

LEADING BEYOND LIMITS:

Mayoral Powers in the Age of New Localism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These are trying times for the world—and acutely challenging times for cities. Whether grappling with the challenges of integrating refugees or adapting to new environmental realities brought on by climate change, mayors are on the front lines dealing with disruptions brought by technology, economic transformation, and demographic shift.

In the United States, socioeconomic and political pressures are disrupting federalist governance arrangements and destabilizing sitting mayors, forcing them to take on new responsibilities with fewer resources. A wave of state preemption laws, fueled by advocacy campaigns from conservative groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Republican-controlled state houses, are rolling back city-led efforts to expand municipal broadband, raise the minimum wage, and regulate home and ride sharing. Proposed reforms to city charters have sought to expand or restrict mayoral control over city budgets, powers over police departments, and more.

In Europe, rising populist sentiment is having similar effects on political discourse, creating tensions between social and economic policy preferences at the local and national level. In the United Kingdom, a devolution movement is granting sweeping new powers to directly elected mayors in cities and metropolitan regions that never had consolidated local leadership before. Mayors are flexing their muscle on the global stage as well, generating coordinated action on issues like climate change where many national governments are falling behind, and

pushing for more formal voice and recognition in an international system that remains organized around the nation state.

With support from the Bloomberg Philanthropies, we conducted this study to explore the state of mayoral powers in a shifting political economy and governance landscape; identify ongoing challenges for research, policy, and practice; and recommend ways to address them. The study began as an investigation of city charter challenges, but expanded to address the heightened urgency of the current political moment and the looming federalist crisis in the United States. The analysis primarily centers on the United States with a U.S. audience in mind, but illustrative examples from countries such as the United Kingdom and Chile help provide important international context for emerging city leadership dynamics around the world.

A clearer articulation of the underlying governance structures in cities and the ways they are evolving will help mayors and other city leaders stay grounded and govern more effectively in a rapidly changing world. The lessons from mayors solving problems and making progress in spite of constraints on their formal powers and available resources are even more necessary today, as federal resources and leadership on critical urban issues are on a steep decline and the gulf between urban policy preferences and state and federal priorities widens. Though cities and governance contexts vary tremendously around the world, some generalizable insights can guide and inspire efforts to strengthen mayoral leadership in cities around the world.

KEY FINDINGS:



1. THE NEED TO LEAD BEYOND THE LIMITS OF FORMAL POWERS IS A DEFINING CONDITION OF MAYORAL REALITY.

Though there is tremendous variation in urban governance arrangements, with few exceptions, formal mayoral powers are shaped and limited by fragmented governance environments. Mayors are only one piece of a diverse and complex urban governance landscape. Yet mayors must (and do) deliver results despite fragmentation of power and authority within their own cities and across other levels of government.

2. KEY FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES HELP MAYORS LEAD, INNOVATE, AND DELIVER RESULTS IN THEIR CITIES IN SPITE OF FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENTS AND LIMITED FORMAL POWERS.

As demands on cities increase, mayors' jobs become increasingly technically complex, multidisciplinary, and network-oriented. Effective mayors govern by network, exercising soft powers of persuasion and executing strategies to improve their cities that rely on a range of public, private, and civic resources. A strong orientation to building, maintaining, and engaging with networks, professionalization of key roles and responsibilities, and collaboration with specialized intermediaries can all help mayors lead beyond the limits of their formal powers.

3. IN FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENTS, ANY PROPOSED EXPANSION OR REDUCTION IN MAYORAL POWERS SHOULD FOCUS ON IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN DECISIONMAKING.

Efforts to improve the quality of city governance can focus on function or form. There is no one "right" way to design the role of mayor; mayors can be effective in many different forms of government. In fragmented governance environments, clear executive structures and transparent lines of authority and decisionmaking are essential to promote transparency and accountability.

4. URBAN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNDER PRESSURE AND IN FLUX. CITY LEADERS MUST ADAPT TO AND SHAPE THIS CHANGE.

The powers that cities and their mayors wield relative to other levels of government and other forces in a globally connected market and society are changing quickly. In the United States, the current federalist arrangement is being tested in real time as progressive urban needs and preferences grow increasingly out of sync with more conservative state and federal priorities. Devolution, regional consolidation, and pressure to include city representation in the international and global system are three multilevel governance changes to watch on the global stage. Mayors are on the front lines of them all.

**“Whenever and wherever societies have
flourished and prospered rather than
stagnated and decayed, creative and workable
cities have been at the core.”**

Jane Jacobs

The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)

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INTRODUCTION

At a historical moment characterized by profound disruption, dizzying complexity, and rapid change, the need for strong leadership—clear vision, direction, organization, and management—is a constant. In our increasingly urbanized world, the question of who leads cities, and how, could not be more important, both for the health and vitality of urban residents and for the global economy, society, and environment writ large. While the forces acting on cities are complex and the actors influencing their trajectories are numerous, mayors, as the leaders of city governments, have special importance in the landscape of city power and governance.(1)

Through the density of their population and the mass of their economies, cities have long exerted forces that shaped the world in profound ways. In recent years, the narrative of urban economic, technological, and cultural dominance became a given as cities—particularly global cities—emerged as some of globalization’s biggest beneficiaries. Cities are now the undisputed engines of economic growth and essential problem-solvers on issues of global importance, from climate change to refugee integration. In recent years, cities have endured the profound shocks of recession and an unprecedented string of extreme weather events. At the same time, they have paved the path to recovery and created the blueprints to rebuild for a stronger future.

A BACKLASH IS HERE.

In this time of flourishing populism and nationalism in the United States and across Europe, urban politics and interests appear to be increasingly out of sync with those of states and central governments. In the United Kingdom’s June 2016 referendum on EU membership, cities voted to remain while a slim majority of the country voted to leave—reflecting deep divisions over refugees and immigrants, globalization and employment, and local control in the face of a growing EU. Elections in Italy, France, Austria, and elsewhere in Europe have reflected similarly divided urban/rural political sentiments.

In the United States, a decades-long retrenchment of federal spending on urban priorities has escalated to an all-out war between progressive cities and the conservative state and federal governments, with battles waged for resources and for social, economic, and environmental policies. (2) De facto devolution of federal responsibilities for housing, infrastructure, and social services is converging with an imposition of anti-urban federal priorities on trade, immigration, and climate change, as well as state-level preemption on progressive social issues and disruptive innovations like ride and home sharing.

These turbulent times may mark the beginning of a new globalism defined by two massive, opposing forces: the increasing speed, efficiency, and openness of markets on one side, encouraging freer flows of information, goods, and people; and the sclerotic, change-averse, bureaucratic machinery of central governments and nationalist politics on the other, acting as a brake. Mayors—whether of global cities like London or [small towns in Iowa](#)¹—often find themselves right in the middle.

But the flip side of this new globalism is a thriving and spirited new localism. Motivated by the need to act in spite of national gridlock and in the face of antagonistic federal policy, cities are extending their reach. They are leading beyond the usual urban issues of economic development and services delivery, lending their voice and visibility to issues of national and global import. By planning, designing, and executing effective solutions for their own residents with limited help from Washington or their states, and organizing and activating cross-city leadership networks as they have for climate change and immigrant and refugee sanctuary, cities and the mayors that lead them are ushering in an era of [New Localism](#)².

A strong network orientation is one of the defining features of mayors and cities that will thrive in this new moment. Mayors everywhere sit at the center of networks of institutions and leaders that span sectors, issues, and geographies well beyond the bounds of their immediate political jurisdiction. In a global economy, mayors must be responsive to the local needs of constituents while remaining sensitive to the broader global political and market dynamics that affect their lives.

Addressing complex urban issues—reducing violence, improving economic mobility—demands integrated solutions that span bureaucratic silos. Delivering basic services—collecting trash, repairing roads—requires navigating the interests of private contractors, public unions, and a range of other actors. Rapidly changing technologies—sensor networks, machine intelligence, autonomous vehicles—are requiring mayors to work with the private and civic sectors to find ways to harness benefits and minimize harms that are still untested and unknown.

In a world where power is diffused across sectors, mayors must increasingly play the role of negotiator-in-chief, assessing the benefits of deals for the city and determining which constituencies benefit.

How can cities and mayors make the most of this moment? The variables that cause some cities to succeed while others struggle, and make formerly struggling cities change course, are numerous, complex, and difficult to isolate. Yet we intuit that leadership makes a difference and that visible, charismatic mayors can be change agents. We less frequently consider the ways that mayors are empowered or constrained by the underlying structural features and mechanics of urban governance. For their central role in cities and their increasing visibility as national and global leaders, we still know too little about how mayors matter to cities and how they should be adapting to help their cities navigate new political and economic realities.

Mayors are often forced to lead on issues over which they have little formal control. Responsibility for the headline issues that

¹ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8qgkyk/sanctuary-cities-complicated-politics-small-towns

² <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/07/14/go-local-help-cities-pursue-the-new-american-localism-to-break-partisan-gridlock/>

sway mayoral elections—education, violence, responses to natural disasters—is widely distributed across individuals and institutions outside of the mayor’s office. Mayors get blamed and praised for things well beyond their formal spheres of control—education a prime example in many cities—but may go unrecognized for important, less visible moves that can be foundational for long-term system change: restructuring and better aligning [economic and workforce development systems](#)³, or changing [procurement rules](#)⁴ to improve transparency and efficiency in government contracting.

Often hidden behind headline issues, the political economies and institutional arrangements in cities are changing in important ways, altering the formal powers mayors have to tackle the complex tasks in front of them and requiring new capacities to lead beyond the limitations of fragmented governance environments.

Urban governance is the sleeping giant of global geopolitics. The complex web of actors that shape urban plans and policies and move resources to and through cities is part of the invisible infrastructure that undergirds everything from well-functioning capital markets to the new light rail line connecting an exurban bedroom community to a thriving downtown. It helps explain how Louisville, Kentucky, and Copenhagen, Denmark, can be kindred spirits in economic innovation in spite of countless geographic, cultural, and political differences.

With mayors on the front lines of defining the new localism, there is a great need to identify

the powers and capacities mayors have to address the challenges in front of them and to determine ways to sharpen and expand them.

How can mayors lead more effectively in extraordinarily complex governance environments? What new capacities and partners do they need to build the infrastructure and deliver the services that will secure their cities’ future in an era of declining support from higher levels of government? What kinds of specialized intermediaries can help them coordinate vertically and horizontally across government, across sectors, and across issue areas? What difference do the formal powers of mayors make to outcomes in the cities they lead? Is changing the formal powers of mayors the best way to improve conditions in cities, or are there better targets of reform efforts?

In an increasingly urbanizing world with complex, interrelated challenges and a domestic political environment that is simultaneously pushing responsibility for citizen well-being down to cities while pulling away power and resources, we need a much stronger evidence base to inform decisions about how to reform and evolve municipal governance arrangements and design the institutions that make them stable and effective. With support from the Bloomberg Philanthropies, we conducted this study to contribute to that body of knowledge by analyzing some of the key variables that make mayors effective leaders, describing how conditions are changing over time, and distilling key recommendations to help mayors be more effective frontline leaders of cities around the world.

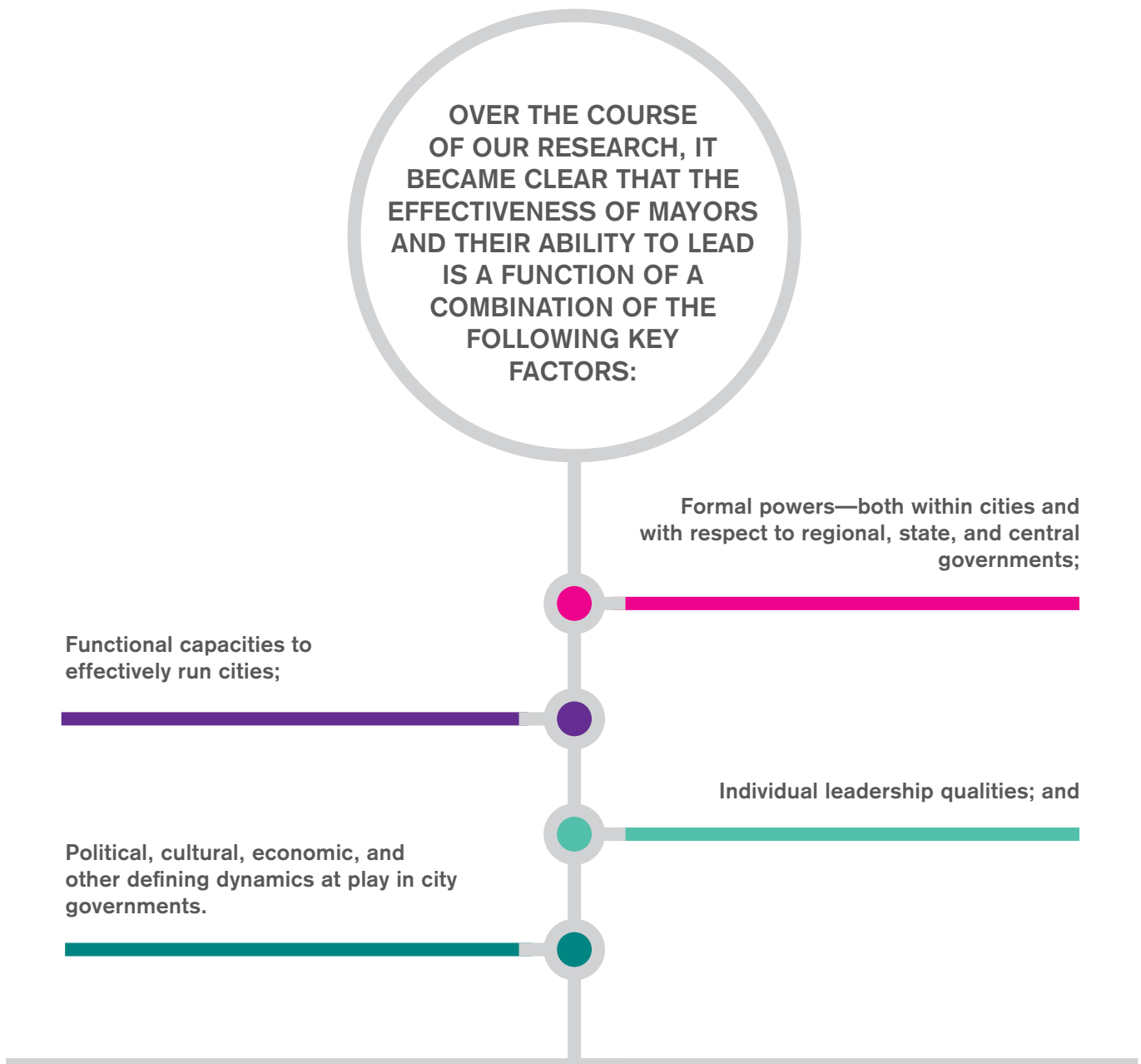
3 <http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2012/01/18/pewphiladelphiaworkforcedevelopmentjobs.pdf>

4 <http://www.govtech.com/budget-finance/Procurement-Reforms-Are-Beginning-to-Take-Hold.html>

PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This paper reviews the landscape of formal mayoral powers, concentrating on the executive leaders of city governments in the United States, where a strong federalist government structure leads to a diverse spectrum of local governance arrangements unlike almost anywhere else in the world.⁽³⁾

It offers a framework that distinguishes formal mayoral powers from the functional capacities that enable or constrain the effectiveness of mayors and their ability to deliver in the cities they lead. It then looks at how mayors and local governance arrangements have changed (and are changing) and points to key areas of reform, adaptation, and future research that could inform efforts to help mayors adapt to changing conditions and govern more effectively.



Two other factors undoubtedly influence how effective mayors can be: the specific leadership qualities, skills, and abilities of the individual mayor and the political dynamics in play in the city and beyond. As consequential as these variables may be, a deep investigation was beyond the scope of this study. This report focuses on unpacking the formal powers and functional capacities that are so often overlooked, understudied, or overshadowed by the personalities and politics of mayors and the cities they lead.

While mayors are the focus of this study, the importance of the multilevel governance arrangements that define and constrain the powers of cities, regardless of leadership form, was a central theme. Research drew on the experiences of recent devolution movements in the United Kingdom, Chile, and elsewhere to shed light on these dynamics as well as the incipient conversation about global urban governance reform sparked by the Sustainable Development Goals, the Habitat III summit and the New Urban Agenda, and the Global Parliament of Mayors.

The central research question focused on the formal powers of city *government*, but the research proceeded with a multisector, networked *governance* lens that acknowledged the increasing distribution of responsibilities among public, private, and civic actors and its impact on mayors, who need specific capacities to navigate this complex environment.

Our research began with a multidisciplinary literature review on municipal public administration and mayoral leadership. We deepened our inquiry through 15 interviews with academics, urban policymakers (including two former mayors and a deputy mayor), funders, and practitioners.⁽⁴⁾ Several case studies have been included that highlight particularly interesting features of different systems of municipal governance, including systems in flux.

Throughout, the goal of this project has been to surface some of the most salient but overlooked aspects of effective urban leadership: the institutional design features that grant mayors and managers the power to govern, to innovate, and to marshal the resources to solve complex problems for their residents and the world.

We hope this study will be useful to cities grappling with big decisions about how to evolve their own government institutions and reform their own governance practices to better meet the needs of a complex, pressure-cooker present; new cities designing their systems from the ground up; central governments seeking to improve conditions in cities from the top down; and networks of leaders advocating for governance reform at multiple levels. And perhaps most importantly, we hope it will be useful to city residents who want to understand how their local governments work, why their votes count, and how they can participate in the evolution of democratic institutions.

WHAT MAKES A MAYOR? FORMAL POWERS, FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES

What makes a mayor powerful? We think we know them when we see them. Asked to name a prototypical strong mayor, many would cite former Chicago mayors Richard J. Daley and Richard M. Daley. Both had tremendous ambition, extensive networks, and political sophistication in spades, and there is no question that they got things done. Yet both had relatively weak *formal* powers. The tremendous fragmentation of the city, the region, and the State of Illinois (with its nearly 7,000 different units of government), combined with an outdated city charter and the division of powers in the U.S. federalist system, constrains the ability of Chicago's mayor to control matters in the city in important ways.⁽⁵⁾

What makes a mayor effective? This is even less clear. In theory, mayors are measured by their ability to build and maintain physical structures in their cities, ensure order and stability, and deliver services to their residents. In the short run, mayoral performance is often assessed, at least by the public, in terms of visible public projects, policy changes, or controversies. Reviews of mayors' day-to-day performance play out in the media or, more recently, with the release of statistics from a

city data portal.⁽⁶⁾ Short-term successes—firms attracted, jobs created, units of housing built, a decrease in crime rates—often overshadow long-run planning victories, such as planning for climate change.

However, the visible measures of success or failure in cities are rarely directly traceable to the actions of mayors—either what they are doing inside their own governments or how they work across networks of other public, private, and civic leaders. And relatively few mayors have the benefit of detailed biographies or case studies to unpack the process behind the politics.

It is somewhat easier to articulate how a successful city government operates. It has effective public institutions that make transparent, prompt, and financially responsible decisions with clear accountability for results. It delivers services efficiently and completes public projects as the need arises. It responds to the changing preferences of its citizens, administering policies that reflect the desires of the community. And it works with local businesses and nonprofits to create the conditions for a thriving economy and pathways to opportunity.

This idealized conception of the city extends to our expectations of city leaders. With a strong caveat that cultural expectations vary from place to place, mayors are generally expected to:

⋮

Provide visible, visionary policy leadership and clear communication about the key goals and priorities of the city;

Deliver professional management of administrative affairs, balancing long-range vision and planning, short-term service delivery, and continual improvement and innovation;

Be responsive to the changing needs and preferences of residents;

⋮

⋮

⋮

Develop strategies to be competitive in a global economy;

Steward networks of civic, private, and other public leaders;

Model good governance, transparency, and accountability; and

⋮

Represent the interests of the city in other levels of government.

How the many thousands of heads of local government around the world—from highly visible, charismatic mayors to little known but long-tenured city managers—begin to tackle this ambitious task is something we are only beginning to understand.

As a first step, we found it useful to distinguish formal mayoral powers—the legal authorities and obligations granted to mayors by their city charters and to cities by the higher levels of government—from the functional capacities that mayors use to get things done in spite of limitations on formal power.

Formal powers may include executive powers (control over overall strategic direction and budgeting, key personnel, and communication); legislative powers (the ability to propose, introduce, and enact new laws and policies); fiscal powers (the ability to tax, borrow, lend, and charge fees for use and service); and sectoral powers (control over strategy, operations, personnel, and budgets in key sectors, such as education, housing, land use, and policing). These powers vary from place to place but broadly represent the toolkit of mayors' formal powers.

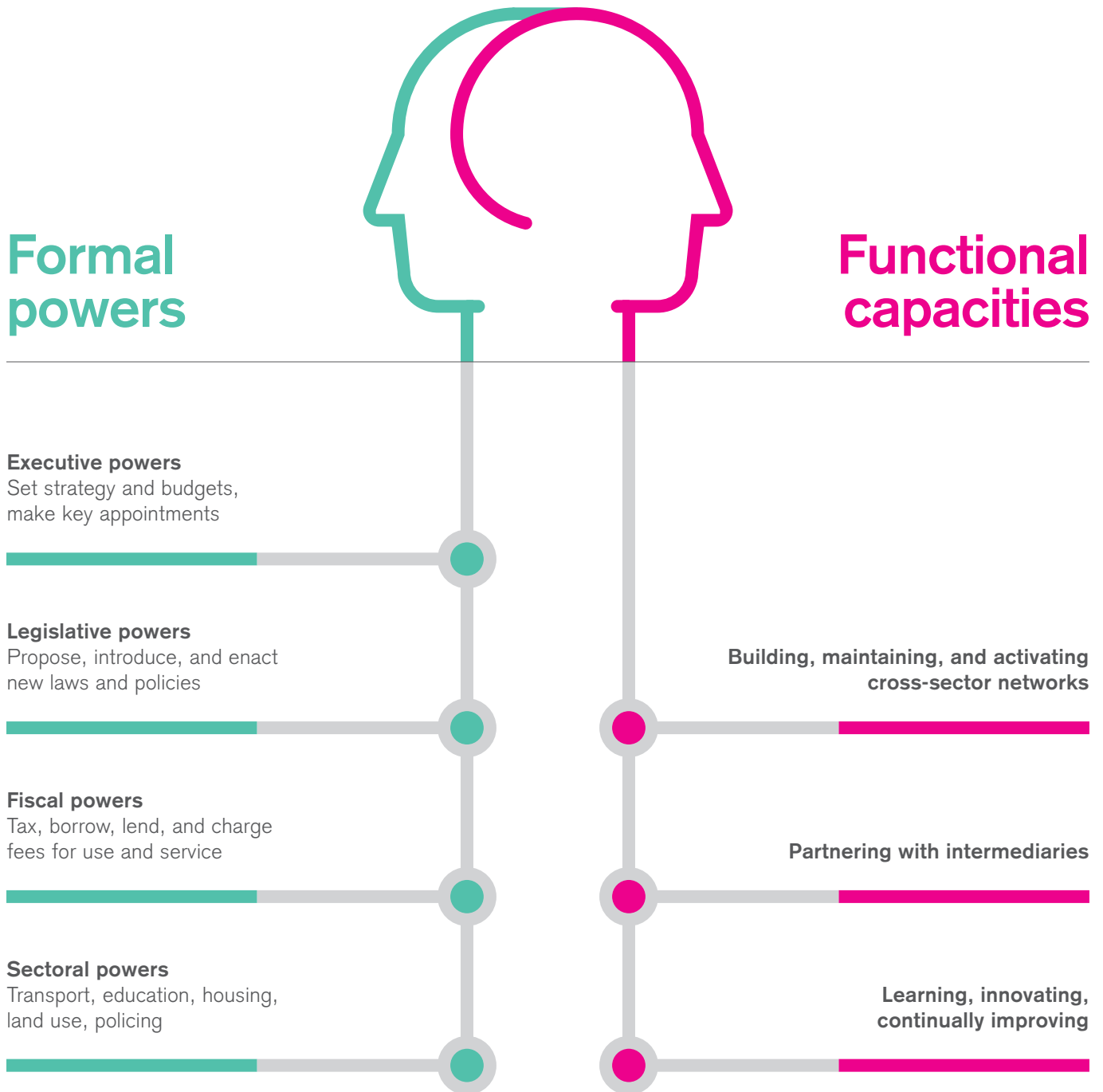
Functional capacities include the practices that mayors perform themselves or ask their staff to

carry out, including professionalization of key roles and responsibilities, collaboration with specialized intermediaries, and dedicated focus on building and maintaining networks. All help mayors lead more effectively regardless of the formal limitations on their power.

We mean for this distinction to be both diagnostic and prescriptive. Formal changes to the structure of government, such as recent charter amendments in Baltimore and San Francisco, can have far-reaching consequences. They should be proposed not as short-term responses to immediate political challenges but as long-term solutions to more fundamental institutional issues.

As legal scholar Richard Schragger concludes in his recent book on urban governance, *City Power: Urban Governance in a Global Age*, "The first step is to identify accurately the sources of the city's constraints. The next step is to challenge them."⁽⁷⁾ The following section aims to identify more precisely the major *structural constraints* that mayors and cities are typically subject to in fragmented urban governance environments. The sections that follow identify some of the ways these constraints are overcome and challenged.

WHERE A MAYOR'S POWER COMES FROM



THE SPECTRUM OF MAYORAL POWERS

KEY FINDING 1: **THE NEED TO LEAD BEYOND THE LIMITS OF FORMAL POWERS IS A DEFINING CONDITION OF MAYORAL REALITY.**

Though there is tremendous variation in urban governance arrangements, formal mayoral powers are often more limited than they appear. Mayors operate in highly complex and fragmented governance environments, and mayoral powers are only part of the broader constellation of actors and forces that make up city power.

Power and responsibility overlap vertically between state, regional, and municipal leadership, and horizontally across neighboring jurisdictions and special-purpose governments. Mayors must share power in key sectors such as education, public safety, and transportation infrastructure with other levels of government, influential agency heads, elected or appointed boards, or organized interest groups such as labor unions. This all means that political

and policy jurisdictions do not align perfectly, increasing the costs of coordination and decisionmaking.

What explains this fragmentation? First, the institutional design of governments spells out the formal division of power between a general central government and sub-units of government. For example, in the federalist system of the United States, the critical division is between the federal government and the states, with the formal powers of sub-state governments assigned by the states. In their seminal study, *City Bound: How States Stifle Urban Innovation*, Gerald E. Frug and David J. Barron identify three key ways that states limit city powers—through laws, regulations, and financing—and how these limitations narrow cities' development options.(8)

FIGURE 1

As mayor, how much control do you have over each of the following areas?

How Much Control Does the Mayor Have Over Each

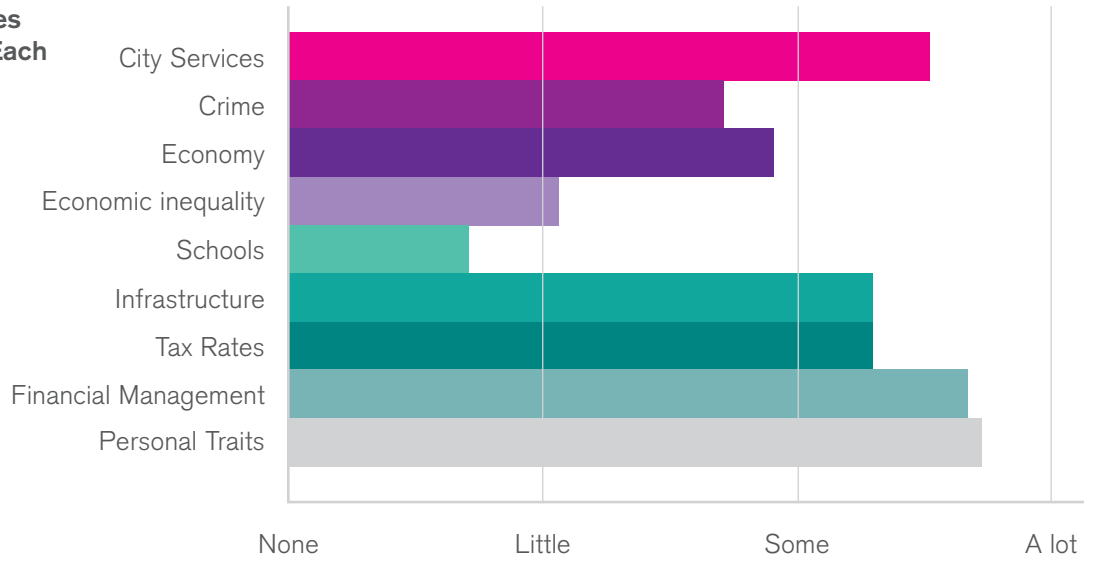
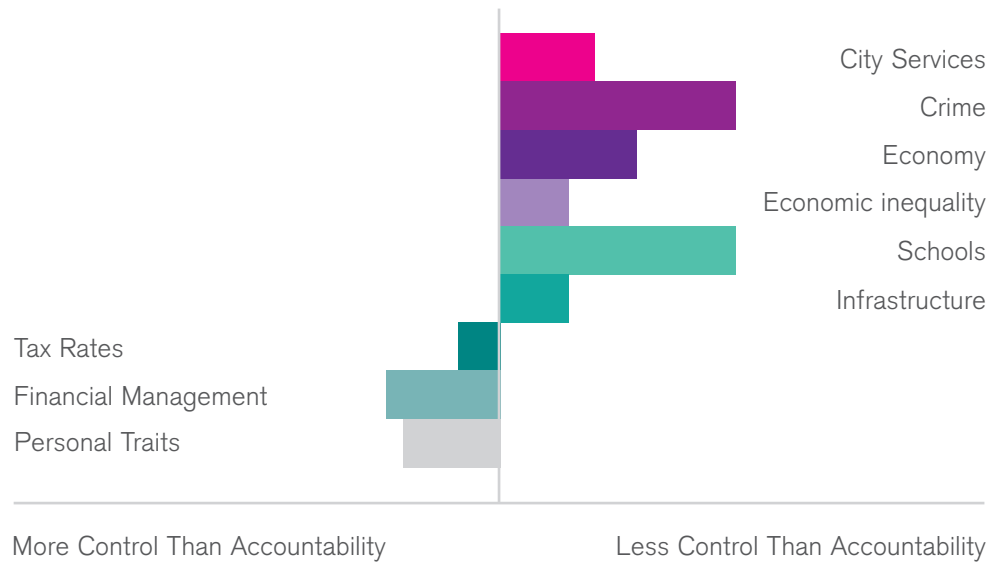


FIGURE 2

Gaps between mayors' perception of how much each drives approval and how much control the mayor has.

Difference Between Accountability and Control



Source: 2015 Menino Survey of Mayors p 30

“Mayors are managing sideways, upwards, downwards, and every other way at once.”

Carol O’Cleireacain
Deputy mayor of Detroit

The second explanation for this fragmentation is the evolving relationship between political and market forces. Richard Schragger has taken this political economy perspective to explain the sources and limits of city power, arguing:

“The current legal limits on city power and the division of authority between cities and states are best understood as a reaction to the political pathologies that arise from the city-business relationship. . . The vertical distribution of powers [are] a proxy for regulating the relationship between private capital and public power.”(9)

The balance of power between private and public interests and benefits has long been a defining dynamic of urban governance arrangements. While a deep exploration of this balance is beyond the scope of this paper, it is an essential backdrop at a time when economic inequality is such a dominant political and social concern.

The relationship between fragmentation of power and accountability for results is one of the central governance challenges for cities as well as for mayors. In *The Failure of Urban Problem Solving*, public administration scholar

Douglas Yates argues that cities experience governance failures because of “the inherent fragmentation of urban service delivery and the historical fragmentation of urban policymaking processes.”(10) In other words, they lack central control over bureaucracies and administrators. Decentralization, diffuse control, and poor communication between city administrators and service providers contribute to service delivery failures. The mismatch between what needs to be done in cities and what *mayors* can do for cities is a challenge because it impedes accountability.

These fragmented governance arrangements have historically not stopped cities or the mayors that lead them from moving forward. As Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley argue in *The Metropolitan Revolution*, the need to be responsive to local demands without sufficient support from higher levels of government has long fueled pragmatic and creative problem solving at the city and metro level. More recently, Katz has argued that by planning, designing, and executing effective solutions with limited help from Washington or their states, cities and the mayors that lead them are ushering in an era of [New American Localism](#)⁵.(11)

Examples of locally led innovation and problem-solving abound on a diverse range of issues: raising the minimum wage, building public support for infrastructure investments through referendum, braiding siloed public funds to create coherent education and workforce development opportunities, and clustering commercial and academic research assets to fuel economic development. However, as Richard Schragger argues in *City Power*, all

5 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/07/14/go-local-help-cities-pursue-the-new-american-localism-to-break-partisan-gridlock/>

of these locally led efforts are not equally positioned for success. Cities should focus their limited human and financial resources on the things that they are equipped to do well.(12)

It is not possible to define in detail all the ways that local government structures around the world enable or constrain cities and mayors. However, a close look at the heterogeneous municipal governance landscape of the United States and its evolution over time shows how formal mayoral powers can make a difference in cities, how they can become both a political target and the focus of broader governance reform efforts, and how important functional capacities can help mayors lead beyond the limits of their formal powers.

As in most countries in the world, American municipalities vary dramatically in size, structure, and capacity. The strong federalist structure of the United States, which assigns all powers not granted to the central government to the states, results in cities that are weak in formal powers relative to state and national governments.

Municipalities today tend to be organized along a spectrum whose ends are defined by one of two forms of government: the mayor-council form and the council-manager form. There are other forms of government in use in smaller cities, including the commission and the town meeting, but they are in the minority.(13) While forms of local government vary along many different dimensions, the biggest difference is in the distribution of executive and legislative powers.

The mayor-council form in many ways mirrors the U.S. federal government. The mayor is directly elected and serves as the head of the executive branch, appointing a wide variety

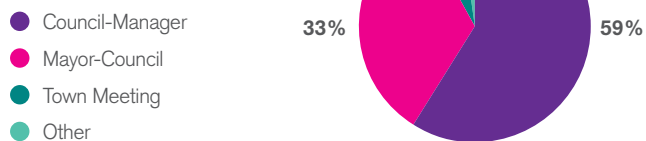
of administrative personnel and exercising a range of budgetary powers. The city council in this system serves as the equivalent of the legislative branch. While only 33 percent of all U.S. cities use the mayor-council system, it is the most common form of government in large U.S. cities, used in 62 percent of the 50 most populous.(14) This likely leads to the common misperception that this is the majority form of government in U.S. cities.(15)

The council-manager form of government is sometimes compared to a parliamentary system of government, though it is not a perfect analogy. (16) A directly elected city council possesses both executive and legislative authority and appoints a professional city manager to handle the administrative functions of the city. The council drives the policymaking process, sets goals, and debates city affairs, whereas the city manager oversees government operations and implements council-approved policies.

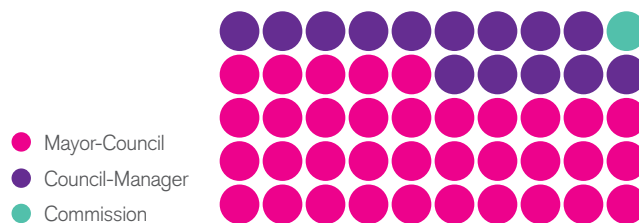
Mayors are also often present in council-manager cities, though the extent of their powers vary dramatically: some have relatively substantial roles, while others are mostly figureheads.

Directly elected mayors (or mayoral equivalents) exist in two-thirds of council-manager cities and 81 percent of cities over 100,000. In the past, mayors in council-manager cities were predominately appointed by the city council, but in many places today citizens directly elect them.(17) While 59 percent of municipalities use the council-manager form nationwide, it is more common in smaller municipalities and is particularly prevalent in Southern and Western states.

Of the the nearly
20,000
 municipalities in the U.S.,
**Council-Manager is the
 most common form**



The Mayor-Council form is used in
35 of the 50
 largest municipalities in the U.S.



“Get rid of the term ‘weak mayor!’”

James Svava
 Arizona State University

For much of the 20th century, these two forms of government were distinct. Cities that used a mayor-council system came to be known as “strong mayor” cities, while places that used a council-manager form were referred to as “weak mayor” cities. But this binary distinction does little to differentiate between the forms, does not accurately capture the reality of the diverse spectrum of governing arrangements that now exist, and fails to highlight the most important dimensions of city leadership. As James Svava told us:

“The mayor needs to be effective at providing a sense of direction, coalescing the council, and helping to ensure that all key actors work together effectively. The common impression from the media is that the mayor-council form has the advantage. The mayor in council-manager cities is often dismissed

as a “weak mayor” and a figurehead. All cities need visionary leadership, and mayors can be visionaries regardless of formal powers. Just as important, mayors should be facilitators who draw out the contributions of the council and administrative staff. The facilitative visionary leader is more effective regardless of form of government. This style is not the second-best alternative that council-manager mayors must settle for, it is the preferred approach in a shared power world where no one is or can be in charge. Cities with the council-manager form do not have to take a back seat to elected executive governments when it comes to leadership. In all local governments, mayors who are not visionary or do not use facilitative leadership are likely to be less effective than those who do, and their councils perform more poorly as well.”

Interview with James Svava.

In recent years, the distinction between the systems has blurred. Many mayor-council systems have implemented efforts to professionalize the office that are more commonly associated with council-manager cities. At the same time, many council-manager

DIFFERENT FORMS, DIFFERENT POWERS

MAYOR-COUNCIL

Philadelphia



17

members all elected



Legislative powers shared

Mayor

Executive powers

Budget

Strategic planning

Transport

Service delivery

Education

Sectorial powers

Appoints 2 of 5 school reform commission members

COUNCIL-MANAGER

Phoenix



8

members all elected



Legislative powers shared

Mayor appoints

CITY MANAGER

Executive powers

Budget

Strategic planning

Transport

Service delivery

Education

Sectorial powers

Coordinating powers

cities have moved toward executive power arrangements more traditionally found in mayor-council systems, particularly in the realm of direct elections and the professionalization of administrative services. In both forms of government, chief administrative officers are approaching ubiquity: 85 percent of all cities now employ a professional chief administrative officer or equivalent.(18)

The prevalence of directly elected mayors and appointed chief administrative officers in large cities today underscores the growing consensus that strong executive functions can be a guarantor of good governance and accountability for cities and for mayors. This preference for clearer executive power, in whatever form of government, can be understood not just as a response to the tremendously fragmented authority that city leaders face but also as an attempt to consolidate power when it is otherwise constrained.

Yet beyond this analysis, we should be careful about drawing conclusions about the relationship between the formal powers of mayors and concrete outcomes for cities and residents. Kim Nelson, a professor of public administration at the University of North Carolina, cautioned, “If anyone tells you they can tell you there’s a relationship, they’re wrong. At this time, there is no data on this. There’s some data to show that *form* of government matters, but not specific mayoral powers.”(19)

The next section identifies some of the most necessary functional capacities for effective mayoral leadership. These are not always structured—and are certainly not guaranteed—by formal institutional arrangements. Nevertheless, they are unquestionably key if mayors are to spur the kind of vibrant problem solving that is needed at the city and regional levels.

“LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT STRUGGLE THE MOST ARE WHERE AUTHORITY IS AMBIGUOUS, PLACES THAT HAVE HAVE TRIED TO EMPOWER A MAYOR AND A COUNCIL AT THE SAME TIME -UNDER A MISGUIDED NOTION THAT YOU CAN GET THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.”

Kim Nelson

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

LEADING BEYOND LIMITS: HOW FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES HELP MAYORS SUCCEED

KEY FINDING 2:

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES HELP MAYORS LEAD, INNOVATE, AND DELIVER RESULTS IN THEIR CITIES IN SPITE OF FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENTS AND LIMITED FORMAL POWERS.

There are many different ways to frame the most important capacities for city governments and their leaders. Bob O’Neill, the former executive director of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), said that local governments need to do five things well: politics, policy, people, execution, and communication and engagement. Living Cities’ *Equipt to Innovate Field Guide* encourages cities to aim for seven key outcomes—they should be data-driven, race-informed, dynamically-planned, broadly-partnered, resident-involved, employee-engaged, and smartly-resourced. Bloomberg Philanthropies has distilled a five-part functional

capacity framework from its work with hundreds of cities and mayoral administrations around the world: capacity to analyze, coordinate and partner, regulate, and innovate.

In our interviews for this project, two ways in particular stood out as critical for mayors to lead effectively in a complex and rapidly changing world: the capacity to build, maintain, and activate networks; and the capacity to operate the city as a learning organization that absorbs and digests information about the changing environment and the performance of city operations.

“In successful cities, there are people dedicated to the task of networked leadership.”

Bob O’Neill

Former executive director of International City/County Management Association

THE CAPACITY TO BUILD, MAINTAIN, AND ACTIVATE NETWORKS

Regardless of municipal governance structure, the ability to build, maintain, and activate networks of stakeholders across sectors and levels of government is perhaps the single most important capacity for mayors. Demands on mayors in an already fragmented governance environment are only growing as the tasks of city management and governance become more complex, multidisciplinary, and network-oriented. This is becoming even more important as cities are being forced to find new sources of funding as federal dollars dry up. In the words of former Indianapolis mayor Stephen Goldsmith, effective mayors “govern by network,” exercising soft powers of persuasion and executing strategies to improve their cities that rely on a range of public, private, and civic resources.

Regardless of what formal powers mayors have, it is impossible for any one individual to execute the myriad services and functions of municipal governments. Mayors rely on the coordinated efforts of civil servants, representatives from higher administrative levels, the private sector, civil society, and the public. Mayors may themselves be the central node of

diverse organizational and individual networks, or they may rely on key staff or even external organizations to perform their role.

There are clear economic benefits that networked relationships between the mayoral office and the private sector can help to capture. In cities around the world, local governments led by innovative and resourceful city mayors have found ways to utilize private-sector expertise and capital to revitalize commercial assets and increase local revenue.⁽²⁰⁾ Stephen Goldsmith said that networks are really “a vehicle for co-production, a way to bring more resources to play.”⁽²¹⁾

Regular participation in cross-sector networks can help increase the transparency and responsiveness of government. As political scientist Gerry Stoker wrote, “The appeal that lies behind networked governance is that it provides a framework for that more expansive vision of democracy to operate. The conception of democracy that underlies the idea of networked governance is that democracy is a process of continuous exchange between governors and governed.”⁽²²⁾ It is essential to make space for this kind of ongoing dialogue at all levels, both to enable meaningful and responsive discussions about existing problems and to construct potential solutions that draw from the resources of all sectors of society.

Strong networks can also enable greater intergovernmental cooperation, a key feature of effective local government leadership. Many issues affecting urban populations—transportation planning, housing, labor markets—go beyond city boundaries, and regional leaders must find ways to service the different needs of suburban and urban populations. No single municipal government

“THE POLITICAL ABILITY TO GET THINGS DONE IS REALLY ABOUT LEVERAGING CERTAIN KINDS OF NETWORKS. WHEN POWER IS DIFFUSE, A GOOD MAYOR MAY BE ABLE TO EXTRACT MORE THAN A NONSKILLED MAYOR.”

Richard Schragger

University of Virginia School of Law

has the necessary resources to meet all the needs.(23) Mayors play a key role in creating a tone of city and regional cooperation, and a skilled mayor can harness the more diffuse power in these networks to deliver successful policies and programs to a broader area.(24)

The ways in which local mayors build and access networks can vary across forms of government and are exercised to different results. Across all of them, mayors use the soft power of diplomacy to convene, convince, and spur collaboration between public, private, and civic leaders. This influence may be more visible in mayor-council systems, but the muscle to build such

collaborative networks may be stronger in council-manager systems. In either case, the additional leverage gained from network engagement can substantially increase the potential gains and outcomes of city and mayoral efforts.(25) Stephen Goldsmith observed that having strong network capacity “makes the strong-mayor role even stronger, with one big caveat: you have to have a mayor that is operationally oriented.”(26) In cities with weaker central leadership, networks can fragment authority even further. Without a clear strategic center of gravity, efforts and resources can be diffused, and opportunities to structure partnerships that strike a balance between public, private, and civic interests can be lost.

LOUISVILLE’S NETWORK LEADERSHIP

In **Louisville/Jefferson County, Kentucky**, a consolidated metro with more than 750,000 people, the mayor’s office is engaged in—but does not have sole responsibility for—a number of formally structured, inclusive economic growth initiatives.(27) Inclusive growth has been a long-standing concern for the metro following the 2003 merger between the Louisville and Jefferson County governments. Former mayor Jerry Abramson established the Mayor’s Education Roundtable in 2008 to develop an action plan focused on improving educational pathways and economic opportunity. Following the committee’s recommendations, local stakeholders signed the Greater Louisville Education Commitment, which pledged public- and private-sector leadership and support for increasing educational attainment throughout the metro region.

This multisector agreement led to the creation of 55,000 Degrees (55K), an initiative with a mission to help half of the metro population attain

bachelor’s or associate degrees by 2020. In its first few years, the program successfully helped over 22,000 students obtain college degrees. By 2014, however, progress had slowed, and a report that year found that the program would have difficulty reaching its 2020 goal (due in part to the region’s population growth). In response, current Metro Mayor Greg Fischer has worked closely with 55K’s leadership to get the program back on track. Cradle to Career, an integrated effort between disparate organizations focused on kindergarten readiness, elementary and secondary education, college completion, and workforce-oriented skills training, is building additional pathways to narrow the achievement gap between whites and minorities in Louisville.

Recognizing that an inclusive economy requires both skilled workers and quality, well-paying jobs, Mayor Fischer convened local business leaders, state government officials, and leaders from the nearby city of Lexington to create the Bluegrass

Economic Advancement Movement (BEAM). Focused on building the region's competitiveness in advanced manufacturing and increasing its exports and foreign direct investment, BEAM offers targeted company outreach programs, small export grants, and a region-wide export strategy. BEAM reached its five-year goal of increasing export successes for small businesses by 50 percent in only three years.

The success of Louisville's Cradle to Career and BEAM initiatives illustrate the importance

of strong civic intermediaries and leadership networks beyond government for cities' success. These deep and complex problems require complex, systemic solutions. The most effective mayors now how to strengthen and connect these organizations and leverage these leaders. As Mayor Fischer said, "This is community organizing at the highest level, and it requires system-wide insights unique to mayors to lead disparate actors toward common visions, tangible actions, and sustained commitment." (28)

The networked city with the mayor as a central node is not a new phenomenon. Mayors have long relied on relationships across other sectors of government, civic institutions, and the private sector to get most things done. However, the importance of these networks is increasing along with the rising complexity of governance tasks everywhere and, in some places, the shrinking public-sector resource base. Mayors have to be able to make good choices about which networks to participate in and how to structure the terms of engagement in ways that deliver maximum benefits to the city.

In fragmented and complex governance environments, coordination and alignment are at a premium. Strong networks can help fulfill these key functions and help governments bring in the external resources—funding, expertise, and information—to augment their own. Networked governance can be seen as a corrective to fragmentation, similar to the way that clear and accountable executive powers can. On their own, networks are just connections between people and organizations. Without clear structures to support them, their strength rests on individuals and can ebb and flow over time. Unfortunately,

few organizational network studies have been undertaken in cities to help illuminate these dynamics and provide guidance on how to improve them.

We do know that skilled and specialized intermediaries can help deliver on complex projects by coordinating, aligning, and activating networks of stakeholders, both for short-term projects and long-range planning. In most places, cities rely on a range of financial instruments and organizational vehicles—including publically owned, privately managed corporations; public authorities; and philanthropic investment funds—to help coordinate and resource city projects. The design of these intermediaries matters; how public value is created and the way benefits are distributed vary widely from project to project and place to place. Mayors have important leadership roles to play in setting the vision and strategy. One recent, concrete example: a new handbook for the U.S. Conference of Mayors outlined ways that mayors can serve as conveners, champions, and catalysts of innovation districts. (29) Mayors should know their options, understand the tradeoffs, and be able to set the terms of city engagement.

THE CAPACITY TO OPERATE THE CITY AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

In addition to serving as network hubs, well-designed intermediaries also play a critical role in supporting the second key capacity for mayors: the capacity to operate their cities as learning organizations. The scale and speed of change wrought by technology, combined with the structural transformation of the economy and new political uncertainties, have sharpened the need for leaders of all organizations to pick up the pace of learning and adaptation.

The term “learning organization” was popularized in the 1990s by the organizational development expert Peter Senge, in his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Harvard Business School professor David A. Garvin defined it simply as “an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.”⁽³⁰⁾

Garvin breaks down the mechanics of the learning organization into five key capacities: systematic problem-solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from their own experience and past history, learning from the experiences and best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization. The “learning organization” captures in one concept the capacity to plan, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve and innovate on programs, projects, and services, both in the long term and the short term—all critical capacities that mayors have, to some degree, in their spheres of control.

In expert interviews, everyone felt that the delivery of basic services and innovation were both important priorities for mayors. But there was some disagreement about their relationship to each other: some felt that the delivery of basic services should always take precedent; others, that mayors had to generate a constant stream of new ideas and projects to generate the political will and visibility they need to maintain their position. Several experts suggested that the two are actually inseparable: mayors have to be able to pave the roads and collect the trash day after day, but as budgets tighten and technologies improve, they are constantly pressured to find ways to do more—and better—with less.

In an environment this disruptive, it does seem clear that there will be no such thing as business as usual for long. Fortunately, while new technologies are certainly a major part of the disruption that cities are experiencing, they are also opening up new avenues to improve the way information is collected, processed, and applied to city policymaking and operations. In recent years, improvements in performance management and [stat systems](#)⁶, both within departments and across the city government enterprise, have made it increasingly possible to continuously collect and analyze data about the city and how it works and to translate that data into actionable information.

New technologies have led to a need for new skills and competencies inside of mayors’ offices and departments. New executive level leadership positions in mayors’ offices may be one response to this dynamic. The addition of chief data officers, chief resilience officers, and other new positions in recent years have brought specific technical skill

⁶ https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2007/04/pdf/citistat_report.pdf

sets and subject-matter expertise inside mayors' offices and helped distribute expertise across the enterprise. But experts caution that not every new position brings a valuable solution. It would be useful to survey mayors to understand which of these roles are truly additive, which add an unnecessary layer of decisionmaking, and which are too weakly positioned to make substantive change.(31)

Another need, certainly not new to city government but also impacted by technology, is long-term, institutionalized planning capacity that is capable of contemplating scenarios that span issues and jurisdictions. This capacity may exist inside city government—in a department of planning or in the office of a deputy mayor with close ties to planning

In the 21st century, the urban century, everybody needs to understand how cities are planned, and what the history of city planning means. Given the pressure on cities and shrinking resources, you do not have the luxury of taking very long to learn; you need to have some intelligence to bring to bear immediately.

Jagan Shah

Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs, India

agencies—but it may also exist outside of city government. In too many cases, it is too weakly developed or resourced, wherever it resides, to be up to the challenge.

Since the 1960s, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) have played an important role for transportation planning in urban areas by ensuring that federal transit dollars are invested in the context of regional planning frameworks. But aligning plans across interlinked but frequently siloed areas of city operations—such as housing, transit, parks and public space development—and gathering actionable information about how they could work together is a capacity that is weakly developed in most cities and, thus, a significant opportunity for improved mayoral leadership.

MAYORAL CAPACITY BUILDING

There are at least two known ways to strengthen these kinds of capacities: build them up inside government or work with high-functioning and trusted intermediaries outside government. In the last decade, there have been several promising efforts to focus on the issue of building the capacities of mayors and their staff on both fronts.

We are in a moment of increased professionalization in cities, partly as a response to changing technologies and partly because of the need to execute across networks to get things done. The complexity of challenges facing cities today demands that they do more with fewer internal resources, which often means relying on external partners. The need to fill local government positions with talented, skilled individuals with the technical capacity to marshal resources creatively is paramount for high-quality

“IF YOU’D ASKED POLITICIANS AND POLICYMAKERS 15 TO 20 YEARS AGO IF THEY COULD CHANGE SOME POPULATION-LEVEL OUTCOME IN A COMMUNITY—TAKE IMPROVED AIR QUALITY, **FOR EXAMPLE—THEY’D HAVE SAID THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN DO. THAT MINDSET IS GONE. YOU HAVE MAYORS WHO ARE TRYING TO MOVE THE NEEDLE.**”

Mark Funkhouser

former mayor of Kansas City

service delivery, effective management, and innovation. Skills in particularly high demand include data analytics, finance, and planning.

The professionalization prescription may be easier for some cities to fill than others. The extent to which cities can reform leadership structures and positions is highly dependent on the size of their administrative budgets and capacity to attract talent.⁽³²⁾ Municipalities that are willing to embrace the data revolution stand to gain from experienced staff and responsive programs that allow for direct citizen participation and input. However, many cities lack sufficient funding to embrace performance statistic programs and attract well-qualified professionals to fill roles such as chief data officer. In all cases, cities can benefit from support to build up these capacities. Capacity-building programs and networks that include cities across the size and geographic spectrum—such as Bloomberg Philanthropies' [What Works Cities](https://whatworkscities.bloomberg.org/)⁷ program, which focuses on augmenting data capacity in mid-sized cities—can help.

While efforts to add new roles and positions inside mayors' offices is one response to changing technological and issue demands in cities, another is training for mayors and their key policy staff. Some leading cities are adapting on their own, and others are engaging in sector-specific training efforts or general training programs, such as the Project on Municipal Innovation or the recently launched [Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership program](https://ash.harvard.edu/cityleadership)⁸. Policy and practice networks such as [100 Resilient Cities](http://www.100resilientcities.org/)⁹ and the [C40 Cities](http://www.c40.org/)

[Climate Leadership Group](http://www.c40.org/)¹⁰ all provide valuable opportunities to exchange ideas and problem-solve with peers. Future research is needed to inventory and study the different mayoral and city leadership networks, comparing those that are issue-driven (climate change, refugees) to those that are focused on more generalized capacity building (like the What Works Cities network) or a blend of both (such as the Project on Municipal Innovation) to understand which offers greatest value.

Specialized intermediaries can also provide tremendous external support to mayors and their governments, adding significant adjacent capacity and helping to set policy and push beyond the bounds of government to engage with the civic and private sectors. Groups like the Civic Consulting Alliance focus on brokering professionals to lend pro bono support to cities and mayors on critical issues in a time-limited way. Specialized planning intermediaries that look beyond the federally mandated transportation planning purview of MPOs can help cities and mayors develop integrated approaches to dealing with housing, land-use planning, transportation, and other issues. New York City's Regional Plan Association, Chicago's Metropolitan Planning Council, and the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) are all prime examples of the ways that intermediaries can help mayors build technical and issue-area capacity in this critical realm of planning.

Specialized economic development intermediaries, such as World Business Chicago, can also help mayors develop more

7 <https://whatworkscities.bloomberg.org/>

8 <https://ash.harvard.edu/cityleadership>

9 <http://www.100resilientcities.org/>

10 <http://www.c40.org/>

integrated economic development plans. The publically owned private corporations that exist in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Hamburg, Germany, can help mayors and cities with the planning, assembly, and financial capacities they need to execute on complex economic development projects.(33)

Ben Hecht, president and CEO of Living Cities, called on the example of Detroit to illustrate the importance of a strong network of organizations outside of government. “You have to be open and willing to let some people run some stuff while you run others, what Rip would call [distributed leadership](#)¹¹. It doesn’t mean that as a mayor, you don’t have accountability. Detroit is a good example of distributed leadership because it had no choice. Government collapsed, everyone else came in to fill in different roles. Then government came back and took back some roles but not others, and now there’s a regular healthy tension between regional, local, nonprofit organizations, and government about who will lead in these areas.”(34)

Every day in many cities, mayors are leading beyond the limits of their formal powers, through both professionalization of their own operations and collaboration with intermediaries and networks outside. We have explored one of two possible paths to improving mayors’

“C40 has been effective at getting mayors to participate because it gives their cities’ top technocrats access to other cities’ best practices, and it clearly allows them to demonstrate the environmental leadership that is extremely important to their constituencies -- everywhere except the U.S., this isn’t controversial.”

Michael Berkowitz

Rockefeller Foundation and 100 Resilient Cities

ability to get things done: building functional capacities that allow mayors and their staff to create the best possible outcomes for their residents. We turn to the second—efforts to expand the formal powers mayors have the ability and authority to exercise—in the following sections.

11 Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation. <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/biz-monday/article84509567.html>

A RESPONSE TO FRAGMENTATION: **CLEAR EXECUTIVE POWERS**

**KEY FINDING 3:
IN FRAGMENTED GOVERNANCE
ENVIRONMENTS, ANY PROPOSED
EXPANSION OR REDUCTION IN MAYORAL
POWERS SHOULD FOCUS ON IMPROVING
ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN
DECISIONMAKING.**

As we have just seen, many efforts to improve urban governance focus on functional capacities that can exist under a wide array of formal power arrangements. However, formal powers do matter for some things, first among them accountability and transparency in decisionmaking. In already fragmented urban governance environments, any efforts to change the configuration of mayoral powers should carefully account for these differences and the potential results.

In mayor-council cities, accountability is clearly vested in a single person—the mayor—who wields overwhelming executive power over a large number of government functions. In council-manager cities, accountability is vested in a small group—the council. It is the council that appoints the city manager, the person who wields the executive power, and it is the council that ultimately bears responsibility for the decisions the city manager makes.

The question of which form of government is preferable for cities sparked one of the most fascinating debates among interviewed experts. Even more interesting than the divergence of views was the consensus that clear and accountable executive power, regardless of which form it comes in, is a desirable corrective to the fragmented governance environments found in cities of all sizes.

Several academics studying public administration have argued that the council-manager form is superior.⁽³⁵⁾ In their view, the increased professionalization of the office of the city manager means greater managerial competence and improved accountability for results.

The former mayors and deputy mayor interviewed tended to favor the mayor-council system, arguing that an executive had important powers of vision, framing, appointment, and persuasion that only come with the accountability and authority that direct elections confer. As Bob O'Neill, former executive director of ICMA, said, "If you have a hard time getting the right people on the bus, you're going to have a hard time doing both the basic services and the transformational stuff."⁽³⁶⁾ According to Detroit Deputy Mayor Carol O'Cleireacain, "The places I have worked certainly needed a strong and directly elected leader accountable to the public. I don't assume that even relatively strong decisionmaking bodies make efficient decisions—they need some entity to frame the debate, set the agenda, and then to persuade."⁽³⁷⁾

James Svara, a prominent scholar of public administration and local government management, stated that "neither [form of] accountability is necessarily superior to the other." In his eyes, accountability in the two forms is generated by different forces and plays out over different time horizons, while the most substantial checks on executive power play out in different ways. Svara characterizes mayor-council systems as being more likely to produce accountability that is "external, unidirectional, top-down, and short term with an executive that is subject to intermittent direct control when elections occur." He views council-manager systems as producing accountability that is more likely to be "internal, multidirectional, and long-term, and the executive is subject to continuous control by the city council."⁽³⁸⁾

It is clear that mayors can be successful—and accountable—under a range of local government structures and systems. Yet since 1990, 26 large cities in the United States have held referendums to fully change their form of government. Half of these referendums were successful: Mayor-council systems replaced council-manager systems in ten cities, and council-manager arrangements supplanted mayor-council structures in two cities and the commission form in one. But notably, 21 of the 26 large cities were originally council-manager cities that sought to change to mayor-council.⁽³⁹⁾ In addition to these efforts to change the full form of government, there are periodic efforts to change specific formal mayoral powers through city charter amendments.

“WE DON’T NEED TO BE
THINKING ABOUT MODEL CITY
CHARTERS, **BUT RATHER MODEL
CITY LEADERS.**”

James Svara

Arizona State University

If successful city governance and mayoral leadership is possible under multiple leadership structures, what triggers efforts to change them—and to what expected end? Where should municipal governance reform efforts best be targeted?

Historically speaking, city governments are in a constant state of evolution. Major structural changes to governance arrangements, like full form of governance change, often require legislative or constitutional changes, which tend to be difficult to achieve. Instead, there has been a great deal of incremental change along

with periods of sweeping reform. Municipal governance changes can be viewed through a balance-of-power lens: correcting for a concentration of power that builds over time until it reaches a breaking point and swings back. The catalysts vary, but the common theme is adaptation to change: changing demographics, economic geographies, and political movements.

Two recent examples show how proposals motivated by politics could have reduced accountability and weakened governing environments instead of strengthening them.

BALTIMORE

In 2016, the Baltimore City Council staged a slow-moving coup against Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, introducing a package of legislation that would have stripped her—and future mayors—of significant powers and decisionmaking authority. The Baltimore City Council's proposal to shift power away from the mayor was triggered by a budget dispute: the question of funding for youth programs. As the *Baltimore Sun* reported, Mayor Rawlings-Blake's initial 2017 budget proposal cut \$4.2 million for community and after-school programs for youth. In a city still reeling from protests and violence in the wake of the April 2015 death of Freddie Gray while in police custody, the mayor's perceived lack of responsiveness may have made her vulnerable. But changing the city's charter would not likely have fixed the problem.

The two proposed amendments to the municipal charter were almost unanimously approved by the city council. They would have been put to voters in November's general election, but the city council failed to override Mayor Rawlings-Blake's predictable veto. The mayor's budget **passed**¹² in June, and Baltimore returned to business as usual. Shortly after the measures failed, the *Baltimore Sun* ran an op-ed calling this outcome good for Baltimore: "Both a proposal to strip future mayors of control of the Board of Estimates and one to give the council power to reallocate funds in the budget would have weakened fiscal accountability and gummed up the works of city government." (40)

¹² <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/politics/bs-md-ci-budget-approval-20160620-story.html>

SAN FRANCISCO

In November 2016, San Francisco became the most recent large city to put charter amendments on the ballot that would have significantly weakened mayoral powers. The nonprofit group SPUR [opposed all four measures](#)¹³ because they would significantly weaken accountability and transparency of the policy process and undo governance reforms that currently hold the mayor responsible for the functioning of government and quality of life in San Francisco. In addition to opposing the measures on policy grounds, SPUR rejected the political motivations behind the measures. “Political grudges are the worst reason to permanently alter the City Charter to reduce the power of all future mayors,” the group said. As we wrote⁽⁴¹⁾ at the time, “Limiting an elected leader’s ability to hire, appoint, and develop budgets makes an already tough job harder. It makes the voter’s job harder too: With such fragmented responsibility, it is nearly impossible to know where to lay praise or blame for policy outcomes.” All four measures failed to pass.⁽⁴²⁾

A majority of interviewees affirmed that local charter challenges are not the most effective target of governance reform efforts. In both Baltimore and San Francisco, the charter changes would have added greater fragmentation of authority and weakened accountability. As Kim Nelson⁽⁴³⁾ warned, local governments struggle when authority is ambiguous. Even in their failure, these episodes reveal something about the shifting balance of power between the executive and legislative arms of local governments and how effective local governments are at responding to the changing needs and preferences of the residents they serve.

Unfortunately, drawing clear lessons from these experiences is difficult—partly due to a lack of data on these changes and partly because of a lack of public discussion about their causes and consequences.⁽⁴⁴⁾ More and better efforts to gather and share information about government and governance shifts could help empower both local leaders and local voters to make better choices about reform.

We do know that mayors with many different formal powers in different systems are leading cities effectively, and do not necessarily need to change their form of government to be successful. As discussed above, much could be gained from a sharper focus on building the functional capacities that enable mayors and their governments to work within and beyond the confines of their autonomy to deliver high-quality public services, execute complex projects, and establish a high quality of life for their residents.

These are tumultuous times for governments at all levels, and formal changes are around the corner if they are already not underway. In part, changing governance arrangements—such as regional consolidation to rationalize and improve the efficiency of too many units of government, or devolution to right-size the powers that big cities need to provide for their growing populations—are long overdue and sorely needed. The necessity of a new political moment, with cities increasingly at odds with the states and nations they reside within, is creating greater pressures for change. The next section turns to these multilevel governance shifts and their implications for mayors.

¹³ <https://spurvoterguide.org/sf-nov-16/prop-d-vacancy-appointments/>

MAYORAL POWERS IN A SHIFTING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

KEY FINDING 4: **URBAN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNDER PRESSURE AND IN FLUX. CITY LEADERS MUST ADAPT TO AND SHAPE THIS CHANGE.**

The conditions of governance in cities are far from fixed. The powers that cities and their mayors wield relative to other levels of government and other forces in a globally connected market and society are changing quickly. The economic and demographic power of cities has long affected politics beyond the boundaries of cities themselves, and the different political preferences of urban, suburban, and rural voters is not a new phenomenon. In some places, the increasing concentration of residents living in cities is creating greater tensions—within regions, states, and countries—that result in pressure for institutional reform.

FEDERAL ABDICATION AND STATE PREEMPTION

A major increase of formal powers and resources to U.S. cities is unlikely in the near

term due to partisan divisions, ideological polarization, and institutional inertia at the federal and state level. The current federalist arrangement of government in the United States is being tested in real time as progressive urban agendas and spending priorities grow increasingly out of sync with states that are more conservative and the Republican-controlled federal government.

The de facto abdication of the federal government from non-defense discretionary spending is not a new story; federal spending on urban priorities has been declining for decades. However, the Trump administration's sharp turn to dismantle the federal bureaucracy is unprecedented. Several federal departments have been targeted for significant downscaling or outright elimination. The administration's requirement that two

regulations be eliminated for every new one adopted threatens to grind an already burdensome approval process to a standstill.

This is an unfortunate shift away from the promising achievements of recent years, when the White House and Congress found ways to pass major reforms of flagship federal programs in workforce development, education, and surface transportation.⁽⁴⁵⁾ While far from perfect, these programs share a number of characteristics that make them noteworthy. They provide state and local actors with more flexibility in how they use federal resources, incentivize collaborative approaches to problems that are tailored to regional and local circumstances, and enable local actors to better leverage resources from the private sector. In these ways, they build upon the locally empowering actions that were an emblematic component of the Obama administration's domestic policy agenda. These programs should stay in place, and they should be scaled.

With the major exception of a commitment to infrastructure spending (the shape and scale of which is still far from certain), the Trump administration's federal policy agenda is starkly at odds with the needs of cities and the preferences of mayors. According to the 2016 Menino Survey of Mayors, mayors overwhelmingly support the federal departments of Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Justice, Education, and Homeland Security and would generally prefer stronger federal regulations.⁽⁴⁶⁾ These preferences held across both red and blue states.

Because of the wide berth the Constitution gives to states, the relationship between state and local decisionmaking is the product of

an accumulation of decisions over time, legal interpretation, custom, and tradition. The space between what is technically possible and customary interpretation can be quite wide. The evolution of the application of Dillon's Rule (the strict interpretation of state limits on local powers in the United States) to home rule (the right to self-government at the local level) is one example of such a change. A Brookings analysis found that Dillon's Rule was used to restrict land-use and planning powers in municipalities in 39 states, even though the rule technically "neither prohibits nor hinders growth management."⁽⁴⁷⁾ This changed over time, as localities argued for greater power to tax, spend, plan, and manage growth and development.

We may now be at the beginning of another big wave of battles and court decisions to relitigate the relationship between state and local decisionmaking. A 2017 report from the National League of Cities found 24 states preempting local minimum wage ordinances, 17 preempting efforts to build municipal broadband services, and 37 limiting local authority to regulate ride sharing, among other policy issues.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Forty-two states already constrain local fiscal authority through tax and expenditure limitations, which can sharply restrict local government's ability to raise revenues—a severe problem in this time of declining federal spending on anything but defense and entitlements. Conservative state legislatures—with trifecta control of both legislative chambers and governors offices in 25 states and fueled by well-funded advocacy efforts—are only getting more aggressive on this front.

Mayors will have to step up their advocacy and be creative in their targets at all levels of government. Efforts to band together and

leverage the political force of their population preferences outside of formal representative channels—as seen in the unfolding debate over sanctuary cities—will be increasingly necessary in coming fights over health care, education, and infrastructure.

REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION AND DEVOLUTION

No charter change at the local government level will have as much impact on cities or on mayors as efforts to fundamentally shift the configuration of power and distribution of resources between nations, states (or other intermediate governments), and local governments. Though this is a topic

that deserves volumes in its own right, the devolution of planning and spending powers to cities and the consolidation of fragmented local powers into functional metropolitan regions are two trends that will determine the future of mayors and the trajectories of the cities they govern.

Complex and populous cities, both within the United States and abroad, cannot be effectively governed without proper coordination among relevant governing bodies and authorities. This often requires consolidation and agglomeration, which can help reduce government inefficiencies, create economies of scale, and maximize available resources and outcomes.(49)

DENVER-AURORA

The Denver-Aurora metro area in Colorado has had particular success in consolidating and coordinating metropolitan power. Since the 1970s, leadership in and around Denver has consistently focused on and advocated for different ways to realize the economic potential and promise of the greater metropolitan area. Following a period of regional fragmentation, social tensions, competition, and rapid population growth, local leaders within Denver began to push to incorporate adjacent counties in an effort to better plan and direct growth. With years of sustained effort, they succeeded.

While met with some pushback, this idea of cooperative growth between urban, suburban, and rural areas helped spark a change in local leadership that led to complex regional agreements and cooperation between mayors, public and civic leaders, and economic development agencies and corporate partners within the Denver area. Tangible benefits that resulted from a coordinated and cooperative leadership stance can be found in the continued existence of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, which has contributed to the strong growth of research centers and innovation districts within the region, and the development of a functional and efficient regional transportation system.(50)

“FRAGMENTATION OF REGIONS IS
SUCH AN IMPORTANT LIMITING
FACTOR IN THE CAPACITY OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

**MAYORS ARE ESSENTIAL BECAUSE
THEY SET THE TONE TO PUT REGIONAL
COOPERATION AND REGIONAL
APPROACHES ON THE AGENDA AS
SOMETHING YOU NEED TO DO.”**

James Svara
Arizona State University

The North Carolina League of Municipalities recently put together a [strategic plan](#)¹⁴ that engaged city residents all over the state. Kim Nelson, who worked on the project, reported, “the wealthier communities are not willing to let the poorer communities just die. These are very conservative communities in many cases, and you would not expect them to want to use their tax dollars. But there is broadening recognition that the metro matters, that this is a necessity.”

Progress toward metropolitan governance reform is also happening globally. The United Kingdom, France, and Chile have all formally adopted comprehensive reforms that have led to the creation of metropolitan institutions and leaders in recent years. We look at the cases of Chile and the United Kingdom in detail below.

CHILE MOVES TOWARD METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

Though Chile has experienced increased economic prosperity and declining inequality in recent years, the centralization and fragmentation of governing powers has constrained its metropolitan regions in significant ways. The governmental system is both weak within Chile’s unitary, highly centralized system of government and fragmented among many overlapping units of local government. Local powers that do exist are difficult to coordinate due to the compartmentalization of national government agencies and the lack of local government power and capacity to drive integrated thinking and action. The reliance on intergovernmental transfers makes planning and delivering services difficult. This has constrained efforts to address environmental issues, such as air quality, plan for more balanced growth and

development, make investments in essential infrastructure, and promote innovative economic projects.

The Chilean national government is attempting to enhance local powers as part of a broader ongoing effort to reform institutional arrangements established under the Pinochet dictatorship. Efforts over the years to devolve, coordinate, and streamline local powers have gained momentum with a devolution law passed in December 2016 that more than doubled the number of powers granted to regional governments (from 23 to 54). Thirty-three more powers are set to be transferred by 2022, including ownership for planning, social programs, innovation, infrastructure, and other investments.

However, as Bruce Katz and Isabel Brain [wrote](#)¹⁵: “The requirement to come up with competencies before there are actual tasks to be accomplished or laws to be passed puts the cart before the horse. To move forward, Congress should invert the process: first determine the challenges that cities and regions are best situated to address, define the results expected, and only then determine the competencies needed to empower governors to solve the problems. This approach would not only simplify the devolution process, but it would also help everyone understand and appreciate what devolution means and what it can accomplish.”⁽⁵¹⁾

The Greater Santiago metropolitan area is home to 7 million people (91 percent of the population of Chile), the capital city of Santiago, and many of the nation’s economic drivers. The capital and central downtown (or *comune de Santiago*) has a directly elected

14 <https://www.nclm.org/about/Pages/Vision2030.aspx>

15 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/05/devolution-in-chile-whatever-competencies-cities-need-they-likely-have/>

mayor with extremely limited policymaking powers and almost total fiscal dependency. The most powerful politician in the region is the *intendente* of the Santiago Metropolitan Region, an unelected presidential delegate who has oversight of six regional provinces and 52 communes. The proposed shift to directly elected *intendentes* has been controversial throughout Chile, with arguments on both sides: against adding a level of elected bureaucracy, for increasing the accountability of the office. At the time of writing, these debates were ongoing, while the challenges – the need to find more effective ways to address pressing environmental, social, and economic concerns in Chile’s metropolitan areas – felt more urgent than ever.

THE UK’S METRO MAYORS

The United Kingdom has one of the most centralized governments in the world, so its ongoing efforts both to devolve power to cities and to consolidate it into more functional metropolitan areas are particularly fascinating to watch as they unfold in real time. The contemporary devolution wave started in England and Wales in the late 1990s. The initial push for local devolution came from the top down in response to fiscal pressures, with national leadership viewing the devolution of administrative duties and services to municipal governments as a way to trim national expenditures.⁽⁵²⁾ But it occurred in parallel with efforts to promote greater alignment, coordination, and collaboration on service delivery at the local level.

The Local Government Act of 2000 initiated a gradual shift to devolve formal powers to local governments, transfer local leadership

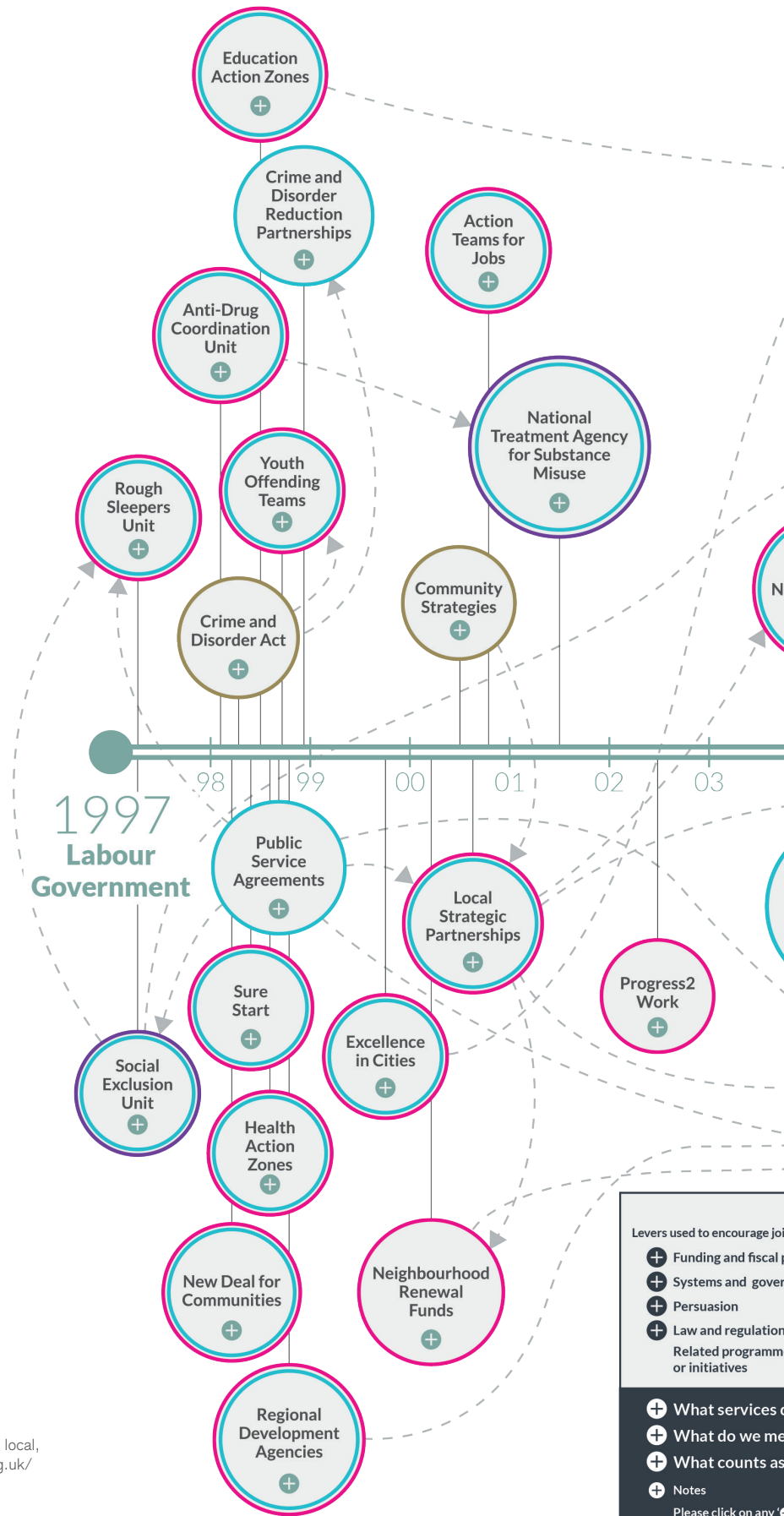
to directly elected mayors, and create new regional governing bodies called combined authorities. Devolution agreements (or City Deals) were negotiated with eight metropolitan areas, and referendums were held across the United Kingdom to determine which specific powers and rights should be granted to local governments.

Directly elected mayors have been a central – and controversial – component of the broader devolution strategy. Traditionally, executive decisionmaking power in English and Welsh localities has been placed in the hands of nonpolitical leaders, so shifting to a directly elected executive is a radical concept. Although some more rural regions, such as Cornwall, have been able to gain some devolved powers without agreeing to a directly elected mayor, this major governance change has been a precondition of devolution agreements in most of the larger metros. This has yielded an unprecedented amount of discretion and flexibility to local actors—both directly elected mayors of single cities like London and up to eight new metro mayors who will preside over the combined authorities.⁽⁵³⁾

In May 2017, six new metro mayors were elected for the first time to lead some of England’s largest metropolitan regions. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ Collectively, these leaders assumed responsibility for almost 10 million people—nearly a fifth of England’s population—and economies worth £214 billion. As we [wrote](#)¹⁶ prior to the election, this big metropolitan governance experiment has the potential reshape the leadership landscape in the United Kingdom. It should also offer lessons to other localities looking to forge more effective regional governance arrangements. The U.K.-

¹⁶ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/28/make-way-for-mayors/>

KEY NATIONAL ATTEMPTS TO JOIN UP PUBLIC SERVICES AT A LOCAL LEVEL IN ENGLAND



Lever used to encourage join up

- ⊕ Funding and fiscal incentives
- ⊕ Systems and governance
- ⊕ Persuasion
- ⊕ Law and regulation
- ⊕ Related programmes or initiatives

⊕ What services are involved

⊕ What do we measure

⊕ What counts as success

⊕ Notes

Please click on any circle

Source: © Institute for Government, "Joining up public services around local citizen needs," November 2015. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/attempts-join-public-services-timeline>

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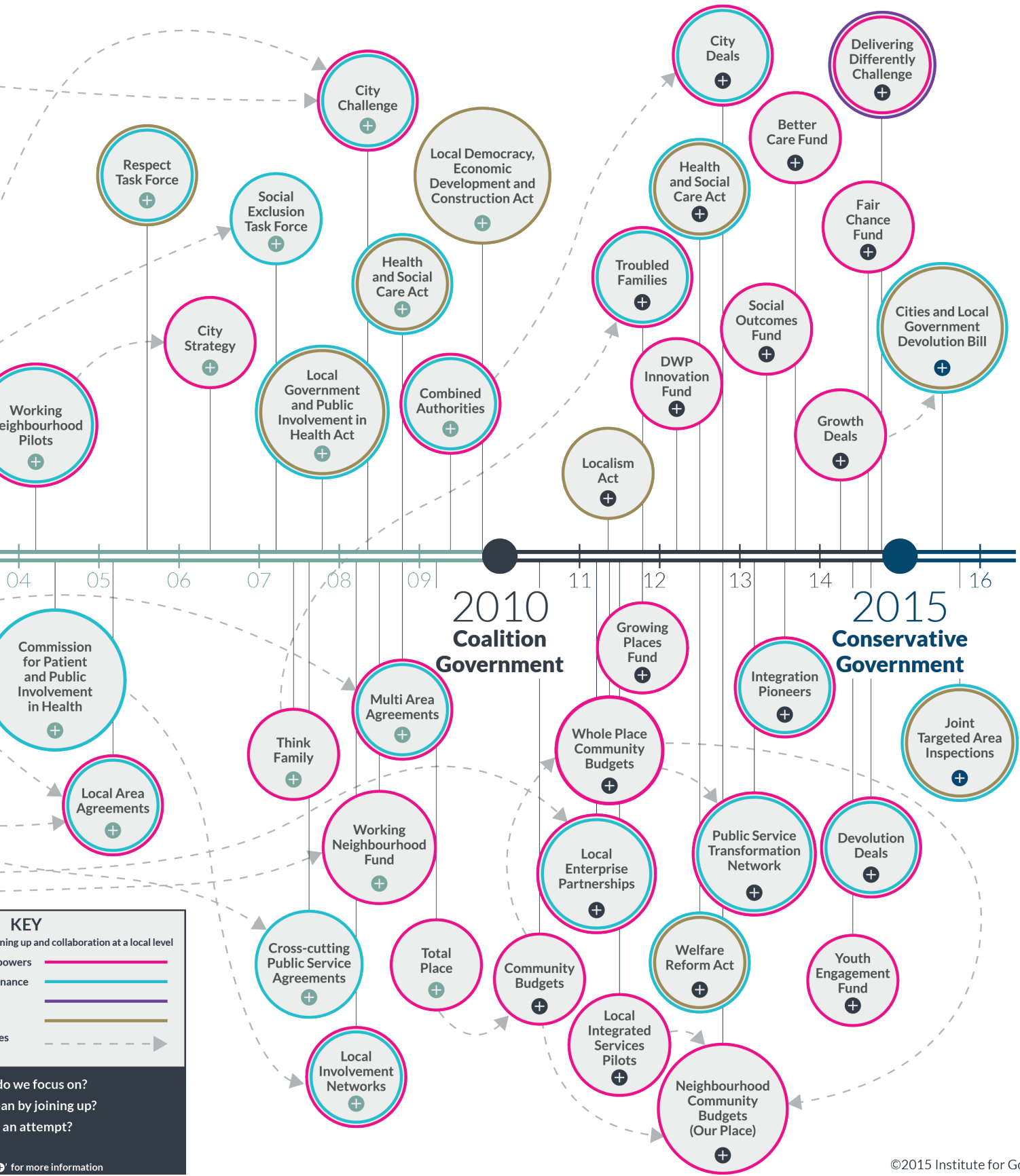







FIGURE 3

New Metro Mayoral Powers: England's Combined Authorities

	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Greater Manchester	Liverpool City Region	Tees Valley	West Midlands	West of England
 30-YEAR INVESTMENT FUND	£600m	£900m	£900m	£450m	£1.1bn	£900m
 EDUCATION & SKILLS POWERS	Apprenticeship Grant for Employers. Adult Skills Budget. Post-16 further education system.	Apprenticeship Grant for Employers. Adult Skills Budget. Post-16 further education system.	Apprenticeship Grant for Employers. Adult Skills Budget. Post-16 further education system.	Adult Skills Budget.	Adult Skills Budget.	Apprenticeship Grant for Employers. Adult Skills Budget. Post-16 further education system.
 HOUSING & PLANNING	£170m affordable housing grant. Strategic planning. Mayoral Development Corporations.	£30m a year Housing Investment Fund. Strategic planning. Land Commission. Compulsory purchase powers. Mayoral Development Corporations.	Strategic planning. Compulsory purchase powers. Mayoral Development Corporations. Control of Key Route Network.	Mayoral Development Corporations.	Compulsory purchase powers.	Strategic planning. Compulsory purchase powers. Mayoral Development Corporations.
 TRANSPORT	Consolidated transport budget. Local roads network. Bus franchising. Smart ticketing.	Consolidated transport budget. Local roads network. Bus franchising. Smart ticketing.	Consolidated transport budget. Local roads network. Bus franchising. Smart ticketing.	Consolidated transport budget.	Consolidated transport budget. Local roads network. Bus franchising. Smart ticketing.	Consolidated transport budget. Local roads network. Bus franchising. Smart ticketing.
 HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE	Planning for health and social care integration.	Control of £6 billion integrated health and social care budget.	Planning for health and social care integration.			

Source: <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2017-powers-table-01.jpg>

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based Institute for Government examined nearly 20 years of efforts to join up service delivery at the local level and identified several of the challenges for directly elected mayors in the current devolution wave:

“Joined up services at a local level significantly complicates accountability. Where two or more organisations share responsibility horizontally, for example by pooling funding, or vertically, through central and local collaboration, it can be unclear who is accountable for shared outcomes, and who is responsible for failure. For example, where a programme is funded and overseen by central government, but designed and delivered at a local level, is it the central government department or the local authority that is responsible for ensuring success against desired outcomes? The assumption is both, but without clarifying these relationships, accountability is likely to “bounce back” to central government, fueling reluctance to devolve any further powers to local areas.”(55)

The learning curve for the new mayors will be steep; they have new formal powers to wield and will need to quickly develop key functional capacities to govern effectively. While a thorough review of these important urban governance changes is beyond the scope of this report, they are unfolding in real time and should be the subject of close observation and continued research. A network of new metropolitan mayors would help these leaders learn from peers as they build these new institutions and define new roles.

MAYORS ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Several important events in the past several years have strengthened the position of mayors on the global stage. Cities and mayors advocated for the Paris climate agreement, worked to shape and include a city-focused global [Sustainable Development Goal](#)¹⁷, contributed to the [New Urban Agenda](#)¹⁸ agreed upon at the [Habitat III summit](#)¹⁹, and stood up the [Global Parliament of Mayors](#)²⁰. Each of these opportunities to engage in broader matters of international policy and global diplomacy raised questions about how effective mayors can be absent formal powers in the international system—and pointed to how much more effective they could be if they had more robust formal mechanisms to engage.

The international system has only had a focus on cities since the 1970s. The agency now known as UN-Habitat (formally the United Nations Human Settlements Programme) is charged with oversight of a broad range of issues related to “urbanization and human settlements.”(56) Its origins were in an international conference on urbanization held in Vancouver in 1976, called Habitat I; a second conference, Habitat II, was held in Istanbul in 1996. With population projections forecasting explosive growth in urbanization, the 2000s were ushered in as the beginning of the “[Century of the City](#)²¹”. The third Habitat conference—convened in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016—happened in a radically different context, one where cities

17 <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>

18 <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

19 <http://habitat3.org/>

20 <http://www.globalparliamentofmayors.org/>

21 <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/century-of-the-city/>

and mayors were starting to be recognized as central players in a global world. This newfound recognition has been reflected in the increased role mayors played in diplomatic negotiations at the Paris Climate Summit and in the adoption of "[Sustainable Cities and Communities](#)²²" as one of UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.(57)

As we have written [elsewhere](#)²³, Habitat III not only cast light on the institutional governance arrangements that support and sustain cities at the national, international, and global levels, it focused the leaders of the world on implementing them. As the Rockefeller Foundation's Michael Berkowitz remarked, "If only one thing came out of Habitat III, I hope it's that there's guidance about how to devolve more powers and authorities to cities and how we can establish a reform path and follow it for the next 20 years."(58) However, while there was a push for greater engagement in the run-up to Habitat III, mayors still lacked a formal seat at the decisionmaking table in the development of the global goal-setting document for cities, the New Urban Agenda. (59) As a system based on nation-state level engagement, the UN system does not provide for formal participation of local leaders or channels to incorporate their perspectives.(60)

The Global Parliament of Mayors can be seen as another response to the lack of formal influence that cities have in the international system. Conceived and promoted by the late political theorist Benjamin Barber, the project is focused on the idea that cities need a more effective way

both to lead collaboratively on issues like climate change and refugee integration and to commit mutually to joint action.(61)

The proposal to convene the Parliament was greeted skeptically by some critics who questioned the wisdom of setting up an alternative body that could undermine the existing international system or duplicate existing mayoral leadership networks. At the first convening of the Parliament in The Hague in September 2016, there were strong arguments in its favor, especially by those who perceive the UN system as not moving fast enough or smoothly enough to incorporate mayors into the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III process in meaningful ways. Many of the most functional international city leadership networks are issue-based, so while their member cities might all be grappling with basic *governance* challenges separately (such as the need for devolution and greater fiscal powers), they are not getting the benefits of spread and scale.

It seems clear that cities and mayors do need a greater voice and more forceful representation in the international system. That may come from a new body like the Global Parliament of Mayors, or from changes to the governance structure of institutions in the existing international system. Alternatively, it may come from the many successful issue-based city leadership networks that are creating pragmatic solutions to pressing challenges, expanding their mandates beyond networking and the sharing of best practices to become stronger advocates for urban governance reform.(62)

22 <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>
23 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/04/12/why-urban-governance-matters-now-more-than-ever/>

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In fragmented urban governance environments, robust formal mayoral powers that promote accountability seem to make a difference in cities (although more research is necessary to understand which formal powers matter *most* for accountability). The multilevel governance arrangements that enable or constrain cities and mayors also matter, as mayors grapple with how to govern effectively beyond the bounds of cities whose political borders no longer match their economic reality.


In spite of constraints on their formal powers, mayors everywhere have developed important capacities to overcome them. In the last decade, there have been several promising efforts to strengthen the capacities of mayors and their staff and build leadership networks that allow them to share ideas and innovations. Whether focused on core capacities or pressing issues of the day, efforts to help mayors exercise their powers more effectively—by activating their networks; using data to increase accountability, effectiveness, and responsiveness; or adapting to whatever change is around the corner—can be force multipliers.

Formal governance changes may not be necessary for mayors to rise to the complex

task of governing cities, but in many cases change is coming for better or worse. It is a mayor's job to navigate the changing preferences of citizens and residents and to negotiate and network across other levels of government and sectors to get things done. Advocating to overcome fragmentation or to demand more resources from states and central governments are reasonable and necessary functions of mayors. However, most mayors have few resources to dedicate to this task and the advocacy networks that exist to support these functions may need to evolve to keep up with new demands.

As we have suggested throughout this paper, cities are networks, and mayors are network leaders. Their ultimate success rests on the investments and actions of a number of different stakeholders—and on their ability to leverage them. Cutting across all of these recommendations is a call for greater focus and attention to these networks and the ways that cities and mayors build, activate, and engage with them. Though the primary audience for these recommendations are the mayors themselves, they are also relevant to other civic leaders, the heads of state and central governments, and philanthropies and donor organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:



1. INVEST IN PROFESSIONALIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MAYORS AND KEY STAFF, FOCUSING ON THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF BUILDING, MAINTAINING, AND LEVERAGING NETWORKS.

Mayors everywhere need to understand the fundamentals of good government and governance, and they need to understand how to engage with other levels of government and to advocate for city-level interests. Certain capacities are becoming even more essential: building and activating networks; using data and information technologies more effectively to plan, manage, and evaluate programs and services; and developing creative mechanisms to leverage public assets for greater value. Beyond these general capacities, mayors could benefit from domain-specific expertise in areas such as climate adaptation and mitigation, police reform, or immigration. In a time of increasing need and complexity, mayors and their teams need support and expertise.

2. IDENTIFY THE SPECIALIZED INTERMEDIARIES AND INSTRUMENTS THAT SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL CITIES AND MAYORS. THEN DOCUMENT, STRENGTHEN, AND SPREAD THEM.

Mayors rely on relationships across other sectors of government, civic institutions, and the private sector to get most things done. Skilled and specialized intermediaries can help deliver on complex projects by coordinating, aligning, and activating networks of stakeholders, both for short-term projects and long-range planning. In most places, cities rely on a range of financial instruments and organizational vehicles—such as publically owned, privately managed corporations; public authorities; and philanthropic investment funds—to help resource city projects. Their design matters: How public value is created and the way benefits are distributed vary widely from project to project and place to place. Mayors should know their options, understand the tradeoffs, and be able to set the terms of city engagement.

3. ESTABLISH NATIONAL DATA SOURCES THAT TRACK LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHANGES OVER TIME AND SUPPORT EFFORTS TO TRACK THE QUALITY OF CITY GOVERNANCE.

There are too few sources of consistent, comprehensive, and credible data on local government and governance to enable the quality and quantity of research that is needed on this important topic. These could be housed in census or statistical bureaus at the federal level or within nongovernmental organizations. Regular surveys of mayors (such as the Menino Survey) and of city residents' attitudes toward their mayors are important data sources as well. These should include specific questions on the quality of government functioning, network capacity, and partnerships with intermediaries as well as public perceptions, attitudes, and overall trust in government.



4. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE ROLE OF MAYORS AND CITY LEADERSHIP, IN PARTICULAR THE WAYS THEY ARE CHANGING.

Even many experts who work with cities lack a detailed understanding of the fundamentals of mayoral powers. Public information campaigns about how local governments work and the role mayors play in leading them would help voters make informed choices when local government changes are proposed. Most importantly, in this time of great potential for governance shifts, cities in the United States and around the world need to be learning from examples of institutional adaptation and change.

With few exceptions, the pace of institutional and bureaucratic adaptation generally lags behind the accelerating changes in the world. Efforts by mayors to adapt and lead within the span of their existing formal powers by developing and strengthening their functional capacities are useful and essential; many promising examples exist that could be

amplified, replicated, and scaled. There is a great need to identify potential governance reforms and to find ways to accelerate them. The time is ripe for mayors to lead beyond the limits of their traditional roles. Such expanded mayoral leadership could have far-reaching effects, not only for cities and their residents, but for a world that needs them to succeed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank our Brookings colleagues in the Global Economy and Development program and Office of the Centennial Scholar, and our collaborators on the [Project on 21st Century City Governance](https://www.brookings.edu/project/project-on-21st-century-city-governance/)²⁴. The candor and insights from the experts we interviewed greatly enriched this work, and we thank them all for their generous contributions. We are especially grateful to Solomon Greene, Christy

McFarland, and Jeremy Nowak for their careful review and thoughtful comments. Ian Hecker, Zeenia Framroze, and Zoe Covello contributed valuable research assistance to the effort.

We also wish to gratefully acknowledge the support of the Bloomberg Philanthropies, both for making this report possible and for the broader commitment to understanding how city leadership works—and improving it.

²⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/project/project-on-21st-century-city-governance/>

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Alaina Harkness is a fellow in the Centennial Scholar Initiative and the Project on 21st Century City Governance.

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ABOUT THE CENTENNIAL SCHOLAR INITIATIVE AT BROOKINGS

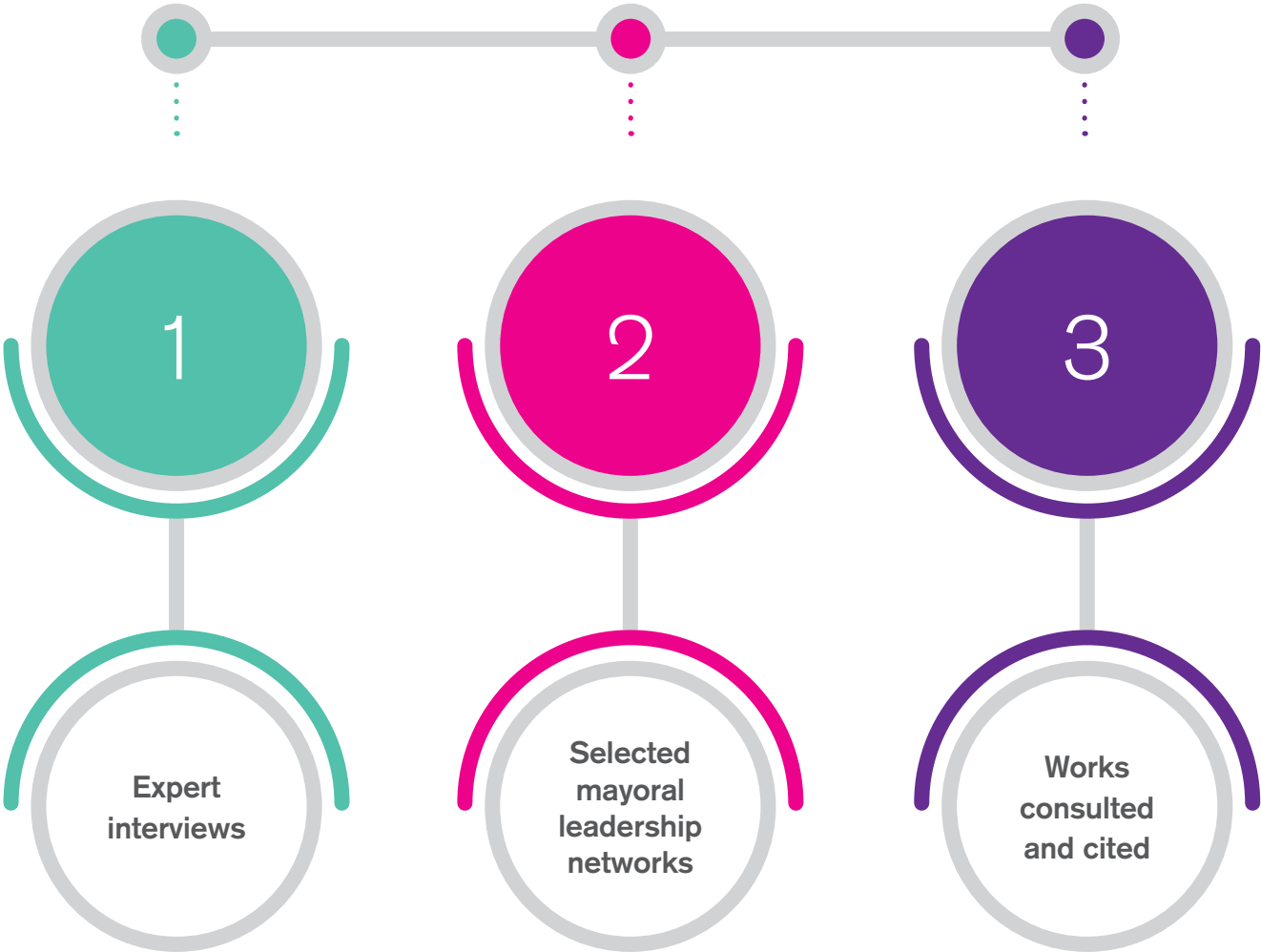
The Centennial Scholar Initiative cultivates a new style of scholarship at Brookings, fostering work that is cross-program, inter-disciplinary, international, and intensely focused on impact. As the inaugural Brookings Centennial Scholar, Bruce Katz brings this type of integrated problem solving to the issues arising from global urbanization and the challenges of a city-driven century.

ABOUT THE PROJECT ON 21st CENTURY CITY GOVERNANCE

The Project on 21st Century City Governance is a collaboration of the Brookings Centennial Scholar Initiative and the Global Economy and Development program. It aims to deepen our understanding of the norms, institutions, and networks essential to successful city governance.

MAYORAL POWERS IN A SHIFTING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: EXPERT INTERVIEWS



Andrew Carter, **Chief Executive, Centre for Cities**

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Andrew Carter became chief executive of the Centre for Cities in April 2017. Before that, he was the deputy chief executive and director of policy and research with overall responsibility for the Centre's research and policy program. He is also the deputy director of the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. He has over twenty years of experience working on urban economic policy issues for public and private development agencies, consultants, and research institutes. He has spent time in the United States as a part of the Churchill Foundation's Fellowship Programme, during which he reviewed urban economic development policy and practice in American cities.

Ben Hecht, **President & CEO, Living Cities**

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Ben Hecht was appointed president and CEO of Living Cities in July 2007. He is currently serving as chairman of EveryoneOn and sits on both the National Advisory Board for StriveTogether and Duke University's Center for Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship Advisory Council. In 2013, Hecht was selected as one of the Top 100 City Innovators Worldwide in the area of urban policy. Prior to joining Living Cities, he was senior vice president at the Enterprise Foundation and co-founded One Economy Corporation, where he was president from 2000 to 2007. He spent ten years teaching at Georgetown University Law Center and built the premier housing and community development clinical program in the country. He has written three books: *Managingnonprofits.org: Dynamic Management for the Digital Age* (New York: Wiley, 2002), with Rey Ramsey; *Developing Affordable Housing: A Practical Guide for Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: Wiley, 2006), and *Managing Affordable Housing: A Practical Guide for Building Stable Communities* (New York: Wiley, 1996), with James

Stockard. Hecht received his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center and his CPA from the State of Maryland.

Carol O'Cleireacain, **Deputy Mayor for Economic Policy,** **Planning & Strategy, City of Detroit**

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Prior to being appointed deputy mayor for economic policy, planning and strategy in the City of Detroit, Carol O' Cleireacain served as deputy treasurer of the State of New Jersey and director of the Office of Management, Finance, and Budget for New York City. She has served as a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and as a senior fellow of the Rockefeller Institute. O'Cleireacain has been a member of the Advisory Council to New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, the federal Competitiveness Policy Council's Infrastructure Task Force, and the National Academy of Sciences' Task Force on Business Strategies for Public Capital Investment. O'Cleireacain served as an adjunct professor at the New School, Barnard College, Columbia University, and New York University. She obtained a B.A. and M.A. in economics from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in economics from the London School of Economics.

Jagan Shah, **Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs, India**

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From 2007 to 2010, Jagan Shah was the chief executive of Urban Space Consultants, providing consultancy in policy formulation, spatial planning, heritage conservation, transportation, and livelihoods development for clients such as Infrastructure Development Finance Company, Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transport System, Jaipur Virasat Foundation, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, India Foundation for the Arts, and others. Shah served as the director of Sushant School of Art & Architecture in Gurgaon, India, and has

taught at the School of Planning & Architecture (SPA) in New Delhi. He is the author of *Contemporary Indian Architecture* (New Delhi: Lustre Press, 2008); co-author of *Building beyond Borders: The Story of Contemporary Indian Architecture* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1995); and co-editor of *Round* (Osaka, Japan: Acetate, 2006), a collection of seminal Asian texts on architecture. He is also a founding member of the Modern Asian Architecture Network (MAAN). Shah studied architectural design at SPA and architectural history and theory at the University of Cincinnati and Columbia.

James Svava,
Professor, School of Public Affairs, College
of Public Service and Community Solutions, Arizona
State University & Senior Sustainability Scientist,
Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability

James Svava is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, an honorary member of the International City/County Management Association, and a former board member of the Alliance for Innovation. He has served on the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina State University, and Arizona State University. He specializes in local government politics, management, ethics, innovation, and sustainability. He has a special interest in the roles and responsibilities of elected and administrative officials in local governments. He has edited several books, including *Justice for All: Promoting Social Equity in Public Administration* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), with Norman J. Johnson; *More Than Mayor or Manager: Campaigns to Change Form of Government in America's Large Cities* (Georgetown University Press, 2010), with Douglas J. Watson; and *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall: Reexamining the Scope and Contributions* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Svava received a B.A. in history from the University of Kentucky and an M.A. in international relations and a Ph.D. in political science from Yale.

Kimberly L. Nelson,
Associate Professor of Public Administration
and Government, School of Government,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Kim Nelson joined the UNC School of Government in August 2013. She has been a member of the Public Administration Review editorial board since January 2016

and will serve a three-year term. She taught for seven years in the MPA program at Northern Illinois University, where she received the 2010 Professor of the Year award from the students of the Division of Public Administration. Her research and teaching interests include local government management, form of government, and innovation in local government. Previously, she taught at Southern Illinois University, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and North Carolina State University. Nelson received an MPA from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University.

Mark Funkhouser,
Publisher, Governing Magazine

Prior to serving as the publisher of Governing magazine, Mark Funkhouser served as mayor of Kansas City, Mo., from 2007 to 2011. Before that he was the city's auditor for 18 years and was honored in 2003 as a Governing Public Official of the Year. He also served as director of the Governing Institute. Funkhouser is an internationally recognized auditing expert, author and teacher in public administration and its fiscal disciplines. He holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in public administration and sociology from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, an MBA in accounting and finance from Tennessee State University, and a M.A. in social work from West Virginia University.

Michael Berkowitz,
President, 100 Resilient Cities and Managing
Director of Rockefeller Foundation

Michael Berkowitz is the president of 100 Resilient Cities—Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation. Previously, Berkowitz was the global head of operational risk management (ORM) at Deutsche Bank, the head of corporate security and business continuity (CSBC) for Deutsche Bank in the Asia-Pacific region, and the editor of Emergency Preparedness News, a Washington, D.C.-based newsletter for emergency management professionals.

Mike Emmerich,
Founding Director, Metro Dynamics

For over eight years prior to founding the urban development consultancy Metro Dynamics, Emmerich was the chief executive of New Economy in Manchester,

United Kingdom, where he was central to the negotiation of the Manchester devolution deal. New Economy played a key role in the development of Manchester's approach to growth and reform, initiating the Manchester Independent Economic Review and leading the integration of economics-based appraisal mechanisms in Greater Manchester's approach. He has a distinguished background in the political and economic arena, where he has worked in academia; set up a governance institute at the University of Manchester; consulted with Ernst and Young; and been a civil servant. Emmerich has experience at HM Treasury, where he was one of the founding members of the Productivity Team, and in the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, where he held the brief on local government housing and planning. He has also participated in a number of high-profile reviews, including as an advisor to the City Growth Commission and as a member both of the London Finance Commission and the City Finance Commission chaired by Sir Stuart Lipton.

Priya Shankar,
Director, India Smart Cities program
for Bloomberg Philanthropies

Priya Shankar directs the India Smart Cities program for Bloomberg Philanthropies. She ran the challenge last year for officials and cities to compete for national urban development funding. She previously worked with LSE Cities on urban governance issues in India as well as internationally and comparatively. Shankar previously worked with a policy think tank called Policy Network, where she looked at governance and globalization issues beyond the city level. Shankar also advised on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Smart Cities initiative.

Richard Schragger,
Perre Bowen Professor of Law and
Joseph C. Carter, Jr. Research and Professor of Law,
University of Virginia School of Law

Richard Schragger joined the Virginia faculty in 2001 and was named the Perre Bowen Professor in 2013. He focuses on the intersection of constitutional law and local government law, federalism, urban policy, and the constitutional and economic status of cities. He teaches property, local government law, urban law and policy, and church and state. Schragger has been a visiting professor at Quinnipiac, Georgetown, New York University, Chicago

and Tel Aviv. He was the Samuel Rubin Visiting Professor at Columbia. He is the author of *City Power: Urban Governance in a Global Age*. Schragger received an M.A. in legal theory from University College London and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Robert J. O'Neill,
Executive Director of the International City/County
Management Association (ICMA)

Robert J. O'Neill joined ICMA in November 2002. He previously served as president of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) and was on temporary assignment at the federal Office of Management and Budget as counselor to the director and deputy director on management issues. O'Neill has also served as Fairfax County executive, where he oversaw the largest general-purpose local government in the state of Virginia and is credited with developing a series of successful community and commercial revitalization strategies. He served as city manager of Hampton, Virginia, where he was recognized by organizations such as the National League of Cities and Public Technology, Inc., for his "reinvention" of the city government. He received his B.A. in political science from Old Dominion University, his M.A. from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, and his MBA from the University of Virginia. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws by Old Dominion University in 2000.

Stephen Goldsmith,
Daniel Paul Professor of the Practice
of Government, Ash Center for Democratic
Governance and Innovation, Harvard University

Steve Goldsmith is the Daniel Paul Professor of the Practice of Government and director of the Innovations in American Government Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He currently directs Data-Smart City Solutions, a project to highlight local government efforts to use new technologies that connect breakthroughs in the use of big data analytics with community input to reshape the relationship between government and citizen. He previously served as deputy mayor of New York City and mayor of Indianapolis, where he earned a reputation as one of the country's leaders in public-private partnerships, competition, and privatization. Stephen was also the chief domestic policy advisor to the George W. Bush campaign

in 2000, the chair of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the district attorney for Marion County, Indiana, from 1979 to 1990. He has written *The Responsive City: Engaging Communities Through Data-Smart Governance* (2014), with Susan Crawford; *The Power of Social Innovation* (2010), with Donald F. Kettl; *Governing by Network: the New Shape of the Public Sector* (2004), with William D. Eggers; *Putting Faith in Neighborhoods: Making Cities Work through Grassroots Citizenship* (2002), with Ryan Streeter; and *The Twenty-First Century City: Resurrecting Urban America* (1999).

Tony Travers,
**Professor of Government, London School
of Economics & Director of the Greater London
Group at the London School of Economics**
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Tony Travers is the director of LSE London and contributes a regular column to the Local Government Chronicle. He

is currently a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and a member of the Urban Task Force Working Group in Finance. Prior to working as a professor, Travers was a member of the Audit Commission and a senior associate of the King's Fund. He has advised the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee and the Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Wolfgang Schmidt,
State Secretary of the City of Hamburg, Germany
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Wolfgang Schmidt was appointed state secretary of the City of Hamburg in 2011. He also serves as the commissioner for federal, European, and foreign affairs of the City of Hamburg. He has previously served as the director of the International Labour Organization and as the head of Germany's Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

APPENDIX 2: SELECTED MAYORAL LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

UNITED STATES:

National Conference of Democratic Mayors (NCDM)

Created in the 1970s, the NCDM serves as a structure through which Democratic mayors can communicate and promote the goals of their party as it relates to cities; to act as a liaison between the nation's Democratic mayors, the Democratic National Committee, and other Democratic organizations; and to create a political network of mayors to affect local, state, and national elections. The NCDM has established the Mayors Alliance for Progress (MAP), which provides leaders in the private sector, organized labor, and other fields with opportunities to meet and share ideas with Democratic mayors.

National League of Cities (NLC)

The NLC works in partnership with 49 state municipal

leagues within the United States as a resource to advocate for over 19,000 cities, towns, and villages. The NLC lobbies on behalf of local governments, provides tools and knowledge to local leaders, provides networking opportunities for city officials, and partners with state leagues to strengthen the voice of local government. Elected officials and staff of member cities participate in NLC's programs, activities, and governance. In 2015, the NLC set up a new strategic plan with the goals of driving federal policy, raising the profile of city governments as key leaders, expanding the capacity of city officials to lead ethically and effectively, and furthering the promotion of innovation and the provision of strategies and resources.

Republican Mayors and Local Officials (RMLO)

RMLO is a coalition of elected officials at the county and city level who joined together to form a network working

to uphold and develop the philosophy of the Republican Party in cities and towns across the United States. RMLO works closely with elected county officials, state league officials, governors, the federal executive branch, and Congressional members of the Senate and the House of Representatives in order to resolve issues affecting government at the municipal level.

United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)

USCM is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. More than 1,400 cities are represented in the conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. This network seeks to promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy, strengthen federal-city relationships, ensure that federal policy meets urban needs, provide mayors with leadership and management tools, and create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information. Members of USCM receive representation of municipal interest before the federal government, networking opportunities, and the opportunity to apply for a number of grants and award programs.

Women Mayors of America's Cities

Established in 1983, Women Mayors of America's Cities was developed as a nonpartisan women's group with the goal of encouraging and developing the involvement and leadership potential of women mayors within the USCM. The group meets biannually to provide an opportunity for networking and the exchange of ideas, focusing on issues facing cities, policies affecting those issues, and how women mayors can assume more responsibility within the USCM.

GLOBAL:

Cities Alliance

The Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and for the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. Members include local authorities, national governments, nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral organizations. The Cities Alliance works to support cities in providing effective local government, an active citizenship, and an economy characterized by both public and private investment. Members work together to develop and enhance national policy frameworks addressing urban development needs and local inclusive strategies and plans. Cities

Alliance also works to strengthen city capacities to improve services to the urban poor, as well as to develop methods of engaging citizens in local governance. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Metropolis, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), and ICLEI are all members of the Cities Alliance and represent local governments in this particular network.

Committee of the Regions (CoR)

CoR is the European Union's assembly of regional and local representatives and includes 350 members from the 28 EU countries. Members of the committee must be democratically elected and/or hold a political mandate in their home country. The committee focuses on policy areas based on EU treaties regarding employment, economic and social cohesion, social affairs, health, education, culture, and the environment.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

CLGF works with national and local governments to support the development of democratic values and good local governance. It is an association organization that is officially recognized by the Commonwealth Heads of Government and includes 200 members from 53 countries. Members include local government associations, local authorities, ministries dealing with local government, as well as research and professional organizations that work with local government. CLGF ensures that local government's voice is heard within the Commonwealth and works to bring together central, provincial, and local spheres of government involved in local government policy and decisionmaking.

EUROCITIES

Founded in 1986, EUROCITIES is a network of European local and municipal governments from major European cities. Today it includes over 130 European cities and 40 partner cities. This network offers a platform for sharing knowledge and ideas by offering work groups, projects, activities, and events to members. The objective of EUROCITIES is to reinforce the important role that local governments should play in a multilevel governance structure. EUROCITIES aims to shift the focus of EU legislation in a way that allows city governments to tackle strategic challenges at local levels. The executive committee that manages the business of the organization is made up of 12 elected representatives, all mayors or leaders of city councils.

Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM)

Created in 2016 and led by engaged mayors around the world, the Global Parliament of Mayors is endeavoring to work together to help solve world problems, including security, sustainability, and social justice. GPM includes developing and emerging cities from around the world and works alongside the U.S. Conference of Mayors, COMURES in El Salvador, the European Forum for Urban Security (Efus), EUROCITIES, and a number of other global urban networks. Currently, 75 cities are members, but GPM is working toward scaling up its membership to include thousands of cities.

Metropolis

Representing 137 cities and metropolitan areas, Metropolis is the largest association gathering the governments of major cities all over the world. The association has been working since 1985 to accompany cities in mutual learning, innovation, governance, technical and financial assistance, and international presence and debate. Metropolis advocates for democratic local self-government and wishes to build a network of initiatives among metropolitan governments and collaborating partners to promote projects in partnership for urban sustainability, understood simultaneously in its environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects. Metropolis also manages the metropolitan section of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that serves as a national membership network for individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States. Its network unites citizen diplomats and volunteers in 570 member communities with over 2,300 partnerships around the world. Sister Cities serves as a hub for institutional knowledge and best practices in citizen diplomacy; provides essential services and resources to help members expand and improve; and assists private citizens, municipal officials, and business leaders to conduct long-term relationships.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Created in 2004, UCLG represents, defends, and promotes the interests of local governments worldwide. UCLG is comprised of over 240,000 towns, cities, regions, and metropolises working together toward

becoming the main source of support for democratic, effective, and innovative local government close to the citizen, as well as facilitating programs, networks, and partnerships to build the capacities of local governments.

ISSUE-SPECIFIC:

Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)

Created in 2005, C40 connects more than 80 of the world's greatest cities, primarily to help them address climate change and work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. C40 brings together networks and provides services such as direct technical assistance, facilitation of peer-to-peer exchange and research, and knowledge management and communications. Through C40's seventeen networks, cities are able to undertake joint projects in areas of mutual interest.

Cities for Action

Cities for Action is a coalition of over 100 mayors and municipal leaders fighting for federal immigration reform. Created in 2014, this national advocacy coalition works to launch inclusive policies and programs at the local level focused on creating stronger cities through immigration action. Cities for Action is led by guiding principles, which include working to create an inclusive and timely path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; advocating for economic, social, and civic integration programs; increasing protections for and minimizing obstacles faced by refugees and asylum seekers fleeing various forms of crisis; and committing to secure necessary resources to ensure the successful resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers into local communities.

European Forum for Urban Security (Efus)

Founded in 1987, Efus is the only European network of local and regional authorities dedicated to urban security. It includes nearly 250 members and works to support local and regional authorities in the conception, implementation, and evaluation of their local security policy. Efus also works to help local elected officials get recognition for their role in the development and implementation of national and European policies. In accordance with the principle of "cities helping cities," Efus fosters the exchange of experience between authorities, providing the opportunity for local authorities to network with one another and with international partners and experts, the implementation and supervision

of European cooperation projects and work groups, support of local policies, and informational and technical assistance and training.

ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability

Established in 1990 by 200 local governments from 43 countries, ICLEI has become a leading global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns, and regions in over 100 countries working together to build more sustainable, resilient, resource-efficient, biodiverse, low-carbon

cities. This includes an emphasis on building smart infrastructure; an inclusive, green urban economy; and an international policy environment focused on strengthening local governments and local sustainability.

Compact of Mayors

C40, ICLEI, and UCLG worked together to create the Compact of Mayors in 2014. It is an agreement by city networks to work to reduce city-level emissions and vulnerability to climate change.

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ENDNOTES

1. The changing nature of city power (and of mayors' role within it) is a subject that deserves volumes in its own right. It is not a new phenomenon; discussion of the changing role of cities and mayors in global networks closely tracks with the discourse on globalization. See the 1996 World Bank newsletter article, "The New Role of Mayors in a Changing Global Context, *Urban Age: Mayors and Partnerships* 4, no. 3, pp. 1–5. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/769501468338997059/pdf/multi-page.pdf> Heads of city governments can be categorized as mayors, managers, or other chief executives, but will be referred to throughout the paper as simply "mayor." All the countries discussed in this study have representative local governments with a central figure that roughly corresponds to the position of mayor.
2. David A. Graham, "Red State, Blue City," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 2017 (www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/03/red-state-blue-city/513857/).
3. Although local governance arrangements within the United States vary, the research highlights common features and representative trends of mayoral leadership that can be found within the United States and in countries around the world.
4. See Appendix 1 for the full list of interviews.
5. Though many municipalities in Illinois received greater home rule powers in 1970 with the passage of a new state constitution, Chicago's status as a "special charter municipality" preserved many of the limits of its pre-1870 charter. See Maureen A. Flanagan, "Charters, Municipal," *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/231.html).
6. Measures of mayoral performance are distinct from, but related to, the broadening adoption of "City Stat" systems to manage performance within city governments. In 2014, the City of Boston under the Walsh administration launched CityScore, a single composite measure for city effectiveness. This was an unusual move and the impact—on the city, and on public perception of Mayor Walsh's performance—remains to be seen.
7. Richard C. Schragger, *City Power: Urban Governance in a Global Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 259.
8. Gerald E. Frug and David J. Barron's *City Bound: How States Stifle Urban Innovation* (Cornell University Press, 2008) identified three key ways that states limit city powers through laws, regulations, and financing. The deep look at seven U.S. cities shows how these limitations narrow cities' development options. It is a seminal study for observers of cities and federalism.
9. Richard C. Schragger, "Mobile Capital, Local Economic Regulation, and the Democratic City," *Harvard Law Review* 123, no. 2 (2009), pp. 482–540.
10. Douglas Yates, *The Ungovernable City: The Politics of Urban Problems and Policy Making* (MIT Press), p. 8.
11. See Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley, *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy* (Brookings, 2013); and Bruce Katz, "Go Local: Help Cities Pursue the New American Localism To Break Partisan Gridlock, Brookings Institution, July 14, 2016.
12. The tradeoff between focusing city resources on economic development and redistribution is a central tension in Schragger's book. See also: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/19/want-empowered-cities-start-by-understanding-city-power/>
13. National League of Cities, "Forms of Municipal Government" (www.nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/resources/cities-101/city-structures/forms-of-municipal-government).
14. Brookings analysis of United States Census Bureau population estimates of U.S. cities as of July 1, 2016.
15. The graph includes reference to a form of government, the commission, used in only a small number of cities, including Portland, OR. We have excluded the commission form of government from this analysis.
16. In most council-manager systems, city council members do not exercise direct executive control over departments and agencies, as many members of parliament do. Councils more typically appoint a city manager and are then relatively passive in agency management. There are exceptions, like the Portland City Council, where individual council members do run departments. But because of the combination of executive and legislative authority in one body, the comparison is often made.
17. City of Georgetown, Texas, "Council/Manager Form of Government" (government.georgetown.org/city-management/council-manager-form-of-government/).
18. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA). "Local government management: the hottest career you've probably never heard of." <https://icma.org/local-government-management-hottest-career-youve-probably-never-heard>
19. Interview with Kim Nelson.
20. See <http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/gov-minimize-political-influence-maximize-wealth.html>
21. Interview with Stephen Goldsmith
22. Gerry Stoker (2006). "Public Value Management: A New Narrative for Networked Governance?" *American Review of Public Administration* 36, no. 1, pp. 41–57.
23. Interview with Mark Funkhouser.
24. Interview with Richard Schragger.
25. Goldsmith interview
26. Interview with Steve Goldsmith.
27. The Honorable Greg Fischer and Bruce Katz, "U.S. Lessons for U.K. Metro Mayors: The Hard Impact of Soft Power," *CityMetric*, February 6, 2017 (www.citymetric.com/politics/us-lessons-uk-metro-mayors-hard-impact-soft-power-2780).

28. Marty Finley, "55,000 Degrees Report Shows Mixed Results," *Louisville Business First*, December 2, 2014 (www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2014/12/02/55-000-degrees-report-shows-mixed-results.html); "About 55K" (www.55000degrees.org/about-55k/); and National League of Cities, "Louisville Kentucky 55,000 Degrees" (www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/city-practice-database/louisville-kentucky-55000-degrees).
29. Wagner, Julie, Steve Davies, Nate Storning, and Jennifer Vey. 2017. "Advancing a new wave of urban competitiveness: The role of mayors in the rise of innovation districts." (Brookings and Project for Public Spaces).
30. See Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency and Doubleday, 1990); and David A. Garvin, "Building a Learning Organization," *Harvard Business Review*, July/August 1993.
31. Interview with Carol O'Cleireacain.
32. Interview with Kim Nelson.
33. Bruce Katz and Luise Noring. 2017. "Why Copenhagen Works." (Brookings).
34. Interview with Ben Hecht.
35. Interview with Kim Nelson.
36. Interview with Bob O'Neill.
37. Interview with Carol O'Cleireacain.
38. Interview with James Svava.
39. James H. Svava. (2017) "The two worlds of elected mayors in the U.S.: what type of mayor should cities choose?" In *Directly Elected Mayors in Urban Governance: Impact and Practice*. David Sweeting, ed. (University of Bristol and Policy Press).
40. "Beyond the Charter Amendments," *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 2016.
41. For more background, see Alaina J. Harkness, "On Nov. 8, Don't Forget the Deep Down Ballot," Brookings Institution, November 1, 2016 (www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/11/01/on-nov-8-dont-forget-the-deep-down-ballot/).
42. Ballotpedia, "San Francisco City and County, California Ballot Measures" (ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco_City_and_County,_California_ballot_measures [accessed November 9, 2016]).
43. Interview with Kim Nelson.
44. The nonprofit, nonpartisan group Ballotpedia operates a wiki site for American government at multiple levels, but it does not claim to be comprehensive.
45. These bills include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST).
46. The exception was the EPA, which with its many unfunded mandates is less popular than other federal agencies. Twenty percent of mayors surveyed responded that it "hinders a lot," while only 15 percent said that it "helps a lot." See Katherine Levine Einstein, David M. Glick, and Conor LeBlanc, 2016 Menino Survey of Mayors (Boston: Initiative on Cities, Boston University, 2017).
47. Richardson, Gough, and Puentes, "Is Home Rule the Answer?"
48. National League of Cities, "Civil Rights in an Era of Preemption: New Report from National League of Cities," February 22, 2017 (www.nlc.org/article/city-rights-in-an-era-of-preemption-new-report-from-national-league-of-cities).
49. Rudiger Ahrend, Alexander Lembcke, and Abel Schumann, "Why Metropolitan Governance Matters a Lot More Than You Think," *VoxEU*, January 19, 2016 (voxeu.org/article/why-metropolitan-governance-matters).
50. The Denver case and others are documented in Katz and Bradley, *The Metropolitan Revolution*.
51. See Bruce Katz and Isabel Brain, "Devolution in Chile," Brookings Institution, April 5, 2017 (www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/05/devolution-in-chile-whatever-competencies-cities-need-they-likely-have/).
52. Interview with Mike Emmerich.
53. Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Government of the United Kingdom, "City Deals," July 5, 2013 (www.gov.uk/government/collections/city-deals).
54. For more on the metro mayors, see the London-based Centre for Cities, which has closely tracked devolution in the UK: <http://www.centreforcities.org/publication/everything-need-know-metro-mayors/>
55. Sophie Wilson and others, *Joining Up Public Services around Local, Citizen Needs: Perennial Challenges and Insights on How To Tackle Them* (London: Institute for Government, 2015).
56. UN Habitat, "History, Mandate & Role in the UN System" (unhabitat.org/about-us/history-mandate-role-in-the-un-system/).
57. The Millennium Development Goals adopted at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit did not call out a special focus on any urban dimension, though many of the goals overlapped with urban issues and relied on cities and local governments for progress.
58. Interview with Michael Berkowitz.
59. Carey L. Biron and Neal Peirce, "Why Are U.S. Mayors Missing Habitat III?" *Citiscopes*, September 2, 2016 (citiscopes.org/habitatIII/news/2016/09/why-are-us-mayors-missing-habitat-iii).
60. Biron and Peirce, "Why Are U.S. Mayors Missing Habitat III?"
61. The Global Parliament of Mayors concept and rationale are laid out in Benjamin R. Barber's book *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (Yale University Press, 2013) and his 2013 TED talk, "Why Mayors Should Rule the World."
62. A partial list of mayor leadership networks is included in Appendix 2.

