
This book provides a policy framework for urban public finance in large cities of developing countries. The central question raised is how better to finance public services in large, growing cities and in particular how to capture the benefits of urbanization in order to increase the supply of services. It briefly touches upon the structure of large metropolitan areas, in particular the fiscal implications of the three general models of urban governance: centralized metropolitan governance, functional fragmentation, and jurisdictional fragmentation.


This paper looks at metropolitan governance reforms in six major German city-regions during the last fifteen years to determine where we are headed in terms of geographic scale and functional scope of municipal institutions. It gives a brief history of governance and some current features of governance in each of the profiled cities (Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, Bremen, Stuttgart, and Hanover) and analyzes the reforms which have taken place to see if they demonstrate a trend in one direction or the other. The author concludes that beyond a general trend towards creating soft institutions on a larger scale as a reaction to global competition the cities have followed quite different institutional trajectories.

This report examines the relationships between 11 national capitals and their national governments. It looks at how the national governments deal with the funding of the capitals, the management and oversight of the capitals, and the rights and representations of the citizens of the capitals. The 11 cities profiled are: Berlin, Bern, Brasilia, Canberra, Caracas, London, Mexico City, Ottawa, Paris, Rome, and Washington, D.C.


This article examines evidence from the United States on the performance of different government structures. When it was written in 1992, the British government was proposing major structural reforms of local government, and there was great public debate on the subject. Many changes have since been implemented, so the context of British local government presented in the article is now out of date. However, the discussion of the theoretical effects of local government structures and the conclusions reached from the analysis of the American studies remain interesting.


This report examines the causes and consequences of the recent trend towards decentralization in Latin America. After providing a framework for subnational government, the report analyzes the effect of decentralization on public finance and institutions and on the sectors of education, health care, and roads. Experiences from many Latin American countries are discussed, including Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Columbia, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela.


This working paper looks at whether Australia’s policy during the 1990s of amalgamating small councils into larger local government authorities led to the expected greater economic efficiencies. The paper provides a synopsis of the three major approaches employed to measure economies of scale in local government, a review of the international evidence, and a survey of recent Australian studies. It concludes that the empirical evidence does not support the existence of significant economies of scale in municipal governance.


This article analyzes how central governments can use municipal decentralization to weaken intermediate levels of government. It examines why the central governments of Peru, Brazil and South Africa opted for municipalization during the 1990s and how the municipalization process proceeded. It also discusses various tactics used by the central governments to strengthen municipalities, including fiscal devolution, expenditure decentralization, and administrative and legal changes which empowered localities.

This paper identifies key issues in the governance of large urban areas through a questioning of the literature. It begins with a background which goes over definitions, the government-governance debate, criteria for evaluating good governance, the concept of competitiveness, and decentralization. The following review of the literature is structured around five questions: 1) What has to be decided at the metropolitan level? 2) Which primary policies are influencing metropolitan outcomes? 3) What are the appropriate decision-making processes for metropolitan issues to ensure both vertical and horizontal collaboration? 4) How do institutional arrangements at the metropolitan level influence the decision-making processes and the overall outcomes? 5) How do specific sectoral interventions interrelate with the overall outcomes?


This paper reviews the theoretical arguments and empirical findings concerning the optimal size of local governments. The authors evaluate the issue from a number of angles, including whether consolidation provides size economies in particular service areas, results in increased coordination of regional planning, and increases citizen satisfaction with government services. There is also a short discussion of recent experiences with consolidation in Jordan, Sudan, Latvia, Zimbabwe, and Canada.


This book considers many different aspects of the challenge of urban government, including municipal financial management, land and real estate markets, urban poverty, and transportation. The first two chapters are of particular interest to those interested in urban governance, as they focus on metropolitan issues and city strategy and governance. The first chapter contains essays on the impact of the global economy on cities, the design of metropolitan cities, and the lessons that can be taken from the Toronto experience. The second chapter contains essays on preparing a strategic vision for a city, promoting sustainable cities, and dealing with violence in cities, as well as a case study of the Coimbatore City Corporate Plan and some reflections from the former mayor of Mombasa.


This article proposes that the European Union should establish a competitive market for politics by allowing the evolution of functional, overlapping, and competing jurisdictions (FOCJ). The authors argue that allowing political competition will lead to a significant increase in welfare in the same way that allowing economic competition already has. The paper sets out the theoretical basis of FOCJ, gives examples of similar arrangements in European history and today, compares FOCJ to existing federal
The premier of Ontario created the Greater Toronto Task Force in April 1995 to respond to growing concerns about the health and workability of the city-region. The amalgamation of the City of Toronto in 1998 means that many of the proposals in the Task Force’s report are no longer relevant practically, but theoretically they remain very interesting as they address problems common to many large cities. The recommendations include reforming the property tax, committing to compact development, strengthening municipalities, and restructuring regional governance.

This article considers the nature of “good governance” at the city level in developing countries. The authors discuss concepts and definitions of governance, its importance in today’s world, and the relationship between national and urban governance. They have identified four dimensions of governance – technical, political, institutional, and cultural – and these are used as a framework for an analysis of recent literature. Included in the article is a short case study of local governance in Ghana from 1985 onwards.


The first section of this book is a summary report of criteria and conditions for the allocation of local government functions in Hungary. It discusses expenditure assignment, techniques for public service allocation, decentralization of responsibilities, economies of scale, policy conclusions, and conditions for change. Also included in the work are two background papers, one on economies of scale in Hungarian local public education and the other on capital investment costs of landfill construction in Hungary.


This article, from 1959, addresses an issue which still preoccupies us today, whether consolidation of metropolitan governments leads to economies of scale. The author develops a theoretical framework to analyze the likely expenditure effects of metropolitan growth and consolidation. Data from 149 government units in the St. Louis area as well as some Massachusetts cities is then used to empirically test the hypotheses. The conclusion reached is that in most expenditure areas consolidation does not lead to significant per capita savings.


This book contains six essays which discuss a broad range of issues related to local governments and the efficiency, equity and accountability of their financial systems. The first essay presents a comparative survey of the structural and financial arrangements in place in eight cities, though some of the information is now out of date. The second essay explores the application of the concepts of “subsidiarity” and “enabling government” as guiding principles in designing effective governance structures for city-regions. Also included are analyses of urban infrastructure financing, pricing of local government services, and the principles of local taxation. A case study of local governance and finance in the Greater Toronto Area is out of date, though its discussion of the criteria for designing local government structure remains relevant.


This article examines the factors which have influenced the introduction and workings of Budapest’s new system of local government financing, including the reorganization of the European public administration system and the economic and budgetary cycles in Hungary. It also looks at the effect of the suburbanization phase which took place in Budapest during this time. Finally, the authors discuss the overall impact the new system has had since its implementation in 1990.


In this presentation, Bruce Katz summarizes the various forms of municipal and metropolitan governance models that exist (both formal and informal); discusses the
current fiscal condition of American cities; and offers lessons for Britain as it continues to experiment with devolution and governance reform. Katz concludes that successful local government depends less on picking the "right" form of governance and more on ensuring that local governments possess sufficient fiscal powers to operate effectively.


In his contribution to this book, Bruce Katz argues that in order to improve the plight of cities we must change the way they are governed. His chapter summarizes the issues facing cities, including the way that the U.S. political system works against them, and proposes ten steps to begin the process of metropolitan reconstruction. Among his suggestions are to put in place responsible land-use planning at the regional level, to extend regional governance, and to promote mindful devolution and local reform.


This book, the third in the Brookings Metro Series, contains nine essays which use the lessons learned from past failures at regional collaboration to explore how we can make regionalism work today. After an opening paper which provides an overview of the issue, the remainder of the essays are divided into four sections: “Regional Growth and Governance,” “Coalitions and Metropolitanism,” “Race and Regionalism,” and “A Contrarian Metropolitan View.” One essay uses a case study of metropolitan governance in New York City, and experiences in many states, including Minnesota, Oregon, Illinois, California, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Ohio are also discussed.


This policy brief discusses the need to create metropolitan solutions to the problems which ail American cities today. The author gives a brief synopsis of the ways that current policies have resulted in the decline of central cities and inner suburbs and outlines how this has led to the rise of “metropolitan politics.” The paper focuses on how metropolitan reform can encourage smart growth and improve the situation of the urban poor. Sections on transportation policy and housing and job training examine these issues in more detail.


The authors of this paper have constructed a worldwide database of cities containing some key determinants of city performance. The results are presented in brief, mainly in the form of charts, with a discussion of the significant links between globalization, city governance, and city performance. No specific cities or countries are mentioned, though data is sometimes broken down into OECD and non-OECD sets. The paper also provides a survey of some of the relevant literature in the field, as well as discussions of conceptual and definitional issues concerning city globalization and urban governance in the context of globalization.

This article considers two cases of urban restructuring or proposed urban restructuring in large North American cities: the amalgamation of the City of Toronto and the possible secession of the San Fernando Valley from the city of Los Angeles. Despite the fact that it appears the two regions are heading in opposite directions, the author holds that both changes are motivated by the goal of creating more economically neoliberal and socially conservative urban governance mechanisms. The paper argues that more important than the divide between consolidationists and separationists is the divide between those who favour democratization, social justice and ecological integrity and those who hope to protect the market economy. Analyses of both restructuring strategies are presented, along with a discussion of democracy and governance.


This study begins by identifying key issues and creating a methodological framework for analyzing metropolitan governance. It then outlines how the theoretical debate concerning metropolitan fragmentation versus consolidation is reflected in the United States, Europe and South Asia. This is followed by a discussion of the lack of formal structures for metropolitan governance in most Latin American cities, illustrated by the cases of São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Santiago. Caracas, Quito and Bogotá are presented as exceptions to the rule. The paper ends with lessons for the future for Latin America and a tentative model of metropolitan governance.


This book looks at the phenomenon of Asian mega-urban regions including Bangkok, Beijing, Delhi, Dhaka, Jakarta, Karachi, Kolkata, Metro Manila, Mumbai, Osaka, Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo. It charts the emergence and growth of these regions and the economic, social, geographic, environmental and historical factors which contributed to their development. The author considers the positive and negative ramifications of mega-urban regions, as well as the planning approaches needed to address the unique concerns which come along with them.


This paper draws upon the experiences of cities around the world which have gone through the process of establishing metropolises as political entities to offer lessons for Latin America. It looks at justifications for establishing governance arrangements, models of metropolitan organization, questions of metropolitan legitimacy, and processes of metropolitan governance building. The cities discussed include London, Madrid,


In this article Lefèvre presents a critique of metropolitan governance from its first boom period in the 1960s and 1970s to the more recent revival of interest in the subject. He outlines the theoretical arguments behind experiments in metropolitan government in the earlier period and compares them to practices in various countries. He then considers current experiments and the legitimization arguments which have accompanied them. Cities in Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, the United States, Italy and the Netherlands are discussed, with a more detailed development of the case of Bologna, Italy.


This book is the final publication of the Global Urban Research Initiative (GURI), a ten year project designed to highlight the contribution of researchers from developing countries to the field of urbanization. The eight case studies making up the book relate to the themes of institutional frameworks and reforms, the complexity of urban life, and the process of political and social engagement. The topics covered include fiscal innovation, coordination of urban services, social organization, housing, and political party participation. The case studies contain material from Chile, Columbia, Mexico, Brazil, Sudan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines.


This paper considers the question of good governance, especially in relation to developing countries in Asia. It uses the Habitat II Conference’s database of “best practices,” or innovative urban governance experiences, to identify key characteristics of good governance practices. This leads to a strategy for good urban governance in Asian cities based on lessons derived from successful experiences. An annex provides a sample of the Best Practices from Asia in the Habitat II database.


Chapter nine of this book, “The Challenge of Urban Governance,” begins with a brief discussion of the concept of urban governance and the issues involved, illustrated by the case of the Bangkok Metropolitan Region. It goes on to examine major urban challenges in developing countries along five dimensions: a capacity dimension, a financial resources dimension, a diversity dimension, a security dimension and an authority dimension. Throughout this section the cities of Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, São
Paulo, Manila, Abidjan, and Mexico City are used as examples. The article finishes by considering the question of whether there is a “best” model of urban governance and giving conclusions and recommendations.


This book uses a framework built around the elements of globalization, the “world city” and governance to explore the forces that shape strategic city planning approaches around the world. Particular attention is paid to the idea of global convergence in city planning – is it inevitable that all world cities develop along the same path? The authors provide detailed analyses of the three premier global cities, New York, London, and Tokyo, as well as discussions of 11 emerging global players: Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, Mexico City, Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Barcelona, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore.


The author of this book is a former Minnesota state representative who created a coalition between central Minneapolis-Saint Paul, its declining inner suburbs, and its developing, low-tax capacity suburbs to fight the spread of urban poverty. He also pioneered the use of maps that, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, trace the decline of the central city and inner-ring suburbs and the rise of affluent, outer-ring suburbs. In this book he makes a case for regional policy reforms by charting a wide array of demographic, educational, economic and fiscal trends affecting Minneapolis-Saint Paul, and shows how the tools he used there, with great success, can be applied elsewhere. Specifically, he uses the same methodology he applied to the Twin Cities to evaluate the demographic basis for forming regional reform coalitions in Portland, Chicago and Philadelphia.


Chapter three of this OECD Territorial Review looks at metropolitan governance as a key issue for managing urban growth and implementing policy objectives aimed at pursuing global competitiveness. It contains examinations of four dilemmas: the tension between the need for large metropolitan governing bodies and the need for citizens to feel close to their government, the almost inevitable conflict between autonomous local authorities and higher levels of government, the delicate balance of private sector involvement in public governance, and the fiscal challenge of supporting the large spending needs of metro-regions. The advantages and disadvantages of several different models of metropolitan governance are discussed, along with examples from many OECD countries. Throughout the chapter are tables and boxes with more detailed information about the experiences of specific cities.

Jon Pierre, the author of this article, feels that in the field of urban politics and governance the research strategy of comparison has been underutilized. In this article he first outlines the most significant research questions in the field, then goes on to examine the basic logic of comparison and how it might be applied to urban politics. His main argument is that while urban regime theory has provided a useful base for understanding many important issues, in order to take the study of urban governance to a theoretical level comparison is critical.


This book documents the governance of London from the creation of the London County Council in 1888, through the reign of the Greater London Council (1965-1986) and the 14 year period when London was the responsibility of the central government, to the formation of the Greater London Authority and the early years of Ken Livingstone’s tenure as mayor. The book also looks at London’s handling of the three key issues of transport, policing and economic development. There is a short section at the beginning which considers the diversity of metropolitan communities and the possibilities for mayoral leadership, with a focus on the American, German and French models.


This book presents and evaluates recent local government reforms in five major Canadian cities: Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. It also examines metropolitan reforms and attempts at reform in several other countries – Britain (focusing on the case of London), the United States, Israel, and Korea – emphasizing similarities, differences, and lessons for the Canadian cities. The contributors try to explain the differences in the countries’ ability to implement metropolitan reforms, as well as why Canada has been able to implement reforms at a scale and frequency greater than anywhere else in the democratic world.


This article provides a background to understanding the problems of metropolitan financing in Brazil. It describes the institutional aspects of metropolitan regions, the structure of metropolitan finance, and the main obstacles to efficient municipal financing. It also outlines some of the new proposals for improving coordination, including a discussion of the changes that have been going on in São Paulo. At the end an annex provides detailed information about the Brazilian revenue system.


This paper examines institutional changes in the political and administrative structures governing Berlin, London, and Paris. It analyzes the extent to which increased international competition and European integration has shaped recent reforms and influenced the cities to develop along similar paths, testing whether the “convergence” or
“persistent divergence” thesis applies to these three capitals. It also looks at the changes in the level of centralization of the cities’ two-tier municipal governments over the course of their histories.


This report is the summary of a workshop which addressed the urban governance conundrum. It includes “snapshots” of urban governance in Mumbai, Abidjan, São Paulo, and Kyiv as well as more detailed articles about Johannesburg, Metro Manilla, Tokyo, and Santiago. These are interspersed with short policy papers on subjects such as the importance of participatory planning and the global competitive disadvantage of poor cities. Annexes provide information about the workshop on which the paper is based.


This background paper looks at how Pennsylvania’s fragmented system of local government has led to urban sprawl, declining central cities and boroughs, racial and economic segregation, and sluggish economic growth. The author suggests two approaches the state can take to reverse these trends: structural reform (changing the system of local government) and functional reform (setting new state rules for how the present system carries out key responsibilities). Each approach is then analyzed in terms of its political feasibility.


This paper begins with an assessment of the arguments for major local government reorganization that were used prior to and during the reforms of the 1960s and 70s. It then examines the five ways that Canadian jurisdictions have continued to evolve since 1975: by annexing surrounding territory, incorporating cities into counties, tinkering with reformed structures, incorporating new municipalities, and creating new special purpose bodies. There are illustrative examples from across the country, involving both large cities and smaller towns. A few of the cities have undergone drastic structural changes since the paper was written in 1993, so some of the information is now out of date.


This is an internationally comparative work which looks at the political responses of ten cities across North America and Western Europe as they grappled with the forces of global restructuring between 1970 and 2000. The authors build a framework to explain how urban development works and how it is influenced by political, economic and sociocultural factors, then test their model in the ten cities they have chosen. They also look at the big picture of urban change and try to glean lessons for the future from
the experiences of three decades of development. The ten cities studied include five that have enjoyed favourable market conditions (Paris, Milan, Houston, Toronto, and New York) and five that have experienced adverse market conditions (Naples, Marseilles, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Detroit).


This book traces the emergence in the global economy of four non-OECD cities – Johannesburg, Mumbai/Bombay, São Paulo, and Shanghai – and examines how their metropolitan leaders cope with the twin phenomena of globalization and the ongoing devolution of the state. The contributors identify the actors responsible for making the cities competitive and analyze the discourses taking place as the cities decide how to present themselves to the world. In addition, senior officials from each region who were involved in the development of their respective cities offer an insider perspective on the process.


This book traces the evolution of local governance in developing countries. It presents alternative models of local governance from various countries and develops a comparative institutional framework for responsive, responsible and accountable governance. It also includes 10 detailed case studies which provide an in-depth view of local government organization and finance in South Africa, Uganda, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Argentina, Brazil and Chile.


This book is the product of a conference held in 1991 which examined the issue of whether the collapse in the mid-1980s of metropolitan governments including London, Rotterdam and Copenhagen reflected a fundamental flaw in the model, or was largely coincidental. It contains chapters examining those three cities, as well as six others: Barcelona, Indianapolis, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Montreal, Tokyo, and Toronto. Much of the information in the case studies is now out of date, as some of the cities have restructured their local governments since the publication of the book. The first two chapters are more theoretical in subject, examining the reasons for metropolitan organization and the future of metropolitan government, and these continue to be relevant.


This article explores the changing nature of governance in Lisbon as it becomes an increasingly internationalized city. It outlines how international, national and local conditions have driven subnational governance change throughout Portugal, and within this context it examines the evolution of governance arrangements in Lisbon. It
emphasizes the problems resulting from the high degree of central state control as well as other challenges confronting Lisbon’s governing structure.


This article takes a close look at the amalgamation of the City of Toronto in 1998. It briefly reviews the history leading up to amalgamation, summarizes the new City’s characteristics and finances, and provides an initial analysis of the impact. The author evaluates the provincial government’s reasons for imposing the restructuring and concludes that it is unlikely that any cost savings will result from it. The article ends with a discussion of the challenges facing the new City of Toronto.


This paper evaluates different models of local government structure in the context of both large cities and small, remote communities. It begins by identifying the public finance criteria for designing government structure, then applies these criteria to communities of different size and location. This is followed by an examination of the advantages and disadvantages of four models of government structure: two-tier governments, one-tier governments, voluntary cooperation, and special purpose districts, as well as a discussion of the role for senior levels of government in local service delivery. The paper also includes five case studies of how different models work in the real world: Toronto, Vancouver, London, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, and rural communities in northern Ontario.


This paper explores the role that the Ontario government should play in responding to challenges faced by the province’s larger cities and city-regions. It reviews the importance of Ontario’s cities and city-regions to the provincial economy, outlines the economic, social and fiscal challenges that confront them, describes the current relationships between cities and the provincial government, and considers the most appropriate form and level of government at the sub-provincial level. The authors also set out criteria for designing local government structure and evaluate four different governance models: two-tier, one-tier, voluntary cooperation, and special purpose districts. The paper concludes with a look at recent economic, social and fiscal trends in cities and some recommendations on how to improve cities’ ability to respond to emerging challenges.


This working paper uses the case study of Ludhiana, India, to discuss the reform of urban service delivery in developing countries. It examines whether Ludhiana shows a need for urban service delivery reform when compared with national benchmarks, and
whether there is a relationship between the city’s financial performance and its delivery of urban services. It then looks at both triggers for service delivery reform and bottlenecks to service delivery reform. Also included in the paper is a short review of some relevant studies.


This short article provides a conceptual and research background to a number of key questions facing Latin America as it confronts the challenges and opportunities of municipal government. The topics discussed include the management approach to urban governing vs. the administration approach, the subtle new concept of “governance,” the trends of decentralization and democratization, and the importance of civil society participation. The entire article is geared towards suggesting avenues for further research, and an annex provides specific project proposals.


Richard Stren’s contribution to this book, due out in November 2007, deals with the challenge of handling the huge influx of people to urban areas in the developing world. He breaks the problem down into four dimensions: a capacity dimension, a financial resources dimension, a diversity dimension (which includes the question of security), and an authority dimension. Cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are discussed broadly, with a more detailed analysis of the governance of Abidjan, Côte D’Ivoire.


This special issue of the journal is compiled by guest editors Richard Stren and Robert Cameron and is devoted to metropolitan governance reform. The contributors examine changes in governance structures in both developed and developing countries, with articles focusing on Western Europe, Latin America, Asia, Canada, South Africa and Brazil. The topics discussed include the challenges which prompted the reforms, how and by whom the reforms were implemented, and the difficulties that remain despite the changes.


This book investigates the optimal size of local government with an analysis of the situation in five Central and East European countries, two with fairly large municipal governments (Bulgaria and Poland) and three with very small municipal governments (Hungary, Slovakia, and Czech Republic). The editor begins the book with a review of
international experiences with local government size, arguments for and against territorial consolidation, and a history of consolidation and fragmentation of municipal governments in East-Central Europe. Chapters on the specific countries follow, and the editor concludes with a summary of the changes in territorial organization since 1990, the case for big and small local governments, and recommendations stemming from the evidence presented.


Tony Travers’ provisional paper for the OECD conference on sustainable cities considers the evolution of metropolitan government, its role in today’s world, and the various pressures it must contend with. The paper looks specifically at the implications of various systems of local governance for the competitiveness and cohesion of cities. This question is investigated in more depth with regard to the governance of five major world cities: New York, London, Berlin, Toronto, and Paris.


This article argues that consolidation is no more than a pre-condition for promoting local government fiscal accountability; rather, it is the design of tax-service packages that ultimately determines whether an amalgamation has improved equity and efficiency in service provision. The author uses the case studies of the City of Miramachi, New Brunswick and the Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia, two urban regions which have recently amalgamated with surrounding rural districts, to explore the issues associated with merging districts with differing levels of service provision. This is done through a study of the service typologies and tax-service packages in the two amalgamated cities.


This paper provides an examination of the context of changing urban governance in China as the country transitions to a more market-oriented economy. It reviews the old pillars of socialist urban governance, then traces the forces that are acting inside and outside the state to create new conditions of urban governance. The paper also discusses entrepreneurial behaviour at the local level and the “territorial” organizations such as municipalities, urban districts, Street Offices and Residents’ Committees, which are taking on more management functions. The organization and workings of the city of Shanghai are highlighted throughout.