



Inclusive Visions for Urban Transitions: Lessons from stakeholder dialogues in Asian medium sized cities[☆]



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ABSTRACT

Climate change and other sustainability challenges represent a foundational contest to traditional urban development concepts and practices. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from urban infrastructure and leading cities towards climate resilience requires a transformation of city structures, its organisation and its resident's lifestyles. To anchor such a transformative course of action, a wider societal consensus building with an active and earnest engagement with all relevant actors and interest groups in the city is required. With stakeholder dialogues being a suitable and proven instrument for stimulating engagement, this paper explores dynamics of stakeholder dialogues and how they can advance a city's work on climate change.

For this purpose, a number of stakeholder dialogues with key actors in the field of climate change were organised in four cities across India, Indonesia and the Philippines. Studying them, the authors identified four dimensions that seem to shape the effectiveness and success of such dialogues: the level of interaction between the participants during the events, the diversity of perspectives represented by the stakeholders, their level of capacities in dealing with urban climate issues and, ultimately their political competence that allows them to take decisions based on workshop outcomes.

1. Introduction

The Paris Agreement is a milestone in climate diplomacy and sets ambitious goals for international efforts to avoid dangerous climate change. To eventually change the course of development to a low-carbon and climate resilient future, determined action is needed at all levels of government and by a broad range of stakeholders. So far, subnational actors have been in many respects forerunners in climate action: Prominent examples include Copenhagen's goal to become a zero emission city in 2025 (CCAP, 2011) or Durban's longstanding work on climate change adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). Sustainability concepts are already common in many cities' sectoral plans like Mexico City's strategy to expand its integrated public transport system or Johannesburg's efforts to reduce its methane emissions from landfills to produce green energy (C40 Cities, 2016a, 2016b). In most cases reducing greenhouse gas

emissions from urban infrastructure and consumption patterns is in line with the global goal of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels" (United Nations, 2015, Article 2.1). Leading cities towards climate resilience requires a transformation of city structures, its organisation and resident's lifestyles. While a number of large cities have received national and international support in pursuing those efforts, small and medium sized cities in developing countries have not been at the centre of attention (Rosenzweig, Solecki, Hammer, & Mehrotra, 2010). This is in spite of their high demographic growth rates that lead to those cities' ever-growing CO₂-emissions. While their mitigation potential is already significant (Creutzig, Baiocchi, Bierkandt, Pichler, & Seto, 2015), increasing development challenges and vulnerabilities to climate change underline the necessity for a realignment of support for these urban agglomerations (Birkmann, Welle, Solecki,

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Lwasa, & Garschagen, 2016).

Generally, a transition towards a climate compatible urban development cannot be implemented in a government-only fashion but requires a wider societal consensus building with an active and earnest engagement with all relevant stakeholders (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2016). As Klein et al. (2014, p. 112) found, climate change and particularly adaptation processes seem to advance more swiftly if there is a “deliberative engagement with affected publics”. Stakeholder dialogues are considered a typical instrument for such engagement and help to build up credibility of policy makers for initiating policy processes (Berghöfer & Berghöfer, 2006). At the same time such dialogues feed into project designs, thereby co-creating future urban developments (Scherhauser, 2014, p. 453ff). This is underlined by the finding of van de Kerkhof (2006) stating that the involvement of stakeholders also increases the general compliance with new policies. Moreover being dialogue events for people with different knowledge, values and backgrounds that would not come together otherwise (Cuppen, 2012), these workshops can help to build new relationships and trust, thereby creating innovative partnerships and advance joint learning (Innes, 1999). Only a few studies address the process in which stakeholders can cope with such complex issues as climate change (cf. Nevens, Frantzeskaki, Gorissen, & Loorbach, 2013). Our study, which is based on empirical experience in a comparative case study setting, thus provides a multi-stakeholder approach to reflect on dialogues processes related to climate change. In this regard the question arises how all these different stakeholders with diverging interests can be motivated to cooperate in order to making cities more climate compatible? And what are characteristics of successful interventions? For this reason the paper addresses the following research question: What are relevant dynamics of stakeholder dialogues that can advance a city’s work on climate change? The research was conducted in collaboration with organisations from India, Indonesia and the Philippines and is based on eight workshops held in four medium sized cities, namely Gurgaon (1 workshop) and Puri (1) in India, Kupang (3) in Indonesia and Cagayan de Oro (3) in Philippines.

The paper is structured as follows. After introducing the methods that were applied in the dialogues and the analysis of them, the paper gives an overview of key results in each of the three countries. This is followed by the four dimensions that define the dynamics of stakeholder dialogues (3.4) and the conclusions as well as future research needs.

2. Methodology

Several innovative methods for public participation and stakeholder dialogues have been developed and tested in practice in recent decades (Lynam, De Jong, Sheil, Kusumanto, & Evans, 2007; Welp, de la Vega-Leinert, Stoll-Kleemann, & Jaeger, 2006). Some of the methods are applicable for interaction with a small group of stakeholders (e.g. focus groups, moderated round tables) and some are developed for larger groups – more than 20 to up to several hundreds (Welp, Kasemir, & Jaeger, 2009). Examples of such large group intervention methods include open space (Owen, 2008), Future search conferences (Weisbord, Weisbord, & Janoff, 2000), World Café (Brown & Isaacs, 2005) and modifications of these.

The authors aimed at conducting a cross-city comparison through the observation and analysis of stakeholder dialogues in four different cities across three countries. The World Café method appeared to be flexible enough to be organised in correspondence with wider cultural and societal norms and with regard to typical forms of interaction among and between hierarchical levels. At the same time the method seemed to provide enough structure to the discussions, while giving leeway for new issues to emerge.

The World Café method is a combination of plenary sessions (including e.g. presentations) and discussions in smaller groups (usually 6–8 people at each table). In a series of 3–4 rounds participants discuss

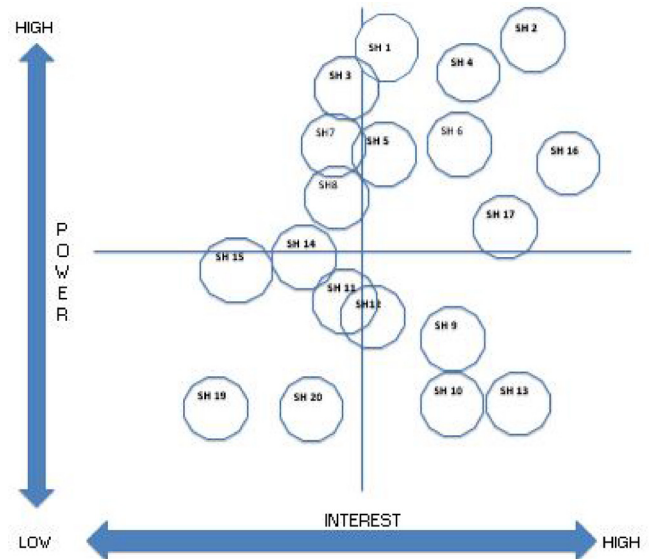


Fig. 1. Exemplary Power-Interest Grid from Gurgaon, India.^{3,4}

predefined questions or topics, while changing to a new table after each round (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). The method enables a large number of people who would not meet otherwise to have a structured dialogue and exchange perspectives, thereby creating a better understanding of the reasons behind different perceptions, ideally but not necessarily leading to a consensus (Cuppen, 2012; van de Kerkhof, 2006, p. 280). For further information see (Brown & Isaacs, 2005) and the World Café Foundation website (<http://www.theworldcafe.com>).

The workshop style and concepts were developed jointly with our partners in the three countries, who co-organized the events. In three preparatory Skype conferences we agreed on the format, type of participants we would want to include and the structure of the events. Cultural differences in each country were taken into account. Among others the question of time had to be considered as in the views of local partner organisations a dialogue exercise was not to exceed a full day. Being adaptable to local contexts and being a semi-structured approach compared to open space methods (very open in terms of contents) and future search conferences (very structured, requiring plenty of time), the World Café was ultimately identified as the most suitable form for the type of stakeholder dialogues the authors were aiming for. In order to capture the proceedings of each dialogue event all workshops were documented (note takers were asked to record all discussions and develop a report afterwards) and a qualitative analysis was done as a basis for this paper.

Prior to the eight workshops a structured stakeholder assessment in each city was conducted. Policy makers, urban residents, academia, industry & commerce, religious groups, public institutions, civil society groups and potential multipliers, such as the media (see Fig. 1) emerged as key categories of stakeholders. The assessment was guided by a set of questions that included inter alia: Why should the stakeholder be

³ SH 1 - Haryana Urban Development Agency; SH 2 - Haryana Urban Development Agency; SH 3 - Gurgaon Municipal Council; SH 4 - Commissioner, Gurgaon Division; SH 5 - Accenture; SH 6 - LANCO Solar; SH 7 - HSBC; SH 8 - Deutsche Bank; SH 9 - Leela Palace; SH 10 - Hotel Westin; SH 11 - Resident Welfare Association; SH 12 - Resident Welfare Association; SH 13 - Shop Keepers Association, DLF Malls; SH 14 - The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI); SH 15 - The Youth Wing of CREDAI; SH 16 - Member of Parliament; SH 17 - Rahgiri - A People's Initiative; SH 18 - Gurgaon Women's Club; SH 19 - ITM University; SH 20 - The Shriram School.

⁴ See Appendix A for full list of participants' names.

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