

Book reviews

Peter Newman and Andy Thornley, *Planning World Cities: Globalization and Urban Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, Hampshire [England]; New York, 2005), 308 pp.

Planning World Cities proposes an alternative to the assumption that world cities are becoming more and more similar. It is a courageous attempt to demonstrate that city politics does matter in the development of world cities and that the world city debate needs grounding in particular conditions. In the first chapter, the authors foreground the importance of city governance across four spatial scales: global, regional, national and local. Decisions at each of these levels impact the development and planning of world cities. This is studied not only in terms of the structural context of economic globalization, but also in terms of historical, cultural and local processes in order to understand the specific context of each case study.

Chapters 2 and 3 survey existing debates on globalization, world cities and urban governance as a framework for setting up the authors' own position. The first part of the second chapter studies the globalization debate. Newman and Thornley recognize the rise of the subject of globalization since the late 1980s, a renewal of the discourse on deindustrialization of cities held during the 1970s and 1980s. Their synthetic account of discussions on globalization over the last few decades highlights important figures and their contributions, such as Manuel Castells, one of the key players in this debate, who suggested the "network society," a new form of global social organization guided by forces of transportation and telecommunication. Castells' redefinition of the city as a space of flows rather than a space of places profoundly influenced the debate. Yet, as the authors indicate, these ideas about a global spatial organization have been countered by critics who emphasize the importance of distinguishing between different types of networks and of recognizing their contingencies to local conditions. At the same time, authors sketch the discussion between the hyperglobalist ideology and its skeptical counterpart. It is here that Newman and Thornley choose to position themselves, convinced that globalization is not a "monolithic process." Thereby, they emphasize the continuing importance of different spatial scales in the planning of world cities and the interaction between these scales. Thus, the hyperglobalist argument that nation-states are hollowing out no longer fully holds; instead, Newman and Thornley focus on the way in which the role of nation-states in planning world cities is being restructured.

The second part of Chapter 2 focuses on the development of the world city hypothesis. Although the authors recognize early definitions of world cities by authors such as David Harvey and Peter Hall, they position the origin of current world city definitions in the 1980s, with the rise of theories that described world cities as specific nodal cities articulating processes of globalization. The authors stress the importance in this debate to move beyond definitions of world cities as static hierarchies and to consider them in terms of processes and networks. In order to further identify the world city in this respect, they explore three dimensions of the debate more thoroughly: the relation of global economic functions to space, the social impact of globalization on cities and the particular history and culture of world cities. In the first dimension of the debate, the world city is often considered to be a “greedy concept,” mainly focusing on the central core of the city. Yet if considered on a wider scale, substantial variations between different parts of the city may emerge. Therefore, the authors are interested in studying the impact of the city region on world city planning. The second dimension raises the question of whether interpretations of social processes, such as low-cost labor migration and polarization, are correct for and specific to world cities. Thirdly, the discussion of historical continuity brings the authors to conclude that a balance between new economic forces and continuity of longer term city roles is to be maintained.

Although this account of the world city debate clearly lays out different positions and complex discussions, the authors do not highlight the reasons behind these arguments. The definition of a world city depends on the reason for defining world cities in the first place. Are these arguments motivated by an interest in economic globalization or in the future of the city and urban planning? This is a question that remains unresolved not only in this chapter, but also in the book as a whole. It is never completely clear why the authors are interested in world cities as a research subject and whether the results of this study reposition the underlying motivations of the debate.

Chapter 3 further explores the issue of urban governance. Here Newman and Thornley aim to avoid straightforward causality between processes of globalization and urban governance. A key question in their search for a more complex understanding of the relationship between global forces and urban government is the degree of autonomy of city administrations in responding to global forces. The chapter starts by describing how the interaction of “trans-world governance” and transnational environmental agreements with local practices has had a major impact on national economies over the last 20 years. Thereby citizenship has been restructured and redistributed along national, international and regional scales. Here the authors argue that nation-states have thereby not been negated, but are rather restructured within the larger framework of multi-scalar urban governance. They suggest that, while the state has acceded functions to supra-regions and decentralized responsibilities to lower governing levels, it may take on new functions such as regulating or monitoring. The authors distinguish an enhanced degree of competition among cities under the influence of economic globalization. They adopt a regime theory, which analyzes relationships

between public and private sectors as key components of formulating an urban agenda. In addition, the authors point at leadership and citizenship as important aspects of world city politics. These observations lead to the conclusion that world cities present new and crucial planning issues, such as the mediating of market efficiency, urban growth, social polarization and environmental sustainability. At the same time, they emphasize the changing ambitions of city planners and the globalization of built-environment professions.

These first three chapters set up a promising and challenging framework for looking at world cities. In the next nine chapters, Newman and Thornley walk the reader through an analysis of the three world cities considered at the top of the global pyramid: New York, London and Tokyo. For each respective region (North America, Europe and Pacific Asia), they suggest a series of cities they consider to be competitors for the world city title. These studies compare findings about planning processes in each of the cities and their relationship to regional, national and global forces. This part of the book provides valuable information and evidence of the intricacies of contemporary planning processes and their local and regional contingencies. However, as a whole, the collection of studies lacks critical assessment of the forces involved.

Conclusions for each city are incomplete, and the relationships discovered between different scales of governance and planning are not explicit enough. Cities are still viewed as isolated fragments of urbanity competing for a position on the world map, rather than part of an interconnected system, whether networks, dispersed urbanities or megalopolis. In this respect, the treatment of alternative cities “challenging” the world cities does not seem to support the initial aim of the authors to challenge the purely functional interpretation of world cities.

As a resident and scholar of New York City, I was especially captured by the analysis of New York as a world city. Much of the information provided and conclusions drawn indeed depict a rich and complex image of a city in transition. At the same time, it seems important to point out a few discrepancies which could potentially nuance the larger implications of this case study. At the start of this chapter, a map of New York City shows the border with New Jersey as a thick boundary, with New Jersey as a blank space. However, in considering regional planning, New Jersey plays an important role for the New York region. As the authors mention, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey provides commuter transportation between New York and New Jersey. Yet, the PANYNJ also financed Newark airport in New Jersey, an important global link to the New York City region that is nevertheless not represented on the map. This seems to be a symptom of a larger conflict in the book between traditional assumptions about urban space and attempts to achieve descriptions of new challenges for a future urban space, different from models already known. In addition, Newman and Thornley conclude their analysis of the post 9/11 downtown rebuilding efforts by stating that private powers strongly influenced public planning. However, private and public powers were highly intertwined throughout the process. The initial public hearings organized

by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation have been interpreted not so much as participation incentives than as public appeasement. Much remains to be said about the underlying motivations of the LMDC and about hidden planning processes, which were never transparent and only occasionally came to the surface through discrepancies between statements of government officials. Also, in considering the regional planning efforts for New York, the new airtrain that provides a fast connection between JFK airport and Manhattan through the transportation hub of Jamaica Station in Queens should not be forgotten. This and other examples of “missing parts” throughout the case studies suggest that a deeper understanding of a smaller amount of case studies could have benefited the clarity of the argument.

In general, the authors’ definition of region as sub-global seems problematic, as the supra-national region has been gaining power in the last two decades. Especially in Europe, cross-border regional cooperation has played a crucial role in international integration and supra-national economic development. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable addition to the rich, yet often generalized discussion on the relationship between globalization and the city. It is a significant contribution to attempts in grounding, localizing and differentiating a lively debate.

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Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2005), 266 pp.

In *The Globalization of Israel*, Uri Ram analyzes the complex, highly contradictory Israeli reality through the prism of globalization. A powerful process that transpires on both the material and the conceptual level of society, globalization has dissolved traditional lifestyles and schemes of thought. In Ram’s book, it serves as a connecting axis between the various strata of Israeli society and culture currently caught in a state of crisis. Ram’s objective is both to comprehend Israel’s “contradictory” and “shattered” reality and “to find some kind of consistency” (p. 8) within it, which, he argues, is provided by the phenomenon of “glocalism.” This term encompasses the encounter of two conflicting forces: globalization, that is, the movement of goods, people, capital, technologies, information and knowledge, which effectively transforms ways of life; and localism, a force that runs counter to this movement. Glocalism thus refers to the inescapable dialectical situation in which the secular cosmopolitan market exists side by side with locally defined, nationalist and fundamentalist trends. Ram claims that the diametrically opposed but intertwined forces of glocalism have altered the face and nature of Israeli society, weakening Israeli nation-state society and placing it at a historical-political junction of options – on one side, liberal consumerism and, on the other, nationalist ethnicity and regressive fundamentalism.