Eco-social glocalization?
Egalitarian and elitist tendencies of the concept of urban governance

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Abstract

Globalization involves a number of eco-social challenges for cities, which manifest themselves differently on the local level. Through their enormous economic, political and demographic significance, cities play an extraordinarily important role in the reflexive relationship between the global and the local, which Robertson (1995) describes as glocalization. In consideration of the concept of urban governance, this paper discusses the effects of global dynamics on the local eco-social problem solving capacity in cities. The paper draws five conclusions: (1) Global development goes hand in hand with isomorphic change on the local level. (2) Institutional changes in cities have highlighted the importance of the concept of urban governance. (3) Urban governance has, first and foremost, elitist tendencies – the dogma of the entrepreneurial city has gained ground. (4) Urban governance, at the same time, brings along egalitarian tendencies – the inclusive city is the conceptual counterpart of the entrepreneurial city. (5) Eco-social glocalization is a matter of values.

Keywords: *glocalization, cities, urban governance, institutional isomorphism, public management*

Öko-soziale Glokalisierung?
Egalitäre und elitäre Tendenzen des Konzepts der Urban Governance

Zusammenfassung

Die Globalisierung hat soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen mit sich gebracht, die sich auf lokaler Ebene unterschiedlich manifestieren. Städte spielen durch ihre ständig im Steigen befindliche wirtschaftliche, politische und demografische Bedeutung eine wichtige Rolle in der reflexiven Wechselwirkung des Globalen und des Lokalen, die Robertson (1995) als Glokalisierung beschreibt. Dieser Beitrag diskutiert unter der Berücksichtigung des Konzepts der Urban Governance die Auswirkungen globaler Dynamiken auf die lokale öko-soziale Problemlösungskapazität in Städten. Er kommt zu folgenden Schlüssen: (1) Globale Entwicklungen bringen isomorphe lokale Veränderungen mit sich. (2) Institutionelle Veränderungen verlangen einen Perspektivenwechsel zur Betrachtung städtischer Steuerungsprozesse als Urban Governance. (3) Urban Governance hat zuallererst elitäre Tendenzen – das Dogma der unternehmerischen Stadt hat Fuß gefasst. (4) Urban Governance hat aber auch egalitäre Tendenzen im Gepäck – die inklusive Stadt ist das konzeptionelle Pendant der unternehmerischen Stadt. (5) Ökosoziale Glokalisierung ist eine Wertefrage.

Schlagwörter: *Glokalisierung, Städte, Urban Governance, Institutionelle Isomorphie, Public Management*

1. Introduction

"The vision of a more just, reasonable world with a sustainable economy can only be global. To implement this vision can only happen locally", the former French resistance fighter and UN diplomat Stéphane Hessel explains in his high-profile essay "Engagez-vous" (Hessel 2011: 32f). Indeed, there is hardly any doubt about the global dimension of the contemporary eco-logical and social 'Grand Challenges', such as the wide-ning gap between the rich and the poor, climate change and resource scarcity. Robertson defines the shifting global framework as „the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson 1992: 8). This awareness for global trends and for a certain "cosmopolitan consciousness related to uniformity in social changes" (Alasuutari 2011: 1) is in opposition to the fact that these challen-ges manifest themselves locally, are shaped by the local context and, at least in part, have to be solved on the local level. Contrary to a one-dimensional understan-ding of globalization, a 'glocal' perspective implies a reflexive relationship between the global and the local, and between the homogenous and the heterogeneous dimension (Robertson 1995).

What is much less obvious is that ideas and con-cepts travel globally and are absorbed by the local level similarly to the problems related to global change. As such, globalization could simply be understood as mere translocalization: Local practices, ideas, customs, and technologies are disseminated from their place of origin to the whole wide world (Czarniawska 2002). They are „fashions that spread throughout the world not only in design but in politics and management at various levels from private and public organiza-tions to nation-states" (Alasuutari 2011: 1). Prominent examples can be found in diverse areas such as poverty diminution (micro-loans), quality management (ISO-certification), management practices (stakeholder value and CSR), and even in gastronomy (Kebab and Pizza). A term that attempts to describe this emergence of organizational forms and practices that are similar all over the globe because of traveling ideas is the neo-institutional concept of isomorphism. In this paper, isomorphism plays two important roles: Firstly, it can explain "why there [is] such a startling homogeneity of organizational forms and practices" (DiMaggio/Powell 1983: 148). Secondly, the power of isomorphism lies in the fact that it partly seems to be a matter of course for policy-makers (Meyer 2004: 45). Its discussion there-fore accounts for the inevitable need to understand the mechanisms underlying global change in order to evaluate its dynamics.

A notable phenomenon that is considered to be an isomorphism is urban governance – i.e. a decision-making mechanism for cities, which is based on the assumption that the structure of actors and stakeholder groups is increasingly complex (Czarniawska 2002). Governance issues in cities that exceed the mere control of autonomous public units by a central unit (similar to corporate governance) are a challenge for academia and praxis. In brief, there are two possible approaches to examining them:

On the one hand, Czarniawska (2002) considers a comparative perspective in special consideration of the micro-level of a limited phenomenon area. This approach is reasonable insofar as it allows for a problem that appears in the context of almost all multi-discipli-nary concepts for the governance of cities: „Given the diversity of cities in terms of size, population growth rates and their economic, social, political, cultural and ecological settings, it is difficult to apply the concept of [e.g. sustainable development] generally" (Pacione 2009: 608). It is difficult to study governance without being informed about the local context.

On the other hand, the existence of globally syn-chronous developments suggests the examination of urban phenomena on the macro-level. Sassen explains the difference between the conventional comparative approach and a global macro-level approach as follows:

„[There is a difference between] studying a set of cities from a classical comparative approach and from a global approach. The issue of comparability in the latter is not standardizing in order to compare. It is, rather, tracking a given system or dynamic [...] and its distinct incarnations in different countries" (Sassen 2001: 348).

Here, the local context of urban planning and governance is accounted for by realizing that globally spreading ideas occur in different local shapes. It is still indispensable to differentiate events at the urban level in view of their local context. However, sub-concepts of urban governance, such as strategic urban planning, organizational decentralization, city marketing and branding, explicit inclusion of urbanites, sustainable city management etc. can be observed worldwide. Their global dynamic deserves a holistic examination instead of a fragmented, one-dimensional point of view.

This paper applies such a 'glocal' approach in order to explore the eco-social dimension of the concept of urban governance. Firstly, it deals with the direct effects

of globalization on the local, social, and ecological agenda, especially concerning growth-related issues in developed cities. Secondly, it discusses the indirect changes of cities' institutional framework, e.g. the emergence of global competition between cities, and organizational as well as structural reforms. Based on the first two descriptive chapters, the following sections analyze the implications of these contextual changes for the distribution of power in urban regimes. In connection to this shift towards urban governance, elitist tendencies, which strengthen the perception of "entrepreneurial cities" and intensify the social and ecological challenges in the urban area, are evident. In contrast, there is a large array of progressive ideas that are a surprisingly inherent part of the urban governance concept as well: Organizations such as OECD, UN-Habitat or the IMF do not become tired of stressing the inclusive potential of good urban governance. The ambiguous duality of the entrepreneurial and the inclusive city is exemplified by the global diffusion of Porto Alegre's participatory budget and urban strategies in Copenhagen and Sydney. Finally, this paper tries to answer the following research question: *In view of the global challenges for the ecological and social urban system, does the isomorphic dissemination of contemporary governance concepts in cities hold the potential for an 'eco-social glocalization'?*

2. Urban change and its challenges for cities

2.1 Growth and crises

The significance of cities as social, political and economic hubs has consistently increased since the early 19th century, mostly owing to their strikingly fast growing population share (Pacione 2009; Czarniawska 2002). In 1890, only Great Britain, parts of Western Europe and the US recorded a relative urban population of more than 25 % (Pacione 2009), whereas the UN estimates that more than 84 % of all humans will live in cities by 2050. In 2010, almost 3.5 billion people throughout the world were urbanites – for the first time in the history of mankind, the share of urban dwellers in the world population thus exceeded 50 % (UN Population 2009).

The problems implied by this rapid growth are not temporary. „Cities will continue to be net consumers of resources and producers of waste products, simply because of the relative intensity of social and economic activity in urban places" (Pacione 2009: 186). Hence, cities have to deal with permanent crises

in the ecological, social and legitimatory context of their governance.

Challenges that are directly implied by the above mentioned growth are demographic change and an infrastructure that is not suited for the increasing number of inhabitants and a hardly manageable density of population and buildings. They pose significant social (e.g. social exclusion), psychological (e.g. stress) and traditional planning problems (e.g. transportation and land use dilemmas). The local context for these challenges varies greatly. In developing countries, crucial topics are lack of space and overcrowding (e.g. in Manila with nearly 45,000 people per square kilometer), intricate health policies in huge slums (e.g. the slum Kibera in Nairobi with more than 2 million inhabitants), and fragmented townscapes because of urban sprawl (e.g. in New Delhi, which consists of 165 villages and more than 50 medium-sized cities). However, even the mostly stable and highly developed cities of the global north have challenges of their own: Ecological problems and the 'green agenda', constant legitimacy deficits, and the increasingly imbalanced distribution of income, wealth, and chances require for a regime that fosters a balance of economic priorities on one hand and social and ecological priorities on the other.

„*Economic development is fundamental to human well-being, but growth which fails to recognize the limits of natural resources and the finite capacity of global ecosystems to absorb waste is a basis of long-term decline in the quality of life*" (Pacione 2009: 186).

2.2 Social polarization

„Any city however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich", Glaeser at al. quote a nearly 2,500-year-old statement of Plato (2008: 1). In the course of globalization, urban inequality has further increased and highlighted the significance of Plato's claim. Firstly, income distribution and population density are positively correlated, as a US study shows for cities exceeding a population threshold of roughly 125 inhabitants/km^2 (Glaeser et al. 2008). Secondly, social inequality in cities has permanently deteriorated alongside the increasingly unequal distribution of income and wealth since the 1980ies (Andersen/Larsen 2003).

The social polarization in cities of the global north has exacerbated as well. The initial ghettoization debate, which was at center stage in early research on urban poverty, was largely replaced by a dicussion of

the "advanced marginality" concept (Andersen/Larsen 2003). According to a popular definition by Wacquant (1996), a certain part of the urban population is independent from macroeconomic trends and therefore does not profit, for example, from an ameliorating situation on the national labor market. Furthermore, this precarious group suffers from territorial fixation and stigmatization through a high concentration of underprivileged people, and little social capital, resulting in the absence of civil society organizations that fulfil advocacy functions for these groups. The concept of advanced marginality also reflects the strong relation between the spatial distribution of education and social inequality (Glaeser et al. 2008). Even though few scholars argue that developed cities are subject to actual ghettoization, there is no doubt that social and spatial aspects are closely connected.

2.3 Ecological footprint

Cities play a dominant role in the ecological sphere of our earth: "Most of the world's highly developed cities exhibit the highest per capita use of environmental capital" (Pacione 2009: 608). The consumption of non-renewable resources, the pressure on woods and water sources, and the per-capita-emission of greenhouse gas all are extraordinarily high in cities. The absorptive capacity of their eco-systems is overburdened. Even though London with its 7.4 million inhabitants does not even count as one of the more than 20 mega cities worldwide, which are defined by a population exceeding 10 million people, it consumes as much energy as Ireland. Cities are responsible for 75 % of the global energy consumption (Pacione 2009: 609) and for 70 % of the global emission of greenhouse gas (UN Habitat 2011a), in spite of only covering 2 % of the earth's surface and housing some 50,5 % of the world population (UN Population 2009).

In many cases, the data concerning the ecological situation of cities might be deceiving: New York, for instance, has taken credit for emitting as little as 7.1 tons of CO_2 per person and year. In comparison to a national average of 24.5 tons, it seems appropriate that NYC refers to itself as the "Big Green Apple" (NYC 2007). In comparison, Hong Kong shows an even more pleasant record, as only 5.4 tons of CO_2 per capita were emitted in 2001 (UN Stat 2011). Because of its status as a Special Administrative Region, however, macro-data including the carbon intensity of imported goods (i.e. the national carbon footprint) is available for Hong Kong,

indicating an alarmingly high overall level of 29 tons per capita (Hertwich/Peters 2009: 6416). In light of the fact that 75 % of Hong Kong's total CO_2 emissions are imported, one might reconsider NYC's green image.

This is little surprising, given that resources from all over the world are used for urban consumption. London once more serves as a good example, being evocative of the image of a medieval castle surrounded by fields: While only some 12 % of the British population live in their capital, London occupies a cultivated surface as big as the whole UK (Whitney/White 1992). The main reason for the illustrated problem is the linear nature of urban metabolism, in which inputs (resources) and outputs (products and services) are largely decoupled from each other, instead of forming a natural cycle (Girardet 2004: 126).

3. Institutional Change: Urban Management und Governance

Alongside the direct impact of global developments, the institutional setting of cities has changed as well through isomorphic social change. The most notable transformations of the prerequisites of governing cities include (1) the interconnectedness and competitive relationship of increasingly global 'world cities', and changes of the context of urban policy-making on (2) a structural and (3) an organizational level.

3.1 Global perspectives and competition

One of the most serious alternations of the context of urban planning is the increasing significance of a global perspective (Czarniawska 2002; Czarniawska-Joerges/Sévon 2005). Two aspects are dominant: Firstly, the constitution of a complex multi-level-governance with supra- and international decision-making bodies. It results in redistribution of agenda-setting power from traditional policy-makers (such as the city government) towards stakeholder groups that are less or not legitimized by the urban public, such as the establishment of the Internal Market as a result of the EU's Service Directive (coining local economic policy), the submission to the international community's Kyoto Protocol (having major impacts on traffic policy), or the Local Agenda 21, which suggests the installation of participatory procedures in urban policy-making.

Secondly, many scholars have noted the emergence of an international competitive relationship between cities. This competition between cities is hardly an

economic fact, but rather a flowery phrase in the vocabulary of policy-makers that has left the rhetorical level long ago and has become political reality. Thus, city rankings and benchmarks both regarding economic aspects and quality of life contribute to the competition for capital (such as headquarters of multinational enterprises, or tourism), political influence (such as international organizations or conferences), and creative minds (Florida 2004). Jouve and Lefèvre claim that local institutions are the key to urban competitiveness (2002), which is why the reflexive relationship between local and global policies also creates the necessity for a strategic approach towards urban planning and policy-making (Zérah 2009; Kornberger/Carter 2010).

3.2 Structural change affecting urban governance

An important characteristic of urban governance is the existence of multiple actors and stakeholders who cannot be clearly distinguished from each other. Many stakeholder groups (such as citizens, formal and informal civil society organizations, companies, media, international organizations, district authorities etc.) have been relevant for decades. The number of actors, however, has actually grown in recent years due to a variety of structural transformations. While in the traditional regime of city governments the majority of public services were concentrated in public institutions, today agencies, public-private partnerships and private companies add to the city administration. Especially the trend towards agencification is based on the efficiency-oriented thought of organizational design, in which the creation of public agencies at arm's length leads to the replacement of traditional Weberian bureaucracies with flexible network structures (Clarke 2009). By creating quasi-markets between public and private contractors, the institutional sector, which is usually the least concerned with the public interest, is given a strong role in the fulfillment of public assignments. Ultimately, networks, communities, and markets all play an important role alongside the existing bureaucracies (Löffler 2009: 222).

The governance of cities has thus undergone a persistent fragmentation. In Vienna, for example, no less than seven administrative units and several advisory boards are responsible for urban planning issues in the narrow sense, being supplemented by several public agencies and funds (Stadt Wien 2011). These public sector organizations add to the countless private architecture and urban planning

offices, lobbyists, management consultants, private investors, etc. In the process, a number of democratically not legitimized partners have extended their influence. All this implies that the city government itself is just one actor among many in shaping the city and its policies. At the same time, however, the general public has become more than just a mere electorate for those in power:

> „Questions about the effectiveness of these new modes of governing and their democratic credentials bring to the fore the participatory dimension of governance" (Zérah 2009: 854).

3.3 Organizational change affecting urban governance

Simultaneously, public organizations have gone through a series of micro-level changes that mostly stem from the paradigm of new public management. These reforms incorporate the application of managerial instruments in the administrative context and the strengthening of the market logic in the public sector. While there is no doubt that some instruments of public management are reasonable, the international pressure to implement management practices is high, primarily because of the entrance of public management in the academic discourse and because of powerful proponents such as the OECD.

The paradigmatic shift that is related to the instruments of the new administrative logic has also triggered an overemphasis of cost efficiency in urban politics (Clarke 2009; Bovaird/Löffler 2009). Apart from the higher valuation of efficiency public management also brought about a number of instruments that aim at increasing the effectiveness and transparency of public conduct. Primarily, this includes the formulation of long-term goals and indicators that are capable of their evaluation, e.g. through strategic management and performance budgeting, and an extension of accountability mechanisms such as accounting and reporting requirements. It is the above-mentioned fragmentation of decision-making actors that has led to a downright flood of accountability requirements. However, the main reason for this "audit explosion" was that the traditional administration is regarded with suspicion by public managers, rather than their ambition to concur with the standards of good governance (Clarke 2009). Consequently, accountability has predominantly been ameliorated towards administrative, professional and legal forums. Political and social accountability, especially towards civil society and the general public, are

usually not central in public management (Bovens 2005).

4. Urban management and governance as an isomorphic regime

In short, the setting of shaping cities has recently shifted from the dominating „traditional, local-Keynesian welfare state pattern" (Redak 2000: 85) towards an urban governance, in which the city government is not the only relevant actor (Galès 1995; Kornberger/Clegg 2011). Similar to the social and ecological facets explained in the first part of this paper, these transformations are global, isomorphic appearances that manifest themselves in different ways on the local level – urban governance is subject to the glocalization of concepts (Robertson 1995; Czarniawska 2002). This is one of the reasons why there are hardly any non-controversial definitions of the governance concept, which is not an isolated case in the social sciences.

One of the essential questions at this point is why ideas concerning the regime of cities travel at all. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) offer three popular explanatory approaches: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism.

All three aspects play an important role in the global dissemination of the urban governance concept: Since 1994, for example, European law coerces authorities (including cities) to call for tender in the public procurement process. At the same time, the active, normative diffusion of concepts by inter- and supranational organizations, such as World Bank, OECD, or the EU, must not be underestimated. Best-practices, competitions, awards or concrete initiatives (such as the OECD's publication series on public management) support normative isomorphism. Finally, Czarniawska highlights the role of mutual mimicry, which was facilitated by globalization through the increasing transparency of comparable data – why, for example, do most current city strategies describe what the city will look like in 2030, rather than 2025 or 2035? The homogeneity of organizational structures is reflected by the effects of a globalized world. For example, the global shift from city governments to urban governance can be explained through different types of pressures, because of which policy-makers deem certain actions as a matter of course in order to acquire legitimacy (Meyer 2004: 45). This is especially true if an organization experiences a large degree of uncertainty, which is pivotal for the case of global change (DiMaggio/Powell 1983).

In order to understand the impact of such transformations, it is important to clarify a few things about the governance of cities. Policy-making in general and planning in particular are traditionally technocratic in urban areas. Due to high complexity, most decision-making processes are top-down and include experts like urban planners, architects, engineers, and academics (Levy 2011). However, the agenda of the public sector clearly exceeds traditional town planning and covers the whole spectrum from urban design, regional and supraregional economic development and urban renewal, transportation planning, and environmental planning (Levy 2011; Pacione 2009; Sinning 2007). At the same time, planning and managing cities is a highly political and emotional topic, especially due to its geographical proximity to those affected and the direct economic and quotidian significance for the local public. Information asymmetries between planners and the public, which is often much better informed about the relevant situation, supplement the difficulties (Levy 2011). Most importantly, the distribution of decision-making power and influence between the urban elite and the general public always plays a central role. Flyvbjerg talks about a "mechanism of power" and emphasizes the inevitable question of power: „Who gains and who loses?" (Flyvbjerg 2002: 9).

In course of the changes described in the first part of this paper, the traditional perception of urban planning as comprehensive practice to shape cities was gradually replaced by terms such as urban management and urban governance: The spread of managerial approaches in the public sector is regularly justified by the global competition between cities and their considerable budgetary restrictions (OECD 2006; Sassen 2005; Florida 2004). Moreover, it reflects the ideologically motivated economization of academia and politics (Brenner/Theodore 2002; Kornberger/Carter 2010: 327). Sinning identifies three different instances of economic thought in the urban planning context: (1) an increasingly strategic approach, (2) a holistic understanding of urban planning that exceeds physical planning and incorporates economic, demographic, and social development, and (3) city marketing (Sinning 2007).

In contrast to this functional notion of a more managerial approach towards traditional city administration (through strategy, economic considerations at center stage, and marketing), urban governance is a term that describes the political framework for urban policy-makers, whose task it is to deal with the unequal

distribution of power within the city. "[Urban Governance] is a key system in determining the outcome of power struggles – of who gets 'what, when and how'" (Pacione 2009: 418). The term itself often lacks a coherent definition, even within one and the same collective volume, but in brief it could be seen as "the way in which stakeholders interact with each other in order to influence the outcomes of public policies" (Bovaird/Löffler 2009b: 6). An exact definition might not even ensure additional analytical value, since the functions associated with the term differ greatly depending on the specific context (for a good introduction see Kjaer 2004). However, it is important to note that the concept incorporates different ideas relating to the complexity of multiple actors and stakeholders, including partnerships between the public and the private sector, but also "a shift towards more participatory forms of democratic engagement" (Kornberger/Clegg 2011: 3).

Pierre argues that governance should be seen as a process of "blending and coordinating public and private interests" (1999: 374), but this single function of the administration as coordinator of a network is somewhat contested (Kooiman/Jentoft, 2011). How these functions are fulfilled is less a question of government or governance than a question of the local application of ideologically coined values and norms in the context of governance. Pierre plausibly argues that ideological objectives, the relationship to a government's citizens, the primary contingency and the definition of certain key evaluative criterions (reaching from efficiency to equity), etc. are closely related to how a city administration deals with certain 'governance gaps' (1999: 388).

In view of these different perspectives on urban governance, the following sections of the chapter are supposed to illustrate two oppositional readings of the concept, namely the elitist tendencies related to the ideal of an 'entrepreneurial city' and the egalitarian tendencies of the ideal of an 'inclusive city', which could both be seen as the logical consequence of the shift from city governments to urban governance described above.

4.1 The entrepreneurial city: elitist tendencies of urban governance

These organizational and structural transformations, which have a certain managerial spirit in common and favor a lean and efficient state over a capacious public sector, suggest that cities can be managed like enterprises. Even though this managea-

bility is a somewhat contested perspective (e.g. because of the territorial fixation of cities, democratic instead of autocratic decision-making processes, public welfare instead of profit maximization, lack of a theory of state, etc.), the entrepreneurial city is not a merely rhetoric construct today (Levy 2011; Leitner/Sheppard, 1998; Redak 2000). An entrepreneurial city, according to a popular definition of Harvey (1989), is characterized by an emphasis on economic development, the entrance of private actors in the provision of public services as well as managerial practices in the public administration, and is increasingly oriented towards economic globalization. There is hardly any empirical research on the entrepreneurial notion of cities as such outside North-America (e.g. Glaeser 2010) – thus, there is always the danger of naively believing that the fact that the entrepreneurial city has entered the discourse of public decision-makers has altered their actions as well (Brunsson 1993). However, a multitude of related trends, i.e. a constantly stronger managerial approach towards administrating the urban public sector, corporate structures, city marketing, the application of strategy thinking, participation in inter-city competitions, etc., are empirically backed (e.g. Pollitt/Bouckaert 2004; Czarniawska-Joerges 2002; Kornberger/Clegg 2011). It is clear that the readjusted stakeholder structure and the tight financial bounds of public sector organizations favor the search for private investors and contractors (Redak 2000). In many cases, the effectiveness and efficiency of private partners is supposed to exceed those of traditional bureaucracies, even though this assumption is disputed and favors the exclusion of some stakeholder groups from the decision-making processes (Klausen et al. 2006; Newman/Ashworth 2009). From a governance perspective, asymmetrical networks with their multiple stakeholder structure add to the rule-based bureaucracies of traditional city administrations (Novy et al. 2001; Löffler 2009b; Rhodes, 2007). The lack in vertical accountability, e.g. between the city government and agencies, who often are not subject to legal directives by the city administration, and the legitimatory deficits of organizations at arm's length imply elitist tendencies at large. This is likely to lead to further social and political polarization:

In the worst case, one can even call it a net-transfer from the poor toward the urban elites" (Redak 2000: 87).

Pierre argues that in the case of an urban governance regime that emphasizes growth, the most important counterpart for the city government is a small business elite, which does not necessarily influence

policy choices but whose strongly represented interests have considerable political ramifications nevertheless. Sometimes, what does not happen is more relevant for the outcome of urban policy-making, e.g. in the case of non-interventionism for ideological reasons (Pierre 1999: 383). Even though the type of the urban regime and the welfare state in question is highly relevant for a comprehensive appraisal, entrepreneurial city concepts usually do not attach great importance to redistribution (or tend to evaluate questions of distributions from an economic perspective; Dannestam 2004) and active inclusion of those population groups who suffer from advanced marginality. Doing so, however, poses an important prerequisite for the removal and avoidance of urban inequality (Andersen/Larsen 2003). According to Pierre, one of the reasons for this "collaboration [that] rests on shared interest in economic growth between city hall and the downtown business elite" (1999: 384) instead of including the public is that "such participation would immediately politicize the progrowth strategy by bringing in competing local government spending options such as neighborhood redevelopment and other distributive measures" (Pierre 1999: 284).

The transformation of the regime-relevant context of urban governance therefore does not contribute to the resolution of ecological problems, because „the goal of sustainability is not an integral element of market capitalism and will encounter opposition from entrenched interests" (Pacione 2009: 186).

4.2 The inclusive city: egalitarian tendencies of urban governance?

As noted, the increased flexibility of urban regimes is partly ideologically motivated and, among other effects, leads to a shift of influence towards the private sector. In view of this observable elitist tendency of urban governance, the question arises why the decisions to implement the according reforms were supported throughout various welfare state regimes and political contexts both by rightist and leftist policy-makers. The hope of progressive forces that governance reforms also might have inclusive outcomes was a major reason for their support (Kornberger/Carter 2010; Zérah 2009; Brenner/Theodore 2002). Theoretically, the concept of urban governance is suited for including stakeholder groups that have previously been excluded and to strategically reduce poverty and social inequality (Andersen/Larsen 2003; Pieterse 2000). According to Pierre, equity can replace growth or efficiency as the key eva-

luative criterion in some models of urban governance (1999: 388).

The changing role of governments in the governance of the public sphere has predominantly caused international organizations and administrative reformers to elaborate on the principles of good governance. According to UNESCAP, good governance incorporates eight comprehensive aspects: It is "consensus-oriented, participatory, in accordance with the rule of law, effective and efficient, accountable, transparent, responsive, just, and inclusive" (UNESCAP 2011). Irrespective of managerialism, the fragmentation of actor structures, and the global competition between cities, OECD, UNDP, EU, IWF and the World Bank stress the importance of striving for these maxims of good governance. In this context, it is important to recall that the role of city governments has largely shifted from self-contained policy-makers towards a facilitating role. Especially where democratically legitimized public bodies are not the only decision-makers, it is indispensable to call for good governance as an inherent component of urban governance that exceeds a merely rhetorical dedication to inclusion (Löffler 2009: 219).

Following Easton's commonly acknowledged definition of politics as the „authoritative allocation of values for a society" (Easton 1953: 129), it is obvious that choosing to govern according to optimizing these criteria has an impact on political equality. Participation and inclusive policies will, by definition, lead to a redistribution of power without simply excluding hard-to-reach groups. In case inclusive policies do not go beyond manipulating citizens and do not create citizen power, Arnstein noted as early as in 1969, participation is actually non-participation. Lee describes the problem of tokenism as follows:

> „People are given the impression that they have influenced the outcomes. However, decision-making is actually nothing more than a black box and power remains in the hand of a few" (Lee 2011, interview).

Apart from the substantive aspect (e.g. through redistributive policies), urban governance therefore implies a significant chance for producing political equality on a procedural level. In the sense of "empowerment governance" (UNESCAP 2005), deliberative politics favor the inclusive city that the proponents of good urban governance call for (Pieterse 2000; Verba 2001). In conclusion, there is reason to believe that urban governance also has the potential for egalitarian tendencies.

4.3 Urban governance as a question of glocalization

These ambivalent readings of the versatile concept of urban governance show that the shift from government to governance does not have a one-dimensional impact on the eco-social agenda, the relationship between banal localism and global consciousness, or the struggles for an equal distribution of power in cities. The above discussion does not aim at identifying one model that is superior to another through all local contexts, but argues that while the global trend stimulating a change towards urban governance is isomorphic, the local impact of the concept cannot be evaluated without taking the local context in general and the local government's values in particular into account (Pierre 1999; Rhodes 2007: 1249). The following discussion aims at providing two illustrative examples for an application of this perspective and bringing together the eco-social big picture of globalized cities as discussed in chapter 2 and the theoretical discussion of the glocal dimension of urban governance.

5. Eco-social glocalization?

The potential of the urban governance concept to create political equality on the ground is not only relevant from a democratic perspective, but also has an indirect impact on the eco-social challenges of cities directly related to their constant globalization. One of the key concepts in understanding the connection between political equality and the eco-social challenges for cities is urban sustainability, which is based on the thoughts on sustainable growth formulated at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. A major relating document, Agenda 21, stresses four dimensions of sustainable governance: social, natural, economic, and physical sustainability. These four aspects are embedded within a fifth dimension: political sustainability. The concept's credo is: "Meeting the needs of the present [economic, social, cultural, health-related, political needs] without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [managing waste, the conservation of non-renewable resources, and being aware of the natural capacity of our environment]" (Satterthwaite 1997: 1668).

According to this, the social and ecological problem solving capacity of cities is directly related to the distribution of power, since sustainability is primarily in the interest of those who are excluded from elitist decision-making: the underprivileged.

Hitherto, the expectations regarding the inclusive dimension of urban governance are fairly abstract, in stark contrast to its manifest entrepreneurial aspects. However, there is a large array of concrete measures that make a contribution to good governance. Two examples with a possibly exceptional impact on the social and ecological problem of the urban area will be discussed in the following: participatory budgets and urban strategies with a green focus. In the dissemination of these sub-concepts of urban governance, international organizations and cities' interest in the global economy have played an important role. In this context, urban strategies could be seen as examples for mimetic isomorphism and the global promotion of the participatory budget through the World Social Forum and the United Nations is a normative isomorphism. What these instruments have in common is their ability to contribute to the resolution of globally existing problems on the local level by complying with the principles of good governance.

5.1 Participatory budgets: advancing social equality

Concepts are transferred from Western countries to developing countries on a regular basis in order to resolve problems of the global south by applying concepts that have been tested in the global north before. However, there are also concepts that travelled the other way around; the participatory budget, for example, was exported from Porto Alegre/Brazil, to Europe (UN Habitat 2011b). In the late 1980ies, Porto Alegre's labor party PT initiated a new budgeting method, where the public decides on a certain part of the public funds that has been cleared by the government (some 20 %, the number has been increasing over time). A detailed description of the method can be found in Sintomer et al. (2008), who also did some research on the concept's diffusion in Europe.

Even though the local manifestation of this exported concept differs largely from city to city, the main principle is always the same: A grassroots council deliberates on the utilization of a certain share in the overall budget in a process that is coherent to the budget cycle, holds a vote on the proposition, and formally asks the city government for its approval. Fixed expenditure, such as pensions and payment of interest, are not up for discussion. In the extreme form, the public is given

the power to decide upon a large part of the variable budget, which equals a high degree of "citizen power" (Arnstein 1969).

An evaluation of the overall advantages and drawbacks of participatory budgeting is not in the focus of this paper, but can be found elsewhere (Novy/Bernhard 2004; Herzberg 2001; Cabannes 2004; Avritzer 2006). Yet, some problems associated with the question of urban equality outlined above can be solved with this approach. As initially stated, personal and regional income distribution in cities correlate severely (Andersen/Larsen 2003). Hence, redistribution of resources to under-developed city districts with a high share of low-income inhabitants is a strong measure to reduce poverty. While subsidizing these districts with public funds is often prevented by hegemonic politics, and while private investment is related to gentrification and other little desirable consequences, the participatory budget of Porto Alegre has led to a "reorientation of public investments towards the most disadvantaged districts" (Sintomer et al. 2008: 167). Apart from the reallocation of financial means, the associated inclusive impact adds to the contribution to reducing poverty: As discussed above, urban poverty leads to social exclusion and makes the development of social capital difficult. Through the gradual discussion process, in which a large number of people are involved in some way, civil society is strengthened and social movements can emerge where it is usually highly unlikely (Sintomer et al. 2008; Putnam 2001).

It is important not to confuse "ideological discourses and actual results" (Sintomer et al. 2008: 175). Participatory budgeting was invented in a very specific context and, truth be told, was only successful in few cases outside Porto Alegre (e.g. to Seville, parts of Berlin, or Plock in Poland). What is interesting, though, is that the concept was taken on very fast by international players and was advertised globally, e.g. through the World Social Forum and, subsequently, by hardly subversive organizations such as the World Bank and UN-Habitat. Today, almost 1.000 out of 16.000 communes in Latin America and more than 100 cities in Europe have adopted the participatory budget in some form (Sintomer et al. 2008).

5.2 Urban strategies: competing for the greenest city

Tackling problems concerning urban equality and sustainability is not a purely functional question, it also

depends on the dedication of the decision-makers, i.e. what they value important. The multi-stakeholder alignment of cities, however, does not suggest that there is anything like a unisonous chorus of opinions that could be seen as the consensual set of values.

In view of the high dependency of the actual manifestation of the concept of urban governance on underlying norms, values and principles, Kooiman/Jentoft (2011) still propose that these factors that underpin decisions should be made explicit as an act of governing governance. One way of doing so are city strategies. Hence, the second illustrative example for a glocal perspective on eco-social problems is cities' strategic approach towards urban policy. The fact that cities have recently started to compile long-term documents and react to international city rankings is a result of both the intercity competition and the entrepreneurial logic of public management (Kornberger/Clegg 2011). Even though strategic thinking and benchmarking predominantly reflect the entrepreneurial tendencies of contemporary cities, urban strategies are also able to contribute to the eco-social advancement of cities.

Because of their (sometimes subtle) global alignment, strategies and city rankings reflect global trends to a large degree. Among these trends is the focus on sustainability and ecologically sound urban development. As Kornberger/Carter show, city rankings such as the Mercer Quality of Life Ranking or the MasterCard Worldwide Centers of Commerce Ranking are more than just a reflection and quantification of reality:

"[L]eague tables are engines, not cameras. League tables engender competition; in turn, this produces the need for cities to develop strategies. Because they render intangibles tangible, because they create a hierarchical order amongst barely related entities, and because they justify and legitimize the allocation of resources to develop city strategies, […] league tables are meaningful ways to engender competition" (Kornberger/Carter 2010: 332).

Hence, global competition, which is regularly used to justify the entrepreneurial approach and the employment of strategies, is promoted by those instruments that are actually intended to display it. A glance at the aspects determining the overall score in city rankings shows how this is relevant for the eco-social perspective: Aside from economically oriented rankings such as the MasterCard ranking, there are also rankings with an emphasis on quality of life, which put social and ecological aspects in the spotlight. The criteria of EIU's Livability Index include stability (25 %), healthcare (20 %), culture and environment (25 %), education

(10 %), and infrastructure (20 %, including traffic and housing) (EIU 2010). Mercer published a special eco-ranking in 2010 that emphasizes sustainability and eco-logically reasonable policies (Mercer 2010). Particular indices, such as the Green City Index by Siemens and EIU (Siemens/EIU 2009) and the Urban Governance Index (UN Habitat 2005) also arrange a competition for the greenest and best-governed city.

As a result, some urban strategies take sustainability and ecological sanity at center stage. Good-practices are Copenhagen's strategy Eco-Metropolis, which states that the city will have become the "green and blue world capital" by 2015, or Sustainable Sydney 2030 with the slogan "Green, global, connected". At the same time, several sustainable strategies are in preparation on the global level, such as at the successor of the Rio Earth Summit, Rio +20, which will, in analogy to the Local Agenda 21, strive for a consolidation of global and local responsibility.

While many policies targeting betterment in eco-social matters are clearly stand-alone local initiatives (sometimes accounted to global talk), the performance of local governments is arguably closely connected to their global competitiveness. In a survey on the reaction of local media to a report on cultural policy, Alasuutari states that journalists exclusively used the relative ranking result for their headlines rather than reporting on the absolute qualitative assessment, i.e. "[they] routinely assumed that how their city is doing compared with the others is of most interest for their readers" (2011: 11).

However, there is also the notion of a 'glocal' reciprocity of urban strategies connected to participating in these competitive games that attracts special interest. In 2011, the City of Copenhagen published a follow-up strategy to Eco-Metropolis, which can only be found in the English-speaking section of the website: „This catalogue details eight sustainable city solutions from Copenhagen. In developing these solutions we were inspired by other cities around the world. We hope that the lessons we learnt will, in return, be of inspiration to you and your city" (City of Copenhagen 2011: 3). Thereby, the city explicitly tries to reflect their key insights and findings to the global level and positions itself as an advocate of sustainable development in the international competition between cities. At the same time, the capitalization of the local government on the authentically local solution to the traffic problems in Copenhagen might not be about contributing to a better global society or to climb up a rank on some lead table, rather than a certain "dramatization of the local"

as an expression of uniqueness, while moving into standardized models (Meyer 2000: 245).

Once more, this raises questions regarding a possible decoupling of talk and action (Brunsson 1993). However, the Foucauldian emphasis on the performative understanding of discourses "as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 49) has also been shown to be applicable to urban strategies (Kornberger/Clegg 2011). Strategy's intentions are thus somewhat irrelevant for its effects, e.g. a mimetic reaction by other cities (for this matter, see for example the recent emergence of the 'Copenhagenize Index[1], assessing the bike-friendliness of a city; Copenhagen comes in second after Amsterdam).

Additionally, strategies have a long-term focus and are therefore compatible with inter-generational problems, in contrast to the short-term thinking common in representative democracies. Strategies address external stakeholder groups and require the inclusion of the public, both in order to ensure the policy-makers' legitimacy and the quality of their policies. Considering long-term outcomes that are in the public interest could reposition ecological and social factors as an inherent component of the urban policy makers' agenda.

6. Conclusion

This paper discusses the recent changes in the matters of urban concern from a macro-perspective. There is an emphasis on the institutional framework of policy-making in cities on one hand, and the relationship to social, ecological, and political challenges of urbanization and globalization on the other. In this regards, it tries to analyze *the isomorphic dissemination of contemporary governance concepts in cities and their potential for an 'eco-social glocalization'* and gives two illustrative examples. The following conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion in reply to the research question:

6.1 Global development goes hand in hand with isomorphic change on the local level.

The effects of globalization are not limited to the direct social, ecological, and demographic challenges, but also favor the diffusion of concepts and ideas: "*ideas travel*" (Czarniawska-Joerges/Sévon 2005). Iso-

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1   http://copenhagenize.eu/index/ [10. 3. 2012].

morphism, i.e. globally similar solutions for similar local problems, arise from coercion, normative dissemination and mimetic behavior of the local actors. The local and the global thereby have a reflexive relationship: inclusive approaches such as the participatory budget are developed locally, disseminated globally, and finally implemented according to the different local prerequisites of policy-making. Strategic policy documents are animated by global problems and local values, are locally formulated and globally advertised, and finally made available to local actors all over the world through global channels. Obviously, the application of a macro-perspective on urban policies in this paper creates additional analytical value through the recognition of this dynamic interaction between the global and the local level, despite its inability to replace the study of individual cases.

6.2 Institutional changes in cities have highlighted the importance of the concept of urban governance.

The institutional context of governing cities is subject to global developments. There is an emphasis on the distinctive competitive relationship between urban centers on the one hand and the partly made-up necessity to obtain a unique selling proposition (i.e. a competitive edge for the city). On the other hand, the management and governance of cities has been altered both on an organizational and on a structural level. Agencification and fragmentation of policy-makers and administrative bodies, the overemphasis on efficiency at the expense of the social and ecological agenda of cities, and the role of private and quasi-autonomous actors in shaping the city are all isomorphic transformations. The narrative of a central policy-maker as most significant actor in shaping the city is archaic and insufficient – the concept of urban governance may be a more accurate way of perceiving policy-making in cities. Urban governance is not a value-neutral concept, i.e. its effects on the important question of the distribution of power within society are somewhat ambiguous.

6.3 Urban governance has, first and foremost, elitist tendencies – the dogma of the entrepreneurial city has gained ground.

The institutional changes in cities have an efficiency-oriented spirit in common that lead to a possible understanding of cities as enterprises. At the same time,

there is well-grounded reason to doubt the suitability of equating cities with companies – mainly focusing on the fact that the goals of cities are more complex than making profit (Redak 2000). The according urban governance model perceives economic growth as the most important value and, according to Pierre (1999), avoids participatory discussions on alternative spending options. Decisions are thereby made primarily by a small elite and consequently are in their interest, while political and social accountability are underrepresented. The concerns expressed by many scholars some ten years ago have become political reality (Zérah 2009; Redak 2000; Novy et al. 2001; Lee 2011). The impact of the new regime for the political equality in cities has hardly been researched on, but a deterioration of the public's options to influence decision-making processes and a persistent negligence of the eco-social agenda can be expected.

6.4 Urban governance, at the same time, brings along egalitarian tendencies – the inclusive city is the conceptual counterpart of the entrepreneurial city.

The entrepreneurial city and the inclusive city seem to be two contradictory ideal types at first glance, but in fact they are two sides of the same coin, i.e. two readings of the concept of urban governance. Understanding the relevant policy-making mechanisms of cities as urban governance does not imply a path-dependency towards an entrepreneurial city without any eco-social ambitions. Rather, participation and sustainability are intrinsic components of the political and academic discourse on the 21st century city. Especially where social and economic inequalities are striking, the call for good urban governance is loud. Participatory planning, environmental governance, open government data, or comprehensive consultation are isomorphic as well and appear jointly with entrepreneurial concepts. Accordingly, urban governance has ambiguous implications for the political equality in cities and the approach towards social and ecological challenges. Even from an entrepreneurial perspective, long-term thinking, sustainability, and social stability are often identified as strategic competitive advantages. Naturally, this does not imply that all cities (or any city at all) become more egalitarian in the end. What it clearly shows, however, is that instruments capable of improving equality spread through similar channels as the entrepreneurial logic does. The ideal type of the

entrepreneurial and the inclusive city may not be so contradictory after all.

6.5 Eco-social glocalization is a matter of values.

Still, the actual notion of the concept of urban governance (i.e. whether these isomorphic changes have egalitarian or elitist consequences) is not arbitrary; it depends on the values and norms in the institutional environment of urban policy-makers. The confrontation with the permanent ecological, social, and legitimatory crises of cities is inevitable even in entrepreneurial cities. The entrepreneurial dimension of the urban governance concept, however, does not provide any sustainable solutions for these challenges. Local policy-makers are therefore required to adjust their local version of urban governance to be more suited to meet the requirements of the eco-social agenda in the new institutional context, both what the substance of policies and the procedure of policy-making is concerned. Isomorphic processes are often perceived as a matter of course. However, they can be influenced through a value-aware application of global ideas on the local level. The reflexive relationship between cities on the one hand an international proponents and idea-showcases (such as rankings or websites) on the other allow that local eco-social strategies are transferred back to the global level. If that happens, an eco-social glocalization is possible.

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