



## Local government management

Edited by Nicolas A. Valcik and Teodoro J. Benavides, Routledge, New York, 2023, 409 pp., £56.99 (hardback), ISBN: 978-0-36702-903-6 (hardback)

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Local Government Management**, edited by Nicolas A. Valcik and Teodoro J. Benavides, New York: Routledge, 2023, 409 pp., £56.99 (hardback), ISBN: 978-0-36702-903-6 (hardback)

Local government management is a complex field, given the involvement of various entities. Although many students and professionals grasp specific aspects of local government management, they frequently lack a complete understanding of all the factors impacting a community as a whole. Effective and efficient local government management is essential for creating a thriving community that caters well to its residents. Based on the problems described, Nicholas wrote *Local Government Management* so that readers can benefit significantly from the scientific field of local government management. Bisogno et al. (2023) state that local governments, as the governmental tier closest to citizens, should deliberate upon strategies and actions attuned to achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the benefit of their communities. Through a comparative analysis of Italian and Spanish local governments, this research investigates the conditions that can support the achievement of SDGs. Findings reveal the political and financial tools capable of inspiring politicians and policymakers to craft suitable strategies and action blueprints for SDG achievement, thereby paving the way for additional research to aid public administrations in their pursuit of sustainable development.

This book provides crucial perspectives for students engaged in public administration/policy studies or individuals aiming to grasp the intricacies of local government functions. The compiled content addresses various subjects, such as the functions of local governments in the US federal system, civic participation, communication, privacy in e-government, technology advancements, environmental issues, emergency management, health care, intergovernmental relationships, homelessness, and immigration. Each section imparts significant practical insights, rendering it a valuable reference for extensive research and investigation. Therefore, I highly recommend this book to read. The book consists of 21 chapters, the subject matter of which is from chapter 2 to chapter 21, and each chapter is written by different authors who are experts in their fields.

Chapter 1 only serves as an introduction to the book *Local Government Management*, with the core content spanning from chapter 2 to chapter 21. Chapter 2 explores the significant divide between individuals with the education and experience to be city managers and those entering the field seeking a challenge. Chapter 3 elaborates on three forms of local government: the commission form of government, mayor-council form of government, and council-manager form of government. Chapter 4 discusses the key role of social media for government organizations in informing the public of daily policy changes, emphasizing civic engagement, policy, and management through digital strategy and communication networks. Chapter 5 explains that cities are unlikely to take aggressive fiscal measures, preferring to maintain the status quo and avoid upsetting elected officials and the public despite underlying issues. The prevailing attitude is to pretend everything is fine, even though it's evident that the city's financial situation is unsustainable. Chapter 6 explains how human resources play a critical role in business success by strategically aligning human capital with organizational objectives, requiring strategic relationships and effective resource allocation.

Chapter 7 focuses on relevant historical events responsible for today's growth policy challenges and identifies five catalytic conditions describing today's policy environment: market dynamics, political polarization, eroding local authority, and lack of resilience. Chapter 8 delves into understanding and exploring the triad of e-government, privacy, and technological innovation, which requires thoughtful design, implementation, and management by local government staff and elected officials, though not necessarily unique to a local government. Chapter 9 examines various aspects of the sharing economy (SE), focusing on practical tools that municipalities can employ

to engage sharing-economy organizations (SEOs) in finding fair and equitable regulatory solutions. Chapter 10 discusses how business stakeholders in local government, comprising individuals or groups within the business community, engage with local authorities to influence decisions and policies affecting their interests, investments, and the overall local economy. Chapter 11 explains local government management and paramedicine. The US health-care system, though extensive, faces challenges of high spending and lower outcomes compared to other developed nations. Introducing community paramedicine programs could alleviate these issues by providing preventive care, potentially reducing emergency department overcrowding and costs, enhancing overall community health.

Chapter 12 focuses on municipal governmental relations and how municipalities can engage government-relations staff to enhance service delivery to citizens. Specifically, the chapter examines the structure of the City of Dallas's governmental affairs, with some tangential attention to other large Texas cities. Chapter 13 provides various examples of fostering the relationship between local governments and school boards, illustrating how these relationships can be mutually beneficial and how successful outcomes are amplified by the synergies created in the partnership. Chapter 14 explores the history of collaboration, including motivations and the multidimensional nature of the relationship between local government and nonprofit organizations. The chapter concludes by discussing how they work together in emergency response. Chapter 15 explains the constant change and adaptation in urban planning, which has accelerated in recent years. Like technological advancements, planning as a profession must either reinvent itself or modify its practices due to lessons learned, state intervention, or technological changes. Firman, Sahrul, and Ramadoan (2023) state that the provincial government has also realized the need for more human resources with IT backgrounds, so these governments conduct training to improve the literacy skills of their employees. This shows a commitment to overcoming human-resource barriers to optimize e-government implementation. For e-government implementation to run optimally, creating a clear legal umbrella and making a grand design for e-government development, including preparing the budget, is necessary.

Chapter 16 discusses homelessness and affordable housing issues in urban areas, addressing root causes, impacts, and strategies for solutions. Chapter 17 examines immigration's influence on American cities, covering demographic, economic, and social aspects. Chapter 18 focuses on the Green Movement and environmental concerns, advocating for protection and sustainability. Chapter 19 explores how rapid industrialization led to influential companies' interference in elections and policymaking, often resulting in corruption. Chapter 20 elaborates on strategic planning's role in public organizations, emphasizing stakeholder engagement. Chapter 21 delves into local government management, highlighting factors like environment, culture, and elected officials' impact on success.

This book offers substantial advantages for many stakeholders, including students, academicians, policymakers, practitioners, government officials, and citizens. It covers an extensive array of compelling topics, issues, and knowledge pertaining to local government. These individuals stand to gain invaluable insights and understanding from the diverse content presented in the book. Whether it's exploring the intricacies of governance structures, analyzing policy implications, or understanding community dynamics, this book provides comprehensive coverage that is essential for anyone involved or interested in local governance. From students seeking academic enrichment to policymakers making informed decisions, practitioners implementing effective strategies, and citizens engaging in civic affairs, the book is an indispensable resource. Its breadth of coverage ensures that readers gain a holistic understanding of the complexities and challenges inherent in local government, empowering them to contribute positively to their communities.

However, in this book, readers will encounter a plethora of foreign terms associated with local government management and public administration. Consequently, for those who need to be better versed in these terms, it is highly recommended that a comprehensive exploration of those fields be conducted. By doing so, individuals can thoroughly understand the book's content. Familiarizing oneself with these terms will improve reading comprehension, facilitating a deeper


appreciation of the book's message. Therefore, taking the time to delve into and understand these foreign terms is crucial for maximizing the value and insights derived from the book.

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