

Governing Large Cities: A Comparative Perspective

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I. Forces Shaping and Redefining Cities and City-regions (Savitch and Vogel, forthcoming)

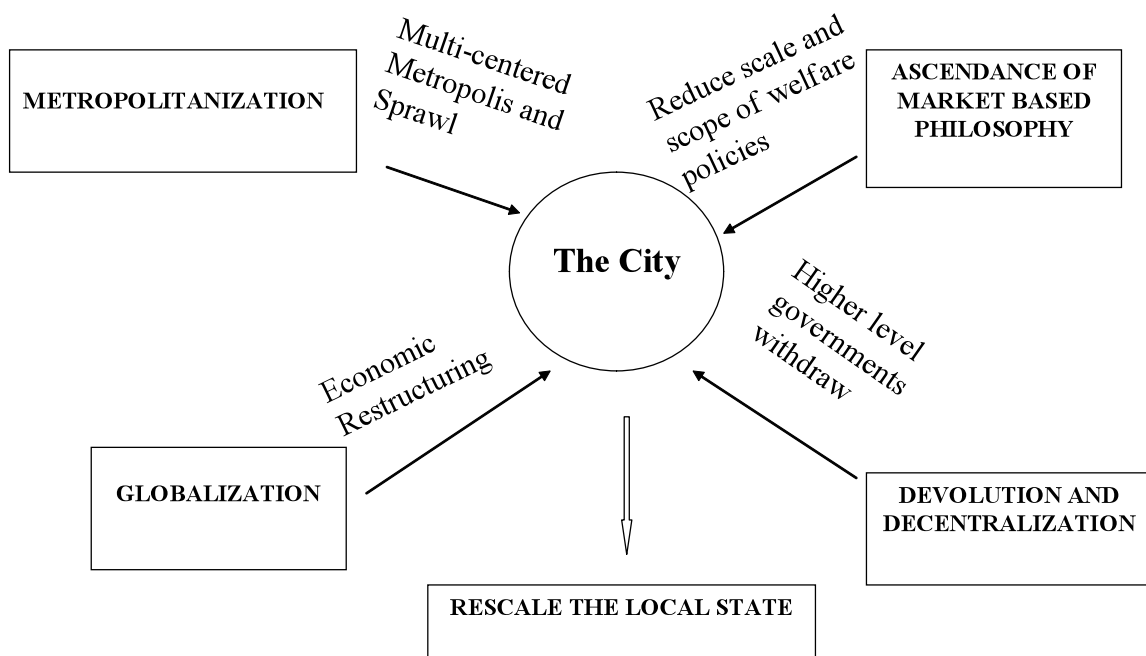
A. Metropolitanization– continued urban expansion,

B. Globalization – increased economic competition in the world economy,

C. Ascendancy of market based philosophies and privatization – reduced scale and scope of governmental activity in favor of market-based policies,

D. Devolution and decentralization – reorganization of the intergovernmental system to reduce government spending and enhance local autonomy.

Figure 1: Forces reshaping and redefining cities



II. Effect on City-(region)

A. Commutes, increased disparities, costs for infrastructure and services

B. Economic restructuring, uneven development (some areas in city decline, others grow), fiscal stress

C. New Political Culture—reject strong state, changed electoral politics (suburbs)

D. City-(region) must be more self-reliant (but usually lack sufficient resources)

III. City-(region) Responses (often in desperation)

A. Change boundaries and scale (create a regional decision-making capacity)

B. Regional city, redevelop core, adopt global city strategy, infrastructure, urban amenities

C. Privatization, reduce welfare policies, more development oriented policies (attract investment), reduce costs (roll back the state)

D. Public-private partnerships, new public management, reinvent government

IV. Local governance rather than formal government (Savitch and Vogel 2000)

Government	Governance
Formal institutions, elections, and established decision making processes	Harness existing institutions in new ways
Coercive power—command and control embedded in hierarchy	Sticks and carrots but focus on horizontal linkages not vertical
Stress centralizing features of regionalism	Stress decentralizing virtues of local cooperation

V. Trend towards Strong executive/mayor¹ (Bas Denters and Lawrence Rose, 2005)

A. Increased fragmentation and dependency on higher level governments or NGOs lead to efforts to create greater cooperation and common agendas (integration)

B. Need for a leader who can more effectively fashion a coalition, horizontal and vertical (i.e., strengthen political executive)

- 1. Overcome internal departmentalization in bureaucracy**
- 2. Build community coalitions**
- 3. Promote greater democratic accountability**

Italy	Introduce strong elected mayor
Belgium	Debate of direct election and strengthening
Netherlands	Debate direct election, strengthen executive (“division of powers”)
Norway	Experiment with direct election
Poland	Introduce direct election and debate strengthening
Germany	Strong mayor after unification

¹ See also James Svara (2005), Craig Wheeland (2002), and John Harrigan and Ronald K. Vogel (2003, pp. 86-92, 198-203).

Switzerland	Attempt to strengthen mayor
UK	Option for strong mayor (few choose)
New Zealand	No change
US	Trend towards mayoral leadership (Savitch and Vogel 2005)

C. Also, corresponding trend to enhance citizen participation involvement in municipal governance

VI. Comparison of Tokyo and Toronto (Metro government in both in late 1990s)

Metropolitan Reform in Tokyo and Toronto

	Tokyo (Vogel 2001)	Toronto
Forces Reshaping and Redefining Cities		
Metropolitanization	Tokyo megalopolis	Greater Toronto Area
Decentralization	Decentralization Promotion Plan (Central to Local)	Realignment (Provincial to Local)
Ascendance of Market Model	Privatization and Administrative Reform	Privatization; Budget Cuts
Globalization	Redevelopment; concern over unbalanced housing and development policy	Redevelopment; contested vision of global city status and benefits
Metropolitan Reform		
Institutional Change	Move towards two-tier metropolitan system with transformation of Wards into full-fledged municipalities	Amalgamation and short-lived experiment with Greater Toronto Services Board (end of two-tier system)

VII. Application to Current Toronto Situation

Toronto considered ill equipped to act decisively in current era.

A. Reforms

- 1. New Toronto Act (power, bolster autonomy)**
- 2. Reform city government (strengthen mayor's ability to provide leadership and direction for city)**
- 3. "New Deal" with Province and Feds**
- 4. Province take over regionalism**

B. Observations on Situation in Toronto

- 1. Concern if the money will be forthcoming; in US "shift and shaft" (Nivola)**
- 2. Will council be willing to strengthen executive? If not, will Province give added power?**

a) Strengthen mayor—possible ways (Svara 2002)

(1) More status for mayor: state of union address, higher salary, more staff, review and comment on budget

(2) More authority for mayor vis-à-vis council: veto, appoint council chairs and committee members, assign items to committee, nominate city manager

(3) More authority vis-à-vis manager: sole ability to initiate firing of manager, more weight in retaining manager, allow to change manager's budget before submission

b) Stronger mayor can make the system work better

(1) Councils often more activist, emphasize ombudsman role, more directive of management, want solve problems but not long term policy orientation (less willing to defer to staff), not have broad view

(2) Manager will have a difficult time forging consensus, council finds it hard to shape the vision of the city

3. Still not address need for larger regional body (e.g., GTSB), and still a concern that community councils are too large

a) Tokyo strengthening lower administrative units and turning them into full-fledged municipalities

b) Tokyo forging ties with other neighboring prefects to try to develop broader regional approaches on development, infrastructure

c) Advantage of perhaps creating a lower tier is that it would free the city mayor and council to take a more strategic regional perspective and focus less on municipal service delivery and bolster citizen involvement

VIII. Conclusion

A. Cities are stretched everywhere (limited fiscal resources)

B. Cities feel lack of authority everywhere (limited autonomy)

C. Regionalism is a problem everywhere (city boundaries no longer correspond to real metropolis)

D. Cities struggling with how to effectively redevelop cities and capture benefits of world economy for their residents (e.g., trade, jobs)

1. Local governance requires building coalitions and mobilizing resources across governmental boundaries as well as non-governmental actors (i.e., multi-level governance, and private and non-profits)

2. Increasingly, mayors playing an important role in setting a community agenda and creating coalitions (i.e., mobilizing resources) to pursue (Stone 1989)

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