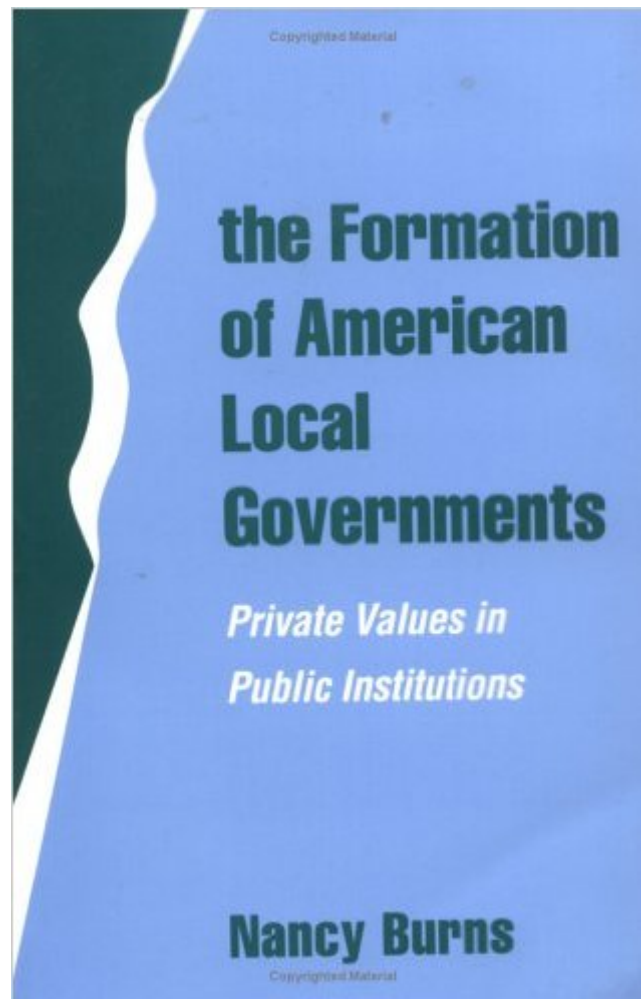


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The Formation Of American Local Governments: Private Values In Public Institutions



Synopsis

Why have Americans created thousands of new local governments in recent years, a rate much higher than population increases demand? Conflicts over local power--the power to tax, to issue bonds, and to provide services--have produced solutions that are often as ruthless as they are resourceful. The first text to illustrate the impact of creating new local governments, this compelling study provides an illuminating examination of the nature of local politics today. Skillfully combining case studies, institutional history, and quantitative analyses, Nancy Burns argues that economic interests, states, the federal government, and inventive individuals have changed the parameters of local institutions, thereby changing local politics. Rather than working for change within the existing system, countless groups have created new municipalities and "special districts," local governments that serve private interests more than the public good. Businesses and developers, who tend to initiate and dominate the process, often serve as organizational bases to help allied groups--such as wealthy homeowners--achieve their goals. Because of the autonomy that local governments enjoy in the U.S., the formation of these new governments has had an impact on the quality of life for many Americans. New boundaries, created mostly along race and class lines, determine access to education, housing, and basic services, allowing the privilege of exclusion to accompany the privilege of municipal management. Revealing the place of local institutions in the larger political spectrum, this landmark work offers students of urban politics and political science a unique look at the structural features of American local politics.

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Good purchase, if you want just the basics to local government. I would say ideal for people interested in getting more involved in local governments like town halls or chamber of commerce.

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