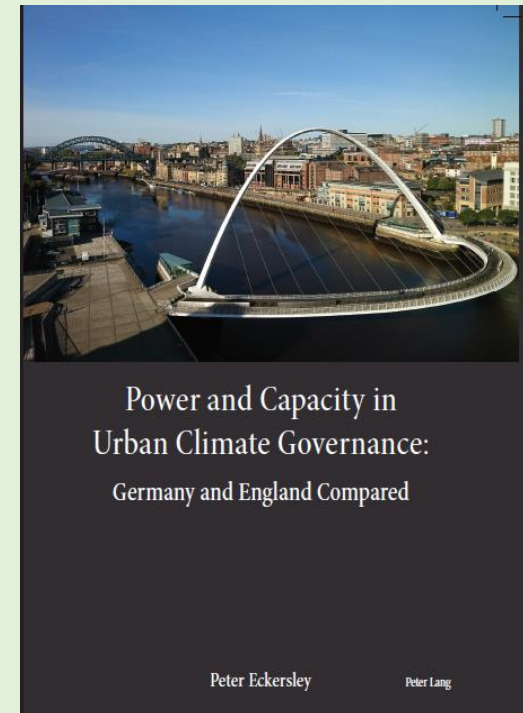


State action and municipal governments: what can we learn?

APSE Climate Emergency Seminar
2019

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Outline of presentation

- Power, capacity and climate change
- Capacity-building strategies in Newcastle and Gelsenkirchen
- Five things to take away

Power and capacity

Power *over* someone and power *to do* something

- Power is not just about being *allowed* to do something – you also need to be *able* to do it!
- Power as *having the resources to achieve your political objectives* (Stone 1989; Matthews 2011)
- Power is not just about control, and not just about legal competence or jurisdiction – it's about having the resources and *capacity* to do what you want to do
- Austerity and economic decline have stripped out capacity within many councils
- Most are far more concerned with balancing the books than developing new initiatives or policies

Which resources do councils need (to tackle climate change)?

- Money
- Staff
- Knowledge/ideas/skills
- Networks
- Legal authority
- Democratic legitimacy

Councils have to look elsewhere for these resources if they do not have sufficient internal capacity to address public problems effectively

Newcastle-Gelsenkirchen key contrasts

- Gelsenkirchen works *interdependently* with the state and federal governments, which gives it greater capacity to operate more *independently* of other local actors
- Newcastle is becoming more and more *independent* of central government, but this means it needs to *depend* increasingly on other local organisations to achieve policy objectives
- These relationships mean Gelsenkirchen can choose to be more hierarchical and invest in more ambitious solutions



Gelsenkirchen: 'city of a thousand suns'



Hans-Sachs-Haus, Gelsenkirchen



Five things to take away

- Localism sounds good in theory, but when combined with austerity it has weakened many councils, particularly in poorer areas. Greater central-local govt interdependence would improve policy co-ordination and effectiveness
- English councils that lack 'anchor institutions' are probably in a much weaker position than Newcastle
- Gelsenkirchen took a long-term view of sustainability, both politically and financially
- Control of (or influence over) utilities, transport and other local public services gave Gelsenkirchen much more say over strategy and policymaking
- Exemplar initiatives in Gelsenkirchen helped to build civic capacity and support for the council's strategy