



GOVERNING CITIES FOR CLIMATE AND NATURE

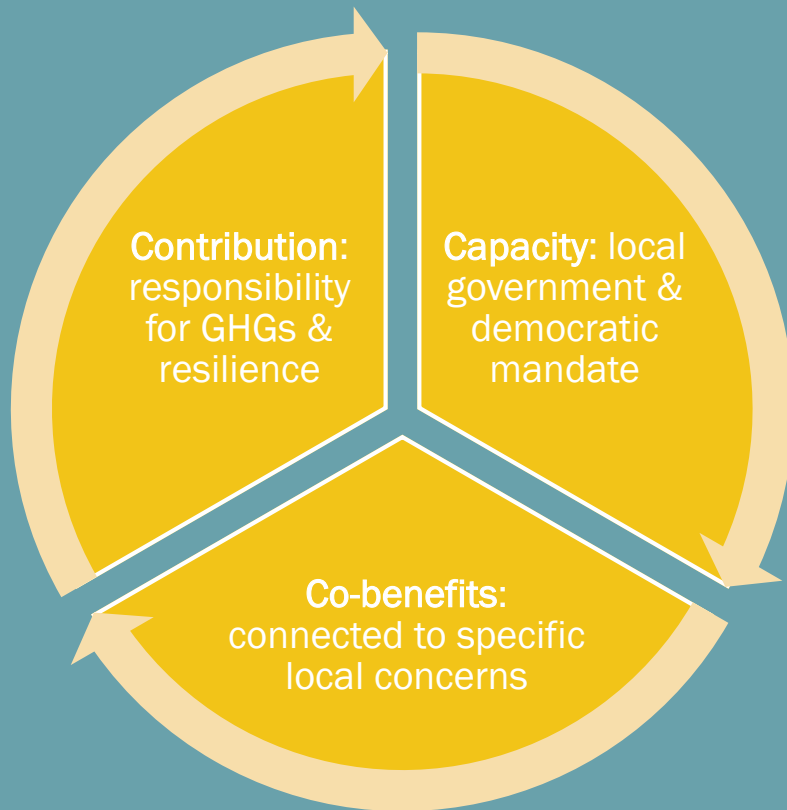
Professor Harriet Bulkeley
Department of Geography, Durham University
Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University



WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Cities have been part of the debate on how to manage and govern complex nature-society systems for over three decades, so what have we learned?

Cities are part of the problem ... & part of the solution



Over 10,000 cities have now joined transnational networks to govern climate change. How far is all this action taking us? Opinion is divided.

New Hope: “1,066 EUCoM cities representing 47.5 million inhabitants (approximately 11% of the EU’s population) ... an average 14.87% reduction from their respective baseline emissions” with 60% on target to meet 2020 commitments of around 20% emissions reductions” (Hsu et al. 2020)

False Dawn: Progress to date has yielded at best “rather modest GHG reductions which are often only a by-product of measures that were actually implemented to serve other needs” and that “cities largely operate in the shadow of hierarchy and have only limited capacities to tackle the problem of climate change independent of other levels of government” (Fuhr et al. 2018: 3).

How are cities governing complex nature-society systems?

New Institutions

- Policy Units
- Plans
- Partnerships
- Participation

Experimentation

- Socio-technical innovation
- Public, private & community sector

Transformation

- Climate emergency
- Just transition
- Divestment

What are cities governing?

Climate Change as discrete problem of end-of-pipe emissions, global commons & international institutions



Climate Change as a systemic socio-economic, political & cultural, multi-actor, multi-sited issue



As the (framing of the) climate problem has changed, so too has urban governance...



Municipal
Voluntarism



Strategic
Urbanism



Climate
Connected

“... the apparatuses of [government] ... have a constant tendency to expand; they are centrifugal. New elements are constantly being integrated ... [governing] therefore involves organizing, or anyway allowing the development of ever-wider circuits” Foucault 2009: 44-45

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Urban efforts to govern complex nature-society systems tells us that climate (and biodiversity) have never been a singular issue that can be addressed as a global commons. Instead climate change must be governed as an ongoing *condition*.

Beyond Ecologically Modern Governance

Climate change came to be understood as a problem with particular kinds of solution as part of the emergence of the ecological modernist paradigm of global environmental governance.

Climate Urbanism – climate as a systemic condition of the urban, the multiplicity of objects and authorities involved, and the indeterminacy of ‘good’ climate futures – brings significant pressure to bear on the dominant paradigm of ecologically modern governance





THANK YOU

h.a.bulkeley@durham.ac.uk

@harrietbulkeley

@naturvation