Chapter 2 discusses local politics at the municipal government level. It focuses on land battles in the urban core between high-ranking state units (or “socialist land masters”) and municipal governments. It argues that while the socialist land masters occupy premium land parcels inherited from the planned economy, the municipal government's authority is reinforced by a modernist discourse, Western urban planning doctrines, and recent policies that grant authority over state-owned urban land to the territorial government. Rather than settling the matter of power in the city, however, municipal leaders' granted authority is tested and defined by their political, regulatory, organizational, and moral authority in negotiations with those above, within, and below them. The municipal government's regulatory capacity is especially challenged by a fragmented real estate industry that includes players from state, non-state, and hybrid sectors.

This chapter explores the relationship between democratization and decentralization. In Mexico, the government promoted deliberative citizen participation nation-wide in rural municipalities, well before
national electoral democratization. Mexican decentralization empowered municipalities, but it turns out that municipal governance systematically excludes millions of rural people who live outside of the town centers that usually control municipal affairs. Those villages are most directly governed by sub-municipal authorities. In some states and regions these truly local authorities are chosen democratically, representing villagers to the municipality, in others they are designated from above, representing the mayor to the villagers. This chapter explores rural citizens' efforts to hold local governments accountable through three different comparative research strategies: analysis of resource allocation decision-making processes in a representative sample of local rural governments in the state of Oaxaca; comparison of changing municipal-sub-municipal power relations in four rural states (Oaxaca, Guerrero, Hidalgo, and Chiapas); and a nation-wide comparison of the state level laws that govern this invisible ‘sub-municipal regime’.

Metropolitan Governance, Real-Estate Projects, and Capital Accumulation
You-tien Hsing

in The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: May 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

Chapter 4 shifts the geographical focus to the urban edge of metropolitan centers, and from urban to rural land. It outlines the land battles between expansionist urban governments at the municipal and district levels and rural governments at the county and township levels. The struggle between urban and rural governments is set in the historical shift in which industrialism has largely given way to urbanism since the late 1990s. Drawing on the changing political discourse, urban governments have moved to incorporate scattered industrial estates formerly controlled by rural governments. As a result, the urban fringe becomes a primary site of capital accumulation, territorial expansion, and consolidation vital to urban governments' local state-building projects. The urban government's logic of property-based accumulation and territorial expansion builds on itself and finds expression in massive-scale mega projects like “new cities” and “university cities” built on former village land in the outskirts of the city.
This chapter examines the systematic factors behind local electoral results. Looking at data from over 7,000 different municipalities over a twenty-year time period, it appears that local elections are a curious mixture of the predictable and the idiosyncratic. They are predictable in that the majority of incumbents for local office either run unopposed or win reelection if they face challengers. This is consistent with the idea of managerial democracy: elections for local office should hinge on issues of custodial performance, and because incumbents get reelected at high rates, most are probably doing their jobs well enough to satisfy enough constituents or to dissuade any opponents. Identifying those instances when incumbents are likely to lose, however, turns out to be a very difficult task. Of the few identifiable trends, it appears that incumbent city council members are more likely to lose in places that are larger in size, greater in scope, and higher in bias. But the ability to predict the likelihood that any given incumbent is likely to lose, even when we know most political and social characteristics of a place, remains small.

This chapter considers the managerial character of local democracy. It asks: Does managerial democracy inhibit or enhance the capacity of most Americans for meaningful self-governance? Who governs in a managerial democracy? In most places, local democracy is less about coalitions of property speculators and machine politicians establishing local fiefdoms or about marginalized groups, such as minorities or the poor, empowering themselves through civic activism. Rather, it is more about large portions of the electorate attaining relatively easy consensus over the general management of a limited number of government services and a greater stratification of different groups across municipal boundaries. Local democracy in suburban America is
less about intramunicipal political struggle than it is about intermunicipal political exclusion. This situation creates a much more complicated picture of “who governs” America than what most existing research suggests.

The Advent of Politics

Jan Palmowski

in Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt Am Main, 1866-1914

Published in print: 1999 Published Online: October 2011
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198207504.003.0002
Item type: chapter

This chapter demonstrates that the local government in Frankfurt had become completely politicised by the late 1870s, as a political framework had been established that was to last until the 1920s. By 1880, not only had the municipal elections become overtly political, but business inside the council, and even the selection of the Magistrat, was conducted according to political ground rules. A comparison with other towns suggests that Frankfurt was not the only place which saw the advent of a vague notion of liberal politics in the 1860s, and where politicization entered a decisive stage in the 1870s. This outcome not only questions seriously the validity of the ‘unpolitical’ German in municipal government. It also challenges the argument that it was the 1890s which constituted the decisive phase of liberal organization.

Municipal government to its zenith

J. A. Chandler

in Explaining Local Government: Local Government in Britain since 1800

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: July 2012
Publisher: Manchester University Press
DOI: 10.7228/manchester/9780719067068.003.0004
Item type: chapter

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act enabled but did not compel industrial towns in Britain to establish municipal corporations, let alone to develop the publicly owned infrastructure. The status and influence of the great industrial towns were signalled by the magnificence of the town halls built as clubs for the industrial and commercial elites who comprised the majority of councillors and aldermen. The development of complex bureaucratic municipal government began at a faltering pace, motivated in some cities by locally sponsored political initiatives, but in others by a belated response to central government demands.
The pace of change, however, accelerated from the 1870s, with substantial municipal purchase of infra-structure and energy companies, stimulated in part by the backward city of Birmingham catching up with developments elsewhere. This chapter focuses on the golden age of municipal government in Britain, incorporation and improvement of towns, consolidation of the boroughs, municipalisation of utilities, the government of London, professionalism and bureaucracy, the franchise, party politics, local elites, and civic pride and commercial interest.

Nîmes
Allan A. Tulchin

in That Men Would Praise the Lord: The Reformation in Nimes, 1530-1570

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: September 2010
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199736522.003.0001

This chapter begins by discussing Nîmes’s political and human geography, focusing on the province of Languedoc. It then discusses the town’s major institutions, including the présidial court, municipal government, the church and popular piety, and education. It concludes with a discussion of Nîmes’s economic and social structure, including occupational distribution, social stratification, and the town’s factions, which were dominated by men in the legal professions.

Power: The City and Its People
Madeleine Yue Dong

in Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories

Published in print: 2003 Published Online: March 2012
DOI: 10.1525/california/9780520230507.003.0003

This chapter examines how major interest groups involved in the reshaping of Republican Beijing's urban form struggled over the meanings of political concepts, commercial interests, and cultural and historical identities of local communities. It explores the operation of and interaction among the municipal government, commercial interests, and ordinary urban residents through the Xuanwu Gate project; the establishment of the street-car system; and the naming of streets. The chapter argues that while the reshaping of Republican Beijing was initially planned and initiated by the state, the state's efforts to establish a certain urban identity were balanced to a considerable degree by
residents' struggles for their material interests in the spaces being transformed.

Liberal Ideals: Faded Remnants or New Dawn?
Alastair P. Thompson

in Left Liberals, the State, and Popular Politics in Wilhelmine Germany
Published in print: 2000 Published Online: October 2011
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on left liberal ideals and attitudes. What did left liberals stand for? Not much is the usual answer. Ideological decline, a continual erosion of liberal substance, lies at the centre of interpretations of left liberal failure in Germany. There are two strands to the story. The first is the debasement of ideology: the glittering tenets of democracy, militia, and social harmony increasingly tarnished by monarchism, militarism, and market economics. Wilhelmine left liberals, it is argued, failed to live up to the ideals of their early nineteenth-century precursors. The second concerns the dissolution of a social base. It claims left liberalism succumbed to socio-economic inevitability, not just to infections of nationalism and imperialism, or left liberal leaders' sins of omission and commission. Identification with the nation-state, market economy, artistic and scientific achievement, urban society, municipal government, and other aspects of Wilhelmine Germany was crucial to the character of left liberalism.

Who Runs for Local Office?
J. Eric Oliver, Shang E. Ha, and Zachary Callen

in Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy
Published in print: 2012 Published Online: October 2017
Item type: chapter

This chapter considers the types of people who run for office and the types of campaigns they run. It examines the impact of factors such as personal ambition, civic responsibility, mobilizing issues, personal gain, and political indignation by looking at a large sample of local politicians (i.e., unsuccessful candidates and elected officials) from the greater Chicago metropolitan area. The small size, limited scope, and low bias of most Chicago-area municipal governments mean that these local politicians, like local voters, tend to be stakeholders in their communities.
They are very concerned with issues of economic development and quality of life, yet are drawn into public affairs primarily from a sense of civic duty and an attachment to their towns. They are motivated less by ideology, partisanship, or even personal ambition, than by a public-spirited commitment to sustaining the quality of their communities.

Neighborhood Capitalism
Ocean Howell

in Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016

Between 1900 and 1912, no political coalition could hold onto City Hall for long, and in the wake of the defeat of the Burnham Plan, there was no centralized authority to impose comprehensive urban planning. Led by James Rolph, the Mission Promotion Association (MPA) would capitalize on this circumstance, broadening its base by incorporating the unions that were moving to the Mission. The MPA established itself as a de facto urban planning authority not only within the Mission District, but in the entire southern half of San Francisco. It also wielded influence in the California state legislature and with the association that governed fire insurance rates for the entire Western United States. So powerful was this Progressive Era improvement club, that its opponents accused it of being a political machine.

Dublin Inc.
Celia Marshik

in Joyce and the Law

Published in print: 2017 Published Online: May 2018

This essay explains the history and legal purview of the Dublin Corporation, the organization established to manage the affairs of the metropolis. Marshik reads "Ivy Day," for its interest in municipal self-government and its casting nationalist agendas as inadequate to the needs of Dublin. She concludes that James Joyce is equally interested in the Corporation "Committee Room" as he is in the "Ivy Day" that laments Charles Stewart Parnell.
In May 1921, Arabs from the villages on the Sharon plain, north of Tel Aviv, attacked the surrounding Jewish settlements. In Palestinian historical literature, this offensive is considered the beginning of organized Palestinian resistance to Zionism. They had only limited success because of the meager arms they had at their disposal (only a few dozen had guns), because of advance warnings received by the Jews, and because of a sharp British response. But their initiative and resolve made the attackers paragons of Palestinian nationalism. Although the security agencies did not cease to intervene in Arab politics, their efforts grew less effective. The story of Tareq 'Abd al-Hayy illustrates the nature of the General Security Service's activity and the measure of its success during Israel's first two decades. The considerable benefit that the security authorities received from their power to dismiss and appoint mukhtars reinforced their opposition to the establishment of municipal governments in the villages. The result was a fierce struggle against the Ministry of Interior, which sought to further the municipalization process.

This chapter explains local control in the context of suburbanization, conservative politics, and school reform, and demonstrates how the confluence of these issues changed practices of municipal government. Local autonomy had almost no legal basis before the 1890s, when a handful of states added home rule amendments to their constitutions, and even then it was primarily used to empower cities at the expense of suburban and rural areas. It was the rise of mass suburbanization between the 1910s and the 1950s that prompted calls to protect small-town government, with attendant rights of zoning, tax collection, and geographical integrity. Conceived in opposition to political machines and profligate spending, the notion of local control became popular with a
variety of interest groups, especially rural and suburban conservatives, for whom localism preserved existing systems of political power and smoothed over potential areas of division.

How Government and Leaders Make Cities Work
Michael Oluf Emerson and Kevin T. Smiley

in Market Cities, People Cities: The Shape of Our Urban Future

Chapter 3 discusses government in the two cities in four sections. First, we do not take for granted what government is supposed to do but instead analyze how leaders consider the role of government in the first place. Second, we discuss the priorities that rank highest on their priorities rubric for the government. Third, we discuss how they pay for city services by examining budgets and tax structures. Finally, we look outside government to see how much of what is public is accomplished by nongovernmental actors, especially in Market Cities. Through all of these, we show how Copenhagen has a much wider and collective imprint on what government should do than does the Market City of Houston.

Centralizing to Modernize at Osh Bazaar
Regine A. Spector

in Order at the Bazaar: Power and Trade in Central Asia

This chapter is the first of two to examine order at Osh bazaar in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Told from the municipality’s perspective, this chapter retraces attempts to create order at the perceived “chaotic” bazaar through reconstruction, and locates the origins of contemporary disorder to power and property struggles that date back to bazaar’s enclosure, or privatization, in the 1990s. Officials justified bazaar reconstruction through legal discourses and the creation of a distinction between “legal” and “illegal” traders. Once branded as “illegal” the city could remove them, while also extolling the efforts of the “legal” ones.
Designing the Civic Playhouse
Lauren R. Clay

in Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies

This chapter examines the role played by municipal governments in designing new civic playhouses in eighteenth-century France. It argues that municipal authorities were central participants in establishing new standards for the design, elegance, and utility of the French playhouse. The actions of municipal authorities supported an escalation in expectations in cities that influenced theater construction, both public and private. This is all the more significant because in the domain of theater architecture the royal government was not the primary trendsetter. This chapter analyzes the decisions of municipal governments to stake their city's reputation—and its funds—on public theaters within the context of the population growth and commercialism that marked eighteenth-century urban life. It also considers how the new generation of public playhouses came to function as multifaceted cultural, social, and even commercial centers, accommodating a wide variety of uses by the urban community. Finally, it discusses the controversy surrounding theater-building projects financed by municipal funds and land.

How Local Politics Shape Federal Policy
Sarah S. Elkind

Focusing on five Los Angeles environmental policy debates between 1920 and 1950, this book investigates how practices in American municipal government gave business groups political legitimacy at the local level as well as unanticipated influence over federal politics. Los Angeles' struggles with oil drilling, air pollution, flooding, and water and power supplies expose the clout business has had over government. Revealing the huge disparities between big business groups and individual community members in power, influence, and the ability to participate in policy debates, the author shows that business groups secured their political power by providing Los Angeles authorities
with much-needed services, including studying emerging problems and framing public debates. As a result, government officials came to view business interests as the public interest. When federal agencies looked to local powerbrokers for project ideas and political support, local business interests influenced federal policy, too. Los Angeles, with its many environmental problems and its dependence upon the federal government, provides a distillation of national urban trends, the author argues, and is thus an ideal jumping-off point for understanding environmental politics and the power of business in the middle of the twentieth century.

Make No Big Plans
Ocean Howell

in Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco

The Progressive-Era politician James Phelan invited the architect Daniel Burnham to San Francisco in 1905 to make a plan for the city, the Burnham Plan. After the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906, a number of Union Labor politicians, led by Abraham Ruef, attempted to centralize authority in the municipal government to make the plan a reality. Seeing that the scheme would radically alter their neighborhood, prominent citizens of the Mission District, like James Rolph, organized. Under the auspices of a new improvement club--the Mission Promotion Association--neighborhood leaders convinced the California legislature not to expand San Francisco's municipal authority, thus halting the Burnham Plan. Though they had allies in the conservative business community, it was the Mission Promotion Association that was most responsible for defeating the plan.