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"Metropolitan governance and democracy in Western Europe. A comparative perspective"

In this paper, we will provide an overview of metropolitan governance arrangements in Western European countries according to various types of regionalism. We then turn to the issue of democracy and assess the role of democratic institutions within the various metropolitan governance arrangements. We argue that the type of regionalism found in a metropolitan area is only one factor influencing the democratic quality and that local government tradition also matters. It will be shown that, in the Anglo group countries the democratic quality is higher in context of old regionalism. On the other hand, democracy is in danger in countries belonging to the Franco and the North-Middle European groups. Indeed, the strong political and/or constitutional status of local government results in an important role of democratic institutions within metropolitan governance, no matter whether old or new regionalism is pursued.