

Pros, cons and practice of devolution

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Pros, cons and practice of devolution

- Key questions
 - Does devolution matter?
 - What are the (counter)claims made about devolution?
 - How are administrative, political and economic changes connected?
 - The (ir)relevance of the US model?
 - Pros/cons; costs/benefits
 - How does Devo Manc measure up?

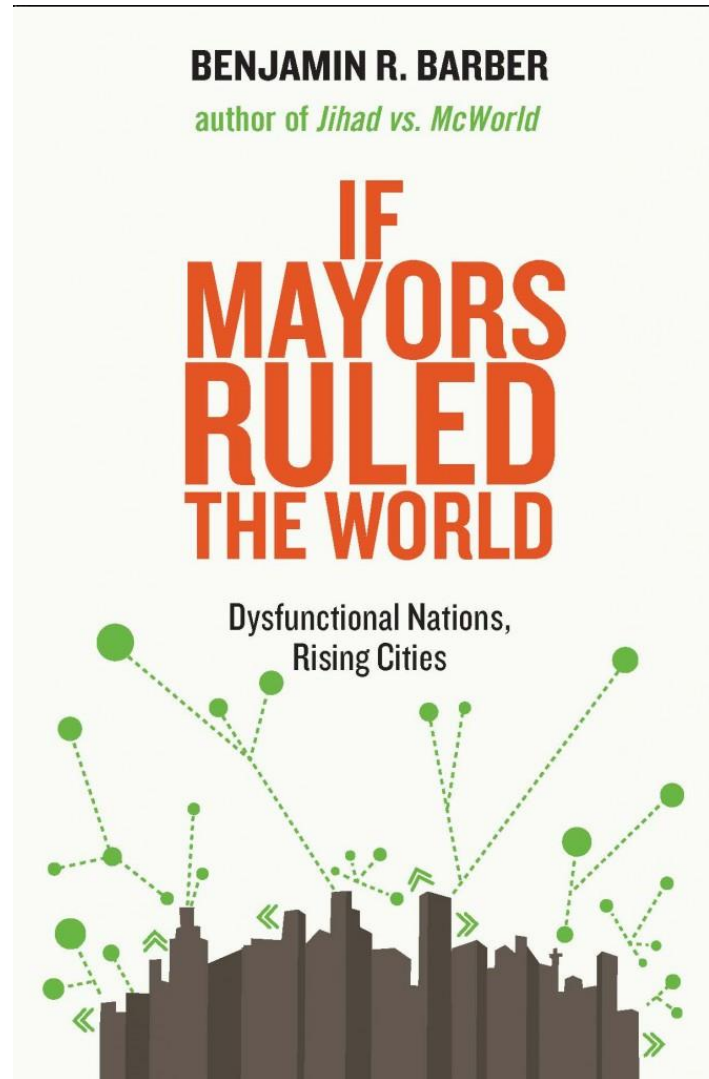
Pros and cons of devolution

Opportunity	Threat
Joined-up, “co-ordinated”, targeted public policy	Technocratic solutions
Economic growth dividend	Socio-economic inequality
Increased democratic accountability	Creation of new unaccountable elites
(Identity politics)	(Identity politics)

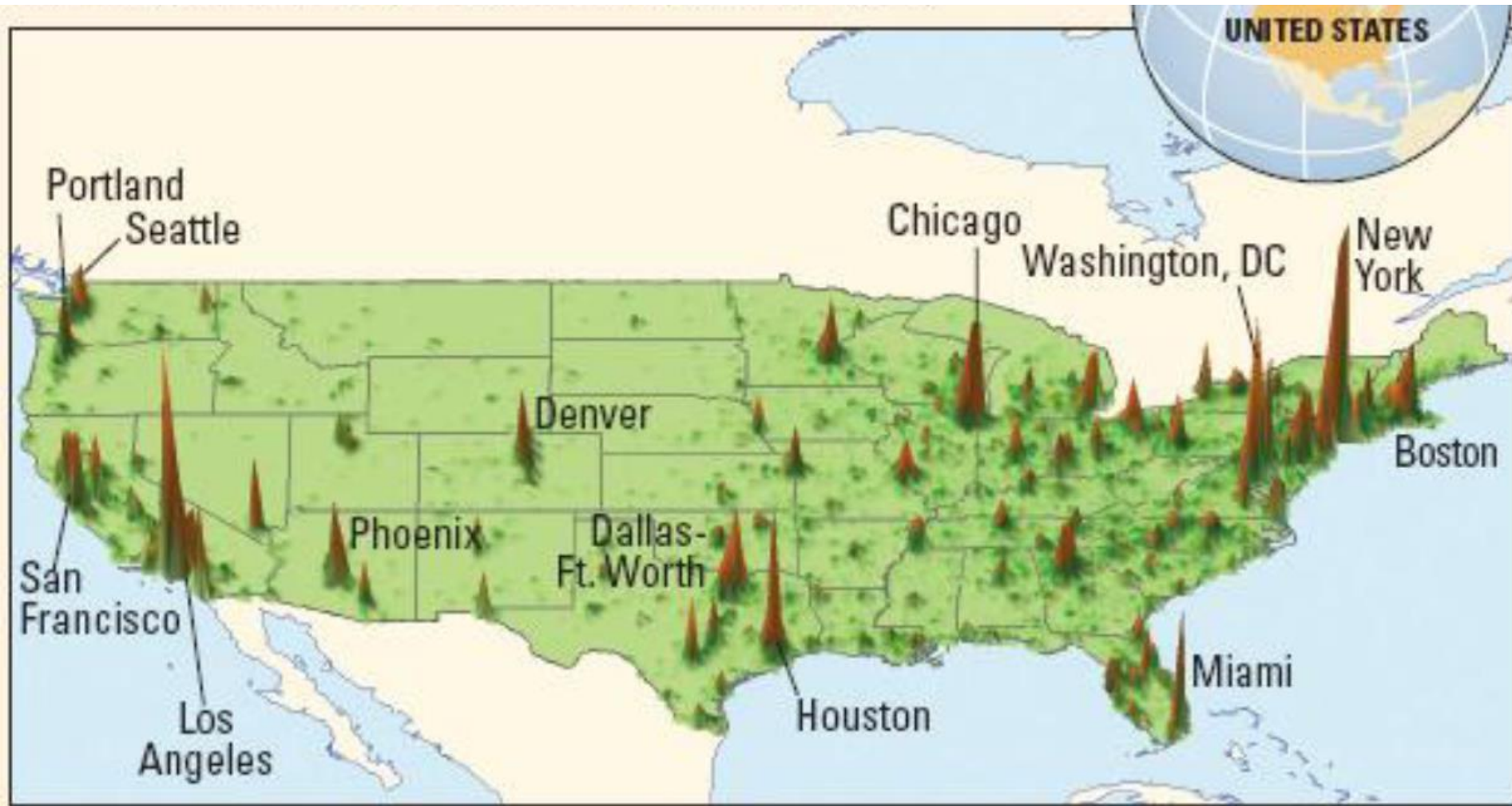
Pros and cons of devolution

Strengths	Weaknesses
Improved accountability and transparency	Institutional capture
Context sensitivity	Geographically uneven provision of basic services
Incentive for innovation	Duplication and wasteful competition
Better co-ordination of regional/local actors	Lack of resources, capacity and knowledge

Practice of devolution: the US story



USA - economic production per square km, 2005



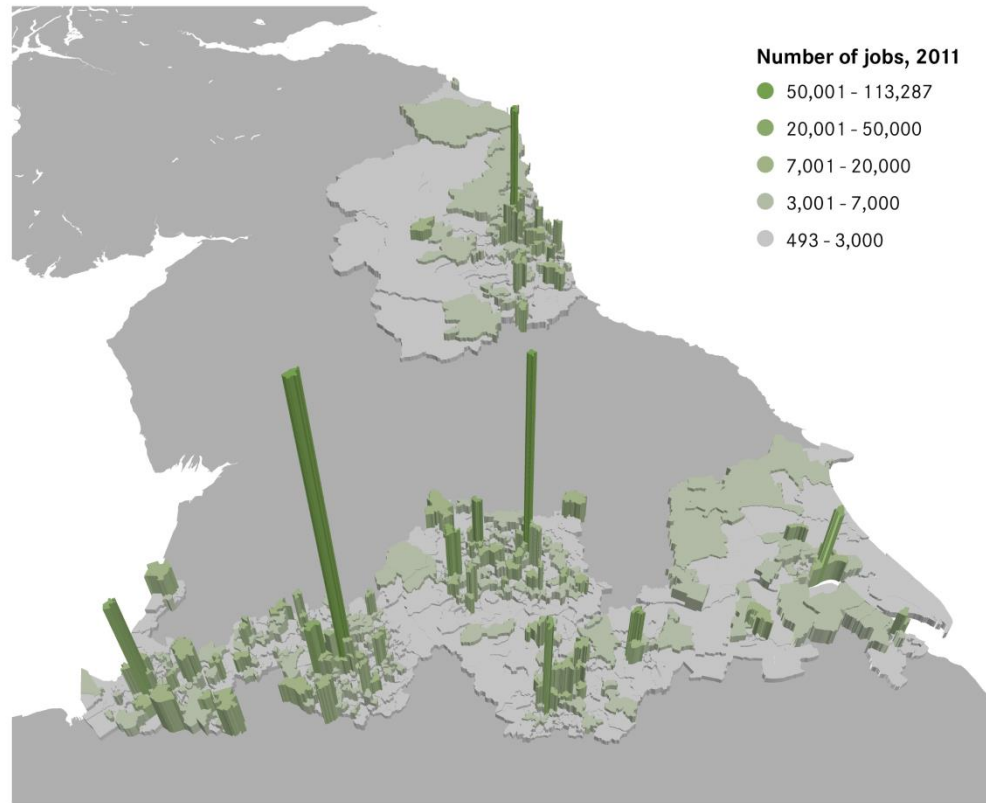
Source: World Bank (2009) *Reshaping Economic Geography*. Washington, DC: World Bank



Can Buffalo Ever Come Back? *Probably not – and government should stop bribing people to stay there*

Northern Powerhouse factsheet

The geography of jobs across the Northern Powerhouse



Source: NOMIS, 2015. Census 2011, occupation. MSOA level.

Read the factsheet:

centreforcities.org/northern-powerhouse-factsheet

Practice of devolution: the Bloomberg story

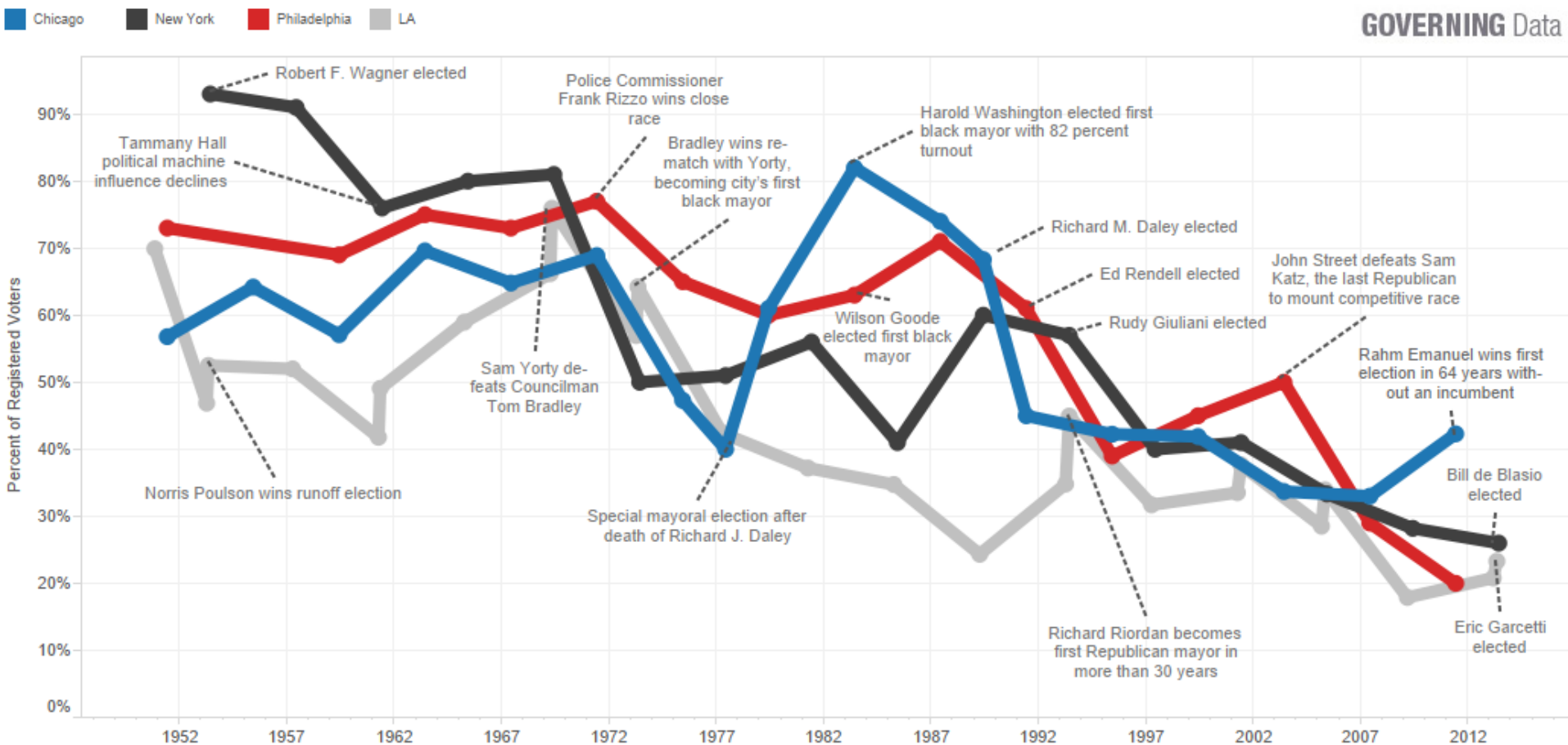


Image above: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/mediatechnologyandtelecoms/media/11074174/Michael-Bloomberg-in-surprise-return-to-head-of-business.html>

Image right: Wikipedia Creative Commons (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_New_York_City#/media/File:NASDAQ.JPG)



Practice of devolution: Mayoral election turnouts in selected US cities



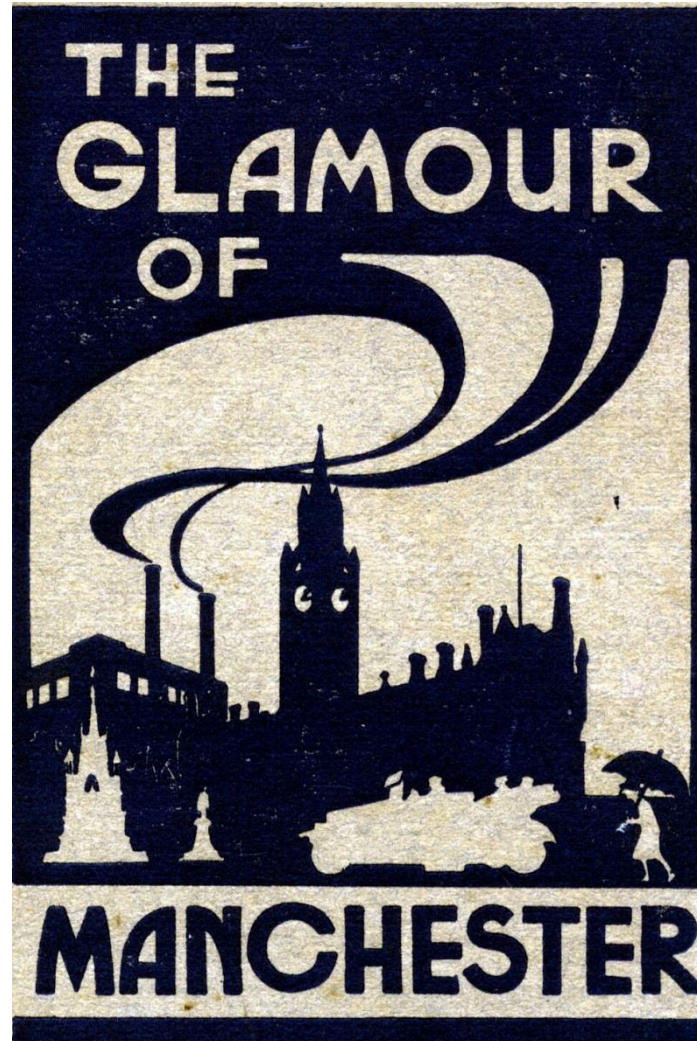
Source: "Voter Turnout Plummeting in Local Elections", *Governing*, October 2014 (<http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-voter-turnout-municipal-elections.html>)

Practice of devolution: the Detroit story

Kwame Kilpatrick, 68th Mayor of Detroit: currently serving 28 years for corruption



Devo Manc



Devo Manc

- Northern powerhouse –winners, losers and also rans
- GM Mayor – “myth of the strong leader” – versus deliberation, accountability, scrutiny (Colin Talbot)
- Referendums and mandates
- Devolution and “secret deals”
- Fiscal devolution or multi-level governance and fiscal solidarity

Conclusion

- Does devolution matter?
- Yes, but
 - Impacts are contingent upon design
 - Devolution can have a progressive or regressive character or a democratic or undemocratic character
 - Many factors affect urban and regional development of which “good governance” is only one
 - Need to set Northern Powerhouse in context of wider debate about what kind of regional development and for whom?

References

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