



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Urban Climate

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/uclim



Editorial

Understanding urban adaptation challenges in diverse contexts: Editors' introduction

1. Contextualising the Issues

This special issue focuses attention on the challenges of adaptation to changing climates and environments in urban areas worldwide. Indeed, this is one of its distinctive features – a deliberate transgression of the conventional boundaries of urban climate/environmental change research that continue, largely for historically-based structural reasons, to dichotomise the frames of reference into rich world/poor world, or global North/global South.

Our rationale is threefold: first, in an increasingly integrated and yet differentiated global system, many of the key contemporary faultlines and differences no longer follow those historical cleavages. Secondly, climate/environmental changes do not adhere to national or regional boundaries while globalised economic processes often link geographically remote urban, peri-urban and rural localities distally through what is now widely referred to as teleconnections or telecoupling (Seto et al., 2012). Finally, and related to the foregoing, strategies for mitigating climate/environmental change and its effects, and/or adapting to its longer-term realities, seem increasingly to resonate across distally connected and networked towns and cities of diverse locations, histories and geopolitical orientations. These relationships are often now catalysed through mutual learning networks like the global C40 group of cities or the Commonwealth Planning Association, which focus on sharing best practice across historically salient cleavages and where personal rapport among mayors, city managers or planners is a crucial lubricant.

Amid the burgeoning urban research literature, considerable attention is now being focused not just on vulnerability assessments but on mitigation, governance, and future urban growth and sustainability scenarios. For the reasons just outlined, we do not accept the UNFCCC position in relation to the Kyoto Protocol renewal negotiations, namely that mitigation is exclusively the duty of OECD countries on account of historical responsibilities for cumulative carbon emissions. Whilst not historically inaccurate, such a view is out of date and unhelpful because many low and lower-middle income countries have for a considerable time now had heavy emissions hotspots that rate among the worst anywhere in the world. Such hotspots arise from diverse sources, of which two stand out. The first is outdated heavy industrial technologies that generate substantial pollution and carbon emissions, commonly in situations of inadequate environmental regulation and/or enforcement. The second is acute air pollution from the rapid growth in motor vehicle numbers, many of them cheap motor bikes and scooters with two-stroke engines, and often old, poorly maintained cars, buses and lorries using fuel

of uncertain provenance.¹ Moreover, many types of mitigation measures and emissions trading and off-setting schemes are now relatively well understood, do not trigger widespread job losses as once feared would occur, and should be applied wherever emissions are problematic. Finally, the 'traditional' dichotomy between mitigation and adaptation strategies and instruments is outdated, since well focused and appropriate interventions have been shown increasingly to be capable of promoting both mitigation and adaptation simultaneously in very different contexts (Simon, 2011, 2013). In other words, while mitigation and adaptation strategies generally have different origins, emphases and foci, synergies often emerge as strategies take root (Carmin et al., 2012).

That said and despite a recent growth in adaptation-based studies, these have been geographically quite concentrated and we still lack nuanced and detailed research-based evidence on how to promote and achieve it in many different contexts. In this sense, successful adaptation measures are likely to be variable and locally contingent because of the need to secure local appropriateness, legitimacy and acceptance. Understanding and promoting effective adaptation is not merely some distant future concern: clear evidence is already emerging of climate/environmental change impacts on some people in towns and cities around the world. Similarly, adaptive capacity varies greatly among households and communities and it is important to recognise that they will reach their limits at different times in terms of what they can do relatively autonomously and spontaneously in the face of changing environmental conditions. Especially in marginal environments or among the most impoverished people, such a situation may already have been reached. If the extent and rate of change accelerate further, conditions will be 'off the scale' of lived experience and local coping capacity and supportive external interventions of varying extents will become essential.

Accordingly, this collection seeks to take forward our understanding of the current 'state of the art' in relation to urban and peri-urban climate/environmental adaptation governance, planning and policy around the world. To this end, this special issue of *Urban Climate* presents conceptually informed studies addressing the nature of governance conditions appropriate to positive adaptation policies and practices at urban and intra-urban levels in different contexts; more applied papers conveying the lessons from successful adaptation experiments such as the innovative Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) pilot scheme in Dutch cities; and future directions for adaptation research, policy and planning practice in one or more urban areas. Several of the papers constitute complementary elements of the recently-completed evaluation of the Rockefeller Foundation-funded Asian Cities and Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN). Some papers also question the common assumption that enhanced resilience as the outcome of adaptation is necessarily positive and/or adequate, and raise issues regarding adaptive limitations and the need for more thorough-going transformations. Indeed, transformational change is now increasingly recognised as essential to overcome inherent limitations of current structures and processes, and forms one of the principal themes of the recent World Social Science Report on *Changing Global Environments* (ISSC and UNESCO, 2013).

These papers are drawn from among those presented in two important conference sessions that we organised during 2012: that entitled 'Too hot to handle? The implications of climate/environmental change for urban governance in Africa' at the international *Planet Under Pressure* conference in London in March 2012, and on 'Adapting to climate/environmental change: the urban challenge' at the annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers in Edinburgh in July 2012. Selected for their originality, innovativeness or the significance of their subject matter, many adopt broad perspectives, comparing experiences in multiple urban contexts or the scope for mutual learning across urban areas of different sizes and in diverse geographical regions.

2. Contents

With a focus on emerging economies in Southeast Asia, Birkmann, Garschagen and Setiadi's paper investigates new challenges for adaptive urban and spatial governance in dynamic environments.

¹ At the same time, it should be noted that seasonally used petrol- or diesel-powered gardening equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf and snow blowers, trimmers and the like now contributes increasingly to air pollution in middle and high-income districts of urban areas in North America, northern Europe and Australasia, in particular.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6577010>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6577010>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)