

## **Cities in the global climate marketplace: transnational actors and urban climate adaptation planning in India**

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In cities across the global South that are pursuing climate change adaptation actions, transnational and multilateral actors are critical catalysts for financing programs, generating public awareness, and legitimizing the agenda (Andonova, Betsill, and Bulkeley 2009; Anguelovski and Carmin 2011; Bulkeley et al. 2012). Transnational aid and philanthropic institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), the United National Development Programme (UNDP), and others have strongly advocated for programs that integrate and support both climate change adaptation and urban socioeconomic and spatial development (Bicknell, Dodman, and Satterthwaite 2009; Halsnæs and Trærup 2009; Huq and Reid 2004), arguing that combining these two objectives will help ensure the long-term resilience of cities (Carmin, Dodman, and Chu 2013). However, scholars of urban adaptation and transnational urban governance have yet to understand whether such external interventions have long-lasting effects on the sustainability, institutionalization, and justice of urban climate adaptation programs (Bulkeley, Edwards, and Fuller 2014; Chu, Anguelovski, and Carmin 2015; Chu 2015). In this paper, I draw on experiences from three cities in India – Surat, Indore, and Bhubaneswar – to analyze the multilevel political, institutional, and financial dynamics

that link local adaptation governance processes with their supporting transnational actors and institutions.

This paper draws on a comparative case study method based on semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis techniques conducted in Surat, Indore, and Bhubaneswar between 2011 and 2015. In the study, I find that current capacity deficits in Indian cities indeed allow external actors to intervene in catalyzing adaptation, but this relationship becomes more dialectical farther into the planning and implementation stages. Urban climate governance thus relies on *street-level processes of translation*, which are systems of policy and planning pathways characterized by the coproduction of knowledge, co-creation of options, and inter-institutionalization of standards, practices, and behaviors. In this context, cities are not in fact unidirectional recipients of external aid and support; rather, cities are taking ownership over how external funds get implemented, which urban actors participate in the process, and why certain sectors and populations receive more support than others. A particular actor's ability to exert authority over how adaptation is financed, bureaucratized, and built across the urban landscape then yields different patterns of adaptation. This finding therefore reasserts the role of urban political actors operating within the global climate regime and the marketplace for climate finance.

However, as cities gain authority over how external climate adaptation mandates get translated into concrete planning programs and infrastructure interventions, this simultaneously creates more opportunities for local government authorities to exclude certain populations in decision-making. The pursuit of urban resilience can therefore become a moniker for further co-optation of political power and for entrenching existing urban socioeconomic injustices, with particularly grave consequences for marginalized and vulnerable urban poor communities (see Shi et al. 2015). As a result, in response to rising urban inequalities attributed to current and pipeline climate adaptation interventions, I present a framework for evaluating *climate justice from below*. This concept takes into account how climate adaptation is mainstreamed into urban development and its relationship to broader socioeconomic transformations at a global scale. I conclude that the ability to mitigate existing power imbalances rests on the restructuring of governance arrangements available to

marginalized communities to advocate for their own interests in the *street-level* resilience-making process.

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