



# The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900

By Philip J. Ethington

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## **The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900** By Philip J. Ethington

This history of San Francisco from 1850 through 1900 identifies the active participation of citizens in communication, persuasion, and mobilization as the public city: the site of American political and social change. Challenging decades of scholarship that treats urban politics as the expression of social-group experience and power, the author develops the opposite thesis that social-group identities of race, class, ethnicity, and gender were politically constructed in the public sphere in the process of mobilization and journalistic discourse,

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**The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900** By Philip J. Ethington **Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"An impressive work based upon extensive research in qualitative and quantitative sources, the book successfully engages a variety of complex interpretative issues at a high level of sophistication. The author's forcefully presented arguments and his provocative conclusions will stimulate discussion and debate. The Public City is required reading for every historian interested in urban history, California history, and the history of American politics in the nineteenth century." Pacific Historical Review

"This ambitious work deserves close attention from urban historians, political historians, and political scientists....[T]he questions it asks, the wealth of information it presents on a crucial period for urban political development, and the ways in which it reframes the urban political contest opens the way for a renewed debate on urban politics that has been mired too long in bosses versus reformers and the social-group paradigm of political development. Ethington is to be congratulated for his achievements here."

Maureen A. Flanagan, Michigan State University, on the Internet

"The book is well grounded in the sources, including election data, and it is especially suggestive in integrating developments in the realms of gender and news media into the overall analysis. The author writes clearly ... the book is an essential addition for all upper-division undergraduate and graduate collections in American, western, and urban history." D.F. Choice

"Practically every page presents some new insight or challenges some accepted interpretation....this is required reading for everyone interested in American politics in the latter half of the nineteenth century."

Robert W. Cherny, American Historical Review

"Philip Ethington has given us an important and provocative study of the changing political culture of early San Francisco and, more generally, of nineteenth-century urban America....'The Public City' is a book that needs to be reckoned with. It makes an important argument for the primacy of political culture. It highlights the discursive role of institutions such as the press in linking and shaping state/civil society relations. It effortlessly blends qualitative and quantitative approaches. And it deepens our understanding of early San Francisco political history. These are no small achievements." Steven Erie, Nevada Historical Society Quarterly

"An impressive work based upon extensive research...the book successfully engages a variety of complex interpretative issues at a high level of sophistication....his provocative conclusions will stimulate discussion and debate." William Issel, Pacific Historic Review

### **From the Back Cover**

The history of San Francisco from 1850 through 1900 identifies the active participation of citizens in communication, persuasion, and mobilization as the "public city", the site of American political and social change. Nineteenth-century Americans relied on the Roman and Enlightenment models of the "public sphere" as a forum for debate and self-government. Drawing on speeches, pamphlets, newspapers, and census and electoral data, the book reinterprets the city's turbulent history. Challenging decades of scholarship that treats urban politics as the expression of social-group experience and power, the author develops the opposite thesis that social-group identities of race, class, ethnicity, and gender were politically constructed in the public sphere in the process of mobilization and journalistic discourse. New methods of

political mobilization unleashed by the Civil War resulted in the death of republican liberalism and birth of pluralist liberalism, and in the transformation from a political conception of society to a social conception of politics in the years from 1850 to 1900.

#### About the Author

**Philip J. Ethington** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern California.

#### Users Review

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Reading a guide tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their very own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the story that share in the guides. But also they write about the information about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors in this world always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write for their book. One of them is this The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900.

###### **Tina Olsen:**

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book might be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900 can be good book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

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