Department
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Double Degree in International Affairs with Sciences Po Bordeaux

Course of Global History and International Relations

Within or Beyond: The City in a World of States

Making Sense of the Role of Cities in International Relations through the Study of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

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"Il y aura toujours, pour les historiens et pour toutes les autres sciences de l'homme, et pour toutes les sciences objectives, une Amérique à découvrir"

// "There will always be, for historians and for any field of science, an America to discover"

-Fernand Braudel, La dynamique du capitalisme (1985, p.107)

-To my mother, without whom I probably wouldn't have had the courage and patience I've had in the past six years.

-And to all the passionate Professors who taught me and made me realize that sometimes the question is more important than the answer.

Abstract

What if mayors ruled the world ? Today, cities around the world aspire to gain a seat at the table of international politics. This momentum is illustrated by the increasing interests in notions such as "city diplomacy", "urban governance" and "city networks". In the urban moment, the city is finding its way onto international relations to make the local agenda a crucial concern for global politics. Cities and local actors' involvements in international politics have profound explanations, both relating to the changing place of the city and the changing parameters of the international system. By asking the simple question "Within or Beyond ?" this thesis aims at making sense of city power in a world of states by situating local actors in the international system. In a world defined by urbanity, does the city have a right to power on the international stage, and if so under what conditions ? The "glocal governance" that unfolds with the new practices of city diplomacy is the focus of this analysis. This thesis argues that city diplomacy is both a product and an agent of a contingent process that redistributed the roles and responsibilities across the international system. As a result, the city, in a world of states, does not represent an ontological threat to the international system, but rather a legitimation of it through the dissemination of its standards of governmentality.

Introduction

On June 1, 2017, then President of the United States Donald Trump delivered on one of his promises as candidate: to withdraw his country from the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015 after the COP 21 negotiations. Taking aback the 195 signatory states, President Trump jeopardize the fate of the world's most ambitious agreement on climate action, one which sought to limit the rise of global average temperatures below 2 degree celsius, in an attempt to limit the potential consequences of climate change on human life. Donald Trump's rhetoric of "America First" was embedded in realism: if international politics is a zero-sum game then he had no interest in defending what wouldn't benefit directly his country. The US, as the President argued, was not responsible to the city of Paris, but to its citizens, the ones of "Youngstown, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania" (The Guardian 2017). Power politics had ceiled the US's withdrawal from an unprecedented, and perhaps urgent, accord for the fight against climate change. After all, "international politics are always power politics" (Carr 1946, p. 102).

The state-led narrative pursued by the US administration could have put the environment at the back of the line of the country's preoccupations - after all, the decision made on June 1st was just one example in a long list of President Trump's skeptic actions in regards to climate change. But on June 2nd, 2017, a coalition of US cities led by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement (Los Angeles Times 2017), picking up on what their Head of State had just gave up on. A new moment in the evolution of urban autonomy was unfolding, one in which the cities Donald Trump built his rhetoric on turned away from him. In the days that followed the June 1st announcement of withdrawal, more than 160 US Mayors promised to honor the Paris Accord through regulations, infrastructure plans and emissions targets. Among these cities were Los Angeles, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Houston, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington D.C. And although, US Mayors couldn't sign onto the Paris Climate Agreement - as only Heads of States can formally do that - they stated their commitment as shadow participants. The ambitions of US Mayors did not stop there, on the contrary. In 2019, they reached out directly to the UN to take part in ongoing climate talks (The Guardian 2019). These American cities, by attempting to reach above their traditional powers, exemplified a new era of cities' international actions. And far from being an isolated case, this episode shed light on a new mantra in international relations: "while nations talk, cities act" (Gordon 2020, p.3).

What if mayors ruled the world ? With a bold question, Richard Florida (2012) grasped the zeitgeist of a time in which global challenges, national gridlocks and urban opportunities overlap. In a world defined by urbanity, in which 4.1 billion people live in metropolitan areas (Ritchie et al 2019, online) and in which 70% of economic output is concentrated in cities, city power might not just be "a stretch of the imagination" (Zoellick in Acuto 2013, p.835). Cities are in fact the new "Wealth of Nations" (Jacobs, 1984). As cities have become the central cradle of an urban common good, it is safe to assume that the local scale represents a new legitimate site of action. In fact, contemporary challenges are rooted in cities, and climate change, economic inequalities and social injustices are just a few examples of what is at stake in the new tragedy of the urban commons. There is, nonetheless, a specific frame in which "glocal" (Chan 2016) actions prosper. The traditional dichotomy that divides the field of International Relations between high and low politics would without a doubt place the city in the latter section. However, contemporary global politics has emphasized the growing blur between between the two categories and, more importantly, the intertwinement that characterize them. Although cities do not wage war, their ability to take part and influence international affairs through different channels urges a new critical thinking. By questioning the classical frame of International Relations, envisioning local power as a potential for global action pushes us to "see like a city" (Acuto 2013), thereby distancing from the unquestioned lens of the state.

The backlash that occurred in 2017 and that saw US Mayors confront President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Accord Agreement, and successively reach out to the UN as the standard bearers of US's climate initiative, is a perfect evidence of a willingness of local actors to take affirmative action on the global stage. By distancing themselves from their federal government, these local officials took part in a clear example of city diplomacy by representing themselves and their interests on an international political scale (Pluijm et al. 2007). The 21st century city, it appears, is emerging as a new strategic site of International Relations. By attempting to take part in debates around environmental protection, economic development, social inclusion and infrastructure-building, cities around the world champion an alternative way of conducting international politics. Enshrined in pragmatism, discussions, networks, and turning away from the sterile national confrontations and intergovernmental gridlocks, local actors embrace the mantra that was illustrated by US cities facing President Trump's decision: "while nations talk, cities act" (Gordon 2020, p.3).

Furthermore, in the contemporary urban moment, cities are empowered by profound changes that fuel their willingness to take stances. In fact, not only does city diplomacy highlights a new distribution of international initiatives, it also sheds lights on the changing place of cities in regards to their political, economic and social influence. Enshrined in a shift of economic paradigms and political practices, cities became part of a wider transformation of "societalization" (Jessop in Pinson 2020, p.163). There is, in fact, a prerequisite to city diplomacy which takes root in a historical development that has reshaped the "image of the city" (Frug 1980). The study of the *longue durée* allows to acknowledge the moving place of cities in global history. From the 18th century onwards, cities have gone through profound evolutions that conditioned their potential of power. The new phase of city diplomacy cannot be understood outside of this historical process.

However, despite clear evidence of profound changes, cities remain "the elephants in the room" (Acuto 2013). Yet, far from being an anomaly, the growing involvement of cities in global affairs underlines the moving frontiers of international relations. This redistribution of roles within the international society questions the "methodological nationalism" (Conrad 2017, p.3) too often assigned to the field of International Relations. By recalling profound trends of city diplomacy, from the Greek city-states to the medieval Hanseatic League, the contemporary involvement of local actors underlines that the world of international relations is socially constituted and thus prone to changes (Bull 1977, Wendt 1992). In this perspective, the study of city diplomacy is not just crucial to frame the new potential of local actors, it is also pivotal for what it reveals of the state of international relations. Far from living a 'Westphalian moment' that would redistribute roles and identities, it appears that city diplomacy reveals the underlying principles of our international system, and more specifically how international actors "govern others and themselves" (Lascoumes 2004). In this regard, not only is there a place for the city in global politics, and there is also a certain practice of International Relations enshrined in local actors. Through this lens, theorizing city power in regards to the academic field paves the way for broader systemic questionings on how actors are legitimized and through which mechanisms they frame their power of governance. Questioning where do cities fit in a world of states brings valuable insights on how international politics is conducted in a world of multi-scalar challenges.

By asking the simple question "Within or Beyond ?" this thesis aims at making sense of city power in a world of states by situating it in the broader international system. This work questions the place of the city at a time when initiatives of city diplomacy bring new potentials and implications to

international relations. In a world of states, how to make sense of the role of the city in international relations ? If cities are to have a role in the global challenges of the 21st century, then their ambitions, actions, strategies and relations to international politics should be carefully analyzed. Rather than taking the city as a powerless entity (Frug 1980), it attempts to deconstruct what the growing involvement of cities implies for the discipline of International Relations. In order to conduct this analysis, this thesis uses the theoretical lenses and historical evidences brought forward by International Relations, but also Global History, Urban Sociology and Critical Geography. The mix of these fields of social sciences is deemed essential in order to make sense of the city, a unit that has been understudied and thus underestimated in a world of states.

The first chapter seeks to make sense of the ongoing urban moment and deconstruct the changing values and identities of local actors. After discussing the subordination of cities in the 18th century, it highlights the redefinition of the city's limits in the face of changing economic and political dynamics and pressing urban challenges. The second part of this study will dive into the values and practices of city diplomacy to claim that it is essentially an agent of global governance by other means - local means, one could say. It discusses the history of city diplomacy in order to define how local actors construct their values and interests in relation to the broader international system. A final chapter will analyze the climate urban governance of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a city network created in 2005 and composed of almost a hundred international cities with the aim of redefining governance and bring urban actions at the center of the global stage. This case study will allow to verify the place of city diplomacy in regards to the international system.

This thesis will argue that the place of the city in a world of states has been fundamentally altered in the past four decades. Fueled by economic and political changes, the values and identities of local actors were reshaped to instill new ambitions for local actors. Enshrined in post-Fordism, the crisis of Statism and the urgency of urban challenges, cities were given a new role in the conduct of international politics. Nonetheless, cities abide by a code of conduct they do not define. The practice of city diplomacy is rooted in a modern technique of government enshrined in state management, what the Foucauldian tradition coins as "governmentality". Although city diplomacy brought new promises of change in a world of urging challenges, it emerged embedded in a hegemonic discourse that conditioned its potential of action. As a result, the city's involvement in global politics does not represent an ontological threat to the international system, but rather a legitimation of it through the dissemination of governmentality. Rather than contesting the status-

quo, the city became an agent of a world order defined by heterarchy and predefined standards of government. Despite hopes of moving beyond the existing parameters of international relations, the city fits neatly within a world of states.

Chapter I: Making Sense of the Urban Moment

The 18th century marked the start of a new urban revolution (see Graph 1) of which consequences are still being felt to this day: Europe - and then successively the world - was getting urbanized. In the midst of this process, our relations to space and its politics changed. Deconstructing what makes the territoriality of our world is crucial in order to put into perspective what role the city holds in the international system. Our urban moment is enshrined in a long term process that cannot be separated from the growing aspirations of cities to take part in international relations.
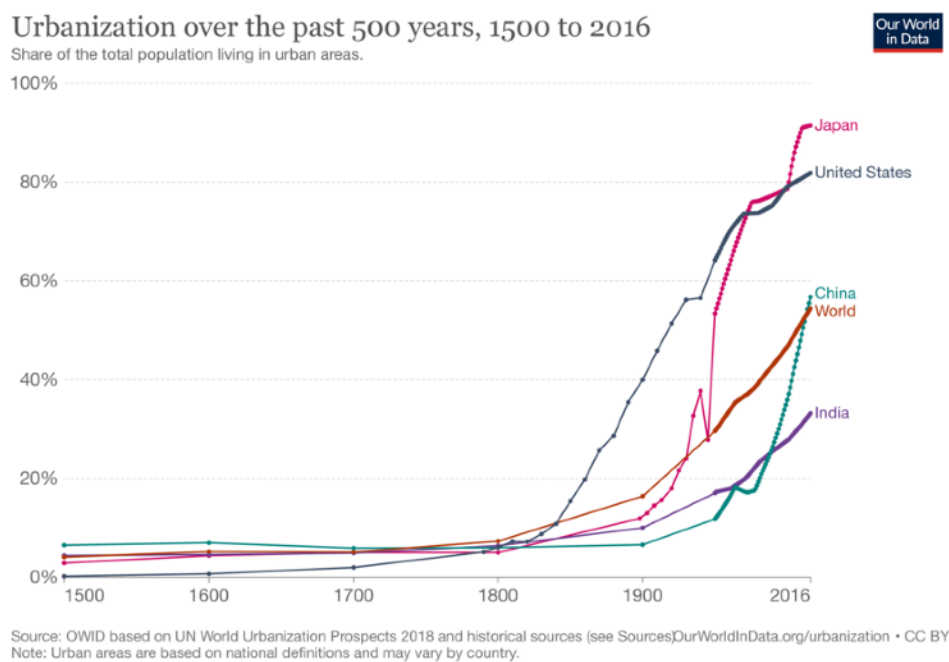
Source: Ritchie et al. 2019, online

In the tryptic of "economics-politics-space" (Pinson 2020, p.210), the latter has often been understudied. In fact, the study of space and the spatiality of power remains marginalized. Of course there is the central assumption that since the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 we live in a state system of sovereign territorial entities. But too often this historiography is taken for granted, "as an iron grid that exercises a transcendent despotism over reality" (Young cited in Alger 1990, p.494). A collateral damage of this marginalization of space and the ramifications of this "methodological nationalism" (Conrad 2017, p.3) is social science's weakness to define the city as something other than a mere "established part of liberal social thought" (Frug 1980, p.1120). In fact, the gap between how cities are represented in social sciences and their actual place in the history of human

settlements is as wide as our inability to grasp the reality of the urban world unfolding in front of our eyes.

Successive urban revolutions have shaped our relations to space, from the development of the first cities in Mesopotamia four millenniums B.C, to the burst of the medieval town and the following birth of the industrial revolution (Stébé 2018), the city has become the cradle of human life. By 2050, estimates stress that 68% of the world population will live in urban areas (Ritchie et al 2019, online). We, as a civilization, now live in an urban culture. Deconstructing, and extensively politicizing, what the city represents in the Anthropocene has a fundamental relevance in a world defined by its urbanity. It is also paramount to understand the extent of city power as the number of cities above 500,000 inhabitants continues to grow and their spatial distribution goes beyond the traditional North/South divide (see Map 1). It is also crucial as streets have regained their place as public spaces in the sense that Jurgen Habermas intended them - among examples we find Occupy Wall Street in New York, Movimiento 15-M in Spain, Tahir Square in Cairo, all occurring in 2011. To understand that the city is finding a new momentum as a site of power is to understand that there is new ground to study.

City ranking
- Medium-sized city (between 533000 and 1 million people)
- Large city (between 1 and 5 million people)
- Metropolis (between 5 and 10 million people)
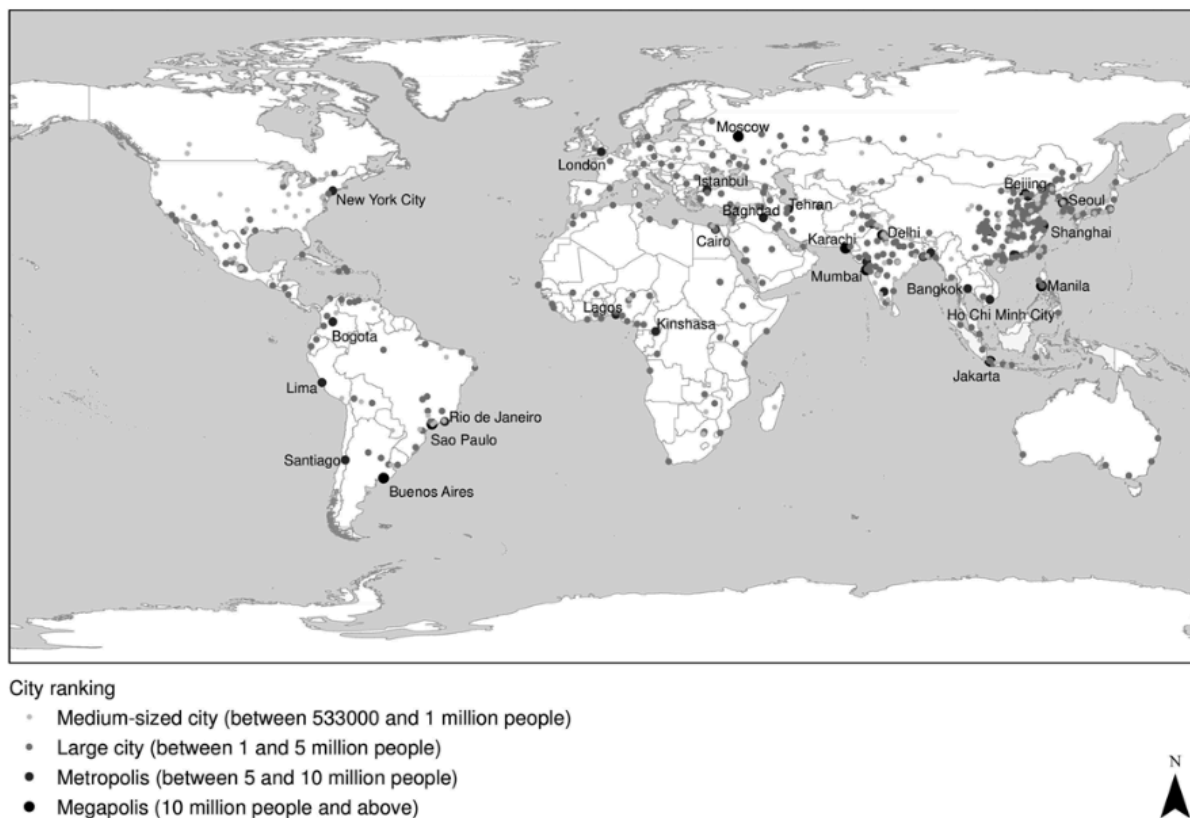- Megapolis (10 million people and above)

N

Fig. 1.1 The spatial distribution of city ranking worldwide (based on www.citymayors.com, largest cities, 2011)

Source: Gupta et al. 2015, p.8

But before diving into the potentials and implications of city power it is essential to define what is meant by city. The task of defining what a city is faces a challenge summarized by Le Galès: "any study of cities must steer a course between the Scylla of representing the city as a separate unit, thus risking reification, and the Charybdis of showing it to be infinitely diverse and complex" (cited in Acuto 2013, p.65). Thus, understanding the city as a conceptual tool means situating it in a world of interrelations with different actors that influence its conduct, while not denying its room for actions - an approach that echoes the figurational and process sociology of Norbert Elias (Curtis 2011).

The urban ecosystem is itself heterogeneous, thereby creating different ways of living the urban. There remains a plurality of cities around the world: metropolis, megalopolis, megacities, towns, etc. The uneven distribution of urban power reflects a broader uneven distribution of economic and political power. Two thousands billionaires around the world are gathered in just a few countries and the top 20 cities in which they live control 2.5 trillion of dollars, the equivalent of the GDP of Germany (Florida 2016). But rather, the focus of this analysis is the ongoing urban moment that created new opportunities for cities around the world, notwithstanding the disparities and inequalities among them. Hence the need to define the fundamental characteristics of the contemporary city as an ideal-type.

Despite various denominations, cities around the world share specific characteristics. What is revealing is that most definitions of city bear uncontested and preconceived ideas that highlight how the city is entangled in political and economic systems. UN Habitat, a program of the United Nations that takes on urban challenges, defines the city through a "functional lens" that takes two components into consideration: first, the city is defined by its "urban extent", in other words, its actual urbanized space; second, it defines the city by its "degree of urbanization", analyzing the share of people living in a single "administrative unit" (UN Habitat 2020). And when the city is not addressed through statistical means, it is often defined as a scale of governance between a government and those governed (Frug 1980). This definition of the city as administrative scale is found throughout the world: US, Egypt, India, and so on. In this perspective, the city is an "internal governmental structure", a mere "creature of the state" (Frug 1980, p.1059). The city is a manager of space and of those who live in it, providing services and seeking an optimal distribution of resources under the sovereignty of the state. The definitions proposed here are symptomatic of a techno-scientific account of the city (Katsikis 2014) that denies the plurality of cities throughout history and bring misleading simplifications (Clark 2013).

In fact, there is no consensus on what makes a city. One understanding that is essential to the conduct of this analysis is to acknowledge both the material aspect of the city and its changing aspect throughout history, in other words both its materiality and its immateriality at the same time. Urban sociologist Manuel Castells defines the city as "what a historical society decides a city will be" (cited in Southall 1998, p.). The city is thus the social meaning attributed to a particular form of spatial distribution by a historically defined society (Southall 1998). To reprise Alexander Wendt (1992), a city is what a society makes of it. In a similar way, Lefebvre distinguishes *habitat* and *habiter* (cited in Stébé 2018, p.12). While the former is similar to the bureaucratic and institutional definition brought about by organizations such as UN Habitat, the latter underlines the social dynamics of the city. The city is both crystalized by its material morphology and shaped by the social nods that take place within it. This definition is essential in order to understand how the city, beyond being a managed territory, is also a unit of social life and thus subject to changes (Wilson 2020).

The third urban revolution that started in the 18th century reconfigured the city as a strategic site and a body politic (Isin 2007), in other words, a legitimate political entity. What allows to consider the new powers of the city in the 21st century are the dynamics that unravelled throughout the 20th century. Cities are "*transformateurs électriques*" (Braudel cited in Southall 1998, p.348), epicenters of the changes that have affected our societies. And it is their plasticity that allowed them to remain central despite fundamental alterations. The city houses a double phenomenon of "implosion/ destruction" (Lefebvre 1970, Brenner 2014), two mutually reclusive phenomenon that shape and reshape cities as the world changes. The hypothesis is simple: the prerequisite for cities to gain power was a new social meaning attributed to the city. This changing image of the city is the focus of this section.

1.1 A Question of Scale: The City in a System of States

Looking back on the successive urban revolutions that changed our relations to human settlements, it was the 18th century reshuffling of space that opened a new way for the place of cities. This century of "divergence" (Pomeranz 2000) fundamentally altered the political, economic and social world through successive phases of state-building, ongoing industrial revolution and Western imperialism. In the middle of this, the city's place was changed, altering the social meaning attributed to it in the process (Castells in Southall 1998). The European continent was its epicenter,

and the new image of the city was then either exported through colonization or copied under competition. Understanding the factors that led to the evolution of the place of cities from the 18th century onwards is crucial in order to put contemporary changes into perspective. In fact, only the *longue durée* can shed light on the integrative process that have shaped and reconfigured societies. The argument that is advocated here is that crucial changes did not happen *to* cities but *through* cities. It is within the walls of cities that identities were forged, that the state was cemented, that capitalism thrived. As a result, the city was both an agent of change and a victim of it. Therein lies the concept of the "dependent city" (Kantor 1987), where dynamics such as market system and intergovernmental relations profoundly shape city politics.

A) Domesticating the City

We have come to live in a world of nation-states around which all interactions are constructed (Wendt 1987) and in which theory and history have reified them in a "memory of the nation" (Nora cited in Coulomb 2010, p.12). The thesis of the monopoly of the state (Weber 1919) argues that the state domesticated the city. But this narrative has overshadowed the role that cities have played in the construction of such a world-view. Braudel (cited in Alger 1990) put an emphasis on localities, urging how their everyday practices of politics has been the backbone of political, economic and social life. Far from being empty black boxes, cities have been stepping stones.

Under this new understanding of relations between the state and the city a new image was depicted. As the state became an established object of liberal social thought, embodied in the ideas of contractualists such as Locke, Rousseau and Hobbes, cities followed suit. In Gerald Frug's study of the early English Modern town and the early American city, we come to understand the progressive shift from the autonomy of medieval towns to the new depiction of the city "as a creature of the state" (1980, p.1059). In England, until the 19th century, cities enjoyed sufficient political and economic independence under legal Charters, giving sufficient autonomy to local merchants and elites to prosper. But the growing suspicion of the King and the rapid changes of the industrial era urged the national government to abrogate Charters and thus impose the command of the state to cities. In the newly born United States, the Lockean logic of the Constitution, for which legislative power was limited by natural rights, instilled a new debate on where to draw the line between private and public corporations. In accordance with liberal social thought, Chancellor Kent stipulated an hypothesis that came to become the cradle of the limitation of governmental powers:

"public corporations are created by governments for political purposes" (Frug 1980, p.1104). As a result, although cities had been juggling between public and private aims until then, a new dichotomy constrained them to the public domain through legislative and executive scrutiny. To Frug (1980), the city became a legal concept and a mere linkage point between the state and the individual.

Analyzing the cities' changes through the evolution of the doctrine of law allows to grasp the idea that the social image of the city changed from the 18th century onwards. As Merry defines it, "law is not simply a set of rules exercising coercive power, but a system of thought by which certain forms of relations come to seem natural and taken for granted" (1988, p.889). The subordination of the city mainly came through law, which in turn framed city's powerlessness and dependence to a hierarchical system of government on top of which the state monopolized the liberal conception of power. An illustration of this historical process is to be found in the reform of municipal corporations in England in the 1830s. In 1833, a committee was appointed to consider whether the municipal corporations of England, Wales and Ireland - the ones inherited from the medieval towns depicted by Frug - were still fit to govern. The conclusions of the committee came in the form of the 1835 Municipal Corporations act establishing a uniform system of municipal boroughs to be governed by elected town councils (Finlayson 1966, Southall 1988). Similar constraints were put on local governments throughout Europe with the results of limiting cities' initiatives: raising local taxes became almost impossible without the approval of central governments, law-making powers were reduced, the city's involvement in economic actions were drastically lowered. With this ongoing dynamic the city fell under legal centralism, a predisposition to conceive political power as rooted in state law. With the successive waves of colonization and the growing ambition to create settlers' towns, legal centralism came on top of other values and practices imposed to the communities being colonized (Merry 1988). As a result, the legal pluralism that regulated space through an overlapping of ethnicity, religions, cultures and geography was replaced by legal centralism with the same effects as in Europe. Legal centralism was progressively internationalized as a "standard of civilization" (Gong 1984), bearing with it new assumptions for city and state powers.

The centrality of the city in the crucial changes of the 18th century stresses its dual nature: the city is both actual and virtual (Isin 2007). Firstly, the city is a concrete space, constituted by its materiality. But the city is also virtual in that it exists beyond the materiality that constitutes it: put

simply the city is made by its community and the powers it instills. This demarcation is essential in order to grasp the process that started in the 18th century. Throughout this century, the two natures of the city became the breeding grounds for the virtual place of the state, a body politic that only exists through its virtuality. The latter was built and enacted through the two spaces of the city which thus was a prerequisite to state-building. As a result, the city was made an integrant part of a "scalar system" (Isin 2007) that imposed new relations between a state and its cities. Under this system, relations between the two took a new meaning. Firstly, they were ahistoric, meaning that their relations were assumed as given and not resulting from historical dynamics. Secondly, they were exclusive, highlighting their ontological similarities and juxtaposition as the same body politic. Thirdly, hierarchy between the state and the city meant that the former was the upper scale of the latter by essence. For states and nations going through new phases of formation, it meant in practice that Paris became France, London became England, Washington D.C became the United States of America. As Rucquoi neatly asserted: "the kingdom is ultimately conceived as a city, or as a community in which the cities would constitute the districts" (cited in Coulomb 2010, p.13).

B) The Industrial Revolution as Urban Revolution

Through economic restructuring, demographic change, and politico-social dynamics, the industrial revolution spurred new changes (see Graph 2). Amongst these consequences, the place of the city was critically altered. One could even suppose that the "urban" only gained relevance with this process: with the industrial revolution, the urban was systemic in the sense that it became the core of a new system. In essence, the industrial revolution was an urban revolution that redefined territoriality in the same way that the city's domestication by the state instilled new relations of power.

GDP per capita, 1820 to 2018

GDP per capita adjusted for price changes over time (inflation) and price differences between countries – it is measured in international-$ in 2011 prices.
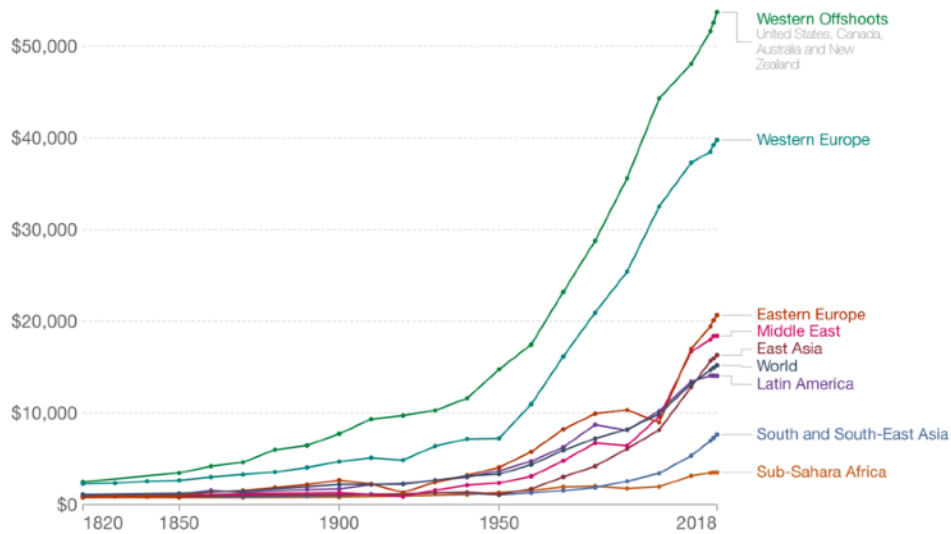
Source: Maddison Project Database 2020 (Bolt and van Zanden (2020))

OurWorldInData.org/economic-growth · CC BY

Source: Ritchie et al. 2019, online

Within European history, the urban revolution takes part in a wider revolution. In short, the adoption of new agricultural techniques, the development of a "proto-industralization" (Mendels 1969), and the opportunities of new technologies, all laid a breeding ground for shaking the city to its core. The factories and the division of labor described by Adam Smith (1776) were unimaginable outside cities. The concentration of wealth and capitalists organizations theorized by Joseph Schumpeter (1939) was unthinkable without urban infrastructures. In the genesis of the capitalist mode of production the supply of labour and capital were indispensable (Southall 1998), and luckily the structural changes that were boiling for centuries had prepared cities to be the central stage of this unfoldment. The city was a central scale that provided new opportunities and fed the capitalist system. From 1771 to 1851, the city of Manchester grew from 10,000 to 300,000 inhabitants. Manchester was the "steam mill mad" city (Southall 1998, p.315) that prophesied the changes to come. By 1851, France's industrial city Lille had already 200 fabrics providing job opportunities. However, conditions of living did not follow. In fact within the walls of the city, the number of workers exploded, a poorly paid class often living in unbearable conditions (Engels 1892): the proletariat was born and with it "a reserve army of labour" stacked in unwelcoming cities.

The industrial city, based on capital accumulation and profit, broke the fetters inherited from the former feudal town to allow an urban revolution (Southall 1998). Putting the lenses of historical

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materialism is enlightening to understand the process that made the city a central feature of the industrial revolution. The feudal urban mode of production was centered on commerce and trade, its key places were Venice, Genova and later Antwerp and Amsterdam. The needs of the industrial city laid elsewhere. The industrial and capitalist urban mode of production was based on the accumulation of capital and the profits of the industry. It could only be achieved in cities that had already established a proto-industrialization, a revolution of its agricultural system and started a demographic transition. England offered a breeding ground for the birth of the industrial city, and Manchester is a central example of the process that was at hand. But not only was Manchester a typical example of the birthplace of the industrial city, it also epitomized its excesses: and unchecked rapid urban growth that spurred misery and insecurity throughout the city. Moreover, the burst of the industrial city stressed the contrasts with the rest of the urban world. On the one hand, the industrial city provided new markets, supply and forged new social relations. On the other hand, ancient boroughs were older cities which failed to embrace the new urban needs. In the middle were older cities which struggled to keep up but eventually managed to find a new place: among these were cities like Bristol, Liverpool and London. The European industrial city thus became a weberian ideal-type that epitomized the evolution of the Western world (Riutort 2014). The city's main focus shifted from agriculture to industry and capitalist needs as its administration reflected the rationalization of practices. To Weber (1921), European cities were central to the continent's own development.

The outburst of the urban revolution was confirmed throughout the 20th century. Not only did state-planning reinforce this trend by reallocating space through economic needs (Castell 1974), it appeared that the urban had become systemic by nature thus stressing the most profound shift in spatiality since the urban revolution of the fourth millennium : all areas were now supporting urbanity, rural resources being a primary example (Southall 1998). To reprise Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), the urban world had became the core and the rest its periphery. The post-WWII economic plans pursued infrastructure plans that connected national territories and made the urban agglomeration not only the workplace of dwellers but also their place of leisure, fueled by the birth of a popular culture that promoted the American way of life - and its indisputable urbanity (Paterson 2000).

At the national level, states pursued a spatial Keynesianism that sought to distribute the effects of economic development among territories in order to prevent the potential regional imbalances

resulting from economic markets (Pinson 2020). For instance, in 1947, the British Transport Act nationalized most of the urban transport networks (Pinson 2020, p.147). On the local level, this strategy was complemented by a managerial approach which consisted in the reproduction of the state's strategy of spatial Keynesianism, thus reminding of the scalar system developed throughout previous centuries (Isin 2007). In the post-WWII era, the techno-scientific distribution of space was pursued by the state to facilitate the economic exploitation of space through governmental planning.

From the early 18th century to the post-WWII era the city had gone through a series of formidable changes. It was both an agent that brought about systemic revolutions and a victim of these. The city was left subordinated in a hierarchical system, deprived of effective autonomy. City power was thus unthinkable under these circumstances. By the 1980s, the urban went through a new series of changes which would open the way for the city to take new stances.

1.2 The New Urban Anchorage: Redefining the Limits of the City

In the 21st century, the urban has become a common good. In fact, the 2010s ushered in the "decade of the city" (Lin 2018, p.45), underlining how far the urban world had spread: by 2008, a turning point had been achieved because for the first time in history the share of people living in urban areas surpassed the share of people living in rural areas. Three centuries of changes had reshaped the city. Gradually, the city was taking a new form that cast a stark contrast with the city "as a creature of the state" (Frug 1980). Indeed, by the start of the 2000s, the city had become a driver of economic, political and cultural changes. The city had become a new strategic site that fundamentally altered the social image inherited from the processes of state-building and industrialization. But more broadly, it was the whole world that was remade by successive economic and political shifts exogenous to the city. Both directly and indirectly, the city found a new momentum.

A) Beyond the City, a Changing World

The crisis of Fordism and Keynesianism that unfolded from the 1970s onwards reshaped practices of governments and the structure of economic markets. The territoriality of power (Brenner 2004) was altered in the process. More specifically, the 1980s marked the turn of a new urban moment in which scales of economic and political power changed under the impulsion of neoliberal capitalism.

The changing dynamics of contemporary globalization modified the parameters of the spatiality of power (Pinson et al. 2016). New theories of international commerce (Krugman 1980, Helpman 1981) underlined the growing influence of multinational companies and the new global division of labor. Together, these two assumptions had great repercussions for the territoriality of contemporary capitalism. With the decomposition of international labor, scales of production were divided between territories depending on their capital and no longer centralized in countries - as it was previously argued by the Ricardian model of international commerce. Furthermore, technological innovations rebalanced territorial opportunities by allowing rapid exchanges and creating a global market that could thrive without states. Multinational firms thus took advantage of the specialization of territories and organized their production accordingly - notwithstanding their eager to seek fiscal advantages. As a result, cities concentrating different forms of capital became central cradles for the processes of productions and more broadly the activities of the private sector. As a matter of fact, today, cities account for the highest share of wealth production, with about 70% of global GDP being created in cities. At the scale of a country, for instance, metropolitan areas in Korea account for 75% of the gross domestic product (OECD 2018).

Moreover, the oil crisis of 1973 unveiled the limits of interventionist states and highlighted the growing pressure put on public spendings. The direct result of these growing stresses on national governments was a shift to neoliberal monetarist economics, epitomized in the policies pursued by Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK. The policies of neoliberalism cast a stark contrast with the ambitions of Keynesianism as illustrated with economic interventionism and territorial development. The spatial Keynesianism that had unravelled since the Second World war was thus facing its limits and the spatiality of state power was put into question (Pinson 2020). Decentralization and privatization were increasingly used to reduce government spending and - by extension - state intervention. Hence, the spatiality of economic and political power changed throughout the last decades of the 20th century (Gupta et al. 2015).

In practice, the new dynamics that spurred from the 1980s onwards revealed a new practice of governmentality, or in other words, the rationalization of governmental practices (Lemke 2007). Indeed, neoliberalism did not merely imply an erasure of the state, but rather a reengineering of governmental practices. This process did not merely reduce government, but redefined its position in society and thereby diffused a new ethos of marketization and new governmentality (Crowley 2003). The latter notion draws from the tradition of French philosopher Michel Foucault, who first

coined it to make sense of the evolution of states' governmental power in the modern period. In the foucauldian tradition, governmentality is a historically defined exercise of power that guides the government of subjects and their organizations. With the process of neoliberalization, new practices of governments rooted in rationalization and the technicality of power (Lascoumes 2004) reified new subjects and imposed new values to the conduct of body politics. This did not simply involved the state, it also concerned other traditional and non-traditional actors. Businesses, international institutions, non-governmental actors, all were influenced in a direct or indirect way by the changes at hand. Of course, cities were not left behind. Critical geography attempts to shed light on the broader structural evolutions embedded in the terms of post-Fordism, globalization and neoliberalization (Pinson 2016). The school of thought explains that the material and regulatory changes of the 1980s redefined the place of the city.

As in the 18th century, the city was reshaped by new practices of government from the 1980s onwards. Under these new parameters, cities took on new identities and agendas under new practices of government, widely shared with other actors. A stark contrast was unfolding with the city as "a creature of the state".

B) The City as Strategic Site

In 1985, a colloquium of local actors, businessmen and academics gathered in Orleans with the aim of exploring new ways of conducting local governance at a time of increasing economic and fiscal pressure on cities (Harvey 1989). The consensus reached illustrated the changing conceptions of city power: urban governments had to lean towards innovative and entrepreneurial management of local resources. New practices of local governance illustrated how the city had become a cradle of neoliberalism.

A report published in 2011 by McKinsey highlighted that just 600 cities worldwide concentrate more than a half of global gross domestic product while representing only 22% of the global population. These figures bring forward the fundamental economic changes that put the city at the heart of contemporary capitalism. With new opportunities of flexible specialization, a new international division of labour and new technologies, the recomposition of the business landscape put cities at the center of the creation of added-value. In 2012, Richard Florida underlined how

cities had witnessed the rise of the "creative class", a labour force that works in the third - digitalized - sector and gave a new momentum to cities.

Progressively, the spatial Keynesianism that had prospered after the Second World war was replaced by a new geography of capital that went through a process of metropolization (Pinson 2016). Metropoles became the epicenters of neoliberal capitalism through both businesses and financial sectors. The city that once enabled the burst of the industrial revolution now housed the birth of post-Fordism. The "global city" (Sassen 1991) became symptomatic of this new dynamic: the city is conceived as a new strategic site of economic, political and cultural power through a process of "glocalization" (Brenner 2004, p.150).

Nonetheless, there is still an obvious North/South divide in the repartition of wealth among global cities. However, this does not contradict the fact that neoliberalization is now urban by nature. A brief look at the economic dynamics in the global South verifies this: take Lagos, the economic capital of Nigeria. In 2017, its state output was estimated at $136bn, which is more than a third of Nigeria's GDP, and its weight is not likely to slow down as estimates expect that by 2040 the city could become the world's third largest urban center after Tokyo and Delhi, with 30 million dwellers (Foreign Trade 2020). In Peru, the agglomeration of the city of Lima concentrates 32% of the country's population, 45% of the gross domestic product and about 50% of the real estate growth (Dorier et al. 2018, p.56). Cities have thus became the crux of contemporary capitalism.

By moving away from the Keynesian logic of spatial redistribution, the new anchorage of neoliberalism is enshrined in cities. Pinson called this process the urbanization of neoliberalism (2016): cities are no longer the means of production of capitalism, they are sites through which added value is created. The evolutions of the place of the city in the neoliberal capitalist system stressed the pivotal importance of space in economic systems. A "spatial creative destruction" remade space and impacted the city in the process while urbanizing capital (Harvey 2004). Industrial Pittsburgh was replaced by financial and borderless New York City.

A second related process was the neoliberalization of the urban world. Following a foucauldian approach, the promotion of neoliberal values instilled new ways of being to the world (Gros 2017). As it was raised earlier, neoliberalism did not mean a hollowing of the state, but rather implied a transformation of the conduct of government through the diffusion of a new ethos based on market,

competitiveness and rationalization (Pinson 2020). As a result, the conduct of urban governance was remodeled. A concrete example can be found in the bailout of New York City in 1975 (New York Times 2008). Before the city became the financial, economic and cultural center that it is today, it was undermined by corruption and weak local government. The city became dependent on bond market, but its inability to prove its solvability led to a tense situation when the city was no longer able to repay its debt. A consortium led by Citibank eventually agreed to bailout New York City, but in exchange the city had to create a "good business climate", which eventually enabled the spread of finance, consulting and real estate in the city (Tabb 1982). The governance of New York City was fundamentally altered after this episode.

With these new neoliberal imperatives, city governance around the world moved away from the managerial approach symbolic of the post-WWII era and embraced an urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989). The new urban governance was characterized by public-private partnerships and the imperatives of both financial sustainability and economic prosperity. Just in the span of forty years, worldwide real estate corporations have become leading companies all around the world: ACS in Spain, Hochtief in Germany and Bouygues in France are just a few examples. These companies have become strategic partners for local governments to conduct local entrepreneurial policies. But above all else, through this process, the city was legitimized as an economic and political actor. The neoliberal city illustrated the new "societalization" (Jessop in Pinson 2020, p.163) of the urban world.

However, the evolution of the city did not take place without its share of critical studies. Reminiscent of the "Right to the City" advocated by Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1968), critical urban thinkers shed light on the dynamics at hand. By continuing to see the city as the central place through which capitalism unfolds, they question the practices of urban governance. Essentially, it appears that contemporary urban governance holds a promise to a new "right to the city", but deprives it from the democratization and struggle of class it once held with Lefebvre. Under the assumptions of urban governance we find the concept of the smart city, a city that uses the opportunities of new technologies to regulate resources and foster a better allocation of resources (Garnier 2010). But the revolutionary promises of the smart city seem deprived of critical reflections on what a city should offer to its dwellers, thus producing an apolitical and techno-scientific representation of the city (Kitchin 2015). A similar argument could be made against the "15 minutes city", a city that seeks to offer basic services to inhabitants but that eventually fails to

question the social segmentation and geographic inequalities of its neighborhoods, notwithstanding processes of gentrification. A 2013 report conducted by McKinsey proposed to "do more for cities, with less", championing an ethos of local entrepreneurialism. For the neoliberal city, city power is enshrined in pragmatism and techno-scientific practices, therefore turning away from a politicization that would be essential to defining what a public space is and should be.

1.3 Urban Challenges in a World of Global Tensions

In 1918, Thomas and Znaniecki published The Polish peasant in Europe and America, a sociological inquiry that laid the basis for what was to become the Chicago School of urban sociology. The city of Chicago was depicted as a social laboratory in which unfolded a new urban world rooted in immigrations and industrialization. Their assumption that the city was the theatre of broader systemic changes is a starting point shared by the analysis brought forward in this essay. In a world defined by urbanity, challenges have become urban by essence. New forms of warfare, alarming social injustices, demographic pressures and infrastructural needs are just a few examples highlighting how the city is entangled in a world of challenges. Above all of these, climate change poses a fundamental threat to a world that takes the urban as its *raison d'être*. Global challenges are thus telescoped in the city and emphasizing the importance of the ongoing urban moment. "Seeing it like a city" (Acuto 2013) allows us to understand the perspectives for actions.

A) Telescoping Global Challenges in Cities' Streets

Global politics has "telescoped" (Appadurai cited in Curtis 2011, p.1945) into the city with the implosion of both national and international concerns into the urban. As a result, cities have not only become strategic sites, but also sites of tensions. Challenges are undermining cities around the world. Water supply, to name one concrete example, has become a clear concern for the UN (Dorier et al 2018), knowing that from 1990 to 2008 the urban population increased more rapidly than the effective access to clean water and sanitation (UN 2014). This alarming trend is even more urgent as it directly affects the poorest urban areas. Infrastructural capacities and inequalities to access basic needs is thus an alarming feature of urban tensions. And this is not likely to slow down because by 2050 two-third of the global population will live in urban areas. Going forward, these few examples of urban risks are not only high for health and infrastructures, but also pose indirect threats relating to the access to proper living conditions, education and housing. Furthermore, cities

are responsible for 70% of the global greenhouse gas emissions (Gordon 2020) and will be among the first geographical areas to feel the effect of changes in the environment. Therefore, added to the tensions of human settlements is the question of the sustainability of urban life.

Because global tensions have become urban tensions, cities have been increasingly acknowledged as a crux of contemporary challenges. Thanks to the pressure of cities and city-networks from 2013 to 2015 (C40 Knowledge 2021), the Sustainable Development Goals laid down for the year 2030 recognize the crucial need for sustainable urban development in Goal 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities". But urban challenges were not understudied beforehand. Since 1972, more than 1200 acknowledgements to cities were made across 32 UN official documents (Kosovac et al 2020, p.4). The corollary of this was that the city was not only a strategic site, but also a space in which the challenges of the century could be addressed.

However, questions of accessibility and sustainability of cities are not the only examples of the telescoping of global tensions into urban areas. The evolutions of warfare increasingly bring a risk for cities, as conflicts now take the urban as their battlegrounds. Conscript armies and heavy artillery had pushed the battlefield onto rural areas from the 18th century onwards. As a matter of fact, the First World war epitomized rural warfare, with its scenes of trenches and no-mans-land. In 1936, the Spanish Civil war announced an evolution of warfare with conflicts now unravelling *in* cities. The Second World war - with the illustrating battle for Stalingrad - and the successive conflicts and waves of decolonization enshrined the new urban warfare (Konaev 2019). Asymmetric wars and paramilitary groups embraced the latter, with the seizing example of US interventions in Iraq (Hoffmann 2017) and IS's campaigns in Syria which led to the destruction of 3000 buildings just in the city of Kobane (Dorier 2018). And aside from the material consequences of urban conflicts are the human consequences. Those displaced due to conflicts and the loss of their homes find themselves in urban areas in situations that exacerbate the urban tensions already mentioned above. Among the world's 19.5 million refugees, 60% live in cities and urban slums.

The telescoping of global issues into the city also asks the question of the social acceptability of urban life. The urban life creates unprecedented pressures on the share of space and resources, which in return creates tensions on economic and social justice. The notion of urban-rural divide stresses the growing gap between geographical spaces. This growing trend is not without its consequences: in a study conducted before the 2016 US Presidential election, Cramer (2016)

studied rural Wisconsin and its inhabitants, and was ultimately seized by the "politics of resentment" that led rural dwellers to feel abandoned by cities' elites and eventually pushed them to support Donald Trump. By turning away from rural areas, cities perpetuate geographical tensions that feed political distrust. And the Wisconsin example is just one among many. These questions of distribution of resources and voices across space is not just urgent between the urban and rural spaces. The urban world is itself divided by uneven distributions of capital, be they financial, human, infrastructural (Garnier 2010). In the urban moment not all cities have the same opportunities of economic, social and political development. In this century, megacities are often better connected than most cities from the same country. The movement of an internationalized elite, or "local internationals" (Alger 1990), migrating from a "franchised city" (Mangin 2004) to the next and sharing the values of cosmopolitan neoliberalism is a good example of this unequal meshing of cities. The urban moment comes with its share of tensions.

Not only the urban moment exacerbates existing challenges on natural resources it also creates new ones. And as the world is likely to reach unparalleled levels of urbanization in the coming decades, the possibility of an intensification of urban tensions is significant (Brenner 2004). What these challenges require is an effective urban governance to respond to these new needs.

B) Framing the Governance of the Urban Commons

In the face of a new "Tragedy of the Commons" (Hardin 1968) grounded in the overexploitation of urban resources and increasing social injustices, it appears that urban governance is finding a way to bring about new solutions rooted in the local. The urban moment, enabled by structural shifts and the new momentum of local actors, allows cities to take new stances. The telescoping of global tensions in the urban calls for a "glocal governance" (Chan 2016), an urban governance that acknowledges the intertwinement between local and global challenges and recognizes that the future starts in cities.

The evolution of statism (Curtis 2016) opened a new path that moved away from the conception of the city as "a mere creature of the state" to a city as an actor of the commons. Urban governance thus takes shape within the ongoing urban moment. It is defined as "a process of coordinating actors, social groups and institutions to attain particular goals in given environments" (Berraz, p.138). To conduct urban governance is thus to identify vulnerabilities and seek to tame them.

However, urban governance is not conducted in the same sovereign way as states. Urban governance is therefore characterized by its own practices and is illustrated by the local entrepreneurialism that Harvey (1989) found in cities' actions from the 1980s onwards. This new territorial scale is based on local initiatives, subsidiarity, shared management of resources, and cross-sectional dialogues with private actors (Tranquard 2020). Urban governance is rooted in adaptive polices and experimental "learning by doing and doing by learning" (Wolfram et al 2019, p.3). City governance is also characterized by discursive methods that legitimize local actions. Framing global issues as local issues allows local actors to gain recognition and leverage in innovative strategies. Mexico City used air pollution to expand its local initiatives to climate change and strengthen its policy traction (Betsill et al 2007). Examples of local initiatives are plenty: Tokyo developed its own metropolitan emissions trading system (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2020). Vancouver set itself the ambitious goal of reaching 100% of renewable energy by 2050 (Jaccard et al. 2019). Barcelona is experiencing a digital platform, Decidim, aimed at bringing local citizens in local decision-making (Decidim 2021). Rapid transit systems are restructuring mobility in cities of South America, like Curitiba and Bogota. Hence, global issues are locally politicized.

Among the challenges pressing for "glocal governance" (Chan 2016), climate change is perhaps the most central. The urban moment is unfolding at a time of urgent environmental threats that question life on earth, a life that is now essentially rooted in cities. In an effort to attain the goals and the imperative of sustainable development, cities embrace a discourse that claims that it "Begins in my Backyard" (Viltard 2008, p.527) - BIMBY, in opposition to the "Not in my Backyard", a movement that started in the 1970s in opposition to the construction of infrastructures near settlements.

If cities are to face "a profound evolution of the world" (Hidalgo cited in Garnier 2010), they should have the powers that enable them to prepare accordingly. Guided by the "70% mantra" (Aust 2015, p.262) that stresses that cities are accountable for more than two third of global greenhouse gas emissions, local actors aim at finding innovative ways to face climate change and adapt to it through the practice of climate urban governance. Moreover, two documents of the UNFCC published in 2013 called upon a multi-stakeholder approach to respond to the urgency of climate change through "international cooperative initiatives" (Widerberg et al 2015). In fact, after the inability of Copenhagen's COP 15 to reach an international accord guided by states, the UN exhorted all actors with sufficient power to take stances to preserve natural resources. After this call upon subsidiarity, cities around the world took bold stances. Tranquard (2020) underlines the

overlaps between imperatives of sustainable development and opportunities of urban governance: sustainable development necessitates multilevel actions that legitimize local initiatives. It appears that the concept of sustainable development carries within itself a potential for redefining the scales of power. By requiring innovative and reflexive action, imperatives of development call for new ways of actions. As a result, the local scale is legitimized not only by the urban moment but also by the necessity posed by the threat of climate change.

A brief conclusion made from this first chapter allows to understand the new "image of city" that unfolded from the 1980s onwards and marked a stark contrast with the territoriality of power instilled in the 18th century. The crisis of statism, the new ethos of neoliberalism and the new parameters of the international system created a new interstice of power for cities. The telescoping of global challenges within the streets of cities legitimized new potential actions. Local actors now took bold stances and city power found the ground upon which to prosper.

Chapter II: The City in International Politics, Global Governance by Other Means

The momentum of city diplomacy is consubstantial to the ongoing urban moment and cannot be understood outside of this historical process. If cities found a new role as international actors it is above all else thanks to structural shifts brought forward earlier in this analysis. As an economic and political centerpiece, the city extensively became a legitimate international actor acknowledged by the international community. In April 2021, the Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres urged cities to embrace a "generational opportunity" (UN 2021) to take actions on the global stage, particularly in a context of rapid climate change. At the 26th Conference of Parties on climate change that will take place in Scotland in November 2021, cities are invited to take part in a new "multilevel action COP" (Cities and Regions in UNFCC 2021). In 2012, Nobel Prize of Economics Elinor Ostrom called the overlapping of city, subnational, national and international policies an "evolutionary approach [that] provides essential safety nets" (Project Syndicate 2012). At the local level, mayors are increasingly taking vows to raise their cities' voice internationally. For instance, the city of Dortmund has created an office for urban diplomacy, aimed at fostering cooperation with international actors and sharing new strategies (Dortmund 2021). And in 2021, the city signed a cooperation agreement with Pittsburgh, USA (Official statement 2021). The new attention given to city and their international ambitions is also underlined in new studies conducted by think tanks, renowned for representing the new forums of ideas. In February 2021, Brookings published a call to create a US Department of subnational diplomacy (Pipa et al 2021). In April 2021, Chatham House shared "Reflections on building more inclusive global governance" with urban centers at the core of the initiative. The 21st century has verified a prediction made in 1970 by global historian Arnold Toynbee, "cities are on the move".

Through city diplomacy, local actors champion the "urban link" (Acuto 2013): the intertwinement between global challenges and urban opportunities. City diplomacy appears as a channel to bring forward urban identities and interests on the global stage, alongside traditional and nontraditional actors. Among its concerns, we find for instance peace-building, social justice, and sustainable development. However, city diplomacy is not a completely new phenomenon. In fact, cities involvement in international politics took place throughout the 20th century without gaining much of an academic study. Replacing city diplomacy and what it represents today is one of the aim of this section. Understanding how city diplomacy came to be rationalized, organized through

procedures and institutions is enlightening to frame how, more broadly, governance is conducted in the 21st century. Indeed, a question arise while assessing the potentials and implications of city diplomacy: how does its conduct shed light on the way international politics is pursued ? Because the emergence of city diplomacy is not just revealing the emergence of nontraditional actors consubstantial to the conduct of global governance. It also underlines a governmentality of international politics, in other words, a specific exercise of power characterized by rationalization and complexification (Lascoumes 2004).

For these reasons, and more, a study of what city diplomacy represents is essential to understand the way international relations are conducted. As a matter of fact, city diplomacy poses fundamental questions to the study of International Relations, to its actors and to its dynamics. This chapter is dedicated to the study of the place of the city in international relations.

2.1 A Seat at the Table

City diplomacy evokes the will of local actors to take part in international politics and either legitimize or contest global affairs. However, different practices of city diplomacy have unfolded throughout history. The pursue of city diplomacy in the ongoing urban moment is underlining a certain practice of governance, and is moving away from the practice of city diplomacy as it took place from the 20th century onwards (Kosovac et al 2020). More precisely, city diplomacy shifted from an occasional and unorganized involvement in global affairs to an approach in which cities claimed the legitimacy of urban matters for global politics through systematic and institutionalized actions. Studying the increasing involvement of cities in international affairs is also revealing of the way international relations are pursued in a world of governance. The forging of new actors, whether supranational or subnational, sheds light on the development of new identities and values under the auspices of the international system. This process is crucial for the study of International Relations and reopens the pandora's box of "great debates" (Lake 2013).

A) City Diplomac(ies)

In an attempt to define city diplomacy in a context of growing inter-city relations, the Clingendael Institute of International Relations coined the concept as "the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political scale with the aim of representing

themselves and their interests to one another" (Pluijm et al. 2007, p.33). Cities' involvement on the global stage is rooted in their belief of the intertwinement between world tensions and urban agendas. The city is perceived as the scene of "everyday politics" (Alger 1990) and thus the legitimate place to make and remake values and identities in a body politic. Rather than "seeing it like a state", to reprise James Scott's critique of the contemporary bias of conceiving ongoing issues only through the lens of states' governments, city diplomacy urges to conceive contemporary challenges as urban and "see them like a city" (Le Galès 2020).

Since the birth of International Relations as an academic discipline after the First World war, cities have increasingly took part in international politics. However, the phenomenon has been understudied. In fact, world politics actually witnessed different periods and practices of city diplomacies (Alger 1990). This acknowledgment is essential to understand the moving perceptions of what the city can achieve internationally. The historical episodes of city diplomacy can be divided into two distinctive periods: one in which the city pursued occasional and episodic involvements, which I shall call *the city with*; a second phase in which cities constructed rationalized and institutional organizations through which their - urban - interests was brought forward, that I shall call *the city for*.

Throughout the 20th century, cities took part in international relations at a rather marginal pace. This phase of city diplomacy can be characterized as *the city with* because cities only took part in episodic interventions and never as international actors in their own rights. Rather than seeking for acknowledgment and legitimacy, these moments of city diplomacy often fell within "consensus moments" (Lofland cited in Alger 1990, p506). Recalling of this trend, the burst of city twinnings and sister-city programs from the 1920s onwards marked the ambitions to create bilateral inter-cities relations for economic purposes, cultural exchanges and diaspora relations (Kosovac et al. 2020). Just from 1950 to 1990, more than 11,000 pairs of sister cities came into agreement in about 160 countries (Zelinsky 1991). In the 1990s, France had 3753 inter-municipal linkages of the sort (Pluijm et al. 2007, p.23). These programs were often signed between cities from two previously belligerent countries. In this case, the city was thus a medium through which interstate relations were ceiled. The practice started in 1920 after the twining of Keighley, England with Poix-du-Nord, France. In 1956, US President Dweight Eisenhower launched a similar programs with former WWII rival Japan. Also evocative is the part played by sister-city programs in the construction of a European identity (Fishbone 2017, Kern et al. 2009). Inter-city organizations were also created to

bring together cities - often only in the Western hemisphere - with the intention of bringing local issues and self-government on top of the global agenda. This was the case of the International Union of Local Authorities, founded in 1913 and which served as the urban entity of the League of Nations from 1919 onwards (Kosovac et al. 2020). However, such initiatives failed. With the entanglement of scales of territoriality defining the state as the core (Le Galès 2020, Isin 2007) and with the image of the city "as a creature of the state", this phase did not manage to enshrine the urban lens to international politics.

Nonetheless, the first phase of city diplomacy was not only characterized by "consensus moments" (Lofland cited in Alger 1990, p506), it also brought its share of contestation. In this historical moment, local actors episodically voiced their concerns and stances on the international stage to contest global politics. In the 1980s, in reaction to waves of conservatism and neoliberalization, local authorities contested the practices of international relations. Concomitantly to the burst of paradiplomacy (Kosovac et al. 2020), defined as the growing interference of non-state actors in global politics, cities took firm stances. To Viltard (2008), these practices were crystallized through four episodes: the creation of local 'nuclear-free zones' in reaction to the new nuclear tensions of the Cold War in the 1980s; cities' sanctions of South Africa during the last months of the country's apartheid system; local boycotts of non-ethical products in numerous countries; actions of local disobedience aiming at welcoming illegal refugees coming from Central America despite the restrictions of the US federal state. This "municipal activism" (Hobbs 1994) took the form of participative democracy pursued in response to specific global events. In retrospect, this phase of city diplomacy planted the seeds for contemporary city diplomacy, defined as *the city for*. In fact, the latter did not replace the former but rather complemented it to eventually strengthened cities' international stances.

What is crucial with contemporary city diplomacy is how representation is sought on the international stage (Pluijm et al. 2007). The means through which representation is pursued is enlightening to shed light on the evolution of practices of city diplomacy throughout the past century. Between the two phases of city diplomacy, we witnessed two mutually dependent shifts: one from idealism to pragmatism, and another that marked the professionalization of city diplomacy's civil servants. For cities, the second phase of city diplomacy is taking roots in the professionalization of officials and the guidance of statistical tools (Kosovac et al. 2020). At the same time, the episodic stances of cities that were rooted in idealism took a new form illustrated in

pragmatism (Pluijm et al. 2007). The latter guided practices of city diplomacy and enshrined actions on economic and practical criteria. City-to-city cooperation is also illustrated in the sharing of cities' best practices to face ongoing urban challenges such as gender equality, energy sufficiency, waste management, etc. As a result, the representative dimension of city diplomacy took new forms both within and outside existing international organizations. With the former, cities now attempted to influence decision-making processes and bring an urban insight to international discussions. In the case of the Council of Europe, a Chamber of Local Authorities brings an urban anchorage to the values of democracy, equality and justice. For the latter, cities attempt to influence global politics through lobbying. The stance of US cities against President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord is a great example of this.

The second phase of city diplomacy borrowed from the previous practices of local activism. But the changing place of the city in both the political and economic worlds, together with global challenges directly related to urban life, opened a new pathway for cities' involvement in international relations. Rather than a medium through which state-to-state relations are cemented, cities embrace contestation and affirm their legitimacy on the international stage. This new phase, enshrined in the urban moment defined earlier, reflects *the city for*. The city embraces its identity as a legitimate actor on the world stage who can bring an added-value to the table. The notion of urban governance is therefore directly linked to the ongoing practice of city diplomacy (Tranquard 2020). The concept recognizes urban challenges as global challenges that requires the local scale in order to be fully faced - hence the idea of "glocal governance" (Chan 2016). The city of Hamburg, Germany is a primary example of this new phase of city diplomacy. City ambassadors are deputized to represent the city internationally and attempt to create binds with other cities to create new economic opportunities and share best urban practices (Fishbone 2017). Hamburg is not an isolated case, cities around the world engage in similar actives. In a survey conducted in 2020 on 47 cities spread equally between the North and South, Kosovac et al. (2020) found that local leaders overwhelmingly recognize the importance of engaging their cities internationally, and are confident in their abilities despite their lack of formal diplomatic formation. On top of their concerns is climate change at 28%, an imperative for which local leaders believe they are more efficient than their national counterparts.

What makes the singularity of the new phase of city diplomacy is the overwhelming reliance on city networks. For states, network cooperation is not a primary concern of diplomacy. But for cities, it

becomes a fundamental forum to find a voice on the global stage (Pluijm et al. 2007). In a world of sovereign states, cities can only successfully punch above their weight if gathered in inter-city organizations. As actors of paradiplomacy, cities lack legal and traditional legitimacies - notwithstanding the bias of the "creature of the state". In this context, networks aggregate their voices and give a body to their grievances. There are currently more than 170 city networks forged around the will to bring urban challenges upfront (Acuto et al. 2016). Within these organizations, almost two-thirds were created after 1985 (Acuto et al. 2016). In accordance with the characteristics of the second phase of city diplomacy, city networks are rooted in both pragmatism and professionalization.

In the ongoing phase of city diplomacy, local actors long for a seat at the table of international relations by stressing how global challenges will only be tackled with the help of urban actors. The city is *for* a change in international politics.

The distinction between two historical practices of city diplomacy is revealing of the changing place the local scale has went through in the territoriality of governance. Practices of city diplomacy shifted from a "municipal voluntarism" to a "strategic urbanism" (Bulkeley cited in Gordon 2018, p.62). By transitioning from *a city with* to *a city for*, local actors have cemented their place as international actors: "an entity of which actions alter the distribution of resources and the definition of values on the global stage" (Battistella et al. 2012, p.1). But the conduct of international practices cannot be studied outside a given structure. In fact, the emergence of city diplomacy is to be understood within a broader shift towards governance.

B) How Urban Governance Thrives

To Francis Fukuyama the end of the Cold War marked a concomitant "end of history" (1989). Western values and liberal democracy outperformed the Soviet bloc and was set to expand throughout the world. Beyond this optimistic narrative lays the reality of the post-Cold War era. Although Fukuyama has been criticized and proven wrong in the years that followed, he had one good assumption: international politics was changing. City diplomacy is to be understood under these changing circumstances.

The end of the logic of bloc confrontation between the West and the East allowed the formation of a new international society, defined as an ensemble of states aware of sharing interests and common values, and bound by rules of conduct. Moreover, the guidance of the United States as global policeman insured a relative stability, and the replacement of the logic of balance of power - the one that had caused the two World Wars - by a unipolarity headed by a country that had both military supremacy and the acquiescence of the international system through a set of shared values. In this "unipolar moment" (Krauthammer 1990), the stability of the international system is thus forged by the intertwinement between a solidarist international society and a unipolar state system (Battistella 2015). With this new structure of international relations, and as new challenges put into question the traditional state-led actions, practices of global politics were altered.

Progressively, international politics shifted from government to governance, from hierarchy to heterarchy. The seeds of this change were already found in the world system constructed in the post-World War Two era, with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the Bretton Woods accords. But with the unravelling confrontation between the USSR and the US, the related conflicts by proxy, and the tensed waves of decolonization, multilateralism failed to find its moment. After 1991, governance and multilateralism found a new momentum while at the very same time challenges not related to armed conflicts found their way on top of new preoccupations. The increasing use of soft law as an alternative to legally binding interstate treaties - which have shown their limits in recent years - underlines these methods of governance (Guruparan et al. 2021). Through principles, shared values and declarations, new actors get involve in international politics with the intention of replacing what is often perceived as insufficient state action.

Governance in contemporary politics is marked by heterarchy and the principle of subsidiarity. The former moves away from the principle of hierarchy to stress the interrelations and the need for cooperation between actors, whether national, subnational or international. The latter explains how competences are distributed depending on an ability to tackle and respond to ongoing issues. Together, heterarchy and subsidiarity redistribute power, create new roles and allow governance to redefine the territoriality of power (Crowley 2003) by contesting state spatiality (Brenner 2004) and allowing new actors to step in, such as subnational actors (Aust 2015). Although war remains a central focus of international relations, contemporary challenges, such as climate change, economic debt and more broadly the intersectionality of modern capitalism, legitimize the governance

approach to tackling global issues. High politics thus meets low politics. The European Union is a paramount example of governance at the supranational level. And at the subnational level, global governance gives new weights to cities. Specifically, the changing international system, and the related rebalancing of power between new actors, redefined city power on the global stage and made it an actor of global governance. The urban governance pursued through contemporary city diplomacy epitomizes the "governance experiments" (Hoffman cited in Bulkeley 2010, p.234) that are emerging as a result of the fragmentation of authority on an international scale.

The shift to governance thus opened new "governance niches" (Widerberg et al. 2015, p.52) that allowed new actors to step in the realm of International Relations. This new moment of international relations thus revealed that the state of anarchy of the international system was not a given, but rather a situation defined "by what states make of it" (Wendt 1992). City diplomacy was pursued within this narrative. This "glocal governance" (Chan 2016) is rooted in both subsidiarity and locality: as economic and political actors, cities are to have a seat at the table. Such assumption is enlightening for International Relations because it urges to ask which actor is relevant, and more fundamentally what makes an actors of global politics. With that in mind, the enquiry on city diplomacy connects with the definition of International Relations as set out by Hedley Bull's English School: "IR [is] about establishing a body of general propositions about the global political system; it studies states, but also regions, non-governmental organizations and subnational groups" (Dunne et al. 2013, p.135).

By questioning the basic tryptic of "system-unit-structure" (Curtis 2011, p.1935), city diplomacy - as much as other practices of governance - questions the ontology of the academic field. In fact, while International Relations takes states as reified objects, examples of city diplomacy highlight the intersubjective construction of the international system. As such, the growing influence of urban governance in international politics echoes the 'fourth Great Debate' that divided the discipline in the 1980s and 1990s between rationalists and reflexivists. To summarize in a few words, IR theorists were divided on the ontology, epistemology and methodology of their discipline. More specifically, as the field failed to foresee the end of the Cold War, the question centered on what constitutes international relations and what defines its actors and their interests. From this meta-theoretical debate rose a new paradigm in International Relations. By setting to analyze the intersubjective, mutually-constituted and dynamic nature of international politics (Battistella 2015), constructivism takes identities and interests as part of historical processes. In this perspective, city

diplomacy is a crucial case study for the paradigmatic assumptions of constructivists, and urges to study the "sociological perspectives of world politics" (Battistella 2015, online).

City diplomacy take roots in a new way of conducting international politics. It underlines the growing legitimacy of new actors, both at supranational and subnational levels. As we witness the growing interference of cities in international relations through city diplomacy and the promotion of urban governance, we have to replace it in a broader context of systemic changes that allowed new governance practices. The potential implications for International Relations are great and are enshrined in broader meta-theoretical debates within the field. In order to reach a conclusion on what city diplomacy represents for the discipline of International Relations I now dive into its concrete practice.

2.2 Cities Making Networks

If the notion of city diplomacy evokes the will of local actors to take part in the management of global challenges, city networks has become synonymous with the *modus operandi* of the ongoing "strategic urbanism" (Bulkeley cited in Gordon 2018, p.62). In fact, city networks challenge the conventional conception of networks in International Relations. While these organizations are traditionally perceived as best founded under the self-interests of member-states or as an idealist way of surpassing the state of anarchy (respectively for IR realism and IR classical liberalism), city networks redefine network effects (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009). Through city networks' lenses, power does not ensue from members but from the organization itself. Networks allow cities to find a voice on the international stage. Evocative of this trend of network-making is the UNFCC's call made after the failure of the COP15 and urging the creation of International Cooperation Initiatives guided by both subnational and supranational actors to take firm stances as national environmental goals were insufficient to respond to the climate urgency (Widerberg et al. 2015). Networks elevate cities actions and frame their international role. The study of their development and methods is thus crucial to situate the place of cities in a world of global governance.
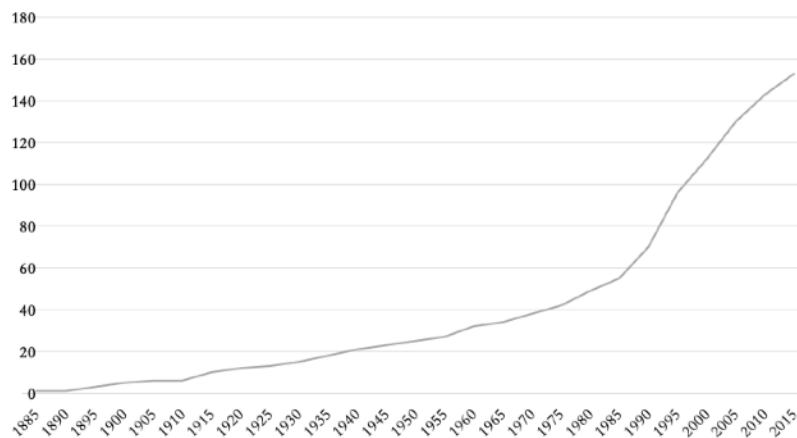
A) From Local Actions to Network-Making

State action differs from city action because the two entities do not enjoy the same politico-legal powers. While states are traditionally conceived as sovereign actors under a state of anarchy, cities

remain stuck in a system of political and economic interdependencies. This ontological difference influences the potential leverage of each actors. As this analysis pointed out earlier, examples of local actions pursued by city officials in an attempt to link urban and global challenges are plenty: Vancouver's initiative to seek ambitious goals of renewable energy, Mexico City's tackling of climate change through air pollution, Dortmund's office for international relations, and so on. But in comparison to states, cities actions do not suffice to claim legitimacy in international politics. For cities, networks have become an end in itself that allows to create momentum and political space to reach recognition (Bulkeley 2010). Distiancing from state-level networks, city networks underline the co-benefits and common interests that bring local actors together (Chan 2016). The importance of networks for city diplomacy stresses the close intertwinement between power and recognition in international politics: to gain enough power, cities need recognition from other actors. The history of International Relations is a history of moving boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of potential actors. Cities, through networks, gain the recognition that is essential to the conduct of international politics.

The history of inter-city networks is closely linked - and perhaps also dependent - to the two phases of city diplomacy defined above. In fact, city networks already existed in the first phase of "municipal voluntarism" (Bulkeley cited in Gordon 2018, p. 62). But as cities entered the second phase of strategic local actions - defined as *the city for* - growing practices of rationalization and professionalization ushered in a new moment for city networks. Moreover, in an urban moment in which cities were becoming strategic sites, and as traditional state-led politics failed to fill governance voids, inter-city networks brought an alternative method to the conduct of international politics. From 1985 onwards, more than a hundred intercity organizations were created with the aim of raising the voice of local leaders and allow city officials to exchange and develop innovative ideas (see Graph 4). A report of the organization Resilient Cities Network underlines the ambition to "change how the world's cities plan for and act upon the greatest challenges of our time" (2019, p.2); the ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability shares similars goals, aiming to " confront the realities of urbanization, adapt to economic and demographic trends and prepare for the impacts of climate change and other urban challenges" (2016, p.2). City networks thus became a springboard for cities longing to take a seat at the table of international politics. As of 2021, more than two hundred city networks exist, Tab 1 sheds light on a few example.

Figure 3: Numbers of networks per year, 1885–2015

Source: Acuto et al. 2016, p.1156

Network	Mission	Creation	Website
Mayors for Peace (8045 member cities)	Contribute to international peace-building through the promotion of total abolition of nuclear weapons, fight against poverty, tackling human rights abuses and environmental degradation.	1982	http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html
Metropolis (141 member cities)	Serve as a platform for local leaders to connect and share practices in order to enhance urban governance.	1984	https://www.metropolis.org
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (more than 2500 local and regional governments)	Promote sustainable urban development through practical solutions and peer exchanges.	1990	https://iclei.org/en/Home.html

			2005	https://www.c40.org
C40 Cities (97 member cities)	Bring local action at the forefront of the fight against climate change through the implementation of the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.			
Resilient Cities Network (100 member cities)	Bring together knowledge, best practices and resources to build safe and equitable cities.		2013	https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org

The 1980s marked a change for city-networks, and more profoundly for their characteristics. In a study conducted by Acuto and Rayner (2016), we learn that the share of regional and international networks continued to grow from the 1980s onwards, accounting respectively for 21% and 29%, while the share of national city networks is 49%. Contemporary practice of city networks also moved away from a Western centric geography to welcome cities from around the world (Kosovac et al. 2020, Bulkeley 2010). Among the key global challenges that these organizations attempt to take on, the environment represents the overwhelming share with 29% (Acuto et al. 2016) - thus verifying an assertion made earlier that stresses the close link between environmental challenges and urban agendas (Tranquard 2020). Among the considerations that follow we find cultural exchanges, inequality, peace-building and energy (see Graph 5).

Figure 2: Subject focus of city networks (n = 170)

Legend:
- Environment
- Culture
- Poverty/inequality
- Energy
- Peacebuilding
- Gender
- Other
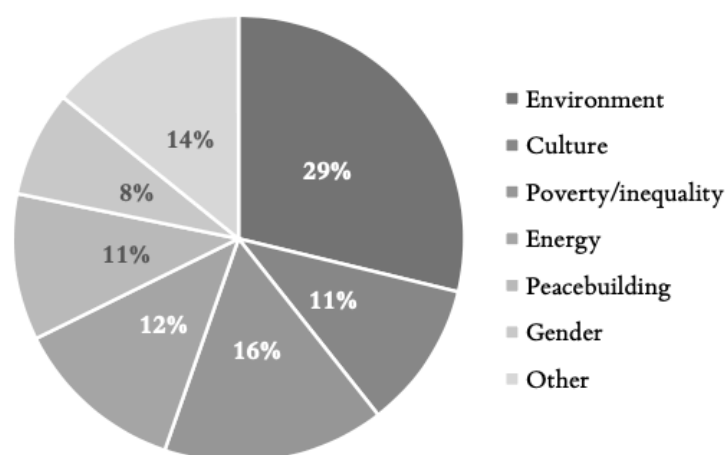
Source: Acuto et al. 2016, p.1154

More profoundly, the core characteristics of city networks bring valuable insights. Membership is open and decisions are non-binding, both because networks lack the politico-legal power to do so and because cities' political leeway differ depending on their national laws. Moreover, as professionalization and pragmatism became cornerstones of city diplomacy, city networks took the same path and went through a process of institutionalization. What resulted was the creation of effective bureaucracies, through the appointment of officials and secretariats dedicated to the organization. Among the many organizations created in the past 40 years, we find a few examples: Mayors for Peace is structured around a secretariat and a committee of executive cities that discuss shared initiatives; similarly, the ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability has a Board of Directors and several offices in charge of the day-to-day affairs of the organization.

A related effect of this rationalization was the implementation of tools of scrutiny and assessment dedicated to both the organizations and their members. With mechanisms such as statistical tools, benchmarking and target setting, city networks become forums for local actors to share successes, targets and concerns for global challenges (Bulkeley 2010). These tools became crucial as cities increasingly attempted to take stances on matters such as climate change, social justice and economic growth.

On the basis of these parameters, city networks take part in "informal international law making" (Acuto in Aust 2015, p.272). The latter distances itself from traditional international actions conducted by states. Rather, "INLAW" is characteristic of city networks as actions are not translated as binding decisions but shaped through soft law and shared principles of actions.

Furthermore, as city networks differ in nature from state networks, they lack the sufficient financial resources to pursue and implement their actions. A direct effect of this strain is a reliance on private organizations and business actors to finance projects. Evocative of the involvement of private actors is the role played by The Rockefeller Foundation in the engineering of the Resilient Cities Network, or the role of Bloomberg Philanthropies in the financing of the C40 Cities network. All in all, the new scale of city networks, alongside their institutionalization and collaboration with private actors, allowed such organizations to become central places for local initiatives. City networks provided the necessary resources, whether technical or financial, and political space for "local policy entrepreneurs" (Bulkeley 2010, p.238) to link urban and global challenges.

However, the shift that happened in the 1980s onwards and that allowed city networks to enhance "strategy and alliance capability" (Acuto et al. 2016, p.1156) should be nuanced. City networks are far from being "flat", to reprise Kern (cited in Acuto 2013, p.852). It would be misleading to assume that they are necessarily synonymous with horizontality and poly-centric forms of governance. Two notes can be made in this regard. First, as membership is relatively non-binding and networks do not have the sufficient authority to impose decisions upon member cities, those organizations are likely to end up being networks of "pioneers for pioneers" (Kern et al. 2009). That is, the *laissez faire* of networks can easily create a distinction between cities that are leaders in urban governance and other free riders that benefit from the image of commitment and decisions of members while not implementing decisions. Secondly, although city diplomacy and network-making differs from state-to-state relations, it does not necessarily break away from the structural inequalities of international politics. A "New York-London axis" (cited in Acuto 2013, p.853) remains existent in city-networks, thus highlighting deeper North-South divides that characterize the conduct of international relations.

B) Theorizing City Networks

In the discipline of International Relations, theories serve to make sense of global politics and its actors. In this sense, it is fair to look at the academic field's traditions in an attempt to frame city networks. This exercises is enlightening for the study of IR because not only does it shed light on paradigmatic debates, it also pushes the field to find new approaches to global dynamics.

Having underlined the complex relations between local authorities and states in the conduct of city diplomacy and the establishment of city networks, the liberal intergovernmentalism developed by Andrew Moravcsik can bring key insights. For the author (Moravcsik 1997), the interdependencies of the international system urges actors to satisfy their needs considering the interests of others. From this perspective, local actors benefit from the positive externalities that arise because urban efforts are beneficial to all international actors. In the typical example of a governance void, this would mean that cities' involvement is welcomed by other actors because it is valuable to the common good. Moreover, it would also mean that interdependencies would prevent local actors to take bold actions because liberal intergovernmentalism sees international politics as a two-level game: at the first level, cities' interests are determined by local issues; at the second level, actors bargain for leverage which eventually acknowledge - or not - certain powers. Although such theory

stresses the interdependencies that characterize the conduct of city diplomacy and network-making, it lacks an explanation of social dynamics and governance learning.

By analyzing the moving frontiers of International Relations and the social dynamics that legitimize actors, constructivism can bring new perspectives to network-making. In fact, the constructivist paradigm allows to make sense of the changing inter-subjective nature of the international system and the growing importance of city networks (Gordon 2020). While liberal intergovernmentalism studies the actors and networks in regards to other units, constructivism questions the intersubjective nature of the international system. As a result, city networks are not perceived as black boxes, they are characterized by interactions and internal dynamics that shape their prospect of actions. Local actors become organized around a shared understanding of an opportunity or a challenge and forge an intersubjective identity that "locks in" a network (Acuto et al. 2016).

The concept of "governance field" (Gordon 2020) can be used to explain the blooming of city networks throughout the past decades. The notion draws from the constructivist tradition to underline the social constitution and power dynamics that shape actors and organizations. A first step towards the construction of a network is the realization of an existing gridlock or gap in a governance complex. For cities, it was illustrated with governance voids in climate management, or with the underestimation of the local scale by national authorities. In the second step, a group of actors come together to define a set of common interests and goals to be achieved through a new organization. In this regard, governance field allows to move away from a conception of networks solely based on "a matter of implementing solutions" to consider them as "constitutions and configurations of what should be governed" (Gordon 2020, p.63). Moreover, governance fields are necessarily rooted in historically defined habitus which provide them with a sense of disposition, ideas and interests (Gordon 2020). But rather than being restrictive, this habitus is a structuring structure. Hence, the intertwinement between city diplomacy and the urban moment: the urban moment empowers cities with a sense of legitimacy that they then attempt to seize through networks. What empowers cities to take part in international politics and to form networks is a historical and dynamic process that put the urban at the same level as other global challenges. Cities come together with the realization that they can bring something to international politics, and what fuels them is a historical moment enshrined in governance and urban strategic sites.

Network-making for cities pushes the academic field of International Relations to look beyond 'Great Debates' and attempt to explain new dynamics on the international stage. Governance field highlights the extent to which international politics is subject to social reconstitutions and how new actors come to be legitimized. This process underlines the socially constituted nature of city networks and will be used in the case study later in this analysis.

2.3 The Urban Governance of What ?

Through city diplomacy and its vessels, local actors aim at representing themselves and their interests on the international stage. In this process, recognition is a central mechanism in the acknowledgment of new actors and subsequent opening of the international system. But what makes cities fit within international relations ? What allows cities to aspire to take an international role without disrupting the structure of the international system ? The conduct of city diplomacy asks the questions of what is governed and under what conditions. The ongoing phase of city diplomacy is far from sharing the features of a Westphalian moment that would redistribute the roles and interests of actors. Far from it. Having discussed the channels through which city diplomacy is conducted, it is necessary to look at what city diplomacy says more broadly about the international system. City diplomacy, it appears, fits neatly within a hegemonic structure of international relations that puts governance at its core. As a result, local actors are both shaped and constrained in their international ambitions. Put simply, cities thrive within a world of governance.

A) The City, Governance and Governmentality

Up to this point, this analysis has shown the intricate links between the urban moment that has made cities strategic sites and their growing aspirations to take part in international politics. One point needs to be furthered, however. How does cities learn the practice of global governance ? In other words, how local actors situate their identities and interests in the broader international system? Governance learning sheds light on this process in which "stakeholders interact in response to a given societal problem, thereby constituting a mode of governance of the polity, politics and policy" (Wolfram et al. 2019, p.3). Such question urges to not only consider the city as a subject but also as an agent of a broader phenomenon.

The conduct of city diplomacy is revealing of a system of international relations that has embraced the notion of governance. However, the concept of governance fails to account for the dissemination of "techniques of governmentality" across the entire international system (Crowley 2003). As it was mentioned earlier, the neoliberalization of the 1980 instilled a new ethos that redefined identities and practices of government. The redefinition of the state's place in the society came together with a dissemination of governmentality that was illustrated at the local level through a new territoriality and an innovative local entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989). Cities became entangled in a new governmentality rooted in rationalization and technicality of power (Lascoumes 2004). This process did not just reshape cities, the whole range of actors embraced a certain way of "governing others and themselves" (Lascoumes 2004) thus becoming pivot points rooted in governmentality (Le Galès 2020). These techniques are found in the professionalization and standardization of elites, the focus on economic and financial results, the growing use of statistical tools and technologies of information and communication, just to name a few.

Moving away from governance, governmentality allows to understand the process of subjectivization instilled through discourse and actions. In fact, the diffusion of governmentality became the backbone on which cities built their aspirations to find a place in international relations. The reengineering of the state's place both domestically and internationally opened interstices for non-traditional actors to prosper. But the diffusion of an ethos of governmentality both empowered and restrained these new actors. New subjects of international politics were given a voice provided that they abided by hegemonic practices and standards of government. City diplomacy could thus prosper but only insofar that it didn't question the teleology of an international system build around states and governmentalized by predefined rules. City power was thus a contingent outcome rooted in the profound changes of governmental practices. In International Relations, city power is therefore not a contestation of the international system but a facet of the world order (Curtis 2016).

In essence, what characterized city diplomacy throughout the past decades is a process of institutionalization and professionalization that ultimately shares the codes of contemporary governance. City diplomacy is consensual and abides by the rules of the game, thus insuring its recognition by other actors. Multiple involvements in international organizations, the conduct of city-to-city talks and the creation of city networks, all these practices have abided by standards of governance with the end result of fitting neatly within the international system. In fact, not a single city network openly defy the contemporary international order. Organizations of strategic urbanism

do, however, contribute to the reinforcement of the latter. In other words, these actions do not contest contemporary politics but rather seek to find a place within it. For Broto (2017), this process finds a clear illustration in the attribution of responsibilities of climate change and the following subjectivization of actors. In fact, because traditional international decision-making failed to answer to environmental threats, governmentality has been disseminated across actors at all scales to take stances. The 2013 call of the UNFCC to create International Cooperative Initiatives (Widerberg et al. 2015) epitomized this willingness to distribute responsibilities at all levels of governance. The city, as a strategic site, is both empowered and limited in its frame of actions due to the subjectivization brought about by governmentality and enshrined in discourse.

To go back to the notion of governance learning, the use of governmentality in city diplomacy allows to understand where local initiatives fit within the international system. The international initiatives of local actors reflect a broader willingness of non-traditional entities to make a change on the global stage. Cities and their networks thus share a sense of being capable and rightful members in the governance of global challenges. However, they are conditioned in their practice of global governance by a certain governmentality. In this perspective, city diplomacy is rooted in a governance learning that reflects existing policy schemes and jurisdictions. Embedded in a hegemonic discourse of governance, cities become agents of international politics. They do not defy global politics, but constitute it as actors. And what it means is that local actors bring just enough new arguments to international politics to bring about debates, but don't enjoy enough power to wage systemic contestation.

B) Weighting the Potential for Change

The notion of governmentality allows us to situate the place of city diplomacy within international politics. Having defined their role in relation to a wider system, what arises is the question of their effective potential of bringing change to international affairs. At a time in which we frame global issues as urban challenges and opportunities and in which cities long for a seat at the table, this question becomes central. These implications urge to weight the potential for change brought about by local actors' involvement in international politics.

Because city diplomacy is embedded in a governance complex that has created its own regime of truth, it conceives international relations through a specific lens. The narrative pursued in this process aims at changing as little as possible, thus not fundamentally altering governance but rather to pursue the conduct of the same policies through other means (James et al. 2015). Through their individual actions and shared networks, cities have centered themselves on economic and political prerogatives that rotate around competitiveness, sustainability and infrastructural efficiency. Strategies shared by local actors aim at creating a sustainable city, a notion already pointed out for its bias in regards to economic goals (Whitehead 2013). The goal is to achieve economic growth, attract capital and insure effective infrastructures (Heikkinen et al. 2019). In short, city diplomacy embraces the broader compromise of liberalism (Gordon 2018, p.10). In this perspective it can be argued that city diplomacy and network-making are embedded in a hegemonic discourse rooted in economic and political imperatives that do not critically engage with their own system - thus validating the governmentality of city diplomacy practices. The institutionalization and professionalization of city diplomacy contributes to the dissemination of an ethos that takes "good governance" as its central feature. In this perspective, what matters is economic sustainability, financial attractiveness, and institutionalism at the expanse of actual local realities and the plurality of urban worlds. What this legitimizes is a world of "liberal legalism" (Nicola et al. 2016) that pervades all images of the world by imposing a unilateral way of tackling challenges through marketization and technocracy.

In this process, citizens are often left behind, waging the shadow of a growing depoliticization of local policies (Acuto 2013) at a time of increasing political distrust. Indeed, cities and their networks pursue a logic of "marketization" (Acuto 2013) of city public policy for which decisions are made behind close doors and conducted by technocratic elites outside the scrutiny of their citizens.

A few concluding remarks can be made to close this chapter. The urban moment brought with itself promises of change. A historical moment made cities strategic sites in international politics. City diplomacy and the blooming of city networks offered new perspectives for conducting international relations. At a time in which urban opportunities and global challenges intertwine, it became crucial for actors to find a place within the international community. Yet, city diplomacy emerged embedded in a hegemonic discourse that conditioned its potential of action. What appeared revolutionary was in fact limited in practice. In the frame of international relations, cities are

allowed to bring incremental change, but not to question the system (Heikkinen et al. 2019). To reprise Pluijm et al. (2007), although cities and states do not ride in the same car, they do share the same route. And to that I may add, state's governmentality controls the speed limit. After all, cities live within a world of states.

Chapter III : C40 Is What Cities Make Of It

During the research conducted for this work, I had the opportunity to interview Emmanuelle Pinault, Director of City Diplomacy at C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. Her argument highlighted the role the intercity network seeks to have in raising awareness on (global) urban challenges:

> "Along the years, as we witnessed nation-states fail to make substantial commitments for the environment, cities firmed up their engagement. […] City diplomacy has become a channel for progressive and ambitious political leadership [and] in the midst of all this, the role of C40 is primarily to be a forum, a place of exchange, for city leaders to share their best practices." (2021, interview)

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group was created in 2005 under the impulsion of then London Mayor Ken Livingstone. Following a meeting of the G8 which failed to discuss the urgency of climate change and environmental protection, the local leader decided to create, alongside 17 fellow mayors, a network of cities that would take the fight for climate as its *raison d'être*. Through successive waves of enlargements, the C40 illustrated its ability to gather local leaders from around the world to take rapid actions. As of 2020, the organization gathered 97 cities, representing 27% of the global economy and accounting for more than 800 million people (C40 2020). Perhaps even more important is the number of actions taken by its members: in 2016, the city network documented nearly 11,000 discrete climate actions implemented by its members, a number that tripled in comparison to 2011 (Gordon 2020, p.7). More importantly, the commitments of the organization and its member cities underlined a pivotal claim championed by local actors: "while nations talk, cities act" (Gordon 2020, p.3).

Although the C40 is a relatively young organization, it has managed to sideline similar city networks by continuously augmenting its influence as an institution of international politics (Gordon 2020). By bringing together cities from all continents, the organization has built a legitimacy that epitomizes the goals of city diplomacy. In short, the city network aims at being "the premier forum for cities committed to taking actions for climate" (Pinault 2021, interview).

Moreover, the C40 network is a clear illustration of the new place of cities in international relations. Firstly, the birth of the network is enshrined in an urban moment that has empowered cities and shed light on their ability of being strategic sites of actions. Secondly, the city network takes root in the global governance that shapes the conduct of city diplomacy. Thus, an in-depth study of city diplomacy *à la* C40 allows to understand how "cities have gained the right to have a seat at the global table, and play an important role in the redefinition of multilateralism" (Pinault 2021, interview).

This section aims at using the concepts brought forward earlier to make sense of the concrete practice of city diplomacy through the C40 network. The title of this third chapter makes a direct reference to the work of International Relations theorist and constructivist Alexander Wendt by stating that 'C40 is what cities make of it'. The underlying assumption here embraces a point made earlier which stresses the social construction and dynamics at the heart of city diplomacy. Far from being an empty box, the C40 is constructed by the practice of its members, an assumption key to the constructivist tradition (Gordon 2020). The paradigm thus becomes central in order to understand how the construct and subsequent practice of the C40 network shapes city diplomacy and what it tells us of its place in the broader international system. The argument made in this section verifies the theoretical observations made earlier: the willingness to shape C40 as a network *of* and *for* cities takes root in an urban moment that legitimizes cities and the intertwinement between urban and global challenges. Moreover, the practice of city diplomacy conducted through C40 sheds light on the dynamics of "glocal governance" (Chan 2016), in other words, a practice that is empowered by network-effects and embedded in deeper discourses of governance.

3.1 Translating Urban Interests Into a Global Network

The creation of the C40 network draws on the ambition to connect actors, resources and institutions into a "new multi-scalar aggregations beyond the hierarchical structures of states" (Aust 2015, p.261). The overlap of local and global challenges becomes an opportunity for cities to take on a new role within the realm of international politics. In this, the network is constructed on the co-benefits and common interests shared by local actors. Its organization is structured on the aim of bringing forward the opportunities of local governance for global challenges. As a result, C40 becomes "a channel for progressive and ambitious political leadership" (Pinault 2021, interview).

A) The Construction of a Cohesive Network

When it was created in 2005, the C40 took part in a new generation of city diplomacy that aimed at making the most of the new political spaces allowed by the shift from central government to heterarchical governance. More specifically, global cities embraced a new phase of city diplomacy in which network-making and institutionalization were core features. Sixteen years after its creation under the impulsion of 18 global cities, the C40 network gathers almost a hundred cities under a complex organization that reflects the trends of contemporary city diplomacy.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the C40 network is its rapid development and opening to cities all around the world. The organization includes diverse members, from all continents, all of which are already taking part in numerous city networks. Membership to C40 is non-hierarchical and voluntary, based on the sole assumption that member cities are dedicated to tackling climate change through local actions. Among its members we find New York, London, Los Angeles, Paris, Mumbai, Lagos, Lima, just to name a few (see Map 2). In total, the C40 gathers 1 in 12 people worldwide. All of the network's members reflect an ongoing feature pointed out in the first section of this analysis: an urban moment that puts cities both at the centre of contemporary challenges and at a pivotal place for actions.

Source: C40 Cities, Online

Although the founding members were overwhelmingly from the Western world, successive openings have broadened the scope of the organization. The diversification of C40 has allowed a

relative even distribution of member cities around the world (see Graph 6). This evolution is representative of a broader trend in city networks that seeks to open membership to all local actors. Moreover, this gradual opening of the C40 network also illustrates the willingness to give a voice to every practice of urban governance that can eventually benefit to the environment. However, the relative opening of the C40 membership should be nuanced.
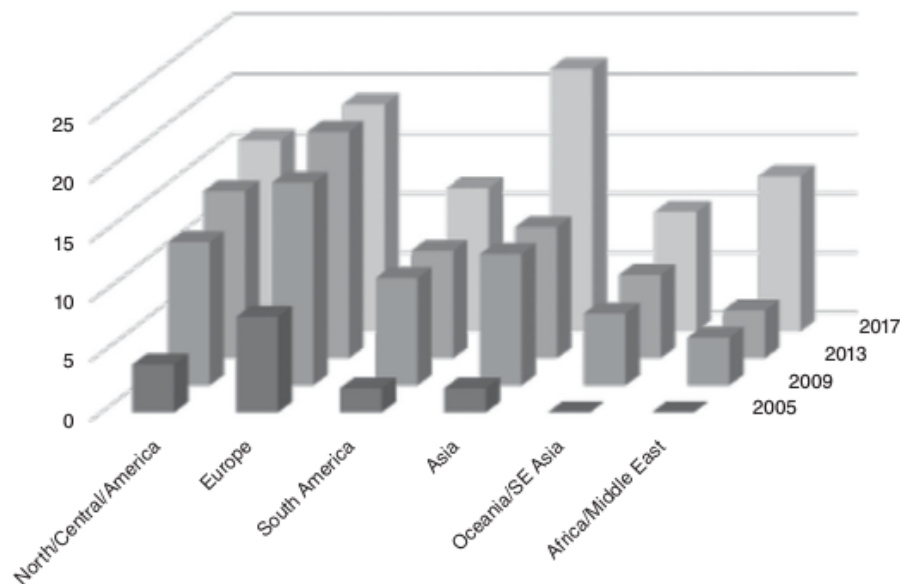

Figure 1.1 C40 composition by geographic region (2005, 2009, 2013, 2017)

Source: Gordon 2020, p.36

When looking at the organization's city members through the prism of income level, we find the overrepresentation of high income level cities (see Graph 7). There is, nonetheless, an increasing share of upper-middle and lower-middle income cities, thus showing a willingness to broaden the scope of the organization (Gordon 2020). A clear illustration of this ambition was made in 2012 with the implementation of new membership guidelines. Besides Megacities (cities with a population of more than three million inhabitants), membership was broadened to include Innovator cities (that have shown clear leadership in climate actions) and Observer cities (either for cities in the process of entering the organization, or for cities that lack regulatory powers to take international actions).
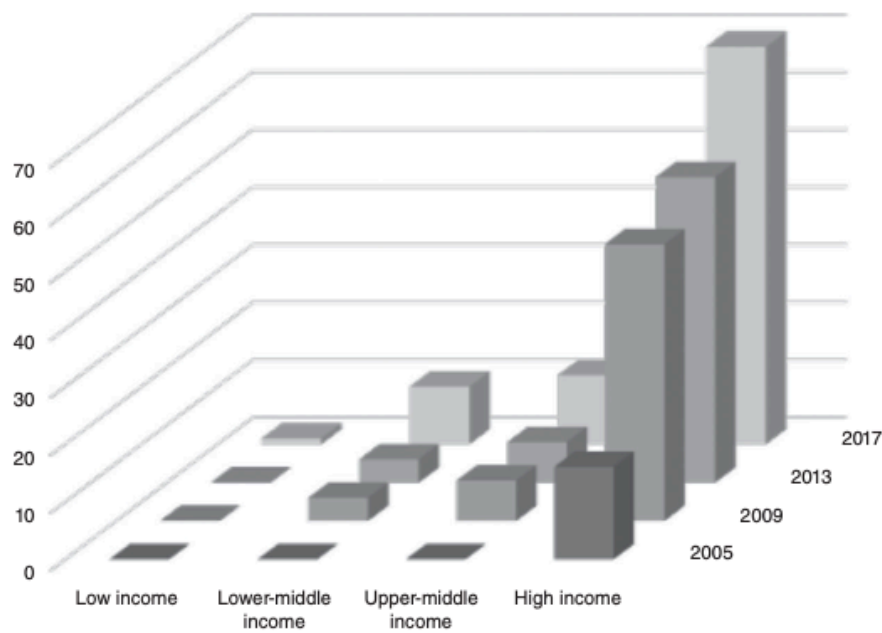
Figure 1.2 C40 composition by income level (2005, 2009, 2013, 2017)

Source: Gordon 2020, p.36

In conjunction with the evolution of its members, C40 went through a process of institutionalization that reflected a commitment to take part in international relations. The Hong Kong Strategy of 2015 enshrined a process of institution-building deemed essential to the conduct of the organization (Acuto 2013). The structure of the organization is divided into two branches, a Steering Committee of Mayors and a Board of Directors. The Steering Committee is elected by member cities to reflect the diversity of the network: two representatives for each of the seven geographical areas, plus two members representing 'Innovative Cities'. The Committee is headed by the Chair of the C40 elected by its peers, currently Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. The second organ is a Board of Directors of 9 members, in charge of the operational oversight of the organization and currently headed by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Moreover, the C40 organization has become representative of the hybrid governance of city networks. In fact, limited in practice by financial resources, the organization has created partnerships with private and traditional actors. Among these we find three Strategic partners: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Realdania and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. Other private actors include Johnson & Johnson, L'Oréal, Clean Air Fund, Open Society Foundation, among others. This close link with private actors is enshrined in an entrepreneurialism that has

become synonymous with local governance and binds together city officials and private businesses to take urban actions. Furthermore, the C40 also received support from state actors, as was recently illustrated by grant from the United Kingdom amounting to £27 million, or recent cooperation agreement with the German and Dutch governments (Acuto et al. 2019, p.710).

The conduct of city diplomacy through C40 has illustrated a defining feature of glocal governance: knowledge through action and action through knowledge. By setting standards and tools that place cities within a broader framework of global issues, the network creates a legitimacy for action (Betsill et al. 2007). Indeed, C40 has built its strength through the continual production of research-based reports that support the need for local actions in the fight against climate change. Among the recent reports published by the C40 organization we find: Defining Carbon Neutrality for Cities & Managing Residual Emissions (2019), Summary for Urban Policymakers: What the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C Means for Cities (2018), Municipality-led circular economy case studies (2018). Moreover, C40 has created two separate entities that foster knowledge sharing. Firstly, the C40 Knowledge serves as a digital platform dedicated to cities and allowing them to find relevant data and best practices implemented by other members. Secondly, the C40 launched in 2017 a Climate Adaptation Academy in Rotterdam dedicated to local officials and urban planners to learn how to adapt their cities to climate change and safeguard the environment. All in all, this parallels a broader conduct of city networks for which momentum and legitimacy is built through empirical evidence that local actions are central to global challenges (Acuto et al. 2016, p.1163).

In less than two decades the C40 organization has managed to construct a cohesive organization built on the assumption that local actors are central to resolving global challenges. The successive waves of institutionalization have allowed to gain the recognition necessary to the construction of its international identity. Its features underline the core characteristics of city diplomacy and network building for local actors.

B)   Shaping an Ambitious Strategy

Through a cohesive structure the C40 organization aims at fostering an ambitious strategy that puts local actors at the centre of global environmental action. The goal of the city network is not just to follow states, it is to lead the way in climate action.

Empowered by the "70% mantra" (Aust 2015, p.262) for which two third of greenhouse gas emissions come from cities and thus justifies that local actors play a role in taming global (urban) pollution, C40 wants to be acknowledged as a cornerstone of climate action. The network has taken upon itself the mission to "halve the collective carbon emissions of member cities within a decade, while improving resilience and equity and creating the conditions for everyone, everywhere to thrive" (C40 2020, p.4). In order to reach this, C40 seeks to be a forum through which local climate action can blossom. City actors take part in discussions, share data, skills and know-hows that can benefit to every territory. In this perspective, the organization is a knowledge broker, a "policy kernel" (Lee et al. 2014, p.479), that creates a base policy adaptable to local characteristics. The principle is simple: what works should be shared.

Throughout the years, the city network has organized issue-based workshops for local officials to discuss best local practices (Acuto 2013). In 2008, meetings in Los Angeles and Rotterdam focused on airports and ports planning. In 2010, a workshop organized in Berlin focused on energy efficiency. As a result of these seminars and in conjunctions with other discussions, member cities have implemented and reproduced the successes of others: for instance between 2009 and 2020, the number of C40 cities with a cycle hire scheme increased by over 60%; in the same period, the number of C40 cities incentivizing renewable electricity increased by 650% (C40 2020). In this process, the organization attempts to insure that all best practices are shared in order to go beyond the traditional North/South divide. As an example, cities from South America have demonstrated the successes of Bus Rapid Transits, the creation of dedicated routes for public transportation. After having discussed the implementation of these systems, 35 C40 cities have engaged further action to implement the same techniques (Chan 2016). It is as if the more pragmatic discussions took place, the less they focused on the preexisting biases of international politics. The direct consequence of this was an overall increase in the members' local actions for climate: from under 59 actions/city in 2005 to 135 actions/city in 2017 (Gordon 2020, p.38). And it was expected that the actions encouraged by C40 up until 2020 would result in a reduction of 645 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e), an amount greater than the annual emissions generated by countries such as South Korea or Australia (Gordon 2020, p.8).

The C40 network has also pursued a lobbyism that seeks to place it at the center stage of environmental action (Aust 2015). Alongside other key city networks, C40 took part in active campaigns to have international organizations acknowledge the role of local actors. It resulted in the

recognition of the role of cities in the Sustainable Development Goal 11 of the United Nations. The activism pursued by local actors also pushed the scientific community to stress the role of local actions in the fight against climate change. This was illustrated in the creation in 2018 of a Global Research and Action Agenda bringing together the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), local actors and city networks.

More profoundly, the conjunction of pragmatic talks on best practices and the lobbyism of the C40 sheds light on the existence of two separate branches of the strategy of C40. On the one hand, a "C40 for Mayors" (Acuto et al. 2019, p.710) allows to bring together local actors, creating a strategic global platform that fosters local action by bringing city actors together. On the other, a "C40 for Cities" (Acuto et al. 2019, p.710) gathers scientific evidence to lobby and champion urban interests on the global stage. Together, they are two sides of a some coin that shapes the ambitious strategy of the C40 city network.

3.2 … Within the Scheme of Global Governance

The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has become structured through a complex set of institutions producing the knowledge necessary to the legitimacy of its members' actions. In just over 16 years the organization has become a pivotal forum of not just city diplomacy but also of international action. Putting aside the process of institution-building, the question of its place in the broader international system becomes crucial. What this reveals is an organization that thrives within a particular discourse of international action and that legitimizes a governmentalized conduct of city networked diplomacy.

A) The Development of a Global Governance Field

The C40 network has been forged through the actions of its members. Its gradual development has highlighted a phase of social construction that echoes the paradigmatic claims of IR constructivists. The city network has gained momentum through the inter-subjective relevancy it gained following the commitments of its members. In fact, the network has epitomized what Gordon (2020) refers to as a "global governance field": a socially constituted organization that fuels on the authority, acknowledgment and power its actors place within it.

In the economic and political era of post-Fordism, cities have became cradles of neoliberal power. As a direct result, cities took it upon themselves to create new responsibilities in regards to global challenges. In the face of intergovernmental gridlocks and environmental urgency, global cities took stances to bring forward their ability as local actors to promote change at their level. By intertwining urban and global agendas, local actors became "global urban climate governors" (Gordon 2020, p.85). The notion allows to distance from the concrete actions discussed earlier to study more profoundly how actors come to alter how they perceive themselves as international actors. In this perspective, collective action within a governance network is a function of the ability to gather actors around a shared perspective and common goal (Gordon 2020). The building of the C40 network is a crucial illustration of the birth of a global governance field.

Being in essence a social construction, C40 gradually built its legitimacy, both in regards to its members and more broadly in regards to other international actors. Three successive trends have molded the city network. From 2005 to 2009, the network was perceived as a forum for discussion, however its members failed to see themselves as agents of climate governance. From 2009 to 2013, a period of clustering planted the seeds for a new image of the network. By 2013 the convergence of cities allowed the perception of the C40 as an entity of autonomous agency with members committed to a standardization of both monitoring and action (Gordon 2020). The reasons for this gradual development fall both within and outside the life of the C40. From 2013 onwards, the organization benefited from strong leadership and outside support. Under the tenures of Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes and successively Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, the organization embraced a strategic shift in its ambitions as a forum for environmental action. Framing cities' environmental challenge as "defining for our generation" (Hidalgo 2019, online), local actors were called upon to lead the way of climate actions. In the same timeframe, the C40 welcomed new members and took part in the discussions leading up to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 thus stressing a clear ambition to be acknowledged by the international community. Moreover, continuous international gridlocks, popular protests and the rise environmental - urban - catastrophes, urged local actors to take bold stances in the fight against climate change.

The social constitution of the C40 network gradually empowered the organization's ability to influence its members and push them to implement bold actions in the fights against climate change. A study conducted by Lee et al. (2014) showed that formal membership to C40 resulted in a stronger commitment to environmental action. Not only did inter-city dialogue fostered local action,

it also urged actors to implement the best practices for altering environmental degradation and insuring sustainable development. Two-thirds of members showed evidence of environmental commitments in both actions and discourse (Gordon 2020). What this reveals is a dual process through which local actors constitute and empower the network, while at the same time the network pushes cities to implement the best actions through network discussions.

Studying the C40 organization as a governance field allows to go further than the classical analysis of its structure. The actual practice of the network shows a process of consolidation that takes root in the increasing commitments of its members. It becomes a governance field of local governors who take their actions as central to global challenges. In this process, the C40 becomes a source of influence, an "actor-network" that exerts power as a result of its constitution (Acuto 2013).

B) Strengthening a Discourse of Governmentality

Up to this point this case study has shed light on the construction of the organizations's "legitimacy" and "effectiveness". Pinault (interview 2021) underlined the intrinsic link between city diplomacy and multilateralism, adding that "it is highly unlikely that state-to-state diplomacy will be replaced by city diplomacy. The question arise, then, regarding its "institutional fit", to reprise Widerberg et al.'s study (2015) on the ambitions of paradiplomatic initiatives. This question allows to understand in what discourse C40 roots its actions, and extensively makes sense of its capacity to bring about an effective change in the realm of International Relations.

Are C40's ambitions "incremental, reformistic or transformational" (Heikkinen et al. 2017) ? In other words, how do its members' actions fit within the political and economic realm ? In a study conducted on 12 C40 cities, divided equally between the North and South, Heikkinen et al. (2017) showed that the strategies brought forward within the organization were centered on three key pillars: the economy, infrastructure-building, and socio-political solutions. Among the first category, the aim for cities was to insure an urban environment in which green growth could thrive. Innovations, together with start-ups and new business models, will instill a new economic model more in cline with the preservation of natural resources. Moreover, a clear stress was put on infrastructures. The discussed strategies aim at developing strong infrastructures that protect cities against natural disasters, promote public transportation systems and renewable energies. In this,

socio-political solutions are merely centered on raising awareness and creating campaigns for public support. Citizens, more precisely, are passive in the initiatives promoted within the C40 network.

The concrete actions promoted by the C40 network allows to understand its place within the governance discourse of climate change. In its conception, city diplomacy is reformistic and not enshrined in any radical transformation. It embraces the "compromise of liberal environmentalism" (Bernstein cited in Gordon 2020, p.93) for which the adaptations of the capitalist system can preserve natural resources. Moreover, it is rooted in an attribution of the responsibilities of climate change that instills a governmentality within the conduct of city diplomacy. This means that the practice of city diplomacy abides by a precise exercise of power that reflects the technicality of state's power and the rationalization of action (Lascoumes 2004). As a result of these two implications, the teleology of city diplomacy is left unquestioned. In fact, the intertwinement between neoliberal imperatives and modern practices of governmentality fundamentally limit the ability of the C40 network to bring about a profound change in the practice of international relations. Rather than an evolution of the international system, it highlights the passage from state hegemony to a structure of multi-scalar governance united under predefined techniques of government.

Nonetheless, there remains a possibility of changes within the frame. As it was noted earlier, city diplomacy and networked urbanism are rooted in new practices of global governance that distance themselves from traditional state-to-state diplomacy. The local paradiplomacy takes benefit of the governance void to instill new ways of conducting international politics. It fosters a practice of international relations that is less conflictual and more pragmatic, that builds on cooperation rather than confrontation, and that acknowledges the dynamics enabled by its social constitution. As a result, despite being framed by a governmentality, C40 illustrates the capacity of city networks to take advantage of power leeways. The city-to-city organization promotes both "inclusiveness and equality" (Pinault interview 2021). In practice, this is found in the relative equal balance between North cities and South cities and the equal voice in creating a dialogue for local actions (Chan 2016). Another clear examples of the potential of change brought about by C40 is the window it offers to gender equality. There are more women local leaders than there are women national leaders. During the recent Climate Summit hosted by US President Joe Biden in April 2021 almost all state leaders were men. But the subnational meeting showed a stark contrast with the high participation of women local leaders (Pinault interview 2021). These examples, though reformistic,

underline the ability that C40 holds to promote an alternative way of conducting diplomacy in the limits of the frame imposed to it by the standards of international relations.

Together, the rapid development of the C40 network and its concomitant successes of raising the bar of local environmental action, brought a promise of change to international politics. However, its innovative nature is limited in essence. The strategic urbanism championed by C40 is in fact representative of the key trends that are shaping the direction of global governance (Acuto 2019). Networked urbanism *à la* C40 epitomizes how city diplomacy fits within the international system: an actor of global governance that abides by the rules, constitutes the system, and does not fundamentally question the practices of modern governmentality.

Conclusion

The growing involvement of cities within the field of International Relations brought with it its share of hope for bringing change to a system facing multi-scalar threats. City diplomacy and its subsequent practice of network-making shed light on a new way of conducting international politics, a prospect crucial not only to tackle "glocal" challenges but also for advancing knowledge in the field of IR. However, the reality of city diplomacy is more nuanced than what it appears.

The fundamental plasticity of cities illustrated in the spatial creative destruction that made and remade the urban world was proven essential from the 1980s onwards. The image of the city inherited from both state-building and industrialization and that subordinated the local scale to profound changes was altered by economic changes and political turnarounds. Moreover, as urban challenges increasingly overlapped with global threats, the city was empowered as a strategic site of action. Enabled by a new identity, the city cemented its new place by taking part in international politics.

Through the evolution of its practice, city diplomacy insured that cities would find a voice among other traditional international actors. In fact, it went through a process of formalization and institutionalization that insured that local actors would have a seat at the table of international relations. This was allowed by a broader shift from state hierarchy to global governance's heterarchy, a transition which opened governance voids to be filled by new actors. The practice of city diplomacy then took roots in an original practice of international relations which highlighted the dynamics through which values and identities are forged. For cities, networks became essential channels to voice their ambitions and seek the acknowledgment of other actors. In an era of governance, city actors gathered to champion the overlap between urban opportunities and global challenges.

The study of the effective practice of this "glocal governance" allows to frame how city diplomacy fits within a world of states. The retreat of the state consubstantial to the shift towards global governance was accompanied by a dissemination of techniques of government which eventually conditioned the power leverage of new actors. Shaped by governmentality, cities are limited in their scope of action, thereby restricting what appears at first sight an ambitious contestation of international relations' status quo. The systemic implications of this argument are crucial.

Governmentality is rooted in practices of standardization, professionalization and complexification. It contributes to the establishment of a "unidimensional world" (Battistella 2015) that fails to conceive itself outside of its own hegemonic discourse. Although these implications are not the core of this analysis, they wage an important question in a world threatened by existential menaces that require ontological questions.

Although the growing ambitions of cities to take part in international relations are rooted in profound evolutions of the urban, and although local actors are acknowledged as new international actors, they are shaped and conditioned by a world of states. Cities fall within the contemporary structure of international relations because it is fundamentally a contingent historical moment that has empowered them as legitimate actors.

This moment, however, is not only contingent, it is also fragile. The ongoing tensions in the city of Hong Kong epitomize the frail balance on which city power and diplomacy have unravelled in the last decades. Hong Kong is a city stuck between two different worlds of international relations. Hong Kong reminds us that cities are "multipliers, capable of adapting to change and helping to bring it about" (Braudel cited in Alger 1990, p.494). On the one hand, it is a global city that has led the way for the acknowledgement of the urban link within the realm of international politics: rooted in the knowledge economy of post-Fordism, threatened by challenges that are urban by nature, ambitious in the city diplomacy it conducts. On the other hand, the city is one of the epicenters of the contestation of the international world order. What is at stake in Hong Kong is not only the autonomy of a city threatened by the People's Republic of China, it is also the future of a world order based on governance. And on this second route, city power does not necessarily have a bright future.

Summary

What if mayors ruled the world ? Fueled by politico-economic changes, demographic growth and social dynamics, the world has ushered in a new urban moment of which consequences and implications are understudied. In this, cities throughout the world aspire to gain a seat at the table of international politics. This momentum is illustrated by the increasing interests in notions such as "city diplomacy", "urban governance" and "city networks". In a world defined by urbanity, does the city have a right to power on the international stage, and if so under what conditions ?

In the urban moment, the city is finding its way onto international relations to make the local agenda a crucial concern for global politics. Cities and local actors' involvements in international politics have profound explanations, both relating to the changing place of the city and the changing parameters of the international system. In this regard, one can say that there is a place for the city in IR, and there is also a certain practice of IR enshrined in local actors. Not only does city diplomacy sheds light on an urban moment that legitimizes cities as strategic sites, it also highlights how international - local - actors govern other and themselves through techniques of government.

By asking the simple question "Within or Beyond ?" this thesis aims at making sense of city power in a world of states by situating it in the international system. The "glocal governance" that unfolds with the new practices of city diplomacy is the focus of this analysis. Fundamentally, this works aims at deconstructing the process that made the city a central site of international action and extensively empowered city diplomacy as a legitimate practice of international relations. This thesis argues that city diplomacy is both a product and an agent of a contingent process that redistributed the roles and responsibilities across the international system. As a result, the city, in a world of states, does not represent an ontological threat to the international system, but rather a legitimation of it through the dissemination of its standards of governmentality.

Chapter I: Making Sense of the Urban Moment

The history of the city is a history of moving boundaries with both the state and the international system. Deconstructing the processes that have made and remade the "image of the city" (Frug 1980) is essential in order to understand the trajectory that pushes this work to consider local actions as a new feature of international relations. History proves that the city is a central actor of

societal shifts, from state-building in the 18th century to environmental contemporary challenges. What this reveals is the fundamental plasticity of the city, a territorial scale that cannot be reduced to its materiality. Urban sociologist Manuel Castells defines the city as "what a historical society decides a city will be" (cited in Southall 1998, p.). The city is thus the social meaning attributed to a particular form of spatial distribution by a historically defined society (Southall 1998). To reprise Alexander Wendt (1992), a city is what a society makes of it.

The third urban revolution that started in the 18th century reconfigured the city as a strategic site and a body politic through a series of "divergence" (Pomeranz 2000) that fundamentally altered the political, economic and social worlds. However, it is essential to understand that these changes did not simply happen *to* cities, but *through* cities. The promotion of liberal social thought made the city an invisible linkage point between a state and its individuals. This legal centralism was enshrined through law and the successive restraints put on local actors. As a result, the city was made in integrant part of a "scalar system" (Isin 2007) that imposed new relations between a state and its cities.

At the very same time, the industrial revolution reshaped Europe's territoriality. Through this process, the urban was systemic in the sense that it became the core of a new system. The division of labor described by Adam Smith (1776) and the concentration of wealth and capitalist organizations theorized by Joseph Schumpeter (1939) were both unthinkable without urban infrastructures. The industrial city broke the fetters inherited from the former feudal town to allow an urban revolution (Southall 1998). The outburst of the urban revolution was confirmed throughout the 20th century. The city was made an integrant part of a spatial Keynesianism (Pinson 2020) that became the backbone of state-led industrialism (Castells et al. 1974). All in all, throughout the span of two decades, the city proved its central place in history. Nonetheless, its "image" (Frug 1980) constrained it to a subordination that deprived it from local autonomy.

The 1980s marked a new evolution in the urban world. Together, economic opportunities, political turnarounds and new global-local challenges redefined the role of the city in a world of states. Gradually, the city was taking a new form that cast a stark contrast with the city "as a creature of the state" (Frug 1980).

Firstly, the crisis of both Fordism and Keynesianism that unfolded from the 1970s onwards reshaped practices of governments and the structure of economic markets. The territoriality of power (Brenner 2004) was altered in the process. The shift towards neoliberal monetarist economics conflicted with the ambitions of Keynesianism. The spatial Keynesianism that had unravelled since the Second World war was thus facing its limits and the spatiality of state power was put into question (Pinson 2020). Fueled by the new opportunities of economic globalization and transformed by the financial restraints imposed by states, cities became the core of post-Fordism. The concomitant neoliberalization of cities fundamentally altered local actors' practices of government. Local governance around the world moved away from the managerial approach symbolic of the post-WWII era and embraced an urban entrepreneurialism characterized by public-private partnerships and the imperatives of both financial sustainability and economic prosperity (Harvey 1989). But above all else, the city was legitimized as an economic and political actor.

Secondly, in a world defined by urbanity, challenges have become urban in essence. Global politics has in fact been "telescoped" (Appadurai cited in Curtis 2011, p.1945) into the city's streets. Tensions on urban infrastructures, water supply, mobility, bring a corollary question regarding the sustainability of urban life. Moreover, the evolutions of warfare put cities at the center of the modern battlefield, highlighting the scope of material and human disasters. And as the world is likely to reach unparalleled levels of urbanization in the coming decades, the possibility of an intensification of urban tensions is significant.

Together, these phenomenons frame the challenges and opportunities of the urban moment. As an answer, urban governance is finding a way to bring about new solutions rooted in the local. Ongoing tensions call for a "glocal governance" (Chan 2016), an urban governance that acknowledges the intertwinement between local and global challenges and recognizes that the future starts in cities. This new practice of power is rooted in adaptive polices and experimental "learning by doing and doing by learning" (Wolfram et al 2019, p.3). The telescoping of global challenges within the streets of cities legitimize new potential actions. Local actors are allowed to talk bold stances and city power finds the ground upon which to prosper.

Chapter II: The City in International Politics, Global Governance by Other Means

Increasingly, cities are acknowledged by the international community as essential actors in global governance. From Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres to Nobel Prize of Economics Elinor Ostrom, the "urban link" (Acuto 2013) is perceived as a necessary scale for tackling contemporary challenges. Situating the city within the international system is essential in order to frame its potentials and implications for bringing change to global politics.

On the global stage, local actions are championed through city diplomacy. Fundamentally, the notion refers to "the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political scale with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another" (Pluijm et al. 2007, p.33). Among its concerns, we find for instance peace-building, social justice, and sustainable development. However, despite this relatively recent definition, world politics actually witnessed different periods and practices of city diplomacies (Alger 1990). Throughout the 20th century a certain practice of city diplomacy laid the ground for contemporary "glocal" actions. This first phase was illustrated with sister-city programs between cities willing to create new bonds after a century of World wars and in the midst of a new sense of internationalism. However, this first episode was only characterized by occasional and episodic involvements, if not embedded in "consensus moments" (Lofland cited in Alger 1990, p506).

In the second - ongoing - phase of city diplomacy, local actors have turned to rationalized and institutional organizations through which their - urban - interests are brought forward. This new practice of "municipal activism" (Hobbs 1994) is marked by a shift towards pragmatism and professionalization. Through this new phase of city diplomacy, cities embrace contestation and affirm their autonomous legitimacy on the international stage. Moreover, the second episode of city diplomacy has been allowed by a historical moment that marked a systemic shift from states' centrality to global governance's multi-scalar approach. In this transition from hierarchy to heterarchy, city diplomacy epitomizes the "governance experiments" (Hoffman cited in Bulkeley 2010, p.234) that are emerging as a result of the fragmentation of authority on an international scale.

What makes the singularity of the new phase of city diplomacy is the overwhelming reliance on city networks. If for states network cooperation is not a primary concern of diplomacy, for cities it

becomes a fundamental forum to find a voice on the global stage (Pluijm et al. 2007). Through city networks' lenses, power does not ensue from members but from the organization itself. In fact, city networks challenge the conventional conception of networks in International Relations. City networks are not black boxes, they are characterized by interactions and internal dynamics that shape their prospect of actions. Local actors become organized around a shared understanding of an opportunity or a challenge and forge an intersubjective identity that "locks in" a network (Acuto et al. 2016). City networks are "governance fields" (Gordon 2020) socially constituted around an intersubjective definition of "what should be governed" (Gordon 2020, p.63).

City networks have become springboards for cities longing to take a seat at the table of international politics. Just from 1985 onwards, more than a hundred intercity organizations were created with the aim of raising the voice of local leaders. As of 2021, more than two hundred city networks exist. Among these we find organizations such as Mayors for Peace (8045 member cities), Metropolis (141 member cities), Resilient Cities Network (100 member cities).

But what makes cities fit within international relations ? The conduct of city diplomacy asks the questions of what is governed and under what conditions. City diplomacy, it appears, fits neatly within a hegemonic structure of international relations that puts governance at its core. In fact, the concept of governance fails to account for the dissemination of "techniques of governmentality" across the entire international system (Crowley 2003). The redefinition of the state's place in the society came together with a dissemination of governmentality that was illustrated at the local level through a new territoriality and an innovative local entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989). Through this process, cities became entangled in a governmentality rooted in rationalization and the technicality of power (Lascoumes 2004). This process did not just reshape cities, the whole range of actors embraced a certain way of "governing others and themselves" (Lascoumes 2004) thus becoming pivot points in an international system rooted in governmentality (Le Galès 2020). City diplomacy could thus prosper but only insofar that it didn't question the teleology of an international system build around states and governmentalized by predefined rules. City power is thus a contingent outcome rooted in the profound changes of governmental practices.

Having defined their role in relation to a wider system, what arises is the question of city diplomacy's effective potential of bringing change to international affairs. The narrative pursued by city diplomacy and its networks aims at changing as little as possible, thus not fundamentally

altering governance, but rather pursuing the conduct of the same policies through other means (James et al. 2015). The goal is to achieve economic growth, attract capital and insure effective infrastructures, while keeping citizens' initiatives on a marginal level (Heikkinen et al. 2019). In short, city diplomacy embraces the broader compromise of liberalism (Gordon 2018, p.10). In this perspective it can be argued that city diplomacy and network-making are embedded in a hegemonic discourse rooted in economic and political imperatives that do not critically engage with their own system. What appeared revolutionary is in fact limited in practice. In the frame of international relations, cities are allowed to bring incremental change, but not to question the system (Heikkinen et al. 2019).

Chapter III: C40 Is What Cities Make Of It

Since its creation in 2005 under the impulsion of then London Mayor Ken Livingstone, alongside 17 fellow mayors, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has aimed at becoming "a forum, a place of exchange, for city leaders to share their best practices" (Pinault 2021, interview). Through successive waves of enlargements, the C40 illustrated its ability to gather local leaders from all around the world to take rapid actions on climate change. As of 2020, the organization gathered 97 cities, representing 27% of the global economy and accounting for more than 800 million people (C40 2020). Perhaps even more important is the number of actions taken by its members: in 2016, the city network documented nearly 11,000 discrete climate actions implemented by its members, a number that tripled in comparison to 2011 (Gordon 2020, p.7). Since its creation, the organization has proven right to the mantra according to which "while nations talk, cities act" (Gordon 2020, p.3).

In accordance with the parameters of contemporary city networked diplomacy, C40 went through a process of institutionalization that reflected a commitment to take part in international relations. The structure of the organization is divided into two branches, a Steering Committee of Mayors and a Board of Directors. Moreover, the C40 organization has become representative of the hybrid governance of city networks. In fact, limited in practice by financial resources, the organization has created partnerships with private and traditional actors. Among these we find three Strategic partners: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Realdania and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. Furthermore, the network seeks to legitimize the necessity of its members' actions through the production of knowledge and the promotion of statistical tools in pluri-annual reports.

The goal of the city network is not just to follow states, it is to lead the way in climate action. C40 seeks to be a forum through which local climate actions can blossom. City actors take part in discussions, share data, skills and know-hows that can benefit to every territory. Throughout the years, the city network has organized issue-based workshops for local officials to discuss best local practices (Acuto 2013). The direct consequence of this was an overall increase in the members' local actions for climate: from under 59 actions/city in 2005 to 135 actions/city in 2017 (Gordon 2020, p.38).

On top of that, its gradual development has highlighted a phase of social construction that echoes the paradigmatic claims of IR constructivists. In fact, the network has epitomized what Gordon (2020) refers to as a "global governance field": a socially constituted organization that fuels on the authority, acknowledgment and power its actors place within it. Being in essence a social construction, C40 gradually built its legitimacy, both in regards to its members and more broadly in regards to other international actors. Distinct phases underline this process of institution-building: from 2005 to 2009, although its members perceived C40 as a forum of discussion, cities failed to see themselves as legitimate actors of climate governance; by 2013, the convergence of cities allowed the perception of the C40 network as an entity of autonomous agency with members committed to a standardization of both monitoring and action (Gordon 2020). What permitted this transformation was both a change in the internal governance of the organization and external pressures accentuated by rapid environmental change. The social constitution of C40 gradually empowered the organization's ability to influence its members and push them to implement bold actions in the fight against climate change. In this process, the C40 becomes a source of influence, an "actor-network" that exerts power as a result of its constitution (Acuto 2013).

Are C40's ambitions "incremental, reformistic or transformational" (Heikkinen et al. 2017) ? In other words, how do its members' actions fit within the political and economic realm ? Strategies and concrete actions championed by the organization and city members appear to focus solely on three pathways: the economy, infrastructure-building, and socio-political solutions (Heikkinen et al. 2017). The economy is expected to foster a green growth compatible with the preservation of the environment, while new infrastructures shall insure the adaptation of the urban world to climate urgency. In this, socio-political solutions are merely centered on raising awareness and creating campaigns for public support. Citizens, more precisely, are passive in the initiatives promoted within the C40 network.

This allows to say that city diplomacy *à la* C40 is reformistic and not enshrined in any radical transformation. It embraces the "compromise of liberal environmentalism" (Bernstein cited in Gordon 2020, p.93) for which the adaptations of the capitalist system can preserve natural resources. Moreover, it is rooted in an attribution of the responsibilities of climate change that instills a governmentality within the conduct of city diplomacy. The C40 network is a direct illustration of the technicality of state's power and the rationalization of action (Lascoumes 2004). The strategic urbanism advocated by C40 leaves unquestioned neoliberal imperatives and modern practices of governmentality. Rather than a profound evolution of the international system, it highlights the passage from state hegemony to a structure of multi-scalar governance united under predefined techniques of government.

Concluding remarks

The growing involvement of cities within the field of International Relations brought with it its share of hope for bringing change to a system facing multi-scalar threats. City diplomacy and its subsequent practice of network-making shed light on a new way of conducting international politics, a prospect crucial not only to tackle "glocal" challenges but also for advancing knowledge in the field of IR. However, the reality of city diplomacy is more nuanced than what it appears. The systematic deconstruction conducted in this study underlines the complex place of city power within global politics.

The new potential for cities as strategic sites is rooted in a contingent process that redistributed values and identities through profound economic, political and social changes. This provided the ground on which cities could find a voice in international relations. Yet, city diplomacy did not prosper out of the blue. Rather, it was enshrined in a governance-learning that reflected contemporary techniques of government. The dissemination of identifies and values that resulted from the shift from states' hierarchy to global governance's heterarchy essentially conditioned the behavior of cities in global politics. What appeared revolutionary was in fact limited in practice. In the frame of international relations, cities are allowed to bring incremental change, but not to question the system. Cities thus have a place in International Relations, but only insofar as they acknowledge that they live in a world of states.

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