AMERICAN URBAN POLITICS IN A GLOBAL AGE

THE READER

SIXTH EDITION

Paul Kantor • Dennis R. Judd

American Urban Politics in a Global Age

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To my grandchildren, Dylan, Miranda, Jake, Weston, Wyatt, Eliza, and Katie: you make the world go round!

Dennis R. Judd

To my wonderful daughter, Elizabeth, and her global generation.

Paul Kantor

PREFACE

The globalization of America's cities, suburbs, and urban regions has unleashed so many dramatic changes in local politics that political scientists have had to rethink their approaches to the study of the city. Social and political developments in the first decade of the twenty-first century are so far-reaching and profound in social meaning that they are altering our assumptions about the nature of urban politics. For this reason, we have assembled readings for this sixth edition that highlight: the intense competition among cities in the international marketplace; the new attention given to urban culture in promoting cities; the fears and rivalries among groups over efforts to privatize public spaces; the political competition over new issues of race, ethnicity, and inequality, and the emergence of a multiethnic metropolis; the novel efforts to address the costs of urban sprawl; and the intergovernmental politics that helps determine how well cities cope with terrorism and natural disasters that overwhelm local resources. These developments are so transformative that we have been forced to substantially re-conceive our task, with the result that *American Urban Politics in a Global Age* is quite different from earlier editions in much of its content.

However, it is important to acknowledge the degree to which many of the "new" urban issues are actually rooted in the past. In our introductory essay we place the global age in historical context and highlight the continuities that have defined American urban politics since the nation's founding. In the first century, when cities spread across the frontier, they engaged in a frenetic competition for primacy and power and coped with the political effects of massive immigration—just as they do today. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, cities emerged as industrial centers, but then slid into decline as a result of suburbanization and, finally, the end of federal urban programs. In the global era, as we have noted, intense inter-urban competition and ethnic and racial rivalries drive local politics. The issues of federalism have also become important because of the limited capacity of cities to respond to all of the problems that confront them.

In all three periods, urban leaders have tried to promote local economic prosperity, but they have had to do so within the constraints of democratic processes. Dynamic tension between these two imperatives has shaped city politics in the past, and it continues to do so in the global age. This is because the American political order constitutes a merger of capitalism and democracy, or to put it differently, it joins a process in which popular elections and give-and-take among groups co-exists with private institutions and markets that supply necessary resources in exchange for profit. Local governments and cities are part of this political order.

The selections making up Part One of the book shed light on the economic imperatives that are reshaping urban America. They examine how contemporary urban politics is shaped by economic competition and the choices that cities make in mapping out their future well-being. The selections in Part Two comment on the complex and sometimes contested governance of the multiethnic metropolis. The chapters examine how governance takes placed not only within the public realm of cities and suburbs, but also within privatized urban enclaves. In all of these spaces, groups jostle for influence and control.

Part Three is concerned with the politics and governance of our socially fractured metropolitan areas. Some of the selections deal with sprawl and the attempts to respond to its problems. Other selections examine federal-local governmental relations and comment upon how effective decentralized political system copes with major problems that overwhelm the resources of local political systems.

Although the Internet and electronic libraries provide ready access to information about urban politics, students often find these sources overwhelming. Worse, they are lacking in selectivity and context. This volume overcomes these deficiencies. It brings together a selection of readings that represent some of the most important trends and topics in urban scholarship today. These are placed in context by means of editors' essays at the beginning of each chapter. These essays explain how each reading fits into the thematic context and highlight particularly important insights, from these readings. This book is a suitable companion for any good urban politics text, but its organization and themes fit particularly well with Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom's *City Politics*, a textbook also published by Longman Publishers.

Although not every area of importance for the study of urban politics could be included, we believe these reading selections provide depth and scope for students trying to understand politics in urban America through the work of some of our nation's leading scholars. This Sixth Edition of *American Urban Politics in a Global Age: The Reader* captures many of the new and old dynamics that shape the politics of America's cities. We wish to thank Eric Stano, our Longman political science editor, for championing this book. His interest, ideas, and encouragement were essential to this enterprise. We also wish to thank the professional reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions: John Bretting, University of Texas—El Paso; Michael Coulter, Grove City College; Aubrey Jewett, University of Central Florida; Kenneth Fernandez, University of Nevada—Las Vegas; Tim Mead, University of North Carolina—Charlotte, Platon Rigos, University of South Florida—Tampa; Linda Shafer, Allegheny College; Allan Wallis, Colorado University—Denver; Frank Popper, Rutgers University—New Brunswick; and Mark Chubb, Portland State University.

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Editors' Introductory Essay

Governing the Metropolis in the Global Era

Globalization has intensified competition among cities, quickened the pace of immigration, and changed spatial relationships within metropolitan areas. Cities have been thrown into intense interurban competition because investors send their money to wherever it yields the highest profits. People from low-wage parts of the world are moving in large numbers to places that afford opportunity; frequently, this means they move to urban areas. So many travelers and tourists move about each year that they have become a permanent fixture of the local landscape and the economies of all larger cities. Cities and urban regions are at the center of these globalization processes and are deeply affected by them. If "all politics is local," as a congressman famously observed decades ago, the phrase can now be interpreted to mean that the processes of globalization can be understood best by the imprint they leave on local communities.

Cities of all sizes, including those in the suburbs, compete in the global economy; as in the past, they can ill afford to leave their fortunes to chance. Intense interurban competition is not new; in the nineteenth century, for example, cities fought hard for railroad connections that would tie them into the emerging industrial economy. More recently, the global economy has favored investments in postindustrial business sectors such as finance, real estate, insurance, and a variety of service activities. In global cities all over the world highly educated white-collar professionals—for example, corporate managers, management consultants, legal experts, accountants, computer specialists, financial analysts, media and public relations specialists—work in clusters of downtown skyscrapers.[1] Likewise, cities further down the urban hierarchy try to define a niche that will secure their futures. Suburbs have gotten into the act, too; in effect, urban areas are free-trade zones where cities offer various subsidies to attract malls, big-box stores, and affluent residents.

Economic competition among jurisdictions will remain a basic fact of the global era into the foreseeable future. By the early twentieth century, cities occupied well-defined places in the industrial urban hierarchy. Globalization has torn that system apart. In the global era, cities are dependent on the decisions made by highly mobile, transnational corporations. New technologies in computers, communications, materials, production, and business organization have enabled businesses to disperse many of their activities to far-flung locations in suburbia, the Sunbelt, and foreign production sites. Many traditional industrial activities that once were undertaken in cities, such as steelmaking and garment and appliance manufacturing, have migrated to lower-cost locations in foreign countries in the Asian Rim, the Caribbean, Mexico, and South and Central America. The so-called global office has become commonplace: large corporations have concentrated their administrative

activities in major cities while decentralizing all other business operations to a multitude of sites.

The competitive struggle for economic prosperity has enormous implications for local politics and public policy. Globalization keeps local officials fixated on economic matters for the simple reason that the rules of the game are constantly changing. Yesterday it was manufacturing; today it is a complex mix of services and the economic benefits flowing from tourism and culture. All cities try to get their share, but the options available to them are limited, and especially so for poorer and smaller places. This economic imperative can be read by observing the transformation of city skylines. In recent decades, restored waterfronts and historic buildings, gleaming office towers, luxury hotels, convention centers, sports stadiums—and the list goes on—have sprung up in central cities everywhere. Cities commonly try to attract investment by offering such lures as historic tax credits, tax subsidies, and public improvements. Surrounding suburbs try to outdo one another to influence the location of development projects such as retail clusters and office parks. To attract the most affluent workers in the globalized service economy, all cities must offer a high level of urban amenities.[2]

The public subsidies required to build new infrastructure and amenities draw critical comments in the letters sections of local newspapers because it often appears that local governments do little else but support development and respond to the needs of business. In most cities, however, public officials try to achieve—or appear to achieve—some kind of balance. At least to some degree, the ballot box acts as a counterweight. All but the most homogeneous and prosperous local communities must manage a complex politics marked by interest-group competition and racial, ethnic, and class differences. An increasing volume of capital flows may be a defining feature of globalization, but so also is the movement of people across borders and from place to place. The logic of the marketplace treats cities purely as locations for private economic activity, but the political logic of democratic processes motivates public officials to build political support for what they seek to accomplish.[3]

In the United States, local governments are especially dependent upon the marketplace because they receive so little aid from upper-level governments. In most other Western nations, much of the basic infrastructure and many of the services provided to citizens originate from central governments. Most West European city governments do not have to rely on private lenders to raise money for capital projects; those are generally financed by national governments. The relative absence of intergovernmental aid forces U.S. cities to support their activities through local revenues, and these quickly dry up unless adequate tax sources can be found. This is a major reason why the economic and political imperatives are often so difficult to negotiate.

To trace the contours of today's urban politics, we have organized *American Urban Politics in a Global Age* into three parts. Part One contains selections highlighting the thesis that the economic imperative powerfully shapes contemporary urban politics. Part Two is made up of selections dealing with the governance imperative: How are competing political demands of citizens reconciled with the economic pressures? In the global era, as in the past, local governments are forced to respond to issues connected to race, space, and ethnicity.

The selections in Part Three comment on the fragmentation of power and authority in America's governmental system. America's metropolitan regions are fractured into multitudes of governments, which makes it difficult to respond to important problems connected

to sprawl. The way governments are organized matters, both at the metropolitan level and beyond. The haphazard response to the catastrophic damage inflicted on New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 called into question whether the intergovernmental system of the United States can effectively respond not only to natural disasters, but also to less-publicized problems, such as poverty and inadequate schooling and housing. In the remainder of this essay, we summarize the themes that the selections are meant to address.

Part One: Globalization and the Economic Imperative

If we place today's urban politics in historical context, the differences as well as the continuities come into focus. In the United States, fierce interurban competition has always worked as a mainspring animating urban politics. In the nineteenth century, local elites were active promoters of local growth because they instinctively understood that some cities—but not all—would prosper in the international urban system that was emerging in the industrial age. Before industrialization, the major obstacles to local economic growth were physical barriers that impeded the exchange of goods between a rural hinterland and the city, and between the city and other commercial centers. With the coming of railroads in mid-century, competition among cities became truly national in scope. Cities everywhere, big or small, new or old, could use railroad lines to penetrate their hinterland in the expectation that they could gather up the trade of the backcountry and channel it through to their own commercial streets. Individual cities, as public corporations, provided massive assistance to railroad companies that agreed to build connecting lines. The federal and state governments offered assistance to the railroads as well, but the cities provided the most of all.

The selections in Part One make it clear that there is a close parallel with the politics of growth in today's cities. As in an earlier era, today's civic boosters are fired with the conviction that the fate of their cities cannot be left to chance. In the postwar era, when suburbanization and deindustrialization threatened to plunge the cities into permanent decline, downtown business interests mobilized to preserve their investments. In city after city, coalitions led by aggressive mayors and corporate CEOs led campaigns to revitalize the downtowns. For nearly half a century, the politics of cities revolved around these coalitions and their preferences. They spearheaded the efforts to build convention centers, renew business districts, improve streets and streetscapes, build sports facilities, and improve parks and green spaces.

An emerging literature in urban politics shows that globalization has dispersed power more widely and reduced the influence of the CEO-led organizations. Corporate buyouts, mergers, and the internationalization of corporate structures have reduced the ranks of business leaders interested in local politics. In their stead, a new leadership has emerged that reflects the shape of the new economy: developers, the leaders of nonprofit organizations, and professionals working in cultural institutions have filled the gap left by the lagging interest of corporate CEOs. Since the 1990s, tourism and culture have led the revitalization of many central cities. The new political leadership translates culture into policies that often seem heavily weighted in favor of tourists and affluent downtown residents. High-end residential and tourist enclaves exist in virtually all cities whatever their racial and ethnic makeup, and policies to promote such developments are nearly universal. This has created competition and often confrontation among groups over neighborhood changes and city

policies. As in the past, city politics often pivots around the economic imperative, even though the specific political actors have changed.

Part Two: Governing the Multiethnic Metropolis

As important as the economic imperative may be, a political logic also acts as a dynamic feature of urban politics. This dynamic is not new to the global era. In the nineteenth century, a rapidly expanding urban electorate became an enduring fixture in the politics of cities. This development radically changed the complexion of local politics. By the 1840s, property qualifications to vote were abolished almost everywhere, a reform that enhanced the influence of immigrant voters. After the Civil War, city populations exploded when waves of immigrants from abroad and migrants from rural areas came in search of jobs in the factories. Wide-open political struggles began to replace oligarchic control by business elites. A new generation of politicians organized party machines as a way of mobilizing the urban electorate by buying loyalty and favors with cash, jobs, contracts, and other material inducements. Whatever their merits or shortcomings, the machines gave the immigrants a voice in local politics. This new-found influence became the lightning rod for many of the political conflicts of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

The parallels with urban politics today are plain to see. An immigrant floodtide has made cities and urban regions more racially and ethnically diverse than ever before. More immigrants came to the United States in the 1990s than in any previous decade in the nation's history, and the flow is certain to continue well into the twenty-first century. The social and political effects of large-scale population movements are dramatically evident in big global cities such as Miami, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. In these cities—and even in some smaller places—the new immigration has changed the complexion of local politics.

The diverse ethnic makeup of the globalized metropolis constitutes a sharp break from the previous urban pattern. In the years after World War II, white flight to the suburbs combined with the mass migration of blacks to the central cities created a metropolis characterized by high levels of racial segregation and sometimes violent racial confrontation. The movements into and out of the cities created a nearly unbridgeable social chasm that threatened to rend the fabric of American society. As blacks moved into central-city neighborhoods, whites resisted, often violently. These tensions began to ease by the 1970s when blacks became incorporated into local politics systems. A black political leadership first emerged in the central cities, and over time blacks have been elected to political office throughout the federal system.

Immigration has unleashed far-reaching changes. Immigrants from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Eastern and Central Europe now constitute a substantial and growing proportion of the residents of America's cities and of its suburbs. As the ethnic complexion of cities has become more diverse, urban politics has increasingly become defined by a process of interethnic bargaining. A power struggle is taking place between newly arrived immigrants, African Americans, and middle- and upper-class residents. It has become clear that there is no singular "minority" interest; instead, the new immigrants often compete with blacks in the electoral arena and beyond. Coalitions, sometimes quite temporary and fragile, have replaced the clear racial divisions of the past. Sometimes the tensions are difficult to manage. At the same time, it must be recognized that the presence of minorities in positions of political leadership has reduced the mutual suspicions and hostilities that characterized interracial and interethnic relations just a few decades ago.

Not long ago these observations would have applied mainly to the central cities. But unlike the past, immigrants of all ethnic backgrounds are now settling in the suburbs as much as in the central cities. The old urban pattern, with a troubled central city surrounded by rank on rank of suburbs, is breaking down. The new urban pattern is extremely complex. In central cities, rising levels of social inequality characteristic of U.S. society are written on the urban landscape. Affluent downtown and gentrified neighborhoods are sharply separated from the neighborhoods inhabited by the urban poor. High-rise condominium and townhouse developments sometimes sit only a block or two from neighborhoods with extreme levels of poverty. Affluent empty-nesters and young professionals are moving back downtown. Central cities are once again becoming hotspots for culture, nightlife, and fun, but a few blocks away the scene may be very different. In cities facing the social problems that arise from immigration and social polarization, it should occasion no surprise that the debate over policies that seem weighted heavily in favor of affluent downtown residents should become highly contentious.

In the suburbs, a parallel process has been unfolding. In the 1990s, when Asians and Latinos settled in the suburbs in large numbers, a large proportion of both groups ended up in ethnic enclaves that were sharply separated from whites,[4] although these groups were less segregated in the suburbs than in the central cities.[5] Many suburbs are becoming multiethnic. In some of these suburbs a politics of interethnic bargaining has evolved that looks very much like the political process that has evolved in the central cities over a long period, in which minorities have become, or are in the process of becoming, incorporated into electoral politics and institutions. In other suburbs, a politics of marginalization, distrust, and hostility carries the day. Metropolitan areas are typically fragmented into a multitude of separate jurisdictions. Often, immigrants are sharply separated from the neighborhoods inhabited by affluent residents. For example, during the 1990s two streams moved to Orange County, California, just outside Los Angeles: highly educated professionals and foreign-born immigrants. The two streams could hardly have been more different: high-income families making more than $150,000 per year jumped by 184 percent in the county, but at the same time the number of foreign-born immigrants increased by 48 percent.[6] Commenting on these trends, a noted demographer said the county could go in two directions: either a "mostly gated-community-type mentality" or "Immigrants start integrating into middle-class areas, so you have a blended suburbia."[7]

A multiethnic metropolis has emerged that requires a high degree of political dexterity to manage the demands made by various groups. Some urban residents seem to be opting out of the demands of governance altogether by retreating from the public realm into protected, privatized enclaves. Enclaves have proliferated in suburbs just as they have in central cities. A large proportion of urban residents commute from subdivisions, gated communities, townhouse developments, and condominium complexes to high-rise downtown office buildings or suburban office parks, drive to enclosed malls and mall complexes for shopping, and commute to entertainment and tourist bubbles to enjoy themselves.[8] Escape from the public realm fragments the metropolis not only into separate suburban jurisdictions, but also into privatized enclaves that separate affluent from poorer residents more purely than before.

In addition to immigration, other global pressures are relentlessly changing the responsibilities of local governments. International terrorism is bringing the dark side of globalization into the largest cities, particularly since 9/11. The terrorist threat has precipitated a political scramble to seek defensive measures and redefine how important public

spaces, such as airports, tall buildings, subways, and crowded commercial centers, should be watched and made safe. Local governments, as first responders, are frontline participants in the struggle for homeland security.

Part Three: Sprawl, Federalism, and the Divided Metropolis

In recent years, urban sprawl has blossomed as an important public policy issue. The sprawled metropolis has spawned a set of highly publicized issues such as traffic congestion and gridlock, uncontrolled development, and air pollution, but governance must be added to the list as one of the most intractable problems. For decades, movements sprang forth seeking the regional consolidation of governments, but attempts to achieve this goal failed decade after decade. Although comprehensive reform proved to be elusive, other, more modest steps have been taken to reduce the quality of governance and to reduce inequality among jurisdictions. For example, in Minnesota, the state legislature approved a modest tax-sharing plan, wherein wealthier jurisdictions would share some of the tax revenues created by attracting development with less wealthy suburbs.

The debates about the consequences of sprawl have run the gamut; some have said it is simply an outcome of prosperity, which gives Americans the opportunity to constantly improve their circumstances; others have decried the proliferation of suburban malls, the spiderweb of superhighways that crisscrosses the landscape, and the spread of housing tracts that seem to go on forever. For the New Urbanists, much of the solution for tract housing developments, big-box retailing, and expressways is more compact planned developments that mix uses and design traffic grids, streets, and neighborhoods to human scale.

Debates about the appropriate scale and governance of our metropolitan areas have been given new urgency by international pressures resulting in rising energy prices. As suburban and city residents confront the reality of dramatically more expensive costs of gasoline, fuel oil, natural gas, and electricity, recalculating the desirability of sprawled living styles is unavoidable. Distances to work and home acquire a new meaning. Regional policy is becoming a pocketbook issue.

The slow and disorganized response to the devastation wrought on New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 raised important questions about the complicated governmental system of the United States. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, also raised the alarm. It is not only regions that are fragmented; the governmental structure of the nation is as well, and as the disaster revealed, it was difficult for national, state, and local authorities to work together. What is the proper relationship between the federal government and the cities? Do cities possess the capacity to respond to all problems that may face them? Since the withdrawal of federal urban programs in the 1980s, cities have been on their own. At the same time, there are signs of creeping federal regulation and mandates, but often without adequate funding to assist local governments in meeting their obligations. For the most part, local governments have stepped up to the daunting challenge posed by revitalizing local economies at a time of limited federal assistance. But large-scale disasters pose a different kind of problem that may require a closer relationship between cities and federal government. The nation's federal system is in flux, and its future evolution will dramatically shape the capacity of cities to govern.

CHAPTER 1

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF URBAN GOVERNANCE

ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIES

City politics can be understood as a bargaining process over the policy priorities and public expenditures of local governments. These negotiations, whether they are conducted as open battles fought out between electoral candidates or in other arenas, become highly contentious because, as public corporations, cities are invested with significant public powers that can be used for a variety of purposes. As Paul E. Peterson points out in Selection 1, there are constant debates about the "public interest" that cities ought to pursue. Some people might demand that cities spend their public resources on "redistributive" policies designed to help those most in need. Others might promote the view that city governments should do little more than provide the services necessary to make the city a healthy and functional environment. Peterson's view is that cities must at all costs avoid policies that redistribute resources from businesses and affluent residents to those with fewer resources. Instead, he argues, cities have no choice but to support policies that will stimulate economic growth. Such policies, he says, respond to a "unitary interest" that all urban residents hold in local economic vitality: "It is in the city's interest . . . to help sustain a high-quality local infrastructure generally attractive to all commerce and industry." This logic dictates that even the social health of a city depends upon its economic prosperity: "When a city is able to export its products, service industries prosper, labor is in greater demand . . . tax revenues increase, city services can be improved, donations to charitable organizations become more generous, and the social and cultural life of the city is enhanced."

In Peterson's analysis, the leaders of cities cannot leave economic growth to chance because cities compete with one another. City governments are unable to control the movement of capital and labor across borders. In contrast to the national government, they lack the authority to regulate immigration, currency, prices, and wages, or the import or export of goods and services. City governments, therefore, are constrained to compete for capital investment or suffer decline in the economic well-being of the community. Cities occupy a particular space, but businesses can move; therefore, if the local business environment is not pleasing to them, investors and businesses will go elsewhere. This logic drives cities to minimize taxes, avoid expensive regulations, and offer a variety of subsidies to business. If they heed Peterson's injunction, politicians will resist the

clamor of all political interests that might compromise the preferences of business in any way.

The book from which the Peterson selection is taken ignited a controversy among urban scholars—a controversy that has not died down completely even after more than two decades. (Peterson's book was published in 1981.) Many scholars took Peterson to task for his apparent assertion that growth benefits everyone. Others accused him of ignoring the complexities of local politics by pointing out that the mix of local policies differs substantially from city to city depending on population demographics, the political influence and the degree of political participation of various groups, and governmental powers and structures. The importance of local prosperity is likely to always be high on the agenda, but politicians must also mobilize sufficient political support to remain in office; in other words, they must win elections. Mayors must often perform a delicate balancing act that requires them to protect and enhance the economic base of a city while at the same time mobilizing sufficient political support to remain in office and implement their policies.

Partially in response to Peterson's book, a literature on "urban regimes" emerged that provided detailed descriptions of the process by which local policy priorities were decided. The leading book, *Regime Politics* (1989), by now a classic in the field of urban politics, was based on a detailed case study of postwar politics in Atlanta. As described by Clarence N. Stone in Selection 2, the two most powerful partners of what he called the "urban regime" in Atlanta included the mayor and the city's downtown business elite. In his study, Stone pointed out that governmental officials were motivated to join the coalition because they lacked the resources to do much about Atlanta's economic problems on their own. Likewise, the business community required a local government capable of coordinating the massive resources necessary for saving the downtown from decline. By working together, all the participants could accomplish goals that none of them could achieve on their own. Stone noted, "What makes governance in Atlanta effective is not the formal machinery of government, but rather the informal partnership between city hall and the downtown business elite. This informal partnership and the way it operates constitute the city's regime; it is the same means through which major policy decisions are made." For Stone, governance in Atlanta was achieved by *partnership* rather than by control exercised by a few powerful individuals.

Globalization has changed the internal politics of cities in fundamental ways. Following Stone's book, the literature in urban politics documented the overwhelming influence of business elites in promoting economic growth and downtown revitalization. Elizabeth Strom points out in Selection 3 that the alliances forged between powerful mayors and downtown business elites are being replaced by looser coalitions dominated by real estate developers, nonprofit institutions, and public-sector agencies. Downtown is no longer "the seat of corporate power;" instead, American downtowns have become transformed into entertainment spaces and locations for upscale residences. The owners and managers of condominium towers, cultural facilities, convention centers, sports venues, and entertainment complexes, working closely with public development agencies, cooperate, as needed, to promote an environment that will be mutually beneficial. In Strom's view, the result is that the ambitious civic agenda once promoted by business elites has given way to a politics driven by a narrower set of issues. Downtown interests remain influential, but they do not necessarily dominate the local political landscape.