

Paradiplomacy of cities in the Global South and multilevel climate governance: evidence from Brazil

[Laura S. Valente de Macedo](#) , [Pedro Roberto Jacobi](#) & [Jose A. Puppim de Oliveira](#)

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Abstract

Multilevel climate governance (MCG) makes room for multiple non-state actors, including subnational governments, to engage actively in international activities that are conceptualised as paradiplomacy. As climate urgency increases, subnational climate actions have expanded through transnational networks and have attracted ample studies, primarily on such practices in Europe and North America. This study, as a response, aims to expand knowledge of city diplomacy in less-studied developing countries and uses Brazil as one example. It examines climate policies in Brazilian cities, particularly in four cases (Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo) to understand their roles in global climate governance and how their paradiplomatic activities through transnational municipal networks (TMNs) affect the municipal and national agendas. Our research demonstrates that even though Brazil's federative model has fallen short of adequately integrating cities into the national climate agenda, national and transnational municipal networks have been essential to building capacities, disseminating good practices and influencing climate policy at the national level. It further reflects on how to improve the dialogue with the federal level in the context of developing countries and to obtain support for climate-related urban initiatives while contributing to implementing international climate commitments.