

## **The continuing rise of transnational urban climate governance: Global Mayors Compact**

**Abstract:** City climate networks are positioning cities as critical sites for climate governance. Climate change governance is no longer limited to international or national forums, it is now a critical urban issue. The IPCC (2014), World Bank (2010), UN Habitat (2013) and the OECD (2010) are all positioning cities as central to successful global climate change mitigation, as well as adaptation. The importance of city climate networks are now acknowledged by the IPCC (2014) as a critical part of citizen engagement. Nine urban climate networks have evolved over the last two decades (Bulkeley et al. 2014). The most significant development for climate strategic worldwide urban network is the launch of the Global Mayors Compact at the latest UN Summit (2014). However, city climate change networks are now positioned within the frame of *strategic urbanism* – (Hodson and Marvin 2010, While et al. 2010). That is involving urban climate governance framed more within a mainstream economic issue. Debate is therefore required about the capacity of city networks to offer realistic methods of engaging and deflecting complex, fast moving threats and disruptions at the planetary scale. This paper engages with the critical issue of climate urban politics. It explores situating the cities in global environmental politics and potential of the collective response of cities to climate change.

## Introduction

In the so called 'urban age' (Brenner & Schmid 2014) it is perhaps not surprising that cities are positioning themselves as critical to human prospects and the threats these face. This is certainly evident in contemporary climate politics where (some) cities are an emergent force, pursuing climate governance in their own right. Climate politics is now no longer limited to international or national forums, and cities are progressively developing and participating in transnational climate urban governance networks. This is referred to as by Sassen as urban centrality: that is cities deploying, individually and collectively, the power they have accrued over time to evade and dislodge state and other forms of territorial power mainly un-noticed by national governments. City government response to the formation of transnational climate urban governance is significant and evolving. At least, nine urban climate networks have evolved over the last two decades (Bulkeley et al. 2014). The most substantial amongst these is the C40 Climate Leadership Group, a network of exclusive powerful global mega cities that are economically and politically powerful (Davidson & Gleeson 2015). The prominence of transnational urban climate governance was elevated with the launch of the Global Mayors Compact (GMC) at the UN Climate Summit (2014). GMC is the formation of three key city climate networks: : ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), C40 Climate Leadership Group (C40), and United Cities and Local Governments. Six other partners importantly also support this agreement at inception: the World Resources Institute, Energy Cities, Eurocities, The Climate Group, Chinese Global Mayors Forum, and Citynet. The Global Mayors Compact involves cities voluntarily committing to mitigation, publically releasing targets and plans, and reporting annually within a newly standardised measurement system that is compatible within international practice. Cities are explicitly progressively been positioned as critical for climate change governance.

UN Habitat and World Bank collectively have argued for a new framework for global governance for human survival and city governance and planning are critical to the future sustainable cities (UN-Habitat 2009; World Bank 2010; OCED 2010). The UN Habitat (2013) and the World Bank (2009), for example, both insist that governments formulate national urban policy and increase local government powers and resources to deliver on sustainability goals, including sustaining an environment being challenged by rapid climate change. The IPCC has also recognised that city governments must play a central role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and is concerned that urban centres and systems contribute to global resilience. It would like to see 'more examples of city governments and their networks contributing to national and global discussions of climate change adaptation (and mitigation), including establishing voluntary commitments (see for instance the Durban Adaptation Charter for local governments) and engaging with the Conference of Parties' (Revi et al. 2014, p. 14).

Collectively these organisations argue for progressive urban governance, however what is emerging is narrower assertions of city power and governmentality are evident. Transnational urban climate government has evolved and noted as entering its second phase, strategic urbanism. Urban climate governance in this second phase is framed more within a mainstream economic issue and advanced claims for the strategic importance of urban governance for climate change. The C40 provides a prime example of this second phase. This has provoked Hodson and Marvin on numerous occasions (2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012) to state their concern about whether key world cities and associated networks will contribute to escalating urban eco-entrepreneurialism.

Urban centrality is of growing considerable significance in the debate about governance and strategy when considering human responses to climate change and is an emerging area of scholarly inquiry (Amin 2013). Political commentator Benjamin Barber, has gone so far as to muse a near future 'If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities' presenting a new vision of governance for the coming century.

The solution stands before us, obvious but largely uncharted: let cities, the most networked and interconnected of our political associations, defined above all by collaboration and pragmatism, by creativity and multi-culture, do what states cannot. Let mayors rule the world (2013 p.4)

Barber is a pivotal organiser and advocate of urban networking and linked governance of the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), 'a new political and civic institution by, for, and of cities' (GPM on-line). Longworth (2015) concurs and unequivocally states 'Global cities run the world'. To escalate the importance of understanding climate city networks Saskia Sassen (cited in Kearney 2012, p. 5) predicts that 'our geopolitical future ... will be determined in good part through 20 or so strategic worldwide urban networks'. Cities are global players in international networks that emphasis cities participation rather than dominated by nation states (Beal & Pinson 2014).

This paper engages with the critical issue of climate urban politics. It explores situating the cities in global environmental politics and potential of the collective response of cities to climate change. This paper will interrogate the key urban coalition networks that form the Global Mayors Compact (GMC). The purpose is to develop an understanding of how this collaboration of city networks will lead a new Global Mayor Compact and whether it represents progressive urban climate governance, or regressive narrow assertions of city power and governmentality. The framework for analysis of the climate city networks consists of three parts. Firstly, the paper begins with an account of the rise of transnational urban climate governance. This section also considers the political economy of climate transitions through the lead and most economically and political powerful urban climate network, C40. Secondly, the position of climate transition among leading urban climate networks within the GMC is articulated using a political economic approach. The regressive and progressive understandings of the potential of strategic urban climate networks and their climate transitions are articulated. Thirdly, the established positions of C40, ICLEI, and UCLG on climate transitions are critiqued through the lens of urban political ecology (UPE). Particular emphasis will be on the tensions, contradictions and divergences of the ideals of climate transition promoted by the major urban coalitions. An understanding of the key city climate networks positions of climate transition will provide some indication of whether the GMC offer realistic methods of engaging and deflecting complex, fast moving threats and disruptions at the planetary scale or whether maintaining the status quo of normalising political economy will again be further embedded.

### **Positioning cities critical sites for climate governance: transnational climate urban governance**

In the past two decades city climate change networks have evolved from municipal voluntarism (Bulkeley & Betsill 2013) to strategic urbanism – (Hodson and Marvin 2010, While et al. 2010) involving urban climate governance framed more within a mainstream economic issue. The shift from municipal voluntarism to strategic urbanism is reflective of the transnational climate change governance that is favoured by neoliberalism on two key accounts. The shift to multi-level governance, the blending of public and private spheres, and markets as a means of governance, the carbon economy (Body et al. 2011).

The marketisation of governance prevalent within solutions to environmental problems (Heynen et al. 2006; Mansfield 2008) means that the main actors are therefore well-practised in this organisational form and have transferred their experience to climate change. Examples of the reorganisation of state powers include: PPPs (Andonova 2010; Pattberg 2010); credit-rating agencies (Sinclair 2005); standard setting (Clapp 1998); and accountancy (Perry & Nolke 2006). Secondly, for the lattice of actors involved in transnational governance, the dominance of neoliberalism leads to the rationalities and modes of governance referred to as advanced liberal government (e.g. Miller & Rose 2008), meaning governance is situated within an audit culture and an audit society (Power 1999; Strathern 2000). It is a culture of constant measurement, monitoring and publicising by cities which have internalised neoliberal rules and norms. While the cities operate independently, they are operating within the dominant neoliberal governance regime (Bulkeley et al. 2014: 65).

Hodson & Marvin (2009) have additionally speculated that this new mode of urban governance – territorial world city governance in the case of the C40 – is in reality the action of a privileged cohort of large wealthy cities and their networks trying to save themselves and accidentally developing 'new forms of autarky based on bypassing national and regional infrastructure, leading to the development of new archipelagos of connected world cities'. These developments have led Hodson & Marvin to speculate about how material linkages will be provided between world cities and the new peripheries, and by who – national states or corporate capital?' (Hodson & Marvin, 2011, p. 13).

Simultaneously, constraints on resources are placing new pressures on cities to respond. But the fear for objective observers is the rise of insular neoliberal accumulation strategies by which city leaders attempt to safeguard the resources that underpin their economies, power and lifestyles. Key organizing principles like carbon neutrality, zero waste and energy independence will be intertwined, understood and subverted to promote an insular self-sufficiency. Resource flows will be rescaled to cities as they position themselves to their advantage as 'post-carbon urban enclaves' (Hodson and Marvin, 2011, 2012). 'underpin new forms of growth in relation to particular places' (Hodson & Marvin, 2010b, p. 110).

Debate is required about the capacity of city networks to offer realistic methods of engaging and deflecting complex, fast moving threats and disruptions at the planetary scale. Arguably, the rise of

such economically powerful and globally influential city networks as C40 actually intensifies the 'world at risk' (Beck 2009) because city coalitions threaten to shift our focus from the existing, underlying political economy at the root of the climate and other crises to a narrow focus on urban futures. It is important to understand the alternatives, a more universal solution, more concerned with a fair share equality of access, and less megacity-centric.

## **Methodology**

My discursive and documentary analysis aims to clarify and explain the current positions of key lead city climate networks that formed the Global Mayor Compact on political economy and climate transitions. I will review their policy documents on climate transition policy to ascertain their understanding and deployment of the concept. My interrogative frame is the political economy of climate transitions. It draws upon the political economy of climate transitions to identify key themes in the policy documents, including whether they reveal critical or uncritical deployment of dominant, i.e., conventional, climate transition constructions situated within neoliberalism or more progressive interpretations of the climate transition construct situated within critical social science such as UPE. UPE is my entry point into the current investigation and my lens for the analysis. After establishing the key lead city climate networks current positions on political economy and climate transitions, I critique their key constructs through the lens of UPE. This analysis reveals critical or uncritical deployment of the climate transitions construct.

## ***Interrogative framework***

My analysis deploys the political economic understanding of climate transitions to identify key themes in the key lead city network reports. The themes are based on key points of tension and contradiction between the two broadly different visions of climate transition:

1. Inclusive or exclusive urbanism
2. Critical or normalising political economy

Firstly, the focus on inclusive or exclusive urbanism, it is important to critique the criteria of inclusion in the context of progressive or regressive political economy of climate transition. An understanding of city climate network criteria for city inclusion/exclusion into the network is crucial as it represents the possibility of the pickings of the winners from losers for climate transitions across the internal and external borders.

The second theme, critical or normalising political economy, reflects the need to understand the current position on political economy and climate transition of key city networks with Global Mayor Compact. The economic emphasis in the contemporary discussion marginalises just socioecological conditions in our cities (Harvey 2012). Global cities however 'leave very destructive environmental footprints as their inhabitants reach out into markets around the world for material inputs to survive, but the transactions of this new political ecology also are the root causes of global ecological decline' (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003, p. 12).

The conventional commentary on climate transitions for sustainable cities is situated within neoliberal urbanism of which Glaeser (2011) refer to models such entrepreneurial city; and the marginalised political possibilities situated within radical interpretation like good cities (Gleeson 2010), right city (Harvey 2012) are advocated by UPE scholars.

## ***Theoretical framework***

The UPE diverges from the mainstream conventional approach to illuminate the uneven distribution of wealth in all its forms inherent in neoliberal urbanism (Swyngedouw & Heynen 2003). As Swyngedouw recently stated: 'Any political sequence is one that re-orders socio-ecological coordinates and patterns, reconfigures an even socio-ecological relations (while foreclosing others), often with unforeseen or unforeseeable consequences' (2014, p. 181).

UPE employs a more progressive alternative understanding of socioecological urbanisation, offering a view of human cultural history and a consciousness of power relations and their impact on human attitudes, aspirations and achievements. Positioned within this understanding, UPE offers a platform for the conceptualisation, debate and construction of socioenvironmental visions. 'A new political ecology reconceives the globe as a mosaic of lifeworlds, especially city regions, which see natural balance as a premise, not ambition, of human economy. Sufficiency replaces profusion as political economic impulse' (Gleeson 2014, p. 134).

## **Global Mayors Compact: Insight into key lead city climate networks**

Key policy documents are reviewed to establish positions of C40, ICLEI, and UCLG on climate transitions.

**ICLEI** (Local Governments for Sustainability, founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)

The ICLEI claims to be 'the world's leading network of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises committed to building a sustainable future' (ICLEI on-line). It is an inclusive network with a focus on local government, but includes associate (non-governmental organisations, universities and not-for-profit research institutions) and corporate partnerships (commercial, for-profit organizations, businesses, and corporations on a non-exclusive and voluntary basis).

The four stated goals of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCPC) are: (1) Strengthening local commitments to reduce urban emissions of GHG; (2) Disseminating planning and management tools to facilitate development of cost-effective CO<sub>2</sub> reduction policies; (3) Research and development of best practices, and development of model municipalities that lead by example; (4) Enhancing national and international ties so that municipal-level actions are included in national action plans and international deliberations (ICLEI, 1993b). The ICLEI considers networks as an actor trying to mobilise and persuade cities to work on climate protection.

The central position of the CCPC is that 'Cities and communities are where people live and hence are urgently threatened by climate changes' (ICLEI 1993c, p. 13). The motivation for the CCPC, in 1993, was the high levels of public acceptance of the greenhouse gas effect, which had not translated into (political) action (ICLEI 1993c, p. 29). Yet, the climate change protection issue is situated in a local context and threatens urban populations. As urban areas are a major source of GHGs, cities are a part of the problem (ICLEI 1993b, p. 1).

Nevertheless, the ICLEI positions cities as part of the *solution* since action to mitigate climate change depends on concerted local support by the people most affected (ICLEI 1995a; 1995b). Local government is critical in local action 'because they exercise key power over many activities which create sources and sinks of GHG emissions, such as decisions governing urban form; transportation; energy use, production and distribution; waste and waste-water management; and forest protection' (ICLEI cited in Lindseth 2004, p. 329).

Local government action on climate change is perceived by the ICLEI as offering benefits for cities, as well as tasks. The benefits are understood to be environmental and economic. The environmental benefits link solving global and local problems, for example better air quality and improvements in public health, and reductions in traffic congestion and greater urban liveability. Economic benefits include lower costs of municipal operations, and local job creation (ICLEI cited in Lindseth 2004).

Lindseth (2004) indicates that after a decade of CCPC inception there are numerous 'labelled' climate protection initiatives. He further observes that:

*CCPC is premised on the belief that local efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change will have cumulative effects contributing to global efforts to control GHG emissions. In this regard, CCPC has little to show for its work. Even if cities were to reduce emissions, it is clear that many emission reductions reported by CCPC communities were realised by including reductions from policies and programmes that existed prior to CCPC (Betsill, 2001). Europe, the US and Australia show only minor emissions reductions due to CCPC (p. 330).*

ICLEI has positioned climate change action within a co-benefit strategy. Scholars Betsill (2001) and Betsill and Bulkeley (2003) point out that by adopting this strategy, particularly focusing on energy efficiency, city administrators can repackage existing programs as climate initiatives, and limit actual climate change mitigation to activities that amount to business as usual. In 2000 Bulkeley reviewed the Australian experience and found that in order to encourage support for the climate change mitigation program, local governments emphasised the economic benefits gained from emissions reductions. These findings of the Australian experience concur with those in the US.

Slocum (2004) also agrees that the US experience of CCPC frames the problem as one of seeking win-win approaches to economic development and environmental protection, particularly when energy efficiency is involved. Betsill (2001) emphasises that 'ICLEI officials often emphasise co-benefits first,

and point to climate protection as a secondary consideration' (cited in Lindseth 2004, p. 332). Lindseth (2004, p. 333) notes that the 'CCPC's lack of results brings into question whether the co-benefit strategy has sufficient potential to reduce emissions'. Toly (2008: 350) concurs 'the CCP and its member cities most often frame the call to action in terms of co-benefits that primarily satisfy the demands of other competing first principles, thus legitimizing neoliberal ecopolitical principles and diluting the capacity for norm contestation'.

Moreover, Lindseth (2004) raises serious concerns about the CCPC framework for solving climate change locally by ad hoc local actors within a co-benefit strategy. The CCPC's publications do not discuss climate change as an overarching responsibility, nor do they stress that climate change should be an important local concern, and therefore provide no framework within which local actors can collectively respond.

The 2014 key agendas that are listed on the ICLEI website are as follows: sustainable city, resilient city, biodiverse city, low-carbon city, resource-efficient city, sustainable urban infrastructure city, green urban economy, and healthy and happy community. Resource-efficiency is positioned as 'goes beyond minimizing the use of natural resources, and is productive, competitive and sustainable' (ICLEI on-line). The statement is ambiguous. Regardless of how logical it may sound, protecting natural resources cannot be successfully subsumed into productivity, competitiveness and sustainability.

Smart-urban infrastructure in this context is considered to be the 'key to developing greener cities and economies'. Being inclusive is not explicit in this agenda for smart-urban infrastructure. The focus is on eco-efficiency, low carbon and efficiency. Nevertheless, the green urban economy is tacitly considered to encompass both productivity and social inclusion. The weightings and unknown trade-offs between the two attributes are not explicit. The emphasis on the environment in a green urban economy is also emphasised in a directive to 'use local natural resources responsibly, while minimizing future costs, environmental risks, and ecological damage' (ICLEI on-line).

The idea of a healthy and happy community in the ICILEI documents suggests movement beyond the traditional, and inappropriate, use of GDP growth as a measure of a nation's wellbeing, suggesting instead that there should be greater emphasis on cleanliness, wellbeing, inclusivity, peace and safety. Quality life and good governance, education, infrastructure and culture are all considered key components in a healthy and happy community. The conceptual frameworks originally embedded within ICLEI still have currency, however, and co-benefits are still incorporated into the agenda, particularly resource efficiency, and smart urban infrastructure, without a hint of the inherent issues their presence raises, if only because the terms have to be defined consensually to have meaning.

Tools and services developed and promoted within the CCPC framework show a bias towards liberal governance. There are a host of assessment and reporting tools that can be used to measure the success of the climate change interventions. The tools include:

- Standards, such as the STAR Community Index that provides a national standard for local governments in the United States to create, evaluate and revise sustainability plans.
- Self assessment, such as Local Authorities Self Assessment of Local Agenda 21 enables local governments evaluate processes and progress towards sustainable development.
- Account and reporting such as HEAT+ helps cities to account and report greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, develop an emissions forecast and climate action plan and Global Protocol for Community-Scale GHG Emissions is a framework for greenhouse gas emissions measurement and reporting processes for cities of all sizes and geographies, and allows them to plan and finance climate action.
- Monitoring and evaluation such as City Biodiversity Index that is designed specifically for monitoring and evaluating biodiversity in cities, and Communication, Education and Public Awareness Evaluation Tool Kit enables cities to evaluate, track and measure the effectiveness and impact of their communication, education and public awareness campaigns on local natural resource management.

#### **C40**

The C40 network excludes cities with a population of less than three million. Members must also be in the top 25 cities on earth as ranked by GDP, with purchasing-power parity (PPP), either currently or projected for 2025.

The two most significant reports published by the C40 both involve collaborations with private partners, CDP, AECOM and ARUP. *Wealthier, healthier cities* written by CDP in collaboration with the C40 and AECOM. AECOM conducted the analysis and information design for CDP, although the detail of what this involved is unclear. The *Climate action in megacities: C40 cities baseline and opportunities Vol 2.0* report is the most current report released by the C40. The report summarises the result of a survey of 63 C40 cities, so includes data from 94% of its members. The survey was undertaken by the C40 research team and supported by international consultancy firm, ARUP. This report is also understood by former President of the C40 Board of Directors, Bloomberg, as creating 'a roadmap that enables (the) cities to have an even greater impact through knowledge-transfer and collaboration' (C40 2014, p. 2).

The opening of the *Wealthier, healthier cities* was written by the CDP in collaboration with the C40 and AECOM. These groups argue that 'climate change action by local governments around the world is creating wealthier, healthier cities' (CDP 2013, p. 3), and that cities that engage in climate change action 'are saving money, creating more attractive investment environments, and enabling citizens to live healthier lives' (CDP 2013, p. 3).

These points of emphasis are reflected in the section titles of the report: *Driving efficiency and cost savings* (p.4); *Attracting new business and investment* (p.7); and *Building healthier cities* (p.12). The authors of the report maintain a firm belief that climate change action is beneficial for cities, stating that:

*The most frequently cited opportunity is the development of new businesses in the city—63% of cities report that they anticipate investment from businesses in new industries.....*

It adds:

*Nearly every reporting city this year understands that climate change action creates economic opportunities—a powerful rebuke to constituencies that associate climate action with economic harm.*

*Climate action in megacities: C40 cities baseline and opportunities Vol 2.0* report encompasses the Climate Action in Megacities Survey. It was a quantitative study of the efforts of the C40 cities to reduce GHG emissions and the actions taken to improve urban resilience to climate change. The survey measured the number of 'actions' each city had taken with regard to seven different sectors – transport, energy efficiency, energy supply, adaptation and water, waste management, finance and economic development, and sustainable communities.

The impact of the actions is not reported against each theme; for example, the reduction of greenhouse gases against the implementation of energy efficiency actions, which makes an assessment difficult. However, an advanced liberal governance is encouraged through the listing against actions of audits, advice, benchmarking and certification, concepts that are present in smart city and compact city concepts (C40 2014, 203).

The financial and economic sectors are nominated as the key arenas for future climate action as signalled by the significant number of actions related to economics, 62 percent, currently in the 'proposed' or 'pilot phase' (C40 2014, 8). The most commonly reported actions include green manufacturing and support for clean technology clusters. Urban green economies are encouraged by support from the city and through research and private sector partnering encouraged by the co-location of clean technology companies (C40 2014, 175). C40 members now have thriving finance and green growth sub-networks (C40 2014, 7) and the enthusiastic application of market mechanisms, such as trading and taxes, to environmental problems is common. Policy settings for green manufacturing encourage: loans; fiscal incentives; multilateral/bilateral climate funds; revolving funds; CDM/JI; bonds; city carbon trading scheme; and green mortgages (C40 2014, 177).

### ***United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)***

UCLG was founded in 2004. It represents over half of the world's population including over 1000 cities and regions, and 112 national associations. The aim of UCLG is:

*To be the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community. (UCLG on-line)*

UCLG has four categories of membership, which essentially include local or regional government and local or regional governments associations. Membership or associate membership in the International

Association of Local Governments is open to organisations which, though not themselves local government organisations, are strongly concerned with or involved in local government matters.

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the UCLG, a key outcome was the Mexico Declaration, which incorporated a manifesto entitled *The City of 2030* (2010). The key themes of this city are that it be democratic and self-governing; inclusive; a city with a vision for its future; a liveable city; a creative city; a city of culture; a cleaner, greener more compact city; the city of 2030- a shared responsibility of governance strengthened through cooperation with neighbouring municipalities; and a strong presence and role in the new global governance, for example, involved as full partner by the UN and wider international community, in all issues concerning the future of our cities and human settlements.

The manifesto suggests a strong commitment to a 'democratic city government and leadership, chosen by the people and accountable to them'. It encourages a 'representative democracy' and makes a commitment to the common good:

*city governments must, through active participation, design and implement powerful policies for social cohesion, based on democratic values, on gender equality, human rights, and the people's 'right to the city' (UCLG 2010: 2).*

Emphasis is on the provision of public services and a city without slums.

The city requires a clear vision: 'It has a clear outward- looking strategic vision, based on an accurate diagnosis of its potential and its resources, and a plan of action to make it a reality. The vision and the plan are developed and implemented in partnership with the citizens, as well as the public and private partners' (UCLG 2010, p. 2).

Creativity linked to economic social life and development. Mobility linked to equal access to the city. Liveability and mobility, together with a supportive network of local relationships, are closely linked to economic competitiveness'. (UCLG 2010, p. 3). A city fit for work is understood to 'favouring a climate of enterprise for businesses of all sizes, and offering decent jobs'. 'The city will give priority to energy efficiency, to renewable energies and non-polluting technologies' (UCLG 2010, p. 4).

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The Global Mayor Compact is led by three key city networks. In understanding how this collaboration of city networks will lead a new Global Mayor Compact, the position of each of the leading climate transitions needs to be understood. The convergences and divergences require articulation and discussion.

### ***Inclusive or exclusive urbanism***

The C40 is the newest city network and is quickly growing in strength and influence. Importantly, economically powerful mega cities are a part of this network. The C40 is the only exclusive city climate network, excluding cities based on GDP growth and population city size. The UCLG and ICLEI focus primarily on local governments, but both have inclusion categories that allow them to incorporate other interested parties both public and private.

The C40 uses GDP as a criterion for inclusion in the political network organised for climate response. Such traditional economic indicators are normally the subject of critique, environmental analysis and advocacy as being an inadequate measure of any phenomenon except the market value of the aggregate of all goods and services produced in a country in a given period of time. Beck (2012) earlier noted that 'we must break open the misleading framework which focuses narrowly on 'gross national product' or 'per capita income' into which the problem of inequality is usually forced' (Beck 2012, p. 148-149). More so Costanza et al (2014) have recently noted the chance to overthrow GDP as the pre-eminent measure of a country's wellbeing is now in sight. The opportunity has arisen through the scheduling of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2015, a set of international objectives to improve global well-being.

### ***Critical or normalising political economy***

Among the three leading city networks belonging to the Global Mayors Compact, tensions, contradictions and divergences can be observed. C40 climate transition is deeply influenced by neoliberal urbanism, while ICLEI and UCLG, although basically inclined to neoliberal views and interpretations, do diverge somewhat from the C40 climate transitions.

C40 positions climate transition in an urban governance framework within economic development. This framework is assigned some key attributes: driving efficiency and cost savings; attracting new

business and investment; and building healthier cities. Climate change co-benefits are promoted as 'good for the environment and equally good for business'. C40 supports an audit culture, as is evident by the fact the group has developed a second *Climate action in megacities: C40 cities baseline and opportunities Vol 2.0* report. The audit culture favours the modes of advanced liberal government and certification benchmarking of climate change mitigation and adaptation practices would be a logical process within the context of this mode of governance.

The outcome of this report is referred to as a 'road map' by Bloomberg, past influential president of the C40, which in turn provides a framework for the internalising of rules and norms, in this case re-confirmation of neoliberal urbanism (C40 2014). Cities within the C40 operate independently, but they are operating within a dominant neoliberal governance regime, and the city network is favouring and further embedding neoliberal norms into these individual cities. The C40 is an illustration of the new urban climate governance that is characterised by the shaping and blending of public and private authority. The C40 has numerous partnerships with leading consultancy firms and other corporates, including Microsoft.

The ICLEI concurs with the C40 in part, but does diverge from neoliberal urbanism in critical features. The ICLEI, for example, espouses co-benefits, the linking of green economic growth with environmental outcome. Moreso, many of the tools developed by the ICLEI favour advanced liberal governance, with an emphasis on monitoring, accounting, and certification. ICLEI does however emphasize social inclusivity in a green urban economy, and a healthy and happy community, particularly with its indication that GDP is an inappropriate key measurement.

The UCLG is the most progressive of the city networks. Within the 2030 manifesto there are many progressive themes which indicate a divergence from a liberal managerial approach. These include: representative democracy committed to active participation, social inclusion, strong emphasis on the provision of public services and the people's 'rights to the city'. There is also, however, the typical neoliberal support for linking liveability and mobility to economic competitiveness, and support for business enterprises is a mainstay of city governance. Priority is given to technocratic solutions to problems such as energy efficiency and green technologies.

Even with recognition from key international organisations, including the IPCC, who are collectively arguing for a new framework for global governance, in particular progressive urban governance, it is disappointing that the Global Mayor Compact city networks have made little progress in the formation of strategies that will deliver more democratic urban environmental politics. The UCLG is the most promising network situated within the three lead organisations of GMC, but still displays overtones of neoliberalism. Continuing support from particularly the C40 to neoliberal market democracy does not encourage active democratic citizenship. Democratic citizenship requires challenging the familiar political economy. More must be done to control the production of greenhouse gas emissions and respond to a changing climate than can be accomplished by measuring emission reduction in terms of economic impact.

Moreover, the Global Mayor Compact further contributes to an ever more complex political economy of climate change intertwined further into neoliberal accumulation strategies including organising principles of sustainable development, smart cities, carbon control, self sufficiency, exclusive world mega-cities climate networks and so on. The deployment of new norms are not explicit in the key lead city climate networks, therefore it is unlikely that the Global Mayor Compact will deligitimize neo-liberal eco-politics and to advance a progressive environmental agenda. Swyngedouw (2014 online) recently again called for the 'politicizing of environments' but noted a requirement to 'the violence of the sustainable city' with the aim too violate genuine sustainability. He is emphasising the inherent contestation and disagreement in urban socio-natural configurations, and that should not be legitimized 'through an externalized legitimation that resides in a fantasy of Nature or Sustainability' (Swyngedouw 2014-on-line). As strategic urban climate networks continue to evolve it demands a critical examination of the political economies and political ecologies of such processes and in particular their implications for issues of social and environmental justices. Continuous debate is therefore required about the capacity of city networks that situate cities in global environmental politics and their potential of the collective response of cities to climate change.

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