INTRODUCTION

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Urbanisation is one of the most powerful trends of the modern era. Since 2007, for the first time in history over half the world's population lives in cities, a proportion the United Nations (UN) estimates will rise to two-thirds by 2050 (UN, 2019). Much of this urban growth will take place in Africa and Asia, but other regions will also be deeply affected. New concepts such as the "urban age" (Burdett et al., 2018) and "planetary urbanisation" (Brenner, 2014) have been coined to capture the radical demographic shifts we are witnessing and to express a new reality in which the scale and generality of urbanisation processes leave few places free from their impact and render traditional urban-rural distinctions redundant.

The realisation that our future will be predominantly urban has also bestowed unprecedented relevance on cities and urban regions in world politics. The past two decades have seen a progressive urban turn in global governance. In 2001, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened the annual meeting of the UN Human Settlements Programme (Habitat) by stating that the world had entered an "urban millennium".[1] In the same year, his foreword to the first edition of UN-HABITAT's flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities*, elaborated on this statement:

> As more and more people make cities their home, cities will be the arenas in which some of the world's biggest social, economic, environmental and political challenges will be addressed, and where the solutions will be found. As globalization proceeds, more cities will find themselves managing problems and opportunities that used to be the exclusive domain of national governments. (UN-Habitat, 2001: 2).

This extract makes two claims that summarise the rationale that has underpinned the urban turn of global development policy debates and agendas, especially since the negotiation of the post-2015 agenda. The first is that today's major challenges – from inequality to climate change and sustainable economic growth – are concentrated in cities and urban governance is essential to remedying them. The second is that cities are emerging as global political actors engaged in taking on responsibili-

1. See https://www.un.org/press/en/2001/GA9867.doc.htm.

ties that were previously the preserve of nation-states. Together, these observations signal a profound reconfiguration of earlier conceptions of cities in international development: from being viewed as local problem hotspots in the 1980s and strategic sites for intervention in the 1990s, they are now seen as active drivers of positive transformation (Parnell, 2016). Notably, this change in conception is part of a more general revitalisation of debates about cities and the emergence of a new urban optimism in the social sciences at the beginning of the 21st century (Barnett and Parnell, 2016). In this environment, a consensus has arisen across policy, research and practice communities about the central importance of urban processes for our transition to a more sustainable future. The understanding is that, given their current rapid growth, the decisions cities and their local governments make about urban planning, energy, transport, housing and related issues today will impact generations to come.

The pro-urban consensus was consolidated into global policy in 2015 with the adoption of a universal urban sustainable development agenda as part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The relevance attributed to urban process in the 2030 Agenda is twofold. Firstly, following a two-year multi-stakeholder campaign headed by transnational networks of local governments, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included a dedicated urban goal, SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient". SDG 11 is the UN's strongest expression to date of the wider social, economic and environmental significance of cities for the world's future (Swope, 2014). Further, the 2030 Agenda acknowledges the role of sub-national governments in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. Nearly all the SDGs have targets that depend on the actions of local and regional governments. The potential and responsibilities inherent in urban development were also acknowledged by the other major agendas adopted in 2015, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (Rudd et al., 2018). Finally, the New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of UN-Habitat's 2016 summit Habitat III, further fleshed out the mutually reinforcing relationship between urbanisation and sustainable development established by SDG 11.

Some commentators have spoken of the heightened visibility of urban issues in global policy processes as representing a "global localist ideology" (Ljungkvist, 2014). In this ideology, international bodies are becoming heavily involved in redefining state-local relations, empowering local authorities as well as other urban stakeholders. However, the empowerment of cities has not only been top-down but also bottom-up. Urban representatives and stakeholders have themselves played a major role in the reframing of global challenges as urban ones and in positioning cities' interests in the global arena. The exponential rise in transnational city networks since the early 2000s (Acuto et al., 2017) clearly shows how cities are collectively stepping up their efforts to seize the opportunity to expand their political influence. As mentioned above, city networks were among the main advocates for an urban SDG. For this purpose, they created the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) in 2013, a coordination and consultation mechanism that brings a local perspective to global policy processes.[2]

2. https://www.global-taskforce.org/about-us

Yet, while SDG 11 has no doubt raised the profile of cities in global dialogue, most of the time their influence is largely symbolic (Fernández de Losada, 2019). The GTF, although a great achievement, is a voluntary mechanism with no formal UN status. The UN and other intergovernmental organisations are clearly struggling to revise existing mechanisms and legal frameworks to accommodate the new role of local government and provide adequate representation in multilateral negotiations. Thus far, the new importance ascribed to cities in the post-2015 agenda has not been matched by any real devolution of power. The fear many member states have of losing political leverage and visibility does not help in this process. While states have come to accept cities' "soft power" and ability to advocate for their interests (Foster and Swiney, 2019), they are not willing to grant them a permanent and equal "seat at the global table". This unwillingness to treat local governments as equal partners has also characterised the SDG reporting process. In theory, the SDG reporting framework allows for the nesting of local, national and global indicators. But in practice, sub-national involvement has only been partial and has varied from country to country. Only 45% of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted to the UN in the years 2016–2018 engaged local and regional governments (GOLD, 2018). To strengthen the local dimension of the review process, some cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Kitakyushu, Oaxaca, Buenos Aires, Santana de Parnaíba and Bristol, have submitted their own Voluntary Local Reviews to the UN in 2018 and 2019.

Contribution of this volume

The issues and questions that have arisen around the city-centric shift in global policy are numerous and demand deeper analysis. Over the past decade a body of literature has emerged that critically examines and theorises the new global political agency of cities (see e.g. Acuto, 2013; Curtis, 2014; Ljungkvist, 2016; Oosterlynck et al., 2019). The present volume seeks to contribute to this debate by taking a policy-centred perspective. It analyses concrete examples of how cities and their governments are engaging in global governance, through both evolution and devolution dynamics. On the one hand, the subsequent chapters examine what may be called the "global politics" of cities; that is, how cities are actively seeking to extend their political influence beyond their jurisdiction and into the wider arena of world politics. On the other hand, they examine how the 2030 Agenda and its various related initiatives recognise the need for some form of devolution and how these agendas are localised in cities. The focus of the volume is on three global policy areas in which cities have become particularly engaged: climate change, migration and sustainable urban development. It closes with an exploration of how metropolitan areas – i.e. fusions of centre cities and suburbs which account for a major part of today's urban growth – are emerging as a new level of governance at which innovative approaches to sustainable urbanisation are being formulated.

This volume emerged from a seminar entitled "The Place and Role of Cities in Global Governance" held at CIDOB in November 2018 with the support of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB). The seminar brought together think tanks from around the world that study the new role of cities in world politics. The participating think tanks were CIDOB (Spain), the Ecologic Institute (Germany, Belgium, USA), the Italian Institute for

International Political Studies (Italy), the Centre for Cities (UK), the China Centre for Urban Development (China), the Centre for Urban Equity (India), the African Centre for Cities (South Africa), the CIPPEC - The Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (Argentina), The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the Brookings Institution (both USA).

The urban governance of climate change

It has become widely recognised that the implementation of effective global and national climate policies depends on the involvement of cities and their governments. Cities are responsible for much of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. If left unchecked, rapid urbanisation will have detrimental effects on the rising demand for both non-renewable and renewable resources and create new vulnerabilities. Further, as home to significant numbers of people, cities are highly prone to climatic hazards, such as floods, storms and heat waves. But cities also concentrate the knowledge, technical resources and often the political will to drive practical, on-the-ground climate mitigation actions and policies. Some of the most powerful transnational city networks, such as ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group and the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, have formed around climate governance. This networked city action is partially filling the "governance gap" (Hale et al., 2013) that has emerged between our need for global climate solutions and the inability of the multilateral order to deliver them (Bouteligier, 2013). Top-down governance responses to climate change are increasingly complemented by concerted city-level action that can address the highly polycentric causes and impacts of climate change.

In their chapter, Linda Mederake, Ewa Iwaszuk and Doris Knoblauch examine the evolving role of cities in the international climate regime, as demarcated by the principles, rules, norms and procedures of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and other related documents. The authors argue that while cities have not been attributed a formal role in intergovernmental negotiations on climate governance, their recognition goes beyond that of other non-state actors in similar processes. Since the creation of the Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency in the UNFCCC process in 1995, cities have progressively gained influence and visibility in global climate summits. The 2010 Cancun Agreements were a turning point in this regard. Today, official forums for exchanges between state and city representatives have become common practice at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCC. In tracing the milestones that lead to these achievements, the authors highlight the important role of transnational city networks that specialise in climate issues. City networks function as platforms for advocacy and peer-learning and they empower cities to act independently from national climate politics. However, the authors also point to the geographical, financial and legal limitations of city-driven global climate action. In particular, they underscore how the international legal order is preventing the much-needed reform of the state-centric framework of global climate governance and the devolution of powers to local authorities.

Providing a view on international climate governance from the Global South, **Darshini Mahadevia** examines potential synergies and conflicts between climate mitigation efforts and the implementation of the SDGs in urban India. As the world's second-most populous country, and with a high economic and urbanisation growth trajectory, the pressures on India to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement are high. However, in India, as in other emerging economies, mitigation efforts are likely to undermine many SDGs unless synergistic pathways are formulated. While the need to approach the two agendas jointly is universal, trade-offs are aggravated in conditions of such high development deficit as is prevalent in urban India. Focusing on transport and land-use policies in Indian cities, the chapter discusses how in conditions of high inequality that facilitate elite capture of policymaking, mitigation efforts can lead to a further increase in poverty and inequality rates, thereby undermining advances on the SDGs. To reduce such adverse effects on disadvantaged sections of societies, more sensitive and ethical public policy planning is required. For Mahadevia, the effective interlinkage of mitigation efforts and the SDGs needs to work from the bottom up through city-level action that can respond to local specificities. With a view to better understanding the link between local, national and global policies, the chapter maps potential synergies and trade-offs between the global climate and sustainable development agendas in urban India, providing valuable insights for future policy planning and empirical research.

Cities at the centre of global mobility

The growing recognition of cities in international climate governance often serves as a model for global urban political agency in other issue areas. An emerging area that is ever more linked with concerns about climate change and the transfer of responsibilities to cities and local governments is migration. With global temperatures rising, urban areas will play host not only to economic migrants and refugees fleeing conflict, but also to growing numbers of people displaced by climate change. Global mobility is reaching record numbers and it is becoming evident that while migration law and governance are primarily national concerns, local governments are essential interlocutors as the first receivers and hosts of migrants. They carry out the greater part of service provisions and subsequent integration efforts and they possess important technical capacities and relevant policy knowledge (Brandt, 2018). Nevertheless, until recently, their needs and experiences were not considered in regional and international deliberations and policies concerning migrants and refugees. This situation is currently changing, with cities actively engaging in migration diplomacy and policymaking. Prominent examples include the alliances between US cities with "sanctuary" policies and the European "Solidarity Cities" network. At UN level, the most notable initiatives have been the Mechelen Declaration, which – under the leadership of the world association of municipalities United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – advocated for the Global Migration Compact (GMC) to take a human-rights approach, and the Mayors Migration Council (MMC), which was created in parallel to the adoption of the GMC in December 2018, with the objective of shaping and informing its implementation.

Cities in the United States (US) have been at the forefront of this development. **Juliana Kerr** analyses how US cities are emerging as new actors on migration policy at both national and international level, and proposes some ideas on how cities could be more systematically involved in policy decision-making. A majority of mayors and local leaders across the US have traditionally been committed to the migration agenda and have introduced numerous initiatives to minimise its challenges and maximise its benefits. Yet, as Kerr shows, the effectiveness of these initiatives is severely compromised by outdated national laws created without input from cities that have proven unable to answer today's global dynamics and cities' socioeconomic needs. To counter these limitations, cities are collaborating to try and shape migration policy. Kerr throws into relief the most successful strategies they have developed to this end, including the collective enactment of local policies, city diplomacy and other forms of transnational collaboration. As these strategies are not specific to migration policy or US cities, Kerr's chapter has strong reverberations with other policy areas and regions. However, like Mederake and colleagues, she also takes stock of the limitations of local influence on migration policy and the potential risks involved in giving cities too much autonomy. While the American "new localism" has much potential (Katz and Nowak, 2017), it should not be romanticised. In the US especially, local control over settlement policies has a violent history related to racial segregation and the suppression of minority rights.

Both chapters in this section address the important issue of how cities are rewriting populist anti-immigration narratives. Kerr discusses how the American "sanctuary cities" movement has effectively countered President Trump's racist rhetoric and deportation agenda by advocating for diversity and inclusion. Turning to Italian cities and the European Union (EU) context, **Tobia Zevi** critically unpacks the anti-immigrant discourse that has come to dominate the public debate in Italy since the Five Star-League government took office in 2018. He provides a rational counterweight to the populist misrepresentation of an overwhelming rise in immigration by reviewing concrete immigration numbers in the 2013–2018 period and the policies devised in response. In particular, he analyses how since the 2015 "refugee crisis" the Italian reception system – the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), which was adopted in 2002 – has progressively engaged cities and local authorities in order to divide up responsibilities and distribute the recipients of international protection across territories. According to Zevi, the management of migrants in Italian cities is intimately linked with questions of urban planning. By not supporting municipalities with planning policies at both local and national level, the central government severely compromised the success of SPRAR. Further, the strain on municipalities was increased when the Five Star-League government cut back on SPRAR funds. It is this over-burdening of cities that is leading to the deterioration of the reception system and providing fuel to the populist anti-immigration discourse. The analysis of the Italian case shows that cities have a high degree of resilience when it comes to responding to migration flows. However, without a clear vision, efficient management and sufficient funding they are at risk. There is an urgent need for international migration policies to engage with and respond to these on-the-ground realities.

National Urban Policies: linking the global urban agenda with local specificities

National Urban Policies (NUPs) have been widely recognised as an effective tool for the implementation and monitoring of the urban dimension of the post-2015 global agenda, above all the SDGs and the NUA. The NUA identifies NUPs that establish a link between urbanisation dynamics and the overall process of national development as one of its five main pillars of implementation to support clear and accountable governance, coordination and follow-up across the different levels of national, regional and local government. In the wake of the integrative logic of the post-2015 agenda, a new generation of NUPs has emerged that seeks to replace the top-down approach of traditional policies with multi-level mechanisms that harmonise national priorities with local and regional needs and expectations. Underpinning these reconfigured multi-level governance arrangements is the belief that sustainable development pathways can only be achieved if they are *effectively localised*; that is, if their implementation actively involves local governments and stakeholders, including civil society, the private and knowledge sectors. However, while this ideal is being widely propagated in international policy forums its implementation is still evolving. The two chapters in this section critically examine the adoption of new NUPs in Africa and Latin America with a view to their effective localisation.

In Africa, the world's most rapidly urbanising continent, 38 countries are currently developing or implementing NUPs. The large-scale adoption of NUPs is a recent phenomenon. Due to a historic anti-urban bias that is particularly strong in Sub-Saharan cultures, national urbanisation processes and strategies barely received any policy attention until the turn of the century. Edgar Pieterse traces the political shifts, external pressures and policy instruments that paved the way for the positive reframing of Africa's urban transition as an opportunity to embark on a sustainable development pathway. A critical turning point in this process was the passing of the African Union's Agenda 2063 in 2015, which served as a direct input into the SDG negotiations. Since then, NUPs have emerged as an important governance mechanism to embed the urban turn in multi-level policy processes across Africa. However, as Pieterse shows, there is no enabling political environment for impactful NUPs. At this time, most African NUPs operate as performative documents that mimic global agendas, but barely advance on their localisation. A major impairment has been the colonial legacy of highly centralised government systems and top-down administrative control, which prevents democratic decentralisation reforms. Further, inefficient bureaucracies limit adequate responses to poorly managed urbanisation. Unlike in some Latin American countries, the humanitarian and development costs of these dynamics have not been met with coordinated civil society demands for more transparency and accountability. Pieterse closes with recommendations on how to foster the developmental potential of African NUPs through alliances between international actors and African organisations at all levels.

Turning to Latin America, Gabriel Lanfranchi examines how localisation is approached by Argentina's first comprehensive NUP, which was launched in 2018 as a response to the country's adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the NUA. Within Argentina's federal structure urban

policy is the responsibility of the provinces and no national regulation mechanism previously existed. However, although the NUP is a policy advance, it contains much room for improvement. For Lanfranchi, one of its major problems is its non-binding nature, which makes it prone to political preferences and changes at both national and local level. But a more serious deficit that makes effective localisation difficult is the lack of mechanisms for participation and engagement. While the initial design of the policy provided some opportunities for the involvement of subnational governments and non-governmental stakeholders, this has not been the case with the implementation phase. To demonstrate how these shortcomings may be overcome, the chapter introduces the PlanificACCIÓN method developed by the Cities Program at CIPPEC, which is currently being applied in five Argentinian cities and metropolitan regions. Launched one year before the NUP, the aim of PlanificACCIÓN has also been to support the localisation of the NUA. But as its name (which translates as "planning in action") suggests, the programme takes a more bottom-up and participatory approach that promotes the capacity of local administrations to align policies with the international agendas and empowers all sectors of civil society to play an active part in this process.

Governing from the metropolitan scale

With cities having moved to the top of the international agenda in the past two decades, it is important to go beyond generic understandings of urbanisation and ask how exactly the world is urbanising. A distinctive feature of the accelerating urbanisation trend has been the expansion of urban populations beyond what were previously considered the limits of the city. More and more cities are growing into larger metropolitan agglomerations. In 2017 these metropolitan areas were home to 41% of the global urban population and by 2050 it is estimated this population will grow by 600 million (GOLD, 2017). This spatial reality poses a new challenge to municipal governance structures: namely, how to bridge the mismatch between the political boundary of the city and its over-spilling functional area – its physical extension, labour and service flows, and financial markets (Gómez-Álvarez et al., 2017). There is no one-size-fits-all solution to this problem. Different arrangements are emerging in both the Global North and South to move towards more coordinated metropolitan governance (Tomás, 2017). They include complex forms of multi-level governance, with regional or state government managing some services, the creation of inter-municipal forums, and the establishment of a separate metropolitan-level government.

Given the growing importance of large metropolitan areas as global economic and cultural hubs, but also as sites of intense inequalities and pollution, the question of how to provide sustainable urban solutions at the metropolitan scale has attained increasing importance in global governance. Addressing this issue, **Agustí Fernández de Losada** examines how six of the main global sustainable development agendas respond to the economic, social and environmental challenges metropolitan areas face, and what opportunities and difficulties their adaptation to the metropolitan scale brings. The agendas reviewed are the 2030 Agenda, the NUA, the 2015 UN

Climate Change Conference (COP 21), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. By discussing local-national-global relations in the definition, implementation and evaluation of this broad range of agendas, the chapter fleshes out the main challenges of moving towards integrated multi-level governance and ties together some of the issues addressed in previous chapters. Particular attention is given to the capacity of large cities and their surrounding areas to shape the definition of both national and global strategies and policies, and why it is important that they ensure their needs and interests are taken into account. While the engagement in national and international dialogues is a challenge for cities, it is also putting healthy pressure on them to better define their competencies and improve their capacities and governance structures, particularly at the metropolitan scale. The underlying principles of the post-2015 agendas – their holistic universalism and ambition for engagement, participation, transparency and accountability – are a helpful guide in this process.

In the United Kingdom (UK) intensive efforts have recently been made to improve metropolitan governance structures. Between 2017–2019 eight city regions in England, including Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region, elected a "metro mayor" for the first time to represent combined authorities. Andrew Carter analyses the metro mayor system as part of the UK government's devolution agenda and as an opportunity for English cities to become more active partners in global governance initiatives post-Brexit. The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act was passed in May 2016, one month before the Brexit referendum. Carter argues that if giving cities more autonomy to take control of their specific challenges was already emerging as a political priority before the referendum, the Leave vote only emphasised the urgency of reform. That vote revealed stark political divides within the country that directly map onto its economic ones, especially between the most and least prosperous cities. Today, we know that the Leave vote in economically underperforming areas was less about the UK's relations with the EU than the desire for decisive change at home. These "left-behind" places have been the victims of a highly centralised government that is increasingly struggling to adapt national policies to the needs of ever more diverse urban conglomerations with different levels of resilience to global pressures. For Carter, the metro mayors hold the promise of a potentially bigger shift towards more federal governance arrangements that would not only enhance urban performance but also enable UK cities to take a more active role internationally.

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