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*Urban Affairs Review* 1999 34: 372

DOI: 10.1177/10780879922183988

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## MODELS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE The Institutional Dimension of Urban Politics

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Local governments in Western Europe have become increasingly involved in network building with the local business community. The author suggests that governance processes are not value neutral but reflect and sustain political values beyond partisan conflict. Comparing managerial, corporatist, progrowth, and welfare governance models of urban governance, the author argues that nation-state factors play an important role in shaping urban governance. Different sectors in urban politics display different models of governance and local political choice matters. Also, cities within the same national context differ significantly with regard to the degree of inclusion of organized interests in urban governance, which, in turn, is reflected in urban policy outcomes.

**The role of institutions** in urban politics and urban governance is critically examined in this article. I argue that the new and more encompassing forms of public-private exchanges that characterize urban politics in both Europe and the United States must be understood against the background of the purposes and goals of urban governance. Furthermore, I suggest that the wide variety of urban governance objectives can be reduced analytically to four general models: managerial, corporatist, progrowth, and welfare governance. Each of these models displays its own type of governance with regard to participants, objectives, instruments, and outcomes. Finally, I argue that different models of urban governance not only reflect different political orientations between different cities but also the issue of what should be the goals of

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association in Toronto, 17-20 April 1997. I am extremely grateful to Guy Peters, Gerry Stoker, and five anonymous reviewers for comments on previous drafts of this article.*

URBAN AFFAIRS REVIEW, Vol. 34, No. 3, January 1999 372-396  
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urban governance is at the heart of urban political choice, and different segments of the city and the city administration tend to embrace different values. Thus the framework developed in this article also helps explain problems of governability or “governance gaps” (Pierce 1993; Warren, Rosentraub, and Weschler 1992; Wirt 1974) within individual cities.

Over the past several years, theories of governance have come to shape much of the thinking about urban politics, at least in the Western European academic milieu (Dowding 1996; Goldsmith 1997; Le Galès 1997; Stoker 1998). These emerging theories are primarily concerned with the coordination and fusion of public and private resources, which have become a widely adopted strategy for local authorities throughout Western Europe. Although there is a growing body of research on the nature of these public-private partnerships, broadly defined (King and Stoker 1996; Pierre 1994, 1998), the issue of which political objectives guide such urban governance has been left largely unanswered.

However, one cannot understand urban governance unless these value dimensions are brought into the analysis. It is here that institutional theory, which highlights the overarching values that give meaning and understanding to political processes, offers some analytical assistance. Although theories of governance conceptualize processes of public-private resource mobilization, institutional theory is thus a vehicle for understanding the values and objectives that give these processes direction, objective, and meaning.

The institutional dimension of urban politics is conceptualized in a similar way to what is often referred to as institutional (or neo-institutional) theory (March and Olsen 1984, 1989, 1995; Peters 1996a). Thus institution refers to overarching systems of values, traditions, norms, and practices that shape or constrain political behavior. Institutionalists make a clear distinction between institutions and organizations (North 1990; Scott 1995). Certainly, institutions have organizational logics (Clarke 1995); for instance, cities in welfare states have a different organizational setup than do cities in more market-embracing systems. The relationship between institutions and organizations is dynamic, and one should not expect a continuous harmony to exist between systems of values and norms, on one hand, and the organizational system of government, on the other (see Pierre and Park 1997).

Although institutional theory has become a leitmotiv in much of mainstream political science, the institutional dimension of urban politics remains unclear and ambiguous (but see Clarke 1995). Institutions in urban politics are derived, to a significant extent, from nation-state institutions and can only be uncovered in cross-national analyses (DiGaetano and Klemanski 1993; Keating 1991; King 1987). Interestingly, such studies suggest that local governments “differ more in what they govern than in how they govern” (Teune

1995, 16). If the styles and objectives of urban governance remain fairly stable across countries and the main differences relate to the scope of local government, then analyses of urban governance should be focused less on cross-national variations and more on trying to uncover what causes this high degree of similarity between highly different political, administrative, and legal cultures.

Thus, to a much greater extent than is the case at the level of the nation-state, institutions in urban governance are themselves constrained by organizational factors such as constitutional arrangements and other types of legal definitions of the responsibilities of public organizations.<sup>1</sup> Organizations matter in a large number of other ways as well—as instruments for democratic accountability, for instilling political authority into the governance process, and for linking the urban political process to that of higher echelons of government, just to name a few—so it is necessary to examine to what extent organizational arrangements shape urban politics and the relationship between institutions and organizations in urban politics.

The article has two objectives. First, I seek to clarify the institutional dimension of urban governance. I point at ways to sharpen the distinctions between government and governance, between institution and process, and between the local state and the local civil society.<sup>2</sup> Second, I introduce a typology of different models of urban governance bringing together the external and internal dimensions of urban governance. The structuring and orientation of urban governance in any given national and local context reflect overarching norms, values, ideas, and practices. Thus one can identify different models of urban governance with regard to different views of local democracy, the role of local government in local economic development, different styles of distributive policies, and different conceptions of the role of the local state in relationship to civil society, on one hand, and the objectives that guide local governments' different exchanges with the local civil society, on the other. However, locales within the same (national) political culture differ with regard to their governance, and there are contending views even within cities about the purpose and goals of the city's policies.

The basic argument presented here can be summarized in four points. First, urban governance should be understood of as a process blending and coordinating public and private interests. As regime theorists have long argued, governing the city and its exchange with private actors is a task that is too overwhelming for public organizations to handle alone (Beauregard 1996; Stoker 1995a; Stone 1989). Governance refers to the process through which local authorities, in concert with private interests, seek to enhance collective goals. It is a process shaped by those systems of political, economic,

and social values from which the urban regime derives its legitimacy. However, although these collaborative strategies strengthen the governing capacity of local authorities, they also expose these organizations to the full thrust of political pressures from private business and civil society. Therefore, urban governance should be seen as a two-way street channeling pressures and objectives both ways across the public-private border. Although a host of literature testifies to the powerful influence that private capital exerts in urban politics (see, e.g., Jones and Bachelor 1986; Peterson 1981; Swanstrom 1988; Vogel 1992), it is also true that cities have some leverage over the local business community (Kantor 1997).

Second, understanding the capabilities of local government organizations is essential for an understanding of urban governance. This is because those organizations are among the key players in such governance, albeit in a different way compared to more traditional analyses of urban politics. These early accounts of urban politics saw the institutional arrangements of the local state as derived primarily from the long-term objectives and interests of the political elite. In the governance perspective, the approach is exactly the opposite. Here, the key questions are centered on the role of local government in urban governance. Much is to be gained from bringing these aspects of urban politics closer to mainstream political science and the type of institutional analysis seen there.

Third, different institutional models of urban governance describe different systems of values, norms, beliefs, and practices. These value systems produce different urban policy choices and outcomes. For instance, urban governance dominated by private business interests will generate urban policies that differ from those resulting from urban governance in which other constituencies play a dominating role. Just as institutionalists see institutional systems as reflections of values and norms (March and Olsen 1989, 1995), the formal and effective organization of urban governance reflects values and interests typical to the local community. Urban governance, in this view, is embedded in a myriad of economic, social, political, and historical factors pertaining to the exchanges between the local state and the local civil society.

Finally, I suggest here that although theories of urban governance offer a new approach in comparative analyses of urban politics, it is also important to acknowledge the significance of the national context within which urban governance is embedded. National politics and state traditions remain the most powerful factors in explaining various aspects of urban politics, including urban political economy, urban political conflict, and strategies of local resource mobilization (Gurr and King 1987; Keating 1993; Pickvance and Preteceille 1991). Nation-states still effectively constrain local political

choice. Furthermore, even in policy sectors in which significant urban policy choice exists, local elites—for political or ideological reasons (Molotch 1990)—tend to make similar choices.

### GOVERNMENT, GOVERNANCE, AND INSTITUTIONS

Mainstream political science has witnessed two significant alterations of scholarly focus during the past decade or so. One such paradigmatic shift is the renewed interest in political institutions (March and Olsen 1984, 1989, 1995; for overviews, see Peters 1996a; Rothstein 1996). Institutions are overarching societal values, norms, and practices that tend to make public policy path dependent. Moreover, the “new institutionalists” perceive institutions as political actors that not only respond to external changes but also tend to dominate their environments (March and Olsen 1989). Unlike the institutionalism of the 1920s and 1930s, when the design of the institutional system was the key analytical problem, institutionalists of the 1980s and 1990s see institutions and institutional arrangements as clusters of factors explaining changes in policy outcomes, state-society exchange processes, and government capabilities (Peters 1996a).

The second significant change is the rapidly growing number of studies centered on the concept of governance at different analytical and institutional levels. Governance refers to processes of regulation, coordination, and control (Rhodes 1997). Thus, for governance theorists, analyzing the process of coordination and regulation as such is the main concern: The role of government in the process of governance is perceived as an empirical question (Campbell, Hollingsworth, and Lindberg 1991; Hollingsworth, Schmitter, and Streek 1994; Hyden 1992; Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1996, 1997).

This shift in focus from local government to urban governance has several important consequences. First, it helps bring together regime theory, theories of the local state, and urban political economy into a broader analytical framework. Moreover, the governance approach to urban politics highlights the wide range of constraints on local authorities’ abilities to bring about change in the local community.

Focusing strictly on governance entails risks of conceptual oversimplification and reductionism. If governance, loosely defined, refers to any public-private exchange, then soon everything becomes governance. The continuous exchange between the public and private blurs the distinction between policy formulation and implementation because much of the policy will be given its final design as it is being implemented (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; Lipsky 1980). A careful conceptual analysis of urban

governance is therefore essential to show if and how this framework offers better analytical mileage than contending approaches to urban politics.

In sum, theories of urban governance emphasize outcomes over formal, political processes and public-private interaction over formal (legal) policy implementation. Public-private interaction is seen as necessary to manage the task of governing. However, because different configurations of the governance process offer different actors' participation and influence, one also must look at the economic, political, and ideological framework within which these processes are embedded. These value systems constitute the institutions of urban governance. In the next section, I explore different models of urban governance and the different roles of local government that these models portray.

## MODELS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE

I will now briefly describe four different models of urban governance: the managerial, corporatist, progrowth, and welfare models.<sup>3</sup> These models are derived from four different institutions in urban governance that will be described in detail later. The models should be seen as ideal types rather than empirically precise accounts of urban governance in different countries, locales, and policy sectors.

In the real world, one should not be surprised to find urban governance resembling more than one of the four models. To reiterate an earlier remark, cities frequently display conflicts between different models of governance supported by different segments of the city administration. Similarly, over time, cities could move from one model of urban governance to another along with changes in national and/or urban regimes. Finally, some models of urban governance are clearly more relevant to some sectors than others. Thus the different models are typical not only to any particular model of urban political economy or a certain national context but also to specific sectors of the local authority.

Each model of urban governance is described according to four variables: the composition of key participants, the overarching objectives that characterize the governance, the main instruments employed to attain these objectives, and the most common outcomes of the different models.

### MANAGERIAL GOVERNANCE

Local government can be assessed along two dimensions, as Keating (1991, chap. 1) pointed out. One dimension is the democratic, participatory

objective that portrays local government as an instrument for the management of political conflict. The other dimension is the managerial aspect, in which local government is seen as a public organization resolving collective needs and interests through service production and delivery.<sup>4</sup> These two different aspects of local government place different—if not inconsistent—demands on local authorities. As a result of this tension, a cycle has evolved in many countries with regard to which of the two aspects should be given priority in reform.<sup>5</sup>

During the past 10 to 15 years, the managerial dimension clearly has come to dominate over the democratic-participatory dimension of local government. The main driver of this shift has been the exacerbated fiscal crisis, first of the nation-state and later of local government (Sharpe 1988). This crisis has been coupled with a widespread orientation in most countries away from collective political involvement toward the pursuit of individual interests (Dalton 1996). These developments have provided fertile soil for a wide variety of market-based concepts normally summarized under the heading of “new public management” (NPM) to enter local authorities and urban politics (Pollitt 1990). NPM—or what Peters (1996b, 28) calls “generic government” because the NPM philosophy maintains that management is an essentially non-sector-specific task—emphasizes the need for competition among different service providers and the empowerment of customers (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). The overall goal is to create a public-choice-style, marketlike exchange between the producers and consumers of urban services in which consumer choice, rather than preferences among elected officials, decides what services they will be offered and by whom.

The focus on costs, efficiency, demand, and professional management—which is the centerpiece of the NPM strategy—clearly has a lot to offer to public service producers at all levels of government. The rapid expansion of urban services probably has created some degree of organizational slack in most local authorities. Also, in an era when tax levels and public expenditures are constantly questioned and when support for politicians and their office organizations is dramatically decreasing, increasing cost awareness and professionalization in service production are an important strategy to alleviate problems of public distrust and strained public finances.

However, managerial governance also poses several major challenges for local authorities. First, NPM assumes that service producers operate at an arm’s-length distance from elected officials whose main role is confined to defining long-term objectives for the urban service production. Within these broadly defined parameters, service production is to be guided via direct, marketlike communication between producers and customers. Obviously, the marginalization of elected officials is a very different enterprise and has



very different consequences in the United States and Western Europe because of the different historical roles local politicians have played in these different political milieus. In Western Europe, urban politics has a stronger partisan element than in the United States, although ironically a larger number of public offices are elective in the United States than in most Western European systems.

A common problem is to define alternative models of accountability. Although NPM advocates argue that managerial governance offers citizens/customers a more direct and influential input on urban public services compared to the traditional system of local government (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), they also tend to be quiet on how their model defines political control and accountability (Peters and Pierre 1998). Should elected officials be held accountable for service production over which they have virtually no control?

Second, managerial governance places local authorities in a dependency on professional management resources inside and outside their organizations. Traditional qualities associated with public employment such as education in public administration and law do not carry much weight as business management ideals are to govern public service production and delivery. To some extent, this may well be a short-term problem. However, bringing in expertise from the private sector may be just as much a problem as a solution because these professional groups usually have problems understanding the public sector's obsession with due process. The introduction of NPM thus means a clash of two distinctly different organizational and professional cultures that will not be resolved easily. Values that are indigenous to the public sector and public office are alien to strict business management thinking and vice versa.

Finally, bringing NPM into urban politics assumes a degree of organizational flexibility in local government that does not exist in a large number of countries. Customer choice introduces an element of considerable uncertainty to local governments, which has far-reaching organizational consequences. For instance, offering parents choice with regard to which school they should send their children means that local authorities can no longer plan education spending in different geographical areas with the same degree of accuracy as in the previously used planning system, which was based on demographic data. To cope with this uncertainty, public organizations must become flexible enough to be able to reallocate resources on a fairly short notice to those service areas where demand is biggest. It is little surprise, therefore, that alongside the NPM campaign there is a similar plea for more flexible government (Peters 1996b, chap. 4).

In sum, managerial governance accords only a minimal role to elected officials. The emphasis is on output performance according to private management standards. Managerial governance blurs the public-private distinction, not least on an ideological level, by portraying service producers and clients as actors in markets and by identifying market-based criteria as the main criteria for evaluation.

*Participants.* Managerial governance emphasizes professional participation over elite political involvement. The NPM slogan of “letting the managers manage” (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) is indicative of this philosophy. Thus key players in managerial governance are the managers of organizations producing and delivering public services. However, because customer satisfaction is a key criterion, customers also are essential to managerial governance.

*Objectives.* Managerial governance aims at enhancing the efficiency of public service production and delivery, as well as providing the customers of these services with a genuine choice of products and providers. A key strategy to attain these goals is to downplay the public-private distinction, for instance, by introducing private-sector management strategies in public service production and delivery. Managerial governance also could be said to aim at restoring confidence in the public sector by showing that it can be managed in ways that make its services more customer attuned and diversified.

*Instruments.* Managerial governance draws on a wide variety of instruments: contracts with for-profit organizations for providing selected public services, new strategies of recruitment to managerial positions in the public sector, increased discretion to these positions, internal markets and other forms of competition both within the public sector and between public and private providers, and a redefinition of the role for elected officials.

*Outcomes.* No systematic evaluation of NPM and the “managerial revolution” in public service production has become apparent. Managerial governance probably has helped increase the efficiency in service production, not least because it has brought in private-sector expertise into the public sector. With regard to the efficiency of internal markets and customer choice, the effects are more uncertain. However, NPM is a contested reform strategy in jurisdictions where *Rechtstaat* ideals still dominate the organizational culture of the public sector (Peters and Pierre 1998).

#### CORPORATIST GOVERNANCE

The corporatist model of urban governance is typical of the small, industrial, advanced democracies of Western Europe. These are political systems historically characterized by a strong etatist tradition that manifests itself in a

large public sector, redistributive policies, comprehensive welfare state service provisions, a high degree of political involvement, proportional representation, and strong voluntary associations. Corporatism at different levels of government is not the main cause of the high level of government spending; instead, corporatism as a model of political representation is derived from a distinctly collectivist political culture (Elder, Thomas, and Arter 1982; Katzenstein 1984, 1985; Olsen 1986).

Another defining characteristic of corporatist governance is that it occurs primarily in the distributive sectors of local government. Although the emphasis is on safeguarding and promoting the interests of the organizations' members, there is also a strong commitment to participatory democracy in a broader sense. Organization tends to propel counterorganization (Coser 1956), which, in turn, sustains high levels of collective participation.

Corporatist governance portrays local government as a political and democratic system for the inclusion of social groups and organized interests in the urban political process. The idea of participatory local democracy manifested in interest representation is central to this model of urban governance. Policy deliberation is seen as bargaining processes between these interests (Hernes and Selvik 1983; Villadsen 1986), and local government is seen as an instrument to create consensus and concerted public-private action. The key criterion of assessment is the extent to which local government and urban politics reflects the ideals of a participatory local democracy.<sup>6</sup>

An indigenous problem in corporatist governance is fiscal discipline. Compromises that are acceptable to all major represented interests are attained by distributive compensatory policies. Although there is considerable interest among voluntary associations to have input on public expenditures, there is much less incentive to participate in discussions concerning urban revenues, except when the interests of the organizations are at stake. This collective self-interest poses significant problems in urban governance because it tends to disaggregate the public interest and put local government in a weak bargaining position vis-à-vis interest organizations.

A second problem is that, arguably, corporatist governance is a fair-weather model of collective political choice. I emphasized earlier that the inclination of interest organizations is to promote not just a collective interest but also participatory democracy as a form of governance.<sup>7</sup> However, in times of extensive cutbacks in local government expenditures, the incentives for organized interests to participate have decreased dramatically. The rationale of corporatist involvement in urban governance remains first and foremost in defending the interests of the organizations' membership; hence the organizations' strategies will change as the economic viability of different tiers of government is altered. In the Scandinavian countries, for instance, interest

organizations for the disabled historically have worked closely with local governments to ensure spending on their clients. As local governments came under severe fiscal stress in the late 1980s, however, these organized interests reassessed their strategies and turned to the state to push for legislation defending the rights of the disabled vis-à-vis local authorities. Thus one of the dilemmas in corporatist governance is that it pits the city in a dependency toward actors with selective and narrowly defined interests and with secondary attention to the broader societal good. Instead, they take an instrumental view on local authorities, and their participation in urban governance is guided by such considerations.

*Participants.* One of the defining characteristics of corporatist governance is its participatory nature. This is a two-tiered model of participation in which mass participation is intraorganizational rather than strictly political, and only the top organizational leadership is involved in the political process. In its most advanced form, corporatist governance sees interest organizations enjoy delegated public authority with only limited direct involvement by political institutions.

*Objectives.* The main objective of corporatist governance is distributive, ensuring that the interests of the organizations' membership shape urban services and policies. The interests of constituencies and social groups that are not involved in the process frequently tend to be neglected. Corporatist governance serves to coordinate the programs and actions by the local government and organized interests because both types of actors are involved in urban politics and public service delivery.

*Instruments.* The inclusive nature of corporatist governance not only is a particular model of interest representation but also serves as a key instrument of governance. Bringing in all major actors and interests into the urban political process creates a high degree of civil society acceptance of urban political choice. Thus, although the deliberation process is tedious and slow, implementation often becomes smoother compared to other governance models because the key societal actors have been involved in the policy process.

An important instrument in corporate governance is the system of involved organizations themselves. Controlling vast human and financial resources, these organizations can assume responsibility for public service delivery, as is the case in the sports and leisure sector in countries such as Germany and Sweden.

*Outcomes.* Corporatist governance reduces fiscal discipline. Balancing the budget becomes almost impossible because there are strong interests advocating selective public spending but few powerful advocates of raising public revenues to match the spending. Moreover, corporatist governance

frequently creates inequalities between members of favored organized interests, on one hand, and other social groups, on the other.

#### PROGROWTH GOVERNANCE

Of the four models of governance outlined here, progrowth governance is by far the most familiar abstraction of urban politics. The past decades have witnessed an extensive debate among social scientists, particularly in the United States, concerning their understanding of cities' stakes in growth and the nature of the urban political economy in a broader perspective.<sup>8</sup>

The main issue, or perhaps rather one of the main issues, has been the extent to which the urban political economy allows for political choice or whether, as Peterson (1981, 23) put it, "it is only a modest oversimplification to equate the interests of cities with the interests of their export industries." On the other side of the argument, advocates of the "politics matters" school of thought—although acknowledging the powerful influence of the capitalist economy both in structural terms and with regard to corporate decisions and strategies—maintain that all economic structural arrangements offer some degree of political choice (see, e.g., Jones and Bachelor 1986; Mollenkopf 1983; Parkinson and Judd 1988; Pagano and Bowman 1995; Stone and Sanders 1987; Stone 1989; Swanstrom 1988, 1993).

The issue about the existence of political choice is important because governance is precisely about making choices. Such choices refer not only to policy choice but also to what development strategy to pursue (Pagano and Bowman 1995) and the selection of network partners in this project. According to Stone (1987, 5), political choice in urban economic development refers to "the creation of a set of arrangements whereby accommodation is reached between the wielders of state power and the wielders of market power." Progrowth governance is an example of such arrangements, facilitating accommodation between political and economic power.

Governance conceived of as making choices involves decisions that are not policy choices but nonetheless have significant political ramifications. One such choice is whether the city should get seriously involved in economic development in the first place. In partisan local government systems such as those of the United Kingdom or the Scandinavian countries, nonaction is sometimes chosen for ideological reasons by right-wing political elites. Right-wing political elites sometimes argue that cities should not intervene in the market economy. Leftist political leaders frequently arrive at the same conclusion but on the grounds that close collaboration with private businesses would yield private capital a privileged position in urban politics (Parkinson 1990; Pierre 1992a).

For cities that decide to engage in local economic development—and this group includes the vast majority of cities in most jurisdictions—politics matters in a number of ways, mainly relating to economic development strategy and the structuring of governance. Progrowth governance is characterized by close public-private interaction. The political and social preconditions for such cooperation are related to national traditions of state strength and public presence in the markets (Savitch 1998). Local political choice regarding the structuring of progrowth governance can refer to the degree of inclusion or exclusion of different actors, the choice between different short-term and long-term objectives, the nature of the city's relationship with higher levels of government (Gurr and King 1987; King 1987; Stone 1987), or whether the city should embark on internationalization as a strategy to complement other strategies.<sup>9</sup> Thus, looking at the issues of the extent to which politics matters in a governance perspective brings out a wide variety of ways other than policy choice in which politics indeed matters.

Progrowth governance is the structuring of concerted, public-private actions to boost the local economy. Such collaboration rests on shared interests in economic growth between city hall and the downtown business elite (Molotch 1976). This is the least participatory of the four governance models. Mass involvement could never be an option simply because such participation would immediately politicize the progrowth strategy by bringing in competing local government spending options such as neighborhood redevelopment and other distributive measures (Swanstrom 1985). Although progrowth politics has very few opponents—most local actors have a direct or indirect stake in growth (Molotch 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987)—it tends to have even fewer active supporters, apart from the public and private elites themselves.

Because one of the purposes of the current exercise is to outline a taxonomy of urban governance that may serve as an analytical tool in comparative research, the degree of ethnocentricity in this largely American literature needs to be assessed. Peterson's notion of a "unitary interest" in growth in urban politics has been described as essentially an abstraction of U.S. urban political economy (Orum 1991). Similarly, Western European observers tend to question how well these theories travel across the Atlantic (Harding 1995).

Progrowth governance addresses one of the most salient sectors of current urban politics in nearly all advanced industrialized democracies—namely, that of the politics of local economic restructuring. Thus, although the legal and economic frameworks for local economic development policies vary across national contexts, the basic problematic—urban political dependency on private capital for its tax base and revenues—remains largely the same, albeit for different reasons. In countries such as Germany, the Netherlands,

and the Scandinavian countries, local government funding comes primarily from the state, and corporate taxation is national rather than local. However, private businesses provide jobs, which, in turn, generate local income taxes. To be sure, the competition for private investment in these countries is almost as fierce as in the United States (Kantor and Savitch 1993; Lesjö 1994; Pierre 1992b).

*Participants.* Typical participants in progrowth governance include the downtown elite and senior elected officials who share an interest in boosting the local economy. Although most actors have a direct or indirect interest in growth (Logan and Molotch 1987), managerial governance is a distinctly elitist governance model. Restrictive participation is necessary to prevent distributive objectives to be infused in the governance, as seems to be a result of urban regimes drawing on broader, “populist” support (Swanstrom 1985).

*Objectives.* Obviously, progrowth governance has economic growth as an overarching objective. Ideally, this growth should be long term and sustained. The sources of such growth have changed considerably over the past few decades, from land-based manufacturing industry to knowledge-intensive, small-scale businesses.

*Instruments.* Boosting the local economy draws on a wide variety of local government instruments such as urban planning, the mobilization of resources from regional and national government, and infrastructural development. Another important—albeit more subtle—instrument is building a favorable image of the city that attracts investment (Pagano and Bowman 1995). More important, however, progrowth governance is based in institutionalized public-private partnerships enjoying substantive operative discretion.

*Outcomes.* Several studies suggest that local political choice, within the parameters defined by structural changes in the economy, makes a difference with regard to the growth in the local economy (Clarke 1995; Keating 1993; Logan and Molotch 1987; Pagano and Bowman 1995; Stone and Sanders 1987). However, the relationship between political choice and economic growth is weak in comparison with the overwhelming influence that structural changes in the economy have on the local economy.

#### WELFARE GOVERNANCE

In his elegant analysis of the political and institutional linkages between federal and local progrowth strategies in American politics, Mollenkopf (1983, 40) offered a simple but illuminating typology of cities with regard to their economic history and development. The old industrial cities that faced severe problems of economic restructuring and were not able to regenerate



the local economy constitute one type. Cities with a similar background but that were successful in repositioning themselves as administrative or service centers constitute another type. The third type of cities comprises “new” cities (e.g., cities in the American Southwest) that have experienced an economic boom without having to cater to a legacy of declining industries. My interest here is focused on the first type of cities: the once prosperous industrial locales that have not been able to bring in businesses or public organizations to redefine the base of the local economy. Gurr and King (1987, 191-202) take this discussion further by distinguishing between passive and active state power and policy on one axis and stagnant versus prosperous (local) market economy on the other. Cities embedded in a passive state policy style and that are characterized by a stagnant local economy are labeled *welfare cities*.

Welfare governance refers to the governance of this particular type of urban political and economic setting. These cities have very limited growth in the local economy. The main influx of capital into the economy comes through the welfare system, placing these cities in an especially delicate dependency toward the state. I have already mentioned the wide range of state-local relationships in the western democracies, but this plight introduces yet another type of such dependency.

The industrial legacy of the city, coupled with high unemployment and frustration with corporate strategies, often leads these cities to be politically leftist, sometimes radically leftist. In Western Europe, this type of city is common in former industrial cities in regions such as the Lille region in France, the Ruhr Valley in Germany, the Bergslagen region in Sweden, the Midlands and Merseyside regions in England, and the Clydeside region in Scotland. In the United States—where the ideological orientation does not come near the European mass political response to the collapse in the local economy—this type of local economy is typical to the former manufacturing industry-dominated cities of the American “rustbelt,” although a significant number of locales there have been successful in regenerating the local economy (Rodwin and Sazanami 1991). Gurr and King (1987, 200) aptly described these welfare cities as “the economic backwaters of the advanced capitalist societies, largely abandoned by private capital, passed over in plans for regional redevelopment, and heavily dependent on governmental spending to maintain individual and collective existence at a subsistence level.”

Given this dependency on central government spending, this governance model includes the state to the largest extent possible, as a provider or as an enabler or both. The urban political leadership puts great reliance on the state to provide compensatory programs to the city. Indeed, this type of resource mobilization often tends to become more important than trying to



reinvigorate the private business sector, partly because of the uncertainties involved in such a strategy and partly because developing networks with the corporate sector is not an attractive option for political reasons.

Welfare governance combines mass political involvement with a hostile perspective on private businesses that are believed to be the root and cause of the city's plight. The priority given to close contacts with the state—through political or administrative channels—tends to detach the city from the local economy. This, in turn, exacerbates the problems in the declining economy. Moreover, although state subsidies provide some short-term remedy for the city to address the economic problems, they quickly become addictive to local authorities who see few incentives to try to develop the local tax base as long as the state covers for the social costs incurred by the industrial restructuring. Finally, the political militancy that these cities display scares off potential private investors (Parkinson 1990). Thus the main dilemma in welfare governance is that although the urban political and economic milieu that fosters such governance is more needy than any other governance model for private investment and market-conforming urban policies, the governance model is the least geared for attracting such investment.

In sum, welfare governance draws on anticapitalist sentiments and uses networks with higher echelons of government to compensate for the eroded tax base. Apart from these types of intergovernmental contacts, this model of urban governance is the least embracing of the governance models described here; for instance, it is explicitly reluctant to enter partnerships with private capital.

*Participants.* The main participants in welfare governance are local government officials and state (national) officials and bureaucrats. The partisan connection between local and national institutions can be instrumental in supporting selected cities (Mollenkopf 1983).

*Objectives.* The short-term objective is to secure the inflow of state funds to sustain the local economy. The long-term objectives are more unclear. In some welfare cities such as Liverpool (England), the local progressive regime reassessed its strategies and took a more cooperative stance vis-à-vis private businesses (Parkinson 1990). The radical orientation in welfare governance emphasizes redistribution and minimal exchange with private capital.

*Instruments.* Welfare governance draws primarily on networks with higher echelons of government. These networks may be political, administrative, or both.

*Outcomes.* Welfare governance cannot be sustained in the long term. The philosophy of "uneven development" (Parkinson and Judd 1988), which gained political support in both the United States and Britain during the

**TABLE 1: Models of Urban Governance: Defining Characteristics**

<i>Defining Characteristics</i>	<i>Models of Urban Governance</i>			
	<i>Managerial</i>	<i>Corporatist</i>	<i>Progrowth</i>	<i>Welfare</i>
Policy objectives	Efficiency	Distribution	Growth	Redistribution
Policy style	Pragmatic	Ideological	Pragmatic	Ideological
Nature of political exchange	Consensus	Conflict	Consensus	Conflict
Nature of public-private exchange	Competitive	Concerted	Interactive	Restrictive
Local state-citizen relationship	Exclusive	Inclusive	Exclusive	Inclusive
Primary contingency	Professionals	Civic leaders	Business	The state
Key instruments	Contracts	Deliberations	Partnerships	Networks
Pattern of subordination	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Key evaluative criterion	Efficiency	Participation	Growth	Equity

1980s, is a Darwinistic perspective on local economic development; cities that cannot sustain their economic growth should not be artificially supported by national government. Furthermore, in welfare states such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, the central state has experienced growing budget deficits, which has led to cutbacks in local government grants. Supporting declining cities and regions, therefore, is no longer an option.

Table 1 summarizes the four models of urban governance. Patterns of subordination describe different relationships between urban economic policy and the market economy. In both positive and negative subordination, urban policy is responding to, rather than proactively governing, the economy. In positive subordination, urban policies conform and contribute to the market economy, whereas negative subordination means that urban economic development policy is so constrained by the capitalist economy that it is effectively unable to make a contribution to the functioning of the economic system.<sup>10</sup> Hula (1993, 38) described local government restructuring as a case of positive subordination; local governments are restructuring in ways "that mobilize types and levels of private resources not normally available to purely public institutions," in ways "that shift program goals toward traditional economic elites," and in ways "that may reduce popular control."

As Table 1 suggests, there are such distinct differences between the four governance models that conflict within the city administrative apparatus should only be expected. Cities tend to contain these different institutions by allowing for a multiorganizational and fragmented structure in which different segments of the organization are enabled to develop different models of governance. It remains clear that the differences in perspective on urban politics that the models display suggest that urban "ungovernability" is in part

explained by conflict over values and objectives within the city administration. Again, this is not to say that cities can exhibit several different governance models at the same time. Instead, the argument is that because the different governance models favor different political objectives, organizational strategies, and key participants, consensus on which model to pursue appears to be less likely than conflict.

The progrowth and managerial governance models could be described as purpose (or externally) driven because their focus is distinctly on outcomes. Process is of little interest; indeed, these governance models draw on entrepreneurial zeal and skills that tend to bypass the due process. Welfare and corporatist governance, on the other hand, with their emphasis on entitlements and representation, are clearly process driven.

### **LINKING INSTITUTIONAL THEORY TO MODELS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE**

The four models of urban governance briefly outlined in this article represent clusters of policy objectives, cultural values, norms, practices, and patterns of recurrent political behavior or, in other words, different institutions in urban politics (March and Olsen 1989). Furthermore, each model displays its own pattern of external dependencies, and in each model, governance is organized in such a way that it reduces or contains these contingencies while increasing the city's "capacity to act" (Stone 1989).<sup>11</sup>

Each governance model also has its own organizational logic and constituency. Different sectors within local government tend to advocate different models of governance. As Savitch (1990, 152) pointed out, local states are not unitary but multidimensional phenomena, "and their different dimensions act upon different agendas, address different problems, respond to different pressures, and reflect different constituencies." For instance, one should not expect social workers to support progrowth governance, nor is it very likely that the local economic development office is a key player in welfare governance. To assume otherwise would be to exaggerate the logic and coherence of the local state (Wirt 1974).

The analytical model outlined here not only helps to accord objective and meaning to urban governance but also offers a path to understand the tensions in urban politics and within local government. Indeed, the tensions generated within local governments pursuing different and contending forms of governance illustrate the overload that cities tend to generate in their relationship to their external environments (Viteritti 1990). Problems in urban governance, in this perspective, are explained by differences in priorities, objectives,

and strategies between different segments of the local state, or what Pierce (1993, 39) called "governance gaps" caused by organizational insufficiency and lack of interorganizational coordination (see Warren, Rosentraub, and Weschler 1992). This is not to suggest that governance is a sectoral, rather than a city, phenomenon, but it points at intraorganizational tensions concerning the objectives of governance as an important source of local government ungovernability.

Institutional theory enables one to separate analytically the normative and organizational dimensions of local government. In traditional accounts of local government, organizational arrangements of the local state are seen as derived from fundamental norms of local democracy (see, e.g., Norton 1994). By not linking local government structures to an overarching and uniform system of values, the institutional approach shows how politically charged the organizational aspect of local government is. Furthermore, institutional theory is a critical component in any understanding of urban governance, not least because it highlights systems of values and norms that give meaning, direction, and legitimacy to such governance.

This leads to the question of whether cities proactively choose a particular governance model or whether these models are artifacts of external dependencies and tensions within the city administration. What is at issue here is the role of local government in governance. Governance in other empirical contexts is sometimes perceived as autopoietic, self-organizing networks (Campbell, Hollingsworth, and Lindberg 1991; Rhodes 1996) created to resolve common problems. Government can play a wide variety of different roles in such governance, ranging from being altogether absent to being the key coordinator of public and private action. In urban politics, however, local authorities enter governance with an agenda and get involved in governance to attain these goals. The extent to which this pursuit of political and organizational objectives requires the inclusion of other actors depends on national political traditions, the nature of the policy sector, and the nature of the urban political economy. Thus the structuring of governance—the inclusion or exclusion of different actors and the selection of instruments—is not value neutral but is embedded in, and sustains, political values above and beyond urban partisan division.

This observation, in turn, raises the broader question about what are the political, organizational, and institutional relationships between the four models of urban governance. Some of the models share basic values; this is the case with managerial and progrowth governance, which are both market-conforming forms of urban governance, whereas corporatist and welfare governance, albeit in different ways, seek to control or contain market forces. In most local government systems, decentralization has enabled subcultures

in the organization to build stronger networks with their environments. Although this has impaired central control, it has in many cases enhanced the governing capacity of these organizational segments. Thus, slightly ironically perhaps, the organizational fragmentation of the local state helps local governments accommodate the potential conflict between contending institutions in urban politics.

A second concluding reflection refers to scholars' broader understanding of urban governance. Such governance obviously requires local government organizations with some degree of political, economic, and administrative viability and an external environment with some degree of social cohesion and stability. Both of these requirements are predicated on some level of economic development. However, for cities displaying exceedingly deep political, social, and organizational fragmentation, governance poses a tremendous challenge.

This article has pointed at institutional theory as an attractive theoretical framework in comparative urban politics. One of the future challenges—arguably, the most important—in this research is linking institutional theory to regime theory as a means of helping to understand how and why cities display different patterns of public-private elite formation and objectives and to reveal the consequences of these patterns (Clarke 1995; Stoker 1995b, 1998). Such research could be cross-national or comparative within the same national context: Both approaches will add to the understanding of urban governance.

## NOTES

1. Indeed, one can conceive of a hierarchy of institutions and organizations in which institutions at one level of government are constrained by organizations at a higher level of government while “embedding” organizations at its own level as well as at a lower level of government.

2. *Civil society* refers to voluntary associations and other forms of collective political and social action and should not be confused with the public sector.

3. Some readers might find these labels slightly awkward. *Corporatism*, to some observers, is associated with predemocratic regimes in Spain and Argentina but is frequently used in a nonpejorative way in West European political analysis. *Managerial* denotes the focus on public management that is typical to that model of governance. *Welfare* is related to the welfare state and hence draws on the European meaning, not the American meaning, of the word. *Progrowth* is derived from the key political objective of that governance style.

4. This is not to suggest that local governments in all countries and across time have been “democratic.” Instead, the point here is that local governments tend to provide some form of political representation serving to allocate collective resources, but this dimension of local government—in some national contexts and during different time periods—is considered less important than the managerial aspect.

5. In some cases, ascertaining to what extent local government restructuring—either conducted by the nation-state or in a more spontaneous fashion by the local authority itself—serves managerial or democratic-participatory objectives is extremely complex. Also, although the intention of a policy may be enhancing one of the aspects, it may very well end up strengthening the other aspect. For instance, in the Scandinavian countries during the 1970s and 1980s, a comprehensive program of local government amalgamation was conducted to create local governments that could assume greater welfare state responsibilities (i.e., an emphasis on the managerial dimension of local authorities). Although critics saw the drastically reduced number of elected offices as a threat to local democracy, the long-term effect of the reform appears to have been a stronger local democracy as well as a strengthening of the administrative and organizational capabilities of local authorities.

6. Corporatist models of interest representation and policy making are typical to political cultures that are often described as consensual, such as the Scandinavian or Austrian political milieus. It would be misleading to suggest either that corporatism has brought about such a consensual political culture or that the culture has fostered a corporatist model of interest representation. Instead, it seems more likely that a tradition of proportional representation has been conducive both to a “politics of compromise” (Rustow 1954) and to corporatism.

7. Sustaining such a form of governance is, of course, also in the self-interest of the organizations because it provides legitimacy for their political involvement.

8. This is not the place to even try to rehearse the host of literature in this research field. For reviews with slightly different themes, see Gottdiener (1987), Hill (1984), Kantor (1988), Swanson (1993), and Vogel (1992).

9. Progrowth governance is increasingly often associated with strategies aimed at positioning the city in international arenas and markets. The reasons why cities choose to embark on such strategies are manifold, but one of the main incentives is that internationalization can bring in new investment into the local economy (Fry 1989; cf. Hobbs 1994).

10. Offe (1984, 39) defined positive subordination as “a relationship between the economy and the normative and political-administrative systems in which the latter are structured in such a way that they *positively contribute* to, and create the preconditions for, the functioning of the dominant organizational principle and the sphere of the economy determined by it. The distinctive feature of this type of positive subordination is the *adjustment of the content* of the normative and political subsystems so that they *conform* to economic processes.” Negative subordination, on the other hand, refers to a political economy in which “the ideological and state power systems are related to the capitalist economic system in such a way that they are *limited* by, and insulated from this economic system without, however, being able to substantively contribute to its ability to function.”

11. I probably have overlooked several other important institutions in urban politics. In many cities, urban politics is structured to a much higher degree by religious or ethnic factors than the institutions discussed here.

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