Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

The city as an actor in International Relations: The case of cross-border city networks seen from Kristiansand, Norway

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Master of Science International Relations

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Declaration

I, Linn Chloe Cueto Hagstrøm, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature..Date.................15.12.2019.....................

Acknowledgements

Preface

from Elin Børrud, the Coordinator of "Interdisciplinary Masterclass 2019",

Denne masteroppgaven har inngått i "Tverrfaglig masterklasse 2019" og i prosjektet "Kristiansand dobbel +". "Kristiansand dobbel +" ble utviklet som følge av en forespørsel fra Kristiansand kommune til undertegnede om å bruke kommunen som case i undervisningen. Bakgrunnen for henvendelsen er den kommende kommunesammenslåingen. Fra januar 2020 skal Kristiansand, Songdalen og Søgne kommuner bli én kommune, "nye" Kristiansand.

"Kristiansand dobbel +" inneholder flere undervisningsopplegg og ble presentert som felles case for et forslag om å etablere en "tverrfaglig masterklasse" ved NMBU. Tverrfaglig masterklasse er initiert av SITRAP som en alternativ måte å gjennomføre det avsluttede semesteret med egen masteroppgave. Grunntanken er at studenter fra ulike studieprogram ved NMBU kan arbeide med en felles case, men med ulike temaer, problemstillinger og metoder. Dette øker verdien av den enkelte masteroppgave, da problemstillingen inngår i en større sammenheng og resultatene bidrar til et bredt anlagt materiale. Det er dog studentene selv i samarbeid med den enkeltes veileder, som har ansvar for hvordan casen anvendes i forskningen. m

"Tverrfaglig masterklasse 2019" har hatt 14 studenter, fordelt på 12 oppgaver som dekker sju ulike studieprogrammer og kommer fra tre ulike fakulteter ved NMBU. Det har vært gjennomført noen felles workshops, befaringer og presentasjoner av arbeidet underveis. Dette har gitt studentene innsikt i hverandres arbeid og de har kunnet gi hverandre verdifulle tilbakemeldinger underveis i prosessen. Kristiansand kommune har invitert studentene til å presentere resultatene sine på SNART! konferansen i juni 2019 og en artikkelversjon av oppgavene vil bli samlet i en antologi som skal produseres i etterkant. Deler av materialet som studentene har utviklet vil inngå i en planlagt utstilling våren 2020, som har blitt støttet av KORO.

Forøvrig er alle masteroppgavene utarbeidet, veiledet og sensurert i tråd med studieforskriften og de ulike studieprogrammenes kvalitetskrav.

Jeg vil takke alle studentene og deres veiledere som bidro i oppstart- og midtveispresentasjoner. Og jeg vil spesielt takke representantene fra de tre kommunene som har bidratt med bakgrunnskunnskap og hjelp til å komme i kontakt med informanter for studentenes intervjuer.

Til slutt vil jeg ønske alle studentene lykke til videre; Slutt aldri å stille gode spørsmål!

Ås, Mai 2019

Koordinator for "Tverrfaglig masterklasse 2019"

Professor Elin Børrud

Leder av SITRAP Senter for integrert og transfaglig undervisning i planlegging

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Abstract

Cities garner increasing interest as an object of study within the field of international relations. Networked social relations is used as a guiding framework to understand cities as actors rather than as sites for international politics. This thesis seeks to broaden the understanding of cities as political actors and how they influence processes of global governance through cross-border city networks. The thesis aims to identify different motives for ordinary- and globalizing cities to participate in cross-border city networks. It will do so through a case study that focuses on network participation from the perspective of actors in Kristiansand. Four actors who participate in Kristiansand's cross-border city networks were interviewed in order to examine local perspectives on network participation. The thesis will argue that networked city diplomacy is a vast and complex landscape that cities must navigate to solve local and global challenges related to security and development. Furthermore, the thesis will argue that the motives for city diplomacy are changing. It will be suggested that cities are moving away from traditional forms of city diplomacy based on peacebuilding and peacekeeping and over to more strategic forms of networked city diplomacy that are rooted in cost-benefit rationales. Lastly, the thesis will suggest a link between strategic city diplomacy and status literature in International Relations. The thesis contributes to the project "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" and the project "Kristiansand Dobbel+".

Keywords: city networks, global governance, city agency, municipalities, city diplomacy.

Acronyms and abbreviations

C40 – Cities Climate Leadership Group

CCI – Clinton Climate Initiative

ECAD – European Cities Against Drugs

EIP-SCC – The European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities

EU – European Union

ICLEI – International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives

NCN – Nordic City Network

SCN – The Strong Cities Network

UBC – The Union of Baltic Cities

UCLG – The United Cities and Local Governments

UN – United Nations

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1. Introduction

This thesis addresses cities' increased interest within the field of International Relations. Cities hold more than half of the world's population and have taken on leadership in solving global challenges (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2016). Cities participate in cross-border city networks as political actors in international arenas, such as climate change and security (Acuto & Rayner, 2016; Bouteligier, 2013a). The participation of cities in cross-border city networks is characteristic of the development of a multi-actor political environment (Curtis, 2016a). In this environment, power relations between states, cities and other actors continues to change (Bouteligier, 2013a; Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003; Curtis, 2016a; Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). To imagine cities as actors in networks requires a relational approach. A relational approach enables a focus on the social relations among cities and indicates that social practices are no longer bound to physical spaces (Acuto, 2013b; Castells, 2010). Through this approach, contemporary society can be characterized as networked (Taylor, 2004). Cities interact with diverse groups of actors, such as non-governmental organizations, non-profits, intergovernmental organizations, private companies, interest groups and other cities through networks that span across borders (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003; Bouteligier, 2013a). This thesis focuses on city participation in cross-border city networks and aims to contribute to the discussion on the changing role of cities in global governance.

The example I use to understand the changing role of cities in global governance processes is the case of Kristiansand city and its cross-border city networks. The thesis focuses on cross-border city network participation from the perspective of actors in Kristiansand. The choice to focus on Kristiansand city came from an invitation to contribute to the master class project "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" and the project "Kristiansand Dobbel+". The project was initiated after a request from Kristiansand to use the municipality as a case in teaching at NMBU. The purpose of the project "Kristiansand double +" is the upcoming municipal merge. This means that from January 2020, the municipalities of Kristiansand, Songdalen and Søgne will become one municipality, which is often referred to as 'new Kristiansand'. The thesis therefore aims to contribute an international perspective to this master class project.

Furthermore, the topic of the thesis was inspired by municipal documents published by Kristiansand municipality. These documents outline global challenges for new Kristiansand city and feature participation in international projects and networks as an international

strategy to achieve development goals for the new municipality. The document "Nye Kristiansand utfordringsbilde 2018" (translation: New Kristiansand challenges 2018), describes processes of globalization, digitalization, climate change and increasing urbanization as challenges that new Kristiansand must address (Kristiansand municipality, September 2018). Furthermore, the action plan for new Kristiansand outlines the city's visions and goals towards the year 2030 and states that Kristiansand will participate in international development projects and international networks (Councilor of Kristiansand Municipality, 20. September 2017). These documents give the study relevance because it asks about the advantages for cities to participate in cross-border city networks and what meaning local actors see in this participation. Thus, the thesis seeks to contribute to the body of literature on cities in International Relations through analyzing how activities in cross-border networks are evaluated by actors that participate in these networks on behalf of one city.

This thesis therefore asks the following research question: 'How do participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks?'

To answer the research question, the thesis relies on three main sources: literature on cities and city networks, documents published by Kristiansand municipality and interviews with local participants in Kristiansand's cross-border city networks.

The thesis is organized into four main chapters. The literature review chapter addresses the role of cities in global governance and identifies how the city is treated in International Relations. Furthermore, the chapter establishes a relational approach that will guide the analysis. The approach is based on concepts from literature on 'global cities' and how they came to be important global actors (Curtis, 2016a; Castells, 2010; Sassen, 1991; 2001). The chapter will argue that global challenges require cities to navigate a complex multi-actor political environment in order to achieve their development goals. Moreover, the chapter will argue for the use of cross-border city networks as a term to include a variety of city networks. The third chapter accounts for the research strategy and methods. It addresses the choice of conducting a case study and the use of interviews as a method to collect data. The fourth chapter presents the case and findings from the case study. The chapter is divided into three sub-chapters that present findings and provide empirical evidence. The chapter incorporates both analysis and discussion. The final chapter summarizes findings, presents implications and proposes recommendations for future research on the topic.

2. The (re-)emergence of cities in International Relations: Cross-border city networks and global governance

This literature review addresses the role of cities in global governance. It reviews arguments about the city as a novel actor in global governance and the changes this has on global governance, including its effect on the role of the state. The review assesses arguments for and against this observed change. The purpose is, first, to identify how the city is described as a novel object of study in international relations. The second purpose is to summarize how the city's role in global governance is understood in this literature. This literature review thus provides a basis for how the city of Kristiansand and its cross-border networks can be approached as a case for examining the changing role of cities in global governance. This chapter thus introduces theoretical and analytical foundations in order to delineate the scope and approach of this thesis.

2.1. The growing attention to cities in International Relations: What's new?

Theoretical and political interest for the role of cities in international relations keeps growing. For the purposes of this thesis, the word 'city' is used to indicate the involvement of local governments or, more precisely, sub-national governments in issues of international relations. Some scholars ground the increasing interest for cities in the claim of waning state relevance and challenge traditional theories that often focus on explanations of state behavior and their concerns regarding power and security (Amen, Toly, McCarney, & Segbers, 2011). Hurrell (2006), for example, reasons that state centrism may neglect layers of complexity in terms of, for example, the growing number of international institutions, increasing role of NGOs, specialized networks, scope and range of international rules and norms, and pluralism of global governance. In this thesis, global governance is used to refer to "collective efforts to identify, understand, or address worldwide problems that go beyond the capacities of individual states to solve" (Weiss, 2013, p. 99). Segbers claims that state importance weakens because of the "new global landscape" of international politics, which has increasingly become "characterized by flows of capital, people, and content and resembling patchworks and networks, beyond the grasp of traditional theories" (Amen, Toly, McCarney, & Segbers, 2011, p. 2). In other words, whereas some scholars see the state as losing influence as a global political actor, other scholars argue that the state remains important while cities and various non-state actors gain more sway in how global governance issues evolve.

Cities garner interest, not only as contexts for increasing urbanization, economic growth, information flows and movements of people and goods, but also as political actors on international arenas (Acuto & Rayner, 2016). For example, cities engage in diplomatic activities on the international stage as political actors (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). Furthermore, Curtis (2016a) claims that modern cities have developed "multi-scalar political agency" through city networks and are able to influence processes of global governance (p. 117). Bouteligier (2013a) argues that cities are both strategic places and political actors. In her study, cities are explained as strategic sites in global networks where key services, infrastructure and knowledge are concentrated and from which key actors operate and organize global activities (Bouteligier, 2013a). Furthermore, she demonstrates how cities are political actors through their initiative-taking in creating networks where cities come together to create more sustainable futures (Bouteligier, 2013a).

The above-mentioned examples from Acuto and Rayner (2016) and Bouteligier (2013a), among others, demonstrate that the city is now getting attention. The evolving views and roles of cities are observed in global cities literature in International Relations. Thus, the following sections will address what theories of international relations have to say about cities in international politics.

2.2. The advent of 'Global cities'

Underlying research on 'global cities' is the effort to understand the changing connection between major cities, the global economy, and how cities' have been entrenched within territorial states during modernity (Curtis, 2016a, p. 62). Cross-border processes are not new and throughout the 20th century, the affairs of the global economy were largely entrenched in the interstate system with states as the main actors (Sassen, 2001).

The body of literature focused on the global city in international relations draws inspiration from urban studies. This approach to the city viewed cities as self-sustained structures, or as performing specific functions within established hierarchies of domestic economies (Curtis, 2016a, p. 63). Thus, urban systems were studied mainly from within the context of territorially bounded states (Curtis, 2016a, p. 63). Moving forward, through focusing on the economic functions of cities, urban theorists were able to provide the base for the concept of global cities. Yet, their theorizations lacked 'the international' in their analysis. This element was introduced by Marxist theorists such as John Friedmann (1986) and his *World City*

Hypothesis, who inspired by dependency and structural imperialism theories, merged world system theory with hierarchical urban studies and thereby provided the grounds for reconceptualizing relationships between cities "at a scale beyond the national" (Curtis, 2016a, pp. 63-64). The contribution Friedmann makes through his world city hypothesis also stimulates a push away from state-centric knowledge-production thereby moving the theoretical discussion on the role of cities beyond the national sphere.

This move laid the groundwork for theorizing globalization and global cities. Drawing on Sassen (1991), this era is characterized by territorial centralization suited for the ways in which technology continues to restructure the links between time and space, and this is what global cities constitute as a new territorial node channeling and articulating the global economic system of flows (Curtis, 2016a, p. 69). This observation also posits a view of cities as nodes within an interconnected system of flows, rather than in territorial terms. Furthermore, "cities are the nexus of processes that link global practices (world economy) with local practices (social communities)" (Taylor, 2016, p. 94).

What has given rise to the context of our current globalized economy with high levels of interconnectedness and cross-border networks is, according to Sassen (2001), the rapid development of information technologies and corresponding "increase in the mobility and liquidity of capital" (p. 78). These two processes have been referred to as 'the rise of informationalism' and 'capitalist restructuring' by Castells (2011, as cited in Sassen, 2001, p. 78). These changes to the global economic system were facilitated by measures of privatization, allowing foreign companies access to national economies, deregulation and national actors increasingly participating in the global economy (Sassen, 2001, p. 78). These processes combined (among other factors) served to reduce the importance of the state as a spatial unit and thus produced the conditions for other spatial units (or scales) to emerge and gain importance (Sassen, 2001). It was within this context, Sassen (2001) argues, that global cities emerged.

Brenner (1998) contends that the creation of global cities and re-scaling of the state are two interwoven processes of "reterritorialization that have radically reconfigured the scalar organization of capitalism since the global economic crises of the early 1970s" (cited in Curtis, 2016a, p. 3). This is because cities "function both as nodes of capital accumulation and as co-ordinates of state territorial power" (Brenner, 1998, as cited in Bulkeley, 2005, p.

891). Thus, the rescaling process allows the nation state to guide political economies on the subnational level to pursue global capital (Bulkeley, 2005, p. 891). Furthermore, capital accumulation requires competition where global cities and smaller urban centers must compete against each other to attract investment (Mendes & Figueira, 2017). Curtis (2016b) adds that the forces leading to the development of global cities also changed the structure and material basis of society (p. 460). He follows Brenner in attributing this change to the process of neoliberal restructuring, which Curtis claims worked as a spatial disruption that served to deconstruct the world system and then reconstruct it into the historically specific form of order we see today (2016a; 2016b). Furthermore, Curtis (2016a) argues that the two systems, namely the territorial state system and capitalist economic system together characterize two different and contesting logics coming from different dynamics and processes (p. 21). Thus, he describes this process as a spatial tension between the state-based territorializing system and the neoliberal capitalist model, which acts deterritorializing. More importantly, Curtis (2016a) claims that the mutations in urban forms, such as the global city, emerged to mediate this spatial tension. Hence, as discussed above, many factors played a role in the emergence of global cities.

The focus on economic aspects of cities has yielded useful theoretical insights regarding the rise and novelty of global cities, yet this case study seeks to move beyond global economics. In contributing to steer contemporary global cities literature away from the focus on global political economy and onto the broader role of cities in international relations, Curtis suggests another development. Namely, that global cities and their networks have become vitally important for the emerging 'new global order' of actors in international relations (Curtis, 2016a; 2016b). Another point that can be made regarding the emergence of a new and networked global order are the normative implications that may come from it (Slaughter, 2004, as cited in Martinez-Diaz and Woods, 2009). Aside from global cities and their networks being central in new forms for global governance, I now turn to the usefulness of 'global cities' as a concept for this case study and my own position within this wide-ranging body of literature.

Curtis calls for researchers to pay closer attention to the political implications of these urban forms [global cities] (Curtis, 2016a, p. 59). Hence, I follow Curtis (2016a) in viewing the 'global city' as "a spatial expression of a fundamentally new form of global capitalism, although one with unpredictable and emergent qualities" (p. 61). However, using the 'global

city' as a concept opens up for a few pitfalls, such as focusing solely on a few city functions which may only apply to a small group of cities (Bouteligier, 2013). This in turn may lead to fewer findings relevant to other *globalizing* cities (Orum & Chen, 2003, as cited in Bouteligier, 2013, p. 149). Following Amin (2002), the expression 'globalizing' "reflects a general characteristic of urban centers in the current era" (in Bouteligier, 2013, p. 149). Thus, rather than focusing on 'global cities', this thesis focuses on the cross-border relationships of globalizing cities and perhaps illuminate some of its political implications. This thesis therefore understands globalizing cities as expressions of trends from globalizing forces, namely the 'rise of informationalism' (Castells, 2011) which produced today's information society, and 'capitalist restructuring' (Sassen, 2001) which operates in flux against forces from the state system thus creating the spatial tension that gave rise to 'global cities' (Curtis, 2016a).

The scholars Sassen, Castells and Curtis demonstrate how processes of globalization created the necessary conditions that produced global cities. These insights from global cities and globalization literature thus provide a base from which to approach the relations between cities. The next section will shift attention from global cities as *sites* for international trade, technological development, information sharing and cross-border relations to a non-territorial *spatial* understanding of cities before turning to the social relationships that link cities together.

2.3. The relational approach to cities

This thesis seeks to move beyond seeing the city as a *site* of international relations. According to Bulkeley (2005, p. 891), the 'global city' as a concept allows for rescaling and reframing cities' role in global [environmental] governance (as cited in Bouteligier, 2013, p. 150). Thus, cities' importance goes beyond the local scale and through this view "become meaningful for global challenges because they [cities] are part of networks" (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 150; 2013b). Hence, this section begins with reviewing non-territorial understandings of cities in order to build a foundation for discussing relations between cities. This thesis approaches the social relations of cities through a focus on city networks, which necessitates thinking about space in terms of practices. Therefore, I shift the attention from cities as physical and strategic places to social spaces where city-to-city cross-border relations are both shaped and take place. I will now turn to ideas of place, space and network society before moving on to cities as actors.

Amin (2002) suggests understanding 'place' in non-territorial terms (see also Bouteligier, 2013; Castells, 2010; Curtis, 2016a). This means interpreting places as "nodes in relational settings and as sites of situated practice" (Thrift, 1999, as cited in Amin, 2002, p. 391). Hence, Amin (2002) directs attention towards the placement of practices, where practices refer to numerous interactions between things and bodies at specific locations (Thrift, 1999, as cited in Amin, 2002, p. 391). For Castells (2000, p. 453), place refers to "a locale whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity" (as cited in Bouteligier, 2013, p. 55). Thus, Amin focuses on social practices in understanding place whereas Castells sees place as physically bounded. In contrast, Castells (1996) social theory of space regards *space as social practices*, which are defined by contiguity and this means that social practices require the interaction of minimum two actors in coinciding amalgamations of actions (as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 26). Furthermore, Castells argues that "it is the material articulation of this simultaneity that gives sense to space vis-à-vis society" (2010, p. 441). Therefore, I follow Castells in understanding space as social practices, as these are no longer physically bound to particular places. As social practices are historically contingent, the technological advancements of our age became crucial to the creation of our information society because these revolutionized the ways in which individuals and larger groups perform social practices.

Castells concept 'network society' may be illuminating in this regard. This concept refers to the process of globalization as a myriad of flows (Taylor, 2016, p. 93). Castells suggests the idea of a new "spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society: the space of flows" (2010, p. 442). The space of flows is, according to Castells (2010) "the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows" (p. 442). This means that space combines practices that happen simultaneously. Therefore, Castells suggests that the space of place must be distinguished from the space of flows (Bouteligier, 2013, p. 55). Moreover, through combining this idea of 'network society' with the model of global cities, Castells (1989) is able to demonstrate a crucial feature of his "social theory of space in a new network society" (as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 26). Castells (1989) argues that global cities are both the result of and chosen site for running global corporations that emerged during the process of globalization and development of informational technologies (as cited in Taylor, 2016, p. 92). Also, Castells (1996) departs from Sassen (1991) in viewing the global city not as a place but rather as a process (Taylor,

2004, p. 27). Global cities became hubs for information and business and perform a variety of important functions for their national and local economies.

The network society is made of three layers. The first being infrastructural support for the above-mentioned space of flows, such as technologies pertaining to transportation, electronic devices and computers (Curtis, 2016a, p. 70). The third is composed of "the spatial organization of economic elites and the networks of places in which they live and work" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 71). And lastly, the middle layer ties together the first and third layers, and reflects the space where social, cultural and economic activities occur while connecting local places to networks (Curtis, 2016a, p. 70). This triple-layered image of network society can also be used to describe the global city, according to Curtis (2016a). Thus, Castell's work offers the base for a networked understanding of global cities. More importantly, global cities communicate and work across borders through networks.

Acuto (2013a) promotes the relational view of cities in terms of spaces. Acuto (2013a) argues that, "… the geography of global governance can be understood as a 'global' complex of all spaces through which world politics unfold" (p. 25). This means that states and international affairs are part of a wider social context of social space. Borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu (1989), social space is "a multidimensional world of overlapping social spheres, where individuals and communities are agents on, and subjects of, the structures of human interactions" (as cited in Acuto, 2013, p. 25). The concept of social space usefully focuses on relationships rather than physical material structures. This allows for a shift from territorial to spatial considerations in analytic endeavors. Moreover, Bourdieu's concept of social space provides a base for using Castells' term network space in a relational approach. These make up conceptual springboards to understand cities as political actors in world politics rather than as strategic places where politics take place. Furthermore, it also allows a focus on cities as actors through networks.

After discussing and establishing a view of space as social practices and global governance as a complex of spaces, I now turn to the concept of networks and distinguish it from other forms of governance. Two particular strands of literature provide useful insights regarding networks. The first considers studies on policy and/or governance networks and pays attention to actors that create networks and the relationships they foster within these networks (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 45). The second strand consists of scholars who understand "networks

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as a spatial metaphor" where networks serve to connect actors and places while building structures of interaction (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 45). Combining insights from these two strands aid the development of an analytical approach to the international relations of cities.

Martinez-Diez and Woods (2009) borrow from Podolny and Page (1998) in defining a 'network' as "a non-hierarchical structure in which relations among actors are repeated and enduring, but where no one has the power to arbitrate and resolve disputes among the members" (pp. 1-2). This definition allows for a distinction between networks and other governance forms, such as markets or hierarchies. For example, in a market buyers and sellers may only share one transaction, whereas in networks "the same group of actors interact repeatedly in an iterative process" (Martinez-Diez & Woods, 2009, p. 2). In a hierarchy, actors regularly interact while one or more actors hold authority to mediate and decide disputes during conflicts, whereas networks also regularly interact but do not give such authority to any members (Martinez-Diaz & Woods, 2009). Curtis also suggests that city networks are horizontal, non-hierarchical, and self-organized (2016a, p. 116). Consequently, defining networks as non-hierarchical structures with enduring and repeated relations between actors provides a base for discussing city networks. In addition, networks are highly flexible and adapt well to changing circumstances due to the development of information technologies, which makes them very durable (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 45). Thus, networks are organizational forms that can be viewed as a structure from which actors engage with one another.

Within the literature on cities, there are many different types of city networks. Curtis (2016b) defines 'global city' networks as "the material exoskeleton of globalization, and its nodes the command hubs for the governance of many kinds of global flows" (p. 459). In defining city networks through an understanding of global cities as command centers, Curtis focuses primarily on how 'global cities' participate in and influence global governance processes, and he suggests the emergence of a new global order. Taylor (2016) also emphasizes how 'global cities' act as nodes linking global and local practices (p. 94). He defines 'global city' networks as "… the situation where today's major metropolitan centers are trading well beyond their local hinterlands and frequently reaching a global scale of business" (Taylor, 2016, p. 93). These definitions of global city networks may be useful for research on 'global cities' and how they participate in the global political economy and in global governance but as Taylor's research goes beyond a focus on 'global cities,' he proposes the concept 'world

city network' which focuses on the external relations of cities in terms of services (2016, p. 95). The move Taylor makes from 'global' to 'world' allows for the inclusion of ordinary cities that do not fit the characteristics of 'global cities' as put forward by Sassen (1991). However, there are also other types of city-to-city networks that operate globally.

Transnational municipal networks (TMNs) are another type of city network where city governments initiate networks with each other to improve their "policies by exchanging knowledge and expertise" (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 2). Following Karl Kaiser (1970; 1997), 'transnational' as a concept can be understood "as crossing and overlapping national borders – without including (governmental) actors at the national level" (Niedenhafner, 2013, p. 379). Bouteligier's (2013) study on global environmental governance demonstrate how cities, through TMNs, can matter internationally and that claims that such networks are one example of how values and norms are formed and circulate through networks in contemporary society (p. 2). Therefore, as this case study seeks to include various types of city networks and does not focus exclusively on for example 'global cities' or services; the term 'cross-border city networks' will be used to denote city or municipal participation in networks that span across territorial state borders. Cross-border city networks as a concept is preferred to 'global city networks' or 'world city networks' since these definitions pertain to specific kinds of cities (i.e. 'global cities') and functions of city networks (i.e. 'services'). Thus, cross-border city networks as a concept will be used in this thesis to encompass the above-mentioned types of city-to-city networks that span across state borders.

Exploring how city networks are explained and rationalized in literature also necessitates distinguishing between two major kinds of city networks. Following Bouteligier (2013a), the first one arises from "location and organization strategies of global actors" (p. 19). Within this first type of city network, cities play the role as strategic *places* where actors plan and orchestrate their activities (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 19). These strategies of global actors and cities in these networks drive the need for access to information. The second type of network emerges with the objective to tackle common urban challenges in more effective ways (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 19). These city networks focus on collaboration between cities through sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 19). Thus, in this second type of city networks, cities act as *actors* rather than places.

The scholars Sassen and Castells demonstrate in what ways processes of globalization take form in cities and connect these places to global networks (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 42). Taylor has made great strides in mapping the world city network and demonstrates how cities across the globe operate as nodes in a networked system. Curtis gives attention to some of the political implications that may arise from global city networks by focusing on transformations of global order. The thesis draws on the research and findings of these scholars, as well as their transformationalist views. I mean transformationalist in the sense that they view international relations in terms of a changing and globalizing international system. Furthermore, the thesis borrows Castells understanding of society as a globalizing network society and his view of cities in nonterritorial terms. The nonterritorial view enables a focus on the social relations of cities through cross-border city networks.

The definition of cross-border city networks that will be used in this thesis takes inspiration from how global city networks are defined by Curtis and Taylor. Characteristics from the definitions made by Curtis and Taylor will be useful to better understand how ordinary cities act in city networks that reach across state borders. Thus, in order to discuss cross-border city networks, this thesis draws on Curtis' notion of cities as nodes for flows of governance, practices and norms (Curtis, 2016b, p. 459; Taylor, 2016, p. 94). However, nodes will be used in a broader sense. This means that, in contrast to Curtis, the nodes refer to ordinary cities – and not – global cities. Hereafter, I use the concept of cross-border city networks to direct attention to cities as political actors. Cross-border city networks as a concept suggests ordinary- and globalizing cities as nodes in an interconnected network of flows that spans across state borders, whether these territorial borders separate neighboring states, states within the same continent or globally. Furthermore, the definition of cross-border city networks is used to encompass projects with a fixed duration as long as cities are actors and nodes within a network of flows. The definition includes, for example, a three-year project funded by the European Commission that facilitates the creation and maintenance of a city network (nodes), which shares knowledge and best practices (flows) and has concrete action plans aimed to counter e.g. negative effects from climate change in urban areas. The next section addresses how actors engage in cross-border city networks and, more importantly, how cities participation in cross-border city networks point to the unique capacities and political agency of contemporary cities.

2.4. Cities as political actors

This thesis seeks to move beyond seeing the city as a *site* of international relations, thus this section focuses on cities as actors and looks at ways cities actively participate in global relationships and transnational cooperation through cross-border city networks. The fact that ordinary cities participate in cross-border city networks characterizes the important move of globalizing cities into the international realm (Herrschel & Newman, 2017; Niederhafner, 2013) and demonstrates that globalizing cities engage in cross-border city networks and act, exert influence and become powerful in affecting how global governance issues evolve. Acuto and Rayner (2016) reinforce this notion when they claim that "the extent and persistence of over the past two decades of the development of city networks give a clear sign that cities are indeed participants in the architecture of world politics" (p. 1147). Thus, while providing cities a platform to act politically and thereby the chance to influence global governance processes, the development of city networks continues and can create impact.

Herrschel & Newman (2017) identify different ways in which cities are international actors. They explore how sub-national actors made moves into "the international political-economic realm as individual actors or as part of one or more collaborative networks with a local, regional or global reach" (Herrschel & Newman, 2017, p. 51). These strides into the international realm have been important, especially for ordinary cities that do not fulfil the criteria of 'global cities.' Herrschel & Newman (2017) illuminate methods for cities to pursue influence and trustworthiness, both as spaces for economic opportunity and as reliable independent actors (p. 51), which are shown below in Figure 1.
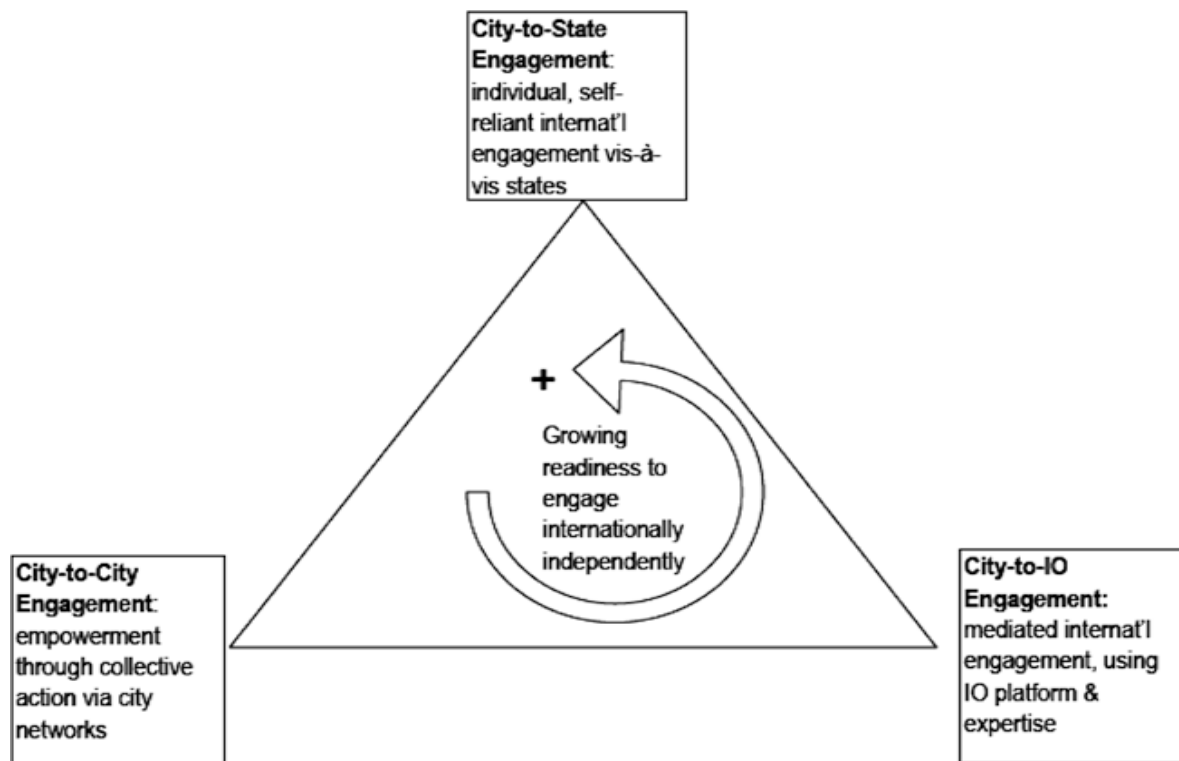
Figure 1. "Modes of international engagement by cities" in Herrschel, T., & Newman, P. (2017). *Cities as International Actors: Urban and Regional Governance Beyond the Nation State*, p. 52. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

The first way is to create or participate in networks for collective engagement; the second is to lobby or get involved with "existing international organizations (IOs) to act on the behalf of cities" (instead of depending on the state); and third, "directly engaging as individual actors with own agendas vis-à-vis states and IOs as the established forces ordering the international realm" (Herrschel & Newman, 2017, p. 2). These three paths as outlined above, underscore the political agency of cities and illustrate how cities can act, exert influence and become powerful in affecting how global governance issues evolve. This means that cities actively engaging in world politics "lobbying, linking, planning and cooperating; and they are doing all this, often, in formalized groups—city networks" (Acuto & Rayner, 2016, p. 1147).

Furthermore, the three paths as outlined by Herrschel & Newman (2017) give attention to needs in global society that remain unfulfilled. Martinez-Diaz and Woods (2009) found that city networks advance in prominence and "mainly emerge as a reaction to (perceived) shortcomings of other governance structures" (as cited in Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 2). While Curtis (2016b) suggests that global city networks flourished in the "spaces and gaps left by the state's governance failures" (p. 456). He posits that city agency through networks play an

important part in a decentralized form of governance, where cities and their networks fulfil tasks the state is no longer able to do. Curtis (2016b) also adds that it is not the state itself failing, rather, he attributes these trends to the emergence of a new global order (p. 456). The processes of "global economic integration, changing modes of capitalist accumulation, nationalist and other decentralizing movements, and ideological shifts in the role of the welfare state" have led many to express doubt about the stability of the state (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003, p. 17). Which Brenner (1998) and Curtis (2016a) discuss in their work. Rather than Curtis' suggestion of a new 'global order', other scholars have suggested that we are observing "new geographies of governance" (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999, p. 505, as cited in Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003, p. 17). Moreover, these observations may also indicate that city networks and the state are two different iterations of space overlapping and working in parallel within the same global system.

This overlapping of space can be understood in different ways, aside from Curtis' contention of a new global order. Taylor (2004) describes two overlapping spaces where the networked society represents "a space of flows" on one hand, and states make up a territorial mosaic and represent "a space of places" on the other hand (p. 27). The space of flows can mean flows of globalization, digitalization and urbanization. The space of places is different physical places that these flows pass through. Also discussing representation of space Agnew and Corbridge (1995, p. 95) argue that,

> … the ways in which space is produced and used, have changed profoundly. In particular, both territorial states and non-state actors now operate in a world in which state boundaries have become more culturally and economically permeable to decisions and flows emanating from networks of power not captured by singularly territorial representations of space. (as cited in Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003, p. 17)

Another prevalent view conceptualizes space differently. The other view of space is "the two worlds of world politics" where states and cities are assumed to operate in two different worlds (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 8). This view sees two different worlds, rather than two overlapping spaces. Within the 'two worlds' view, states are thought to maneuver the state-centric world, while cities and non-state actors work in the 'multi-centric' world (Rosenau, 1990, pp. 243-297, as cited in Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, pp. 8-9). In the

'two worlds' view, is the idea of "paradiplomacy" where cities perform diplomatic activities parallel to the ones done by national governments (Duchacek et al., 1988, cited in Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). Arguably, paradiplomacy becomes simplistic when considering the complex reality where exclusive territories are not recognized (Acuto, 2013a; Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). Furthermore, paradiplomacy as a concept lacks "theoretical engagement" with cities' sources of agency as well as impacts of cities' influence on global governance processes (Acuto, 2013a, p. 9). Thus, paradiplomacy would disregard cross-border city networks as a source of city agency.

The idea of overlapping spaces illustrates that the distinction between the national and the international are no longer clear. Thus, the concept of 'parallel diplomacy' becomes unsuitable to describe city activities in contemporary international relations (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). These spatial overlaps are visible when international issues become national and national issues become global (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). For example, global warming becomes a national issue when flooding and erosion destroys coastal areas, "while national issues such as defense become international as nuclear weapons threaten countries around the world" (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 8). These examples demonstrate how the domestic and the international increasingly overlap because of the wide reach of global issues. Furthermore, another dimension of this process is referred to as localization of global issues, where global issues become local and local actors must adapt to changing global conditions. Therefore, global governance processes cannot be understood in terms of territorial spaces. This is because the territorial view excludes cities and other non-state actors from any analysis in international relations. Thus, the inadequacy of 'paradiplomacy' as a concept for understanding cities' changing role in international politics opens up for alternative theories. This is where the relational approach gets the upper hand. Another necessary thinking tool to add to this approach is the concept of 'city diplomacy'.

The role of cities in international politics and diplomacy was explored in a pilot study by Melissen and Van der Pluiijm (2007). Their study conceptualizes city diplomacy as "the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another" (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 11). Cities and other non-state actors are seen as increasingly important for issues of diplomacy and global governance in order to tackle global challenges. This is due to the increasing internationalization of national (and local)

politics as the arenas of transborder crime, global economic crises and global environmental degradation present issues that national governments cannot solve on their own (Bouteligier, 2013; Curtis, 2016a; Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). Brian Hocking describes the outcome of this spatial overlap as a 'multilayered diplomatic environment' by explaining that,

> … this is a continuum of policy types in which differing elements of the domestic and the international that are located in various political arenas, whether subnational, national or international, are blended together: a multilayered diplomatic environment. (Hocking, 1993, p. 34, as cited in Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 9)

In this excerpt, Hocking (1993) gives attention to the diverse arenas where policymaking takes place and the various levels of authority that are involved in these processes. This multi-actor process creates what he calls "a multilayered diplomatic environment". Moreover, Hocking (1993) brings attention to a broader move. He progressively shows how foreign affairs have expanded to "a broader array of voices than the traditional ones" through localization efforts starting in the early 1990s (as cited in Acuto, 2013a, p. 24). This move breaks with traditional theories in International Relations, such as realist and liberalist theories where states are considered the main actors in international affairs, thereby receiving the most attention. Furthermore, this move points to the changing practices in global politics and how it is necessary to think about practices as taking place in spaces rather than places. This falls in line with what Betsill and Bulkeley claim, namely that international actors work in overlapping spaces and that cities have to maneuver "a transnational network environment across multiple scales" (2006, p. 147, as cited in Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 9). These observations, as discussed, illustrate how cities and local governments have developed different means as political actors which provide them with the necessary global reach to work through and find solutions to the different levels of global issues that affect them.

2.5. Logics and functions of city networks
At the most basic level, city networks facilitate that cities come together, exchange views and learn from each other through interacting in networks. While this may be the overarching idea, the literature reveals different logics behind network formation and diverse functions of city networks.

One logic behind the establishment of new city networks is according to Martinez-Diaz and Woods (2009), the perception that other governance arrangements are failing (as cited in Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 155). But Curtis (2016a) advises that "the autonomy and capabilities of cities do not replace or challenge the agency of states; they are both enabled and constrained by the power of states and the state system" (p. 118). Another logic behind city networks is that "cities – through networks – are both spaces of innovation and places of leadership" and underlying this, the belief that concurrent action in places across the world may create global meaning (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 2). A different logic underpinning networks can be technical leadership such as "in the case of the CCP programme which Toly (2008, pp. 350–351) suggests serves to promote 'neoliberal ecopolitical principles' to forms of 'norm entrepreneurship' in the case of the International Solar Cities programme within which more ambitious and radical goals are expressed" (as cited in Bulkeley and Betsill, 2013, p. 143). Furthermore, Bouteligier (2013a) argues that building an understanding of the logic behind cross-border city networks necessitates exploring the performance and power of city networks (p. 155). This is because city networks seek to increase their [global] agency and influence (Bouteligier, 2013a).

The interdisciplinary literature concerning city networks address different functions of city networks. The literature broadly agrees that the primary function of city networks is to bring cities and actors together. More importantly, "city networks formalize and institutionalize forums for cities to learn from each other and plan jointly" (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2016, p. 4). It is also important to note that the different types of city networks emerge on a self-organized and voluntary basis (Bouteligier, 2013a; Curtis, 2016a; Gordon & Johnson, 2018, p. 35). Furthermore, membership in a city network is "based on the autonomous decision of a city's governmental body" (Niederhafner, 2013, p. 379). The most apparent characteristic of cross-border city networks may be the promotion of knowledge-sharing and best-practices (Gordon and Johnson, 2018). Betsill and Bulkeley (2004) found that, in addition to knowledge and information, networks and their programs provide financial and political resources which attract and mobilize cities to participate.

Bouteligier (2013a) argues that "city networks for global environmental governance are first and foremost innovative governance arrangements" (p. 143). This means that city networks are a different kind of organization that positions itself as innovative and represents discontinuity with the past (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 114). Furthermore, these networks are

thought to be "flexible organizational structures that consist of nodes and flows and are held together by their programs" (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 114). Moreover, as political actors, Curtis (2016a) claims that modern cities have developed a new "form of multi-scalar political agency" (p. 117). He suggests that through city networks, cities have developed a two-sided approach to global governance, and this is one of the ways cities acquire their political agency (2016a). Cities participate in national and international forums, and simultaneously create "a parallel, self-organizing track that bypasses traditional hierarchical channels" (2016a, p. 117). Thus, Curtis (2016a) implies that cities and their residents have become important participants in global governance and that cities have the capacity to go beyond the constraints imposed on them by the state. This means that organizationally, cross-border city networks are able to create direct links between their membership and other international actors like international governmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), or other international actors, thereby sidestepping the national level (Bulkeley and Kern, 2009; Heinelt and Niederhafner, 2008, as cited in Niederhafner, 2013, p. 380).

Rather than focusing on global governance, Gordon and Johnson (2018) highlight effects of city networks that focus on problem solving and the development of best practices. They claim that the goal of emerging city networks is to promote better interaction, communication, and exposure in order to get more effective and flexible policy interventions (Gordon & Johnson, 2018). Transnational municipal networks focused on climate action perform different functions, such as offering their members commitment brokering, advocacy and consultancy, where the latter describes "tools and advice for local governments, provided by the networks' own formal infrastructure" (Busch & Anderberg, 2015, p. 6). In example, Busch and Anderberg (2015) discovered that German cities maneuver climate networks in order to improve their own local strategies for climate change. They also write that "cities use their membership in TMNs to communicate their climate policies to peers in other municipalities and local inhabitants" (p. 11). Thus, city networks for environmental governance like TMNs, demonstrate the "capacity to stimulate city engagement in climate governance, in ways that reflect a genuine orientation towards problem-solving rather than solely for purpose of branding or green-washing" (Busch, 2015; Busch & Anderberg, 2015, as cited in Gordon & Johnson, 2018, p. 38). Furthermore, Benington and Harvey (1999, p. 216) discovered that TMNs in Europe exchange not only material resources like information and money but also resources that are harder to measure, such as knowledge, values, vision,

judgement and intelligence (as cited in Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003, p. 187). In addition, TMNs also contribute through "strengthening local capacity … initiating and supporting climate projects and policies" (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019, p. 210).

City networks also hold the capacity to spread particular norms and values across the globe. Curtis (2016a) claims that "cities are beginning to act as important 'norm-entrepreneurs' in setting global agendas" (p. 118). On the environmental front, for example, cities were seen as a source for environmental degradation. Countering this, Bouteligier (2013) claims that policy makers and academics increasingly move away from viewing cities as places of environmental degeneration and rather choose to generate ideas about how cities can be front-runners on the journey towards environmental sustainability (p. 2).

Through participating in global governance, cities and other actors "such as, transnational governance networks (Slaughter, 2004), transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink, 1999), epistemic communities and NGOs" get an international platform to promote their ideas, interests and values, which includes creating and diffusing norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, as cited in Curtis, 2016a, p. 119). Similarly, this also gives private actors the ability to make and spread norms, values and best practices which other actors pick up, among them states (Curtis, 2016a). The issue of private actors contributing to the creation and dispersion of norms and values raises questions of legitimacy and democratic deficit, mainly because the legitimacy of private actors may often hinge on claims of efficiency in problem-solving or technical knowledge (Curtis, 2016a). However, Curtis (2016a) notes that the question of democratic deficit and legitimacy changes when discussing cities because of their closeness to citizens daily lives and the democratic accountability of mayors reinforcing their legitimacy (p. 119).

City networks can be most clearly observed in global governance processes, according to Curtis (2016a). This is because global governance involves the empowerment of various actors both above and below the state level, and merges public and private actors in functional networks that aim to solve problems of collective action (Curtis, 2016a). Thus, this means that global governance processes are flexible and can include a wide range of actors. Building on the same argument, Acuto proposes that assemblages of cities could "also become capable of exercising influence on world affairs like many other international organizations more commonly investigated in IR" (2013a, p. 838). For example, cities "did

not need states' permission to take action on climate change or security, and the efforts of city networks such as the C40 have been more promising than state initiatives" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 170). Moreover, Gordon and Johnson (2018) infer that city networks operate in the interstitial space of urban and global governance. In theory, this means that city networks have the ability to create bridges across state borders and simultaneously bridge a gap between city governments and other actors. This in turn may foster coordinated actions and meaningful collective effects (Gordon & Johnson, 2018). Although city networks have existed in the past, modern city networks showcase the political agency of cities and their unique capacity to bridge gaps between different actors across national borders.

The empowerment of various actors above and below state-level through cross-border city networks can also be understood as a "sub-national challenge to the traditional concept of the sovereignty of nation-states as the predominant international actors" (Herrschel & Newman, 2017, p. 1). This implies that the sovereignty of the state becomes challenged when cities by-pass traditional hierarchies of the state system through cross-border city networks (Curtis, 2016a; Keohane and Nye, 1971). Furthermore, Curtis (2016a) claims that "city legitimacy and power grow in the gaps left by the state's failures of governance at the transnational level" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 170). This could entail moving outside the constraints placed upon cities or other subnational entities by the state or the state system.

To describe the phenomenon of individuals and organizations bypassing their own governments, Keohane and Nye (1971) reference J. David Singer's definition of how a non-state actor can play a role in world politics. They write that this bypassing occurs when a non-state actor, such as cities in this case, "play direct roles vis-à-vis foreign governments or foreign societies and thus bypass their own governments" (Singer in Rosenau, 1969, p. 24, in Keohane and Nye, 1971, p. 333). This definition can encompass a wide range of phenomena while it focuses on the position of an actor and gives specific attention to role. In this context, role and position are considered in terms of cities and their representatives who influence global governance processes through cross-border city networks. In example, assemblages of cities such as the C40 Climate Leadership network could 'supervene' the agency of their members (Acuto, 2013). To 'supervene' in this context means that one actor emerges above or over another, "in the sense that there cannot be a transformation in the former without also producing a difference in the latter, a view that allows us to connect macro to micro phenomena" (Acuto, 2013, p. 838). This perspective allows for exploring how cities network

within a city network and the networking of a city network (Acuto, 2013). Thus, through explanations and rationalizations of city networks, the literature on cross-border city networks bring forth logics behind network-formation while empirical studies showcase a vast degree of functions city networks perform.

City networks show great promise in their ability to take action on global issues, yet they may produce some problems and have limitations. For example, Bouteligier (2013a) found that there are varying degrees as to whether city networks are able to efficiently achieve their aims. She discovered that "city networks for global environmental governance seem to perform well in terms of output, but less in terms of outcome and impact" as there were mixed results concerning changes in behavior and making environmental conditions better (p. 155). Furthermore, she found that network performance differed contingent on different factors such as path dependency, what kind of actor initiated the network, and their network programs (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 156). Thus, many factors play a role in whether various types of city networks succeed in reaching their goals.

Representation makes for another limitation to city networks. For example, through an investigation of thirteen TMNs; Bansard, Pattberg and Widerberg (2017) discovered that city memberships are greatly represented by states located in Europe and North America (Global North) while states in the Global South remain inadequately represented. Furthermore, city networks can be understood to replicate prevailing power hierarchies as discrepancies between the Global north and south remain in such networks (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 128). Another limitation to city networks is their lack of monitoring (Bansard, Pattberg and Widerberg, 2017; Bouteligier, 2013a). Moreover, existing governance mechanisms and lack of democratic participation creates problems for city networks. The varying degrees of city participation in city networks raise questions regarding the capacity of local governments and institutions to include local people in urban policy processes and decision making (Aylett, 2015, as cited in Gordon & Johnson, 2018, p. 38). This, in turn, can affect democratic legitimacy and how effective the functions of city networks become during implementation by local actors and stakeholders.

Although city networks demonstrate effectiveness and innovation on specific issues like environmental governance (Bouteligier, 2013a) or sharing knowledge and best practices (Bulkeley et al., 2009; Gordon & Johnson, 2018), these alternative organizations do come

with limitations such as lack of efficiency, impact, representation and democratic participation. Nevertheless, the most noteworthy case of city agency and influence over environmental governance in international climate politics may be the Cities Climate Leadership Group, also referred to as the C40 (Acuto, 2013b). The next section explores the C40 as an influential cross-border city network in environmental governance and demonstrates both utility and limitations to cross-border city networks.

The C40 city leadership network came into being in 2005 from the initiative of then-London mayor Ken Livingston and his deputy Nicky Gavron (Acuto, 2013a, p. 839). Together with ICLEI and the organization The Climate Group, the Greater London Authority convened a two-day 'World Cities Leadership and Climate Summit' that gathered large metropolises under the banner of 'C20' cities (Acuto, 2013a p. 839). The group was mainly concerned with 'urban governance of climate change' (Acuto, 2013a, pp. 839-840). According to Acuto (2013b), the political rationale behind the initiative was for 'global cities' to position themselves as main actors in responding to environmental issues in relation to states (p. 100). As such, this summit is an example of how cities sought to be viewed as necessary pit stops for the global governance of climate change while stressing the importance of 'global cities' as key nodes for global flows (Acuto, 2013b, p. 100). Thus, the C40 developed from a loose cooperative group of 20 member-cities to become an initiative with lots of staff and funding (Gordon, 2019, p. 29). Moving on, the membership of the original C20 expanded to become known as the C40.

Over the years, the C40 cities have become more ambitious and consequently increased the amount and extent of their 'climate governance activities' and furthermore, the network also began to perceive itself, and is seen by others, as bestowed with "collective agency" (Gordon, 2019, p. 29). By collective agency, Gordon (2019) means that the network, as an actor, can create intended, evident and significant change in the world. The C40 network exercises this collective agency through arranging "meetings in the form of workshops, conferences and summits so the cities can exchange best practices, policies and ideas, and action can be stimulated." (Bouteligier, 2013b, p. 260). In order to create successful meetings and reach goals, the C40 also cooperates with external actors. In example, the C40 partnered up with the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI) in 2006, which helped design city programs aimed at reducing "energy use and emissions in the areas of building retrofits, outdoor lighting, waste management and transportation" (Bouteligier, 2013b, p. 260). The C40 has many

partnerships, such as World Bank and Ecos, and have together with the CCI joined alliances in order to increase city membership and expand their budget (Bouteligier, 2013b, p. 260). This shows how city networks depend on external actors as well as local actors in order to be effective at creating sustainable change.

Furthermore, the C40 network wants to be a leader in combating climate change and views cities as holding the resources to create "positive governance outcomes on the global stage" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 117). The group seeks to accomplish this through combined coordination, collective action and shared strategy, and this approach to governance allows the group to engage with both national and international environments while also creating opportunities for "bypassing the traditional hierarchical channels" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 117). This demonstrates how the C40 can both be understood as an actor that influences global governance and contributes to changing global outcomes of climate change, while also giving cities more prominent roles as political actors.

According to Bulkeley et al. (2009), the C40 network demonstrates a new approach to cross-border networking which focuses "on the development of specific 'clubs' of cities which can gain privileged access to information, funding and project implementation, in return for specific actions" (p. 26). While this might work well to promote leadership for solving the climate problem among some cities, it could also end up excluding cities from taking part in efforts against climate change and getting benefits like better air quality or energy efficiency for example in the global south (Bulkeley et al., 2009, pp. 26-27). This exclusion affects cities in regions in the Middle East and the African continent, but according to Brugmann (2007, p. 147) this also happens to "peripheral cities and parts of cities, because often, priority is given to major cities and these cities' central business districts to implement pilot projects" (as cited in Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 136). As a result, benefits from innovation fail to reach many areas of cities and marginal cities, which might augment existing inequalities.

Curtis (2016a) criticizes the C40 for their subscription to, and perpetuation of, the neoliberal discourse. He claims that the C40's "goals and activities remain well within the discursive space of the neoliberal discourse; they frame their solutions in the language and philosophy of markets, offering technocratic agendas, partnering with private foundations and multinational corporations" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 118). Furthermore, cities in the C40 and cross-border networks always compete against one another for capital and investment and, at the

same time, pursue solutions to approaching crises such as resource scarcity and climate change through "individual networked infrastructure security strategies" (Curtis, 2016a, p. 118). Thus, Curtis (2016a) suggests that in practice, it will be difficult to distinguish between this type of global governance from the dominant discourse of neoliberalism (p. 118). Moreover, Hodson and Marvin (2011) argue that this overarching neoliberal discourse that the C40 operate within will continue to be a major obstacle to creating "systemic and relational solutions to what are systemic and relational crises" (as cited in Curtis, 2016a, p. 118).

The C40 engages with political leadership and gets involved in diplomacy. It works with political leaders to promote local politics relevant to the environment and improve activities done by members of the network (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019, p. 218). For example, the C40 aided the city mayor in strengthening the importance of the local climate agenda in Cape Town (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019). Furthermore, the C40 contributes to global norm-production and perpetuation. The Climate Leadership Group (C40), along with other cross-border city networks such as the Climate Alliance and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), both encourage and disseminate international norms concerning climate science and demand substantial cuts in greenhouse emissions (Bulkeley, et al., 2009, p. 11). Yet, empirical studies have shown that the involvement alone of a network, such as the C40, does not come with a guarantee of change (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019, p. 226). Rather, on its own, cross-border city networks can demonstrate "incremental changes, if any" according to Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer (2019, p. 226). In example, Johannesburg, despite it being a member and receiving substantial support from the C40 for more than a decade, only small changes in organization and policy were found (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019, p. 226). Furthermore, Sao Paolo provides another example as a founding member of the C40. In Sao Paolo, a political shift which introduced a new mayor resulted in putting all climate-efforts to a standstill and the city discontinued its involvement in networks for the duration of the term (Stehle, Höhne, Hickmann, & Lederer, 2019, p. 226). Thus, these examples demonstrate how cross-border city networks like the C40 can initiate, assist and inspire cities to take action on issues like climate change but that perceived success depends on active participation by local actors in coalitions of support in order to become effective and create sustainable change.

2.6. Introducing the ordinary- and globalizing city in cross-border city networks

It is clear that attention to cities in international relations continues to grow and that many scholars across disciplines turn to cities as a novel object of study. Focusing on the city in international relations provides opportunities to make visible processes that are otherwise hidden. Within the literature on cities, 'global cities' attract a lot of attention and this particular iteration of the city emerged through forces of globalization and the development of informational technology (Sassen, 2001). The concept of the 'global city' allows for thinking about the city in different ways and as holding particular attributes and abilities across contexts. However, it also opens up for a few pitfalls, such as focusing solely on a few city functions which may only apply to a small group of cities (Bouteligier, 2013).

Cities actively engage in international relations through city networks, which diverges from other forms of governance as networks serve to connect actors and places while building structures of interaction (Bouteligier, 2013a, p. 45). Thus, networks are organizational forms that can be understood as a relational structure from which actors engage with one another. Furthermore, the involvement of cities in cross-border city networks highlight different pathways for cities to influence the outcomes of global governance and the ability to move beyond the constraints of the state system (Acuto, 2013a, 2013b; Curtis, 2016a; Herrschel & Newman, 2017). Yet, theorizations on cities' role in international politics rarely account for cities that do not meet the criteria of global cities. A general understanding of city networks and how these work in international relations should be grounded in an approach to the phenomenon in its totality. Therefore, theorizations on city networks should not be restricted to a small group of actors, such as global cities. Small, middle-sized and large globalizing cities in terms of population, size and density that are not considered 'global cities' remain underrepresented in this body of literature. This reveals a need for more attention to ordinary- and globalizing cities and how cities can act, exert influence and become powerful in affecting how global governance issues evolve. Therefore, the concept of cross-border city networks is used to broaden the scope of actors as well as to include different types of networks and cross-border collaborations. I make this move in order to offer a more realistic and complex picture of the relations cities have across borders, in their region, and globally. This is important as these various forms of city-based networking do not take place in a vacuum or at particular times but rather co-exist in overlapping spaces.

The logic behind cross-border city networks and their attributes, functions and limitations has received much attention. Often, research on cross-border city networks focuses on covering the largest transnational municipal networks or global city networks, such as the C40, ICLEI or Metropolis (see e.g. Acuto, 2013a, 2013b; Betsill & Bulkeley, 2004; 2013; Bouteligier, 2013a; Curtis, 2016a; Gordon & Johnson 2018; Niederhafner, 2013). Furthermore, much literature focuses on networks in the context of environmental global governance , such as how transnational municipal networks are effective at promoting initiatives and policies to address climate change (e.g. Acuto, 2013a; Bouteligier, 2013a; Betsill & Bulkeley, 2004; Fünfgeld, 2015). The networks for environmental governance have gained much ground due to the nature of the climate change governance problem. Bulkeley and Newell (2010) argue that how the climate change problem is "being addressed has created the political space for new collaborations and mechanisms of governance" (p. 55). Furthermore, the process of globalization has served to increase the importance of municipalities as actors to collaborate with governments, communities and stakeholders to solve collective problems. These studies highlight the complex reality actors face navigating a changing pluralist global political environment. Moreover, while global challenges were traditionally considered the domain of states, this builds on a growing call for alternative ways to understand cities role in international relations.

The issues of climate change, urbanization and globalization have local impacts and show that states are no longer the only influential actors in such governance processes. Thus, more attention must be paid to the role of cities in international affairs, and to networks as an instrument for cities to play a role in governance processes. Therefore, the thesis aims to parts of the broader picture of networked urban governance where perspectives of participants at the local level have received little attention in academic discussions. The thesis seeks to inform the field by using a relational approach and focusing on an ordinary- and globalizing city. Furthermore, the thesis aims to give participants a voice to inform thinking around city agency. It will do so through a pilot case study that explores participants' motives, explanations and justifications for involvement in cross-border city networks. The study will emphasize the perspectives of actors that represent Kristiansand City in cross-border city networks.

3.   Research strategy and methods: Case study and interview data

This chapter will account for research strategy and research design. The chapter addresses why the case study has been chosen as research strategy and discuss its positive and negative attributes. The chapter also addresses interviews as the main data collection method and how data is selected. Furthermore, the chapter details the sampling approach and how interview data will be used. The third section tackles internal validity and research ethics, while the final section discusses delimitations. The analysis or findings will not be discussed in this chapter, as these will be presented under their own headings in following sections.

3.1. Case study

The thesis aims to empirically investigate the contemporary social phenomenon of city participation in cross-border city networks. Therefore, this thesis asks how participants in cross-border city networks explain and justify their involvement in city networks. Yin (2018) writes that case studies are well-suited for investigating contemporary social phenomena, especially when they require in-depth descriptions and tracing operational processes over time (p. 33). Therefore, I have chosen to conduct a case study to answer my research question and analyze one case of city participation in cross-border city networks.

The thesis project has selected Kristiansand city and its participation in cross-border city networks as a case study. The background for the selected case is the inclusion of this master's thesis in the "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" and in the project "Kristiansand double +". "Kristiansand double +" was developed after a request from Kristiansand to use the municipality as a case in teaching at NMBU. The purpose of the project "Kristiansand double +" is the upcoming municipal amalgamation. From January 2020, the municipalities of Kristiansand, Songdalen and Søgne municipalities will become one municipality, which is often referred to as 'new' Kristiansand. The students in "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" use different research questions, foci and methods to explore the case of new Kristiansand and this thesis project was tasked to contribute an international take on the case. Thus, the case focuses on Kristiansand and the actors involved in Kristiansand city's networks.

The research question for this thesis asks how participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks. Hence, the thesis attempts to answer a "how" question, which makes a case study the most appropriate research method. This is because case studies are most suitable when "how" or "why" questions are asked about events set in a

contemporary context (Yin, 2018, pp. 43-44). The case is set in a contemporary context as it focuses on the perspectives of participants in Kristiansand's networks. Furthermore, the case is "bound" (Yin, 2018, p. 65) by the setting of Kristiansand and focus on the subjective experiences of actors in cross-border city networks. These networks perform many functions and emerge for different reasons. Therefore, the case study relies on interviewing as a method to learn more about participation in cross-border city networks.

There are many advantages to conduct case study research on participation in cross-border city networks. As an empirical method, a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2018, p. 46). In this study, the phenomenon is cross-border city networks and the context is Kristiansand. As discussed in the literature review, cross-border city networks blur the distinction between different levels of governance. This is because networks operate across borders and do not face territorial constraints. Within cross-border city networks, cities such as Kristiansand can act to influence the outcome of global governance processes. Therefore, Kristiansand is not treated as a site where international relations take place but rather as a political actor that conducts city diplomacy through networks. Furthermore, the case of Kristiansand and its participation in cross-border city networks may be an example of "a broader category of which it is a member" (Bryman, 2012, p. 70). This is because Kristiansand is one of many ordinary- and globalizing cities that participate in cross-border city networks. Thus, as an example of a broader category, a case study on Kristiansand's cross-border city networks from the perspective of participants can create a starting point for future interdisciplinary and comparative studies.

3.2. Collecting data through interviews and documents

The research and data collection for this thesis was conducted between January and February 2019 and write up was done between August and December 2019. The data for this project was collected through qualitative interviews and documentary information.

The case study uses documentary information to deepen knowledge about the case context and to provide context for the interviews. First, Statistics Norway provides information that helps characterize the city of Kristiansand as an ordinary- and globalizing city for the purposes of this thesis. Kristiansand is ordinary because it is neither the national capital nor a

large city with its ca. 90,000-110,000 residents before and after municipal amalgamation respectively (Statistics Norway, 2019). Furthermore, Kristiansand can be characterized as globalizing on different accounts where some can be based on statistics. For example, Kristiansand's population is highly multicultural and as of 1 January 2019, Kristiansand was home to 16,918 immigrants and Norwegian born immigrants (18,33% of Kristiansand's population) representing ca. 150 different nationalities (Statistics Norway, 2019). In addition, Kristiansand city's population alone is projected to increase by almost 10,000 by 2030 and these numbers are estimated without including the two merging municipalities Songdalen and Søgne (Statistics Norway, 2019). These statistics indicate the potential growth of Kristiansand as a globalizing urban municipality. Second, municipal government documents, action plans and strategies published by Kristiansand municipality inform the study. The documents are used to illuminate how Kristiansand can be characterized as globalizing. Furthermore, the documents inform the analysis because they reflect and represent the perspectives and views of Kristiansand, which this thesis aims to better understand.

The municipal government documents, plans and strategies are the following. The administrative document "New Kristiansand: Challenges 2018" (Kristiansand municipality, September 2018) addresses the current and future challenges for Kristiansand city, and gives recommendations for actions. As an ordinary city, Kristiansand faces challenges that can be characterized as global which support the claim of Kristiansand being both ordinary- and globalizing. These global challenges are also addressed in the "Kristiansand towards 2030" action plan (Councilor of Kristiansand Municipality, 20. september 2017), and the "New Kristiansand municipal planning strategy 2019-2023: What plans do we need?" (Kristiansand municipality, March/April 2019). The action plan outlines Kristiansand's visions and goals while it suggests guidelines to achieve the goals by 2030. In addition, I use the document "Action Program 2019-2022", which was adopted by Kristiansand municipality on 19 December 2018 (Councilor of Kristiansand municipality, 2019). The two action plans inform the study as they outline how Kristiansand will be an internationally oriented city through participation in cross-border city networks and international development projects. The attention and priority given to international orientation underscores Kristiansand as a 'globalizing' city. However, the documents provide limited, if any, information as to how networks will be used to achieve new Kristiansand's goals and visions. Nor do these documents outline priorities for which networks or type of networks Kristiansand should engage in to reach goals. Thus, the reports provide an entry point for the case study and

inspire more questions to ask interviewees to learn more about Kristiansand's involvement in cross-border city networks. In addition, a couple of news articles published by Kristiansand are also used as "documentary information" (Yin, 2018, p. 156) to supplement the case study with information. The informative news article, "Business in Kristiansand" describes and gives a short overview of Kristiansand's different approaches to international relations, such as descriptions of twin town agreements, strategic bilateral collaboration agreements and the various cross-border city networks.

This case study adopts an interpretive approach, which makes qualitative interviews the most suitable data collection method. The aim of the interpretive research is to provide an understanding of Kristiansand's involvement in cross-border city networks from the perspective of actors. The research question for the case study asks for explanations and justifications for participation in networks, which are rooted in meanings that participants attribute to their experiences in cross-border city networks. Social reality holds meaning to human beings, and thus, human beings act based on meanings they give their own actions as well as those of others (Bryman, 2012, p. 27). Therefore, interviews were chosen as the main data collection method.

The primary data for this thesis was collected through interviews with expert informants that participate in Kristiansand city's cross-border city networks. The interviewees are considered experts due to their extensive work experience in Kristiansand municipality and thorough knowledge of the city's participation in cross-border city networks. The four interviewees work for Kristiansand city in positions ranging from political leadership to business, and urban planning and development. The interviewees were chosen because of their experience with participation in cross-border city networks, which ranged from one year to more than a decade.

I chose to use "shorter case study interviews" as the main data collection method, because these are more focused and last for about one hour which allows for open-ended questions and conversation (Yin, 2018, p. 162). Interviewing as a method can provide insights that may not be discovered through other methods. One advantage is that informants can go off at tangents which gives attention to what they see as important in their work for Kristiansand. The four semi-structured interviews ranged from 40 to 82 minutes in length. The first three interviews were conducted over the course of one day in different locations in Kristiansand

city while the last interview took place over a Skype videocall. The three interviews in Kristiansand city were held in office spaces belonging to the department or municipal buildings where the informants work.

In the interviews, the interviewees were asked questions about their experiences with participating in cross-border city networks. Another advantage to using interviewing as a method is flexibility. This means that the researcher can freely ask follow-up questions to interesting insights surfacing during the interview. The interviews were somewhat tailored to each informant because of their different perspectives and roles in Kristiansand city and the interviewees also represent Kristiansand in different cross-border city networks. The motivation for conducting interviews is to gather comprehensive answers from the informants with lots of detail. This allows for concepts and themes to emerge out of the data. Furthermore, interviewees can give their own account of what they see as beneficial and meaningful with activities in cross-border city networks for the city, for them as individuals and for the citizens they represent (Bryman, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, the questions were designed with the intention of being open and non-directive so that the responded were allowed plenty of time to answer each question.

Interviewing as a method requires an interview guide. The interview guide was informed by the literature review and guidance from my supervisor (see Appendix 1). The interview guide operationalizes the research question into categories. The first section is used to obtain background information about Kristiansand's cross-border city networks and to find out which networks each interviewee participated in. The second category asks questions about the activities that participants were involved in through the cross-border city network. This category of questions seeks to learn more about how cross-border city networks facilitate international relations among cities. It asks how the interviewee participated in activities, and what participants took away from their experiences. The third category concerns motives for participation in these networks. The aim behind this category of questions is to find out what motivates participants to participate in networks, on the individual level and also on behalf of Kristiansand. It probes for evaluations of the use of networks to municipal governance. The fourth category asks questions in relation to the municipal strategies for new Kristiansand towards 2030. It seeks to find out how networks are used as an instrument in strengthening city development in Kristiansand. Furthermore, it aims to uncover why the municipality lists international collaboration through projects and networks specifically. The last category

concerns democratic participation in networks and asks how involvement in cross-border city networks benefit the citizens in Kristiansand. Furthermore, it asks how the citizens were involved in the process and how the municipality disseminates information to their citizens. Although the interview guide was structured by topics, most of the questions were broad. This was meant to allow the interviewees to steer the conversation based on their experience, while staying within the scope of the thesis topic. Another advantage of qualitative interviewing is the opportunity to observe both verbal and non-verbal cues, which may provide more information and context than for example textual documents (Bryman, 2016, p. 467). The broad questions allowed participants to talk about the things that excited them about this work and also to express frustration over certain aspects of the process. This provides more depth to the information and data.

To get access to interviewees, the coordinator for the master class referred the students in the master class to one insider in Kristiansand municipality. This was done to avoid overburdening municipal employees and to ease the sampling process. Based on the sampling criteria, the contact in Kristiansand referred me to potential informants. Based on the information I received from the fixer, I used snowball sampling to locate more relevant informants for my study. This allowed me to take advantage of opportunities to obtain data relevant to the study from informants who may be challenging to get in contact with under normal circumstances (Bryman, 2016, p. 409). The criteria for sampling were individuals with knowledge of Kristiansand municipality and experience from representing Kristiansand in cross-border city networks. The sampling units in this study were people (Bryman, 2012, pp. 407-408). Sample size for qualitative interviews varies but due to the time constraint of the thesis project, the sample size was limited to two-five interviews with the length of ca. 45-80 minutes. I contacted more potential informants than the intended sample size, but they chose not to participate in interviews. Thus, I was only able to interview four informants.

The four informants I interviewed were politicians from different political parties whom have experience in political leadership, as well as informants that work for the municipality. The informants are all well-versed in municipal and national politics, business development, and city and regional planning. The informants are or have been involved in work across fields, topics and issues ranging from combating climate change and environmental issues, businessdevelopment, city planning, developing policies, to combatting social issues.

Three of the informants wished to be anonymous whereas the fourth informant was indifferent to being anonymous in the thesis. Therefore, I chose to anonymize all informants because that was clearly stated in the consent form. When directly quoting from the interviews, I use a fictive name to maintain the anonymity of the informant and I ask the informant to approve the quote before using it to ensure fair and accurate representation. I refer to the first informant as Rosa Karlsen. The second informant will be called Anne Nilsen. The third informant is Klara Andersen, and the fourth informant will be referred to as Paul Pettersen. The first two informants work for the municipality, while the last two informants work with political leadership.

3.3. Data Analysis

Prior to interviewing the informants, I acquired their informed consent through a consent form based on guidelines from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The first three interviews were recorded on a tape recorder, while the last interview was recorded on a phone. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian since the participants are Norwegian native speakers. During the interviews, I made hand-written notes and drafted follow-up questions. After completing the interviews and converting the media files to MP3-format, I transcribed them in Norwegian using the website www.otranscribe.com and saved the transcriptions as word documents. I saved the audio recordings together with the finished transcriptions on a USB-drive which was kept in a protected storage-locker and a password-protected folder, thus following the instructions of the General Data Protection Regulation. I also deleted the audio recording from both the tape recorder and the phone after transferring the files. I did these measures in order to protect the rights of the informants.

The literature review revealed different logics behind network formation and diverse functions of cross-border city networks. Therefore, the goal of the analysis is to answer the research question. The question is how participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks. The definition of cross-border city networks conceptualizes ordinary- and globalizing cities as nodes in an interconnected network of flows that spans across state borders, whether the borders are among neighboring states, a region, a continent or globally. Furthermore, cross-border city networks as a concept includes projects with a fixed duration as long as member cities act as nodes within a network of flows. In order to answer the research questions, the analysis relies on interviews carried out with Norwegian expert informants who have worked with cross-border city networks. The research question

asks for explanations and justifications, which involves the subjective experiences of the informants. The aim behind the research question is to uncover how informants ascribe meaning to their participation and what benefits and functions cross-border networks have to them and Kristiansand city. This involves asking questions about activities organized through networks, motivations behind participation and the function of cross-border networks. The analysis is therefore based on corroborated or contesting answers from the informants, which have been categorized into themes. The analysis is structured around these themes and discusses the main results from the case study. The chapter will thereafter discuss potential political implications based on the results.

In order to identify themes, I read through and color-coded the transcribed interviews in order to identify codes to guide the analysis. I was specifically looking for motivations and justifications for joining cross-border city networks and tried to identify ways in which participants ascribed meaning to their participation. I also looked for contestations among the informants in terms of what they deemed important or how they argued for joining or not joining such networks. The process of determining these themes involved going through the interviews in detail and labeling relevant words and phrases relating to concepts, activities, processes and relevant ideas as codes. The codes emerged in informants' descriptions of what they saw as important to them and their city. The process resulted in many codes. Therefore, codes were combined into overarching categories which are referred to as themes. Some codes were deemed as not significant because these only appeared once in the interview data, had no reference in the literature or were not verified through data from other interviews. Therefore, some codes were dismissed.

Because I tailored the interview guide to each participant, some questions concerned issues that were not part of one or more informants' praxis or they were specific to a particular cross-border city network. Thus, only informants participating in particular networks could answer the question while other informants knew nothing about it (e.g. question 7c or question 8, see Appendix 1). In addition, I omitted a couple of questions and follow-up questions from the interview guide as during the first couple of interviews I discovered that some of the questions may not be relevant. The participants could not answer them; therefore, the planned follow-up questions were omitted as well. This means that in the final interview I omitted the follow-up questions a, c and d to question 9 as they were very specific and the previous three respondents were unable to answer them in previous interviews. In search of

answers to why Kristiansand does what it does, the questions in the section regarding motivation for cross-border city network participation began with 'why' rather than 'how' or 'how come'. This may have led participants to become more defensive in their responses, which was not the intention of the researcher. This leads to challenges of representability and may have hindered access to information. For example, some justifications may have been stated in order to serve the interests of the interviewee, like keeping or not keeping Kristiansand city involved in cross-border city networks. Another issue is that some answers may not be verifiable. These issues, as mentioned, point to one of the disadvantages of semi-structured interviewing, namely that answers from different respondents are more challenging to analyze and the findings become difficult to compare. Moreover, it points to the lack of experience of the researcher. However, the 'discrepancies' among responses makes them interesting.

3.4. Validity and ethical considerations

I chose to conduct a case study with a qualitative approach and use data collected through interviews, which means that validity becomes hard to measure. External validity, for example, is often used to determine whether the results or findings from a study can be generalized to a wider population or beyond the particular study (Bryman, 2012, p. 69). This thesis does not aim to generalize its findings to a larger population. Rather, the aim is to reveal information through interpreting data collected through interviews. The findings from this case study will not be generalizable to a wider population, however, the lessons learned from this case study may apply to other similar situations or like cases. The trustworthiness of this thesis' findings will be determined through examining whether the findings stand up to scrutiny (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). Furthermore, validity will be based on whether or not the researcher followed steps in the research plan. Due to the inductive relationship between theory and research, the ongoing process of interpretation has to be reflexive and the researcher must watch out for their own bias and ensure integrity in the results. Moreover, triangulation of data collection sources was implemented as another measure of trustworthiness, meaning that the researcher uses more than one data collection method to ensure reliability of findings (Yin, 2018, p. 172).

The main ethical concern in this study regards the 'do good' and 'do no harm' principle (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). Due to the nature of this study, no sensitive information was required. Therefore, questions were designed in ways that would not infringe upon the

privacy of informants' (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). I obtained informed consent from all informants before conducting the interviews, which was important to ensure that informants knew what they agreed to and to make sure they knew that they could withdraw at any time. Furthermore, I sought to avoid any form of deception in the way questions were asked or how informed consent was obtained (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). I strove towards openness and to accurately present the intentions of the study and how it would proceed after the interviews. Moreover, the study seeks to maintain confidentiality of records, so that participants will not be harmed during interviews or analysis of transcriptions. In addition, prior to submission of the thesis, all informants will be informed of direct quotes to be used in the thesis. The informants will be asked to read the translations of quotes from their interviews and have opportunity to correct any misunderstandings or misrepresentation. Thus, the thesis will ensure that informants cannot be identified and that they feel accurately represented.

3.5 Limitations

Although case studies come with many advantages, there are also disadvantages often associated with case studies. The main issue associated with case studies is whether the research is rigorous enough (Yin, 2018, p. 50). I chose to collect data through interviews and documents due to time constraints and the scope of the thesis. I only conducted four interviews. Out of the people I reached out to, only four responded and agreed to be interviewed. Through the contact person in Kristiansand and cross-searching Kristiansand's membership in cross-border city networks, I was able to locate several potential informants. However, some did not respond when I reached out and some could not participate in interviews. More interviews would greatly benefit the analysis of this thesis and could provide more substance to the results and discussion of findings.

Another limitation to this thesis is that the results cannot be generalizable due to the small interview sample. However, the aim of this thesis is to do a rigorous and descriptive examination of a single case and not to generalize findings to the wider population (Bryman, 2012, p. 71). Furthermore, this research would have benefited from other data collection methods such as direct observation, focus groups or questionnaires. For example, to participate as an observant at one of the activities organized by a cross-border city network would provide more insights into how these networks work in practice. Thus, direct observation or focus groups could provide detailed and in-depth information not otherwise available to the researcher.

The last limitation that may arise when conducting case study research is failure to follow systematic procedures. The main issue is that I failed to submit an application to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). I did submit an application, which I later pulled after a request from my supervisor. The application was retracted because my supervisor had not approved the application before I sent it in. This error was made due to a misunderstanding between myself and my supervisor where I believed that this process did not require approval and therefore did not consult her first. Afterwards, I made the mistake of not sending in an application to NSD at all. However, I did follow NSD guidelines when creating the informed consent form and received guidance from my supervisor. In addition, I consulted my supervisor regarding the interview guide prior to conducting the interviews and all translated quotes from interviews were approved by informants prior to submission of the thesis. This was done to increase the validity of the findings and that interviewees felt accurately represented in the use of direct quotes.

4. **The Case of international city networks seen from Kristiansand, Norway.**

The chapter aims to answer the research question of how participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks. The chapter will present and analyze the findings of the case study. The first section explains the context for the case study and seeks to describe the international relations of Kristiansand city with an emphasis on cross-border city networks. The second section presents the findings. Interviews are the main source for data collected in the case study. The interviews were carried out with Norwegian expert informants who have represented Kristiansand in cross-border city networks. Thus, the analysis is based on the responses, descriptions and perspectives corroborated or contested by informants. The International Relations literature on cities provides the analytical base for the case study. The last source is a small assemblage of documents written and published by Kristiansand municipality, which informs the interview guide and analysis. After the analysis follows a discussion on potential political implications of cross-border city networks as an approach to international relations.

4.1. The international relations of Kristiansand

The background for this case study is the inclusion of this master's thesis in the "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" and in the project "Kristiansand double +". "Kristiansand double +" was developed as a result of a request from Kristiansand to use the municipality as a case in teaching at NMBU. The project participants in "Interdisciplinary Master Class 2019" therefore approach the case of Kristiansand through different research questions, foci and methods. This thesis project was tasked with contributing an international take on the case of Kristiansand. The purpose of the project "Kristiansand double +" is the upcoming municipal amalgamation. From January 2020, the municipalities of Kristiansand, Songdalen and Søgne municipalities will become one municipality: 'new' Kristiansand.

The process of municipal amalgamation is not new to Kristiansand, which grew through incorporating parts of the Lund and Oddernes municipalities in 1921, and an amalgamation reform in 1965 incorporated all of Oddernes municipality along with the municipalities of Randesund and Tveit in 1965 (Breen, 1991, p. 16). The municipalities of Kristiansand, Søgne and Songdalen decided to merge succeeding the Solberg Government's municipal amalgamation reform (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2014-2015). This was approved by the Storting in June 2017 and goes into effect January 1st, 2020 (Thorsnæs,

Nilsen, & Bjørtvedt, Kristiansand, 2019). At the same time, Vest-Agder merges with Øst-Agder and becomes Agder County with Kristiansand as the regional capital.

Kristiansand can be characterized as an 'ordinary' city. This is because Kristiansand is neither a capital city nor a large city with its ca. 90,000-110,000 residents before and after municipal amalgamation respectively (Statistics Norway, 2019). Although Kristiansand may be an 'ordinary' city, it still faces challenges that can be characterized as global. According to Kristiansand municipality (2017; 2018), the global trends that affect the city are,

(1) climate change,
(2) demographic change and
(3) effects from the processes of globalization, urbanization and digitalization.

First, Kristiansand asserts that the average global temperature is rising, while natural disasters affect the world and reduce access to resources (2018, p. 4). Second, demographic changes are characterized as "falling birth rates, increasing migration, higher life expectancy and changing health challenges" (Kristiansand municipality, 2018, p. 4). Third, Kristiansand describes the processes of globalization, urbanization and digitalization as:

> "more people move to cities, while economy, culture and society increasingly develop across national boundaries irrespective of physical distance. Digitalization is the most comprehensive technological trend of our time and affects most areas of society. Communication depends less on location, access to information is almost unlimited, robotization replaces and creates jobs. The workforce has new requirements and expectations for work content and workplace. Competition for both jobs and labor continue to increase" (Kristiansand municipality, 2017, p. 4).

The above-mentioned global trends and how Kristiansand municipality describe them demonstrate how global issues impact cities and local contexts. Thereby blurring the line between levels of governance (Herrschel and Newman, 2017, p. 69). Furthermore, Kristiansand describes broadly how the three global trends may impact social life, working life and nature in Kristiansand. Thus, Kristiansand can be characterized as both 'ordinary' and 'globalizing' as it seeks to meet the challenges associated with global trends.

As the case study focuses on an 'ordinary' city, it departs from previous studies that focus on i.e., 'global city networks' or environmental transnational municipal networks. Furthermore, in its municipal planning documents, Kristiansand municipality describes how it will answer to the global trends that affect the city. Figure 2 shows how global trends influence the municipal plan and how the municipality intends to answer them. This is illustrated in the shape of a house.[1]

Inclusive city
Attractive experience city
Green innovation city

A creative city with ambitions

| Driven by collaboration | Competence for economic growth | Participation and belonging | Growth with quality |

Megatrends

Answer to climate change
Answer to demographic change
Answer to globalization, urbanization, digitalization

Premises
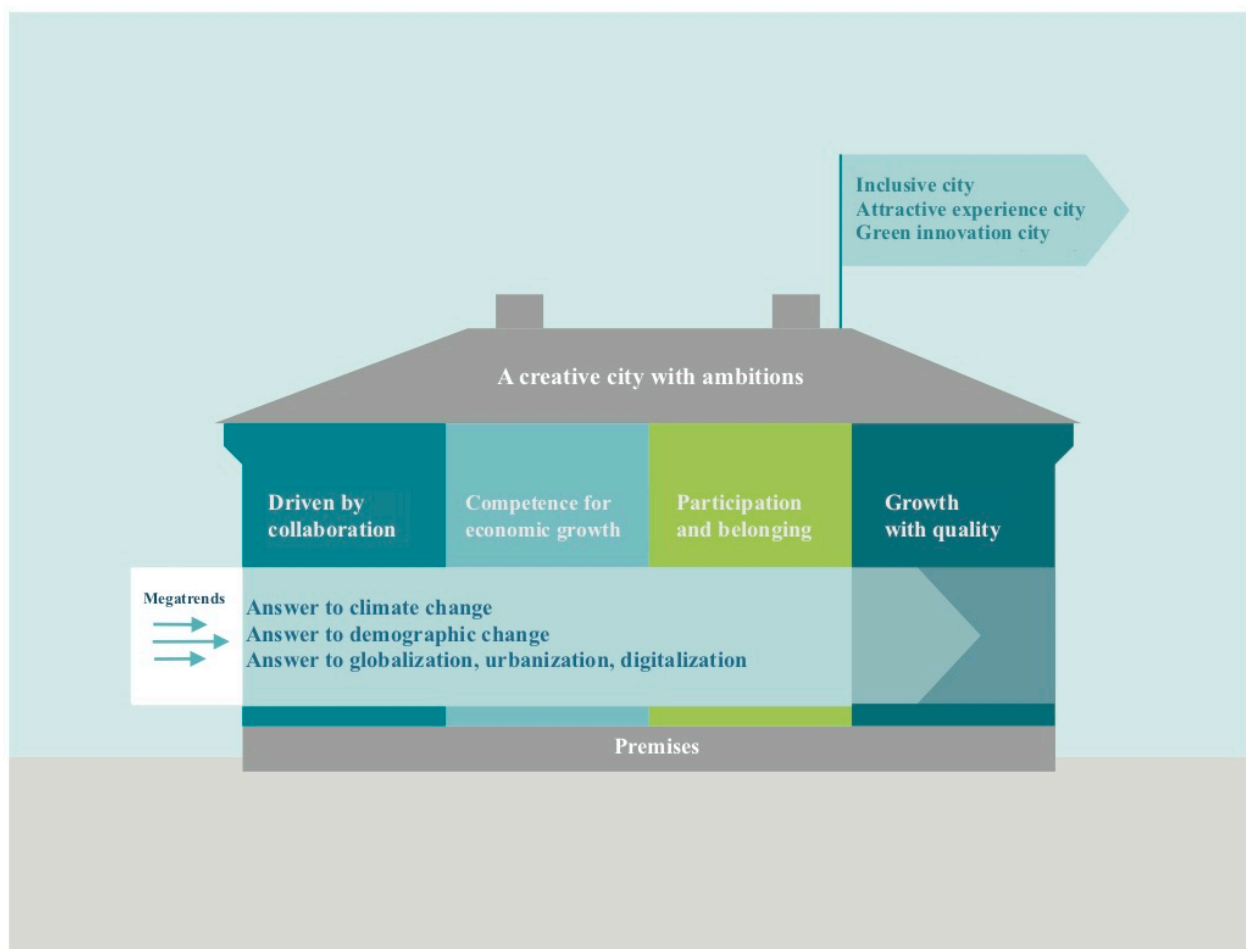
Figure: The main elements of the municipal plan's social section are illustrated as a house that influenced by global trends.

Figure 2. Councilor of Kristiansand Municipality (20. september 2017). En skapende by med ambisjoner! Kristiansand mot 2030: Kommuneplanens samfunnsdel 2017–2030, p. 15. Kristiansand: Kristiansand municipality.

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[1] Edited to add translations for this thesis. The illustration has not been approved by Kristiansand municipality.

On the basis of Kristiansand's municipal documents, the case study explores networked city relations through asking questions about motivations, activities and strategies for participation in cross-border networks and attempts to do this from the perspective of informants in Kristiansand.

The discovery that Kristiansand city holds membership in several city networks raised questions such as how Kristiansand benefits from these networks, why networks are part of their strategy, why Kristiansand city participates in networks, and so on. Further spurring interest, the political governance document for the establishment of 'new' Kristiansand emphasizes international orientation, strategic international cooperation and participation in international development projects and networks as one of its to reach visions and goals towards 2030 (30 January 2018). The visions and goals of 'new' Kristiansand towards 2030 give the case study relevance as it asks questions about Kristiansand's participation in cross-border city networks.

This case study adopts the view of Kristiansand as a 'globalizing' city (Amin, 2002) with international relations. Kristiansand is situated on the southern littoral of Norway in northern Europe and due to its location, Kristiansand is often referred to as "the port to Europe" (Breen, 1991, p. 16). The international relations of Kristiansand city can be roughly divided into five categories: (1) twin towns and cities; (2) strategic city-to-city relations; (3) international projects; (4) cross-border city networks; and (5) global associations. This thesis focuses primarily on Kristiansand's cross-border city networks.

Within the first category, Kristiansand has nine twin towns and cities[2], which include Trollhättan in Sweden, Kerava in Finland, Reykjanæsbær in Iceland, Orléans in France, Münster in Germany, Letchworth in England, Walvis Bay in Namibia, Rajshahi in Bangladesh and Gdynia in Poland (Karlson, 2015). Twin towns or cities and 'sister cities' relationships are a form of city-to-city cooperation or bilateral agreement. These relationships often have typical goals or functions such as peacekeeping or reconciliation, cultural exchange, international business collaboration, or promoting tourism and trade (Fünfgeld, 2015). Following the end of World War II, "sister-city relationships have emerged as a common form of international bilateral city partnerships, in Europe and elsewhere" (Fünfgeld, 2015). For example, the Nordic friendship cities collaboration began after the

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[2] In the Unites States, twin cities are often referred to as Sister Cities.

Second World War as a peacekeeping project meant to tie Nordic cities together, exchange experience and expertise, and improve cohesion in the Nordic region. As of February 12, 2019, the Municipal Committee of Kristiansand (Kommunalutvalget) decided to recommend termination of the Nordic twin city relations with Trollhättan, Reykjanæsbær and Kerava (Tybakken, 2019). The city of Hjørring in Denmark announced withdrawal from the Nordic friendship already in 2015. The reason behind Kristiansand leaving the Nordic twin city relations was that the city currently puts more emphasis on strategic connections that support and promote academia and business.

The second category of international relations is Kristiansand municipality's strategic cooperation with the cities Houston and Austin in Texas. Kristiansand is a key exporter of drilling equipment, which demands strategic business relations with for example Houston, TX. The third category, international projects, includes various projects through for example, Interreg, which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Furthermore, Kristiansand works with various international projects such as CreArt, Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA), Mediatic, and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). ISOCARP is a non-governmental global association of experienced professional planners (Karlson, 2015). Furthermore, the city is member of several cross-border projects and networks, such as International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) which is an international network for professional planners. These projects and networks do not fall within the definition of cross-border city networks but are mentioned here to highlight Kristiansand city's international engagements.

Kristiansand city actively participates in different types of cross-border city networks, which will be subject to re-evaluation in 2019 and 2020 due to the establishment of 'new' Kristiansand, which includes the municipalities Søgne and Songdalen (Tybakken, 2019). Yet, the political governance document for 'new' Kristiansand (Kristiansand Municipality, 30 January 2018) emphasizes participation in international networks. Starting out in the 1980s, various formalized international cross-border city networks have developed and grown. Some of these networks have focused on capacity-building or a single issue, while others focus on advocacy and collaborative efforts on multiple issues (Fünfgeld, 2015, p. 67). Kristiansand city currently holds membership in more than ten cross-border city networks, which include: Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI); United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); Strong Cities Network (SCN); Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC); European Cities

Against Drugs (ECAD); Nordic Safe Cities; the Covenant of mayors for Climate and Energy and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Short descriptions of Kristiansand's cross-border city networks are provided in Appendix 2.

Furthermore, Kristiansand is or has been member of four cross-border city programs. These are Gen-Y-City Network, Nordic City Network, Nordic Smart City Network and European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities (EIPSCC). These programs share many characteristics with city networks. However, in terms of structure and organization these networks are characterized as programs rather than TMNs. This is because the programs are organized differently and are run by other actors like programs or agencies, e.g. the European Commission, or one city spearheads the program, or the programs are loosely defined as initiatives. Rather than excluding programs, I choose to include them because in these programs, cities operate as nodes in a network that collaborate with each other, organize activities, share knowledge and promote best practices. Despite different organization and leadership, these programs share many functions with cross-border city networks. Thus, the programs fit the definition of cross-border city networks that was developed in chapter two.

In addition to the cross-border city networks and collaborative cross-border project networks introduced above, Kristiansand city discusses whether or not to seek membership in the 'Cities for Life' cross-border city network. This descriptive overview of Kristiansand's international relations shows how one ordinary- and globalizing city actively engages in various cross-border city networks, while also being active on other international arenas. The next section presents findings and aims to answer the research question how actors in Kristiansand explain and justify participation in cross-border city networks.

4.2. Why participate in networks?

This chapter presents and analyzes the main findings in the case study on Kristiansand and its cross-border city networks. It seeks to answer the research question of how participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks. The main source for the case study is interviews with participants in Kristiansand's cross-border city networks and their perspectives are central to explore the research question. I interviewed two individuals who work in Kristiansand municipality and two individuals that are active politicians. All interviewees have been given fictive names to ensure anonymity. One informant works with city- and regional planning and has been involved in cross-border city networks for a few

years. I refer to this interviewee as Rosa Karlsen. The second informant works in the business sector and has worked many years with project planning and implementation of one network. I call them Anne Nilsen. The third informant I refer to as Klara Andersen. Andersen has many years of experience as a local politician and with representing Kristiansand city in cross-border city networks. Paul Pettersen is a local politician with years of experience with participation in cross-border city networks. The informants come from different backgrounds and fields and have represented Kristiansand for many years in different cross-border city networks.

The chapter is structured after themes that reflect the main findings of the case study. The themes are motivations in city diplomacy, cost-benefit rationale and strategic network participation, and status seeking. The following subchapters will demonstrate how I interpret the data I gathered from the four interviews. I will analyze the main themes in light of existing literature.

The overarching themes of motivations for city diplomacy, cost-benefit rationale and strategic network participation, and status seeking encompass the various codes I created on the basis of words and phrases reiterated and corroborated by informants. The themes and their underlying codes make up the findings of this case study. Motivations for city diplomacy as a theme includes for example: diplomacy, international relations, development aid, peace relations, post-war relation building, regional affairs, friendship cities and twin towns. The codes within the theme reflect how informants explain participation in cross-border city networks as a strategic form of city diplomacy. The theme cost-benefit rationale and strategic network participation is a combination of multiple codes: knowledge, best-practices, learning, policy development, trends, input and output, networking space, problem-solving and empowerment, to name a few. What connects these codes within the cost-benefit theme is how informants use terms to justify their network participation. The themes of city diplomacy and cost-benefit are connected as they signal a shift in motives behind city diplomacy through networks. The final overarching theme includes the codes: international profiling or visibility, international investment, norm-entrepreneur, international footprint, inspiration, global focus and attractiveness. The data suggests the concept of 'status seeking' and several codes were combined in order to create this theme. The connection between the codes and the suggested theme of status is made through reference to status literature in international relations.

Paraphrases and a few direct quotes from the interviews will be used to illustrate how I interpret the participants' motivations for network participation and demonstrate how informants explain and justify participation in cross-border city networks. All paraphrases and quotes have been translated from Norwegian. The translated quotes have been approved by the interviewees.

4.2.1. Motivations in city diplomacy

From the interviews, I learned that city diplomacy is an important motive for participation in cross-border city networks. The interviewees do not use the term 'city diplomacy' when describing their practices. But their descriptions can be characterized as city diplomacy based on definitions of city diplomacy. The process of globalization has served to make municipalities important partners for political actors involved in global governance as global and local challenges increasingly intertwine (La Porte, 2013, p. 87). This means that globalization challenges former definitions of city diplomacy which emphasize "promotion of peace and prevention of conflict" (La Porte, 2013, p. 87). Melissen and Van der Pluijm broaden the concept of city diplomacy by defining it as "the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another" (2007, p. 11). Through this definition of city diplomacy, Melissen and Van der Pluijm broaden the concept to include representation and interests. This move broadens the academic discussion of cities role in global governance activities beyond the focus on traditional peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Therefore, I refer to this definition when using the term city diplomacy.

The framing of network participation in terms that characterize traditional and new forms of city diplomacy are most prevalent in the perspectives of the local politicians I interviewed. The interviewees describe the role of cities in a multilayered diplomatic environment from the perspective of Kristiansand. In order to learn more about Kristiansand's city diplomacy, I ask interviewees which city networks Kristiansand participates in. In response to this question, Klara Andersen describes the development of Kristiansand's city networks and frames the process in a historical perspective,

> It varies and it's about how this type of work has evolved over time. If you
> look at it historically, it was after WWII that Norwegian cities and
> municipalities started twin town agreements with other Nordic countries

and created networks that way. Where cities exchanged *experience*, *competencies*, and not least *visited* each other, and the idea behind it which I recently learned! The Gerhardsen Government promoted this idea that if Nordic cities are tied together, then in itself that is a kind of *peacekeeping project*. You don't fight your friends, at least not in the scale we talk about now. So that was part of ensuring cohesion in the Nordic region on the background of establishing Nordic twin cities. And then there are *experiences* from that and what these friendship cities cannot provide, and that is the type of professional- and academic-based networks. Such as Strong Cities Network which has a very specific area of *expertise* like radicalization and exclusion etc. While European Cities Against Drugs, well, the name is pretty straight forward. … So, the line of thinking [behind cross-border city networks] stretches further back than the 1990s. That cities wish for *relations* outside their own municipal borders. (Interview, 26 February 2019)

In this quote, Andersen talks about how cross-border city relations have evolved over time. Her description of Kristiansand's historical city network practices can be linked to the traditional concept of city diplomacy as Andersen focuses on "promotion of peace and prevention of conflict" (La Porte, 2013, p. 87). She reflects on ideas about peacekeeping after World War II and how peacekeeping served as motive for establishing the Nordic twin city agreements. Then, Andersen comments on problems with twin town agreements that cross-border networks seem to mediate, such as provision of professional expertise.

The description of practices provided by Andersen shows how city diplomacy can be conceptualized as "two-sided or multiple-sided interactions" (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 12). Two-sided city diplomacy involves two actors and at least one of these is a city representative. Multiple-sided city diplomacy have more than two parties involved in the process that represent different cities (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007, p. 12). Cross-border city networks are an example of multiple-sided city diplomacy, while two-sided city diplomacy is illustrated by the practice of town-twinning.

What I learned from the interviews with Andersen and Pettersen seems to endorse the argument proposed by Melissen and Van der Pluijm. They argue that, "cities are increasingly

turning to pragmatic forms of inter-municipal cooperation, such as the sharing of technology and information" (2007, p. 28). This is reflected in Andersen's comment where she implies that cross-border city networks can be more useful than twin town relationship. This I interpret as an important issue raised by Andersen. In her description, Andersen sets up a shift from city diplomacy through town twinning that concerns "promotion of peace and prevention of conflict" (La Porte, 2013, p. 87), and moves the discussion over to more strategic city diplomacy, such as cross-border city networks.

Likewise, in response to the same inquiry by the interviewer, Pettersen reflects on the different city networks of Kristiansand and seems to share reflections with Andersen,

> We have many one-to-one relations. We have many *twin city agreements*. But we recently ended the Nordic *cooperation* network what was established in the early 60s, which was a wish for *cohesion* and *relation building* across the Nordic region. But *time has run away* from this network, so we ended it. (Interview, 5 April 2019)

In this excerpt, Pettersen talks about Kristiansand's two-sided city diplomacy and also points to the timespans of these relations. Furthermore, Pettersen emphasizes cooperation, relation building and cohesion, which falls in line with the traditional idea of city diplomacy. Furthermore, Andersen has a clear idea about timespans and the difference between twin towns and cross-border city networks,

> It's a whole lot easier when you have *cooperation* arrangements with a set *time span*. It is much easier than ever-lasting *twin-town agreements* you can't get out of, even though the city long ago changed and no longer exists. We have one such example, in England we had a *twin-town* called Letchworth, but it no longer exists. For example, Søgne which merges with Kristiansand. But we couldn't break up with them [Letchworth] anyway! And it's a little odd when the city doesn't exist anymore. Because it has been merged with another city, but it's *a lot of work for maybe nothing*. (Interview 26 February 2019)

In this excerpt from the interview, Andersen talks about Kristiansand's twin city relationship with Letchworth. This relationship was initiated by the British in connection to the UN International Year of Cooperation in 1965 (Ljosland, 2013). However, Letchworth was incorporated in the North Hertfordshire District one year later and the new municipal council declined to take on the twin city relationship (Ljosland, 2013). "Thus, the Letchworth Garden City Twinning Association was created to further the collaboration", said John Gregory, a resident on Kristiansand Way in Letchworth and newsletter editor of Letchworth Garden City Twinning Association (Ljosland, 2013). In the interview, Andersen expresses a clear idea about ending the twin town agreement with Letchworth. She comments on the lack of benefits from this two-sided city diplomacy process and implies that the amount of effort put into its continuation seems to add up to nothing. The issue of timespans and lack of returns can perhaps illuminate the rise and decline of two-sided or multiple-sided city diplomacy. For example, one network can be very attractive and produce much output but later declines if the network loses importance and relevance in the eyes of participants and member cities. Furthermore, Andersen later claims that "if the municipality sees little output from a network then that justifies ending participation" (Interview 26 February 2019). This line of reasoning is expressed by both Andersen and Pettersen in their explanation for ending the Nordic twin city agreements. Moreover, this line of thought connects the theme of city diplomacy to the second theme of cost-benefit, which will be discussed in section 4.2.2.

From the interviews with Andersen, Nilsen and Pettersen I learned that the participation in cross-border city networks is closely linked to the international strategy for new Kristiansand. The municipal document "Strategy for new Kristiansand 2019-2023" outlines ambitious goals for new Kristiansand to continue its international focus,

> … the new municipality aims to actively collect and *use impulses and experiences* from other countries. The municipality shall participate in *international development projects and networks*, secure that *international initiatives* and *cooperation* are grounded in *strategy* and use *international competencies* in Kristiansand's population. In addition, the municipality is a facilitator for an *internationally leading* business sector which demands that the municipality has *updated knowledge* in this field. (Fellesnemnda, Kristiansand, Søgne and Songdalen, 05 March 2019)

This excerpt is from a document that was processed by a committee consisting of elected representatives from the three merging municipalities Kristiansand, Songdalen and Søgne (Norwegian: "Fellesnemnda"). The document is not a plan but presents an arena to discuss development trends and municipal planning needs for Kristiansand. The strategy encourages participation in international projects and networks and explicitly requires that international activities are grounded in strategy. This excerpt seems to support the suggestion of a shift in the practice of city diplomacy in the case of Kristiansand. More broadly, Kristiansand's plan seems to resonate with the argument proposed by Acuto, Morisette and Tsouros (2016). They argue that to get the most out of city networks, more integrative and strategic thinking is needed at the local and international levels (Acuto, Morisette and Tsouros, 2016, p. 1). The literature review argues that cities as political actors are able to influence global governance processes through participation in cross-border city networks. Cross-border city networks also involve diplomatic activities, which are relational and involve social processes. The activities conducted through cross-border city networks are the link to city diplomacy. Because, as La Porte argues, "city diplomacy involves activities that clearly defend social or political interests (cooperation, conflict prevention)" (2013, p. 89). While diplomacy is traditionally viewed as a task for states, cities and municipalities have historically engaged in diplomatic activities and continue to do so. Therefore, in the interviews, participants are asked questions about the international strategy for new Kristiansand towards 2030 (Appendix 1, Questions 9-10). The informants all respond that the strategy has not been made yet, but they do have some ideas based on what has been done in the past. The interviewees anticipate continuation of these strategies but frame them in different ways.

First, Andersen mentions that the case meetings for discussing Kristiansand's strategy will emphasize goals and focus, "we [Kristiansand] will work to develop a strategy on what kind of *cooperation relations* we will have in the future, which and how these will be *focused*, what type of *commitments* we will have" (Interview 26 February).

From her experience, Andersen seems to have a clear idea that city diplomacy must be relevant to Kristiansand's development. She also talks about questions of priority for certain types of cooperation relations and commitments. She might infer the problems of "ever-lasting commitments" that Kristiansand has had in the past and that future relations must be anchored in strategy. Underlining the same sentiment, Pettersen says that "we [Kristiansand] have to be critical towards what networks are interesting to us. And that can be a little of

everything" (Interview 5 April 2019). Then Pettersen provides an example of how cross-border city networks can be used strategically,

> I will hold a speech in St. Petersburg about those who participated [at a previous network [meeting] about the cruise industry and how we can ensure that more [cities] than Kristiansand city go electric. We have 50-60 cruise ships that come to Kristiansand, and when they arrive, we now require that they must not release [pollutive gases], they must not let the auxiliary engines run on low power. They must get shore power from us, and we worked on this [issue] for many years through this network and others towards the EU. Because, if only Norwegian ports have this requirement then it's not so easy to get the cruise ships to accept that. But if all the ports from St. Petersburg to Bergen could join together and say that in two years it will be prohibited to stay in port with auxiliary engines running because they release an insane amount of particulate matter, NOx and CO_2 thereby polluting the city. The seaport is in the middle of the city. So, I plan to speak in St. Petersburg because they are a major seaport. Then Riga, Stockholm and Copenhagen will come and continue the selling point and work not just in the EU, but also to get Russia to join the effort. (Interview 5 April 2019)

This passage from the interview with Pettersen clearly demonstrates strategic use of cross-border city networks. Furthermore, he demonstrates city diplomacy in practice as defined the by Melissen and Van der Pluijm (2007). Pettersen shows how he uses one cross-border city network to strategically engage with other actors on an international stage with the aim to represent Kristiansand and their interests within a specific issue area. In this example from Pettersen, the local problem is emissions from cruise ships in Kristiansand and the local solution is providing electric shore power, which Kristiansand can supply to the cruise ships. Furthermore, as he clearly points out, pollution and emissions of harmful gases are not only a local issue but affect other cities and seaports as well. Therefore, he represents Kristiansand in collaborating with other cities through multiple-sided diplomacy and aims to solve this problem in the Baltic Sea region, promote Kristiansand's interests and cooperate with other actors like the European Union. In addition, this example makes visible the economic dimension of city diplomacy.

From the interviews, I also learned that Kristiansand has its own international strategy for the business sector,

> From a business perspective, we have our own *strategy* to support Kristiansand towards 2030. And that is that *international cooperation* will contribute to *economic growth* in the region. Or *international relations*. It's because our businesses in this region are *international*. If you consider ownership, then the largest businesses are *internationally* owned. You will see that nationally owned businesses have market shares out in the world so large that you would hardly believe it if you knew. So, our business sector is very *international*. It gives us benefits to be *international*, but we can never grow lazy and we have to push people out in the world. Because we cannot live with the small market Norway has, we need to venture out in the world to make money there. Thus, exports are something that's part of *creating value* in parts of the country. (Interview 26 February 2019)

Here the interviewee seems to acknowledge that Kristiansand must continue to engage in international relations. The interviewee appears to ground this rationale in the need to secure economic growth. This rationale makes sense with what Acuto and Rayner (2016) emphasize, namely that "networks are becoming regular gateways through which business actors can make connections not just with individual cities but also within pools of cities" (p. 1163). Thus, participation in city diplomacy through cross-border city networks offers market opportunities. Furthermore, the informant points out how much of the business sector in Kristiansand has international ownership and that Norwegian business owners venture outside the country. The informant mentions the strategic business plan for the Kristiansand region, which states that international collaboration contributes to create economic value in the Kristiansand region (2015, p. 12). This strategic business plan was adopted by all municipalities in the Kristiansand region in 2014. One of its suggested measures is to "open up for municipal hubs to participate in Kristiansand's international networks" such as the Union of Baltic Cities and Nordic Cities Networks (2015, p. 12). Further it recommends the use of international trade fairs and delegations such as the Offshore Technology Conference Houston (OTC), Offshore Northern Seas Stavanger (ONS) and more, as well as European Innovation partnerships (EIP-SCC). In light of the reflections by the informant, it seems that

international networks are key to the development of Kristiansand's business sector. The business plan also resonates with Pettersen's statement: "Why should we be an *international city*, no, it's rather about, it is because we historically have been [international] and we're located close to the continent, and we have so much *business* pointing outwards" (Interview 5 April 2019).

From discussions about activities with cross-border city networks, I learned about the link between network participation and political initiative from the interviewees. Andersen says that "society must be read at any given time in order to evaluate which initiatives should be strengthened and which should be terminated, which goes for both old and new forms of city diplomacy" (Interview 26 February 2019). This passage makes visible the connection between local political priorities and participation in cross-border city networks. Furthermore, one interviewee describes how Kristiansand became a member in one network following political will from the Norwegian government. The informant recounts an anecdote about how the decision to join one cross-border city network came from political influence:

> Radicalization and extremism are unfortunately very appropriate *topics*, as we have seen in recent terror attacks. So, when Donald Trump took office as President of the United States (U.S.) it was very exciting to see whether he would discontinue the network. But when attendees to the meeting explained what it was about, he said "Aaah, I kinda like it" and that was it. They kept it. Because much of it is *funded* by the U.S. So, when the Americans started it, they paid most of the *expenses*, and the Norwegian and Danish Ministries of Foreign Affairs have also contributed with *funding*. The extension of it is a think tank in London called Institute of Strategic Dialogue, which hosts the network. They asked us, after discussing it with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if we would be interested in *collaborating* with Mombasa in Kenya. Which we did. The background for the initiative was that Mombasa experienced a lot of recruitment to Al-Shabaab. The governor there is also a board member in SCN. […] So, it's not Kristiansand municipality that pays the *expenses*, it's the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We signed a memorandum of

understanding [with Mombasa] where we *collaborate* on these issues. We've *exchanged* action plans.[3] (Interview 5 April 2019)

This extract from an interview follows a question asked about representation in cross-border city networks. The quote comes from a longer response where the informant goes on different tangents. Such tangents may give deeper insight into decision making processes regarding membership in networks for globalizing cities. In the extract above, the informant shares an anecdote and identifies different drives behind network participation.

First, the interviewee describes the political will at the national level that resulted in Kristiansand's invitation to the network. Second, they identify the importance of individuals for continuing network engagement, such as the continuation of this network depending on whether or not one person 'likes it'. So, this statement may speak to the timespan of cross-border city networks. The continuation of a network could depend on perceptions of how relevant the topic of the network is at any given time. This may rely on the perceptions of multiple groups, such as individuals, stakeholders, companies and cities.

Third, the interviewee focuses a lot on funding when they explain how Kristiansand came to join one cross-border city network. They seem to defend participation by refuting the issue of municipal spending on international relations, which is mentioned by another interviewee. It appears that the informants anticipate problems related to network participation, by emphasizing that no expenses are paid by Kristiansand municipality. As discussed in the review, democratic deficit can be a limitation to participation in cross-border city networks. However, none of the interviewees express concern regarding democratic deficit in terms of their network participation. Furthermore, I read this statement to mean that being an elected politician may counter the issue of democratic deficit. The informant later explains that "I have oriented the Kristiansand Chairmanship, so they were informed and sanctioned it [activities with SCN]" (Interview 5 April 2019). I interpret this as another justification made to avert the issue of democratic deficit. Here, the informant orients the chairmanship, which is made up of political representatives. Furthermore, the interviewee also explained that they

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[3] This informant wanted to be quoted with their real name, however, due to the agreement signed on the informed consent form, all informants were given fictive names. Therefore, this quote is included here, despite the possibility for identification through network affiliation and/or public statements that may have been made before or after the publication of this thesis.

had tried to get attention through the media to share network initiatives with the citizenry. However, the local media they contacted were not always interested in reporting on this topic.

Another question is whether the problem of democratic deficit can be countered through participants in network being elected officials? After all, positions in political leadership are democratically elected to make decisions on behalf of their citizens. Benjamin Barber (2014) argues that "states have become ever more distant from their citizens, who are increasingly alienated by a widening democratic deficit" (as cited in Curtis, 2016b, p. 456). Furthermore, Barber promotes mayors as key figures in solving transnational governance issues (Curtis, 2016b). Elected city representatives are often argued to have a closer relationship to the citizenry than nationally elected officials (Curtis, 2016a). However, the informant also adds that the municipality should become better at reporting activities with the networks to the citizens (Interview 5 April 2019).

Lastly, in this excerpt, the informant appears to acknowledge traditional hierarchies of power and authority when they argue that political incentive from the government was a central motivator for Kristiansand to join the network. Here, the implication is that cities are sub-state entities under the influence of the state. At the same time, another informant insinuates that the state lags behind cities in some areas:

> In some areas, I believe *municipalities* go in front and the state lags behind. So then of course, there are important areas where local authorities play a *role* in international relations … The first was in the follow-up meeting to Paris that the Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment for the first time brought up internationally the *importance* of what *municipalities* do in environmental efforts. And we, in any *municipality*, experienced this as a major breakthrough. Progress. That now we will be taken seriously. And I cannot imagine how the UN Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved without *municipalities* on the *team*.[5] (Interview 26 February 2019)

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[5] One sentence was removed from the excerpt because it could potentially identify the informant.

In this extract of one interview, the interviewee discusses how cities are front-runners in combating climate change. They identify municipalities as central actors for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put forward by the United Nations (UN). This suggests that the informant sees municipalities as political actors. In support, Bouteligier asserts that policy makers and academics increasingly move away from viewing cities as places of environmental degeneration and rather choose to generate ideas about how cities can be front-runners on the journey towards environmental sustainability (2013a, p. 2). In addition, the interviewee infers that cities will play a bigger role in international affairs going forward. Moreover, the same informant continues to say that,

> [at an international meeting] local politicians from the whole world understood that in order to solve the *challenges* of climate change in the world, we cannot leave all *decisionmaking* to parliaments and national governments. We must go out and think locally. *Think globally* and act locally. That's when local politicians and local governments have to get strongly involved. (Interview, 26 February 2019)

In this statement, the informant reflects on global governance processes and further describes their view of cities and municipalities. I interpret the informants' statement to emphasize cities as central political actors when it comes to global issues, because global problems affect local contexts. They argue for the inclusion of cities in decisionmaking and, along with the former statement, implies that municipalities have an important role in global governance. Based on the two excerpts above, their motivation for network participation can be argued to supplement the argument put forward by Curtis (2016a). He argues that global city networks can allow cities to by-pass the traditional hierarchies of the state system (Curtis, 2016a). This extract does not concretely point towards such by-passing but can imply its potential in relation to climate issues. Moreover, Melissen and Van der Pluijm (2007) argue that with a focus on how globalization processes impact the involvement of cities in diplomacy, "it can be argued that states have lost their monopoly over social, economic and political activity in their territory" (p. 8). This is due to national and international political spheres becoming increasingly blurred (Melissen & van der Pluijm, 2007). Further adding to the argument of changing practices in city diplomacy, the "Plan strategy for new Kristiansand 2019-2023" can be argued to substantiate the same argument,

Kristiansand's *international work* has changed over the past years. International efforts are more angled towards strategic cooperation around common challenges both for the municipality and its partners. This means that there is a need for developing a *new strategy* within this field, which clarifies what direction the new municipality with take in this work. The municipality's work must be *advantageous to citizens*, business and academia, and provide *knowledge* and *competence* to the municipality itself. (Kristiansand municipality, March/April 2019)

This excerpt from the plan strategy for new Kristiansand, underscores that Kristiansand's practices of city diplomacy are in fact changing. This change seems to lie in the shift from peacekeeping and peacebuilding to strategic international cooperation. Furthermore, when referring to the international strategy of new Kristiansand towards 2030 informants also provide a less critical view of network participation. For example, one informant frames the strategy in terms of ambition,

if we have some cities that call us in [invitation] because we have good projects and believe that we do a good job and can be inspired by us, then we have already reached that goal, I think. So, it's all about being ambitious on behalf of the city. (Interview 26 February 2019)

In this quote, the interviewee talks about how the international strategy gives Kristiansand a goal to strive towards and seems positive to continued international cooperation.

In conclusion of this section, from discussing motivations with informants and consulting the municipal documents of Kristiansand, I learned that several factors are important to Kristiansand when deciding to participate in cross-border city networks. These can be tied to two-sided city diplomacy focused on development and humanitarian aid[7], come from political incentive at the national or international level, and also for strategic reasons. Based on my interpretations of the interviews, it is clear that Kristiansand's aim when engaging in multi-sided city diplomacy to benefit the municipality as a whole, the business sector and the

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[7] I chose not to include a focus on this due to lack of space. Furthermore, it directly relates to twin city agreements based on development and humanitarian aid and is not as relevant to the discussion of cross-border city networks.

community. Furthermore, the motives for city diplomacy are multifaceted and complex. Therefore, there are many answers to this part of the research question.

4.2.2. The cost-benefit rationale and strategic network participation

The main idea behind cross-border city networks is to facilitate that cities come together, exchange views and learn from each other through interacting in networks (Gordon and Johnson, 2018). This view broadly reflects in what I learned from the interviews. When the informants describe their experiences with cross-border city networks they also justify their participation in different ways. The justifications they provide seem to depend on different criteria that networks must satisfy in order to be useful to both the informants and Kristiansand municipality. The criteria informants use to justify network participation are framed in terms of cost and benefit, and include:

(1) The cross-border network provides opportunities to acquire knowledge, such as professional input, output, learning, and access to expertise and best practices.
(2) The content of cross-border city networks is timely and relevant to Kristiansand's context in terms of topic or issue area.
(3) Cross-border city networks provide particular spaces for strategic networking and for organizing international collaboration and activities.

The above-mentioned criteria describe the corroborated descriptions by expert informants. The informants seem to rely on these criteria to justify participation in cross-border city networks. Benefits and outputs from city network participation have been discussed in previous studies and is often expressed in terms of goals, functions and capacities (see e.g. Gordon & Johnson, 2018; Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003). But what about costs? From the interviews, I learned that participation in cross-border city networks involves both cost and benefit.

In response to a question regarding activities with cross-border city networks, Klara Andersen argues that Kristiansand approaches cross-border city networks through a cost-benefit model:

> We manage public *funds*. Thus, it is important to know that we get something
> in *return* when we spend money on travel or international relations. To get a
> nice trip to Iceland to look at hot springs and such, that's something I don't

think *benefits* the citizens of Kristiansand even though five politicians have been on a trip. That's why we focus much more on *professionalism* and what you'd call *a cost-benefit model* – to consider the *cost* of something and the *return* from it – if we experience that we don't get much in *return*, then it must be okay to end it. (Interview 26 February 2019)

Through her cost-benefit rationale, Andersen points in several directions at once. First, she highlights the importance of democratic accountability for elected politicians. This move can problematize network participation when combined with the role of managing public funds. For example, by abuse of public funds for own benefit. Therefore, returns are emphasized in the calculation of costs. Second, she connects benefits to citizens to rationalize participation in networks and bilateral relations, which may speak to her feelings about spending money that belongs to the public. I interpret her statement to imply that cost-benefit calculations for participation include not only benefits to the participants in networks but also benefits to the citizens they represent. Third, she describes how expenses become justified through the cost-benefit model and infers that Kristiansand municipality will leave any bilateral relationship or city network that fails to yield desired results or benefits. This may speak to the endurance of networks and bilateral relationships.

Underscoring the same cost-benefit rationale, the other informants also argue that *resources* spent by the municipality in terms of personnel, effort, time, delivery, input, monetary costs, etc., must be justified in relation to the *output* Kristiansand receives from the network. For example, another informant emphasizes that "because of the municipality's role to the public, any *resources used for* Kristiansand's international relations must have *outputs*" (Interview 26 February 2019). The accounts may illuminate how informants perceive the expected output from participation in cross-border city network as vital in any cost-benefit evaluation of network participation. In addition, most informants use the term *professional input* to describe their personal motivation for participation in networks and claim that input from other professionals within the field can contribute positively to their own work in the municipality. Thus, there are several criteria for network participation that relate to knowledge, best-practices and professional input. However, the informants provide several characteristics that seem to justify how benefits outweigh costs of participation.

One informant argues that "Kristiansand must look outwards to *learn*, to know their competition and become inspired in order to face new challenges and follow current *trends*" (Interview 26 February 2019). In this statement, the informant brings up several points. She talks about competition between cities and the need to stay up to date with global trends. Her statement might underscore the arguments about neoliberal capitalist restructuring proposed by Brenner and Curtis (Brenner, 1998; Curtis, 2016a) as discussed in the literature review. Furthermore, the statement also relates to the goals and strategies in Kristiansand's goals and strategies towards 2030 (Kristiansand municipality, 2017, p. 4). The goals and strategies give attention to facing global challenges and being updated on current trends. For example, one interviewee claims that one of the network projects Kristiansand participated in came to influence city planning in Kristiansand municipality (26 February 2019). Thus, from the interviews I learned that participation in network projects provide participants with knowledge and experience that they can transfer to local development processes in Kristiansand.

All informants spoke at length about the many benefits that they and Kristiansand gained through participation in cross-border city networks. For example, the informants claim that networks provide Kristiansand opportunities to get to know other cities, to learn what other cities do to mitigate issues that Kristiansand also faces, and to receive professional *input* and get *international experience*. While all informants underscore *learning* and obtaining professional knowledge as main motivators for network participation, two participants add particular importance to the act of *teaching* other cities best-practices. In addition, Karlsen emphasizes "unexpected a-ha experiences or ideas" as valuable input or inspiration, although this is not a main consideration when signing up for a meeting (Interview 26 February 2019). These examples show how, in different ways, interviewees argue that benefits – such as knowledge of best-practices, input and opportunities from cross-border city networks – can outweigh the costs of participation. The emphasis both Kristiansand's strategy document and interviewees place on knowledge and competence building in Kristiansand's strategy may also indicate that Kristiansand wishes to conduct strategic city networking in order to gain access to knowledge communities, also called epistemic communities (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2016). Cost-benefit evaluations also depend on content and context.

The informants also talk about experiences that indicate challenges with network participation. One informant mentions lack of understanding for how things are done

differently in Norway compared to other countries. This can make collaboration more difficult. Another issue, according to an informant, can be the funding for project implementation. For example, a problem arises if one city decides the project budget for all network participants. If a project budget is rigid and contains specific earmarks for all segments, it can become impossible for Kristiansand to hire extra personnel for implementation or follow-up if necessary. While other countries with lower salaries have more opportunities to hire in people or services. Thus, one informant argues that network and project participation can become a significant workload for those involved (Interview, 26 February 2019). The challenges encountered during network participation makes one interviewee hesitant to take on responsibility for a similar project in the future. The interviewee argues that a decision on whether or not to participate in a network project will depend on how much influence Kristiansand has over the project planning and implementation, such as the budget (Interview 26 February 2019). Thus, network participation comes at a cost, even when membership is sponsored (e.g. by the government, the European Commission, private companies or stakeholders) and whether the cost consists of time, staff or other resources.

From the interviews I learned that in order to get valuable *output* from network participation, the *content* of the cross-border city network and contemporary *context* matters. The informants all claim that the focus area of a cross-border city network must be *timely* and *relevant* to Kristiansand in order to merit membership. For example, Karlsen stresses that "the network must have a relevant topic and the other cities preferably share similar conditions and challenges as Kristiansand" (Interview 26 February 2019). Here, Karlsen talks about comparability among city members in a network. She expresses interest in "inter-city comparability" (Webster and Sanderson, 2012, as cited in Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2016, p. 4). Through the interview, it became clear that it was important to Karlsen to have an understanding of her own, and her peers' "standing in a community of practice" (Webster and Sanderson, 2012, as cited Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2016, p. 4). Moreover, the issue of comparability raises the question of whether network participation can be useful if no other member city shares the same characteristics and capabilities as Kristiansand. Another informant also talks about content of strategic participation in city diplomacy,

we must have content, because simply signing an agreement with no substance has no purpose. But we work a lot internationally and must of course always ask ourselves, is this relevant? (Interview 5 April 2019)

From the interview, I learned that International collaboration is another criterion for strategic city diplomacy. One interviewee uses the connection between international collaboration and local political context in her justification for network participation:

collaboration can improve effects and contribute *knowledge* valuable to *local* implementation. For example, if one network has a *concrete project* that is highly relevant to the local *political context*, it is very *useful* to have several people working on the same *issue* rather than investigating separately. (Interview 26 February 2019)

The informant has a clear idea that more people working together on one project is better than working to solve an issue independently. Furthermore, she talks about characteristics that make participation in networks useful, such as having a concrete project and a relevant topic. These characteristics relate to the above-mentioned criteria of *content*. Moreover, the informant (and other interviewees) emphasize that *collaboration* through a cross-border city network yields more *competence* on a particular issue and also enable Kristiansand to work closely with different communities and actors in their own city. One interviewee talked about how the network she participated in helped facilitate local collaboration where private and public actors came together to implement the project (Interview 26 February 2019). These observations lend support to the argument that city networks help empower actors above and below state level and the idea that networks facilitate public and private actors joining together with the aim to solve problems of collective action (Bouteligier, 2013a; Curtis, 2016a; Gordon and Johnson, 2018). Furthermore, I learned from several informants that network collaboration contributes to strengthen the social *cohesion* in Kristiansand through activities.

Benefits, thematic content and context matter but cross-border city networks also provide *networking* spaces and international platforms for Kristiansand, according to informants. The informants all mention *networking* as an important benefit of participation and they argue that comes networking takes place in specific spaces, such as meetings, conferences and outside

the event venue. Karlsen, Nilsen and Andersen all emphasize how the small conversations occurring between seminars or during meals are valuable as participants get opportunities to engage with one another and *probe* certain topics to learn more. Nilsen and Pettersen both talk about how the network *connections* made during these seminars can open doors to *opportunities* for Kristiansand in the future. They argue that Kristiansand can ask for *input* from a city representative that excels within a particular issue or obtain access to strategic business- and trade relations in the future. Adding to this idea, Andersen describes the most important conversations as "those that take place outside the conference hall, for example during smaller parallel sessions or workshops where participants gather around tables to discuss best-practices and exchange experience" (Interview 26 February 2019). In terms of international platforms, one informant says that they always try to present at conferences with cross-border networks because this keeps them engaged. According to the informant, an appearance on stage makes it easier to connect with people afterwards (Interview 5 April 2019). This could mean that an appearance on stage to speak or hold a presentation may be an important method for Kristiansand to represent itself and their interests in international forums.

In an email from Kristiansand municipality, their membership in the cross-border city network ICLEI was referred to as "asleep" (Email correspondence 1 February 2019). I asked some of the interviewees what this means, and one interviewee understands that the network was very active in the past but is unsure about Kristiansand's membership now (Interview 26 February 2019). Another interviewee answers that it was probably more important "in its time". They continue with, "if they say that, then they believe that. It probably means that it has played its role, but it was important when the climate and environment was put on the agenda"[8] (Interview 26 February 2019). This view of one of the networks Kristiansand participates in further speaks to the issue of a network's timespan, but from the perspective of the participating city.

Moreover, justifications that the interviewees provide both resonate and stand in contrast to what Bulkeley and Betsill (2003) found in their case study on Newcastle in England. They found that Newcastle's involvement in transnational networks gave access to experience and ideas from the continent, however, the city of Newcastle was unable to translate the best-

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[8] I use the term they in order to not identify the individual who sent the email.

practices they learned into their own context due to the differences between the United Kingdom and other countries in Europe (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003, pp. 72-73). There were differences concerning power of local authority and resources. Therefore, the best-practices Newcastle learned were of little practical use (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003, p. 73). Thus, Bulkeley and Betsill (2003) argue that "the process of information sharing functioned rather as a means through which individual officers could gain support and inspiration, in turn keeping the issue of energy on the agenda" (p. 73). Furthermore, Bulkeley and Betsill (2003) discovered that Newcastle's involvement in one transnational network was opportunistic, meaning that the program "failed to become institutionalized within administrative structures of Newcastle City Council" and therefore contact and connections relied on a few main participants and the program became vulnerable to changes in priorities and personnel (p. 73). Thus, by the end of the 1990s, this program was considered less relevant and ended up having little influence on policy or practice in Newcastle. This example from Bulkeley and Betsill's (2003) study shares similarities with the ideas that interviewees express about Kristiansand's membership in ICLEI. This raises the question of how much continued network involvement hinges not only relevance but also initiative by active participants who represent the city.

To summarize, the interviewees justify participation in cross-border city networks through a cost-benefit rationale. This means that Kristiansand's participants in networks assess the benefits they gain from the networks based on different criteria as well as cost. The incentives described by the interviewees also seem to follow the goals and actions outlined in Kristiansand's strategies towards 2023 and 2030. Thus, Kristiansand participates in cross-border city networks because these networks provide strategic *spaces* for multi-sided city diplomacy. This means that networks provide and facilitate spaces for cities to meet, speak on an international platform, strengthen international *collaboration* and facilitate the exchange of *knowledge* and *experience* among cities.

4.2.3. Cross-border city networks as status-seeking?

In the interviews, the interviewees describe their experiences with participating in cross-border city networks. Their motives and rationale for network participation can be interpreted in light of status literature in International Relations. The notion of status and its relevance to network participation was not addressed in the literature review because I first discovered this connection when I combed through the transcribed interviews. The reflections provided by

informants suggest a connection between participating in cross-border city networks and status seeking. Furthermore, cities using cross-border city networks as a status seeking strategy has not been addressed in academic discussion. Thus, in order to discuss the connection between status and participation in cross-border city networks, I give a short review of the concepts status and status seeking in International Relations literature.

More broadly, Renshon (2017, p. 33) defines status as "a state's standing, or rank, in a status community" (as cited in Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira and Neumann, 2017, p. 2). Renshon (2017) further relates status to "collective beliefs" about the ranking of a state based on "valued attributes" (as cited in, Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017, p. 2). The community that perceives the given status of an actor can consist of peers or non-peers (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017). Following Renshon's (2017) definition, status is social, perceptual and positional. Status concerns social relations and the status literature focuses on the social relations between states. Thus, from the view of this literature, status is perceptual because it is based on how a state sees itself and how it is seen by other states (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017). So, status depends on the perception of the actor and other actors. Lastly, status is positional. This means that status becomes meaningful to actors when it is compared to other actors. Furthermore, this indicates that status is "the condition of filling a place in a social hierarchy" (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017, p. 3). In terms of small states, de Carvalho and Neumann (2014, p. 2) argue that "small-power status is about being noticed or seen". Small states want to be "noticed by greater powers by taking (an admittedly small part of) responsibility matters of international peace and security" (de Carvalho and Neumann, 2014, p. 2). Furthermore, status-seeking means "acts undertaken to maintain or better one's placement" (de Carvalho and Neumann, 2014, p. 5). Thus, status seeking involves competing against other actors for recognition and status. Therefore, status "is the result of an intersubjective process and status seeking is a core state activity" (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017, p. 3). Thus, in international relations literature, status seeking is understood as a social activity and competition among states. Furthermore, status is created, reproduced and given by the actor and 'the community' of actors. I will argue that status seeking is relevant to cities as well, and not a strategy reserved for states. This connection was made through the relational approach, where I focus on the social relations actors engage in through cross-border city networks.

The reflections of interviewees suggest that participation in cross-border city networks is a form of status-seeking through city diplomacy. From the interviews, I learned that increasing Kristiansand's international visibility and improving the city's reputation are important considerations in cost-benefit rationales for participation in cross-border city networks. One interviewee says that "in order to become more *visible* internationally, cities and subnational governments may create *international goals and strategies*, and membership in cross-border city networks may be a *strategy* to reach that goal" (Interview 26 February). The informant talks about how Kristiansand can use networks as a tool to become more visible internationally. Furthermore, the informant seems to have a clear idea that international visibility is important to Kristiansand in order to achieve its goals. The statement the interviewee provides about international visibility can be interpreted in light of de Carvalho and Neumann (2014)'s that "status is about being noticed or seen" (p. 2) for small powers. As Kristiansand is a small city, it seems that being noticed internationally is important to attract international businesses, increase exports, expand the labor force, cultural influences and so on.

Karlsen talks about international visibility and refers to the strategy documents for new Kristiansand. They claim that, "we do in fact have a wish to promote our self [Kristiansand] nationally and internationally which is embedded in our overarching plans and in, not least in the Department for Urban Planning and Development. So, there is a wish to profile too, or to be present on an international stage" (Interview 26 February 2019). Here, the informant seems to emphasize the importance of international profiling, to become more visible and acknowledged in international settings. The statement by the interviewee speaks to status as being perceptual. In order to acquire the profile as an international city that the interviewee talks about, Kristiansand must be seen on an international stage and become perceived by their peers as an international city. Furthermore, the interviewee later adds that profiling Kristiansand internationally is important to city development. Then the informant goes on to discuss the duality in Kristiansand's status as a city. According to the informant, there have been discussions within the municipality regarding the question of Kristiansand being a small city or a large 'small town'. The interviewee explains that these discussions stems from ideas of Kristiansand as the capital of southern Norway. But at the same time, Kristiansand cannot be compared to Oslo the capital of Norway. Furthermore, the interviewee explains that Kristiansand often gets included in city reports while other times it does not qualify. The interviewee feels that Kristiansand has some challenges and ambitions on par with cities. But

at the same time, Kristiansand may not fit the size or populations requirements to qualify as a city. This further builds on the notion of status as perceptual because it is based on how a subject sees itself and how it is seen by other states (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017). Thus, in order to gain an international profile, Kristiansand's representatives and citizenry need to perceive Kristiansand as having the quality of international and other cities need to share that perception.

> About profiling, I believe it is important for city development and to explore what we can do to improve as a city, municipality and city-municipality. So, it's a form of *ambition* to *profile* Kristiansand but also a way to do municipal work. (Interview 26 February 2019)

In this excerpt from the same interview, the informant talks about inspiration for municipal work and improving Kristiansand on different local governance levels. This is discussed in reference to the international profile the city aims to have. In contrast, Andersen seems to perceive Kristiansand as already international and claims that "Kristiansand is *part of the world* and the whole world is in Kristiansand" (Interview 26 February 2019). By this, Andersen seems to international city. Pettersen shares the same view and claims that Kristiansand *is* an international city. According to both of them, "Kristiansand is home to people with over 150 different nationalities" (Interviews, 26 February 2019; 5 April 2019). Both informants talk about how Kristiansand's international population speaks to its international character. Furthermore, Pettersen talks about why Kristiansand municipality settles twice as many immigrants as the national average. He says that "Kristiansand seeks to be an open, inclusive and *international* city" (Interview 5 April 2019). Their views demonstrate the importance of perception in relation to status seeking. One interviewee refers to the international character of Kristiansand in saying that "most of the businesses in Kristiansand are internationally owned and that fostering *competition* in the city is vital to securing a prosperous future" (Interview 26 February 2019). Thus, from a business perspective, Kristiansand can be perceived as an international city because of its international business sector. As previously discussed in the motives for network participation, I learned that one of Kristiansand's motives is to attract more people to join the workforce and more investments from international businesses in order to foster economic growth.

The four interviewees seem to have different ideas about Kristiansand's current status. Two informants perceive Kristiansand as international and two informants perceive Kristiansand as aspiring to be international. However, the municipal documents detailing actions, strategies and goals published by Kristiansand in recent years emphasize international visibility and competition. Thus, Kristiansand seeks to be perceived as international. Yet, based on what I learned from interviews; Kristiansand's representatives seem to have internal disagreements on perceptions of Kristiansand as having an international profile. Thus, Kristiansand may use cross-border city networks as a strategy to "maintain or better their placement" (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014, p. 5).

In an article about the Kristiansand Business Region posted on the municipal website, it is stated that,

> The Kristiansand Business Region believes that the city's *international involvement* will contribute to increase *value-creation* and *expertise*, inspire the city and help create a good *reputation* for the Kristiansand region. (Karlson, 2015)

This quote from the article refers to Kristiansand's activities in city diplomacy. As the name indicates, the main concern of the Kristiansand Business Region is to secure economic growth through international involvement. However, the article also makes reference to the reputation of the Kristiansand region. These ideas are also mentioned in the "Strategic business plan for the Kristiansand Region" (2015, p. 12) and the "Action Program: Kristiansand 2019-2022" (Councilor of Kristiansand municipality, 2019). The documents seem to agree that Kristiansand needs international involvement in order to secure a good reputation. This may speak to the notion that Kristiansand competes against other cities for a higher standing among peers as status in international politics refers to a rank or standing in a status community (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira, & Neumann, 2017, p. 2).

The contestations among interviewees regarding the current profile of Kristiansand being described as international, together with the statement from the Kristiansand Business Region, and the municipal strategies and action plans illustrate how Kristiansand aims to become acknowledged internationally and to have an international profile and reputation. These ideas can be tied to the concepts of reputation and status. De Carvalho and Neumann

(2014) argue that these terms are important to separate analytically. They argue that "reputation is tied to identity, to how the self is seen by others – one has a reputation for something in the eyes of someone else" (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014, p. 4). In the excerpts from all interviewees, as provided above, the interviewees all talk about international visibility, Kristiansand already being 'international' and the goal to acquire an international profile. Furthermore, this falls in line with Kristiansand's municipal plans and strategies. It seems that the interviewees share a clear idea about Kristiansand's wish to be perceived by other actors and cities as 'international', 'leading' and 'good'. Moreover, de Carvalho and Neumann (2014, p. 4) argue that "the concept of status is used to refer to actor identities that emerge from such processes, and to the positioning of actors in hierarchies". Thus, it may seem that Kristiansand seeks a particular status and use cross-border city networks as an instrument to obtain this. Another thing to note is that city networks as actors also seek to increase their international agency and influence (Bouteligier, 2013a). This could indicate that status-seeking activities are not only tied to cities that seek status through networks, but that also networks seek status and higher standing as actors in global governance.

Another example that may demonstrate Kristiansand's status-seeking through cross-border city networks is the concept of 'norm-entrepreneur'. In extending the study of norms in international relations, Ingebritsen (2002) examines how the Scandinavian states have emerged as 'norm-entrepreneurs'. In her analysis, Ingebritsen argues that Scandinavian states seek 'social power' through being norm entrepreneurs in international politics (2002, pp. 12-13). She writes that Scandinavian states assumed this role because of their "remote geographic position, limited material capabilities, and unique domestic institutions" (Ingebritsen, 2002, p. 13). Thus, due to these conditions Scandinavia has as a group of small states, they seek power in other ways than great powers in international politics. Furthermore, she argues that,

> With the consistent efforts of Scandinavia to promote its views and strengthen particular international norms, states of the sub-region have earned a global reputation as trustworthy and effective negotiating partners. This reputation is consciously cultivated and deepened as a cornerstone of Scandinavian diplomatic relations. (Ingebritsen, 2002, p. 13)

Ingebritsen's argumentation falls in a similar vein with what de Carvalho and Neumann (2014) argue in regard to Norwegian strategies of status-seeking. I argue that the idea of states being status-seeking or norm-entrepreneurs can be applied to cities as well.

Curtis (2016b) argues that, "cities are beginning to act as important 'norm-entrepreneurs' in setting global agendas" (p. 466). He claims that although cities generate many political problems, such as high rates of greenhouse gas emissions, cities demonstrated that they can be a great resource in finding solutions to these kinds of problems (Curtis, 2016b, p. 466). An example of city resourcefulness from this case study is the shore-power initiative by one of Kristiansand's cross-border networks which one of the interviewees discusses. The informant says that,

> in terms of shore-power and cruise ships, we are *the first* in Norway, and it's guaranteed that in 10-15 years it will be completely unthinkable that these ships in European ports will pollute living spaces. In this area, we have been *first* and *set the standard* for the rest of Europe. We use this network to make other cities commit to the same initiative. (Interview, 5 April 2019)

In this excerpt, the interviewee highlights the entrepreneurship of Kristiansand city. The interviewee emphasizes how Kristiansand has been the first Norwegian city to implement an ambitious project. They seem to argue that Kristiansand takes responsibility in matters of international environmental efforts. Furthermore, the informant highlights how they strategically use their involvement in a cross-border city network to influence other cities. During this discussion, the interviewee is very excited about Kristiansand's potential to influence other cities. Furthermore, their statement may speak to Kristiansand's competition for recognition and status in a peer-group. Simultaneously, the interviewee has a clear idea that this is "the right thing to do" and that Kristiansand goes in front to spread a particular norm of non-pollution in urban spaces. Perhaps in this regard, Kristiansand could be interpreted as a norm-entrepreneur?

On a very different arena, another informant talks about how Kristiansand may become an important city for art and culture once the new art museum opens in the city. They claim that,

we will soon have a few very important cultural institutions in the Norwegian and Nordic context, which may leave an *international footprint*. But I especially believe in *competency* and it is said that the oil related industry in Kristiansand is 'world class'. We are best in the world at offshore drilling systems, which we have to continue. We deliver very pure metals from Elkem Solar. So, we are in many ways, not a *trendsetter* in the world, but we are an important *actor* from a *global perspective.* We have *innovative* student environments and *entrepreneurial* environments that will be part of future change. So, we have many conditions for success with our *international strategy*. (Interview 26 February 2019)

This excerpt is a response to a leading question, namely "how can Kristiansand city be described as a norm-entrepreneur or a trendsetting city?" (Question 10, Appendix 1). Because this is a leading question, the idea of Kristiansand being a 'norm-entrepreneur' cannot be verified based on the four interviews. This is a problem caused by the limited experience and knowledge of the researcher. However, it is interesting that the interviewee refers to the international strategy and the goal stated in the strategy for Kristiansand to become an international leader in particular areas. In this excerpt, the informant brings up the arena of arts and culture and seems to envision Kristiansand as becoming internationally leading in the context of the Nordic Region. Despite the nature of the question, the informant does seem to have a clear idea that Kristiansand is relevant in an international context and on several arenas. The examples of shore-power, clean metals, arts and culture, entrepreneurship and technology brought up by the two informants may suggest that there are several avenues in which Kristiansand can become an international leader.

These discussion so far raises another question, can the suggestion of Kristiansand using cross-border city networks as a strategy for status seeking be refuted by the strategy of city- or place branding? Can these observations be reduced to an attempt by Kristiansand to brand itself as 'international' rather than Kristiansand seeking status? Gustavsson and Elander (2012) claim that "city branding, or city marketing, focuses mostly on 'the city as a place for profitable business' and 'the city as a good place to live in'" (as cited in Busch & Anderberg, 2015, p. 2). The notions of Kristiansand as an attractive city for international business and a good place to live for a culturally diverse population have been raised by all informants

throughout the interviews, which may lend support to the idea of city branding. But, can this render the suggestion that Kristiansand uses strategic networked city diplomacy in order to seek status irrelevant?

In their study on green city branding and cross-border city networks, Busch and Anderberg (2015), found that the literature on place branding views green policies as "a) being implemented to increase a city's attractiveness and are b) then communicated through an intentional branding strategy" (p. 11). But the findings of their research end up questioning the perceived motive behind green policies. They found that the communication of green city policies may not be green city branding, but rather "the communication of a coherent climate strategy" (Busch & Anderberg, 2015, p. 12). Their data might imply that "most of the communication is directed either at peers in the administration of other cities (external) or the respective city's inhabitants (internal)" (Busch & Anderberg, 2015, p. 12). This may speak to the competition for recognition and status amongst a group of peers, as well as the perception of self and others. In the study by Busch and Anderberg (2015), the goal of communicating the climate strategy may be interpreted as a method to shape the perceptions of the self (i.e. the city, its representatives and citizenry) and the perceptions of other cities (i.e. peer group).

Moreover, Busch and Anderberg (2015) expected that cross-border city network participation would be related to the "development and communication of city brands" (p. 7), however, none of their informants mentioned branding strategies in their interviews about network involvement. Rather, during their research, they "did not encounter a single case where green policies were motivated by entrepreneurial arguments" (p. 13). Their study found that there were many other motivations behind communicating green policies, and they further add that, "what could be interpreted as green city branding is, in almost all cases, directed at the local population" – not internationally in the context of cross-border city networks (Busch & Anderberg, 2015, p. 13). This example of a study on the nexus between city branding and cross-border city networks may serve to place the motive of city branding into question. Furthermore, Acuto and Rayner (2016) assert that "the vast landscape of city networking is far deeper and more significant than simple branding" (p. 1162). In the list of policy implications for city diplomacy through cross-border city networks, Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros propose that,

> Networks are communities, not just branding opportunities: cities' incentives to the involvement in institutionalized networking remain closely connected to investment/market opportunities and legitimacy-building, but it is the role of networks as 'communities of practice' that cities regularly reiterate as key to success. (Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros, 2016, p. 1)

Here, Acuto, Morissette and Tsouros (2016) speak to the relational aspect of city diplomacy through networks. Furthermore, the interviewees highlight the benefits of participating in cross-border city networks with reference to obtaining knowledge and learning about their own position in a community of practice. Especially when Karlsen infers the importance of comparability in networks, namely that it is important to share common characteristics, opportunities and challenges with other cities in the network. Thus, I argue that the notion of Kristiansand using cross-border city networks as a strategy for status seeking should not be dismissed.

Thus, this section has presented findings suggesting that Kristiansand's participation in cross-border city networks is a strategy for status seeking. Networked city diplomacy provides international arenas from which Kristiansand's representatives can draw attention to their city, become more visible internationally, maintain or better their international reputation and increase their city status. The suggestive findings can be augmented by further research on status as a motive for networked city diplomacy.

5. Conclusion

By analyzing the case of Kristiansand city's involvement in cross-border city networks from the perspective of its participants, this thesis has sought to offer an understanding of the changing role of cities in global governance. The thesis is carried by three main sources: the literature on cities in International Relations which provides a framework for the case study, interviews with participants in cross-border city networks from Kristiansand and documents published by Kristiansand which I used to develop the interview guide and to inform the analysis.

The literature review sought to provide a glimpse into the breadth of existing theories and studies on city networks and show what has informed this case study. In order to answer the research question and put findings into context, I built a relational approach based on concepts from the literature on 'global cities' and how they came to be important global actors (Curtis, 2016a; Castells, 2010; Sassen, 1991; 2001). The chapter argued that global challenges require cities to navigate a complex multi-actor political environment in order to achieve their development goals. Another aspect of the relational approach was the creation of cross-border city networks as a term to encompass different types of city networks, their logics, functions and limitations. Furthermore, the review showed that local level participants in cross-border city networks (aside from TMNs) receive little academic interest. Therefore, I argued that previous theorizations on cross-border city networks and their effects focus largely on global cities and the actors who participate on behalf of cities receive little attention - with the exception of mayors (Acuto, 2013a; Barber, 2014, as cited in Curtis, 2016a; Bulkeley & Betsill, 2003; Curtis, 2016b). Therefore, this thesis has aimed to inform academic discussions on city networks by contributing a pilot study of an ordinary- and globalizing city and its motives for participating in cross-border city networks.

The case study sought to answer the research question of how participants explain and justify their involvement in cross-border city networks and focused on the city of Kristiansand. The case study demonstrated that Kristiansand can be characterized as an ordinary- and globalizing city due to its small size and global challenges. Then, the case study showed the complexity of Kristiansand's city diplomacy and the various forms these relationships take. Through the case study, I found that Kristiansand's networked city diplomacy has changed over time.

The thesis has argued that Kristiansand may serve as an example of a shift in the practices of city diplomacy. From the interviews, I learned that Kristiansand city moves away from traditional forms of city diplomacy that emphasize conflict prevention, social cohesion and promoting peace. The interviewees with political backgrounds seemed to have clear ideas about the role traditional city diplomacy has to Kristiansand, even though they did not use the term city diplomacy. The interviewees discussed town-twinning, cooperation for development, peacebuilding and cohesion, which can be characterized as forms of city diplomacy. From their perspective, these two-sided city diplomacy relations may have been beneficial in the past, but some of them seem outdated today. In particular, the interviewees referred to the twin-town of Letchworth and the Nordic friendship cities. I learned from the interviewees that Kristiansand seeks more strategic city diplomacy for new Kristiansand. Thus, the thesis has argued that the motives for Kristiansand's city diplomacy changed from traditional city diplomacy to strategic city diplomacy, which are rooted in a cost-benefit rationale.

During discussions with interviewees, I observed that they were passionate and knowledgeable about their (and Kristiansand's) involvement in cross-border city networks. They seemed to feel ownership to the role Kristiansand plays in these urban networks and that they see the networks as useful to the interests of their citizenry and the city. According to the interviewees, their participation in cross-border city networks gave Kristiansand access to knowledge communities to learn best-practices, stay up to date and become inspired in work to develop new Kristiansand. The benefits interviewees brought up seemed to outweigh the costs of participation, which were framed in terms of time, resources, monetary costs and personnel.

Over the course of working with the thesis, I discovered that the reflections by informants can be interpreted in light of status literature in International Relations. This has not received attention in academic discussions. The data collected through interviews suggested a connection between participation in cross-border city networks and status seeking. In discussing the findings, I therefore argued that the way interviewees described practices and motives for city diplomacy through cross-border city networks can be understood as a strategy for status seeking. The interviewees described network participation as important to maintain and build Kristiansand's international profile, to become more visible in international arenas, to attract international investment to Kristiansand, to inspire other cities,

and spread norms and values. These reflections led me to suggest status as another motive for strategic city diplomacy. The status literature in International Relations largely concerns itself with great powers competing for status, while small states get less attention (de Carvalho & Neumann, 2014). Arguably, this also applies to cities, as status literature focuses on states as the main actors. I have argued that ordinary- and globalizing cities also seek status as they have to compete internationally for resources, attract businesses and secure economic growth. Arguably, the international competition among cities stems from the broader trends of globalization, a globalized world economy, the rapid development of informational technologies, increasing rates of urbanization and global challenges in matters of peace and security, such as climate change, environmental degradation, international terrorism.

Thus, through the case study, I learned that the ordinary- and globalizing city of Kristiansand seeks membership and participation in cross-border city networks for different reasons. Cross-border city networks provide international spaces for Kristiansand to conduct multi-sided city diplomacy where they pursue own interests, promote norms and values, acquire issue-specific knowledge, learn best-practices and the chance to improve own status.

The access to resources and my lack of experience as a researcher limited the work of this thesis. As the thesis focused on only a few expert actors in Kristiansand, future research could benefit from adding the perspectives of other actors involved in Kristiansand's city diplomacy, such as stakeholders, representatives from International Organizations, non-profits, or other non-state actors. The perspectives of other actors can give more depth and understanding of the impacts of participation in cross-border city networks for ordinary- and globalizing cities. Another way to augment a case study on Kristiansand's networked city diplomacy is through interviewing and learning from more individuals in the Kristiansand context, such as municipal officials within different agencies and politicians from different political parties to perhaps find more agreements or contestations within municipal agencies or political parties. Future research may want to follow up findings from this study in subsequent interviews with new informants that represent the city in networked city diplomacy. Moreover, this thesis may also inspire future comparative studies on this topic.

Moving forward, there are policy implications for participation in cross-border city networks. Due to the limits and scope of this thesis, I will mention a few I found through the case study. First, this case study has demonstrated that contemporary city diplomacy is vast and complex.

This calls for more clear structures of city diplomacy and perhaps roadmaps to aid cities. Thus, there is a need for more systematic studies of impacts from participation in cross-border city networks. Second, a major challenge for cities at the local level is that participation in many cross-border city networks places management burdens on local city officers, administration and policians. This was brought up by one of the interviewees, who explained that the management structure and budget of a network project was too constrictive and placed a major workload on the interviewee. Thus, participating in a lot of networks can lead to "just as many needs for communication, reporting, collaborating and engaging on already stretched local administrations" (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2016, p. 5).

Third, the increasing amount of cross-border city networks make it difficult for cities to select and prioritize engagements and opportunities with networks. This means that forms of networked city diplomacy that a city has engaged in can be perceived as opportunistic rather than strategic. Thus, there is a need for "more strategic and less opportunistic networking" (Acuto, Morissette, & Tsouros, 2016, p. 1). This issue will be addressed by the municipality of new Kristiansand, where discussions are underway regarding what forms of and which engagements in traditional and networked city diplomacy will be prioritized or discontinued going forward..

As a final remark, the networked social relations of cities are complex and provide multiple entry points for studying the role of cities in global governance processes. This pilot study of Kristiansand city's networked city diplomacy provides a starting point for further research on the impacts of cross-border city networks for ordinary- and globalizing cities in the field of International Relations.

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Appendix 1: Intervju guide

Tusen takk for at du setter av din tid og ønsker å stille til intervju! Jeg heter Linn Chloe Hagstrøm, er masterstudent og studerer internasjonale relasjoner ved NMBU. Jeg skriver masteroppgave om by-nettverk og lurer på hvorfor byer velger å delta i slike nettverk. Jeg har observert at Kristiansand deltar i flere internasjonale by-nettverk. Det satte i gang en rekke spørsmål hos meg. For eksempel, hva er motivasjonen til å delta? Hva gjør dere i slike by-nettverk? Hvilken betydning har det for byen og for de som bor her? Intervjuet vil derfor handle om slike spørsmål. Du er en av flere personer med erfaring med Kristiansand kommunes forskjellige internasjonale by-nettverk og jeg er veldig takknemlig for at du tar deg tid til intervjuet. Jeg har planlagt flere spørsmål jeg ønsker å stille deg. Jeg kommer til å holde meg til stort sett til disse. Jeg har ikke gjort så mange intervjuer før og derfor vil jeg holde meg til planen, stort sett da! Har du spørsmål til meg, sier du bare i fra.

Bakgrunn om Kristiansands internasjonale by-nettverk:
1. Jeg har satt meg inn i noen internasjonale by-nettverk Kristiansand er i: jeg har hørt om Gen-Y City, ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), Nordic City Network, Strong Cities Network, og UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments). Hvilke andre internasjonale by-nettverk er Kristiansand med i, eller har jeg dekket alle?
    a. I hvilket/hvilke by-nettverk representerer du Kristiansand?
    b. Hvilke funksjon(er) har du/hatt i nettverket(ene)?
    c. Hvor lenge har du hatt denne/disse rollen(e)?

Aktiviteter i det internasjonale by-nettverket:
2. Hva gjorde dere da du deltok i det internasjonale by-nettverket på vegne av Kristiansand?
    a. Hvordan gjorde dere disse aktivitetene?
    b. Hva var resultatene fra disse aktivitetene?
    c. Hvordan ble resultatene rapportert? Til hvem?
    d. Hvem hadde ansvar for å planlegge og iverksette aktiviteten?
    e. Var det enighet om hvilke aktiviteter og satsninger dere skulle ha?
3. Var det noen aktiviteter du oppfattet som mer nyttig for Kristiansand enn andre? Hvorfor?

Motivasjon for å delta i internasjonale by-nettverk:
4. Hvorfor var du motivert til å delta i internasjonale by-nettverk?
5. Hvorfor er Kristiansand med i internasjonale by-nettverk?
    a. Hva var utfordringene, slik du erfarte det?
    b. Hvordan gjorde dere rede for hva det internasjonale by-nettverket ga Kristiansand i form av fordeler?
6. Hvilke lokale aktører ble inkludert i prosjekter eller aktiviteter med det internasjonale by-nettverket?
7. Hvilke internasjonale by-nettverk har vært velfungerende og hvorfor?
    a. Hvilke internasjonale by-nettverk har fungert i mindre grad?

b. Hva var forskjellen mellom by-nettverk som fungerte bra og by-nettverk som ikke fungerte så bra?

c. Knut Felberg, Enhetsleder By- og samfunn, omtalte medlemskapet i ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) nettverket som "svært sovende" i en email, hva betyr dette?

8. Jeg får inntrykk av at Gen Y City prosjektet ble spilt opp både på sosiale medier og i lokalavisen. Hva er historien rundt dette prosjektet?

a. Hvorfor ble Kristiansand med i nettopp dette prosjektet?

b. Hva har deltagelsen i Gen Y City prosjektet hatt å si for Kristiansand by?

Nye Kristiansands strategi:

9. Nå nærmer vi oss slutten og i denne siste delen vil jeg gjerne snakke om Kristiansand mot 2030. Kristiansand ønsker å være internasjonalt ledende, og internasjonalt samarbeid og storbynettverk nevnes som strategier for å nå dette målet.

a. Hvorfor vil Kristiansand være internasjonalt ledende? Hva betyr det?

   i. Hva skal Kristiansand gjøre for å være en ledende internasjonal aktør?
      1. Hvordan skal dere måle dette?
      2. Hvorfor er dette viktig for Kristiansand?

b. Hva er ditt syn på denne strategien basert på dine erfaringer med internasjonale by-nettverk?

c. Hvordan reflekterer strategien byens erfaringer med internasjonale by-nettverk?

d. Hva har blitt gjort gjennom internasjonale by-nettverk for å nå dette målet tidligere?

   i. Hva skal byen gjøre annerledes for å få til denne strategien?

10. Hvordan kan Kristiansand by beskrives som en norm-entreprenør eller en trendsettende by?

By-nettverk og borgere:

11. Var din deltakelse i disse internasjonale by-nettverkene gjenstand for diskusjon blant folkevalgte eller i folkevalgte organer i Kristiansand? Hva gikk diskusjonen ut på?

12. Du var med i internasjonale by-nettverk, hvordan ble dette kommunisert til borgerne? Var dette noe du kommuniserte utad?

a. Fikk dere tilbakemeldinger på dette fra borgere i Kristiansand?

13. Hvordan er borgerne involvert i Kristiansands internasjonale by-nettverk? Hva betyr deltagelsen for dem?

Avsluttende spørsmål:

14. Etter denne erfaringen, hva tenker du om å representere Kristiansand i et annet eller nytt by-nettverk?

a. Hvilke satsningsområder ville du prioritert?

15. Hvorfor er Kristiansand interessert i nettopp min masteroppgave om by-nettverk? Har du noen tanker om det?

16. Hvis de ikke har kommet fram i intervjuet: Hvilken stilling har du i Kristiansand kommune og hvor lenge har du jobbet i kommunen?
17. Har du spørsmål til meg?

Appendix 2: Descriptions of Kristiansand's cross-border city networks

Founded in 1990 under the name of International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives; the cross-border city network Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) was one of the earliest city-oriented initiatives towards climate issues and dominated activities together with the Climate Alliance and Energie-cities (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004; Bulkeley, 2013; Kern and Bulkeley, 2009, as cited in Betsill & Bulkeley, 2013, p. 139; Fünfgeld, 2015). Kristiansand municipality became a member of ICLEI in February 1995 and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) joined the ICLEI as early as 1991 (ICLEI, 2019). This global network now has "more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development" (ICLEI, 2019).

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a multi-issue cross-border city network, which works with international advocacy for recognition of local governments while also promoting cooperation and exchange among municipalities on both the regional and international levels (Fünfgeld, 2015, p. 68). This network connects both cities and associations of cities (like ICLEI) and KS is also a member of this network together with Kristiansand municipality.

The Strong Cities Network (SCN) was launched at the United Nations in 2015 and focuses on the issues of counter-extremism and anti-radicalization (Strong Cities, 2019). Kristiansand city was invited to participate at the founding of this global network in New York as Kristiansand municipality has long-standing experience with successful precautionary measures and counter-extremism (Rustad & Lund, 2016). This network claims to be the "first ever global network of mayors, municipal-level policy makers and practitioners united in building social cohesion and community resilience to counter violent extremism in all its forms" (Strong Cities, 2019). The network is run by a UK registered charity called the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and also works as a think-tank.

Founded in 1991, after the breakdown of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) consists of member cities, municipalities and observer cities (Niederhafner, 2013, p. 386). As of 2019, the network comprised of over 100 members from all countries in the Baltic Sea region (Union of the Baltic cities, 2019). The UBC commits to sustainable urban development and promotes a dynamic, prosperous, stable and democratic Baltic Sea Region (Niederhafner, 2013, p. 387). Furthermore, the UBC pursues policies

meant to provide high quality of life for members and supports a "sustainable economic, political, social, environmental and cultural development process" (Niederhafner, 2013, p. 387). Kristiansand city became a member of this network in 1991 and was elected into the Executive Board in 2019.

The network European Cities Against Drugs (ECAD) is made up of European cities and municipalities. This cross-border city network is based on the UN Conventions against drugs and works with prevention of drug use, harm reduction and facilitates recovery. ECAD offers member cities knowledge and tools to improve their actions and policies (ECAD, 2013).

Nordic Safe Cities as a network works 'to ensure safe, trustful, tolerant and resilient cities while preventing radicalization and violent extremism' (Nordic Safe Cities, 2019). The network started up in 2016 with funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers and involve more than fifty small and large cities from the Nordic Region, in addition to executives and experts working with this topic (Nordic Safe Cities, 2019).

Launched in Europe in 2008, the Covenant of mayors for climate and energy sought to 'gather local governments voluntarily committed to achieving and exceeding the EU climate and energy targets' (Covenant of mayors for climate & energy, 2019). The network initiative was funded by the European Commission, ICLEI, UCLG, Eurocities, C40 Cities, Energy Cities and UN Habitat, to name a few. Over time, the covenant grew to include more than 9,000 local and regional authorities spread across 57 countries. Furthermore, the initiative led to the establishment of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy effectively merging the EU's Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy with the Compact of Mayors, which was another initiative of cities and local governments (The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, 2019). Kristiansand joined the EU Covenant of Mayors in 2009.

The Gen-Y-City network consists of 12 member cities in Europe and was created within the URBACT program. The URBACT program works within the program for European Territorial Cooperation and promotes 'sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe'. As an instrument of the European Commission's Cohesion Policy, the program is financed by the European Regional Development Fund, EU member states, Switzerland and Norway (URBACT, 2019). The URBACT program was initiated by the

European Commission, which promotes international relations among cities connected to the European Union through funding transnational initiatives (Niederhafner, 2013, pp. 393-394). The Gen-Y-City network sought to 'develop, attract and retain young local talent, particularly, the creative talent from the Generation Y - people who were born between 1980 and 2000 - within cities of all sizes' and was carried out as a project between September 2015 and May 2018 (URBACT, 2019).

The Nordic City Network (NCN) promotes the idea that cities need to transform from industrial cities to knowledge cities. The network seeks to facilitate the development of Nordic cities into "sustainable, functional, attractive, innovative, cultural and competitive urban communities" (Nordic City Network, 2019).

The collaborative project, Nordic Smart City Network is made up of five countries, five capitals and fourteen cities (Nordic smart city network, 2019). The network aims to "explore the Nordic way to create livable and sustainable cities" (Nordic smart city network, 2019). Kristiansand currently participates in four smart city projects. In example, one project initiated by the City of Kristiansand in 2018 was a smart management system which applies heat to pedestrian streets and sidewalks in order to avoid issues that arise from winter conditions (Nordic smart city network, 2019). The system turns on and off the heat based on data input from the Norwegian weather channel, Yr.no, which can cut energy consumption up to 80 percent (Nordic smart city network, 2019).

The European Commission supports and describes the European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities (EIP-SCC) as "an initiative … that brings together cities, industry, small business (SMEs), banks, research and others" with the aim to "improve urban life through more sustainable integrated solutions and addresses city-specific challenges from different policy areas such as energy, mobility and transport, and information and communications technology" (European Commission, 2019).