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## Competing Cities in the New World Order

### Abstract

In the 21st century, the functions of cities have transformed significantly. Moving beyond the nation-state paradigm, globally expanding cities have emerged as key drivers of economic growth. With this shift, cities increasingly influence the world economy, sometimes surpassing nation-states. In the new world order, cities compete with others sharing similar characteristics, leading to the concept of competing cities. To engage in this competition globally, cities are expected to brand their economic, social and cultural assets and integrate into a hierarchical structure. Cities that strategically use resources and anticipate future developments can attract capital, while those failing to adapt risk losing their power and economic independence. However, in competing as value-added products, cities often become standardized, threaten their cultural heritage and contribute to growing global inequality. The capitalist accumulation process is intrinsically based on inequality, which becomes further intensified within the competing cities model. This study critically investigates the role of competing cities in the new order. Using document analysis, a qualitative research method, it compiles and reviews relevant literature. Theoretical studies examining the relationship between cities and globalization are incorporated to provide a critical perspective.

**Keywords:** The New World Order, Globalization, Competing Cities, Cities, Capital.

## Yeni Dünya Düzeninde Yarışan Kentler

### Öz

21.yüzyılda kentlerin fonksiyonlarında önemli değişimler görülmektedir. Ulus-devlet anlayışından çıkıp küresel ölçekte büyüyen ve gelişen kentler, ekonominin gelişmesini sağlayan önemli bir olgu olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu özelliği sayesinde kentler ülkelerin önüne geçerek dünyada söz sahibi olmaya başladılar. Kentler, yenedünya düzeninde benzer özellikler taşıyan kentlerle rekabet eder hale gelmiş ve yarışan kentler kavramı ortaya çıkmıştır. Küresel alanda diğer kentlerle yarışabilmek için kentlerden beklenen şey; ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel tüm öğelerinin markalaştırarak yarışması ve hiyerarşi içine girmesidir. Bu yarışta kentler kaynaklarını ekonomik olarak geliştirdikleri ve geleceği öngördükleri noktada yenedünya düzeninde sermayeden paylarını alabilmektedir. Rekabet koşullarına ayak uyduramayan kentler ise küresel çapta gücünü ve ekonomik bağımsızlığını kaybetmektedirler. Değer katılmış bir ürün olarak dünya pazarında yarışan kentler, tek tipleşmekte, kültürel miraslarını yok etmekte ve dünyada dengesiz gelişmeyi arttıran bir unsur olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Kapitalist birikim süreci yapısı gereği eşitsizliği barındırmaktadır ve bu eşitsizlik yarışan kentler modelinde derinleşmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı yarışan kentlerin yenedünyadaki konumunu eleştirel bir bakış açısı sunarak incelemektir. Bu çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden doküman analizi yöntemi kullanılmış ve konuyla ilgili literatür taranmıştır. Kentlerin küreselleşme ile ilişkisini ele alan teorik çalışmalara eleştirel bir bakış açısı kazandırmak amacıyla çalışmada yer verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yeni Dünya Düzeni, Küreselleşme, Yarışan Kentler, Kentler, Sermaye.

## Yazar Katkı Oranları/ Author Contributions

Çalışmanın Tasarımı/Conceiving the Study	Yazar-1 (%100)
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## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, cities are places where both globalizing and localizing processes are experienced together. National development has now shifted to local development. As a result, cities have become the focal point of development and have turned towards competition and competition for development. Cities have become local reflections of capital. The city now appears as a socio-cultural space where local and global networks interact. In order to compete with other cities in the global arena, cities are expected to compete by branding all their economic, social and cultural elements and to enter into a hierarchy. Cities function like companies or firms, and each city tries to differentiate itself from the others by asserting its own consciousness.

In the new globalized world order, cities are seen as the basic units of economic development. Cities are expected to have characteristics that distinguish them from other cities. Cities are expected to be able to take initiatives, to analyze developments in the economic, trade and service sectors, and to apply them to the city and urban policies. In this way, cities will be able to stay ahead of other cities and ensure their growth and development. Localities that can find a place for themselves in the global market and specialize will be able to demonstrate comparative advantages in the national and global economy and will both develop economically and ensure the country's growth in world markets.

In the 21st century, the competition between cities has become more important than the competition between countries. Attractive, self-developing new generation cities are flexible, competitive, sustainable, and have features that reveal their local potential. Cities of the new generation are cities that contribute to the increase of competitiveness by acting as brands. From this point of view, what is expected from today's cities is to analyze their own resources well and market them with business logic and, of course, to find their place according to the competitive conditions (Kaypak, 2013: 202).

The process of globalization is redefining economic, social and spatial relationships, with cities becoming central to this change. They have now become focal points for global capital, information and culture. This has led to the concept of competing cities, with inter-city competition becoming one of the defining features of the new world order.

Within this scope, the study's main objective is to critically examine the position of competing cities in the new world. Additionally, the study aims to reveal the strategies cities employ to establish themselves on the global stage, as well as the ways in which they demonstrate their competitive advantages. Furthermore, the effects of globalization on cities will be discussed. The fundamental characteristics of competing cities will be explored, beginning with the concepts of the world, branding, and smart cities. The discussion will explore how cities compete in economic, cultural and knowledge-based terms, and how they strive to find their place in the global hierarchy.

This study employed the document analysis method, a qualitative research technique, and reviewed the relevant literature. Theoretical studies addressing the relationship between cities and globalization were examined and incorporated into the study. The positions and transformations of cities within the global system were considered within a holistic framework. Furthermore, the study was developed through a critical evaluation of the literature.

## **2. Impact of Globalization on Cities**

In the 1980s and 1990s, Keynesian policies came to an end and the ideological approaches of neoliberal policies began to be seen. Neo-liberal policies have manifested themselves both in the complete abandonment of the concept of the welfare state and in the geographical changes experienced by capital in the accumulation process. However, these policies are effective in the accumulation process of capital and the organization of production (Şengül, 2003: 193). In this period, when the level of development was measured by industrialization, industrialized societies achieved the status of developed countries. Today, the level of development of a country is not measured by its industrial sector. The industrial sector has been replaced by the service sector.

While cities were in a complementary relationship with each other after the Second World War, the local units that emerged with the dissolution of the nation-state with globalization have become rival and competing localities rather than integrated and complementary. In this context, capital owners are now looking for local units with the best conditions for them, while local units compete with other local units to attract capital. For a local unit to attract capital, it must have a skilled workforce, but this workforce must be willing to work for low wages. It should also offer technical and physical infrastructure and low tax rates (Ersoy, 2001: 41).

Cities are able to compete due to globalization, economic transformation, moving away from the nation-state mentality and localities gaining power. In the new order, industrialized and production center cities no longer have any function, and these cities bring their resources in the fields of service, communication, information and technology to the forefront (Kaypak, 2013: 209). As a result of the political and economic arrangements that emerged in the 1980s, the city has ceased to be an area of production where labor is important. Urbanization has become indispensable for the accumulation processes of capital. In this new order, capital reached all the places it could not reach or enter in the cities and became the main determinant of the market (Şengül, 2001: 57).

While the position of a city in the national and global division of labor is important for the development of cities, each city has certain economic and strategic roles within this system. It is well known that any economic change and development has an impact on cities, spaces and structures. Economically changing and transforming cities continue their development according to their spatial and geographical characteristics and socio-cultural structures. While urban development, spatial distribution and service provision in developed countries can be planned and state intervention, in underdeveloped countries solving urban problems and transferring resources is left to local level (Ersoy, 2001: 38-39).

As the urbanization processes in developed countries moved from Keynesian to post-Keynesian urbanization, it was observed that the local state shifted to a post-Fordist structure. The dissolution of the nation-state and the mobility of capital have led local units to compete and compete in the spatial division of labor. Cities have sought to increase their urban advantages and resources in order to enter the hierarchy of world cities. In the new order of competing localities, cities have relegated their role in the reproduction of labor. New interventions and strategies have been identified to support capital and investment opportunities have been offered through the transformation of infrastructure works in the urban area (Şengül, 2003: 195).

To see the local state as an extension of the nation-state would be a superficial approach to today's understanding of the local. The local state is both the site of spatial inequalities and the mouthpiece of local forces (usually capital). From this perspective, what matters are not the functions of the local state, but how it responds to the unequal spatial process in the face of economic transformation. As a reflection of the capitalist accumulation process, the position of local cities in the face of this process is constantly changing (Şengül, 2001: 57). Globalization and information have strengthened production and consumption capacity, communication, and cultural development, but they can also lead to inequalities and divisions in the social sphere (Castells, 2008: 98).

When examining the positive effects of globalization on cities, it is evident that globalization facilitates the free movement of capital, thereby promoting the economic growth of cities. The flow of capital into cities increases employment and leads to diversification of city economies. Furthermore, cities are becoming centers for the development of the knowledge economy through global technological networks. Cities are becoming focal points for the production of knowledge and technology (Castells, 2008). As a result, cities are facilitating the spread of communication technologies and smart city applications. Another positive effect of globalization on cities is that it provides a structure that facilitates the coming together of different cultures in cities, thereby enriching them culturally.

Globalization has negative effects on cities. First, globalization increases income inequality and deepens spatial segregation. This process, which is the reproduction of urban space by capital, causes the high-income segment to concentrate in city centers and the low-income segment to migrate to areas on the outskirts of cities (Harvey, 2012). Another negative effect of globalization on cities is that it causes cities to become uniform and identities to become similar. The uniqueness of local cultures is eroding within the global economy. At the same time, cities integrated into the global economy are leading to the development of knowledge-intensive sectors while causing uncertainty in labor-intensive sectors.

Globalization is a multidimensional process that, in addition to being economically driven, eliminates boundaries in technological, cultural, and political spheres, thereby increasing the interdependence of states in the global arena. In this process, cities emerge as key actors in the world economy (Sassen, 1991). Cities are being reshaped as the centers of the global economy. This situation causes cities to become places where both economic opportunities and social inequalities increase. While globalization changes cities economically, culturally, and spatially, it also deepens existing inequalities in cities.

### **3. World City, Brand Cities, Smart Cities**

According to Harvey (2012:414), the *reification* of cities leads them to be seen as an element of political and economic transformation. However, cities should be seen as a set of social and societal processes with spatial foundations. In particular, it can be observed that the class-based structure of capitalism manifests itself in space and, as a result, the class structure of space increases. It is formed by the coming together of different social forces in the organization and transformation of space. According to Harvey, the promotion or branding of the city is found in the coalition of chambers of commerce and industry, local capitalists, entrepreneurs, real estate speculators and urban planners, and this urban process points to a process of conflict.

The changes and transformations of cities are determined by their place in the world economic system and the spatial differentiation of labor. While world cities or global cities are the cities at the top of the world market, cities that do not fall into this category try to enter the world hierarchy in competition and rivalry. The main characteristics of world cities are the quality of the services they offer in the global arena or the cheap labor they provide. World cities are the preferred places of the world in many sectors such as finance, advertising and tourism. The labor market in world cities is characterized by both the presence of specialized managerial professionals and a large number of unskilled labors. Cities that want to be ranked in the world city hierarchy must first have the potential to attract capital investments. Hosting cheap labor is another condition for world cities. At the same time, world cities are places where the service and technology sector are attractive instead of industry and production (Sarioğlu, 2005: 42).

According to Sassen (2016), world cities are places where the service sector and the manufacturing industry are rapidly developing, with strong financial centers and where new products are produced and marketed. These spaces also cause the contradictions of capitalism to lead to class divisions in the spatial sphere. As in the old system, cities connected to industry are becoming less important. The concept of the competing city does not actually compete with the city, but reflects the individuals and firms in the city that are in competition. There are important question marks as to whether each competing city will benefit from this competition or find a place for itself in the world hierarchy.

According to Friedman (1986), who used the concept of world city for the first time, a world city is a phenomenon that is articulated to the global economy, influences structural changes in the city like an entrepreneur and, as a result of these effects, creates the ranking among other cities. The international workforce must be employed at low wages for a city to be entrepreneurial. Subsidies should be provided to reduce costs and policies should be implemented to promote new technologies and the production of new products. Providing support and investment opportunities to the private sector for local entrepreneurship leads to economic development. Another condition for a city to gain entrepreneurship is to intervene in the spatial distribution of consumption. This can be done through cultural renewal, using tourism resources, changing the physical structure of space, or beautifying the exterior of cities by creating centers of attraction for consumers and increasing entertainment resources. In this way, the city enables capital to invest in living, entertainment and consumption. Cities can now participate in the capitalist system by creating new products in addition to their existing resources to market themselves. To acquire entrepreneurial characteristics, cities can function as knowledge cities, financial or administrative centers that can collect process and manage information. This kind of entrepreneurship requires costly investment in infrastructure. At the same time, the need for a specialized workforce for knowledge cities is increasing. A city's sustainability can be measured by its potential to master knowledge. Another founder of entrepreneurial cities can be central governments. However, the impact of competitive localities is important in the redistribution of surplus (Harvey, 2012: 420).

Developing technologies and the free movement of capital can rapidly revitalize the economies of local cities by enhancing their tourism, cultural, and historical features. However, this is only a temporary solution. This is because there is now a hierarchical

relationship among world cities, and this hierarchy can be changed in favor of cities based on their power to influence capital. Cities that have achieved global city status can become centers not only in the national market but also in global markets. Local cities with strong resources that have moved beyond being national cities are gaining the characteristic of becoming global centers. Thus, localities are forced to compete with global cities and global centers, and as a result, they are required to raise awareness, work on branding, and increase their development in this way. The more attractive a city's brand and awareness are for capital, the more chance cities have in the competition and the more development they show in the development process.

In this process that leads to the emergence of brand cities, it is necessary to reveal all the cultural, historical, natural, and social characteristics of the city, promote its distinguishing features from other cities, and provide the necessary support in this direction. Cities embark on the path of branding to attract investment to the city and ensure that capital enters city markets. This is not a problem for cities that become branded on their own, but some cities embark on the path of branding through planning. In this respect, cities are forced to compete with each other through planning. If these cities lose their competitive and distinctive characteristics, they will not close down like companies, but they will lose their appeal to investors, and the flow of capital will not occur in these cities (Kaypak, 2013: 209).

While the natural development process of cities was the transition from agriculture to industry and then to the information society, today cities are jumping directly from agrarian societies to the information society. As an example, we can look at certain agricultural cities in India and China that have developed into information societies without first undergoing industrialization. By moving from an agricultural society to an information society, these countries are increasing their level of development and trying to attract capital. As a result of their investments in technology and the information and communication sector, the cities of these countries are trying to compete with the world's nations. These cities, called Smart Cities, are able to increase their economic development and competitiveness as a result of their investments in technology.

Smart cities are cities based on the information and technology society, which provide all services to the public through electronic systems and have urban information systems. The problems of the city are solved through technology and information and communication, and technology is seen as the savior in the development of the city. The future image of smart cities is perceived at the level of development that offers a technological structure built on fiber optic networks. Smart cities are designed with technology-based development. As a result, they are shaped by goals and practices for resources such as sustainability and recycling (Cumur: 2017).

In India, one of the leading smart cities, call centers can provide services ranging from ordering pizza to making doctor's appointments in the US or UK. Indian workers, willing to work for low wages, work remotely in many technology companies in the US or UK. Thus, the owners of capital in the US and UK can easily see their business through cheap labor and in return contribute to the development of India. A similar practice has been observed in Turkey, where mobile phone companies have chosen eastern cities such as Erzurum as their call centers, where they can adapt to low wages and working conditions. Due to the low employment opportunities in the eastern provinces and the lack of unionization and demand

for workers' rights, capital goes to these cities and invests in technology. While multinational capital is free to enter and move in global markets, it is not expected to transfer capital to every city and increase its profits. To invest in a city, capital chooses the most suitable labor force, market, cultural and social infrastructure of that city. While capital maintains its freedom of movement to increase its profits, cities and localities do not have such a chance (Meriç, 2009: 95).

#### **4. Competing Cities**

Nowadays, the functions of cities are not determined by the central state as in the past, but by their competitiveness according to their global production, consumption, cultural, financial or technological potential. As competitive cities, all the historical, cultural, social and economic differences of the city can increase its superiority over other cities in competition. In the process of capital accumulation, cities are now undergoing a process of competition, and the potentials of local cities are being mobilized to attract capital investment. This is because when making an investment, capital looks at the superior positions of competing cities. If the competing cities decline or disappear completely in the points where they are superior, capital will not hesitate to stop its investments in these points and close its business. In this case, the developing economies will decline, shrink or close down as a result of the investments made (Ersoy, 2001: 43).

Cities, as the focal point of global mobility today, are the places where economic, social, political and societal changes and transformations are most felt. Global processes that want cities to be seen as a product and branded, and that want them to be uniform, also suggest that cities should enter world markets by revealing their differences and competing with each other. This contradictory structure and the reflection of the process of becoming uniform and different leads to deepening problems in cities (Kaypak, 2013: 217).

Competing cities go no further than capital choosing the profitable and functional local city that is useful, profitable, and functional for capital, and leaving out the city that is not profitable, not useful, and not economically important. Capital invests in activities such as entertainment, finance and tourism in cities and develops their infrastructure, but cuts back on investment in the reproduction of the city's labor force. Localities trying to enter the world markets voluntarily leave all their capital and human resources to the conditions of globalization and face many problems in social and economic areas. The fact that localities leave their services to the private sector, borrow globally and make investments to attract capital means the loss of local freedoms and characteristics (Doğan, 2002: 99).

In today's conditions it is seen that local governments have created a new phenomenon in order to attract the movement of capital. The concept of the city taking the initiative is seen as a concept that reveals the city's opportunities, new conditions and potential in the production of new products. The city that takes the initiative turns it into a business, a company or an enterprise. Cities that do not take the initiative and do not prepare favorable investment conditions for capital are condemned to lose the competition today. Cities that take the initiative now act more autonomously than in the old system and have significant authority to determine their own destiny. In order to attract capital, they improve their infrastructure, build business centers, and allow airports and communication networks, which cause cities to act like companies in the national and international arena (Keyder, 2004: 99).

In the globalizing world, as nation-states are replaced by local entities in the new order, there will be a race among cities to compete in global markets. These competing cities will form a hierarchy in the world and will continuously and sustainably rebuild their position in this ranking. In the Keynesian period, cities will appear as spaces where consumption is organized collectively. As a place of labor reproduction, cities are suitable for a pluralist structure. On the other hand, the post-Keynesian period envisages a corporatist system of representation, as localities are the places where production is organized (Ersoy and Şengül, 1998: 138).

It has become a characteristic of today's local cities that global and local economies now determine their strategies to meet their own needs and market their own resources as a product. From now on, competing cities will be able to present their own needs to world markets without the need for an intermediary (central government) and gain the ability to negotiate with capital. To the extent that localities are able to market themselves, they will be able to find a place for themselves within world capital and offer their spaces to these markets as a physical product. The declining importance of the nation state has led localities to enhance their characteristics. Localities are looking for ways to attract capital in the global marketplace and are competing to find a place for themselves in global networks. Localities that benefit from global network economies will eventually set an example for other local cities and prepare an environment in which economies develop on a global basis (Doğan, 2002: 96-97).

In a globalized world, cities compete based on their local characteristics. Therefore, competing cities have emerged as a result of globalization, carrying it from the local to the global level. In order to attract attention on the global stage, competing cities emphasize their economic, cultural and spatial features, and engage in competition with other cities within the global hierarchy. When viewed on a global scale, the levels of development and progress of competing cities differ. However, the fundamental flaw in this notion is that it evaluates cities with different socioeconomic conditions as being on the same level and pits them against each other. The capitalist accumulation process inherently involves inequality, which manifests itself globally, nationally and locally (Ersoy & Şengül, 1998: 139).

The biggest problem with the competing cities model is that it assumes that cities at different stages of economic, cultural, social and historical development will compete on an equal footing. This can be seen as one of the main reasons why the capitalist system ignores local inequalities when understanding development on a global scale. The unequal development inherent in the capitalist system hinders the competitiveness of local cities. While directing itself towards the most profitable cities in the global economic order, capital does not hesitate to abandon places to economic collapse. It directs itself towards cities with greater economic returns while shrinking or disappearing completely from those it leaves behind (Doğan, 2002: 98).

## **5. Conclusion**

Globalization has led to fundamental changes in the role of cities by reshaping the world economy, production relations and capital flows. This profound change has elevated cities from mere spaces competing within national borders to key players in global networks. This study aims to analyze the position of cities in the new world order that has emerged

alongside globalization, and to contextualize this within the framework of competing cities. Today, cities are becoming players in the global economy, transcending national economies due to the influence of globalization. Depending on their distinctive characteristics, cities compete to find their place in the global hierarchy. Notably, cities are evolving from local units into international centers of capital, tourism, information and culture as a result of globalization. They are being transformed and restructured by local, national and international actors as strategically important locations for global markets and information technologies. The concept of competing cities therefore measures how well they attract capital and competes in the international arena.

The study revealed that cities' prominence in the global hierarchy is not solely determined by economic indicators. The decisive factors that create a competitive advantage for cities differentiate them from others and bring them to the fore. In the new world order, therefore, competition between cities is assessed based on their positioning in global competition and the relationships they establish with global capital. In this context, ensuring the continuity of competitive cities is about demonstrating their uniqueness at economic, cultural and political levels.

To compete with other cities on a global scale, cities must brand all their economic, social and cultural elements, and position themselves within a hierarchy. Through this process, cities can secure their share of capital in the new world order by developing their resources economically and anticipating future trends. Those that cannot keep pace with these conditions lose their power and economic independence on the global stage. Those competing in the global market as value-added products become uniform, destroying their cultural heritage and emerging as a factor that exacerbates uneven global development. To compete with other cities on a global scale, cities must brand all their economic, social and cultural elements, and position themselves within a hierarchy. Through this process, cities can secure their share of capital in the new world order by developing their resources economically and anticipating future trends. Those that cannot keep pace with these conditions lose their power and economic independence on the global stage. Those competing in the global market as value-added products become uniform, destroying their cultural heritage and emerging as a factor that exacerbates uneven global development.

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