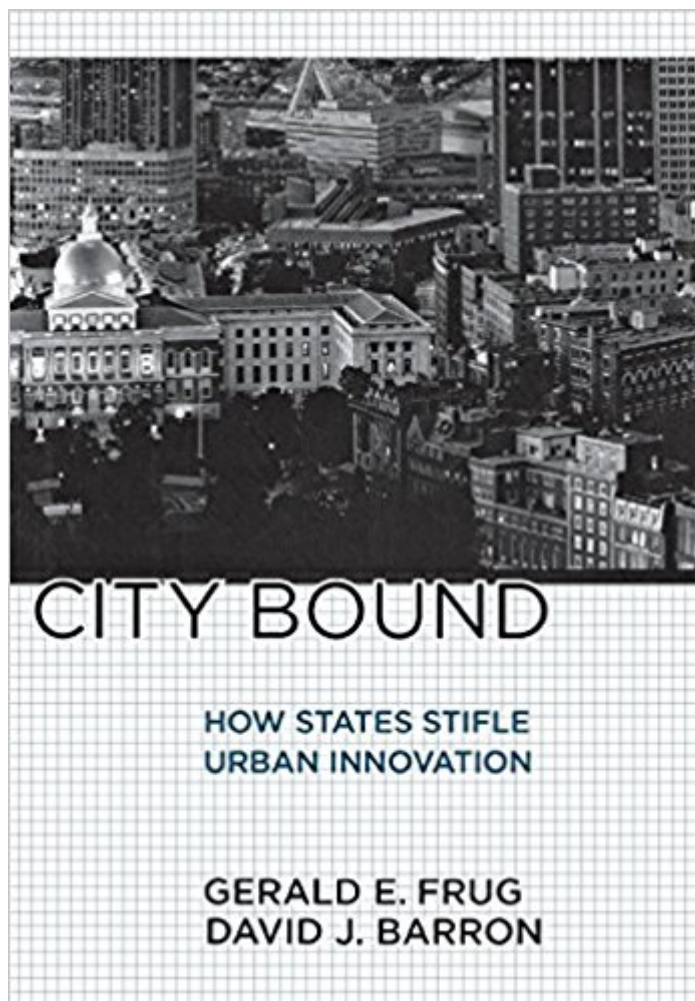


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City Bound: How States Stifle Urban Innovation



Synopsis

Many major American cities are defying the conventional wisdom that suburbs are the communities of the future. But as these urban centers prosper, they increasingly confront significant constraints. In *City Bound*, Gerald E. Frug and David J. Barron address these limits in a new way. Based on a study of the differing legal structures of Boston, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco, and Seattle, *City Bound* explores how state law determines what cities can and cannot do to raise revenue, control land use, and improve city schools. Frug and Barron show that state law can make it much easier for cities to pursue a global-city or a tourist-city agenda than to respond to the needs of middle-class residents or to pursue regional alliances. But they also explain that state law is often so outdated, and so rooted in an unjustified distrust of local decision making, that the legal process makes it hard for successful cities to develop and implement any coherent vision of their future. Their book calls not for local autonomy but for a new structure of state-local relations that would enable cities to take the lead in charting the future course of urban development. It should be of interest to everyone who cares about the future of American cities, whether political scientists, planners, architects, lawyers, or simply citizens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Frug and Barron examine the balance between state and local control in seven cities, asserting that state control distorts and fragments policy making across a number of issues, including education, land use, and taxation. Their claim is persuasive. . . . This work is very well grounded in

the most interesting recent literature about cities and offers many important insights into how the law shapes urban public policy. Highly recommended." –Choice, September 2009

Gerald E. Frug and David J. Barron have produced a masterful assessment of the limitations of big city and metropolitan powers at the very moment when these places drive national prosperity and are our best vehicles for social and climate solutions. There is much at stake here. Remaking local governance is now a critical element of an agenda for national renewal.

–Bruce Katz, Vice President, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution

City Bound is a creative, principled, and compassionate approach to the tragedy of powerless cities and polarized regions.

–Myron Orfield, University of Minnesota Law School

City Bound is the most comprehensive analysis of the legal powers of an American city that I have ever seen. The scholarship is impeccable. Gerald E. Frug and David J. Barron stress that institutions do not just reflect interests; they shape interests and bias the policy agenda.

–Todd Swanstrom, Professor of Public Policy Studies, College of Public Service, Saint Louis University

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A great overview of the ways in which cities' abilities to innovate are hampered by legal and tax structures dictated at the state or provincial level. Want to change things in cities? You need to have these constraints in mind. Slightly dated in places, but (un)fortunately, not much has changed since the book was written, so still very useful.

It's an important book, especially if you have an interest in local government law. But you can get the "point" of it just from its subtitle, that point being that state governments often prevent cities from doing beneficial things. I didn't know that before I read the book, admittedly, but I don't know if I needed 280 pages to tell me it.

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