, Chicago, Seoul, Geneva and Sydney round out the top 10.

[IESE's third annual Cities in Motion Index \(CIMI\)](#), prepared by the IESE [Center for Globalization and Strategy](#) under the direction of professors [Pascual Berrone](#) and [Joan Enric Ricart](#), evaluates the level of development in 181 cities (including 72 capitals) in more than 80 countries.

For its ranking, the index takes into account 77 indicators which cover 10 distinct dimensions of urban life: the economy, technology, human capital, social cohesion, international outreach, the environment, mobility and transportation, urban planning, public management and governance.

Steps forward and steps back

Over the past three years, New York and London have taken turns in the top spot, while Paris has held steady in third place.

These high rankings were earned despite low marks for social cohesion, their Achilles' heel (with New York ranking 161st, London 129th and Paris 91st). Relatively low social cohesion may be due to their statuses as international megacities.

Also noteworthy is the ascent of Copenhagen (11th), which climbs eight positions since last year. The Danish capital leads in the category of urban planning and is third in social cohesion. Los Angeles (15th), meanwhile, jumps up 12 spots over two years with strong showings for its economy (fourth) and human capital (fifth), although it still struggles with urban planning (127th), the environment (124th) and social cohesion (112th).

The city that has advanced the most since 2013 is Mexico City, which moved up from 120th to 100th place over the two-year period.

Barcelona (33rd) also made strides, climbing five places in two years and coming to rest one spot ahead of the Spanish capital, Madrid. A Coruña (60th) and Seville (67th) made the most progress among Spanish cities, rising eight and nine spots, respectively.

Other cities suffered setbacks. Of the CIMI's top-tier, Dublin lost the most ground, plummeting 20 places in one year, from 16th to 36th. This poor rating is due in part to its social cohesion score, in which it placed 123rd overall.

Brazil saw major declines in three of its cities: Curitiba, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro slipped from 16 to 26 spots each.

And Tokyo fell out of the top 10, dropping four spots from eighth to 12th. Its low score in urban planning (133rd), governance (71st), social cohesion (69th) and public management (56th) offset its first-place ranking in technology and fifth place for its economy.

Growth potential

A number of cities that place in the middle of the ranking show great potential for improvement and are rapidly evolving. These include Latin American metropolises such as Quito, Lima, Monterrey and Santo Domingo, and Asian cities Shenzhen, Canton and Ho Chi Minh City.

Meanwhile, a look at city rankings across indicators reveals a group of positively balanced cities, with relatively high scores in all areas. These include Amsterdam, Sydney, Berlin, Brussels, Munich, Melbourne, Seoul and Stockholm.

Comparing the CIMI with other noteworthy reports, such as the Reputation Index (RI) by the Reputation Institute, shows that reputation and reality do not always go hand in hand, and the difference can undermine city legitimacy.

For example, there are no American cities among the RI's top 20 "Most Reputable Cities," with New York the first to appear, down in 31st place. Likewise, "smart" city Seoul has a reputation ranked in 59th place. Conversely, some very "reputable" cities — such as Prague, Florence and Rome — may get more credit than they deserve; their urban development, as ranked by the CIMI, falls far below their reputation scores.

Reflections and improvements

As in previous editions, the authors include a series of reflections for urban policymakers in their report. These include the importance of avoiding a silo mentality, the absence of a single model for success, the desirability of achieving some acceptable minimums in the established categories, and the slow pace of change, since large-scale initiatives need time to crystallize.

The authors have also sought to further improve the index: the current version features a 23-percent increase in the number of cities considered and a 10-percent increase in the number of indicators.

More info

Read the premium article "[Smart Cities, Sustainable Progress](#)".

See "[Greening Up in the City](#)", a review of *Cities and the Environment* — the first volume of the "IESE Cities in Motion" book series.

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