**Chapter3. The Impact of Urban Governance and Policy**

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‘globalization is not inherently good or bad; its outcomes are largely the result of human decisions that can be debated and changed.’ (Scholte, 2000, p.9)

In this chapter we discuss the potential policy response to such changes. Globalization provides a background for policy choices; however, it is a politically contested concept.

Policies concerned with the strategic planning of cities are formulated through decisions made in specific territorial political arenas.

The concern with globalization, global networks and global city functions tends to draw attention away from a discussion of territorially bounded decision-making. However, as we are exploring urban planning in major cities the degree of autonomy that city administrations have in responding to global forces is a key question.

**Global politics, regionalism and national sovereignty**

One of the strands in the globalization literature examines the rise of political organizations that operate on a world scale, sometime referred to as trans-world governance. These organizations are characterized by having supra territorial bureaucracies, drawing their finance from across the world, and developing regulatory and policy approaches that apply globally. Concerns over global ecological degradation have led to a rapid rise in transnational environmental agreements over such issues as the ozone layer, global warming, climate change and biological diversity.

Claims are also made about a 'global civil society'. However, this concept can be interpreted in many different ways. It can include groups that are protesting against global capitalism, the infra-structure needed for the spread of democracy and development or movements that express solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

These growing numbers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), transnational campaign group and other movements and networks suggest and international political context that can have ramifications at the scale of urban decision-making.

New political concepts have begun to frame these debates about the relationship between globalization and civil society.

The concept of citizenship is being restructured in the context of globalization and can be viewed as operating at a number of levels-regional, national and international.

Although 'anti-globalization' movements have hit the headlines there is considerable about such notions of 'global civil society' or 'cosmopolitan citizenship'.

Many authors identify sub-global regionalism as one response to the new, more fluid situation created by globalization.

The growth of politics at the supranational level has obvious implications for the sovereignty of the nation. Holon (1998) points out that the nature of the challenge to sovereignty differs across nation states.

The relationship between globalization and the state therefore has to be seen as the way in which governance generally is under reconstruction rather than focusing simply on the nation state. This involves examining the way in which previous powers of the nation state may shift to the supra or sub-national levels and the functions performed by the nation state itself may be different from those of the pats.

Having explored the changes to global governance and the implications for the sovereignty of the state we now need to explore in more detail changes in the function of the nation state, and especially changes in its relationship to the sub-state levels.

**States, cities and the politics of scales**

The national context is important for understanding urban planning as historically, notwithstanding federal systems, the national level has had a major impact on planning decisions. Any changes in the functions of the state could potentially alter this impact.

Much of this variety in the degree of intervention adopted by the nation state relates to the form of welfare regimes. Different forms of welfare state have been used to explain the different responses in national policy.

However the different regimes are categorized, the discussion demonstrates that considerable variety exists. The issues is whether this variety is disappearing as globalization blurs the boundaries and forces nation states into a common approach, or whether there are deep-seated values that underpin the different regimes that will have enduring effects on how nation states respond to the global forces.

We now return to the issue of re-scaling. Having explored the nation state's changing relationship to global governance we now focus on its relationship to sub-national levels. We draw upon the important debates in political geography around the shifting territoriality of governance.

Viewing the city as this crossroads of powerful forces leads some commentators to see a future of waning national states and increasingly influential trading cities or even autonomous 'cities-sates'. More 'activist' local economic policies are developed in response to global competition, which may well work against other cities and regions within the nation.

Having identified the key elements in this restructuring process we now address the question of variety.

We would expect important differences between states. We would also expect, and the 'scale' debate points in this direction, to find new relationships between national and sub-national scales and perhaps new institutions emerging in response to the challenges of globalization.

**Politics and governance in the cities**

City, state and international bodies work together to manage the pressures on cities. How do these pressures translate into political issues and interact in the 'force field' of the world city? Are coherent responses possible in the uncertain climate of globalization? How are institutional responses organized? In recent years comparative studies on urban politics have suggested a range of influential factors.

Form a consideration of the forces that influence the urban policy of major cities, a dominant theme has arisen in recent years of inter-urban competition.

The competitive climate provides the environment in which urban decision-making takes place. We need to explore how urban actors interpret such competition and how it can lead to particular forms of urban governance.

Growth coalitions express elite politics but regime theory allows a plurality of interests to shape coalitions or regimes differing forms.

We are particularly attracted to the regime concept because it emphasizes the process of formulating a city's urban agenda. So the focus is on the agenda-setting process, not particular policies or projects.

If, as we have been arguing, globalization is not a determining force, then the regime approach offers a focus on those factors at the local scale that translate the pressures on different cities into action.

The idea of 'governing capacity' that is central to regime theory has its echo in normative claims about good city governance. International bodies and some national governments promote 'public-private partnership', 'networking' and 'participatory' forms of governance

One aspect of urban politics that has attracted increasing attention in recent years is leadership. Judd (2000) identifies the importance of strong leadership in US cities in the 1980s and 1990s.

An alternative debate in urban politics in recent years has focused on citizenship and the possibilities of politics form below. What role do the citizens of the cities have in contributing to the urban policy debates in the new global era? For a long time urban political have told us that some interests may have an advantage. Pressures on planning come both form the need to integrate city economies with global forces and from the need to integrate fragmented interest within the city. Some cities may be dominated by international elites.

**Key planning issues for world cities**

World cities are principally located in capitalist economies. In China the logic of the market has been introduced in cities that are being promoted for world city status. The economic market is thus the key driving force for change. Urban planning seeks to shape and control this force. In doing so it tries to fulfill a number of different objectives.

The debates about the restructuring of the nation state and the changing nature of urban politics, reviewed above, provide the context for the formulation of strategic city planning. Urban planning as an overarching discourse concerned with optimizing land-use choices is strongly influenced by the politics of world cities.

In Chapter 2 we reviewed differences between global cities and global city regions. Clearly the pressures exerted by decision-making elites on central cities present specific planning problems, but the city region will need decisions about different issues and at a different scale.

At the city level, economic and social change impacts on civil society and political expression. Cities are increasingly dependent on their interaction with the global economy but at the same time to survive they must have a solid relationship with their local society and its inherent interests.

The ambitions of city planners also change, as do the criteria for judging success. The tools available for planning to intervene in the market, in the new mode of operation in the globalized world, will vary from city to city.

The built-environment professions can themselves be seen to have globalized. Olds (2001), for example, details the familiar lists of architects, planners and others behind 'mega projects' in the Pacific Rim.

So far we have presented generalized arguments about the responses of world cities to globalization, highlighting conceptual issues. The rest of the book looks in detail at case studies, exploring how choices and policy dilemmas are dealt with in particular cities.

**<Reference>**

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Newman Peter, Planning World Cities (Globalization and Urban Politics), Palgrave Macmilla, 2004.