

Cities and Climate Change: Power Games and Greenwashing Through Transnational Urban Networks

by

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Abstract

The 21st century is the century of the city. As urbanization continues, cities will stand at the forefront of environmental progress. In the last ten years, the landscape of environmental politics has been filled with mayors who make grand claims and give significant praise to transnational urban networks. Furthermore, networks have done an excellent job of positioning themselves as important actors in climate change. However, there is sufficient reason to question whether these networks should be perceived as sources of progressive climate change policies.

In this thesis, I argue that networks reinforce existing imbalances in world politics and create a Realist subset, composed of cities, in international society. Additionally, networks are advertisement boards rather than causes of progressive climate change policies. They merely report already performed actions and serve as platforms for information dissemination. Moreover, I argue that the true purpose of networks, and one of the main reasons they are expanding their influence, is hidden behind smoke and mirrors. Mayors use networks to build a “green” image, a presence and a reputation that extends beyond the borders of their city. In fact, mayors have used this leverage to further their political journey, with several of them continuing careers as Presidents.

I go on to argue that most climate change issues are domestic problems that are being framed as international problems through transnational urban networks. Networks have unjustifiably taken credit for many progressive climate change policies and have relegated domestic politics to the status of a marginal player in what is best described as a power game. In fact, at times, networks have formed self-serving partnerships that could be interpreted as subtle forms of intimidation.

Lay Summary

What are cities doing to mitigate climate change? Undoubtedly, mayors have shown tremendous leadership in this policy area. While acknowledge this fact, I continue my thesis by asking why this is?! Compliance has always puzzled the minds of IR scholars and this topic will add to the confusion. I argue that mayors use transnational urban networks as tools of power rather than having a genuine interest in climate change. I support my thesis by using Buenos Aires as an example.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished work of the author, Dushan Pjevovic

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Lastly, I would like to thank my friends. I have been very fortunate in life. Names are unnecessary, simply a nod of the head.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father, Stana and Nikola, as well as my uncle and aunt, Vucidar and Milka, who have always supported me.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I will focus on cities and their role in climate change. To this end, I will proceed in three steps. First, I ask the following question: what are cities doing to contribute to mitigation of climate change? One of the ways that cities have incorporated climate change into their planning is through transnational urban networks.¹ Due to a narrow scope of this thesis, I will define transnational urban networks as international non-governmental organizations that follow a single-purpose mission.² Applied to my thesis, this single-purpose mission is climate change. Moreover, the focus of my thesis are networks composed of cities whose primary focus is climate-related action.

I will juxtapose the Cities for Climate Protection Plan (CCP) and the C40 Climate Leadership Group (C40) in order to draw differences between them and set the stage for subsequent discussions. I have chosen these two networks because they are the most prominent networks for city cooperation. Almost every academic paper on this topic covered CCP and/or C40.³ For the purposes of this thesis, other networks, such as the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and the European Covenant of Mayor, will be ignored. Cities interact through networks, and understanding how and why these networks developed, how they function, why they function that way, will allow one to predict or, perhaps more tentatively, anticipate issues and future outcomes.

¹ I will use the term transnational urban networks and networks interchangeably.

² Thomas Risse, "Transnational Actors and World Politics," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. by Walter Carlsnaes, et al. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012), 427.

³ I have drawn this inference by looking at the work of leading authors in this area of research. Specifically, for more information one could read Lee (2015), Gordon (2013 and 2015), and Acuto (2013).

Furthermore, I will not deal with conditions that allowed the emergence of contemporary cities.⁴ Also, I will cover multilevel governance and capacity briefly. This type of research would require thorough analysis of several cities, linking their capacities to network membership and outcomes. The time constraint does not allow me to engage in this type research. In this thesis, I am interested in taking things for what they are. This entails looking at strategies that cities have developed in order to deal with climate change.

Critical evaluation of organizations such as CCP and C40 will cover the first part of the paper.⁵ In this section, I argue that there are significant issues with networks that make membership in transnational urban networks puzzling. I identify differences between networks and differences within networks as the two main problems. The C40 and CCP are different networks by their very design. They target different audiences and consequently achieve different results. Secondly, megacities tend to monopolize power creating a Realist subset in international society which further reinforces current imbalances in world politics.

Given these issues, the second part of the paper asks the ultimate question: why are cities joining networks? Two potential explanations are given. The first explanation is that networks are platforms for information dissemination. One of the ways that networks have defended their existence and expansion is precisely through this argument. That is, they provide reliable information to city leaders and build an inclusive forum for city cooperation. I argue that networks merely report actions taken by individual cities. They are advertisement boards rather than causes of action. Worryingly, networks have taken credit for many policies that were

⁴ Simon Curtis, "Cities and Global Governance: State Failure or a New Global Order?" *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 44, no. 3 (2016): 460.

⁵ I use the term "network" to describe C40 and CCP throughout this paper. They are organizations that form networks from within.

performed by individual cities. In the second explanation, I argue that mayors use networks for self-interested purposes as they look to advance their political careers. Networks provide a good platform for media attention. Acquiring a reputation for being a “green” mayor is very beneficial. In fact, mayors have used their position to advance their political career as several mayors have successfully run for the position of the President in their countries. This process is best described as greenwashing. In this thesis, greenwashing will be described as an attempt by government officials, in this case mayors, to promote their policies, and even themselves, as environmentally friendly. Greenwashing involves using the environment as leverage for political purposes.

The third section builds on the second section by arguing that most climate change policies are domestic issues that are being framed as international problems via networks. I open this section with a brief discussion of waste management. I chose waste management as an example because cities have the most autonomy in this area of climate politics.⁶ Furthermore, I use the city of Buenos Aires to demonstrate that domestic politics is very complex and that the focus should be shifted to the domestic rather than the global realm.

By forming strategic partnerships with important political and economic actors, networks have built credibility and engaged in subtle forms of intimidation. The expansion of transnational urban networks only further complicates an already difficult subject without providing any substantial contributions.

This argument is taken further when I go on to argue that socialization will be an important variable in climate change. One size fits all philosophy is outdated for the modern world. The crux of environmental politics is altering and adjusting ideas to the local context, as

⁶ This will limit the capacity counter-argument. In fact, cities have the power to act on waste management.

well as instilling the sense of personal responsibility in citizens. The degree of success will be greatly influenced by people's cognitive priors, as well as the ability of environmentalists to "sell" their ideas. Contrary to what some academics believe, globalization will not be the solution to environmental problems.⁷ Climate change is not a global issue. Climate change is a local issue with global consequences.

1.1 Renaissance of the City: Cities on World Stage

According to Gordon, the rise of mega-cities in East Asia and the Indian sub-continent, urbanization, the concentration of economic power and productivity in urban centers, and the vulnerability of cities to rises in sea level and extreme weather have all contributed to placing cities front and center on the climate change agenda.⁸ Furthermore, in the opening chapter of *Urban Climate Challenge*, Johnson et al. point out that by 2050, the world's urban population is expected to grow from approximately 7 billion people to around 10 billion.⁹ For instance, urban areas in China currently account for 40% of the country's population and 75% of the nation's economy.¹⁰ These findings are consistent with Johnson's claim that the highest rate of urban growth is expected to occur in the developing world.¹¹ China is not alone in this regard, as India's urban population is expected to grow by another 497 million by 2050. About half of the

⁷ Lee identifies globalization as the key variable in city cooperation. That is, more globalization leads to closer city cooperation.

⁸ David J. Gordon, "Between Local Innovation and Global Impact: Cities, Networks, and the Governance of Climate Change." *Canadian Foreign Policy* 19, no. 3 (2013): 289.

⁹ Craig Johnson et al., *The Urban Climate Challenge: Rethinking the Role of Cities in the Global Climate Regime* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 3.

¹⁰ Taedong Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change: The Translocal Relations of Environmental Governance* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 9.

¹¹ Johnson, *The Urban Climate Challenge*, 3.

expected 3 billion increase will occur in only 6 countries: Bangladesh, India, China, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Nigeria.¹² These are staggering numbers, at times quite difficult to grasp.

However, regardless of the country, despite cultural differences, the urbanizing trend seems to hold consistently. Whether one looks at the UN data, academic research, local newspaper, the evidence overwhelmingly points in one direction. Urbanization is showing no sign of slowing down.

It must be acknowledged that human population might peak and start to decline this century.¹³ Nonetheless, this applies to the total number of people on the planet. The main concern in this thesis is urbanization, as most people will gravitate towards the city. In light of this information, a few questions emerge. Why is this important? What are the consequences of this development? Why should we care about this process?

Research shows that almost 70 percent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are generated from urban areas which account for only 2 percent of the Earth's surface.¹⁴ Furthermore, 39 of the 63 urban areas with populations greater than 5 million are located in areas with a high risk of flooding, cyclones or drought; 72 percent are located "on or near the coast."¹⁵ Undoubtedly, stakes are high for cities, and they are even higher for coastal cities. Lack of preparation for flooding or droughts can have detrimental consequences. Loss of life, damage to infrastructure, displacement, and in some cases potential inhospitality are all

¹² Peter Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 4.

¹³ An Ecomodernist Manifesto was written by a mix of 18 scholars, professionals, and even filmmakers. Accessed May 25, 2017.
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5515d9f9e4b04d5c3198b7bb/t/552d37bbe4b07a7dd69fcdbb/1429026747046/An+Ecomodernist+Manifesto.pdf>, 11.

¹⁴ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 47.

¹⁵ Johnson, *The Urban Climate Challenge*, 3.

potential outcomes. For countries that are located below sea level, the Netherlands for instance, these are not simply numbers and words. These are issues that must and ought to be addressed.

It is undeniable that cities are impressive producers of wealth and comfort. From long periods of peace, to increased life expectancy, the benefits of this international order must be acknowledged.¹⁶ On the other hand, cities are the largest emitters and simultaneously in the greatest risk of environmental destruction. If urbanization is inevitable, then we must pay closer attention to mayors and policies implemented by the cities. A transition to a greener economy will be one of the key variables for the survival and prosperity of our species.

Partially motivated by the lack of leadership at the national level, cities have been willing to take the lead on climate change. For example, while the US government rejected mandatory GHG reduction targets under the Kyoto protocol in 2001, state and municipal governments have taken the initiative in curbing GHG emissions.¹⁷ More recently, in the light of Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement several mayors have declared their willingness and commitment to upholding the 2015 deal.¹⁸ Former mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg declared that Americans do not need Washington to meet Paris commitments. More impressively, Bloomberg donated 15 million dollars to the UN in order to uphold America's commitments.¹⁹ This might strike one as odd, and rightfully so. Compliance has always puzzled

¹⁶ I have implied that the rise of cities is closely related to the liberal school of thought in IR. I will not deal with this topic directly, but there is substance in this claim.

¹⁷ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 47.

¹⁸ Mark Gollom, "Cities, States Forge Ahead with Own Plans Despite Trump's Withdrawal from Climate Deal," *CBC News*, June 03, 2017. Accessed June 10, 2017. Direct link to be found at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/donald-trump-paris-accord-mayors-governors-1.4143504>

¹⁹ Kristine Phillips, "Michael Bloomberg Pledges His Own Money to Help U.N. After Trump Pulls Out of Paris Climate Deal," *The Washington Post*, June 3, 2017. Accessed June 10, 2017. Direct link to be found at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/06/03/michael-bloomberg-pledges-his-own-money-to-help-u-n-after-trump-pulls-out-of-paris-climate-deal/?utm_term=.cbdea79466aa

the minds of IR scholars. It is not clear why states, or in this case cities, comply with non-binding agreements. What are their *true* motivations? Potential explanations are abundant and in many cases inconclusive as true motivations for action might be unfamiliar to the actors themselves, let alone the outside observer. While calling for a “global parliament of mayors” seems to be a stretch, it appears that cities will test the boundaries of territorial sovereignty.²⁰

The expanding propensity of cities to develop the necessary mechanism to autonomously navigate foreign relations is called *diplomacy*.²¹ In New York, Michael Bloomberg established a “Mayor’s Office for International Affairs” which is used to manage international outreach, an area that covers investment promotion, security exchanges, and cooperation with networks such as C40, as well as the UN.²²

If we accept these claims, that urbanization is inevitable and that cities are willing to take the lead on climate change, one might ask, what are cities doing to achieve their goals? Where are they placing themselves in International Relations?

1.2 The Cities for Climate Protection

One of the largest transnational urban networks, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) was established in 1990 by the International Union of Local Authorities and the United Nations Environment Program in order to address environmental concerns of local authorities at the international level. In turn, the Cities for Climate Protection Plan (CCP) was established by ICLEI in 1993. Currently, the CCP boasts over a thousand local

²⁰ Curtis, “Cities and Global Governance: State Failure or a New Global Order?” 456.

²¹ Michele Acuto and Parag Khanna, “Around the World, Mayors Take Charge,” *The Atlantic*, April 26, 2013. Accessed June 10, 2017. A direct link to be found at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/around-the-world-mayors-take-charge/275335/>

²² *Ibid.*

communities.²³ Moreover, the idea behind CCP was straightforward. Cities should join together to mitigate climate change and contribute to sustainable development. Dissemination of technical information was one of the core tenants of CCP.²⁴ Lee does an excellent job of summarizing CCP's five-step process for mitigation:²⁵

- 1) Measuring energy and emissions inventories
- 2) Establishing emissions targets
- 3) Establishing a climate action plan
- 4) Implementing policies
- 5) Monitoring outcomes and feedback to adjust policies

Upon joining the CCP, the local government must pass a bill committing to these five steps. The CCP provides tools to cities, but does not have in-house institutional resources to invent their own climate action plans. For instance, in collaboration with Torrie Smith Associates, a Canadian environmental consulting firm, the CCP developed a software that helps local authorities calculate, forecast, and monitor their emissions of greenhouse gas.²⁶ However, it would be up to local governments to design a climate action plan that suits the use of this technology.

1.3 The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

According to their website, C40 is a network of world *megacities* committed to addressing

²³ This information comes directly from the CCP website. Accessed June 2, 2017. The link to the website <http://www.iclei-europe.org/members/why-our-members-joined/>

²⁴ Michele M. Betsill and Harriet Bulkeley, "Transnational Networks and Global Environmental Governance: The Cities for Climate Protection Program" *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 478.

²⁵ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 117.

²⁶ Betsill, "Transnational Networks and Global Environmental Governance: The Cities for Climate Protection Program" 488.

climate change and driving urban action to reduce GHG emissions and climate risks, while increasing the health, well-being, and economic opportunities of urban citizens. The C40 was initiated by the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingston, and his Deputy Nicky Gavron, in 2005. Initially, C40 was an invitation only group.²⁷ In 2007, C40 entered a partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative, consequently expanding its membership.²⁸ A further, and a more impressive, expansion occurred in 2012 when the C40 Chair, Michael Bloomberg, changed the membership policy to allow smaller cities to join. From 2012 onwards, C40 offers 3 types of membership:

- 1) Megacities; must meet one of two possible conditions. First, they must have a cosmopolitan population of 10 million people or more. This condition can be met by 2025, allowing developing countries to apply. Second, they must be one of the top 25 global cities in terms of GDP output, at PPP. This condition can be met by 2025 as well.
- 2) Innovator Cities; this category has vague guidelines. To qualify a city must show some form of leadership in climate change. No tangible guidelines are given here.²⁹
- 3) Observer Cities; all new cities join the network through this category. After a one year trial, cities can apply for the category of Innovator City or Megacity. Only cities that do not meet the necessary conditions for these two categories remain in the Observer City category.³⁰

²⁷ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 117.

²⁸ Harriet Bulkeley and Michele M. Betsill, "Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change," *Environmental Politics* 22, no. 1 (2013): 141.

²⁹ Vancouver falls in this category.

³⁰ This information come directly from the C40 website. Accessed June 2, 2017. The link to this information is at http://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/press_releases/images/25_C40_20Guidelines_20FINAL_2011.14.12.original.pdf?1388095701

Currently, C40 has 90 affiliated members, making their name highly misleading. The C40 covers 25% of global GDP and represents 550+ million people. Three goals are identified by the C40 network:

- 1) Reduction, both collective and individual, of GHG.
- 2) Development of best practices for GHG reduction and adaptation
- 3) Sharing of information

The C40 network intends on achieving these goals through pooling the buying power of cities, mobilizing expert assistance, and standardizing measurement tools.³¹ It is noteworthy that both CCP and C40 were created due to perceived shortcomings of the UNFCCC. As stated earlier cities interact through networks, therefore studying and understanding networks will become a growing body of research as academics and policy experts try to assess the gradual power shift towards cities. Furthermore, this claim is supported by the recent joint venture between City Leadership Initiative and University College London. In an effort to evaluate influence of networks these two entities partnered in a project dedicated to assessing the nature of contemporary networks and their growing diplomatic connections.³²

1.4 All Networks are Created Equal, but Some Networks are More Equal Than Others

There are two important points that I will attempt to develop in this section. First, the comparison of C40 and CCP should illuminate the differences between these two networks and establish that not all networks are created equal. These two networks target different audiences and consequently achieve different results. The networks that cities choose to join will have a

³¹ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 51.

³² Curtis, "Cities and Global Governance: State Failure or a New Global Order?" 456.

significant effect on their climate change policies.³³ The second point that I will try to establish is that there is significant variation within each of these networks. In this section I will argue that cities are not created equal either. This argument will be a logical consequence of the first section and will focus on C40, given that its membership criteria targets large cities.

Differences Between Networks

The CCP and C40 are different networks by their very design. ICLEI, and subsequently CCP, consists of cities, towns, counties, even associations. In short, their target audience are local communities. Additionally, their membership criteria are minimal. Local governments join the CCP campaign by passing a resolution pledging to reduce GHG emissions from their local government operations and throughout their community.³⁴ The barriers to entry and participation are almost nonexistent. On the other hand, C40 is formed by large cities. Megacities make up the core of C40's membership with 41 members falling in this category. The C40 Chair, Members of the Steering Committee, and Members of the Board *must* come from megacities.

I should be fair and point out that C40 is very explicit about their membership goals. In fact, most the information on C40 presented in this section comes directly from their website. They openly admit that their target audience are large cities. A further point of clarification is necessary. The C40 does not have explicit barriers to entry. All cities can apply to join C40, but given the 3-layer structure of the network, cities are grouped into rigid categories that determine how much influence they can exert within the network. For instance, due to its size the mayor of Vancouver would be unable to run for the position of the C40 Chair, or any other high ranking position in the C40. This leaves Vancouver, or any other city with a population below 3 million,

³³ Picking a city that is a member of both C40 and CCP and looking at its environmental policies before and after joining the networks would be an interesting research strategy here.

³⁴ The five-step process outlined above.

admittedly a significant number of people/emitters, in a gray area.

Similar ideas are espoused by Bulkeley when she says that the early 2000's signified a shift from *municipal voluntarism* to *strategic urbanism*.³⁵ Municipal voluntarism involved small and medium sized cities in North America and Europe and was reminiscent of social movements rather than organized networks.³⁶ However, an additional form of climate politics has emerged since. Strategic urbanism targets large cities which in turn create their own networks and have their goals and activities embedded in neoliberal discourse.³⁷ Bulkeley rightfully points out that "networks are networks of pioneers for pioneers."³⁸ Acuto adds validity to this argument when he says that city networks have become increasingly international in scale since the Cold War.³⁹ Most academic literature on this topic proposes further globalization as the solution to environmental problems without giving much consideration to the opposite approach.⁴⁰ If left unchecked, an organization like C40 will add to this trend. Continued globalization will reinforce existing imbalances in world politics and will not be beneficial in the long term.

Differences Within Networks

My initial expectation was that there would be significant variation within networks. I anticipated that some cities, by the nature of their size and economic output, will have more power than others. What appears to be developing in C40 is an international system within an international system. This new subset has a Realist logic.⁴¹ Worryingly, more powerful cities set

³⁵ Bulkeley, "Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change" 140.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 139.

³⁷ Curtis, "Cities and Global Governance: State Failure or a New Global Order?" 465.

³⁸ Bulkeley, "Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change," 143.

³⁹ Michele Acuto, "Give Cities a Seat at the Top Table." *Nature* 537, no. 7622 (2016): 612.

⁴⁰ One could see the work of Lee, Acuto, and Gordon. Potentially, Benjamin Barber as well.

⁴¹ Looking at actual conference transcripts would solidify or falsify my claims here. I am limited by time.

the agenda and dominate the discussion. As noted earlier, within C40, only officials from megacities can run for the highest positions in the network. In a different study, Alderson and Beckfield found that New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo monopolize power and prestige in a hierarchical world city system.⁴² Their methodology involved relational data and social network analysis.

Furthermore, cities that have more experience and capabilities are likely to attract more collaborative partners.⁴³ In short, everyone wants to cooperate with New York, London, and Paris, whereas a place like Bogota or Nairobi might have a more difficult time finding partners. Cities tend to make collaborative ties with those cities that show higher levels of climate change policy performance, since it would be more beneficial for them to gain this skill set.⁴⁴ Richness in policy achievement is the key to explaining collaboration among C40 member cities.⁴⁵ Even more specifically, cities seek collaborating partners that have proven performance within their regions.

Collaboration between cities is more likely when they are located on the same continent.⁴⁶ This is not unreasonable behavior. Similarities in history, culture, and at times even geographical landscape provide the conditions for better mutual understanding. Furthermore, transaction costs are an important variable as well, as proximity decreases cost.

This is not to say that cities from different continents do not cooperate with each other. Lee provides several examples where Asian cities cooperate with North American, European, even Australian cities. However, what I have found is that the cooperation usually happens

⁴² Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

between richer cities.⁴⁷ Lee is aware of this shortcoming.⁴⁸ He explicitly states this on a few occasions, but still chooses to use examples that do not justify his awareness. While acknowledging that this might be an issue he provides examples of cooperation between Copenhagen and Seoul, Sydney and Seoul. This is problematic because it further reinforces the claim that richer cities tend to cooperate with one another. Nonetheless, this is a probabilistic rather than a deterministic argument. Larger North American and European cities do, on occasion, cooperate with smaller cities from the developing world. Nonetheless, these collaborations are rare and insufficient.

While megacities monopolize power, a significant challenge stems from the fact that many factors influencing urban carbon emissions and vulnerability are often well beyond the reach of city authority. Oftentimes, cities lack the formal authority to enact legislation governing energy, transportation, infrastructure and so on. Even when cities do have the requisite formal authority, they often lack the financial and human resources. According to Christopher Gore, African cities are often “deeply dependent on national financing and collaboration, along with international financing, to respond to basic service needs as well as climate specific needs.”⁴⁹ Lee expresses a similar concern when he says that some municipal governments may not have the capacity, and at times the will, to institutionalize their efforts.⁵⁰

Relatedly, another troubling finding was that African cities have no collaborative ties to each other. The situation is problematic in South America as well. South American cities only have two collaborative links between each other. These links are between Sao Paolo and Bueno

⁴⁷ For the purposes of this paper the definition of rich will be loose. For instance, London is a rich city, while Buenos Aires is not.

⁴⁸ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 77.

⁴⁹ Johnson, *The Urban Climate Challenge*, 228.

⁵⁰ Lee, *Global Cities and Climate Change*, 52.

Aires, and Curitiba and Bogota.⁵¹ Lee hypothesizes that weak links on these two continents are related to capacity.⁵² Clearly, London and New York have little to gain from entering collaborative ties with a city like Bogota or Nairobi. However, if this issue is unaddressed cities in the developing world will be left behind. Currently, developing African cities do not have much to contribute in terms of climate governance. From limited capacity to scarce expertise, the obstacles are abundant. Undoubtedly, cities from this region will have a harder time establishing partnerships with other cities. It is precisely for this reason that I would call for sharing of information between, rather than solely within, networks. Cities such as London and New York already have access to information and expertise. On the other hand, developing cities lack information, expertise, finance, etc. Most of these resources will have to come from the North.

As stated in the introduction, I have spent most of the previous section pointing out difficulties associated with networks. In their current form, they will reinforce the existing imbalance in world politics and will not provide viable solutions to climate mitigation. In the next section I will ask the ultimate, why question. Given these issues associated with networks, why do cities choose to join?

⁵¹ Ibid., 83.

⁵² Ibid., 83.

Chapter 2: Moving Smoke Screens

Network membership entails expectations of benefits. Therefore, cities should join networks if they expect something in return, some form of benefit that would otherwise be unobtainable. Assuming that mayors are rational and self-interested actors, two plausible explanations emerge as to why cities choose to join networks.

2.1 Platforms

The first explanation is that networks, like C40 and CCP, are good platforms for information dissemination. According to the C40 website, one of their goals is to “amplify individual city solutions by providing a global platform for showcasing city successes.”⁵³ In other words, they report an already performed action. Networks appear to be advertisement boards rather than causes of progressive climate action. The C40 makes troubling claims when they state that 75% of their members have implemented new, better or faster climate actions as a result of participating in C40 networks.⁵⁴ The troubling aspect of this claim is that no evidence is given to support this claim. Ascribing direct causality requires a before and after analysis and a careful breakdown of each policy area in order to prove that networks were the prime movers. For example, if London implemented a new waste management policy that was achieving praiseworthy results, looking at whether other cities implement the same, or even similar, policies would be a good strategy to establish causality. A mere presentation of numbers without any evidence warrants suspicion.

However, in some cases networks may act as the prime movers. Sometimes, they can act

⁵³ The C40 website. Accessed June 2, 2017. Link to the information <http://www.c40.org/networks>

⁵⁴ The C40 website. Accessed June 2, 2017. Link to the information http://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/other_uploads/images/751_2016_Global_Initiatives_Factsheet_%28US_Letter%29_final.original.pdf?1475252235

as causes of action. For instance, if cities in the developing world decide to use some of the information available through these networks and replicate a policy implemented by another city, then one could reasonably claim that networks were the cause of action.

A charitable interpretation of networks and their responsibilities would be that cities join networks in order to acquire information and expertise. Indeed, this would be a sensible reason for seeing membership expansion. Nonetheless, one could probe this claim by asking whether C40 is the only source of information. In a digital world, finding and hiring urban planners and environmental experts is not a difficult task. The C40 does not have a monopoly on good environmental practices. It is not the only moral or knowledge entrepreneur in this area.⁵⁵

A potential counter argument could be that this is the most efficient way to obtain information and expertise, where city leaders can find reliable information and experts quickly. This could certainly be true. The argument that I am making here is not against networks per se. The argument is against grandiose claims. Currently, there is insufficient evidence to prove that networks are the causes of progressive environmental policies. They can be good sources of information and could potentially exert positive influence in the long run. In this way, networks could be useful tools for socialization. This is a possible, but by no means a probable explanation.

In order to separate themselves, and exert influence on environmental policy, networks need to establish exclusivity. Offering benefits that no other organization can would be an excellent way for networks to establish themselves as necessary partners in climate change. An example of this could be access to funding or access to technology.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ I borrowed the terms moral and knowledge entrepreneur from Risse.

⁵⁶ I will address partnerships and collaborations below.

In September 2016, C40 has taken this approach and formed the Cities Finance Facility. This program is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and the United States Agency for International Development.⁵⁷ Thus far two pilot projects came out of this program. The city of Bogota is developing new cycling infrastructure, and Mexico City will receive a fleet of new electric buses.⁵⁸

I have decided to include funding and access to technology in the same explanation as information dissemination because I believe that they are mutually dependent. Information without funding is philosophy, and funding without expertise is paralysis. Both are necessary in order to achieve goals. It appears that the C40 leaders understand this, as they have moved towards forming partnerships with financial organizations in the last couple of years. Anne Hidalgo proudly proclaimed that C40 “must reach the leaders of global finance” in order to create “economic and social transformations needed to create a climate safe world.”⁵⁹ However, 64% of climate actions are funded solely from individual cities’ budgets.⁶⁰

2.2 Reputation and Greenwashing

Reputation is a powerful agent in diplomacy. It is the product of politicians’ ability to control public perceptions in such a way that the public feels compelled to trust them. Moreover, reputation is always forward looking. Politicians look to leverage their reputation in order to further their career. I would argue that “green” policies are part of a growing international norm

⁵⁷ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to information <http://www.c40.org/programmes/c40-cities-finance-facility>

⁵⁸ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to information <http://www.c40.org/programmes/c40-cities-finance-facility>

⁵⁹ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to the information http://www.c40.org/press_releases/press-release-foreign-policy-honours-c40-cities-climate-leadership-group-at-5th-annual-diplomat-of-the-year-awards

⁶⁰ Acuto, “Give Cities a Seat at the Top Table,” 613.

that makes it extremely difficult for mayors to declare themselves as “anti-green.”⁶¹ Progressive environmental policies are one of the necessary conditions for a city to be perceived as a global city. Attracting capital, young professionals, and experts requires some form of progressive environmental policies. Being perceived as “green” and “progressive” can benefit the city and its administration in several ways. There are electoral benefits to cultivating an image of a “green” mayor. However, these benefits could be country, or even region, specific. For example, a mayor without a “green” platform in North America will have a much harder time getting elected compared to a Mayor in an Eastern European country. The fact that Moscow and Warsaw are the only two cities from Eastern Europe to join C40 could be used as evidence to support this claim.

In order to solidify their image, new mayors may internalize this emerging global norm. Furthermore, networks can help mayors cultivate good reputation in two ways. Even mere membership gives mayors credibility in the eyes of the public. Moreover, it gives mayors an additional tool by allowing them to argue that they are doing something to contribute to climate mitigation. Secondly, numerous awards available through C40 as well as other venues are important accolades. For instance, highly ambitious mayors could see the Green Diplomat of the year award as an opportunity to gain attention and potentially make a name for themselves. Social praise and media attention are the building blocks of all good politicians. In some cases, Mayors could use networks as a stepping stone to further their career.

Interestingly, more mayors are becoming heads of state. In 2013, eight heads of states were former mayors. From Seoul’s Mayor Lee Myung-bank, over to Istanbul’s Recep Erdogan, to Teheran’s Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the trend seems to hold consistently regardless of the

⁶¹ I am putting green in quotation marks because the term can be quite vague when analyzed and could have different meanings to different people.

country.⁶² This is not to say that mayors have not experienced failure at times. For example, former Sao Paulo Mayor, Jose Serra narrowly lost the Brazilian national election in 2012.

However, mayors do not seem to lack political aspirations.

A good example to support my claims would be Mauricio Macri. The current President of Argentina acted as the mayor of Buenos Aires from 2007 to 2015. Macri's time as mayor was marked by numerous progressive environmental policies. While gauging how much media attention and popularity he gained from these policies is difficult, one cannot deny his efforts towards more sustainable living in Buenos Aires. During his time as Mayor, Macri managed to build the Environmental Park and improve transportation significantly.⁶³ His policies give sufficient reason to suspect two things.⁶⁴ First, that progressive environmental policies were Macri's initiatives rather than those of C40. Second, these policies allowed him to gain a good reputation and win the presidential election in 2015. Macri has exhibited liberal tendencies throughout his political career. His support of gay marriage in a Catholic country was a risky endeavor, and only further demonstrates his ideology. It appears that Macri genuinely believed in the necessity of battling climate change and was driven by his ideology rather than self-interest. Surely, there might be politicians who see the mayoral position and "green" policies as leverage for careers advancement.

Additionally, in 2016, Macri was named one of the world's hundred most influential

⁶² Michele Acuto and Parag Khanna, "Around the World, Mayors Take Charge," *The Atlantic*, April 26, 2013. Accessed June 10, 2017. Link to the article <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/around-the-world-mayors-take-charge/275335/>

⁶³ More on the Environmental Park in subsequent paragraphs.

⁶⁴ Chris Barrett, "For Argentine Environmentalists, New President Macri Elicits Hope-And Skepticism." *Latin America News Dispatch*, December 15, 2015. Accessed June 10, 2017. Link at <http://latindispatch.com/2015/12/10/for-argentine-environmentalists-new-president-macri-elicits-hope-and-skepticism/>

people and the most powerful president in Latin America by the news magazine *Time*.⁶⁵ As mentioned above, trying to establish how much popularity Macri gained from his policies and network membership is difficult, but claiming that C40 provided another avenue for publicity would not be an outlandish claim. In fact, Acuto argues that branding and business opportunities are the major drivers of city networking.⁶⁶ If this is the case, and city leaders use “green” policies as a power tool, what is the extent and the possibility of progress in climate change?

⁶⁵ *Time Magazine*. “The 100 Most Influential People.” Accessed June 10, 2017. Link to be found at <http://time.com/collection/2016-time-100/leaders/>

⁶⁶ Acuto, “Give Cities a Seat at the top Table,” 613.

Chapter 3: Waste Management in Cities

Decreasing carbon emissions can be approached in different ways. Examples range from transportation, to construction, energy, and even waste. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on Sustainable Solid Waste System. Solid waste management *almost* exclusively falls under the jurisdiction of municipal authorities. As urbanization continues, dealing with waste will put additional pressure on local governments.

Mismanagement of waste could have detrimental consequences. The possibility of air and water borne diseases is greatly increased if waste is mismanaged. Moreover, increased carbon and methane emissions are another negative consequence of poorly planned waste systems. Globally, solid waste contributes anywhere from three to five per cent to current GHG emissions. Nevertheless, if left unaddressed, methane emissions could double by 2020 and quadruple by 2050.⁶⁷

In an effort to help cities manage their waste systems in the most efficient way, the C40 published the “Good Practice Guide.”⁶⁸ This guide *surveys* best waste practices from around the world. Some of the main covenants of this guide include development of infrastructure for waste utilization, promotion of innovation in waste management, using digital mapping to manage solid waste, and many others. As waste management is one of the largest costs to municipal budgets, it comes as no surprise that cities are very keen on addressing this issue.

Additionally, C40 Sustainable Solid Waste System Network established a partnership

⁶⁷ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to be found http://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/good_practice_briefings/images/9_C40_GPG_SSWS.original.pdf?1456789082

⁶⁸ C40 has a Good Practice Guide for every area, including transportation, energy, and everything in between. Accessed June 4, 2017. Good Practice Guides can be found at http://www.c40.org/blog_posts/roadmaps-for-successful-climate-action-c40-cities-share-100-case-studies-proven-to-work

with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition-Municipal Solid Waste Initiative. This partnership brought together the EPA, Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment Japan, the Global Methane Initiative, the World Bank, the UN Environment Program, the International Solid Waste Association, and many others.⁶⁹

3.1 Buenos Aires

With an estimated 3 million people living in the city, and an urban population of 12 million, Buenos Aires makes it into the category of a megacity. Moreover, given its predicament, Buenos Aires has achieved praiseworthy results in waste management. Due to land limitations, and the impossibility of building solid urban waste treatment plants or installing new landfills, the city of Buenos Aires was forced to find different solutions to achieve its sustainability commitments. The route chosen was separation of waste at the source, resource recovery, recycling, and resource valorization.⁷⁰ Achieving these goals involved creating awareness campaigns in order to educate citizens about sustainable practices. Citizens were taught to sort, separate, and deposit waste correctly. More impressively, the Ministry of Environment partnered with the Ministry of Education to encourage primary schools, secondary schools, and universities to visit the Environmental Park to instill the importance of waste management in youth. The Environmental Park, built in 2012, processes around 35% of all waste in Buenos Aires.

According to a C40 Report, there has been a 44% reduction in waste sent to landfills in the first year of the program. Furthermore, the project has generated 4,500 new jobs, with 2,000

⁶⁹ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to be found http://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/good_practice_briefings/images/9_C40_GPG_SSWS.original.pdf?1456789082

⁷⁰ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Case study at <http://www.c40.org/profiles/2014-buenosaires>.

more jobs expected.⁷¹ While these numbers are certainly impressive, it is always important to wonder whether cities would achieve these goals without networks. I am limited by time and space, but an interesting research strategy would be to look at sources of these findings. For instance, where did the money for the Environmental Park come from? Was there any talk of this project by the Argentinian elites before they joined urban networks? Was their mayor particularly keen on “green policies?”⁷² Answering these questions would help one clarify the necessity and the importance of networks. If it turned out that plans were forthcoming, that would not render networks completely useless. Networks can contribute in different ways. Information and finance are perfect examples of possible contributions. Keeping within sound academic tradition I would call for more research in this area. Clarifying how networks help cities deal with climate change would strengthen their claims. In its current form, the C40 appears to be a platform for information sharing, an advertisement board, rather than an institution dedicated to environmental governance.

I must acknowledge that there is plenty of room for interpretation here. It is reasonable to debate over the scope of network action. If the primary purpose of networks is information sharing then C40, even in its current form, does a satisfactory job. However, claims made by C40 leaders, such as Hidalgo and Bloomberg, are far more ambitious. Furthermore, the C40 mission statement is very much ambitious as well. It entails economic growth, providing opportunities, and improving overall quality of life. The C40 leadership sees themselves as pioneers in climate change. Those claims would require some justification, as no evidence demonstrates that cities, in this case Buenos Aires, would not undertake these actions without the presence of C40. While

⁷¹ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Case study at <http://www.c40.org/profiles/2014-buenosaires>.

⁷² In this case, Macri was indeed concerned with the environment.

establishing casual process observations would be difficult in this case, its application could cancel some of the unnecessary background noise by allowing one to decipher the entanglement between domestic and international actors.⁷³ It is the entanglement between the domestic and the international that is of central importance. These political realms do not exist in isolation.

I am not denying the importance of the international realm and networks. That said, I would still argue that C40 is simply reporting the achievements of individual cities rather than playing an active role in the development of these initiatives. Worryingly, in doing so, they exalt their own contributions and city mayors while suppressing the importance of domestic actors. The real question is, what are economic and political giants such as the World Bank, the IMF, and others doing to help individual cities, and not networks.

A concrete example that would be clarify my argument here would be the above mentioned C40's Sustainable Solid Waste System Network partnership with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition-Municipal Solid Waste Initiative, where Environmental Ministries from around the world joined the initiative. As impressively, the World Bank, the UN Environment Programme, the International Solid Waste Association all decided to cooperate.⁷⁴ Worryingly, there is no information or data on individual contributions. Mere participation leads to political kudos that can be interpreted as tokenism rather than anything substantial. Undoubtedly, bringing such powerful organizations under one roof is praiseworthy, but one cannot help wonder whether this is another act of political maneuvering. Some of the institutions named above are economic and political giants, and their presence, expertise, and funds should allow for direct cooperation where individual contributions can be clearly defined and presented. If the environment is the

⁷³ I am borrowing from Robert Putnam's idea on two-level games.

⁷⁴ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to be found http://www.c40.org/networks/sustainable_solid_waste_systems_

primary purpose of these partnerships, one would observe more funding being funneled into new projects. Additionally, having such prominent names working together creates the illusion of progress. Put simply, the mere presence of these organizations provides a base for political praise and a counter-argument against any scrutiny. Taken further, this can be interpreted as a subtle form of intimidation. These are mutually beneficial partnerships that allow financial institutions to present themselves as environmentally friendly, and environmental organizations to present themselves as proactive.

Certainly, the multilevel nature of climate governance makes coordination and transparency very difficult. For instance, four levels of government are involved in the management of Greater Buenos Aires.⁷⁵ I will number them for the sake of clarity:

- 1) National
- 2) State; which includes two jurisdictions (Province of Buenos Aires and Autonomous City of Buenos Aires)
- 3) Partidos; equivalent to borough in English. They are located in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
- 4) Municipal

Fragmentation of political process makes it easier to see how “messy” climate politics can be. With such a fragmented policy area, accountability becomes almost impossible to achieve. Nonetheless, according to Romero-Lankao, state and local authorities have limited jurisdiction, and even more limited human resources and funding. Furthermore, the Office of Climate Change of Buenos Aires has a staff of one and has been shifted three times from department to

⁷⁵ Patricia Romero-Lankao et al. “Multilevel Governance and Institutional Capacity for Climate Change Responses in Latin American Cities.” in *The Urban Climate Challenge*, edited by Craig Johnson et al., (New York: Routledge, 2015): 191.

department.⁷⁶ It would be reasonable to wonder why local authorities have such a limited role in climate change action. If networks truly supported local initiatives then observing more activity at the domestic rather than the international level would be the expected outcome. Currently, we are observing the contrary. To reiterate, partnerships at the international level should be formed for the benefit of cities, and not for the benefit of networks.

3.2 Construction of Compliance: Shifting the Focus and the Responsibility

If norms are interpreted as “ideas and beliefs about what behavior is appropriate,” then one can reasonably claim that people can be taught to behave in “sustainable/green ways.”⁷⁷ Relatedly, I am inclined to say that ideas and belief are fluid.⁷⁸ The question then becomes: is socialization of the developing world possible?⁷⁹ For instance, can China be socialized into embracing a “green” way of thinking? Giving a decisive answer is difficult, but there are sufficient reasons to defend both the “yay” and the “nay” camp. One of the main reasons that countries embrace the Western economic model is the promise of constant economic growth. China did not embrace the capitalist mode of production due to particular affinity towards the West. The acceptance was the result of rational calculation. Besides many other things capitalism promises unprecedented growth.

The concept of “limits to growth” has been a source of contention in academic circles. From economists to environmentalists, the degree of acceptance and rejection of this idea varies greatly and contributes to peoples view on environmental solutions. Pessimism aside, what is the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 191.

⁷⁷ Jennifer Clapp and Linda Swanston, “Doing Away with Plastic Shopping Bags: International Patterns of Norm Emergence and Policy Implementation.” *Environmental Politics* 18, no. 3 (2009): 316.

⁷⁸ Truth be told, there is significant variation here; culture to culture, person to person.

⁷⁹ The same question applies to the developed world.

correct way to socialize the C-Suite, corporations, cities, or countries to behave “appropriately” or in this case “sustainably”?

If van der Ven is correct in his claim that socialization theory explains instances of responsible corporate behavior, it would seem sensible to say that cities could achieve the same result. In fact, given that the source of authority is drawn from the public sphere rather than a select group of unelected individuals, establishing legitimacy might even be easier.⁸⁰

For instance, Bulkeley and Betsill found that framing of urban development and transport planning were critical in determining how climate change was approached.⁸¹ An effective way to achieve environmental goals in parts of the world that may be opposed to environmental ideas is to appeal to obvious problems rather than morality or the environment. Everyone speaks the language of time, not everyone speaks the language of environmentalism. I would argue that ideas must be “sold” rather than “preached.” This argument can be applied to transportation, waste, or any other climate related issue. People need to be persuaded and socialized into thinking sustainably. The ideal situation is education at a young age. If early beliefs are formed so that damaging practices are not part of the calculation, then it is much more likely for these practices to become part of identity.⁸²

However, these goals will be achieved to varying degrees of success based on how issues are framed and presented to the general population. Furthermore, local context will greatly determine the possibilities and the extent of change. For instance, persuading large parts of India to refrain from eating meat will not require much effort. On the other hand, countries like the

⁸⁰ It is important to note that we are socializing individuals not groups. For more on “group-think” see Janis 1982 (chapters 1, 10, 11); Jervis 1976 (chapters 4 and 6).

⁸¹ Bulkeley, “Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change,” 138.

⁸² I am borrowing from rich Constructivist literature. Examples include Wendt, Checkel, Hurd

United States and some European countries have their religious holidays tied to meat consumption.⁸³ In these cases, ‘selling’ vegetarian diets might be more difficult. The real work is to be done in studying how domestic political structures and agents condition normative change.⁸⁴ I have argued above that, in the digital age, organizations like C40 do not have a monopoly on good information and practices. The real issue lies in the conflation of what is international and what is domestic and figuring out how to adjust the international to the domestic. In other words, reconstructing foreign norms to ensure that they fit agents’ cognitive priors and identities.⁸⁵ Climate change should not be tackled through more globalization. In fact, it requires limiting globalization and allowing domestic politics to reclaim its jurisdiction. Taken further, studying the individual, and what the individual does in specific situations, would allow academics to generalize and infer conclusions.

3.3 Deeper Issue: Shadow Boxing Consumption

Bright lights, fast cars, and juicy burgers. They all contribute to an incredible social experiment we have come to call the city. Comforts and spoils of the city are undeniable. In cities, we work and we spend. Globalization, cities, corporations, and consumption are all closely connected. They coexist and reinforce each other. In fact, consumer spending accounts for about 70% of all employment and economic activity in developed economies.⁸⁶ In many places, consumer culture is part of identity. The United States of America and its Christmas traditions would be an ideal example. The frenzy associated with this time of year is very interesting to an

⁸³ Orthodox Christmas and Thanksgiving come to mind.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁸⁵ Amitav Acharya, “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism.” *International Organizations* 58, no. 2 (2004): 239.

⁸⁶ Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister, *Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press) 2013: 34.

outsider.

With some of these figures and ideas in mind, it is not clear that cities should be perceived as havens of sustainability. The future will bring even higher per capita rates of consumption as the developing world pursues the lifestyles of North America and Europe.⁸⁷ The World Bank predicts the output of the global economy, led by growth in China and India, could expand from 35 trillion in 2005 to 72 trillion in 2030.⁸⁸ Potentially troubling outcomes might ensue if developing countries continue to grow while disregarding or deflecting environmental costs. Dauvergne paints a bleak picture when he says that “mitigating the environmental impact of rising consumption is one of the biggest governance challenges of the twenty-first century.”⁸⁹ The C40 report on best waste practices clearly argues the same. Somewhat humorously, the authors have called this idea “Waste Hierarchy,” where prevention stands at the apex of the pyramid. While minimization, recycling, and reuse are good options they argue that prevention would be ideal.⁹⁰ Interestingly, there is no disagreement on the best possible outcome. The disagreement arises when choosing the best path to achieve this goal.

Teaching people that living in cities involves certain responsibilities is a necessary element in achieving environmental goals.⁹¹ Unlimited consumption is not a right bestowed upon people by their governments. The 2012 New York sugary drinks portion cap rule would be a good example of this obsessive tendency. While one can see why people would oppose government regulation that tells them how many milliliters of soda they can drink while

⁸⁷ Peter Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment*, 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁰ The C40 website. Accessed June 4, 2017. Link to be found at http://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/good_practice_briefings/images/9_C40_GPG_SSWS.original.pdf?1456789082

⁹¹ Necessary, but not sufficient condition.

watching a movie at Cineplex, there is something counter-intuitive about tying consumption with individual rights.⁹² Habits of consumption will be difficult to break. On the other hand, *some* environmentalists need to be tentative in their approach to sustainability as they look for a receptive ear. Furthermore, environmentalists should be careful in their praise of networks, as networks tend to distract local politicians by offering solutions outside of their countries. It is essential to recognize that networks and environmental ideas are being used as a velvet glove to cover an iron fist.⁹³ Power guides many of the actions performed by the networks as they continue to expand their influence and serve as tools for greenwashing.

⁹² The Courts defended their verdict through scope of regulatory authority. However, public support was gathered through slogans such as “don’t let bureaucrats tell you what size beverage to buy.”

⁹³ This remark was first uttered by Otto von Bismarck.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this thesis, I looked at various ways in which cities make sense of climate change. I found that cities tend to tackle climate change through transnational urban networks. The evidence suggests that networks reinforce existing imbalances in global politics, creating a Realist subset in international society composed of cities. To solve this problem, I have argued that resources should be shared not only within networks but between networks as well. Tackling climate change involves bringing the developing world into the equation. The underlying consequence of this idea is that the developed world will have to relinquish some of its power and wealth. Undoubtedly, this is easier said than done.

Global politics, preceding globalization, was a two-level game. The interactions between domestic and international politics produced an international society. Corporations and cities have changed that. It is more difficult to disentangle the two and obtain accountability. The example of Buenos Aires demonstrates how “messy” environmental politics in Argentina can be. Internationally, I would argue that networks, in their current form, act as platforms for information dissemination rather than organizations of leadership. They report rather than facilitate action. Correcting imbalances will require a more proactive role. Whether this will occur within existing organizations such as C40 or ICLEI’s CCP remains to be seen. Nevertheless, there are sufficient reasons to suspect that the primary purpose of networks is not the environment. I have argued that cultivating an image of a “green” mayor can be highly beneficial to politicians as they continue to their careers.

We are all willing to go to great lengths to enjoy the comforts of the city. Unfortunately for us, city dwelling comes with responsibilities. I have put faith in socialization as the central variable for future environmental projects. Admittedly, my conclusions are tentative. Some

issues and industries are easier to “construct” than others. Environmental solutions require coordination between many players, all of which are hesitant to relinquish power. Environmental groups should be cautious about any top down impositions on people’s behavior. Humans are creatures of habit and old habits die slowly.

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