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Abstract

Given the contested meanings of the local global context, it is important to see local political processes as more than a matter of new interests or claims prompted by globalization or even new institutions such as public-private partnerships. We argue that local politics in a global era are best understood in terms of the ideas, institutions, and interests shaping local policy processes. They are shaped by the causal stories that different groups and organizations use to politicize issues linking the local and the global, to seek new institutional venues, and to promote some solutions over others. We draw on our national surveys in 1989 and 1996 of large and mediumsized American cities to examine these causal stories about globalization and localism and the policy choices they privilege. Five local strategies are especially salient: classic locational approaches, the world-class community orientation, the entrepreneurial mercantilism strategy, asset-based human capital strategies, and the sustainable development orientation.