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THINK LOCALLY, ACT GLOBALLY: LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE CITIES FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION CAMPAIGN

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Abstract – As large concentrations of producers and consumers, cities are host to a number of environmental problems that only increase as more and more of the world’s people leave the countryside for the opportunities of urban centres. Fortunately, there is increasing recognition of this contribution in the form of transnational networks of cities, acting together to ameliorate urban environmental problems. One such example is the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, a network of almost 700 of the world’s cities that has formed to confront climate change at the local level. Framing the question as a collective action problem, I consider what factors encourage the members of Cities for Climate Protection to come together and confront what is traditionally considered an issue to be solved at the international level. After examining these factors I point to lessons for other transnational networks of local level actors to take from Cities for Climate Protection. Cities are often seen to be at competition with one another to attract investment, but increased urban ecological degradation will necessitate a local response. Examining the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign sheds light on how this response can be achieved.

Local Responses to Global Problems

“Cities are the locus for change and innovation, the place where new ideas, concepts and political visions are moulded into life. The very existence of cities demonstrates the past achievements of humankind and its potential for the future.”¹

The world’s cities are growing at a pace unparalleled in human history. Not only an issue of growing population sizes, cities are growing in terms of their impact on the natural systems that sustain them as well. As large concentrations of producers and consumers, cities are the cause of ecological degradation that only increases as more and more of the world’s people leave the countryside for the opportunities of urban centres. While the environmental effects of urbanization may manifest themselves at the local level, as cities grow so grows their contribution to global ecological degradation as well. Fortunately, there is increasing recognition of this contribution in the form of transnational networks of cities, acting together to ameliorate urban environmental problems. One such example is the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, a network of almost 700 of the world’s cities that has formed to confront climate change at the local level. Importantly, the efforts of Cities for Climate Protection show that disappointingly ineffective—or in some cases, entirely absent—national and international actions to deal with climate change need not handcuff substate actors who believe there is a necessity to act, and to

¹ Bob Evans, Marko Joas, Susan Sundback and Kate Theobald. *Governing Sustainable Cities*. (London: Earthscan, 2005), 1.

act soon. Posing the question as one of collective action, I consider what factors encourage the members of Cities for Climate Protection to take action to confront what is traditionally considered an issue to be solved at the international level. I argue that the Campaign's focus on the co-benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions eliminates any threats to the competitiveness of individual city actors, as well as the potential for cities to 'free ride' off the actions of other Campaign members. After discussing my theoretical approach and the nature of climate change at the urban level, I turn to the workings of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign and point to lessons that other transnational networks of local level actors can take from its example. I conclude with a response to theoretical criticisms of the co-benefits approach, as well as avenues for future research. Though my focus is on climate change, the ultimate goal is to alleviate the impact of the city on nature, no matter what the specific issue under consideration.

Framing the Question

Before discussing growing urban environmental problems and city level responses to them, I must first establish how to approach the question. As with any explanation, this one begins with assumptions. The assumptions within are shared with those made explicit by Eric Laferrière and Peter Stoett in their book on the synthesis of international relations theory and ecological thought.² First, that the environmental health of the planet, and by extension the physical, social and economic wellbeing of humans, is at risk, but that it is not too late to act. Recognition of the growing threat posed by ecological degradation has become commonplace.³ Fortunately, proposed actions to deal with this threat have become common as well. Increases in the knowledge and importance of environmental issues amongst the general public, in the resources devoted to deal with problems posed by environmental degradation, and in the recognition of ecological degradation at the subnational, national and international levels all represent potential areas for action.

The second assumption draws upon the first: "the underlying causes of ecological degradation are political, and where they are not, the human consequences of natural disasters, including maldistributed relief, are."⁴ Ecological degradation is a byproduct of our relationship with nature, closely linked to national and international systems of production, distribution, and consumption.⁵ In turn, the construction of these systems is itself a question of politics; markets do not establish themselves, but are a result of the decisions made by competing interests. The same is true for ecological degradation.

The third assumption stems directly from the first two: if ecological problems are a product of political systems, and it is not too late to address them, then the action to be taken must itself be political. Furthermore, this action must be taken within the existing political system. This assumption falls in line with a growing expectation that it is the role of the state to intervene and ameliorate environmental problems.⁶ However, it will meet with opposition in

² Eric Laferrière and Peter Stoett. *International Relations Theory and Ecological Thought: Towards a Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 1999), Chapter 1.

³ For an extensive discussion of the growing challenges posed by increasing environmental damage see Dennis Pirages and Theresa Degeest. *Ecological Security: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

⁴ Laferrière and Stoett, 3.

⁵ Robert O'Brien and Marc Williams. *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 287.

⁶ *Ibid.*

that it takes an instrumental approach to ecological degradation, viewing human efforts to ameliorate environmental problems as depending upon political intervention, which in turn depends upon the interests people have (or think they have).⁷ Matthew Paterson, for example, would disagree with this approach, arguing that we must first question the underlying structural forces behind ecological degradation in order to explain possible responses.⁸ Paterson and I share the same assumptions, but his argument precludes the possibility for actions within the existing political structure because, he says, this structure is behind “the material processes that produce [ecological] change.”⁹ While I do not disagree with Paterson’s arguments about the *source* of ecological degradation, I see them limiting actions to confront the problem. I take the structures behind ecological degradation as given, because for all intents and purposes we will function within their confines for the foreseeable future. If action to confront ecological degradation must occur now, the question then becomes how can this happen within these structures?

With these three assumptions in mind, the purpose of explaining cities’ political response to environmental degradation remains. The question will be examined as one of collective action. Mancur Olson’s original conception of the collective action problem recognized that while organizations come together to further the collective interest of their members, these individual members might have specific interests contrary to collective goals.¹⁰ Olson also explained that the larger the group size, the more potential for group members to ‘free-ride,’ receiving the benefits of collective action without incurring the costs of individual efforts.¹¹ The collective action problem applies to city-level action in two ways. First, the potential for free riding in confronting environmental problems at the urban level is tremendous. In a neoliberal international economic environment, cities are increasingly at competition with one another to attract investment.¹² Actions taken by one city may hinder its ability to compete economically with others. Therefore, while it is in the collective interest of all cities to abate environmental problems, it may be in the interest of individual cities to rely on others to do so. The second collective action problem stems from the nature of environmental problems. As is the case with national governments initiating international efforts to respond to ecological degradation, cities understand that their individual actions will not be enough to successfully confront certain threats. They are faced, therefore, with the problem that collective action is required to eliminate a collective problem. The question for both cases, then, is what encourages cities to act collectively to solve environmental degradation? To answer this question requires turning to the nature of urban environmental degradation.

The Urban Problem

City level political actions to confront environmental problems are important because of the growing threat posed by urban ecological degradation. As the loci of industry and

⁷ James Connelly and Graham Smith. *Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 18.

⁸ Matthew Paterson. *Understanding Global Environmental Politics: Domination, Accumulation, Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹² See, for example, Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell. “Searching for a New Institutional Fix: The After-Fordist Crisis and Global-Local Disorder.” In *Post Fordism: A Reader*, ed. A. Amin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 280-315.

population, cities are a major source of pollution, vast consumers of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, and they have “substantial ecological footprints – requiring vast areas of land to provide the food, energy, water and natural resources to keep them operating.”¹³ As cities grow, these environmental impacts grow along with them. In 1900 only ten percent of the global population lived in cities; today, over half do.¹⁴ In 1950 New York City was the only world centre with a population over 10 million people; by 2015, there will be 21 such megacities.¹⁵ Medium-sized urban agglomerations are experiencing even higher rates of population growth.¹⁶ Given these projections for urbanization, the cities of today and tomorrow constitute a tremendous impact on earth’s natural systems.¹⁷

To say nothing of the social inequities that run rampant through the world’s cities, from an environmental perspective this impact comes in many forms. The reliance of cities on local watersheds and groundwater sources for residents’ water needs is one area where the population of many cities may have overstretched the carrying capacity of the local environment. Mexico City, for example, has sunk some ten metres over the past 70 years because of excessive groundwater withdrawal.¹⁸ Air pollution in many of the world’s largest cities is another example of environmental degradation. Globally, more than one billion people live in cities where air pollution levels exceed acceptable health standards.¹⁹ In India, for example, air pollution caused 52000 premature deaths in 36 cities in 1995.²⁰

The example of air pollution points to another major environmental impact of cities: their contribution to global climate change. As the world’s centres for industry and population, individual city level actions have a tremendous impact on the global phenomenon of climate change. According to the United Nations, over 80 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions originate from cities.²¹ This fact alone points to the importance of considering local actions when attempting to confront climate change on the global level. Given the high proportion of emissions coming from cities, without the assistance of city governments countries will be unable to meet their international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a response to climate change.²² Data from a number of countries show that local authorities control some 30 to 50 percent of the policy mechanisms available for dealing with greenhouse gas emissions.²³ These controls include land use planning, infrastructure decisions, transportation systems, building codes and waste management processes.²⁴ Additionally, local

¹³ Evans et al, 1.

¹⁴ UN Habitat. *Cities in a Globalizing World: A Global Report on Human Settlements 2001* (London: Earthscan, 2002), 114.

¹⁵ Hania Zlotnik. “World Urbanization: Trends and Prospects.” In *New Forms of Urbanization: Beyond the Urban-Rural Dichotomy*, eds. Tony Champion and Graeme Hugo (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 65

¹⁷ Andre Sorensen, Peter J Marcotullio and Jill Grant. “Towards Sustainable Cities.” In *Towards Sustainable Cities: East Asian, North American and European Perspectives on Managing Urban Regions*, eds. same. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 5.

¹⁸ UN Habitat, 114.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ UN Habitat. “Urban Environment.” January 2006. <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=periodView&period=2043> (accessed 4 November 2006).

²² Michele M. Betsill. “Mitigating Climate Change in US Cities: opportunities and obstacles.” *Local Environment* 6:4 (2001), 394.

²³ Gard Lindseth. “The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCPC) and the Framing of Local Climate Policy.” *Local Environment* 9:4 (August 2004), 325.

²⁴ ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. *2003 Triennial Report*. 2003. <http://www.iclei.org/>

governments can facilitate action by industry and individuals in response to climate change, as well as lobby national governments for further action.²⁵ Thus the decisions of city governments have the potential to alter significantly the role of urban centres in emitting greenhouse gas, ameliorating the effect of cities on global climate change.

This recognition of the potential role for cities in confronting ecological degradation is, of course, nothing new. The *Brundtland Report* included a chapter discussing environmental issues facing cities, arguing that because of increasing urbanization, cities should be central to the pursuit of sustainable development.²⁶ At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, a full chapter of *Agenda 21* was devoted to the role of local authorities in sustainable development.²⁷ The existence of the United Nations Habitat program and its Sustainable Cities Program, the vehicle for implementing the *Agenda 21* recommendations,²⁸ is another example. More recently, Achim Steiner, the newly appointed director of the United Nations Environment Program, explicitly recognized the environmental importance of cities, stating:

the quest for sustainability will be increasingly won or lost in our urban areas. It is imperative, therefore, that cities—and the Mayors who run them—be viewed as essential allies in the struggle against urban environmental decay and poverty, and not as their cause. *The immediate policy challenge is to place the urban environment on the city's agenda* (emphasis added).²⁹

The issue of climate change is clearly on cities' agendas. Under the auspices of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), 674 of the world's cities have joined the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign.³⁰ CCP member cities represent 30 countries and account for approximately 15 percent of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.³¹ Providing members with technical assistance as well as training in order to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, ICLEI acts as facilitator for the CCP. A key element of the CCP is that the campaign is based on the assumption that while any single local government's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may be relatively ineffective, by working collectively cities can make an important contribution in the mitigation of global climate change.³² Importantly, this assumption shows that efforts to confront global environmental issues need not take place solely on the global level; the politics of climate change can be local as well.³³

documents/iclei_tiennial_00_03.pdf (accessed 4 November 2006), 12; Betsill, 394.

²⁵ Michele M. Betsill and Harriet Bulkeley. "Cities and the Multilevel Governance of Global Climate Change." *Global Governance* 12 (2006), 143.

²⁶ World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Chapter Nine.

²⁷ Chapter 28.

²⁸ UN Habitat. "Sustainable Cities and Local Governance." 1996. <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=promoView&promo=1866> (accessed 4 November 2006).

²⁹ UN Habitat. "Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Role of Cities Involvement." 2006. <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=promoView&promo=2225> (accessed 4 November 2006).

³⁰ ICLEI. "CCP Participants." 2006. <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=809> (accessed 7 November 2006).

³¹ ICLEI. "About CCP." 2006. <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=800.html> (accessed 7 November 2006).

³² Michele M. Betsill and Harriet Bulkeley. "Transnational Networks and Global Environmental Governance: The Cities for Climate Protection Program." *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004), 472.

³³ Harriet Bulkeley and Michele M Betsill. *Cities and Climate Change: Urban Sustainability and Global Environmental Governance* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 18.

For the purposes of answering the question considered within, the CCP provides an excellent case for analysis. What encourages member cities to join the program? Is it recognition of the role played by urban centres in combination with an altruistic or ideological commitment to confronting the threat posed by climate change? To place the question within the theoretical framework, how do ICLEI's efforts overcome the collective action problem inherent in a voluntary approach to confronting environmental issues? Is there something besides a commitment to climate protection that encourages cities to participate in the program? If this is the case, what lessons can be extracted from this example to encourage cities to confront other environmental problems? It is with these questions in mind that the analysis turns to an examination of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign.

The Cities for Climate Protection Campaign

The genesis of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign was an ICLEI pilot project called the Urban Carbon Dioxide Reduction Program. Started in 1991, the Reduction Program involved 14 municipalities around the world in efforts to reduce their local greenhouse gas emissions. Out of these efforts came the *Municipal Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change*, which stated, among other things, "local authorities, working closely with each other and with their national governments and international agencies, will play a vital role in reducing the energy intensities of urban environments and their greenhouse gas emissions."³⁴ As a means of encouraging local partnerships, the *Municipal Leaders' Declaration* established the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. The criteria to join the CCP are straightforward; the only requirement is that a local government must agree to sign a local version of the *Municipal Leaders' Declaration*. At the time of its creation the goal of the CCP was to recruit 100 cities representing ten percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions.³⁵ Today the CCP has 674 members responsible for 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, representing cities as diverse as Abbotsford, Canada to Agra, India and Almada, Portugal.

Once cities join the CCP Campaign they are expected to pursue five 'milestones:' 1) Conduct a baseline inventory and forecast of greenhouse gas emissions; 2) Set targets or goals to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions; 3) Develop Local Action Plans to achieve reduction targets; 4) Implement measures contained in the Local Action Plan; and, 5) Monitor and verify progress on measure implementation.³⁶ The milestone process is overseen by ICLEI, which provides cities with technical assistance, including specially designed software for the inventory and quantification of greenhouse gases, training workshops, case studies for information on best practices, and help to identify sources of financing to implement policy measures.³⁷ Funding for the CCP Campaign itself comes from the United States, Canada, Australia and the European Union, though following the transfer of funds these states are essentially 'hands-off,' meaning ICLEI both designs and implements the program and defines how the funds will be used.³⁸ How ICLEI chooses to use these funds is key for answering the question of how the CCP Campaign overcomes the collective action problem.

Rather than focus solely on the threat posed by climate change, ICLEI encourages local

³⁴ Article 1.3. qtd in ICLEI. "Cities for Climate Protection: An International Campaign to Reduce Urban Emissions of Greenhouse Gases." 15 February 1993. <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=1651> (accessed 7 November 2006).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ ICLEI, "2003 Triennial Report," 18.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ Betsill and Bulkeley, "Transnational Networks," 478.

governments to join the CCP Campaign by stressing the co-benefits of taking action. Specifically, ICLEI frames municipal responses to climate change vis-à-vis other policy challenges cities face, such as air pollution or urban energy costs. For example, one of the first steps taken by CCP member cities within the context of the five milestones is to analyze municipal government energy use and find ways to reduce consumption. Indeed, one of the initial focuses of the CCP in 1993 was a program designed to ‘green the fleet’ by replacing existing municipal vehicles with more fuel-efficient alternatives. This program did not encourage cities to take part by appealing to their climate change concerns, but rather wooed them with the cost savings that would be the result of higher fuel efficiency.³⁹ In this way, the CCP Campaign is “no longer talking about climate change policy per se, but about integrating climate concerns in other sectors of local policy.”⁴⁰ While cities’ participation in the CCP means members agree to the normative statement that climate change poses a threat and something must be done about it,⁴¹ it also reflects members’ interests as a response to how ICLEI frames the issue.

This approach is further reflected in ICLEI’s *Triennial Report*, which claims members are drawn to the CCP Campaign because it links climate change mitigation with actions to address other municipal concerns.⁴² The very nature of the milestone process is an attempt by ICLEI to draw these links. It is premised upon the assumption that the barrier to local action on climate change is governments’ lack of knowledge about ways to move forward.⁴³ Thus ICLEI aims to provide this knowledge, and does so by highlighting strategies for action that appeal to both the material (e.g. reduced energy costs) and non-material (e.g. reduced air pollution) interests of members. For example, an oft-cited CCP success story and ICLEI case study is that of Denver. In 1996 Denver’s municipal government installed light-emitting diodes (LEDs) in all red traffic lights and ‘don’t walk’ signs throughout the city. Following the recovery of its initial investment of US\$1.6 million, the lower energy requirements and longer lifespan of LEDs have led to the city experiencing \$5 million in savings for energy use and maintenance.⁴⁴ In fact, the focus on savings as a result of reductions in energy consumption is commonplace for the ICLEI. This is especially true for the CCP Campaigns in the United States⁴⁵ and in Australia. With respect to the latter, one study concludes the work of ICLEI in Australia is almost solely directed at the monetary benefits gained from emissions reductions.⁴⁶

How does this framing of the climate change issue as one of co-benefits overcome the two-pronged collective action problem under consideration here? In terms of the free rider problem inherent in local government action due to inter-urban competition, ICLEI’s focus on the benefits cities will experience outweighs any fears about the costs of action. In fact, emphasizing the economic benefits under the CCP may lead cities to believe participating in the program will actually *enhance* their competitive position. With regards to the second element of the collective action problem, what encourages cities to participate in the program when their

³⁹ ICLEI, “Cities for Climate Protection.”

⁴⁰ Lindseth, 333.

⁴¹ Betsill and Bulkeley, “Transnational Networks,” 478.

⁴² ICLEI, “2003 Triennial Report,” 12.

⁴³ Betsill and Bulkeley, “Transnational Networks,” 478.

⁴⁴ Bulkeley and Betsill, “Cities and Climate Change,” 131.

⁴⁵ Rachel Slocum. “Consumer Citizens and the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign.” *Environment and Planning A* 36:5 (2004), 763-782.

⁴⁶ Harriet Bulkeley. “Down to Earth: local government and greenhouse policy in Australia.” *Australian Geographer* 31:3 (2000), 289-308.

efforts clearly are not enough, on their own, to eliminate the threat of climate change? The answer to this question is identical to the previous one. While cities may be genuinely committed to overcoming the threat of climate change by enacting local policies, the nature of the CCP Campaign makes the question of a commitment to climate change irrelevant; any reductions in greenhouse gas emissions become simply a positive side effect of cities' efforts to pursue their material and non-material interests.

Theoretical Criticisms

Several of the scholars who have written on the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign criticize ICLEI's focus on co-benefits. Rachel Slocum, for example, says that while the CCP Campaign makes climate change relevant by focusing on co-benefits, this does nothing to address the value shift or structural change necessary to eliminate the causes of greenhouse gas emissions in the first place.⁴⁷ Gard Lindseth makes similar claims, arguing that embedding climate change in other policy areas ignores a moral necessity to respond to the problem of greenhouse gas emissions.⁴⁸ Both authors, along with others who write on the topic, essentially claim that the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign has little value because it deals merely with the *symptoms* of climate change, ignoring the question of the *disease* altogether.

Given the assumptions made explicit at the beginning of this paper, I disagree. I argue above that ecological degradation is a creation of the political system, and that the pressing need to confront this degradation, combined with the continued existence of the current structures of politics for the foreseeable future, means that action must take place within the existing system. Unlike Slocum and Lindseth, I draw from the CCP Campaign to claim we *must* embed the discussion of climate change within other policy areas, because these policy areas themselves are part of the problem. I must emphasize that I am not discounting the value structural claims add to the debate; from a normative perspective I would align myself with these claims. But I must also emphasize that we cannot wait for revolutionary action to confront environmental challenges like climate change. It is not too late to act, but if we ignore our current relationship with nature for our ideal of the same, then we may find that we contribute valuable thoughts while missing the opportunity for even more valuable actions. With this in mind, the analysis turns to how lessons from the approach of the CCP Campaign can be applied to other local level environmental initiatives.

Lessons Learned

Drawing lessons from the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign is irrelevant if the program does little to confront the problem it is supposed to confront. Thus the effectiveness of the CCP must be considered. This question requires a caveat of sorts. As CCP members represent only 15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, it is naïve to assume they have the ability to solve the problem of climate change. The first lesson to be learned, therefore, is that action to confront global environmental issues is required at all levels. While cities have tremendous influence over policies that affect energy use and urban form, this alone will not account for the bulk of global greenhouse gas emissions. The same holds true for efforts to protect, for example, biological diversity, where cities' actions in terms of habitat destruction can be an important factor in the success of a global initiative, but will not eliminate the issue on

⁴⁷ Rachel Slocum. "Polar Bears and Energy-efficient Lightbulbs: Strategies to Bring Climate Change Home." *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 22:3 (June 2004), 413.

⁴⁸ Lindseth, 333.

their own.⁴⁹ Thus all levels of action, from the international to the local and from the state to the non-state, are important in confronting ecological degradation.

The second lesson is directly related to the first: while all levels are important, local action to tackle global problems should increase. Is this because of the success of the CCP Campaign in achieving greenhouse gas reductions? Not necessarily. There is little data available on the effects of CCP member's actions with respect to reducing emissions. The data that do exist indicate the effect is a limited one. For example, in its 2003 Triennial Report ICLEI claims the 143 US CCP members' actions led directly to a 9 million ton reduction in emissions from the previous year.⁵⁰ This may seem like a tremendous achievement, but it pales in comparison to the 6.7×10^9 tons emitted by the US as a whole during the same time.⁵¹ Without commenting on the reductions as a question of per capita emissions, ICLEI also describes the US members' actions as saving US cities a total of \$97 million.⁵² Thus effectiveness of the CCP is not necessarily considered by ICLEI to be a question of reductions, but a question of financial savings as well.

Despite the apparent lack of effectiveness of the CCP Campaign with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the second lesson—that local action to tackle global problems should increase—still applies. Since its inception in 1993, membership in the CCP has increased far beyond the initial hopes for 100 cities. Even if members' *actions* provide limited emissions reductions, the *optics* of increasing membership adds value by drawing attention to other efforts to alleviate climate change. Increasing numbers of cities participating in the CCP campaign and achieving modest levels of reductions can increase the public attention focused on climate change, and can also encourage national governments to act in confronting the problem. While there is the potential for the CCP Campaign to be seen as a mere public relations exercise or window dressing, it and similar efforts could also be a starting point for local governments to take action in securing the advancement of environmental issues in fields where they felt incapable of making changes before. By extension, for individuals committed to ameliorating ecological degradation, an increase in transnational networks of local actors means local governments could provide a focal point for advancing certain issues.

The final lesson to be learned from the CCP Campaign is the value of framing environmental concerns as issues of co-benefit. First, the CCP Campaign demonstrates the value of emphasizing the material and non-material interests inherent in confronting ecological degradation as a means of overcoming the collective action problem. Second, framing the issue as one of co-benefits provides an uncontroversial means of refuting those who criticize the scientific basis for such responses to ecological degradation. This is perhaps most valuable vis-à-vis current discourse on global climate change. As one case study of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign says, “the most effective way to get municipal governments to mitigate global climate change is by *not* talking about global climate change.”⁵³ The same could hold true for other city-level environmental initiatives.

Conclusion

⁴⁹ UN Habitat. “Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Role of Cities Involvement.” 2006.
<http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=promoView&promo=2225> (accessed 4 November 2006).

⁵⁰ ICLEI, “2003 Triennial Report,” 17.

⁵¹ US EPA. “Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2003.” April 2005.
<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/downloads06/05ES.pdf> (accessed 11 November 2006).

⁵² ICLEI, “2003 Triennial Report,” 17.

⁵³ Betsill, “Mitigating Climate Change,” 404.

I have examined the case of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign as an effort to respond to the growing environmental damage caused by urban centres. Specifically, I have considered the question of why cities join the CCP from the theoretical perspective of a collective action problem. The argument is that ICLEI's framing of the CCP Campaign as providing co-benefits to member cities is essential in overcoming the competitiveness concerns of cities with respect to free riding, as well as the potential problem that local level action may in fact contribute little to ameliorating global climate change. From this argument come three lessons for other transnational networks of local level actors. First, that action to confront global environmental issues is required at all levels. Second, that local action to tackle global problems should increase. Third, that framing environmental concerns as issues of co-benefit is not only important to overcoming the collective action problem inherent in organizing a global network of cities, but also to overcoming claims that the scientific underpinnings of action are questionable.

It must be recognized that the analysis above ignores the question of cities in less developed countries. This should not be interpreted as neglecting the importance these cities play in global climate change, or as an implicit reflection of the absence of these cities from the CCP Campaign. Indeed, some of the largest cities in less developed countries that are also some of the world's most polluting—Mexico City, for example—are CCP members. However, these cities are still relatively new members of the CCP Campaign, and many of them in regions such as Southeast Asia and Latin America have only just begun the ICLEI milestone process.⁵⁴ As these cities progress in the process, future research should consider the role they play in the CCP Campaign. Indeed, for the CCP to be truly successful in mitigating the effects of urban areas on global climate change it must bring these cities into the fold and ensure that action takes place, and soon.

One final word on another direction for future research is necessary. While there are positive lessons to be learned from the CCP for other transnational networks of local governments, there is a negative one as well. The CCP is limited in its ability to confront climate change because it focuses its efforts wholly on local governments, ignoring the need to engage with both local business and multinational corporations in the process. While ecological degradation should be confronted within existing structures, involving industry in the process is integral to advancing politically acceptable change. By considering how this can be done in the context of city-level initiatives, future research has the potential to make an important contribution to ameliorating urban environmental problems.

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⁵⁴ ICLEI, "2003 Triennial Report," 17.

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