

Multi-Level Governance of Climate Change: A case study of Istanbul



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Abstract

As climate change continues to threaten us more and more, different ways of governing climate change are considered. Multi-level governance approach is widely used in the literature to examine how global, national, and local actor interacts and influence each other. In this thesis I analyse how multi-level governance of climate change work in the case of Istanbul by adopting a power-based approach. I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, C40 network and Green Thought Association. Besides I qualitatively analysed documents from Turkish state, the municipality, and Green Thought Association. Findings suggest that the state holds regulatory power resources; therefore, the municipality has limited independence for implementing policies. Moreover, the laws that the municipality is subjected to does not address climate change adequately; thus, it prevents the municipality to access necessary financial resources. However, the collaborative relationship between the municipality and C40 increases the municipalities capacities through knowledge sharing. Enhanced interaction with civil society also increases the capacities of the municipality. I argue that, with the enhanced capacity, Istanbul could make effective advocacy towards the state to update the existing laws to be compatible with the climate change needs and put pressure on the state to do its share to contribute to global efforts to keep global warming at 2°C.

Keywords: climate change, Turkey, Istanbul, multi-level governance, power

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List of Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
COP	Conference of Parties
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GTA	Green Thought Association
ICC	Istanbul City Council
IMM	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
(I)NDC	(Intended) Nationally Determined Contribution
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
TMN's	Transnational Municipal Networks
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Introduction

Climate change and global warming refer to the rise of global average surface temperature due to the increase of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) (Betsill & Bulkeley, 2003). GHG emissions in the atmosphere increase mainly by burning fossil fuels and deforestation. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2014) states that anthropogenic drivers of GHG emissions are extremely likely to be the dominant cause of the observed global warming since the mid-20th century. The impacts of climate change vary across the regions, but it is very likely that the whole globe will face them. These possible impacts and risks include extreme weather events (hurricanes, extreme warm and cold temperatures, heavy precipitation), floods, drought etc. (IPCC, 2014). Due to these climate events, food production could be in danger, public health concerns might increase, displacement of populations would be faced, and poverty might affect more and more people (IPCC, 2014). Tackling climate change has two pillars: mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation strategies aim to manage the causes of climate change which is mainly done by reducing the GHG emissions from the atmosphere. Meanwhile, adaptation strategies aim to manage the consequences of climate change by reducing human vulnerability to harmful effects (Responding, n.d.).

Climate change is commonly framed as a 'global problem'. One explanation for this framing is that GHG emissions have no boundaries; therefore, it impacts the globe (Bulkeley & Newell, 2015). Given the global nature of this problem, it is necessary to have a global solution, especially regarding mitigation strategies, because no country can tackle climate change alone (Bulkeley & Newell, 2015). Global solution is usually interpreted as international cooperation, and this is formally done through international treaties negotiated and signed by nation-states. This approach is also related to the framing of climate change as an international problem where responsibility lies on nation-states. Although nation-states have significant power over many spheres that contribute to climate change, it is widely recognized that they are limited in directly affecting the emissions. Another

explanation that frames climate change as a global problem is related to global processes that GHG emissions are generated, which includes flows of production, trade, and consumption. This approach shifts the responsibility from nation-states to multinational corporations and consumers. However, this framing of climate change as a global problem tends to neglect other levels of decision-making that shapes the course of climate change.

For this reason, climate change has increasingly been framed as a multi-level problem. This framing includes new spheres and arenas of governance that are involved in both creating and addressing climate change. This means that nation-states not only have to engage with other nation-states but also negotiate and cooperate with non-state actors. Therefore, to understand the governance of climate change, it is crucial to recognize different actors that are involved. Following the framing of climate change as a multi-level problem, this thesis will focus on the city/municipal level as one of the non-state actors that are involved in governing climate change. Cities could be regarded as non-state actors in climate change governance because, despite many central governments' reluctance to address climate change, many cities committed to more ambitious efforts to tackle climate change. A perfect example is the "We Are Still In" coalition of mayors, governors, and business leaders, which was formed after President Donald Trump decided to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.

Paris Agreement is an important milestone in international climate governance, and it is possible to say that it is the norm in the international climate regime set out by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is a legally binding international treaty that was adopted by 196 parties at COP21 in Paris in 2015. Its goal is to limit global warming below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels (The Paris Agreement, n.d.). Paris Agreement also addresses the importance of non-state actors in achieving this target. Conference of Parties (COP) decision 1/CP.21 on Adoption of the Paris Agreement states this in the following article: "Welcomes the efforts of all non-Party stakeholders to address and respond to climate change, including those of civil society, the private sector,

financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities” (UNFCCC, 2016, Section V, paragraph 134)

Cities are significant for climate change governance because more than half of the world population lives in cities, and it is estimated to rise to 60% by 2030 (Goal 11, n.d.). Because of the large population, cities are responsible for 60% of production and consumption. As a result, cities are accountable for an estimated 75% of global CO₂ emissions, making them the biggest contributor to climate change (Cities, n.d.). Due to this massive amount of contribution, drastically reducing GHG emissions in the cities would result in a huge amount of decrease globally. The impacts of climate change on cities are also significant. These impacts include heatwaves with direct effects on public health, increases in rainfall which might result in flooding and the risk of drought and water shortage. Because of the importance of the cities in climate change and the global economy, multiple city networks have emerged over the past years.

1.1. Aim and Research Question

This study focuses on the case of Istanbul because recently, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) has accelerated its efforts to mitigate climate change in the city and adapt to its impacts. Istanbul has significance since it is the largest city in Turkey in terms of population, and it has the potential to inspire and lead other cities to act. IMM is currently in the process of revising the Istanbul Climate Change Action Plan that was published in 2018 because it is not compatible with the new mitigation target of IMM that is to make the city carbon neutral by 2050. This research aims to examine this decision-making process and understand the power dynamics between relevant actors of this governance process. Related to the framing of climate change, as mentioned above, multi-level governance is utilized as a theoretical concept. The multi-level governance arrangement of climate change governance in Istanbul is examined through a power-based approach.

Research Question: How does multi-level governance of climate change work in the context of Istanbul?

In order to answer this question, the relationship between IMM and other actors involved in this process is examined. These actors include the C40 network, the central government (Turkish government) and civil society. Moreover, the challenges to have effective climate change action in Istanbul and possibilities to overcome those challenges are discovered.

1.2. Thesis Outline

This thesis has seven chapters in total. Following this chapter, Chapter 2, provides the reader with a contextual framework of the study by giving relevant background information. This chapter consists of a brief explanation of how municipalities in Turkey operates and recent political events that affected this operation, alongside the impacts of climate change in Istanbul. Chapter 3 discusses the relevant previous studies on climate change governance at the local level and my aim to contribute to the literature with this research. Chapter 4 explains the theoretical framework of this thesis in detail which is multi-level governance with a focus on the concept of power relations. Chapter 5 describes the methodology I used to make a research design, collect, and analyse the data, together with the limitations of the study and my ethical considerations. Chapter 6 consists of an analysis of the data and a discussion in accordance with the theoretical framework. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarizing the findings, making general remarks, and suggesting areas of further research.

2. Background

The aim of this chapter is to provide some relevant background information on the case that is studied in this thesis. First, I briefly demonstrate Turkey's position in the international climate regime set by UNFCCC. Then I explain the municipal status of Istanbul. After that, I continue by describing the political tensions between the Mayor of Istanbul and the central government, mainly President Erdoğan and his party. Moreover, I illustrate how Istanbul will be affected by climate change.

Finally, I shortly define C40 because that is the primary network that IMM works closely with nowadays.

This case cannot be thought of separately from the political context of Turkey. Turkey officially signed the Paris Agreement in April 2016, but Turkey is one of the six countries and the only one among G20 countries that have not ratified the agreement. This means that the agreement did not come to effect in Turkey yet. The COP decision invited all the parties to present their ‘Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)’ before COP21. Turkey presented its INDC to the UNFCCC Secretariat in September 2015. The Paris Agreement calls for all the parties to declare their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) every five years starting from 2020. As Turkey is not a party to the agreement, it did not submit its NDC. Turkey’s INDC determines 18-21% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to the Business-as-Usual Scenario, and in order to achieve this, Turkey plans to utilize new climate finance mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund (Republic of Turkey, 2015). Hence, it is possible to say that Turkey is reluctant to participate in the international climate regime set by the Paris Agreement due to mainly economic reasons. Turkey demands to be removed from UNFCCC Annex I countries based on special circumstances and have access to global climate finance to ratify the Paris Agreement (Bakan Kurum, 2021).

Istanbul is the biggest city in Turkey, with a population of more than 15 million. This makes Istanbul a megacity, and it has the highest GDP per capita among other cities in Turkey. There are 39 district municipalities in Istanbul, and they operate under Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. IMM is run by the mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality, and it is responsible for administering all the district municipalities, selecting waste disposal contractors, and constructing and maintaining city roads (Yazar & York, 2021). IMM is also in charge of the city’s strategic planning and budgets and zoning plans of the district municipalities (Yazar & York, 2021). The local governance of Turkey is characterized as having “a powerful mayor and a weak council” (Türkün, 2011). With the law no.6360 in 2012, the number of metropolitan municipalities increased from 16 to 30, and this has

been interpreted as recentralization of power because the power of local governments would gather around metropolitan municipalities, which arguably conflicts with democratic principles that local governments are built upon (Akilli & Akilli, 2014). Moreover, municipalities are dependent on the central government because funds mainly come from the central government through a tax-sharing system, long-term credits and direct cash transfers (Yazar & York, 2021, p.5).

In the local elections of March 2019, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) that was in power of IMM since 2004, lost the election to the main opposition party Republican People's Party's (CHP) candidate Ekrem Imamoğlu. The Election Committee (YSK) decided on the annulment of this election, and the elections were renewed in Istanbul in June 2019. However, Ekrem Imamoğlu has been re-elected as the Mayor of IMM, and he is still in this position. There was a similar situation in the Metropolitan Municipality of Ankara during the same election period; although CHP's candidate won the elections, they did not renew the elections. Still, in both of the municipalities, AKP holds the majority in the municipal councils. Shortly after the elections President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called those mayors 'lame duck' (Erdoğan'dan İstanbul yorumu, 2019). Together with the already existing dependency of municipalities on the central government, this statement of the President shows that the central government is unwilling to cooperate with the new administrations of those cities. For instance, the authority to assign directors to municipal associations was taken from the mayors and given to the municipal councils through a government decision (Ekrem Imamoğlu, 2019).

There is also tension between Mayor Imamoğlu and the government because of the 'Canal Istanbul' project. The government plans this project to be an alternative waterway to Bosphorus, and it was first announced in 2011 by then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization accepted the controversial Environmental Impact Assessment (ÇED) report for Canal Istanbul in January 2020 despite objections from the opposition, universities, civil society and people. According to the Istanbul Planning Agency and Istanbul City Council, the ÇED report is flawed, and Canal Istanbul will have devastating impacts

on Istanbul, ranging from loss of biodiversity to changes in sea levels, from decreased air quality to increased risks related to earthquakes. Mayor Imamoğlu started a campaign to mobilize people against the Canal Istanbul project called ‘Either Canal or Istanbul’. The government is insistent on constructing the canal, which results in political tension between Mayor Imamoğlu and the government. Moreover, according to the latest survey made by Istanbul Planning Agency, 71.7% of the participant think that inhabitants of Istanbul must decide on whether Canal Istanbul should be built or not and only 25.2% of the participants supports this project while 57.8% does not (Istanbul Planlama Ajansı, 2021).

In terms of climate change, Istanbul’s average annual temperature increased by 0.94°C between the years of 1912-2016 (Toros et al., 2017). The risks that Istanbul faces due to climate change include heat waves, urban heat islands, drought, flash floods (IBB, 2018), and those impacts would be devastating for the population and the economy (Yazar & York, 2021). Istanbul also has the highest GHG emissions in Turkey, but GHG emissions per capita are relatively low compared to similar cities, and this suggests that transition to a low carbon economy can be somewhat fast and easy (IBB, 2018). IMM has a climate action plan that was published in 2018, and the target of this action plan is a 33% reduction of GHG emissions for 2030 and 36% for 2050. However, a made in Istanbul shows that 91% of the participants do not know that the city has a climate action plan (Ağralan & Sadioğlu, 2021). IMM is in the process of renewing this climate action plan to be carbon neutral by 2050. Details of this process are discussed later in this study. As a part of collective efforts to tackle climate change, IMM is a part of C40, Global Covenant of Mayors, the Mexico City Pact, and UCLG-MEWA.

C40 is a transnational municipal network founded in 2005 by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone (History, n.d.), and Istanbul is a member of this network since the beginning. Today the network has 97 member cities all around the world. Members consist of either megacities or innovator cities. Definition of megacity by C40 is cities that have 3 million inhabitants or will have 3 million inhabitants by 2030. Innovative cities are the cities that do not fit the definition of megacity but have

shown clear leadership in tackling climate change. Those cities makeup 27% of the global economy and represent more than 800 million people. C40 is governed by a Steering Committee of mayors elected by their peers to represent their regions. As can be seen, the C40 network is a big organization with a corporate structure.

3. Literature Review

In this part of the thesis, I explain previous studies relevant to my research question. First, I summarize how climate governance has been studied in different cities. This also includes the role of transnational municipal networks (TMNs) in influencing decisions made at the local level. Studies on C40, as it is the main TMN that IMM is in close contact with at the moment, are encompassed in this chapter. Second, I illustrate the limited number of studies on climate change governance in Turkey and Istanbul. With this part, I aim to provide some context of this situation in Turkey and Istanbul and point out the research gap that this study aims to fill in.

3.1. Climate Governance in Cities and the Role of Transnational Municipal Networks

As I stated in the introduction, since cities gained significance in global climate governance, the literature about climate governance in cities has been expanded. Many studies have focused on the multi-level dimension of climate governance and how multi-level governance structures operate in different cities. It has been highlighted that to be more effective local climate initiatives must be hand in hand with higher-level policies and must be integrated into the multi-level governance system (Fuhr, 2018; Pietrapertosa, 2021). Studies demonstrate that institutional adaptation to integrate cities to various levels of governance is underway across cities all around the world but rather in softer forms (Patterson, 2021). However, studies suggest that state-level factors, such as being a member of international agreements, do not necessarily influence the cities for climate action (Lee & Koski, 2014).

There have been various case studies examining climate governance in cities, for instance, a case study of Hanover (Germany) and Växjö (Sweden) suggests that national or federal support for local climate action and influence between political actions performed at different levels appear to broaden the scope of urban energy transition (Emelianoff, 2014). New York City (USA) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands) shows that although transformative climate governance is emerging, it is still subordinate to business-as-usual interest and policy approaches, which favours incremental and short-term solutions (Hölscher et al., 2019). They conclude that to strengthen transformative climate governance, institutional and organizational conditions that would stipulate the prioritization of climate change across different levels should be developed, and more comprehensive coordination, collaboration and learning should be enabled (Hölscher et al., 2019). Results from Chicago and San Francisco similarly show that although these cities had ambitious climate change targets, they lack the power and capacity to achieve these (van der Heijden, 2021). A case study of Dhaka City (Bangladesh) on mainstreaming climate change in the sub-national level found out that to increase the mainstreaming; there is a need to build sub-national level climate capacity with a focus on institutional coordination and cooperation among agencies at different levels and to launch a national financing arrangement that allows sub-national agencies to use climate finance (Fatemi et al., 2020). Karonga (Malawi) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) cases suggest that less developed African cities are aware, concerned and motivated to act on climate change issues (Pasquini, 2020). However, the ability of large African cities to act is largely dependent on an international network that provides resources, while the smaller cities seem to collaborate more effectively within the city to overcome constraints to climate change governance (Pasquini, 2020).

I tried to illustrate how different cases were studied in the literature by giving examples from different continents. Despite this academic attention to cities, the literature mainly focuses on the cities in Global North. Although there are some studies focusing on cities of the Global South, it is possible to say that they are underrepresented in academia. More empirical research is needed to have a thorough understanding of climate governance in cities.

The role of TMNs, especially in climate governance, has been studied widely because of their steady increase in recent years. Kern and Bulkeley (2009) identified three characteristics of TMNs. First, the members are independent, and they are free to join or leave. Second, they are characterized by self-governance because they seem to be non-hierarchical, horizontal, and polycentric. And finally, members directly implement the decisions taken within the networks.

Various studies pointed out the benefits of TMNs, such as their ability to foster the spread of climate policy innovations among cities (Hakelberg, 2014; Busch, 2015, 2016; Busch et al., 2018) through enabling internal mobilisation, formulating emission reduction goals, institutionalizing climate trajectories, enabling direct exchange and offering project support (Busch et al., 2018). Research has shown that member cities of TMNs are more likely to start climate change adaptation processes than non-members, and being a member of multiple TMNs is associated with a higher level of adaptation planning (Heikkinen et al., 2020). Studies also found that certain conditions could increase the benefits of TMNs. For instance, a study on 100 Resilient Cities suggests that TMNs could be more innovative if they create original governance instruments which include a mix of soft and hard power strategies, although the general characteristic of TMNs is soft and voluntary (Papin, 2019). However, several studies pointed out the limitations of TMNs. The soft governing approach that most of the TMNs adopt seems to be limiting their capacity to govern (Kern & Bulkeley, 2009). Because of this approach, they are heavily dependent on their members' level of commitment, and the lack of support from the members can hinder the benefits (Giest & Howlett, 2013; Dumala et al., 2021).

Knowledge sharing and policy learning within TMNs are essential concepts that have been discussed in the literature. TMNs provide a space for cities to learn from one and other. However, most peer exchanges fall short to be called learning; they can be defined only as knowledge sharing (Haupt et al., 2020) as they do not result in substantial changes in urban climate governance (Shefer, 2019). Nevertheless, it might result in modest policy changes (Shefer, 2019). Knowledge and learning are also crucial for the organizational capacities of TMNs because findings suggest that

the most central TMNs such as C40 and ICLEI, as they have diverse contacts, can bring about vast amounts of diverse knowledge that can generate novel governance instruments (Papin, 2020). A study on the C40 network shows that trans-municipal learning is promoted by the existence of a multi-stakeholder governing body, closeness of cultures and a higher level of climate change policy performance (Lee & van de Meene, 2012). As seen, knowledge and learning are crucial for both TMNs to improve their capacities and encourage cities to take climate action by providing ways to do so.

Furthermore, the literature tends to classify member cities of TMNs as pioneers, followers, and laggards in urban climate governance (Kern, 2019). Kern and Bulkeley (2009) state that the TMNs are “networks of pioneers for pioneers” (p.1) because of the passive cities within the networks, which has not significantly changed their behaviour since becoming a member. Kern (2019) later proposes embedded upscaling of local experiments into higher levels of governance so that it even reaches laggards. However, Busch et al. (2018) suggest that certain benefits of TMNs that I have previously mentioned can be associated with laggards rather than pioneers. They state that “former assessments of TMCNs as networks for and by pioneers do not seem to hold true any longer” (Busch et al., 2018, p.229). The reason for that might be the evolvement of TMNs. It is important to note that this study has been conducted in German cities; thus, there is a need for more empirical findings to understand the role of TMNs in different cities.

Moreover, the discrepancy between the members is also visible in terms of cities of Global North and Global South, where the latter is the giving end, and the former is the receiving end (Bouteligier, 2013). This North-South division is problematic because it hampers South to North learning, and it makes the agenda of Global North more prominent; hence, it makes it more difficult to deal with the challenges Global South faces where urbanization is happening rapidly and on a large scale (Bouteligier, 2013). Within the members of the C40 network, it has been found out that while cities of Global South promote change, mainly by increasing the material living standard, cities of Global North support the idea of creating sustainable cities

by mostly small changes that would preserve the current state of society (Heikkinen et al., 2019). It is possible to conclude that learning from South to North could result in more transformational changes. TMN's are also criticized for having a representation problem where Global South is underrepresented (Bansard et al., 2017).

There are other studies that focus on the C40 network. A study of climate policies of 57 member cities suggests that membership to the network matters in terms of achieving goals set by the network, but even non-member cities might act in accordance with those goals (Lee & Koski, 2014). Especially in the absence of concrete international commitments, city networks play a crucial role in enabling cities to adopt policies independently (Rashidi & Patt, 2018). In terms of the anticipated change that the C40 network promotes, this change is mainly incremental, which support the status quo, with only a few transformational climate measures (Heikkinen et al., 2019). Still, C40 is considered to have an essential role in providing institutional support for testing new solutions and implementing climate projects (Nguyen et al., 2020). Research shows that cities must select networks that provide policies according to their needs; for instance, Rashidi and Patt (2018) found out that cities that are members of the C40 network are more likely to adopt climate policies than those that are a member of ICLEI. That might be because as C40 has fewer members than ICLEI, they can offer a higher level of support to each member (Rashidi & Patt, 2018).

3.2. Climate Governance in Turkey and Istanbul

In this section, literature on climate change policy and governance in Turkey and Istanbul will be explained. First of all, there is a limited amount of scientific work on this issue. Previous studies highlighted the position of Turkey in international climate governance. Scholars have pointed out that Turkey's position on international climate change negotiations did not change in the last two decades (Turhan et al., 2016). Evidence suggests that this is because climate policies operationalize as long as they do not conflict with development ambitions (Turhan et al., 2016).

Moreover, Turkey has refrained from signing legally binding agreements based on ‘special circumstances’ that has been recognized by a COP decision (Mazlum, 2017). Although Turkey signed the Paris Agreement, it has not yet been ratified. Mazlum (2017) claims that Turkey should build its institutional capacity for implementing the Paris Agreement, rather than holding onto the special circumstances; otherwise, it will be challenging for the country to comply with the pledges and the review process (p.147). Mazlum (2017) emphasizes that while other countries were grouping according to their interests, Turkey chose to be alone in the international climate negotiations, which makes it harder to represent its interests. Therefore, it has been argued that Turkey needs to shift its climate policy drastically (Turhan et al., 2016; Mazlum, 2017).

Furthermore, Savaşan (2019) identified some obstacles to effective climate governance. Turkey lacks a specific framework act for climate change and related issues; therefore, a Climate Change Act that deals with mitigation and adaptation, risk assessment and monitoring processes. (Savaşan, 2019). There are no policies to enforce local authorities for increased engagement in climate action (Savaşan, 2019). Participation of civil society is very limited in decision making and implementation processes; hence increased engagement with civil society is necessary together with improved transparency and access to information (Savaşan, 2019). Finally, Turkey’s security/economy-oriented political agenda prevents climate change to become prioritized (Savaşan, 2019).

In terms of climate governance in Istanbul, there is one research that gets closer to this one. Yazar and York (2021) aim to explain how climate governance operates in a unitary state structure; in doing so, they focus on four themes: agenda-setting, the divergence between the existing policies and urban climate agendas, policy entrepreneurs’ roles, and civil society organizations. Their findings suggest that changes in political leadership, contrasts between existing laws and contemporary climate agendas, and conflicting priorities of policy entrepreneurs pose challenges for long-term and concrete climate action in Istanbul (Yazar & York, 2021). The data for this thesis was gathered in 2019; therefore, the perspective of the new

administration is very limited. My aim with this thesis is to contribute to the literature by focusing on the power dimension in the process of revising Istanbul's climate action plan.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I explain the theoretical framework of this thesis. I have chosen to use multi-level governance theory (MLG); therefore, I start by demonstrating what MLG is in the most general sense. I illustrate different types of MLG, and I go into certain critiques to MLG and responses to those critiques. Then, I continue by discussing the role of civil society in MLG. Furthermore, I elaborate on the significance of MLG for climate governance. Finally, I highlight the concept of power in MLG because what I am doing in this thesis is to provide a power-based explanation of the MLG arrangement that Istanbul is a part of.

4.1. What is multi-level governance?

A critique of the traditional separation between domestic and international politics is the foundation of multi-level governance theory (Bache & Flinders, 2004). It is originated from European Studies, and the term was first used by Gary Marks (1992). However, it has been widely used to explain complex governance structures beyond the EU, including climate change governance. According to Zito (2015), the popularity of this theory is due to strong scholarly recognition that international, national, and more local political dynamics and their ongoing interactions simultaneously matter. In his early works, Marks described how within multi-level governance, “supranational, national, regional, and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarching policy networks” (Marks, 1993, p.402–3, as cited in Bache & Flinders, 2004).

According to Marks and Hooghe (2004), MLG literature agrees that the dispersion of governance across multiple jurisdictions is both more efficient than, and

normatively superior to, central state monopoly (p.2). They argue that “governance must operate at multiple scales in order to capture variations in the territorial reach of policy externalities. Because externalities arising from the provision of public goods vary immensely—from planet-wide in the case of global warming to local in the case of most city services—so should the scale of governance. To internalize externalities, governance must be multi-level.” (Marks & Hooghe, 2004, p.2). The shift in power and authority has three dimensions: 1) centre vs periphery, in which central government is forced to devolve powers to local and subnational units; 2) anarchy vs regime, in which state sovereignty is reduced by joining structured arrangements of international coordination and regulation, and 3) state vs society, in which the state shares public power with civil society thus blurring the distinction between public and the private (Piattoni, 2009).

Besides this agreement that governance should be multi-level, there are two contrasting visions on how MLG is organised. Marks and Hooghe (2004) label these contrasting visions as Type I and Type II MLG. The foundation of Type I MLG is federalism which is concerned with power-sharing among few levels of governance (Marks & Hooghe, 2004). It has general-purpose jurisdiction, which means that decision-making powers are dispersed across jurisdictions. Another characteristic of Type I MLG is non-intersecting membership, where membership is usually territorial, durable and does not intersect at any particular level. Moreover, there are a limited number of jurisdictional levels in Type I MLG, although this number of levels can vary depending on the context. Finally, this type has system-wide, durable architecture. Levels of governance are created through systemic institutional choice. Therefore, the levels of governance are durable. Change might occur by reallocating policy functions across existing levels (Marks & Hooghe, 2004). However, many scholars supporting this view believe that national governments are still the central actors in decision-making. For instance, Keohane and Nye (2000) argue that “. . . the nation-state is not about to be replaced as the primary instrument of domestic and global governance. . . . Instead, we

believe that the nation-state is being supplemented by other actors-private and third sector ... in a more complex geography” (p.12)

The foundations of Type II MLG can be found in public choice theory. In contrast to Type I MLG, it is task-specific which means that multiple, independent jurisdictions fulfil distinct functions (Marks & Hooghe, 2004). Moreover, there are intersecting memberships where borders are crossed, and jurisdictions overlap. Another characteristic of Type II MLG is that it has many jurisdictional levels. Different jurisdictions can provide each public good and service; therefore, there is no limit in the number of jurisdictions. Type II MLG can also be conceived in the international arena because local problems can become transnational. Lastly, as Type II MLG is task-specific, it has a flexible design that intends to respond to the changing needs and preferences of the citizens.

Figure 1: Types of multi-level governance

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Non-intersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdictions at a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

Source: Marks & Hooghe, 2004, p.3

It is important to note that these types of MLG can coexist, and Marks and Hooghe (2004) highlights this by stating, “Type II multi-level governance tends to be embedded in legal frameworks determined by Type I jurisdictions.” (p.9). They suggest that Type II MLG is likely to emerge when a Type I organisation cannot address an issue with policy action and a tailored governing body is needed. Skelcher (2005) states that “The empirical data from the UK and US show that Type II governance occurs extensively in settings where the high boundary integrity of Type I governmental systems produces a competency constraint, in other words

where mainstream governmental organizations are unable to respond flexibly to policy issues that intersect their jurisdictions.” (p.94)

There are several critiques towards MLG. One criticism is that MLG is ultimately descriptive, not explanatory (Ongaro, 2015). Another one claims that MLG is rather an umbrella term than a theory. Furthermore, some criticise MLG for having an ‘evasive dependent variable’. Zito (2015) deals with the first issue by including ideas and concepts of network governance and learning to MLG. He states that governance networks can be both the unit of analysis, works as an actor connecting the multi-level process, and the arena in which the analysis occurs. “This contribution highlights three dynamics: the equal importance of horizontal as well as vertical interactions, the importance of learning dynamics to the motivation and explanation of networks and the problems of coordination within networks.” (Zito, 2015, p.23). In the first dynamic, vertical interactions refer to all levels of governing, including global, regional, national, and subnational/local levels; however, this vertical dimension is joined by horizontal interaction between the public and private sphere (Zito,2015). This approach to MLG provides significant importance to actors operating at the horizontal level. Actors in the governance interactions are interdependent, continually interacting, governed by trust and a mutually defined set of rules of the game and possessing a substantial autonomy from the state (Zito, 2015). This is related to the second dynamic because policy-making in this context will involve a transformation of structures which would result in actors learning about their interdependence and negotiating among themselves to shape situations, and this requires coordination between the actors (Zito, 2015). Zito (2015) argues that the MLG agenda is valuable in identifying the coordination problem in the governance networks. By drawing upon the concepts mentioned above and ideas, Zito (2015) theorizes MLG by providing an explanatory variable to MLG problem-solving mode, which is learning. He states that “social learning is vital in the first instance to frame the policy problem and to orientate actors into both the resources that they have available and the resources existing in other actors that are required” (Zito, 2015, p.34). Moreover, he argues that to ensure learning and coordination in an MLG arrangement, a collective

entrepreneurial effort, which is more likely to involve some public institution or organisation with some grounds in constitutional legitimacy as well as organisational resource, will be required. As a final remark, Zito (2015) also responds to the 'evasive dependent variable' criticism by emphasizing coordination and the resources that help maintain this coordination as the key dependent variable in MLG.

4.2. Civil Society in MLG

Scholte (2010) points out that MLG is a question of the governed as well as the governors, and the governed are involved in the governance arrangements as civil society. Civil society can be considered a political space where citizens come together with the effort to affect policy-making. In contemporary MLG, civil society activities are mostly done by NGO's and social movements; while the former being formally organized operations, the latter usually does not adopt a bureaucratic form of organization (Scholte, 2010). Civil society does not only engage with national governments, but they also try to influence other governance institutions such as global and regional regulatory agencies; hence civil society today has gained a multi-level character.

According to Scholte (2010), civil society involvement in MLG can be direct, meaning that civil society interacts with the governance agencies themselves, and indirect, meaning that citizen groups engage with the governance process through third parties such as parliaments and mass media. In terms of direct involvement, civil society organisations can take official positions within MLG agencies, or they can be officially recognized through accreditation schemes. Moreover, some governance agencies may have special bureaus for NGO relations. Civil society consultations can also have an ad hoc character, and governance agencies can involve citizen groups for policy implementation and review (Scholte, 2010, p.387-388). In terms of indirect involvement, civil society seeks to affect a governance agency's decisions on one level by lobbying institutions on another level. For instance, they could try to influence global or regional policies through national

governments or get involved with political parties to affect national governments. Furthermore, citizen groups also use mass media, commercial sector, and public education activities to engage in MLG indirectly. Finally, they could also use public demonstrations, which can be regarded as both direct and indirect involvement (Scholte, 2010, p.389-390).

The consequences of those activities are hard to be determined, but Scholte (2010) identifies several impacts of civil society on MLG. Civil society actions have created some regulatory institutions such as the UN and World Trade Organization, or they have contributed to the institutional reforms of existing agencies of MLG. In addition, citizen groups affected the agendas of MLG institutions by addressing new issues or setting out priorities. Civil society engagement also shaped the discourses, that is, how the issues are discussed within governance institutions. Both agenda setting and discourse change resulted in concrete policy decisions. Looking from a broader perspective, all those changes result in changes in deeper structures of society and politics; however, this is very difficult to measure and attribute to civil society (Scholte, 2010, p.390-391).

I wanted to highlight the position of civil society in MLG arrangements because one of the relationships that I will discuss further on in this thesis is the interaction of IMM and civil society in revising the climate action plan. Analysis of how civil society engages with IMM's policy-making process on climate change will be guided by the approach provided by Scholte.

4.3. MLG and Climate Change

Clark (1985) suggests that the challenge of climate change governance is not to establish the pre-eminence of any governance scale but rather to match scales of explanations, processes, and patterns in a realistic and effective way (p.21). This challenge is related to the shift from framing climate change as a global problem to framing it as a multi-level problem mentioned in the introduction chapter. Due to

this shift, there is more attention towards the role of local and subnational levels in climate governance, and MLG has been widely utilized in those studies.

Consequences of environmental problems are often felt locally, but solutions are inherently national because of the spill overs that characterise many environmental problems; however, national programmes need subnational involvement for effective implementation (Wälti, 2010). The issue of climate change is no different. As climate change occurs at multiple levels, the driving forces are to be found in multiple levels, and the authority to deal with the problem occurs in multiple levels; hence, the governance debate should be about how can policies be developed, and initiatives be taken simultaneously at different levels effectively (Gupta et al., 2007). Here MLG comes into play as an appropriate response in which concurrent policy processes at all levels identify policy space and foster initiatives, and put pressure on the other governance levels (Gupta et al., 2007).

Moreover, analyses of the local level may ignore how economic, social, and political processes across different levels and systems of governance interact. Climate policy covers many fields, such as energy and transportation; therefore, the question of how the division of responsibilities for climate policy is organized among different levels should be studied in order to have a thorough understanding of climate governance. Hence, the MLG approach serves as a tool to engage with the processes that shape local capacity and political will for sustainable development at multiple sites and scales of governance to explain why moves towards urban sustainability are, and are not, taking place (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2005).

Networking has become more significant in climate governance with the rise of transnational municipal networks such as ICLEI, C40 and Climate Alliance. According to Lidskog and Elander (2010), there are certain benefits of networks: they create a space for exchanging experience and mutual learning, and they allow members to be a part of the flow opportunities; they open a possibility for cities to become pioneers of innovative ideas and this may strengthen cities' economy by attracting investments from the private sector and public funding, and they are sources of inspiration and knowledge that may create changes in citizen attitudes

and behaviours. City networks are particularly important for this study, but we can observe the increased attention to climate change in national legislations and projects, discussions within international organizations and civil society. Hence, it is possible to say that there is already some sort of multi-level governance of climate policy. Although, this does not mean that there is perfect coordination among these actors. On the contrary, as Lidskog and Elander (2010) state, “there is an ongoing struggle among actors on different levels in society concerning the right to take part in defining and addressing global issues, and there is no guarantee that policies will move in the direction of a broad, final consensus.” (p.39).

4.4. Power in MLG and Climate Change Governance

There has been a lack of attention towards the concept of power in governance research, and MLG literature is not different (Arts & Tatenhove, 2004; Marquardt, 2017; Okereke et al., 2009). Although decision making in multi-level governance systems is highly related to power, most of the MLG literature does not conceptualize this relation explicitly. However, there has been scholarly effort to address the issue of power within MLG and climate governance which I will discuss in this chapter. I think a discussion of power within MLG arrangements would be extremely fruitful for the purpose of this thesis because the case of Istanbul is characterized by an ongoing power struggle.

Okereke, Bulkeley and Schroeder (2009) identified four issues for the conceptualization of climate governance, and those issues are the nature of power and authority in the global arena; the nature of private and public authority; the dynamics between structure and agency; and the actual practice and processes of governance (p.72). Whereas all those issues are important, I will focus on the issue of the nature of power and authority in this thesis. Power issues are crucial for climate governance in many ways. International climate negotiations are characterized by the power struggles between nation-states; domestic pressure from various interest groups shapes the government’s climate policies; and climate-related outcomes are influenced by transnational networks, global companies, and

local governments (Marquardt, 2017). Hence, it is crucial to have an analysis of power to better understand MLG arrangements in climate governance.

The most simplistic definition of power that I will use in this thesis is the following: “an actor’s ability to achieve or at least to affect a certain outcome” (Marquardt, 2017, p.169). Relevant to this definition, Okereke et al. (2009) propose a concept of power that is multiple and relational. This concept means that power is constituted through social relations as well as a function of the specific alignment of social structural forces at any given time. They claim that this approach opens the space to explore not only of whose interests and influences dominate the international regime and its implementation but also of the multiple ways in which actors within and outside the regime adopt strategic capacities, create alternative mentalities of rule, and turn the issue of climate change into practical (Okereke et al., 2009).

Marquardt (2017) suggests a three-dimensional approach to investigate power in MLG of climate change: structural dimension, resource dimension, and capacity dimension. The structural dimension refers to the relevant governance structures within the existing climate regime. The power of an actor is dependent on its position within this governance arrangement and connected to other levels of governance and coordination with other actors. This also depicts the relational aspect of power that Okereke et al. (2009) pointed out.

The resource dimension of power is related to various hard and soft power resources, which can include constitutional and regulatory resources as well as the capacity to influence discourses and shape the political agenda (Marquardt, 2017). For example, while formal institutions such as nation-states hold constitutional and regulatory resources to implement legislation, NGO’s or other non-state actors hold significant power by using different communication strategies to keep specific topics on the public agenda and pressurize policymakers (Marquardt, 2017).

Finally, the capacity dimension of power refers to an actor’s ability to effectively utilize its power resources because having resources alone is not sufficient to

achieve results (Marquardt, 2017). For instance, national governments in developing countries have a hard time implementing climate policies because of the lack of knowledge, money, and bureaucratic infrastructure even though they have sufficient constitutional powers (Marquardt, 2017). In sum, as power is defined as an actor's ability to achieve or affect the outcome, this power is dependent on structures, resources, and capacities. When analysing power in MLG, the first step is to identify the relevant actors, their positions within the arrangement and their interactions. The second step is to map the hard and soft power resources of the actors. And the third step is to discuss the actors' ability to use those resources (Marquardt, 2017).

Marquardt (2017) argues that power is a vital concept in the study of MLG arrangements on climate policy, and he summarizes his argument in the following way: "Power-based approaches can enhance our understanding for how structures and agents shape complex climate governance. Integrating insights from power theories into a multi-level governance framework means exploring the role of structures, resources and capacities for achieving outcomes. It also means carrying out explicitly what most multi-level governance researchers implicitly know already: that power matters." (p.171)

5. Methods and Material

My research question explores how policy-making processes work in an MLG arrangement by focusing on IMM during their revision of the climate change action plan. Therefore, I have chosen to use multi-level governance theory to guide my analysis, and I will focus on a power-based approach that was provided by Marquardt (2017). I aim to investigate how MLG theory and power-based explanations apply to the case of IMM.

This thesis adopts a post-positivist approach towards the research. According to the philosophical standpoints of this approach, objective social reality exists outside of human minds, but it is imperfectly knowable (della Porta & Keating, 2008). This

ontological perspective is called critical realism, and it means that our knowledge of social reality is often socially conditioned and subject to challenge and reinterpretation (della Porta & Keating, 2008). In terms of the epistemological perspective of post-positivism, knowledge is influenced by the researcher, and it is filtered through the theory the researcher adopts (della Porta & Keating, 2008). Therefore, this approach is suitable for deductive, qualitative research.

Post-positivism recognizes the context in terms of institutional factors, and these factors may be expressed through variables. In other words, post-positivists seek to express the effect of context in the form of institutional structures and try to avoid the concept of culture (della Porta & Keating, 2008, p.30). As I stated earlier, my focus in this research would be institutional factors that affect the dependant variable, which is the action taken in Istanbul to tackle climate change. In this case, independent variables that benefit or hinders Istanbul's actions will be discovered and examined throughout the research by utilizing qualitative research methods.

5.1. Research Design

This thesis adopts a case study research design which entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case (Bryman, 2012). This approach provides an in-depth understanding of a process, event or situation (Halperin & Heath, 2012). Case studies could address theory or issues that have wider intellectual relevance, use concepts that are applicable to other contexts and may even seek to make inferences that apply to countries beyond the original case (Halperin & Heath, 2012, p.205). According to Halperin and Heath (2012), a good case study has two characteristics: first, it says something interesting and meaningful about the case that is being studied, which makes the findings of the study internally valid. Second, it says something more general and engages with broader academic debates that might apply to other contexts and other cases, which involves proposing theories and explanations that are also externally valid (p.205).

An important strength of case studies is that they provide a powerful tool to examine whether concepts and theories apply to different cases and contexts by a detailed analysis of a particular case (Halperin & Heath, 2012). Because it is a detailed analysis of a case, it has a high level of internal validity. However, the external validity of this approach creates a limitation in terms of generalizability of the finding of one case study to a wider context and other cases (Halperin & Heath, 2012). The same type of analysis should be repeated elsewhere to overcome this limitation on external validity.

In this paper, the given research design was chosen because I aim to understand whether MLG can be applicable to different cases. The reason to choose Istanbul was based on my findings in the literature review. As previously discussed, there is a limited amount of work on how MLG arrangements work in different cities and most of the study is focused on federal countries or cities of Global North. Although this division of Global North and South is problematic, it has been used in the literature. Turkey and Istanbul do not fit properly into both categories, making it an interesting case to study.

Furthermore, Turkey is a unitary state, but it is argued that MLG is not only a characteristic of federal states. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to study MLG in a different context. In addition, the administration of IMM was changed in 2019, and this new administration is highly different from the old one that was in power for 15 years. And the fact that IMM is in the process of revising its climate action plan provides an excellent opportunity to study the new governance actors and structures.

In terms of sampling, I used purposive sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research. In purposive sampling, the aim is to sample cases or participants strategically that the samples are relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2012). Following this approach, I focused on the actors that are involved in the IMM's Climate Action Plan revision process. I eliminated the actors that are involved purely for technical support because this study focuses on the political dimension of decision making. This left me with C40 and Green Thought

Association (GTA) as well as IMM. The national government is not directly involved in this process, but institutional structures would affect the scope of decision making in IMM. Therefore, I also included some documents into the sampling that would highlight those structures and the relationship between IMM and the national government.

5.2. Empirical Material

5.2.1. Interviews

Interviews are widely used as a data collection method in political research (Halperin & Heath, 2012). I chose to do semi-structured interviews for this study because this method allows the researcher to ask leading questions, which helps the interviewee open up and discuss the relevant subject (Halperin & Heath, 2012). In this interview style, the researcher prepares more general questions, and there is room to ask follow-up questions. The interviews that I have conducted could be considered elite interviews. Elite interviews are interviews held with experts on related issues. This method allows the researcher to obtain information that would not be available to them otherwise; they are useful to confirm the accuracy of the information that has been collected by other methods, and it enables the researcher to make conclusions about a wider group of political elites (Halperin & Heath, 2012). It would be ideal to be present in the policy-making meetings of IMM, but it is not likely that allow researchers into these meetings. Therefore, interviewing people who were in those meetings is the best way of collecting data on the decision-making process.

I have conducted three semi-structured interviews during March-April 2021. Due to the ongoing pandemic, interviews were conducted online using Zoom. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, depending on the interviewees' availability. All the participants have been informed about the purpose of these interviews, so they made an informed choice to participate. Participants are anonymous, but they all have given me the consent to disclose the institutions they

represent because the institutions are crucial for the analysis. Therefore, the participants are referred to the organization they represent (Respondent from C40, Respondent from IMM and Respondent from GTA). I used the contact information that was publicly available to reach out to the interviewees; therefore, it was not difficult to contact them. The quotations from the respondent from C40 are exact quotes since this interview was held in English. But the quotes from other participants are my own translations, not the exact wordings. I tried to keep the translations close to the original meaning as possible but as I am not an educated translator, they are not perfect.

The first interview was with a person working for C40 who engaged with IMM's efforts to change their climate action plan. This interview was very beneficial for this thesis because I managed to collect information about C40 and their work with IMM, which was not publicly available with the sole purpose of using them for this research. This interview was held in English, and it has been recorded with the consent of the participant. It was transcribed using the dictate function of MS Word, and the mistakes were corrected manually.

The second interview was with a person working in IMM's Directorate of Environmental Protection. This department is responsible for revising the climate action plan. Therefore, this interview gave me important information about decision-making processes and the IMM's relationship with other actors. This interviewee requested to have the questions in advance and gave her initial answers in written format through email. Afterwards, we arranged an online meeting, and I was able to ask follow-up questions. IMM did not allow any interviews to be recorded, so I do not have a recording of this interview. I will rely on the written answers that this interviewee provided and the notes I took during the online meeting. The written answers and the interview are both in Turkish. The references from this interview have been translated to English by me.

Finally, my third interviewee was a civil society representative from Green Thought Association based in Istanbul. I conducted this interview to get insights into how IMM includes civil society in decision-making processes and what this NGO thinks

about IMM's efforts to address climate change. I have chosen GTO as a part of the civil society perspective because I have found out that they have been working closely with IMM recently, and they published a report on IMM's engagement with civil society. This interview was also held in Turkish, and it has been recorded with the consent of the participant. I transcribed this interview manually.

5.2.2. Documents

I use some documents as additional sources to make the analysis stronger. C40 Annual Report 2020 provided me with the most recent tools the C40 network uses to influence cities. Republic of Turkey Climate Change Strategy 2010-2023 (2010) and the Declaration of Results in Combatting Climate Change (Original name: İklim Değişikliği ile Mücadele Sonuç Bildirgesi) (2021) helped me understand where Turkey positioned itself in climate change action and what are the national mitigation targets. Moreover, these documents were useful to understand how the government positioned local efforts to address climate change. I also used IMM's Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which provided information about IMM's responsibilities, priorities, strengths, and weaknesses. Finally, I analysed a report published by GTA called Making City Green with Civil Society: IMM – Civil Society Relationship Within the Framework of Green City Practices Evaluation Report (Original name: Sivil Toplum ile Şehri Yeşil Yapmak: Yeşil Şehir Uygulamaları Çerçevesinde İBB-Sivil Toplum İlişkilerinin Değerlendirme Raporu). This report contained important insights into the relationship between IMM and civil society.

5.3. Operationalization of Theoretical Framework

As I thoroughly discussed in chapter 3, theoretical concepts used in this thesis are multi-level governance and the role of power in MLG arrangements. In this section, I explain the operationalization of these concepts in this research.

MLG serves the purpose of explaining how different levels of governance operate in decision-making processes for the governance of climate change in the city. Understanding the position of IMM in MLG arrangement in the context of Turkey is the overall purpose of this thesis. Therefore, MLG provides a background for this specific governance structure. Power is the central concept that I use to examine the relationship between the actors that are part of this governance arrangement. The decision to use the concept of power is related to the case that I decided to study, and that Marquardt's (2017) description provides valuable tools to analyse the empirical material. Firstly, because I was familiar with the case, I anticipated that the MLG arrangement in the context of Turkey is characterized by a power struggle between the local and the national actors. That is why an analysis focusing on power would be helpful to understand the chosen case better. Secondly, as I explained in section 3.3, Marquardt (2017) proposes a three-dimensional approach to analyse power in MLG. According to his approach, first, the actors involved in the MLG should be defined (structural dimension); second, resources of those actors should be identified (resource dimension); third, the capacity of the actors to use those resources should be examined (capacity dimension). I follow this approach in analysing the empirical material. In the coding process, the codes are determined in accordance with this three-dimensional approach to analyse power in MLG. I elaborate on the coding aspect further in the coming section. In the analysis, the relationship between IMM and other actors are examined bilaterally. Following Marquardt's approach, first, the structure of the relationship is analysed, then the resources of the actors are identified, and lastly, the capacity of those actors are examined.

5.4. Data Analysis

To analyse the data I have collected, I am using the qualitative content analysis method. Qualitative data analysis aims to systematically analyse mostly unstructured textual material that has been generated through different types of data collection methods. The first step of qualitative content analysis is to reduce the data, which is particularly important for data collected through semi-structured

interviews since interview transcripts can be too big and have unnecessary texts. This step means to reduce the amount of data to a more manageable level by identifying and extracting the most essential parts of the interview transcripts (Halperin & Heath, 2012).

The second step is coding the material. Coding means to identify certain passages of the text and applying labels to them that indicate they are examples of some thematic idea (Halperin & Heath, 2012). Coding helps the researcher to quickly collect the texts belonging to the same theme, and they can be examined together (Halperin & Heath, 2012). There are two approaches to coding: one relies on a priori codes, and the other relies on grounded codes. In this research, I am using a priori codes, which means that the codes are based on a previous research or theory. I made three groups of codes that were based on Marquardt's (2017) three-dimensional power-based approach. Some of the codes that I used are coordination/collaboration, participation, communication, and agenda-setting. I hand-coded the material since I do not have an immense amount of data and I already have a general understanding of the material. Moreover, I analysed the text through a literal reading which means that I am interested in the literal meanings of the words rather than the possible interpretations.

5.5. Limitations

Initially, I was going to include the new climate action plan into the analysis because the announcement of the climate action plan to the public was planned for June/July 2021. However, due to the delay of this release and the timeframe of this study, I had to choose to continue without the new action plan. Including the new climate action would strengthen the analysis by providing the result of the decision-making process, and the possible challenges to active the new goals could have been discussed. However, as this thesis aims to understand how actors interact in the decision-making process, I do not think it is necessary to include the new climate action plan.

Moreover, I would like to conduct more interviews, especially with people representing IMM. A pilot interview could have been beneficial to change the questions or the order of the questions. However, I was unable to contact other people from IMM, specifically higher-level bureaucrats that work closely with the mayor. But I could include different perspectives of different actors to limit possible biases and included documents and relevant literature to the analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of this study.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

As I stated earlier, I have given detailed information to the interview participants about the nature of this study to ensure that they give informed consent to participate. I also asked for consent to reveal their organisation since it was essential for the research, and they all accepted. I had to respect the participants' decision to take records even if it was not convenient for me. I assure that I store the recordings safely.

Another ethical consideration is related to my positionality. I was born in Istanbul and lived there for a long time. I had voted in the last municipal elections, and I supported Mayor Imamoğlu. However, I do not intend to praise the new administration and criticize the old one in this study. Nor do I aim to criticize the central government. This study is not written from a critical perspective. My aim is to review the process of climate governance of Istanbul, considering the current political situation and relational aspect. Therefore, I tried to stay unbiased as much as I could when conducting this study. I care about Istanbul, and I hope that this study can help fix some issues related to climate change governance.

6. Case and Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the research will be discussed and analysed in relation to the theoretical framework. First, the findings are presented in bilateral relationships focusing on the relationship of IMM with other actors involved in the multi-level governance process. I start by explaining the relationship between IMM and C40. Then I continue with IMM's relationship with the central government. Furthermore, I describe civil society involvement in IMM's policy-making process. In addition, I analyse the internal dynamics of IMM. Finally, I go back to the bigger picture and provide my remarks on this multi-level governance arrangement as a whole.

6.1. IMM and C40

The following statement defines C40's mission in their own words: "C40's mission is to halve the collective carbon emissions of our member cities within a decade, while improving resilience and equity and creating the conditions for everyone, everywhere to thrive." (C40 Annual Report 2020, 2021). This mission is in line with the goal of the Paris Agreement to keep global warming below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C. The power of the C40 is related to its capacity to fulfil this mission. The Deadline 2020 commitment embodies C40's mission and sets a target for cities to be carbon neutral by 2050. C40 made it mandatory for all member cities to commit to it. Istanbul, as a member city of C40, is subjected to this mission. Mayor Imamoğlu signed the Deadline 2020 commitment when he attended C40 World Mayor Summit in Copenhagen in 2019. C40 guides IMM to achieve their contribution to this goal because committing to this agreement means that IMM must do a lot of work to achieve the goals.

"By committing to this important commitment, the mayor and city of Istanbul agreed to work to update the climate action plan and policies, and so this means assessing everything that the city has been doing to combat climate change and updating the policies and plans to meet the

criteria the ambitious targets of the Paris agreement to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.” (Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

The latest strategic vision of IMM is ‘fair, green and creative city, happy Istanbul’, and it is possible to say that it is aligned with C40’s mission. Environmental sensitivity is one of the core values of IMM’s recent administration. This value did not exist in IMM’s previous strategic plan for 2015-2019, nor did climate change seem to be one of the priorities because carbon emission reduction was not even mentioned. The respondent from IMM states that:

“Together with Mayor Imamoğlu taking over the office and the ‘fair, green, and creative city, happy Istanbul’ vision of IMM, we found a common point of view (with C40), and this resulted in speeding up the work (work related to climate action)” (2021, 12 April)

The respondent from C40 agrees that the change in the administration positively affected the relationship between C40 and IMM.

“With this new administration with Mayor Imamoğlu, C40 as an organisation has been able to engage more and better with Istanbul.”
(Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

Membership to C40 is voluntary, but as I discussed in the literature review, there are multiple benefits of being a member of a TMN. However, there are certain membership requirements that cities need to follow; otherwise, they can leave the network. Those requirements are one of the resources that C40 use to achieve their goals. Previous participation standards included setting a target for reducing GHG emissions, developing a climate action plan and actively sharing best practice examples with other cities through the C40 network (C40 Participation Standards, 2018). The respondent from C40 said that Istanbul has never had any issues meeting the minimum participation standards. However, C40’s new membership requirements that came into effect on 1 January 2021, called ‘Leadership Standards’, are much stricter than the previous participation standards.

The Leadership Standards has five aspects (C40 Annual Report 2020, 2021). First, the member cities must have a climate action plan that is aligned with Deadline 2020 commitment and Paris Agreement goals. Second, the cities need to start delivering their commitments. The respondent from C40 said they would start keeping track of the delivery of these commitments in 2024. Third, the cities must use all the necessary financial, regulatory, and other tools to address climate change and mainstream inclusive climate change targets into the city decision making processes. This suggests that climate change targets are not only environmental departments' targets but also targets for the whole administration. Forth, the cities must innovate strategies to address emissions beyond the direct control of the city governments. This means that cities should communicate with different stakeholders such as NGO's, youth, and businesses. Fifth, the mayors and the cities must demonstrate national and global leadership to inspire other actors to act. To summarise, five aspects of C40's Leadership Standards are: plan, deliver, mainstream, innovate and lead. Because cities can choose to leave the network if they think these standards are too ambitious for them, they appear to be soft power resources. Nevertheless, IMM is aware that they cannot achieve the ambitious target of the Deadline 2020 commitment alone. The respondent from IMM said that Istanbul's existing climate action plan had been written without the assistance of C40 and, as I mentioned earlier, it only targets 36% emissions reduction by 2050. Which is still more ambitious than the national commitment, but it is not compatible with the Paris Agreement goals.

It is clear that IMM is following the agenda set by the C40 network. They are revising the climate action plan with C40 to make it compatible with the Deadline 2020 commitment, which is the planning aspect of the Leadership Standards. It is too soon to assess the delivery aspect; however, mainstreaming is already underway. C40 also supports IMM so that all the departments are aware of their responsibility to deliver the climate action plan.

“We invited the relevant director generals for each department to discuss, first to raise awareness on the need for the climate action plan

and also on the need that it was also their responsibility not only the Environment Department and then to start an open conversation with each one of these director generals on what level of ambition they thought that their departments could contribute to delivering on this ambitious objective of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees.”
(Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

We can already see concrete action for mainstreaming since the respondent from IMM informed me that every department in IMM had determined personnel responsible for the climate to ensure healthy coordination between different departments and track climate action.

In terms of the innovation aspect, although I discuss this in detail in the coming chapters, it is possible to say that it is also improving. Finally, for the leading aspect, Mayor Imamoğlu attended C40 World Mayor Summit in Copenhagen 2019 in person, where he signed the Deadline 2020 commitment. Moreover, Respondent from C40 is expecting that Mayor Imamoğlu himself to announce the new climate action plan once it is ready. This expectation is also in line with the leadership aspect since Mayor Imamoğlu might inspire other cities both in Turkey and around the globe by presenting the new climate action plan with a higher level of ambition.

Another important resource of C40 is to provide space for cities to get together and form alliances. IMM has benefited from this resource, and when Mayor Imamoğlu attended to C40 World Mayor Summit in Copenhagen 2019, he and Mayor Sala of Milan signed a goodwill protocol comprised of mobility, migration, and cooperation between municipal institutions. Moreover, the respondent from IMM told me that two municipalities started cooperation on waste management with the request of the Municipality of Milan.

“Right now, Istanbul is also in conversations with the city of Milan, and they have a fantastic relationship. Both Mayor Sala and Mayor Imamoğlu are exploring collaboration opportunities over food, over

waste etc. So once one of the cities or two express interest, C40 also facilitates this contact.” (Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

In the relationship between C40 and IMM, the power of those actors depends on each other. As we can see, C40 could achieve their mission because the current administration of IMM has a similar vision for Istanbul. This can be regarded as the structure of this governance arrangement. C40 uses membership requirements and city-to-city learning as resources to make their member cities follow their goal. Moreover, C40 has the capacity to use those resources effectively because they have staff, knowledge, and experience to assist IMM in their path to execute the agenda set by C40. I would argue that C40 is powerful in their relation to IMM, not because they are a powerful organisation in nature. They are powerful because IMM opens a space for them. And vice-versa, IMM has become more ambitious in terms of its climate change targets and has become a pioneering city in Turkey because of the agenda set by C40. Considering the previous climate change targets set by the previous administration, the national level of ambition and the situation of other cities in Turkey, if C40 did not set a climate change agenda, IMM might not have had the same level of ambition as they have now with the Deadline 2020 commitment. Hence, I would argue further that the governance arrangement between C40 and IMM is currently functioning very well. However, it is crucial to examine the delivery phase of the new climate action plan to understand this relationship better.

6.2. IMM and Central Government

The realm of authority of IMM is determined by Law No.5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities, Law No.5393 on Municipalities and Law No.5018 on Public Finance Management and Control. Yazar and York (2021) point out that they all lack climate change recognition, and this constitutes an impediment for municipalities requiring a budget from the municipal council and the national government for climate change action.

“Unfortunately, financing issue is the most important factor that prevents us and also other local governments to take urgent action (against climate change)” (Respondent from IMM, 2021, 12 April)

Moreover, IMM is responsible for implementing Law No.3194 on Land Development Planning and Control, Law No.5627 on Energy Efficiency and Energy Efficiency Regulation for Buildings. Only the energy laws directly influence climate change mitigation in urban areas (Yazar & York, 2021). Hence, there are severe obstacles in front of IMM for the implementation of tangible climate action because the existing laws they are subjected to fail to address climate change.

“When GHG emissions are examined, it is seen that sectors and actions within IMM’s scope of authority are very limited... IMM needs and aims to cooperate with other institutions on mitigation and adaptation actions that go beyond their scope of authority.” (Respondent from IMM, 2021, 12 April)

As seen from this statement from the respondent from IMM, implementation of the more ambitious action plan highly depends on cooperation with the national government and ministries in terms of financing and the issues that go beyond IMM’s realm of authority. However, with the current political circumstances, this could be a challenge.

Furthermore, there are not many references to municipalities in Turkey’s Climate Change Strategy 2010-2023 document published by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism. There are two direct references to local governments: one is related to waste management, and the other is raising climate change awareness in local governments. There is also an indirect reference to municipalities that is related to transportation. In this document, it is seen that increasing the capacities of local governments is not one of the climate change strategies. There is the attribution of duties to local governments within their existing scope of authority.

“I think that a good follow up (for the implementation of IMM’s new climate action plan) can be doing some advocacy to the Turkish government to raise the awareness on this climate action plan and to let them know, send them a message that they also need to do their part.” (Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

Following this statement by the respondent from C40, it is necessary to try and influence the national governments and ministries to integrate climate change action into laws for relevant sectors. This would enhance municipalities’ ability to implement climate change policies, and the national governments would get closer to achieve national climate change targets. This does not mean that the national governments should leave all the initiative to local governments. Nevertheless, it means that alongside strong national climate action targets and a concrete road map to achieve these targets, increasing local capacity could be an effective way to tackle climate change.

In April 2020, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism made it mandatory for all municipalities (city and district municipalities) to have a climate change department. According to Minister of Environment and Urbanism Murat Kurum, this decision aims to speed up the decision-making processes about climate change in the municipalities (Turapoğlu, 2020). Moreover, he puts the responsibility to municipalities to reinterpret national and global responsibilities through a new institutionalisation. It seems like the central government is a turn to give more responsibility to local governments in climate action, although there is no clarity on what they are expecting from the climate change departments of municipalities. There is also a reference to regional climate action plans in the Declaration of Results on Combatting Climate Change (İklim Değişikliği ile Mücadele Sonuç Bildirgesi) that was presented in February 2021. It only says that those regional plans would make the country resilient to climate change; then again, it does not provide any details on how that would happen. The lack of a national climate change mitigation target and failure to addressing the tools that local governments

could use to combat climate change suggests that the national government evades responsibility by laying the burden on local governments instead.

“In recent years, Turkey abstained from having a strong national political will (in terms of climate action), and a perception has begun to emerge in Turkey that this is a matter of locals and if the locals do this sufficiently, Turkey will fulfil its responsibilities adequately in terms of international agreements.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

Perhaps we will see a more concrete road map for the national government and the municipalities in the new national climate change strategy 2050 and the national climate action plan (2023-2030) that is planned to be published in the last quarter of 2022 (Bodur, 2021).

The respondent from C40 points out the importance of having national, supranational, and even global targets for climate action by stating the following:

“In the European Union frontiers, I think that we have the advantage that the European institutions have already adopted that climate neutrality target as a whole for the full European Union through the EU Green Deal, and this is good news because I am certain that the EU Green Deal and its ambitious targets can influence the neighbouring countries and Turkey as a neighbouring country.”
(Respondent from C40, 2021, 30 March)

We can see that the EU Green Deal is already influencing Turkey. In July 2021 Turkish Republic Ministry of Trade published Green Deal Action Plan in order to organise trade activities that are compatible with the EU Green Deal. This development flourishes hope that Turkey will fulfil their responsibility to have an inclusive climate change action plan and ambitious mitigation targets in the future.

A power struggle characterises the structure of the relationship between IMM and the national government. The national government wants to hold the regulatory resources, which are the relevant laws, in their hands, but it deems problematic for

IMM because it might prevent them from achieving their goals set by the climate change action plan. National laws and regulations and the failure to have concrete national climate change targets limit IMM's resources and capacity to achieve its goals. However, Istanbul's new climate change action plan could be an opportunity for Istanbul to influence the national government's decisions. The possibility to achieve something great in Istanbul in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation could be an important resource for IMM to affect the decisions in Turkey.

On the other hand, the political culture of Turkey makes it challenging for the Imamođlu administration to communicate their position both inside the IMM with the municipal council and outside with the national government. To sum up, IMM has trouble accessing the necessary regulatory and financial resources to fulfil their aim, which limits their power in climate governance. The state has the regulatory resources to address climate change adequately; however, they do not use it with a total capacity to pressure the international climate regime to get access to global climate financing. This strategy of the national government also affects IMM to get access to the resources required.

6.3. IMM and Civil Society

Green Thought Association have worked closely with IMM for their 'Cities as a Place of Hope' project. This project was launched in 2019, and it focuses on good practices and policies in different European cities and aims to gather experiences and needs to form strong cooperation among the cities.¹ Within the scope of this project, GTA organised two workshops with representatives from different departments of IMM and other urban actors intending to create participatory practices for green and sustainable urban policy-making. The focus was on improving three aspects of the partnership between IMM and other urban actors: participation, tracking, and access to information. They published the results of

¹ <https://yesildusunce.org/project/umudun-yeri-yesil-sehirler/>

these workshops. The respondent from GTA said that this interaction with IMM was not in the original plan of this project, but they decided to partner with IMM after the Imamoğlu administration came to power.

“We decided to partner with IMM because, firstly, we saw a potential in Istanbul of having good green city practices due to the discourses of Imamoğlu administration. Second, the city of Athens was a good example of collaboration with urban actors in terms of capacity building, raising awareness and policy-making to fight heatwaves. Moreover, Athens has similarities with Istanbul in respect to city structure and geographical location.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

This shows that administration change in IMM brought them closer not only to C40 and to civil society. Increased interaction with different relevant actors opens up opportunities such as learning. IMM can increase their capacity by learning from the experiences of Athens on the issue of heatwaves.

“We are an NGO that existed in Istanbul for a long time. With IMM’s previous administration, there was no space for us to have a close contact with them. The new administration opened up this space with the initiative they showed in working with civil society in the administration of the local regardless of any political ideology. This was another reason why we decided to work with IMM.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

Interacting with as many city actors as possible is vital for gaining new perspectives and allowing more possibilities for learning. According to Yazar & York (2021), especially after the Gezi Park protest in 2013,² important city actors such as

² This protest started on May 28, 2013, against an arbitrary decision to remove Gezi Park in Taksim/Istanbul to rebuild an Ottoman-era military barrack that have been removed in 1940. The protest escalated rapidly when police used disproportional force. After the police brutality protests spread all over Turkey and people protested for wide range of concerns including freedom of press, expression and assembly, and secularism.

professional unions and civil society organisations were excluded from urban climate governance, which encumbers knowledge exchange between these organisations. GTA partners with Green European Foundation, which is funded by the European Parliament but linked to European Green Parties. So GTA has a political foundation that resulted in them being excluded in this process until the Imamoğlu administration came to power.

Besides these positive aspects of the relationship between IMM and civil society, GTA identified some challenges and obstacles after the workshops they organised with IMM and other civil society organisations and published them in a report. According to this report, one of the issues is the difficulty of coordination (Uncu, 2021). They state that the relationship between IMM and civil society is handled through workshops, and sometimes the same issues are discussed in different workshops because the intersection of topics is not considered during the organisation of the workshops. Another problem is the tracking of the decisions that have been taken in the workshops. This problem is also related to the transparency of the data; however, they state that IMM has recently opened an online data portal. Comprehensiveness is another issue that has been pointed out in the report, which means two things. One, comprehensiveness in terms of inviting all the relevant NGO's and two, in terms of different dimensions of the topic that is discussed. Moreover, finally, they state that the internal organisation of IMM causes some problems for civil society. They claim that this problem arises from a lack of communication between the departments of IMM or between IMM and district municipalities.

The way GTA tries to influence the decisions of IMM is a way of indirect involvement in policy-making since neither GTA nor other civil society organisations have official seats in the municipal council. They try to affect decisions or put an issue into the agenda of IMM through, as I mentioned earlier, workshops or by being a part of Istanbul City Council (ICC) that was actualised first time by the Imamoğlu administration, although it is included in Law on

Municipalities. ICC is a platform for all the urban actors to discuss urban issues and develop policy suggestions for decision-makers.

“We care about motivating municipalities and local governments to take action for climate change... As Turkey is under high risk of heatwaves, we focused our work on this issue.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

The following statement from the respondent from GTA shows how the issue of heatwaves came into the agenda of IMM, but it still has to result in action because it is an urgent matter:

“The issue of heatwaves was not on IMM’s agenda until Istanbul City Council Climate Crisis Working Group, which we are also a part of, published a report on heatwaves and presented the urgency of this matter to the vice presidency. On top of that, we published a report including policy suggestions. However, the ones there (in the webinar)³ are not the primary decision-makers; they are the ones who would implement and track those policies.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

Again, we can see the relational power dynamics in this relationship. The capacity of civil society organisations to use their resources are dependent on IMM. It is observed that the capacity of civil society organisations has increased with the openness of the Imamoğlu administration because they can use their resources more effectively. Still, there are factors such as lack of coordination, communication and access to information that prevents them from using their resources entirely. Moreover, IMM could also increase their capacity through better collaboration with civil society organisations because this collaboration enhances the effective use of resources through learning and experience sharing. Civil society engagement can

³ GTA organized a public webinar to present the report on heat waves mainly to the municipalities. I attended to observe the webinar and I realized the participators from the municipalities were employees of certain departments.

also benefit IMM in legitimizing its decisions and perhaps putting pressure on the national government.

6.4. Dynamics Within IMM

I have already mentioned that there is a lack of coordination between the departments within IMM in relation to civil society. But this issue also affects policy making process of IMM in different ways. Especially, it cripples IMM when an issue coincides with multiple departments and urgent action is needed. For instance, the issue of heatwaves needs urgent adaptation strategies, but more than one department is responsible for implementing those strategies. This lack of coordination among the departments results in a lack of action.

Even when there is action, the issue is where to position those actions in Istanbul's climate change action plan.

“On the other hand, there is a need to take action towards more urgent matters. The Directorate of Transportation and the Directorate of Parks and Gardens has effective practices in those matters, but there is no mapping on where those practices would position in the climate change action plan.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

Directorate of Environmental Protection needs to thoroughly map the role of every department in implementing Istanbul's climate change action plan and should find innovative ways to assure cooperation between the departments. According to the respondent from GTA, this is a problem right now:

“We realised through our observations that the Directorate of Environmental Protection is the main department responsible for the climate action plan, but cooperation and communication with other relevant departments are very weak. This is one of the biggest problems in policy-making processes not only for IMM but also for Turkey in general.” (Respondent from GTA, 2021, 21 April)

One of my concerns when I started this study was how much voice does departments have in the governance of the city. Because the administration of the municipalities is subject to change through elections and different administrations might have different priorities. This poses a danger that some works might get suspended after an administration change. The answer to this question is also relational. The decision-makers of the municipality are the mayor and the municipal council. However, the respondent from IMM told me that right now, the Imamoğlu administration is very supportive of the suggestions coming from the Directorate of Environmental Protection. This suggests that the departments of IMM must also communicate their work with every new administration effectively to assure the continuity of their effort, especially for the implementation of the climate change action plan since it requires a long time to be fully realised. To sum up, this section, improving coordination among the department of IMM and effective communication between departments and the administration could increase the capacity of IMM to implement effective climate action.

6.5. Multi-level Governance of Climate Change in Istanbul

When I map out the governance structure, at the global level, I see the international climate regime lead by UNFCCC that affects the governance of Istanbul through C40 and the national government. Although UNFCCC is not directly involved in climate change governance in Istanbul, as C40 follows the target set by UNFCCC, IMM is also subject to those targets as a member of C40. Moreover, UNFCCC also affects this governance arrangement through negotiating with the Turkish government. As I mentioned earlier, Turkey's reluctance to accept the targets set by UNFCCC is refraining them from setting out national climate change targets, which hinders IMM's climate action. C40 also operates at the global level, but it is in relation to the cities rather than nations.

At the national level, the leading actor is the Turkish government, which directly affects Istanbul's climate governance through laws and regulations. As previously mentioned, IMM is subject to the laws and regulations made by the central

government and has limited independence. And as Turkey is a unitary state, the central government plays a key role in this governance arrangement. Furthermore, at the local level, we see IMM and civil society. Even though Turkey is a unitary, highly centralised state, IMM still holds some resources to negotiate its position in this governance structure. Moreover, we can even separate IMM into elected decision-makers (mayor and municipal council), and city bureaucrats (departments and directorates) since city bureaucrats have the ability to influence elected decision-makers.

In terms of mapping the resources of these actors, most constitutional and regulatory resources, which can be considered hard power resources, belong to the Turkish government. IMM's realm of authority is directly subject to the laws, and the lack of recognition of climate change in those laws hampers the actions of IMM both in terms of taking independent decisions and accessing the necessary financial resources to actualise the climate action plan. However, IMM has other soft power resources. The new climate change action plan could be a good advocacy resource to influence decisions of the central government and influence other cities in Istanbul. C40's most important resource is their knowledge and expertise in climate change action in cities, both in technical and political terms. They use this resource to influence their member cities, and it is deemed useful in relation to IMM. Furthermore, the resources of civil society organisations are lobbying and knowledge sharing. I illustrated above how GTA put heatwaves in the agenda of IMM.

C40 plays an important role in enhancing the capacity of IMM through setting out an agenda, providing assistance and fostering knowledge exchange. I argue that collaborating effectively with civil society would also increase the capacity of IMM because of the opportunity to share knowledge and experience alongside legitimising the decisions. This collaboration could also strengthen the advocacy towards the Turkish government. I would say that the lack of collaboration between IMM and central government and the unwillingness of the central government to

cooperate with IMM due to the political circumstances are challenges that decrease the capacities of both actors.

Power relations in this multi-level governance of climate change favours the central government since they hold the regulatory resources as it is the case for most unitary, highly centralized states. However, I argue that Imamoğlu administration has increased the capacity of IMM comparing to the previous administration by getting closer with the C40 network and opening up the space for better collaboration with civil society. If IMM could overcome the difficulties of cooperation, that I stated above, among the departments and with the civil society organizations, they could challenge the centralized status-quo with an effective advocacy. Moreover, if IMM could also increase awareness about the climate change action plan among the citizens they could also get the support of the citizens for the advocacy. We could also see that the central government refers to local governments' role in climate action more and more. But this should not be a way to shift responsibility from central governments to the local governments. It is necessary for local governments and the central government share the burden and find ways to collaborate to tackle climate change effectively. My observation of the central government from this study is that they are stuck in the status-quo which does not necessarily favours multi-level governance arrangement. Finding of Yazar & York (2021) that contrast between existing laws and contemporary climate agenda poses a threat to effective climate change governance in Istanbul is still valid. However, there is a difference now that Imamoğlu administration of IMM seem to have the political will to pressure the government to eliminate those challenges arising from the outdated laws.

7. Conclusion

I stated this study by explaining what climate change means and how it is governed in the contemporary world. Recently climate change governance in the cities has become prominent in governance arrangements especially with the emergence of transnational municipal networks. In the literature of climate change governance those issues are widely discussed within a multi-level governance framework since climate change comprises of multiple sectors that scattered around multiple frontiers. That is why, I aimed to study climate change governance in Istanbul which was also an understudied case. My research question was how does multi-level governance of climate change work in the context of Istanbul. Or does it even work in Istanbul? Context of Istanbul is particularly interesting because it is located in Turkey which is a highly unitary and centralized state. Moreover, the administration of the municipality changed in 2019 after administered by the ruling party AKP for 15 years and the main opposition party CHP's candidate won the elections and became the mayor. This development raised questions about the possible collaboration issues between IMM and the central government. Another interesting development was the decision of IMM to sign the Deadline 2020 commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050 and in consequence they started to update Istanbul Climate Change Action Plan together with C40 to be compatible with this target.

I studied climate governance of Istanbul through a multi-level governance framework by using a power-based approach. Because this approach would help me determine the relevant actors, examine the relationship between those actors and discover the relational power structures. The primary actors that I determined was the national government, IMM, the C40 network and the civil society. I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of those actors except the national government. I also gathered relevant documents that would give clues about the nature of this governance arrangement. After a qualitative content analysis, I presented my findings.

First of all the competencies of IMM are very limited to actualize an ambitious climate change action plan because IMM is subjected to laws and regulations and most of those laws and regulation does not encompass the issue of climate change. The lack of reference to climate change action in those laws also hamper IMM from accessing to the necessary financial resources. IMM is aware of these issues and because of that, the implementation of the climate change action plan is highly dependent on cooperation with the national government. But with the current political tension between Mayor Imamoğlu and the government this cooperation seems unlikely. Moreover, the government is so determined to build the Canal Istanbul it does not seem like they will prioritize climate change mitigation and adaptation in the city. They have not even prioritized climate change in the national level as we can see from the lack of concrete climate targets.

Furthermore, I found that increased collaboration with the C40 network was beneficial for IMM. The reason for this increased collaboration is that both actors were aligned in their perspective on climate change actions. Perhaps IMM did not have a concrete target but C40 has provided them one which is the Deadline 2020 commitment. C40 also provided assistance to IMM in the process of updating the climate change action plan. Moreover, C40 helped IMM to pair with the Municipality of Milano to collaborate on different areas and learn from each other. The contribution of C40 helps IMM to increase their capacity and better negotiate their position in this multi-level governance arrangement.

I also found out that the Imamoğlu administration engaged more with the civil society. Although there are issues like lack of coordination or problems with access to data or tracking the developments, the situation is better than the previous administration. Further collaboration with civil society is another aspect that enhances the capacity of IMM. Hence, if those issues are resolved through innovative solutions IMM could increase their capacity even more.

However, the issue of coordination also exists within IMM between the departmentst. Especially, in policies related to climate change there is bit of a

confusion among the departments. To overcome this issue there should be a mapping of responsibilities and work-sharing.

I argue that capacity building through C40 and civil society could open up more possibilities to IMM in terms of strengthening its position in climate change governance in Istanbul. If IMM communicates the climate change action plan well with the inhabitants and raise awareness about it, it could get the support from the population. IMM could use its enhanced capacity and support to advocate the national government to make a climate change reform on the existing laws and commit to global climate regime.

In the literature review, it has been said that there is a trend that cities are getting more integrated into different levels of governance structures. It is seen that Turkey does not follow this trend in terms of climate change governance. Perhaps this might change in the future because we can observe that there is more emphasis on local governments in several policy documents.

Moreover, as previous studies suggest most cities does not promote transformative change in terms of climate change policy. This could be an opportunity for further research after the updated climate change action plan gets published. Other case studies shows that transformative change cannot be implemented without institutional reformations that would allow prioritizing climate change action. This study can agree with that, but further research is needed. However, this study certainly agrees that being a member of TMN's has benefits for the cities and it improved the climate action taken in the city.

Further study is definitely needed after the updated climate change action plan is published and when the implementation period begins. The ability of IMM to carry on this action plan then be analysed adequately. Moreover, other actors such as district municipalities and business could be added into the analysis.

As a final remark, I want to say that once again I realized the importance of electing politicians that has climate change in their agenda. Because every action starts with a political will and we, as citizens, need to show that if we want a better future.

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