

Abstract

Transnational climate governance networks, composed of sub-state and private actors, are being increasingly recognized in the international climate regime, most recently at the 2015 UNFCCC summit in Paris. Urban centres and their own networks, trans-municipal climate networks such as ICLEI and C40, have been particularly touted as a decentralized solution to climate policy collective action problems at the level of the nation-state. These networks help motivated cities acquire resources and policy guidance, as well as reframe climate policy as more universal and cities as climate leaders. But do they really improve climate output? Do cities in trans-municipal networks pass more climate policy than non-members? This study examines a sample of 190 cities in 26 OECD countries which self-reported their climate actions in the year 2017. Using a multi-level regression model, the study accounts for control variables at both the urban and state level for climate exposure, available resources, and political factors, finding that networked cities do pass more policies than their non-networked peers. It also provides more limited evidence that more networks may compound this effect. State level factors appear generally not to have a significant effect on city level policy, save for the degree of fossil fuel dependency. Given these results and the large role cities play in greenhouse gas production, this study indicates that encouraging cities to join these networks and increasing their role in the global climate change regime may help increase climate action in urban areas.

Key Words: Climate, Transnational Climate Governance, Transnational Municipal Networks, UNFCCC, Multi-Level Model, International Climate Regime, Cities, Policy Diffusion, OECD

