

Johnson, C., Toly, N. and Schroeder, H. (eds.): **The Urban Climate Challenge: Rethinking the Role of Cities in the Global Climate Regime** (Cities and Global Governance). London–New York, Routledge, 2015. 258 p.

Urbanisation is a hot topic: the urban population has already exceeded the world's rural population for the first time in our history, and the number and ratio of people living in cities are projected to increase further. This growth is mostly expected to occur in the developing world. The increase of urban population is accompanied with the increasing demand for clean air, water, land, and other essential services. As cities are major emitters of greenhouse gases (GHGs), mitigation, adaptation, and sustainability of cities have also become pressing global priorities.

The volume is built up from five parts and includes 12 chapters in total, bringing together articles written by researchers working on climate change, sustainability, global governance, and political science. The case studies were carried out with the contribution of acknowledged local experts from North America, Latin America and India. Chapter 9 and 11 are freely available as Open Access PDF from the publisher. The book is part of the current Routledge series 'Cities

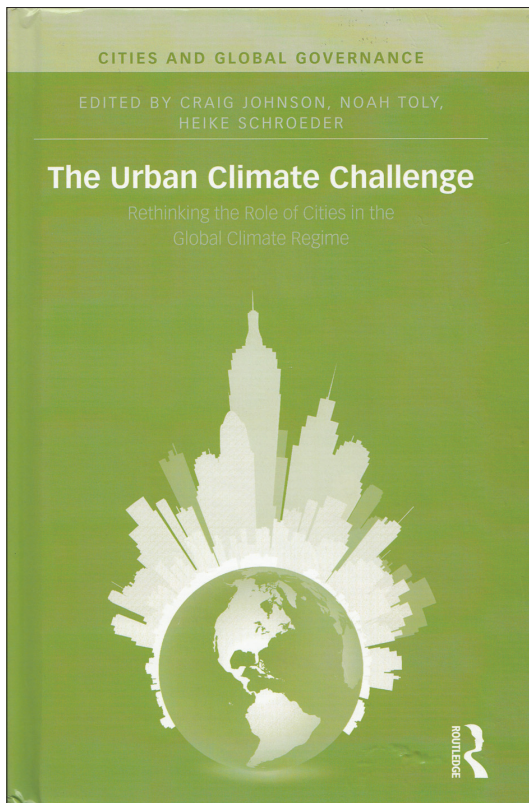
and Global Governance', launched in 2014, which makes an attempt to describe the role and influence of the city in global governance.

The book focuses on the following questions from theoretical, geographical, and political perspectives: How are cities incorporating climate change into urban planning and policy? What is the impact of international climate change norms on urban and national climate policies? How cities and urban networks are positioned in global climate governance politics? What are the implications for the study of international relations and global climate governance?

Part 1 explores the theoretical dimensions of urban and global climate governance Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the book, written by the editors. They formulate the importance of the urban climate challenge, review recent state of the role of cities in climate governance, then guide the reader through the content of the book.

Saskia SASSEN argues in Chapter 2 for bringing cities into the global climate network. Even though global governance regimes as Kyoto Protocol or the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change do not include cities, they are on the stage – as goals on this scale are more easily achievable than on the global scale. Cities are part of the problem, but can be part of the solution, too, as they can set more ambitious goals than national governments due to their practical engagement. The author sketches the strategy to maximise urban capacities, use science and technology to transform negative links into positive ones between cities and biosphere, and implement environmental measures that engage the legal system and profit logics to achieve advances towards environmental sustainability.

Chapter 3 focuses on cities as systems, and articulates why it can be misleading to build cities from scratch instead of re-thinking our existing systems. In her opinion, a paradigm shift is needed, a transition from 'open' to 'closed' resource flows, together with an other from 'closed' to 'open' urban space governance. The chapter introduces interactions in cities as complex adaptive systems, and discusses what happens if the equilibrium between production and consumption is disturbed. After presenting the complexity of the city, two structures of sets, the 'tree' and the 'semi-lattice' are shown, and the disadvantages of tree-like structures in urban systems are discussed. The difference between the two is in the number and position of connections. In the tree structure no overlap occurs, while the semi-lattice represents a more complex, ambiguous



structure, which is more natural, and thought to be more resistant for harmful events. Therefore, in semi-lattice structures there are much more connections between people, and between different parts of the city as well. Consequently, the amount and size of isolated neighbourhoods, which exist independently from their surroundings and where people live, work and shop in a somewhat artificial and closed circle, is much smaller. It is a well-explained and interesting chapter even for the layperson, and makes the reader think about sustainability of cities and relevance of the ready-made eco-city gigaprojects.

Part 2 looks at cities as parts of international networks. Chapter 4 describes the history and improvement in city-climate governance since the early 1990s, the first and second wave of transnational city networks, like ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) and C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. The latter is the main focus of the chapter. These networks put climate change on the local agenda, try to engage the municipalities with the issue of sustainability, and held regular summits to exchange experience. The authors explain the discursive, tactical, and organizational strategies of legitimation at the cities' disposal.

Chapter 5 considers the interactions between cities and multinational companies (MNCs) from the climate governance perspective. As cities are competing to become the most eco-friendly, sustainable, climate proof etc., but sometimes lack knowledge how to achieve that, MNCs happen to advise or assess climate policies (e.g. from creating solutions in transport to reduce carbon footprint). But they do so on a purely market-based approach. The chapter therefore critically examines the link between the two parties, and ask the question, if 'techno-fixes' will make cities more sustainable. The answer is probably no, as without questioning the way of living it just exports the pollution and emission elsewhere, since it treats the symptoms, not the causes. On the other hand, these actions can help in raising awareness, or increase efficiency, but one has to be careful to set up long term, city-wide, or even global goals to achieve a climate friendly city and sustainable lifestyle for its citizens.

Part 3 turns to the national level, comparing the ways in which interactions with national policy institutions have influenced governance processes and outcomes in different urban policy settings in Brazil, Canada, India and the USA.

Chapter 6 provides the example of São Paulo's efforts to reduce GHG emissions, adapt and mitigate climate change since 2005. Transnational activity was key to introduce the issue of climate change at the local level (which made São Paulo one of the first cities in the world to address climate change), but lost its importance at the implementation stage of the climate change policy due to the discrepancy between local and national level policies and interests.

Chapter 7 shows a case study for four cities in British Columbia, Canada. In the chapter the authors state that the difference between adaptation and mitigation is over-emphasised, as integrating them into a broader sustainability framework could have been the way to 'change our lens'. Instead of considering responding to climate change a stressor only, we could start to look at it as an opportunity to improve our environment. The four selected cities represent a diverse sample on the spectrum of responses and levels of integration in community climate change planning. The work reveals that an integrated sustainability approach is prevalent amongst 'leading' communities, which can help optimising efforts to reach both climate targets and local political priorities.

Chapter 8 is about adaptation in Mumbai, India, to the reoccurring flood events. It can be clearly seen that climate change governance is still an issue for the national elite, where the challenges of adaptation are exacerbated by the viewpoint on historical responsibility, by inequality, lack of resources, and of administrative origin (i.e. infrastructural deficiencies, waste management problems). Further analysis is needed therefore to foster adaptation, and help the municipality and the government to find access to international 'adaptation funds'.

Chapter 9 describes the case study of Portland, Oregon, thus, how a logging town has transformed into a successful leader in urban responses to climate change since the early 1990s. Aylett's analysis shows that significant systemic transformations (e.g. changing the focus from technocratic to holistic, replacing isolated agencies by collaborative ones, capitalising on the synergies between different groups of actors or subject areas, like emission reduction and health) in the municipal structures could make this happen, and that building internal networks within departments is an effective strategy in governance.

Part 4 offers a regional and comparative perspective on the politics of urban climate governance (p. 17.). It looks at urban responses in Latin America and East Africa. Chapter 10 and 11 show the differences and similarities between cities of the 'Global South'. Some problems they face are the fragmented institutional structures, the lack of power, budget, and human resources in defining climate issues and response strategies, and the fact that scientific information is sometimes disconnected from needs, therefore, it has little contribution to policy-making. When urban population growth and economic growth are disconnected, it creates another source of tension. However, there are some success stories as well, as some of these cities are acting and has a willingness to act to respond climate change.

The final section concludes with a chapter from the editors to highlight the central topics of the book and identifies the direction for future research. At the end of the book one can find the biography of

its authors, and an index which makes it easier to look for definitions or concepts covered inside. The importance of the book is emphasised by the fact that although it was released only a bit more than a year ago, it is already cited in the literature. The chain of chapters appearing in the volume gives the reader a wide spectrum of climate governance issues. Some main ideas are repeated in the introductory part of different chapters, with different focal points and slightly different opinions, however, as they could stand as independent papers, it is not distracting at this level.

After an overall assessment the book discusses the current state of climate policy around the world, which helps the readers put into context their own experiences, and helps to avoid administrative and political mistakes or failures (including never-realised plans and disintegrated institutional systems) already explained in the literature. The diversity of the displayed cities helps to understand both the different and common challenges they are facing with. This

makes it a useful reading for scholars from Central and Eastern Europe despite the fact that no European example is discussed in the volume. The book will be of interest to scholars and practitioners of urban climate policy, global environmental governance and climate change. Adaptation, mitigation and sustainability issues are present in the urban climate change literature. This volume puts them in a different context and shows these topics from a political and social science perspective, in the practical chapters using mostly the interview method. I found it interesting to see, how the results of science can, or in some cases cannot, get incorporated into the decision-making processes.

The book is written in meticulous scientific language. At the end of each chapter one can find the notes and bibliography, which helps the reader to navigate through the related literature. It is accessible for a broad public, as not only the hardcover, but an electronic version is available for a moderate price.

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