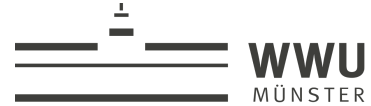


UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



Network Dynamics of Grassroot activism:
The Case of
“Cities for CEDAW” in the United States

B.Sc. Thesis

In Public Governance across Border

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(St. no.: 2610809)

Word Count: 10419

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11.07.2022

Abstract

This thesis aims at answering the question of how the network “Cities for CEDAW” developed over time. Further, it aims at elaborating on the adoption process within the examined cases, so as to see the development of the network into a collective action policy network within the cities. The adoption and policy diffusion process in the grass-root networks as well as the different elements that play a role in this process will be discussed. For that, the author chooses to conduct interviews as well as collect quantitative data from member cities. As hypothesized, the adoption of CEDAW legislature in the distinct cities/counties is influenced by similar cities/counties that locally adopted CEDAW legislature beforehand. During that process challenges, such as education on the matter of CEDAW, as well as structural challenges, such as the C4C network being informal and the participating grass-root movements being on a volunteer basis, were identified. Therefore, contributing to the movement can be a challenge in reaching the goal. Last, the thesis sees the issue of women’s rights and gender equity as pressing, as the current situation in the U.S. did not adopt the federal CEDAW legislature nor ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). Therefore, this thesis showcases how the local adoption of CEDAW can be a way to further the conversation around local gender equality.

Keywords: *Grass-root movement, policy adoption network, CEDAW, Cities for CEDAW*

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Abbreviations:

CA - California

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CSW - Commission on the Status of Women

C4C - Cities for CEDAW

ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council

ERA - Equal Rights Amendment

FL - Florida

NGO - Non- Governmental Organization

RQ - Research Question

SC - South Carolina

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

SQ - Subquestion

UNA - United Nations Association

UN - United Nations

U.S. - United States

VA - Virginia

WIN - Women's Intercultural Network

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1. Introduction

Despite decades of women's rights activism in the U.S., starting politically from the suffragettes¹ around the 1920s, women's rights in the U.S. are still under strain. Discrimination based on gender has been an issue globally for centuries. Their importance was formally addressed back in 1979 on a global level. To combat gender-based discrimination, the UN General Assembly adopted the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (CEDAW) in 1979.

CEDAW has been adopted in many countries across the globe. It has even proven to be highly important for the support of women's rights in countries that are known for vulnerable human rights situations. For example, in Rwanda or Mongolia, the convention now allowed a way to create more gender-equal laws. First of all, it is important to define what CEDAW's definition of "women" would be. The 1979 UN Convention does not specify on the definition of "women" and rather uses the binary term, as only a distinction between men and women are made (OHCHR, 1979). The San Francisco adopted ordinance (1998) does use the term gender, however, it focuses on the binary standards that are socially constructed between men and women (*CEDAW Ordinance* | *Department on the Status of Women*, n.d.). The ordinance already does address the intersectionality of this issue to an extent, by mentioning racial discrimination as an additional factor. Further, it is to say that in comparison to the UN Convention, San Francisco does include girls and women specifically and not only names women. However, the terminology changes from city to city as they adopt their own legislature.

This bachelor thesis focuses on the adoption process of CEDAW in the United States of America. Strikingly, while being signed by the U.S. and ratified in many different countries, this critical convention was never ratified nationally in the Senate; it would need two-thirds of the Senate or 67 votes. In the United States, the protection of women and women's rights is not secured, as the only other national legislature is the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) who's ratification has come to a stop (*Equal Rights Amendment* | *Definition, History, Text, Pros and Cons, & Facts*, n.d.). Ongoing abuses, discrimination, and inequality are the result. This issue is

¹ Addressing mostly white women

socially highly relevant as it was only recently brought to the surface again through, setbacks in reproductive rights², high femicide rates (1.014 cases in 2018³), or the #metoo movement.

Because the legislation on CEDAW was not ratified nationally in the US, initiatives sparked around 1998 to adopt this legislation at a local level. The City of San Francisco took the first initiative to adopt an Ordinance. Trying to make this global legislation work on the local level a movement emerged: Cities for CEDAW (C4C).

1.1. Cities for CEDAW

C4C is a women's rights network focusing on implementing CEDAW ordinances or resolutions in different cities and counties all around the United States. It encourages cities, counties, and states to join the convention and adopt policies to improve women's rights locally and eventually adopt the legislation on a national level.

Depending on state law, cities and counties can make resolutions or ordinances within their limits, as long as they do not conflict with general law (*Cities for CEDAW | UN Women USA*, n.d.). Resolutions are a softer form of law, an expression of an opinion or general intent (*Ordinances and Resolutions*, n.d.). Ordinances are committed pieces of permanent local legislation whereby a city or county can be held accountable (*Ordinances and Resolutions*, n.d.). Ordinances of CEDAW often include a financial commitment, the establishment of a council, and the city/county commitment to ongoing reports on the situation of women⁴ in their district. Some cities/counties first had a CEDAW resolution to aim toward the goal and then committed with an ordinance a couple of years after. For example, Cincinnati in Ohio first signed a resolution in 2015, and then in 2017, an ordinance further committing to CEDAW (citiesforcedaw.org).

The C4C network wants cities/counties/states to eliminate existing gender barriers and proactively work toward gender equity. In 1998 the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women began to implement the UN Convention on Eliminating all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since then, the issue has spread to other jurisdictions. By 2013, at a meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, different NGOs got together to create C4C.

² total ban of abortion in many states, including Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, Oklahoma, Montana, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia

³ with likely a higher dark number as homicide reports of indigenous women are missing in the FBI's data (Hackman, 2021)

⁴ Women meant here in the binary, although some legislation does use gender and includes nonbinary, gender non-conforming people, as well as transgender; in the case of an inclusive legislation approach, this thesis will specifically mention women, non-binary, gender-npn-conforming and transgender people

Including two vital founding members, the Women's Intercultural Network (WIN) and the Department on the Status of Women in San Francisco (DOSW). The network grew through expanding its resources and getting more and more grass-root activists in different jurisdictions involved, reaching from coast to coast. With the adoption of the CEDAW legislature, tools like gender analysis and city departments for women grew to ensure all programs contribute to gender equity (citiesforcedaw.org; unwomenusa.org). By 2014 the network was endorsed by the US Conference of Mayors (unwomenusa.org). Almost 200 civil organizations supported this effort in the United States (unausa.org).

The first City to establish CEDAW was San Francisco, CA. in 1998, while forming the Department of the Status of Women (citiesforcedaw.org). 55 cities/counties/states have either jurisdictions with a CEDAW resolution or/and a CEDAW ordinance⁵. Therefore, this network is an established wide-ranging network including different states, and sizes of cities, reaching from coast to coast (fig.1).

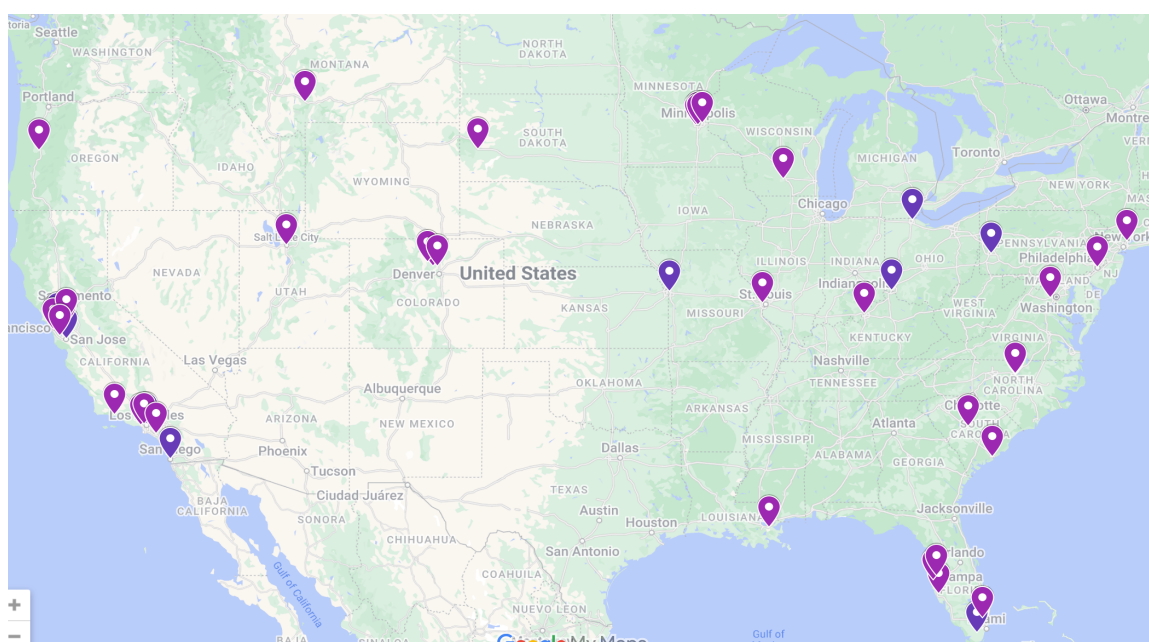


Figure 1: Cities and Counties with CEDAW legislation (missing: Honolulu, HI; California [state]; Kentucky [state])⁶

⁵ Requirements from CEDAW: CEDAW requires that gender inequality has to be actively addressed, though first an assessment of the situation, by providing reports on the status of the women and then formulating an action plan, all of those are to be enacted through a designated committee.

⁶ Dark purple pins: Ordinance; light purple pins: Resolutions

1.2. Cities for CEDAW as a network

In the following this bachelor thesis will focus on the network aspect of the informal policy network: Cities for CEDAW. First of all, it is to mention that the phenomenon of taking human rights issues from the global to the local level in the legislature, has been discussed in the literature before. It has been established that women's rights had most success in a community, when local feminist activists reached out to transnational networks (Och, 2018). It also has been said that the local actors play a crucial role hereby, as they are transforming and adapting the global norms (Acharya, 2004). As mentioned by Berry et.al. (2004) in policy networks, there have been issue networks, where a group comes together about an issue, e.g. women's rights, and brings forward a policy, through agenda setting etc.. As an issue network, the C4C network does stand with different actors in communication, like the group members, experts, and elected officials on the council (Berry, et.al., 2004). Those mostly informal networks can be demonstrated best in a case study. An important aspect of local level policy networks is, as also mentioned, knowledge orientation (Barrutia & Echebarria, 2011). C4C does offer multiple resources to accumulate and share knowledge, further the local level of a municipality offers the social capital, as "trust and relation-based relations" (Barrutia & Echebarria, 2011, 382) on the local level work well.

The network C4C does show a lack of centrality, as the network is informal and not professionalized. As shown by Yi (2017) the field of self-organized policy networks is understudied, as their challenges are different from formal networks. As mentioned by Isett et.al. (2011) informal networks are understudied. Further, the theme of feminist networks, has not been studied sufficiently in case studies, as such networks do exhibit similarities to other policy networks, such as climate activist networks, but are unique in their efforts. This thesis wants to contribute to the discussion of informal grass roots activist networks, especially surrounding the ever pressing issue of gender equality. As gender equality has had a major set back by the pandemic⁷, it becomes ever more evident to research on how to forward women's rights. Subsequently the policy adaptation of feminist legislature is a pressing issue and has to be investigated closer.

⁷ Women and girls (as well as other marginalized groups) have been disproportionately affected by the results of the pandemic (Brower, 2022; Madgavkar et al., 2022; "The Pandemic Drove Women out of the Workforce. Will They Come Back?," 2021; U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, 2022)

In the thesis, the C4C network will be discussed with the help of the following research question (RQ):

How did the network “Cities for CEDAW” develop, and how can we explain its development to a collective action policy network within the cities?

This question will be explained with the help of the following sub-questions. These will be elaborated on by looking at a specific jurisdiction/case and through a mixed methods approach.

- SQ 1: What was the development of the C4C network over time?
- SQ 2: To what extent does the timing of adoption correlate with the characteristics of the cities/counties? Does one geographical region influence the time of adoption structure in particular?
- SQ 3: Are there differences/ similarities in these decision-making processes between the cities (comparative case analysis)?
- SQ 4: How can we explain the decision to join the network (adopt its policies) within⁸ the different cities (case dynamics) from the activist effort?
- SQ 5: What are the challenges in the process of reaching their goal, and does the network help to overcome them?

This thesis investigates how grass-root activist networks can lead to policy implementation across the United States. For this, there will be an analysis of existing literature and theories of policy networks. Then the thesis will examine the cities/counties/states and their legislature closely to understand the matter further. Lastly, there will be a study of expert interviews to lead to the answer to the research question.

2. Theoretical Framework

To further understand this issue, there will be a closer look at the existing literature under the aspect of elaborating on the relevant theories to answer the RQ. First, there will be an overview of relevant definitions, followed by specific policy network and adoption policy theory, while considering the gender and global component of this issue.

⁸ [an early-adopting city and a late adopting]

2.1. Theories of informal adoption networks

First, it is important to clarify the term networks. The most used definition of networks seems to be in the frame of conceptualization and can be described as a structure of linkages and information sharing between actors (Börzel, 1998; Isett et.al., 2011; Kapucu et.al., 2017; O'Toole, 1997). Further, this thesis will differentiate between formal and *informal policy networks*. The network C4C can be described as an informal network, as it exhibits informal relations with actors and activism, however, it also appears to have forms of formality (Isett et.al.,2011). Those structures can not always be clearly separated, since often the development of a formal network comes from an informal one (Isett et.al.,2011). Policy networks involve traditional policymakers, in the case of C4C city council or board of supervisors (policymakers in counties), it also involves public agencies and nontraditional actors such as interest groups⁹ (Kapucu et.al., 2014).

Lecy et. al. (2013) offer a distinction between three types of policy networks, describing the stages of the policy process. It is distinguished between: 'policy formation networks', 'governance networks'¹⁰, and 'policy implementation networks'¹¹. *Policy formation* describes the process of policy creation, the focus lies on actors working together to frame an agenda. Since the network C4C does focus on the adoption of the resolution or ordinance, it can also be categorized as a policy formation network. In the case of C4C, the network developed surrounding a social movement about a feminist issue that then developed into implementing CEDAW policy in different jurisdictions.

Grass-root networks are a *bottom-up mechanism* that try to influence social policies mainly on the local level (Longley, 2020). Grass-root movements develop one idea that can grow, by drawing in a lot of people and that way influence policymakers, through for example agenda setting, this has become a very common effect in the United States. As previously mentioned for example the women's suffrage movement or #metoo (Longley, 2020). Social movements/grass-root movements evoke policy changes and especially on a local level have an impact, which can lead to policy consequences through their action (Vasi & Steil, 2014).

The C4C campaign calling for the ratification of CEDAW norms on the local level had to bypass the federal level since they did not act upon the global pressure of adopting the widespread legislature. In the US policy change can be done at the municipality level, this procedure has

⁹ In the case of C4C those are the feminist activists associated with C4C

¹⁰ They administer policy problems in a collective manner, including different actors, dealing offer with issues of managing resources (Lecy e.al., 2013).

¹¹ The policy implementation network though are involved in the delivery of services.

been more and more used by local activists. This *norm localization* process of international human rights norms has been a growing phenomenon (Och, 2018; Tarrow, 2005). Local activists play a major role while making global norms appealing to municipalities, as they are the ones redefining and modifying the global legislature (Och, 2018), which Och (2018) calls the “norm brokers” (Och, 2018: 428).

Further her findings show that those “norm brokers” (Och, 2018: 428) often are rooted in cosmopolitanism. As Tarrow (2005) acknowledges, those activists “utilize their domestic resources and opportunities to move in and out of international institutions, processes, and alliances” (Tarrow, 2005: 28). In consequence, there has to be local concern about a certain issue (Acharya, 2004). In the case of C4C, it surrounds the issue of gender inequality. The network has accumulated reports that showcase the importance of adopting such legislation, as well as reports of members that did adopt an ordinance.¹² Those individual actors or norm brokers are important in the process as well as members of the network, they want to effect change by adopting the policy, in that they will be satisfied when the legislature gets adopted (Portney & Berry, 2009).

Portney and Berry (2009) named those policy networks (like C4C) also “issue networks” (Portney & Berry, 2009: 542), as they surround a specific issue (in this case, gender equity), and influence the policy process in their jurisdiction. Setting the agenda, and reaching out to interest groups as well as offices of elected officials and experts on the issues of CEDAW; those three communication points were also brought up by Portney and Berry (2009).

Additionally, when it comes to policy adoption in a city, county, or state a mix between internal and diffusion factors come together (Bassett & Shandas 2010; Homsy & Warner, 2015). Internal factors being the motivation for the policy adoption, they play a more internal role; whereas the diffusion factors lead to the policy being adopted through similar values between/within a network and its neighbors, they help to establish a norm (Berry & Berry, 1999). There is always a combination of policy factors (Bassett & Shandas, 2010; Hui et.al., 2019). Generally, municipalities that adopt the legislature later benefit from the network, accepting the norm as legitimate and widespread; whereas early-adopting cities are driven by internal factors (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983; Bassett & Shandas, 2010).

The embeddedness of the network “Cities for CEDAW” can also play a role in its success. As Provan et al (2009) mention, the performance of a network and its structural position within other networks does contribute to the so-called embeddedness. Which can be a factor to draw

¹² If cities choose to adopt an ordinance, they are obliged to provide a report on the status of women in their jurisdiction

resources and exchange information (Provan et al, 2009). As discussed previously on a local level the issue policy networks offer a base of social capital for communication and resource sharing (Barrutia & Echebarria, 2011). This was also picked up by Rogers (1987), who called the adoption of the legislature in the jurisdictions a diffusion process, which describes the communication of certain information (innovation) through a social system with members (Rogers, 1987). This innovation can be an idea, in this case, C4C or rather the legislature CEDAW and its local adoption. Rogers (1987) identifies four main attributes in the adoption process: the innovations (resolutions or ordinances of CEDAW), communication channels (to create the knowledge about said innovation), time¹³ (from information sharing to adoption of legislature), and the social system (the network behind it, with its goal to adopt the legislature) (Rogers, 1987).

2.2. General theoretical hypothesis

Derived from the discussed set of theories, the bachelor thesis is lead to the following hypothesis:

First of all the described activists need to know about the global norm. The process of norm localization and the necessity for experts to be able to communicate between the global and local spheres was described by Och (2018) and Tarrow (2005). Having those cosmopolitan activists is essential to communication and formulating the legislature. Therefore this bachelor thesis assumes:

H1: The local activists have to have a connection to the international sphere to become those “norm brokers” that communicate global conventions and are able to apply them locally.

In order to gain resources, networks often are embedded in other networks (Provan et.al., 2009). As informal networks often connect through social capital and communication through different resources in the diffusion process, the activists can also be assumed to be part of other networks, surrounding a similar issue (Barrutia & Echbarria, 2011; Rogers, 2009). Therefore the bachelor thesis assumes:

¹³ Time here can be split up again: “(a) in the innovation-decision process by which individuals move from first awareness to adoption or rejection; (b) in the innovativeness of an individual or other unit of adoption (i.e., the length of time that elapses before a person adopts the innovation); and (c) in an innovation's rate of adoption (measured as the number of members of a system who adopt an innovation in a given time period)” (Rogers, 1987: 83).

H2: As C4C is an informal network, other more formalized networks and the embeddedness of C4C helped to further better its performance (reach more possible members).

As established in the literature, diffusion factors play a role in adopting policies (Berry & Berry, 1999). This is also applicable to the C4C network, as they spread the policy adoption process across the USA, from coast to coast. The jurisdictions that are joining more recently (now), can look at other jurisdictions that may have certain important similarities and achieved the goal of adopting the wider accepted and spread CEDAW legislature (Tolert & Zucker, 1983; Basset & Shandas, 2010). Therefore this Bachelor thesis assumes:

H3.a.: Having a broad network with different cities/counties helped, as it gave new cities/counties similar examples (similar values, population size, etc.) that they could connect with, having the same goal of achieving gender equity.

H3.b.: If one city in the region begins to become a member city, then others follow in that region.

As it was made clear by the theory grass-root movements have especially on the local level an impact (Vasi & Steil, 2014). Since CEDAW was not ratified on the federal level, despite numerous attempts, why is it now adopted on a local level? This could be through the previously described bottom-up mechanism, which are essential in policy making on a local level/ in a community (Longley, 2020). Therefore this bachelor thesis assumes that:

H4: Through being on a local level and applying the social issue of gender justice on a local level, the network was successful in reaching across the United States.

3. Methodology

Drawing upon the literature in regard to informal policy networks, this thesis will discuss how CEDAW legislature in cities/counties and states was formed. In order to approach the RQ: How did the network "Cities for CEDAW" develop, and how can we explain its development to a collective action policy network within the cities? The subquestions will be elaborated on in the analysis, with the determined methods.

In the following part, an overview of the used methods is given. It is pointed out that understanding the development or history of a network can help to advance the understanding in theory building when it comes to consequences or causes of networks (O'Toole, 1997). Isett et.al. (2011) underline this by stating that there is a need for a more dynamic network investigation to comprehend the development better. In order to analyze the city network C4C, it is important to also see it as a dynamic network that did develop with the help of grass-roots activism into a policy network to achieve a common goal in the United States.

Therefore in the following (3.1.) there will be a description of the current network and its history. This will be accomplished using existing data, which is systematically collected together in excel. Through that mechanisms specific to CEDAW can be made visible, also under the consideration of the aspects presented in the relevant theory.

3.1. Case selection

This bachelor thesis is a qualitative study of the C4C network, as it represents informal policy networks. The network was used to further look into informal grass-roots activism, the case was selected to understand such a unique network. The case, however, can be seen as representative as well, as there might be similar informal grass-roots networks, which surround social activism issues. Additionally, can the network be seen as unique, as there are unique components to the case and the movements around it, like the global connection, as well as the already for a long time established women's rights¹⁴ movement in the USA. Gaining a deeper understanding about this particular network/case, can help further build understanding surrounding other local human rights networks. This case helps to gain knowledge about the network dynamics of policy adoption in grass-root activism, as it has societal and scientific relevance.

3.2. Operationalization and data analysis

This bachelor thesis used a qualitative research design. Including a combination of newly collected data (through expert interviews) and existing data about the network. A research of the member jurisdiction and their legislation was conducted¹⁵. This was done to first describe the network and to further gain information about its history, since there were no official reports about the general network itself. Therefore the information came together through the network's website and resources provided there, as well as the website of the cities and town hall

¹⁴ CEDAW policy was first introduced as a women's rights issue, while often being interpreted as a gender rights bill now

¹⁵ The Excel table can be found in the data appendix

meetings discussing the legislature. Additionally, information about population size was taken from the US census bureau.

This collected data was stored in an excel file for organization and analysis¹⁶. Further for the research it was important to take a closer look at the legislature, as the legal documents vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Subsequently, the legal documents were searched under the aspect of inclusivity and intersection. To further analyse whether the jurisdiction/legislature considers an intersectional feminist approach towards womens rights. For this the legal documents were searched in four categories (gender, reproductive health, non-cis-women, intersectionality): first “gender”¹⁷, as this would include the social construct, behavior behind the role of women, men, non-binary, transpeople, gender-nonconforming, and gender diverse people. Whereas the word sex is often used to only describe the binary sex assigned at birth (*Gender and Health*, 2019). Further it was important if the legislature included reproductive health, as this is a growing womens rights issue and besides being part of the SDGs, it has been mentioned in the original CEDAW document. This was looked at, by checking for the keywords of: “pregnancy”, “pregnant”, “contraception”; “contraceptive care”, and “abortion”. Those words are associated with reproductive health of people with uterus, which is relevant when talking about women's rights issues¹⁸. Inclusivity in the language is an important aspect as well. That is why the document was tested if certain words that described other non-cis-genders were mentioned. For that the documents were searched for: “non-binary”, “nonbinary”, “trans-women”, “transgender”¹⁹. To find out if intersectionality has been addressed, the measures of inclusivity can be used. To get another aspect of intersectionality and whether this has been addressed, the legislature was examined whether the words “race” or “racial discrimination” were particularly mentioned. However, it should be noted that the issue of intersectionality and intersectional policies is complex, as established by the literature, and is not only confined to race and gender (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011)²⁰.

Further data was collected from the US Census Bureau to gather more information about the population sizes of the jurisdiction, as to compare the sizes of the cities and counties.

¹⁶ Appendix D shows the examined jurisdictions/cases (55) with date and legislature

¹⁷ Similar to the original which has 30 Art. and only mentioned gender once in the introduction part

¹⁸ Especially nowadays in the United States

¹⁹ It was not searched for further more inclusive language, since the premise was set by representatives using the word sex to describe gender issues, therefore this was the add most expectation that could be set

²⁰ Further there have to be aspects of social identity taken into account(class, money...

3.3. Qualitative Data

Within the frame of this bachelor thesis four expert interviews were conducted, all from different cities²¹. They were conducted under the premise to get further explanations surrounding the network and the grass-root activism in the cities. The selection of the cities was built on a most different approach, with cases from all over the United States. The geographical location was taken into account, as well as having cities/counties which have resolutions, ordinances and bills²². The four interviews were 45 minutes to one hour long and contained questions about the adoption process in the jurisdiction of the experts, as well as the involvement of C4C in that process. The experts were activists in their jurisdictions and heavily involved in the process of getting CEDAW legislation through the city council or board of supervisors²³. The questions were individualized, however, most of them were similar, since they all regarded the process of adoption and the involvement of C4C and other partner cities/counties²⁴.

The chosen jurisdictions were Sarasota, Florida; San Diego County, California; Fairfax, Virginia; and Washington D.C. (fig.1).

San Diego County in California was chosen since it just recently passed a CEDAW Ordinance, on May 10th, 2022.²⁵ Fairfax County in Virginia, situated geographically on the other coast, also adopted legislation recently, on May 8th, 2022. Fairfax County adopted a resolution of CEDAW. The two counties adopted both legislatures recently, however, different ones (resolution and ordinance). They further differ in size as well as geographical location. One city being close in geographical location to Fairfax County is Washington DC. Washington DC can be seen as an outlier, it did not adopt a legislature on CEDAW, starting an attempt in 2015, which did not succeed. Currently, an ordinance is on the way. The district has another interesting aspect, as the legislative process is different from other cities or counties in the United States, as the legislature has to pass through the congress. Sarasota, Florida a mid-sized southern city did adopt a CEDAW resolution in 2017 and therefore geographically far from the other cases.

This thesis is interested to see how the legislature was ratified, which role the network played and how the connection was to other members of C4C. Furthermore it was important to choose jurisdictions that ratified the norm at different times, as to further understand the development of C4C over time. Additionally, it was important to interview activists from different geographical

²¹ An overview of the Interviews can be found in appendix A

²² Not ratified legislature

²³ Legislative body of counties

²⁴ Sample questions can be found in the appendix B

²⁵ The city of San Diego did adopt a CEDAW resolution early on, in 1998. However, as stated earlier resolutions are not legally binding.

regions, as C4C is stretched across the U.S.. Those interviews in the combination with the previously gained knowledge about the background of the network, will be used to answer the RQ. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the general processes during policy adoption, from the perspective of informal grass-root networks. Consequently, the findings from the data will be brought into context with the hypotheses, based on the existing theory.

4. Analysis

In the following, the described data will be used to describe the network and its processes to gain a deeper understanding with the help of the previously determined subquestions. Following will be a discussion about the outlined hypothesis.

4.1. The networks process

In subsequent part subquestion one and two are explained while presenting and analyzing the established quantitative data. To answer the *first subquestion*²⁶, it is essential to take a closer look at the timeline of the network and the adoption of CEDAW legislature over the years, and the different processes. As mentioned earlier, the grass-root activist network C4C started after adopting a CEDAW ordinance in 1998 in San Francisco. It was/is supported by numerous other networks, two of the founding members being WIN and the Department on the Status of Women in San Francisco. They first saw the need to establish a standard platform of resource sharing and interconnecting for spreading CEDAW legislature across the U.S.. By June 2022, about 57 CEDAW legislations are active (fig. 2). The processes are different, depending on jurisdiction.

²⁶ What was the development of the C4C network over time?

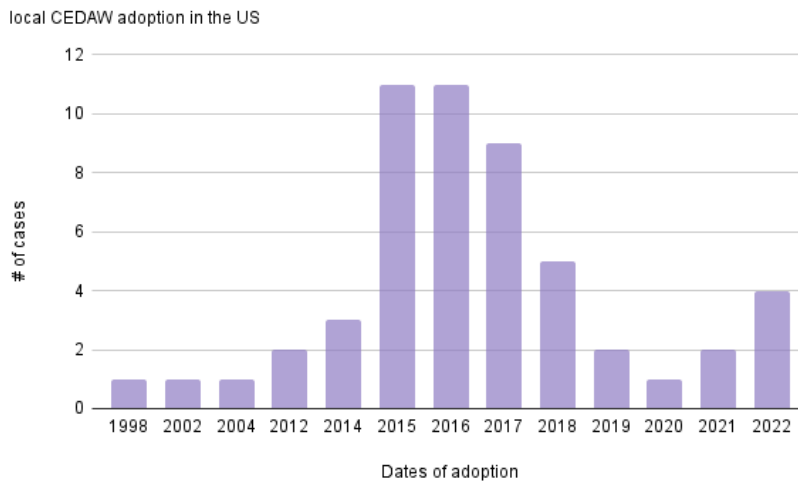


Figure 2: no. of local CEDAW adoptions in the USA during the years

Generally, the network's expansion can be divided into three phases (fig. 2). The first going from 1998 to 2013, building the *early adopters*. From 2014 to 2018, there is the *main adoption phase* visible, with spikes in 2015 and 2016. Afterward, from 2019 till now (2022), the *late adoption phase* can be identified.

In counties, the legislative bodies are boards of supervisors, whereas, in cities, they are called city councils. Those legislative bodies differentiate in the composition; whereas some jurisdictions have ten or more members, others only have 5. The analysis showed that in the composition, 33% were female and 67% of members in total were male²⁷ (fig.3). Out of 36 cases²⁸, in three councils/boards, there could be an equal representation of men and women²⁹ found. Whereas, in eight, the representation of women was dominant. None of the councils/boards had a representation of a non-binary, trans-person, or gender non-confirming person during the year of the legislature's adoption. Further, some cities had in the year their CEDAW legislation was passed, only one woman represented; for example, Salt Lake City was composed of one woman and six men in 2016, when their CEDAW Resolution was passed.

²⁷ Percentages did not consider the missing data, of the legislative bodies were gender could not be identified

²⁸ All counted jurisdictions, without missing

²⁹ cis-gender

Gender of legislated body

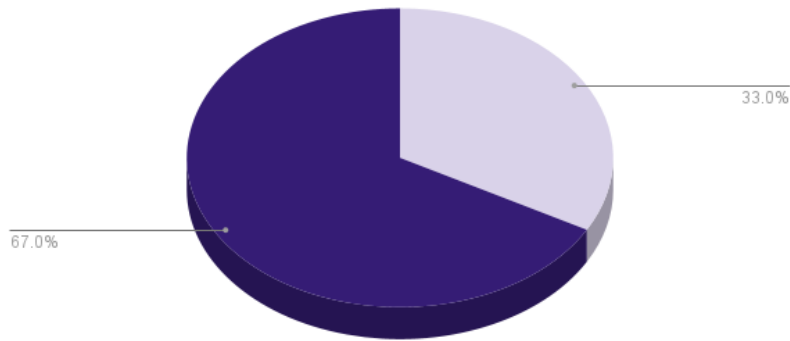


Figure 3: gender of legislated bodies [dark purple: male; light purple: female; without missing cases]

The number of members on the board of supervisors or councils³⁰³¹ depends on the jurisdictions themselves. The legislative process differs between the states, depending on state law and city/county laws, in some cases boards/councils had to be non-partial for example, as they and their members should not have a party affiliation (fig.4). In 60% of the determined cases the council/board had a democratic majority, only in one case (3,3%) a republican majority could be found³², in 36,6% of cases the council/board was non-partisan, as illustrated by figure 4.

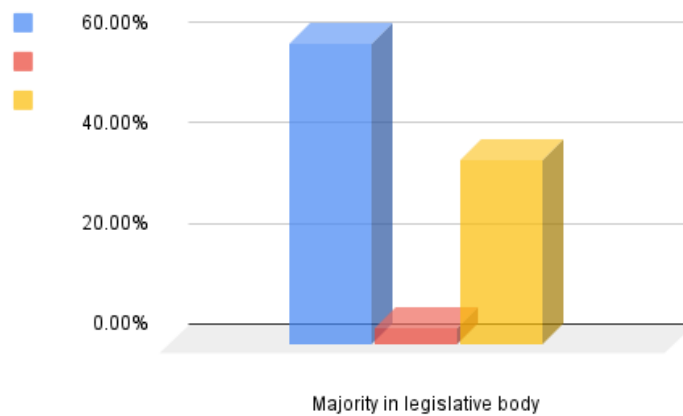


Figure 4: political majority in the legislative bodies [blue: Democratic; red: Republican, yellow: non-partisan]³³

³⁰ Or in the case of California and Kentucky the house of representative

³¹ And if non-partial or party affiliated, or election turns (wards etc.)

³² The State of Kentucky

³³ 24 missing data points, that were not considered

As mentioned previously the legislative process differs depending on the state legislature. The norms can cover a wide range of issues of day-to-day topics. Counties and Cities have different jurisdictions and responsibilities, therefore are able to pass laws concerning different aspects/topics. However, what they all have in common is that all of them can pass laws against gender discrimination in their jurisdictions, concerning their respected tasks/responsibilities (*State, Local and Municipal Laws*, 2020)³⁴. Sometimes the structures of the county and city are intertwined as well as their responsibilities, and in some areas the cities operate more independently (*State, Local and Municipal Laws*, 2020).

Members of the network vary in geographical location (fig.1) and population size, from 16.347³⁵ to over 39 million people³⁶. Furthermore, differences are visible in the legislature, specifically in the used language. Some differentiate and use words such as "gender" and "trans-women", as will be elaborated on further along. Others are intersectional in their approach and include the word "race" to elaborate on the overlap of discriminatory forms of racism and sexism.

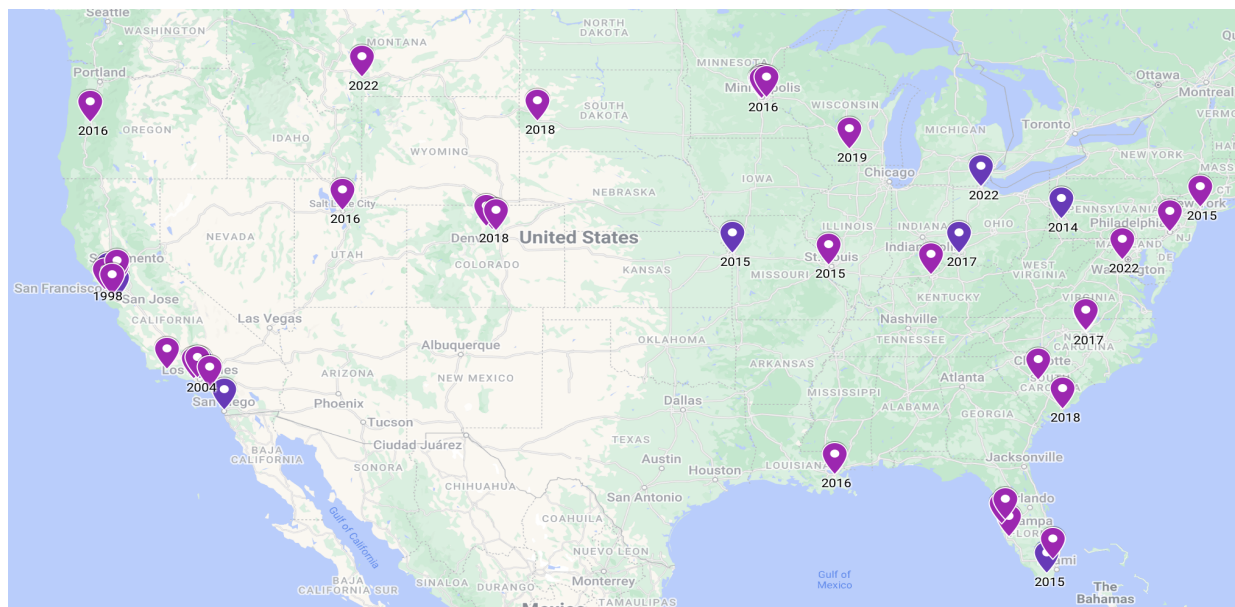


Figure 5: Map of Cities and Counties with CEDAW legislature and the year of their adoption

It can be said that over time, more and more cities adopted the legislature. However, it is visible that the process did not take place in the form of a geographical adoption (fig.5). After cities in California³⁷ adopted the legislature, cities, and counties that followed were not solely in the immediate neighborhood. The process began in California, where now the most jurisdictions

³⁴ Further there are special districts such as airports, that also have legal authorities/ability

³⁵ Laguna Woods, CA

³⁶ California state

³⁷ With 18 resolutions or ordinances

with CEDAW legislature lie, with 18 resolutions and ordinances. California even adopted the state legislature on CEDAW in the main adoption phase, 2018. The only other state-wide resolution can be found in Kentucky, although there is only one city, Louisville, in Kentucky that adopted a resolution in 2014, making it an early adopter. Apart from that, the member jurisdictions³⁸ are spread across the states without a specific geographical pattern connected to time. This can be used to answer already part of *the second subquestion*³⁹, there does not seem to be a connection between the geographical location and time of adoption. A standard policy adoption curve is visible when looking at the adoption over the years, showing the progress in getting more jurisdictions involved in C4C (fig.2).

In order to answer the *second subquestion* entirely, it is important to highlight again how different the jurisdictions are. As already stated, cities, counties, and states adopting legislature; differ in different aspects, as some are smaller⁴⁰ and more conservative, and others are bigger and more liberal. As mentioned beforehand, those characteristics are also visible in their language. Some, like San Diego County in California, use inclusive language and try to emphasize intersectionality; others, like Sarasota in Florida, have a more conservative approach to the wording in the legislature. Although Sarasota adopted a resolution in 2017, therefore being in the phase of main adopters, San Diego County is with its year of adoption: 2022, a late adopter of the CEDAW ordinance.

Generally, no pattern is visible regarding the year of adoption and adoption of an inclusive/intersectional language in the legislature⁴¹. However, it is to say that the first adopter did not mention non-binary people, transwomen, or transgender at all. Only two cities in the main adoption phase mention those words in their legislature, Pittsburgh, CA, in 2014 and Pittsburgh, PA, in 2016. In the late adoption stage, it is also mentioned in two legal documents, Los Angeles County in 2021 and San Diego County in 2022. So, although C4C fights for women's rights, those are defined individually city by city, county by county, and state by state. Some focus on gender equity in general (e.g., San Diego County, CA/ Pittsburgh, CA), while others focus on the rights of cis women and cis girls⁴² (e.g., Columbia, SC/ Sarasota, FL). The network is there to give resources to the cities/counties/states so that they can connect to others

³⁸ The jurisdictions that have passed CEDAW legislature and are therefore part of C4C

³⁹ To what extent does the timing of adoption correlate with the characteristics of the cities/counties? Does one geographical region influence the time of adoption structure in particular

⁴⁰ Measured in population size

⁴¹ As measured from the examined legislature

⁴² Personal identification with the gender of the person and their birth gender, in this case female (*Cisgender Adjective - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes* | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.Com, n.d.)

and have the resources to present a bill that fits their jurisdiction. The aspect of the jurisdiction size⁴³ as a characteristic of the cities/counties compared to the year of adoption can be seen in figure six.

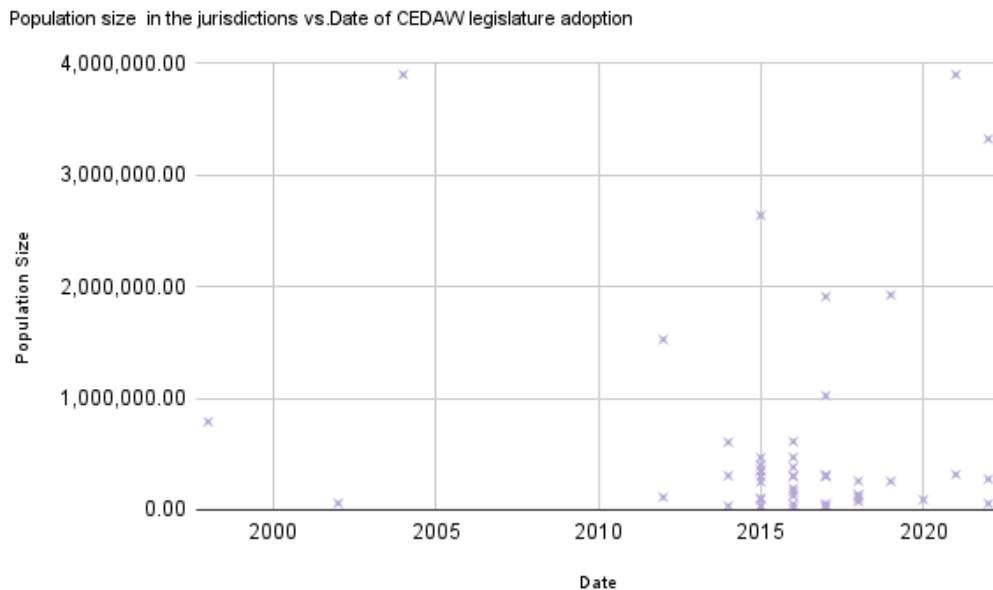


Figure 6.1.: Population size of jurisdictions vs. date of adoption of CEDAW policy (without the outlier case of the State of California)

As established in figure two, there has been a spike in adoption around 2015/16; this can also be observed in figure six. It is striking that most jurisdictions adopting legislature have a similar size; it began in 2014 with jurisdiction sizes ranging from 35.053 in population to 605.762. We can find most cities in the following years within this scale, with six outliers⁴⁴. Before that, in the early adoption stage, there were only two cities with lower population sizes, in 2002 with 58.598 and 2012 with 112.662. More precisely illustrated by figure 6.2.. After the initial establishment of the legislature in similar-sized cities and counties, other cities and counties with similar sizes followed.

⁴³ As determined by the population size of the cities/counties or states

⁴⁴ 2015- 2.639.000 [Miami-Dade County, FL]; 2017 - 1.023.000 [San Jose, CA]; 2019 - 1.926.000 [Broward County, FL]; 2021- 3,9 million [LA county, CA]; 2022 - 3.324.000 [San Diego County, FL]

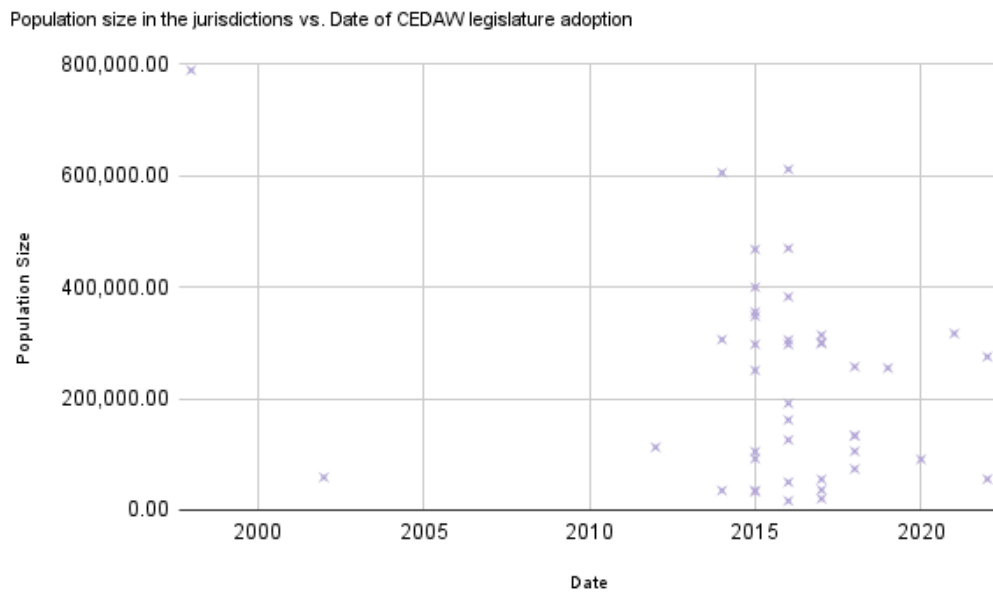


Figure 6.2.: Population size of jurisdiction to date of adoption of CEDAW legislature (without jurisdictions of more than 1.000.000 inhabitants)

Subsequently, the characteristic of size (population) is related to time. As after the jurisdictions adopted the legislature, others similar in size followed.

Lastly, it is to note that although two states have adopted a CEDAW legislature, as stated earlier, different levels of governments have different jurisdictions. Therefore, a legislature against gender discrimination is needed on all levels of government. Cities, for example, themselves are responsible for one part of public life and the counties or states for others. This was confirmed by the interview with San Diego County activists⁴⁵. As the collected data was presented it is important to also bring them into context with the conducted interviews, this will be done while examining the hypothesis, as well as answering the rest of the subquestions (3 & 4).

⁴⁵ Interview 2

4.2. Findings and discussion

Before further elaborating on subquestion four⁴⁶, it is essential to understand the unique processes of a CEDAW legislature within the cities; therefore, subquestion three⁴⁷ will be discussed beforehand.

The decision-making had multiple factors that came into play. The interviewed activists/experts were engaged in local social activist groups but also had national and international components. Those groups or organizations were always different, depending on the jurisdiction, but as mentioned by all of the interviewees, always influential and necessary. Multiple local interest groups collaborated on the issue in the cases discovered. It has been mentioned that most of this collaboration is a form of soft collaboration. The connection often takes place through events where people talk to each other about the issue at hand, more than formal collaboration since the most prominent challenge seemed to be (as all interviewees agreed) the education on CEDAW.

The knowledge of CEDAW legislation was often not stretched throughout the communities; therefore, there needed to be a collaboration first and foremost around informing local officials, which then needed to be brought to the public. During this stage, the network C4C was seen as extremely helpful, as they provided resources and material on other cities/counties/states and about CEDAW in general. However, it was emphasized that every jurisdiction had its approach, as every community is different⁴⁸.

Nonetheless, all interviewees mentioned that they observed similar cities to gain momentum on how to pass the legislature. For this, elements such as size and, whether the cities were more conservative or liberal played a role to determine similar member jurisdictions⁴⁹. The geographical location was only meaningful when a city in the state had already passed CEDAW legislation; this was taken as an argument to adopt legislature as well, as it was locally already adopted in a close geographical sphere. For example, Sarasota County in Florida⁵⁰ (2017) looked on one hand towards Louisville, Kentucky (2014), as they are both relatively conservative and were relatable for policymakers as well as the activists and participating

⁴⁶How can we explain the decision to join the network (adopt its policies) within the different cities (case dynamics) from the activist effort?

⁴⁷ Are there differences/ similarities in these decision-making processes between the cities (analysis between case analysis)

⁴⁸ Interview 1, 3 & 4

⁴⁹Interview 1

⁵⁰ Interview 1

groups. On the other hand, they took Miami-Dade (2015) as an example, as they previously passed CEDAW legislature in Florida.

One striking finding was a prominent group in Fairfax County, VA⁵¹, and San Diego County, CA⁵²: the League of Women Voters. This local activist group has local chapters and helped organize, give support, and coordinate in both cases. San Diego County, CA adopted an ordinance that was intersectional and inclusive in their language; they looked to a city that passed CEDAW before, which was Pittsburgh, PA, in 2016⁵³. The Pittsburgh C4C initiative was supported by multiple organizations, one of them being the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh for CEDAW, 2022). Interestingly, Pittsburgh used an intersectional angle and has already published a report about intersectional gender equity that proved helpful to San Diego as well, as they went with an intersectional approach as well⁵⁴. Although they differ in size (as one is a big city and the other a county surrounding a big city) and geographical location, they could find a bridge through the common goal of inclusive gender justice, as well as connections through overlapping networks/organizations⁵⁵. As the interviewees mentioned, the network C4C does not have a local presence; it is an educational connection that helps organize and connect future members with current members. However, the local campaigns must get local organizations on board in order to connect and gain more resources as well as momentum in their communities⁵⁶. Interestingly, as derived from the interviews, the member cities/counties are not necessarily connected. As well, as not every city's/county's campaign is connected to C4C⁵⁷. They do always have access to the recourses, and those were, in the examined cases always used⁵⁸. However, not all examined jurisdictions connected extensively with and through the C4C network⁵⁹. As they saw the models of resolutions and ordinances of the other cities and counties as enough, and rather focused on the specific needs of their jurisdiction and political climate.

⁵¹ Interview 3

⁵² Interview 2

⁵³ Interview 2

⁵⁴ Examined by interview 2 and passed ordinance in San Diego

⁵⁵ Eg. the league of women voters

⁵⁶ Interview 1

⁵⁷ Interview 1 & 3

⁵⁸ Derived from all interviews

⁵⁹ Interview 1 & 3

4.2.1. Localization of CEDAW

Every city had to localize the global norm differently, as different aspects applied to their jurisdictions. Nevertheless, the process was similar to an extent, as they all dealt with the same norm, as can be visible by the support of similar local organizations or chapters⁶⁰. A significant component that was identified with the help of the expert interviews was the CSW⁶¹. The CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) is a UN instrument of the ECOSOC⁶² promoting gender equality, which holds annual sessions with civil society representatives as well as member states (CSW66 (2022), n.d.)⁶³. It connected the local activists with other groups and organizations and often introduced the idea of CEDAW. Relevant organizations can send people to attend this annual conference, one of them being the League of Women Voters⁶⁴. Another factor is the UNAs chapters promoting CEDAW at different levels. This is an organization that promotes the UN and human rights values on a local level. Through those organizations the localization of those global human rights norms are made possible. As also previously mentioned in the literature the local actors need to reach out in the international sphere, through global organizations (Och, 2018). First the activists come in contact with a local organization, like League of Women Voters, or a UNA chapter and then reach out and gather resources through C4C. Or as it was the case for San Diego activists⁶⁵, come back from those global events, like CSW, and bring home CEDAW and start the process of connecting to like minded groups and networks.

To conclude *hypothesis one*⁶⁶ can be confirmed. As elaborated previously, the connection between the global and the local sphere is essential. Those norm brokers that attend the necessary events also need to be capable of communicating the norms. For that, the network C4C can help, as they provide valuable resources for those interconnected activists to localize and formulate a fitting norm.

Deriving from this, we can also answer the *fourth subquestion*⁶⁷ The activists that pushed for the CEDAW legislature were already involved in human rights issues. As some of the

⁶⁰ Eg. the mentioned League of women voters

⁶¹ Commission on the Status of Women

⁶² Economic and Social Council

⁶³ Member states, are the 45 member states in the ECOSOC

⁶⁴ Interview 3

⁶⁵ Interview 2

⁶⁶ *The local activists have to have a connection to the international sphere to become those "norm brokers" that communicate global conventions and are able to apply them locally.*

⁶⁷ (How can we explain the decision to join the network (adopt its policies) within the different cities (case dynamics) from the activist effort?).

interviewed activists were human rights lawyers or international lawyers⁶⁸ in their professional sphere, but also socially involved in their local community and through that active in human rights issues⁶⁹. Through those activities the interviewees said that they gained valuable resources. Further, they got engaged and connected to various local groups connected to the CSW. All the interviewees in the cities and counties where the legislature has passed highlighted the role of CSW⁷⁰. Via that conference, the connection to other groups such as UNA or the League of Women Voters was made, or it was established beforehand and led to the participation in the conference⁷¹.

4.2.2. C4C and other networks

Interestingly, deriving from that part, we can already see part of *hypothesis two*⁷² accepted. As was introduced by the established literature, that in order to gain resources in the diffusion process the activists are part of other networks (Barrutia & Echbarria, 2011; Rogers, 1987, Provan et.al., 2009). As mentioned previously the grass-root efforts were supported by different organizations/networks. The UNA chapters, for example, are also a local widespread grass-roots organization, although more formalized with different chapters, who are greatly connected, with a range of summits and events, as well as a national council and other professionalized positions (UNA Women Affinity Group, n.d.). Therefore it is to note that the activists are connected through other activists within their community to different local organizations and networks that are more professionalized/formalized in order to gain resources⁷³. The network or organizations to which the local CEDAW activists are connected depend on their community. In Sarasota, FL, for example, the grass-roots C4C campaign was also connected to a local church that helped gain more momentum in the community for the campaign⁷⁴. In the examined cases, the campaign was always connected to multiple other organizations/networks. Subsequently, the C4C network and its idea could reach that way through different formalized networks, like the CSW. Therefore *hypothesis two* can be confirmed.

⁶⁸ Interview

⁶⁹ Derived from all interviews

⁷⁰ Interview 1, 2 & 3

⁷¹ Interview 2 & 3

⁷² *As C4C is an informal network, other more formalized networks and the embeddedness of C4C helped to further better its performance.*

⁷³ Interview 1, 2 & 3

⁷⁴ Interview 1

4.2.3. Policy diffusion of CEDAW (with C4C)

Counties and states have different processes of joining the network and to what extent they use the network. Deriving from the interviews, it became apparent that the campaigns used to an extent the network C4C, for instance applying/utilizing its resources to help in the campaign.

To answer the question of similarity⁷⁵ (SQ 3), if jurisdictions drive similar cities to adopt CEDAW legislature as well, can be evaluated by observing figure 2 and figure 6.1. Cities of smaller size seemed to follow cities, which also exhibited similar population size after⁷⁶. Additionally, the interviews⁷⁷ showed that the community activists looked towards similar cities⁷⁸ within the network that have already adopted the legislation. Those cities were asked for their process, resources, and advice. To the size of the jurisdiction, another factor came into place, which was the geographical location. In the case of Sarasota, FL, the county looked to communities that were similar, as a comparison with the circumstances in San Francisco, CA, for example, was difficult. The other important factor was that in 2015 other jurisdictions adopted CEDAW legislation in Florida (Miami-Dade, St. Petersburg, Tampa)⁷⁹.

From the theory *hypothesis 3.a.* was formed⁸⁰. Gathered by the literature, it is clear that during the adoption process, different diffusion factors played a role (Berry & Berry, 1999). Communities that joined the process later, can use the C4C network to gather resources, as well as utilize it to showcase its spread of acceptance of the global norm being localized (Tolert & Zucker, 1983; Basset & Shandas, 2010). On the one hand, this is shown, by the interviewees⁸¹, and as was stated, during the process, they looked at passed CEDAW legislature in other cities to see how it was formulated. On the other hand, they further could use published gender analysis reports. Those reports are one of the goals of the C4C network, as they want to gather information on the situation of women locally in their local government (*Cities for CEDAW | UN Women USA*, n.d.). Currently, there is often a lack of information reported, as data on the status of equality in local communities does simply not exist often times⁸². Those reports analyzed government policies as well as programs and their services

⁷⁵ SQ 4: Are there differences/ similarities in these decision-making processes between the cities (analysis between case analysis)?

⁷⁶ Figure 6.1. And figure 6.2.

⁷⁷ Interview 1 & 2

⁷⁸ In regard to values (conservative or not) and size, as well as rural

⁷⁹ Interview 1

⁸⁰ *Having a broad network with different cities/counties helped, as it gave new cities/counties similar examples (similar values, population size) that they could connect with, having the same goal of achieving gender equity.*

⁸¹ Interview 1, 2, 3 & 4

⁸² Interviews 2, 4

(*Cities for CEDAW* | *UN Women USA*, n.d.). Therefore the activists are faced with the problem of making the gender discrimination visible in the first place, where the connection to other cities and their reports come in handy⁸³. Further there are reports from the older participating cities such as San Francisco, CA, who, since gathering those reports over a long period of time, could provide successful practices and their outcome (*Gender Analysis Reports* | *Department on the Status of Women*, n.d.). As outlined previously, three jurisdictions that passed CEDAW legislation that were being interviewed⁸⁴, also used those factors of diffusion. They all expressed looking toward a jurisdiction that had similarities with their journey and connected with them. Therefore *hypothesis 3.a.* can be confirmed, as the diverse cases all found cities and counties that they could relate to or gather resources from, through the C4C network, more precisely their website. Fairfax county also looked at jurisdictions which passed legislature, but did not in particular reach out to a specific city for help, as it was evident from the interview that the process and local needs and politics were unique in every community⁸⁵. However, in the case of San Diego county, the Pittsburgh gender analysis was of great help⁸⁶. Therefore although the *hypothesis 3.a.* can be confirmed, it also has to be stated, that the usage of the network and connection to other cities, depend on the grassroot efforts themselves and values in the respected communities.

For the second part of the *third hypothesis 3.b.*⁸⁷, there can be two arguments found. On the one hand, it did help cities like Sarasota, FL, to have cities that had already adopted legislature within their own state⁸⁸. On the other hand, from fig.1, it is gained that the member jurisdictions are spread out, with often only one city/county adopting CEDAW legislature in the state, for instance, Louisville, KY or Bozeman, MT. Therefore, the first half of the third hypothesis is more relevant than the second and the *hypothesis 3.b.* can only be partially confirmed.

Furthermore it is to elaborate on the example of Kansas City and their efforts to found the Midwest Coalition 4 CEDAW, it can be seen that assumptions of *hypothesis three a. and b.* can be connected through this example (Sloan, 2022). Similar to the C4C movement, the coalition wants local governments to adopt CEDAW legislation focused on western Missouri and eastern Kansas. Through being geographically close connects the region to build a coalition in order to gain momentum, however as was derived from *hypothesis 3.a.* the similarities in value and size

⁸³ Interview 2 & 4

⁸⁴ Interview 1, 2 & 3

⁸⁵ Interview 3

⁸⁶ Interview 2

⁸⁷ *If one city in the region becomes a member city, then others follow in that region*

⁸⁸ Interview 1

that can be observed throughout that region are important as well; as they are facing similar issues when talking about the bill to policy makers or the public.

4.2.4. Identified challenges in the process

As mentioned before, every global CEDAW norm's localization process was different and unique in its approach, as every jurisdiction dealt with different challenges. This leads to the *fifth subquestion*⁸⁹: As previously mentioned, a challenge in the communities was the education process of CEDAW, as often there was a misunderstanding of the norm or no knowledge of its existence⁹⁰. Another challenge was the capacities, as the people involved in this grass-roots effort worked as volunteers⁹¹. If the process is stretched out (because other things are prioritized by the city, e.g., COVID-19), frustration can grow⁹². Or as in Washington D.C. other important issues come up that need to be prioritized by volunteers, such as voter registration in an election year.⁹³ Lastly, there was a challenge in the localization of the global norm. This point is interconnected with the challenge of education; depending on the community, there was more or less backlash towards international norms⁹⁴.

Further, there is often no data in the form of local gender analysis⁹⁵. Therefore identifying the particular problem and communicating those to the municipality can be difficult, as often there is only the male narrative present. To put gender justice in a local frame is a challenge on its own as well. Also, because the data analysis is often part of the framework, part of the resolution or ordinance, after the passing of the norm, there is the process of collecting data, as many communities do not provide those (gender statistics). To overcome the challenges, activists and other networks and groups use resources provided by other cities that passed the legislature often by connecting through the C4C network⁹⁶.

4.2.5. Impactful local grassroots movements

Nonetheless, it can be derived from the interviews that the localization process was also what made it successful. By looking within their community, specializing their CEDAW legislation on the particular needs, and working with local organizations together. This made an impact on the

⁸⁹ What are the challenges in reaching their goal, and does the network help to overcome them?

⁹⁰ Interview 1, 2, 3 & 4

⁹¹ Interviews 2 & 4

⁹² Interview 2

⁹³ Interview 4

⁹⁴ Interview 1

⁹⁵ Interview 2 & 4

⁹⁶ Interview 1, 2 & 3

local jurisdictions and furthered the process and dialogue about CEDAW throughout the US. Although, the adoption on the federal level was not possible⁹⁷. Localizing the CEDAW norm made it possible to bring the issue of women's rights forward. As of now, there have been 57 legislations passed over 68 million people are affected by it through their local governments. Arriving at the *fourth hypothesis*⁹⁸ it can be said that the ratification of the CEDAW norm is working on the local level; 55 communities have CEDAW legislation in about 21 different states within the 14 years of beginning to localize the UN convention. Achieved through the bottom-up approach, by looking towards their local level/ their local community, activists showcase the positive impact of CEDAW on the local community⁹⁹. Therefore the *fourth hypothesis* can be confirmed, as the grassroots bottom-up movements reach across the states (figure 1). Although the network is not centralized and informal at the moment.

So as the findings proved the network is widespread across the US, this development could be divided into three phases and was not bound geographically. The provided research also identified the main groups supporting the C4C network as it developed into a collective action policy network with more and more cities participating.

5. Conclusion

The presented thesis explored the network dynamics of grassroots activism in the C4C network within the United States. This was examined by conducting a case study with the collection of quantitative data on the network as a whole and conducting interviews in specific cities and counties.

Through incurring hypotheses and subquestions this matter was analyzed and discussed and general results were drawn. Furthermore, a general conclusion will be presented as well as limits of the research and recommendations for future researchers will be provided.

5.1. General conclusion

First and foremost, exploring the five subquestions showed the patterns and evolvement of the network over time and in relation to the processes in the distinct jurisdictions. This led with the

⁹⁷ Due to multiple political complications, such as the political divide between the parties, or the issue of adopting global norms

⁹⁸ *Through being on a local level and applying the social issue of gender justice on a local level, the network was successful in reaching across the United States*

⁹⁹ Interviews 1, 2, 3 & 4

accumulated literature to the analysis of the hypotheses. All hypotheses could be confirmed or partially confirmed.

According to the findings, it was clear that the activists in the described communities also had a connection to the global sphere. Through different organizations, the communities that passed the legislature were strikingly all connected to the CSW. As they were moving through the local and global levels, they also shared the idea of C4C as well as the CEDAW norm itself, therefore becoming global norm brokers. This striking discovery was only made during the interviews, that being said on the quantitative cases, there were connections discovered to other national organizations who are also connected to either the UNA or the CSW. However, those connections to the CSW could only be clearly discovered in the qualitative interviews. Although in those, the importance of their annual event and the connections being made there were emphasized¹⁰⁰. These findings demonstrated that *The local activists have to have a connection to the international sphere to become those “norm brokers” that communicate global conventions and are able to apply them locally;* and **therefore hypothesis one could be accepted.**

Going back to the connections of the C4C network activists, as stated earlier, they were all connected within their community with different organizations. The organizations or networks, that the activists were locally connected to gave them resources as well as momentum, when facing the policy makers¹⁰¹. Those networks were more formalized, as there was a professional structure visible at the examined networks, such as UNA. However, it has to be stated, that it was only possible, due to limited research capacities to look into the related networks briefly and only further examine those that became reoccurring. As the local communities all had multiple organizations/networks, sometimes as in Sarasota the list of supporting organizations was around 200 (*Cities for CEDAW | UN Women USA*, n.d.). Also it was not possible to identify the supporting organizations in all jurisdictions, as some grassroots campaigns could not be found online. However, the recurrent networks, like the League of Women's Voters, are more professionalized and formal than C4C and have been proven helpful in different jurisdictions. These findings demonstrated that *As C4C is an informal network, other more formalized networks and the embeddedness of C4C helped to further better its performance;* and **therefore hypothesis two can be accepted.**

The C4C network was used as a resource that also played a role in the diffusion process, as more and more diverse jurisdictions with different sizes, political affiliations, and rural or not,

¹⁰⁰ By all interviews were legislation had passed (San Diego County, CA; Sarasota, FL; Fairfax, VA)

¹⁰¹ As derived from the interviews

joined. These findings demonstrated that *Having a broad network with different cities/counties helped, as it gave new cities/counties similar examples (similar values, population size) that they could connect with, having the same goal of achieving gender equity and therefore hypothesis three a. could be accepted.*

As discussed before, the second part of the third hypothesis, could be supported in one of the interviews¹⁰², however, no substantial evidence could be found in other examined cases. As it was mostly important for the jurisdictions to find similar ones in regard to values and size, rather than geographical location. Although as it was noted by the Sarasota activist, it did have a positive effect, and was used as an argument when approaching policy makers. Nevertheless, in the gathered quantitative data it was interesting to note, some jurisdictions being the only ones that passed CEDAW norms in their state. These findings demonstrate that *If one city in the region becomes a member city, then others follow in that region*, is not necessarily true. **Therefore hypothesis three b. could not fully be accepted.**

As stated earlier, it was assumed that CEDAW legislature was not implemented on a federal level, therefore it had to be localized. Through deriving from the community themselves, the bottom-up mechanism works in the US, as an effective structure to pass CEDAW resolutions and ordinances successfully. As the activists rely on those global issues in local government it becomes evident that CEDAW norms are necessary for their community. However the research was limited to only include jurisdictions which have passed CEDAW legislature, not examining the cases, where activists might have tried to pass the bill with a grass-root movement and did not succeed, due to limited research capacities. The only jurisdiction that was interviewed, which did not pass CEDAW legislature yet, and failed one time in 2015, was Washington D.C.. However, they were interviewed under the premise that the current grass-root movement got far and is likely to succeed. These findings in the presented research nevertheless, demonstrated that *Through being on a local level and applying the social issue of gender justice on a local level, the network was successful in reaching across the United States; and therefore hypothesis four could be accepted in the examined cases.*

Along those hypotheses, the analysis and discussion produced the conclusion that the network expanded gradually over time, in no specific geographical matter, or with a specific geographical limitation. The grassroots movement did develop its policy plan with the resources of other networks, as well as resources provided by C4C. Further, they connected to other jurisdictions with similar values and sizes through the C4C network.

¹⁰² Derived from the interview with Sarasota, FL

The presented study contributes to the research of informal policy networks in the context of grass-root efforts. Furthermore in terms of relevance, the study points out that the issue of gender equality in the United States becomes apparent as an ever more pressing matter, further highlighting that efficient grass-root efforts are of importance. Therefore it is relevant to study their structure as well as how they work and what makes them efficient/successful. This thesis contributed to that dialogue. As well as further showcased the connecting theory on the matter of policy networks with this case study. In addition it showcased the interconnection between those theories on the matter of grass-root networks.

5.2. Limitations of research and further recommendations

In part, the conclusion points towards C4C almost being a network of networks, as it is highly connected locally to other organizations/networks that support the local efforts. This interconnectedness and especially the partner networks could not be extensively studied in this bachelor thesis, due to the limits of research capacities. However, it would be recommendable to further research them as, especially the interconnectedness between specific networks that also reached across communities, was observed as influential.

The network itself became more and more relevant during the study, as further resolutions are passed on the grounds of local CEDAW norms to guarantee the right to reproductive health¹⁰³. Therefore it is advisable that future research also includes legal texts that were based on the CEDAW legislature in the communities as this way the success can be measured as well as the capabilities of the CEDAW norms, to evaluate it as being a substantial norm.

This research was confronted with a measure of difficulties, as the quantitative data has missing values. There was some information on the campaign or the local jurisdiction that either due to EU data regulation could not be accessed through specific websites. Also in some smaller jurisdictions often the information was not available and could not be found. Further, the interviews that were conducted did help to gather a deeper understanding of the network and the grassroots efforts in those jurisdictions. However, as there were only 4 in-depth interviews, with only 3 having a CEDAW legislature that passed; it would be advisable for future research to conduct more interviews, from the 55 cases where legislature got passed.

¹⁰³ As Kansas City has passed a resolution founded on their CEDAW resolution, to help government staff that seek and abortion with financing their travel across state lines (Sloan, 2022).

Furthermore, future research could be concentrating on the observed communication patterns related to the CSW, as it was identified as one of the key events to further spread the message of C4C and connect grass-root activists.

Another angle on this issue which differs from the policy approach, which this research took, is an intersectional policy analysis (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2010). This paper was limited to gathering information on intersectionality only considering the intersection of race and gender and further limited its capacities to the passed norms. It would also be advisable to diversify this issue in future research and e.g. include 'class', as well as consider the past gender analysis reports. So to further elaborate on the effectiveness of CEDAW legislation as a tool to combat gender-based discrimination¹⁰⁴.

Future research also should include a wider range of cities, also including jurisdictions, which have failed to pass legislature in their community. That would explain more challenges that the grass-root movements face, and explain further the variable of how the network C4C and their resources could help or not. As this study was restrained to the cases that have passed the legislature due to research capabilities, such as time. At the moment there are more and more researchers interested in grassroots movements as well as the C4C network, with very recent articles published as well as current studies that are conducted. This author is also currently in a research project, surrounding the thematic of the history and future of the network¹⁰⁵. Therefore it is to be expected that more findings and more data on this will be published, which will allow future researchers more and easier access to data and scientific articles.

Further recommendations are based on the findings of the observed inequalities in the local legislative bodies. It would be interesting to not only take a closer look at the cities and counties reports on the situation of gender discrimination in their jurisdiction, but also changes over time and changes in the legislative body, as to measure the effectiveness of the CEDAW norm¹⁰⁶. Also, it might be interesting to look at the composition of the legislative bodies in the jurisdiction that failed to pass the CEDAW bill, as to identify whether the inequality of political representation poses an additional challenge.

It is recommended to use the mixed method design in the future as well, as this highlights different aspects of the network. The interviews provided a deeper understanding of the different processes, whereas the collected data offered the basis to overall observe the development of C4C.

¹⁰⁴ On the way to achieve the 5th SDG

¹⁰⁵ The Cities for CEDAW history and Future Project → with an international research team from the Philippines, Europe (the author) and the United States

¹⁰⁶ To observe the long term effects, as can at the moment visible in San Francisco

To conclude, as this thesis focuses on the adoption process of CEDAW, and there is no federal law or Amendment (ERA), the local adoption of the global norm CEDAW can be seen as a useful tool. Helpful in this process, is the C4C network, which is supported by many more organizations across the United States, as the norm transformation and adoption process on this issue of gender discrimination brings challenges.

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Appendix

A. Overview of the Interviews

Interviews	Activists from the City/County	Date	Length (in minutes)
Interview 1	Sarasota County, FL	07.06.2022	43:03
Interview 2	San Diego County, CA	08.06.2022	38:36
Interview 3	Fairfax County, VA	09.06.2022	52:38
Interview 4	Washington D.C.	13.06.2022	38:04

B. Interview Guideline

Anonymized Interview Questions with C4C Activists:

1. Formation of the campaign:
 - How did [the community] build up the campaign?
 - Who did you start contacting to get the campaign off the ground?
 - What were some important milestones for the campaign on their way to getting the Resolution to the council and through the council?
 - For jurisdictions that passed first resolutions:
 - Was it planned to first pass the resolution and then an ordinance?--> is an ordinance planned?
 - How was that beneficial/helpful to already have a resolution in place?
2. Connection to C4C:
 - What was your involvement with C4C during the process of adopting the legislature?
 - How often did you meet? Were meetings held regularly?
 - Did you have contact with other member cities (=cities that passed CEDAW legislature)? To which ones, which ones were important?
3. Challenges:
 - What were the biggest challenges in the campaign?
 - Where did you get support to overcome those?
 - Did C4C help in overcoming the challenges as well?
4. Connection to other networks/organizations:
 - Was there more connection over the UN Women Chapters or through the Cities for CEDAW Network to gain resources about local adoption?
 - Were there other organizations involved in the process?
 - In what way was their participation helpful/or not?
5. Further involvement:

- Have you been involved in another process of CEDAW, in other counties/cities or other parts of the campaign for example, or with C4C in other jurisdictions?
 - For jurisdictions that have ordinance:
 - Development of Action plan after ordinance: What is the involvement? Do the local organizations stay involved? For how long to ensure the action plan addresses the issues?
6. Used language in the legal documents:
- Depending on legislature:
 - Why did you use gender/sex to describe the people being affected by CEDAW? What was the decision-making behind including inclusive language (such as transwomen, non-binary, gender non-conforming)?
 - What was influential in that decision to use reproductive rights in the legislature? Why did you not?

All Interviews were held individually and in a conversation style, meaning that the questions might vary as well as their order.

C. Interview Transcripts


The transcripts of the Interview are handed in separately, in the form of a zip file in the *Data Appendix file*.

D. Analyzed cities/counties/ states

City/County/State	Date of adoption	Legislature
San Francisco, CA	1998	Ordinance
Berkeley, CA	2012	Ordinance
Cincinnati, OH	2015/ 2017	Ordinance Resolution
Honolulu, HI	2015	Ordinance
Los Angeles, CA	2021/ 2004	City Ordinance County Ordinance

Miami-Dade, FL	2015	Ordinance
Pittsburgh, PA	2016	Ordinance
San Jose, Ca	2017	Ordinance
Santa Clara, CA	2017	Ordinance
Ashland, ORE	2016	Resolution
Boulder city and County, CO	2017/ 2018	County Resolution City Resolution
California	2018	Resolution
Columbia, SC	2018	Resolution
Contra-Costa, CA	2021	Resolution
Daly City, CA	2015	Resolution
Durham County & City, NC	2017/ 2018	County Resolution City Resolution
Edina, MI	2016	Resolution
Eugene, ORE	2016	Resolution
Fairfax, VI	2022	

		
Kansas City; Mo	2015	Resolution
Kentucky	2016	Resolution
Lafayette, CO	2016	Resolution
Laguna Woods, Ca	2016	Missing Resolution
Long Beach, CA	2016	Resolution
Louisville, CO	2016	Resolution
Louisville, KY	2014	Resolution
Madison, WI	2019	Resolution
Minneapolis, MI	2015	Resolution
Mount Vernon, NY	2015	Resolution
New Orleans, LA	2016	Resolution
Pittsburgh, CA	2014	Resolution
Rapid City, SD	2018	Resolution
Richfield, MI	2017	Resolution

Salt Lake City, UT	2016	Resolution
Santa Monica, CA	2015	Resolution
Sarasota, FL	2017	
St. Paul, MI	2016	Resolution
St. Petersburg, FL	2016	Resolution
Tampa, FL	2015	Resolution
University City, MO	2015	Resolution
West Hollywood, CA	2014	Resolution
San Diego County, CA	2022	Ordinance
Toledo, OH	2022	Ordinance
Santa Barbara, CA	2020	Resolution
Bozeman, MT	2022	Resolution

Charleston, SC	2018	Resolution
Irvin, Ca	2021	Resolution
Palo Alto, CA	2002	Resolution
Philadelphia, PA	2012	Resolution
Broward County, FL	2019	Resolution

E. Quantitative Dataset

The analyzed collected data will be handed in separately, in the form of a zip file in the *Data Appendix file*.