

COORDINATION

This is still, by far, the dominant management model throughout the world, requiring that efforts to tackle the issues of bureaucratic rigidity, fragmentation, excessive specialisation, lack of responsiveness, insensitivity to context and so forth are made within a public-sector service framework. For example, the key issue of coordinating the actions of agents whose actions impact on public space will to a large extent imply the coordination of public-sector services, either horizontally within and among local authority departments, or vertically among agencies at different levels of government, from the neighbourhood scale upwards.

Hierarchical structures to secure horizontal and vertical coordination will be very important in this model. This can mean the creation of clear lines of management and responsibility for public space services at local authority level, or formal agreements linking the performance of, for example, national and regional agencies to the service delivery strategies of local authority departments. As discussion in Chapter 6 will show, in England the effort to better coordinate public space interventions has often meant restructuring local authorities to create 'cross-cutting', more strategic structures that can focus on several dimensions of public space and are not limited by the narrower remits of specific services. 'Task forces' and working groups that can oversee and harmonise the actions of different agencies have been another common way of securing multi-agency coordination in public space management.

As this state-centred model maintains the separation between service providers (the public-sector agencies) and service users (public space users), an important issue for coordination is how the different aspirations, demands and actions of users are factored into public space management. The normal participation channels of parliamentary democracy are obviously important as public space users can express their views, on the quality of their public space when they elect local government. However, this might not be sensitive or flexible enough to respond to changing demands or contextual variety. This need for more responsive ways of coordinating the aspirations and actions of users requires the development of consultation and reporting mechanisms with effective feedback to users and linkages to service delivery agencies. It is likely to be a challenge in a complex multi-level, multi-agency institutional context.

REGULATION

The hierarchical nature of many of the coordination initiatives in this state-centred model means that a regulatory framework for public space management has two sides to it. One is straightforward legislation on uses and their impact on public space, on how users should relate to public space,

and so forth, accompanied by enforcement action to secure compliance with legislation. This is clearly associated with the law-making and policing roles of the state and addresses the relationship between public space users and the state, framed by accepted rules, norms and customs.

The second refers to the regulation of relationships between public space service providers and is about securing compliance with public space policy aims and objectives and service commitments among public-sector agencies at different levels. Coordination initiatives in this model seek to organise roles and responsibilities among agencies so that public space policy can be achieved, but this needs mechanisms to ensure that those agencies commit the effort and resources required to an area that in many cases is poorly understood and, as a result, is seen as marginal.

This is to some extent secured by the hierarchical nature of the state apparatus, but the fragmentation, restructuring and withdrawal of the state over recent years (see Chapter 5) have weakened traditional command-and-control hierarchical structures. New forms have emerged to regulate performance of public sector organisations which rely less on hierarchical lines of command and more on performance management (Hill 2000, Leach and Percy-Smith 2001). In England, for example, as part of a drive for efficiency in local government, there has been a sustained effort to implement a performance measurement culture based on target setting for public services and auditing of results, with sanctions imposed on agencies that miss their targets and rewards given to those who perform well (Leach and Percy-Smith 2001; Audit Commission 2002a). As a consequence, regulation of public-sector agencies actions as regards public space is now done through the setting of targets at national, regional and local levels, measured through officially approved indicators (e.g. on street cleanliness, park quality, user satisfaction, and so forth).

MAINTENANCE

In this model maintenance routines are primarily technical and budgetary exercises, confirmed by political sanctioning in policy instruments and public consultation to secure support when necessary. This is public space management in the narrowest sense, which in this model is typically conducted by specialised departments of local government and other public agencies. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of public space maintenance, for example concerning the appropriateness and contextual sensitivity of maintenance routines. This has put the spotlight on how these routines are defined and what rationale underpins them, and indeed whether or not their deployment is an exclusive public sector affair.

In this context, key to the maintenance dimension of public space management are the mechanisms that secure the involvement of policy