

Inter-Municipal Cooperation and Environmental Outcomes

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5.6 Impact Statement

Cities host 54.5% of the world's population and are significant contributors to global environmental challenges. In Quito, on 20 October 2016, world leaders adopted the New Urban Agenda, which set global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities. Cities produce 70% of global waste, and over 60% of global energy consumption comes from our cities. Approximately 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions are also associated with cities. As a result, the relevance of cities to addressing global environmental challenges cannot be underestimated, and this is reflected in the United Nation's SDG 11 (make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and SDG 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts).

This thesis focused on metropolitan areas, which represent an agglomeration of cities. The thesis sheds light on the need for local governments to work together to address environmental issues. It highlighted the critical factors that drive cooperation and explored how cooperation can be incentivised.

Chapter 2 showed that if local governments cooperate on transport issues in a metropolitan area, they can significantly reduce CO₂ transport emissions. The finding gives an evidential basis on which city governments can justify and initiate cooperation arrangements to address environmental concerns. Policy-wise, it emphasises the need for scholars and practitioners to advocate a coupling of local thinking with global and national scales of action to secure a reduction in negative environmental outcomes.

Chapter 3 broke the high prevalence of global North literature on understanding the drivers of IMC by drawing on cases from the African context. The chapter highlighted that while networks are essential, accounting for contextually defined incentives and political realities also remains crucial in network analysis of IMC,

especially in addressing collective environmental dilemmas. Aside from the chapter's methodological innovation, it draws the attention of academics and practitioners to context specificity and explains why financial incentives are more critical for cooperation success in the African context in contrast to trust or network embeddedness in the global North context.

Chapter 4 contributed to the field's research methodology and understanding of how to incentivise cooperation by using a rare game theory approach. While standard models and discourses addressing environmental dilemmas suggest tradeoffs between individual and collective social gains, this thesis suggested that, although not easy, both personal and collective gains in ensuring IMC around environmental challenges can be realised. The chapter shed light on a win-win strategy to balance both individual and collective societal benefits to ensure IMC emerges to address environmental challenges. In effect, the chapter challenges scholars and development practitioners to emphasise and unearth how to incentivise cooperation in metropolitan areas.

Finally, the findings and conclusions of this thesis have been presented at various conferences and workshops to stimulate discussion and dissemination of findings. Specifically, earlier versions of **chapter 2** were presented at the 48th Annual Urban Affairs Association Conference in Toronto, the EURA conference on "Cities Locked in Network" in Warsaw and the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management's conference on "Public Policy Beyond Borders" in Brussels. The chapter has received key publicity among practitioners and was awarded the best paper by the European Urban Research Association (EURA) in 2017. The chapter was published in *Local Government Studies* in August 2021 with a more digestible non-academic version published as blog posts for the Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham and UNU-MERIT. Chapter 3 was presented at the EURA conference on "Reconciling Urban and Regional Strengths of the Past with Developments in the Future" in Tilburg and UNU-MERIT's internal conference in 2019 and 2020. Chapter 4 was presented and discussed at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) methods school on Qualitative Comparative Analysis in Budapest in 2019. The chapter was also accepted for discussion at the 2019 Third International QCA Paper Development Workshop in ETH Zurich.