

Toward an Agenda for the Transnational Study
of Local and Metropolitan Governance

Phase III of the International Metropolitan Observatory Project

DRAFT – NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Jefferey Sellers
University of Southern California

Vincent Hoffmann-Martinot
CERVL-IEP Bordeaux

Paper prepared for presentation at Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting, Montreal
CA, April 19-22, 2006, and International Metropolitan Observatory Meeting, Montreal,
CA, April 24-25, 2006.

An accumulating body of theory and empirical work has pointed to the local and metropolitan levels as important domains of governmental institutions and politics. As various forms of decentralization have taken root around the world, this importance has likely grown in recent years. This metropolitanization of politics has special relevance for the question of equality. In different ways within distinct national contexts, social inequality has meant spatial inequalities. Inequality among metropolitan places can also mean inequality in the delivery of services. But politics, policies and institutional arrangements also offer means that can limit the degree that social inequality translates into spatial inequality.

The International Metropolitan Observatory has assembled an unrivalled dataset for observing metropolitan social and spatial inequalities and their consequences for governance. In this paper we sketch a research agenda that would draw on this previous research to examine how far spatial inequalities in metropolitan areas have corresponded to inequalities in governance. In this agenda we propose to examine: (1) whether spatial disadvantages arising from concentrations of poverty and related forms of social exclusion have been compounded by disparities in government services; (2) whether the spatial and governance dynamics of metropolitan areas have enabled more affluent citizens to obtain lower tax obligations and/or enjoy distinctive service arrangements, and (3) whether horizontal as well as vertical arrangements for interlocal cooperation within metropolitan areas have tempered or reinforced spatial differences in service provision.

Comparison will also enable testing of a number of leading hypotheses about metropolitan inequality, and the transnational, national and local influences on it. At the local and regional level, the analysis will explore how patterns of governance have

responded to and helped reinforce local sorting among firms and residents according to social and economic patterns. Cross-national comparison will enable testing of how national differences in social and economic inequality and national institutions for local and metropolitan governance have affected these local patterns. Comparisons within and between counties will also permit examination of the global influences that have often been held out as pervasive influences on local governance. Transnational economic ties among global financial and corporate networks, for instance, have often been highlighted as a source of inequality in local governance as well as local spatial concentrations. So has growth in immigration.

A. The Theoretical Background

Around the world, there is a widespread sense that systems of policymaking and governing are undergoing far-reaching changes. A widely perceived trend toward decentralization (Sellers 2002; Brenner 2003) is one element in a variety of shifts in need of greater study. Much of this work, encapsulated under the term “governance,” points to various forms of ordering and policy determinations that defy traditional types of formal government hierarchies and formal governmental action (Pierre 2000). There is a widely recognized need to study how and why these patterns have been converging or diverging.

One of the most significant sources of the new governance concerns the problem of interlocal or horizontal governance. The relation among different local or subnational units has long been recognized as an important dimension (Gregg 1974). The emergence of metropolitan areas as the predominant form of human settlement in most of the developed world, replacing both rural and purely urban forms, has shifted this interlocal

dimension to an increasingly central element in wider patterns of governance. As the initial investigations of the International Metropolitan Observatory Project in fifteen countries showed, metropolitan areas now contain half or more of the population in all of the most developed countries outside of Scandinavia (Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers 2005). In the largest metropolitan areas of nearly all countries, and in a majority of metropolitan areas in many of them, most of the population lives outside the central cities in a fragmented, often segregated patchworks of local jurisdictions.

The social and economic inequalities of metropolitan areas both reflect and contribute to wider patterns of inequality. Social and economic inequality has always been a pervasive feature of developed democracies, and often poses even more difficulties in developing and transitional countries. A considerable body of literature contends that, with the transition from manufacturing to service economies, these national social and economic inequalities have grown. As metropolitan areas have attracted more socially, ethnically and racially diverse populations, aggregate studies suggest that lower levels of redistributive policies and even lower levels of public goods provision may ensue (Alesina, Baqir and Easterly 1999).

To investigate the precise sources of effects like this requires close scrutiny of the ways that inequality actually affects policy and politics within metropolitan areas. Patterns of settlement can have especially crucial consequences for the relation between social inequality and governance. Initial IMO analyses showed several types of metropolitan inequality to be common to metropolitan areas across the developed world (Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers 2005). Many of these spatial inequalities existed across the full range of differences in developed country political economies, welfare states,

and planning regimes. These include (1) concentration of the most disadvantaged citizens and immigrants in specific parts of metropolitan areas, and (2) concentration of some portions of more privileged residents in often distinct parts. The question proposed for phase three of the project is how these patterns, and the interlocal and institutional dynamics linked to them, produce parallel inequalities in the delivery of goods and services from public policies.

Several bodies of theory provide a rich basis for theorizing about how the fragmented metropolis would affect patterns of governance.

--Social structuralist approaches to the analysis of metropolitan areas point to ethnocultural and class divisions as sources of inequalities in governance. From this perspective, which has dominated much of the U.S. work on metropolitan areas and their governance (Massey and Denton 1993; Sellers 1999; Gainsborough 2001), metropolitan divisions need to be analyzed mainly in terms of class, ethnicity and race. *Ceteris paribus*, this approach would predict the greatest inequalities in services in metropolitan areas with a high degree of spatial segregation by class and race, and in distributive issues in the provision of services.

--A line of institutionalist argument linked to metropolitan reform argues that more consolidated governmental forms are crucial to provision of public goods for metropolitan communities. Earlier versions of this work stress externalities and scale efficiencies as reasons to seek synoptic, hierarchical institutional forms of metropolitan governance. More recent versions have pursued more flexible, limited and localized institutional means to address the same problems (Dente 1990). Both versions point to the need for institutions that can overcome free-riding by municipalities and “joint

decision traps” associated with horizontal coordination among multiple governments (Scharpf 1988). These institutional conditions are likely to differ under different national systems of local government as well as national regimes of institutions in specific policy sectors.

--Public choice theory has opposed the reformist tradition with an alternative approach that has favored decentralization to the local level. Here the analysis looks to local participation and exit from metropolitan communities as mechanisms to secure accountability. Fiscal federalism, a line of analysis begun by Tiebout (1956), characterizes a market among jurisdictions as an alternative for the allocation of locally specific public goods. Firms and residents sort among communities according to tastes as well as according to ability to pay the taxes for different levels of services. The Tiebout logic depends on a number of conditions. These include sufficient size of the market, local discretion to offer different levels of taxes and services, and sufficient diversity of preferences or ability to pay for services among local residents. Fischel (2003) goes so far as to assert that homeowners, because of their interest in property values in their community, will vote to fund services they do not benefit from directly.

--Work on the international political economy and cities has reinforced an already established line of work on the place of an urban region in national hierarchies of cities (Dente 1990). The most recent versions of this work highlight relations with the global economy as the source of differences in governance at the local and metropolitan level. Originally formulated around economic globalization, in the form of growing transnational connections among localities, capital and social mobility, these accounts have even more sweep when they encompass “translocalization” within countries.

Sassen (1991) and others point to economic imperatives in global economic centers that produce greater segregation, including mobilization around business services.

--No account of governance would be complete without attention to the dynamics of politics within metropolitan communities, including such variables as local ideology, parties, local political organization, local political movements and local leadership (cf. Oliver 2001). There are also major variations with national differences in local government systems (Kübler 2006) and national policy matrices.

A cross-national comparative account of this sort must consider these influences in light of such broad differences in national contexts as the greater ethnoracial diversity of the United States, Canada, and Israel, and the differences in wealth between Western and Eastern Europe or developing countries. The point of the analysis, however, is to show effects from metropolitan spatial inequalities in governance that go beyond the compositional inequalities at the national level. On the one hand, we expect to find that these metropolitan patterns exert effects on inequality beyond those evident in national data on inequality and diversity. On the other, we anticipate that similar patterns of inequality may have similar effects at the metropolitan level regardless of the differences in national aggregate inequality.

A further element that gives this area promise is the increasing availability of data on local governance. It is now possible to envision systematic analysis of local governance on a scale that only a generation ago would have been inconceivable. As the first phases of the International Metropolitan Observatory Project have demonstrated, the tremendous quantities of unexploited data at the local level make it possible to envision

cross-national local analysis with an empirical scope and detail that rivals those at the regional or even the country level.

B. Research questions

1. Has there been a shift toward new forms of interlocal and metropolitan governance in response to metropolitan social and economic change? Does this represent a convergence or has it followed different paths in different systems?

Previous IMO findings point to a progressive, widespread metropolitanization that has often decentralized and fragmented governance at the metropolitan level. At the same time, countervailing trends toward metropolitan governance arrangements were evident in many cases. The most obvious version of these took the form of consolidation among governments in Scandinavia, Canada, the United Kingdom. Elsewhere, in France and parts of the United States, layered government at the departmental or county level has often served a similar purpose. Such analysts as Dente (1990) and Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom (2001) contend that that arrangements for metropolitan governance now represent a move away from more synoptic, hierarchical version of the earlier literature on institutional reform.

To answer this question fully requires a fuller mapping of trajectories at the metropolitan level. As a threshold inquiry, we propose a more careful mapping of arrangements for governance. Aspects of the arrangements that have evolved with the spread of metropolitan areas may represent genuinely new practices. Others may follow established practices that date back decades or more, only now on a wider scale that has emerged with metropolitanization itself. Still others may simply reproduce traditional

forms of governance under new names. Once this threshold question is answered, the inquiry shifts to the question of causation.

Existing theory points to several different types of expectations about this development. It is already clear, for instance, that the various currents of metropolitan reform have undergone widespread processes of diffusion across the developed world and beyond. In its earliest and most widely popularized version, analysis of economic globalization and urban regions points to mobilization around infrastructure, services and other advantages that enhance “competitiveness” as a broad imperative for governance (e.g. Sassen 1991; Kresl and Fry 2005). Brenner (2003) articulates the argument that numerous aspects of an emerging transnational political economy to new forms of subnational regionalization in much of the developed world. According to this argument, urban regions with regional governing arrangements will succeed better in attracting mobile, transnational firms or advanced service activities. Other work, such as Lefevre and Jouve (2002), suggests that more fragmented governmental arrangements and functional governance might better serve the interests of transnational elites and businesses.

Institutional reform theory would also predict a functional need for consolidation to provide governmental services. Alternative, “new regionalist” visions point to alternative forms of regional integration through interlocal cooperation or other institutional variants (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001).

Public choice theory would also predict that fragmentation would offer efficiency advantages, especially when collective metropolitan goods such as regional transportation

are provided through functional cooperation or other means (cf. Ostrom 1972; Parks and Oakerson 2000).

Following social structural logics, the greater diversity of a more extensive, more unequal metropolis creates distributive conflicts that undermine institutional consolidation or other collective action. Although Alesina, Easterly and Baqir (1999) account for differences in U.S. counties simply by virtue of aggregate ethnic composition, others have outlined how segregation may reinforce interests opposed to collective action (Sellers 1999; Gainsborough 2001; Walks 2004; Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001).

Political influences of various kinds are likely to mediate these other causes. In such countries as France and Canada, for instance, metropolitan reform has often been bound up with national political dynamics surrounding decentralization at other levels of the state, such as between federal or regional units and the national government. Such theorists as Peck and Tickell and Brenner have also drawn links between local governance reform and more “neoliberal” movements in favor of an entire agenda that includes deregulation and opposition to big government (Peck and Tickell 2001; Brenner and Theodore 2002). One imperative for an explanation of institutional change will be to trace country by country whether these links hold, and whether specific political parties, movements or other forces can be identified as the sources. Political party cleavages may reinforce the sociospatial divisions that social structural theories emphasize, but can also have an independent effect on metropolitan trajectories. Savitch and Kantor (2002), for instance, point to distinctive political dynamics between local, metropolitan and higher

levels of government as a source of relative success in bringing central cities and suburbs into cooperative alliances.

Finally, international comparison is likely to highlight nation-specific trajectories. Although partly explicable through metropolitan differences, we expect that national institutions and traditions will impose various kinds of path dependence. Kübler (2006) points to different local government systems in Europe as the sources of different trajectories in metropolitan reform. Variations in the policy sectors that national governments delegate to local government, such as the local responsibilities for education and police services in the United States, also affect local expenditure and tax patterns. In each country, the inquiry should aim to outline the causal mechanisms by which either changes in governance took place, or the reasons why governance institutions remained the same despite shifts in settlement patterns.

Data that is already largely collected offers basis for a first systematic test of these hypotheses. Addition of data on interlocal cooperation and functional governance arrangements among municipalities to the systematic data already present in the IMO database would enable a comparative mapping of these arrangements. Testing will compare the evolution of these arrangements over the decade from approximately 1990-2000, or over a longer period as feasible. For the present, we would propose a comparatively modest, well defined framework for comparison. Variations in patterns in metropolitan cooperation in each country can mapped according to an agreed upon set of types. These patterns can then compared for correlations with specific hypotheses like those listed above. Mapping correlations with economic globalization, fragmentation, diversity, segregation, and political orientations at the metropolitan level would both

provide a protocol for specific testing and a springboard for further work that would analyze the multilevel political dynamics behind local trajectories more fully.

2. Has the delivery of general and redistributive governmental services reinforced or mediated the disadvantages of residents in the poorest, most disadvantaged localities within metropolitan areas?

The first IMO analysis (Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers 2005) demonstrated that parts of metropolitan areas across much of the developed world frequently had become centers of concentrated poverty and marginality. Often, the biggest such concentrations appeared in the central cities. But in the United States as well as in France and other Western European countries, and even more in transitional and developing countries, municipalities outside urban centers also harbored concentrations of disadvantage. Especially in the largest urban areas, there is evidence that these concentrations, partly as a result of immigration as well as economic shifts, have been growing. A central question these areas raise for governance is how far patterns in the delivery of governmental services reinforce or compensate for these concentrations of disadvantage. Analyzing expenditures of local governments offers a manageable way to address this question.

The U.S. literature has established a strong relation between local poverty concentrations and expenditures on lower overall service provision (Pack 1998; Joassaart-Marcelli, Musso and Wolch 2005). In any number of different ways, concentrated poverty in a locality can create problems that spill over to other sectors of governmental activity. Poverty can contribute to higher crime rates, boosting the need for police protection. Older housing poses greater fire risks, requiring more fire protection. Higher utilization of public transit fosters a need for greater investments in

maintenance as well as facilities. Overcrowding necessitates higher sanitation and infrastructure costs. (Chernick and Reschovsky 1995). Although the fact of significant concentrations of disadvantage in such countries as the U.K. and France is also well established even beyond the initial IMO analysis (Body-Gendrot 2001; Garbaye 2006), similar analyses have yet to be extended beyond the United States.

The horizontal fragmentation of governments can generate dynamics among places that aggravate horizontal inequities. Work on fiscal federalism has generated a number of insights into these effects, most with significant implications for efficiency or equity (Tiebout 1956; Musgrave 1959; Oates 1972). Cities facing higher spillover costs from poverty without horizontal redistribution must impose higher tax rates for the same level of services as other places. Particularly when the local government jurisdictions remain fragmented, as in many U.S. metropolitan areas, the dynamics of residential mobility can pose additional problems. Migration of residents and firms to places with lower levels of taxation and higher levels of services can reinforce disparities (Tiebout 1956; Greene and Parliament 1980). The spillovers from migratory patterns of both affluent and poor people add further distortions (Gramlich and Laren 1984; Aronson and Hilley 1986). U.S. studies suggest that fragmented metropolitan governmental structures facilitate the sorting of wealthier white residents and poorer minorities into segregated communities (Rusk 1993; Downs 1994). The resulting fiscal patterns most likely help to explain why greater racial, ethnic and economic heterogeneity is associated with lower state and local public goods expenditure in the United States (Alesina, Baqir and Easterly 1999; Hero 2003).

Work on global economic transformations and cities has highlighted the major social structural and economic conditions that are likely to affect these patterns. In the large urban

regions that emerged as global cities, Sassen (1991) argued that growing disparities between elites involved in corporate services and growing low-wage immigrant work forces had produced higher levels of social and spatial polarization. Although more systematic comparisons have qualified or even refuted this conclusion about social disparities (Fainstein 2001; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000), processes linked to globalization may still contribute to greater disparities in local service provision. Resources redirected to promotion of global business service centers may be taken away from services to poor communities. High proportions of poor immigrants in a region may accentuate disparities in services in ways not evident in other regions (cf. Joassart-Marcelli, Musso and Wolch 2005). Social and spatial influences of this kind also need not be connected to globalization. An extensive metropolitan area with ten million people should generate greater fragmentation and disparities than one with only one million. In faster growing regions, more of intergovernmental expenditures are likely to go toward new physical infrastructure in support of growth.

Infrastructures of policies and institutions at the national level clearly make a difference for these problems. The wide cross-national variations in local governments, welfare states and other relevant institutions makes cross-national comparison critical to understanding how far the established U.S. patterns reflect more general characteristics of metropolitan governance. Although a full framework for analysis of these arrangements must await a more thorough survey of the alternatives, the existing literature highlights several dimensions to be taken into account.

First, higher level government programs in metro areas might either compensate for or aggravate the consequences of poverty concentration. Redistributive spending or the redirection of general funds might each address poverty-related disparities. Within the U.S. there are a

number of studies of the effects from higher level government spending on cities alone (Pack 1998), or for overall central city-suburban disparities (Nathan and Adams 1976; Parker 1997), the emergence of disparities among suburbs necessitates analyses that look toward more complex metropolitan patterns (Katz and Lang 2003; Sellers and Hoffmann-Martinot 2005). The two recent studies that extend to comparison of local patterns, in greater Los Angeles (Joassart-Marcelli, Musso and Wolch 2005) and greater Philadelphia (Gyourko and Summers 2005), suggest that the compensation to high-poverty areas from federal and state redistributive spending is usually outweighed by other spending patterns. This may not be the case in systems with more extensive redistributive policies.

The logic of the Tiebout model (1956) points to patterns of taxation as a further influence on local services. Where localities raise their own revenues through local taxation, the poverty of poor communities will constrain the level of services there. Where local revenues come predominantly from a nationally uniform system of taxation, or where local tax revenues are redistributed among municipalities, expenditures on services should be more uniform. A related discussion has centered around the differences that different kinds of local taxes, such as municipal income or sales taxes might make for metropolitan disparities (Bowman and Mikesell 1981; Bell and Clark 2004).

Boundary-setting processes comprise a further set of influences. Metropolitan consolidation, annexation, or similar tools can also establish local government jurisdictions that limit Tieboutian sorting among metropolitan towns and the consequent disparities in services (Rusk 1993; Kelleher and Lowry 2004).

Other differences between national systems of policy and multilevel governance may also need to be taken account as background conditions. For instance, allocation of different

functions to local government in different systems may lead to different patterns of inequality in services. Local authority for infrastructure, for instance, is likely to demonstrate distinctive patterns of inequality from local authority for early education. Such national political configurations as types of welfare states also correspond to significant differences in local government arrangements (Sellers and Lidström 2006). Analysts comparing European and U.S. metropolitan areas have often asserted European welfare states have reduced levels and metropolitan inequality in metropolitan services (Musterd 2004). Although these conditions are in important respects a fixed element of the context at the metropolitan level, it may also be possible to trace them to the influence of parties at the national level.

Works that demonstrate negative relationships between economic and social diversity and public expenditures also point to political dynamics within local governments as an important source of this link (Alesina and Ferrara 2000; Hero 2003). Case studies of local political economy have outlined how local groups mobilize to attain better services in municipal government, and benefits from governments at higher levels (Stone and Sanders 1987; Sellers 2002; Garbaye 2006). In most countries political parties opposed to or supportive of redistribution among localities are likely to be crucial to these local dynamics. The same multilevel political dynamics among parties at local, metropolitan and higher levels of government that helps to explain institutional cooperation or consolidation may also account for levels of metropolitan redistribution. Curiously, existing statistical analyses of metropolitan and local expenditure patterns have so far neglected to pursue these insights. In a number of ways, work on political participation shows that local or metropolitan politics and institutions can add to or reduce the impediments that the poor already face in mobilizing politically to influence local policy. In the U.S. “reform” institutions such as council-manager government or at-large

voting have been shown to contribute to electoral demobilization (Lineberry and Fowler 1967; Wood 2002). Although smaller, more ethnically homogeneous communities may enhance opportunities for political mobilization and social capital, class homogeneity is linked to local participation (Oliver 2000).

3. Has the fragmentation of government within metropolitan areas enabled distinctive, localized advantages in services or tax relief for affluent and middle-class concentrations? Or have fiscal and other institutional arrangements counteracted the advantages of affluent and middle-class concentrations?

A second question concerns the other side of metropolitan disparities in services. Previous IMO work shows that metropolitan residents of higher socioeconomic status often concentrated disproportionately in specific localities, and that middle class families often comprise the majority of metropolitan residents outside the central cities. Even when highly educated, higher income residents have continued to concentrate more in the central cities, there are also concentrations in outlying communities. Although the tax and service arrangements in these areas represent the other side of the disparities vis a vis poorer communities, they have received less attention in the scholarly literature. Even in the United States, most work on metropolitan disparities centers on the poorest places.

In several ways, residence in more privileged communities outside central cities may offer affluent and middle class residences advantages in services or taxation. (1) Where localities raise substantial portions of revenues through taxation, a bigger tax base should make higher levels of governmental services possible with lower tax rates; (2) Because these communities face fewer of the social problems that confront poor communities, from security to affordable housing, expenditures there can be directed to other kinds of services that are more demanded by wealthier residents, including general

governmental services; (3) Residents in these communities may also agree to reduce public services through privatized contractual arrangements that make them dependent on payment in the marketplace.

In the United States, the literature on wealthier and middle class suburbs furnishes some basis for each of these conclusions. Studies of the formation of local governments, which U.S. law often enables through initiatives from communities, demonstrate a relation between initiatives of this sort and affluence (Burns 1993; Miller 1981). A number of accounts also contrast the low fiscal effort relative to fiscal capacity in wealthier suburbs to the higher effort in poorer suburbs (Orfield 2003; Pack 2005), and the higher educational spending capacities in wealthier places to those in poorer suburbs (Orfield). Federal expenditures outside of those directed at poverty-related services reinforce the advantage the more privileged local governments already enjoy (Wolch et al. 2005; Gyourko and Summers 2005).

More generally, work on globalizing cities suggests that these may be sites where more privileged suburbs will have the most distinctive service arrangements. To accommodate and attract the transnational elites that global economic centers seek to attract, segregated communities of privilege can provide privileged clusters of amenities. The advantages include separation from poorer areas and their problems as well as specialized public and private services for affluent and middle class residents. Other theoretical perspectives point toward parallel expectations. From the standpoint of social structural accounts, the greater social disparities and social diversity in the largest urban regions offers added incentives for more privileged residents to seek separate

communities. Larger numbers of higher status residents also provide a bigger market niche to be filled in a Tieboutian market for different packages of taxes and services.

National differences in administrative, policy and fiscal systems must also be taken into account here. On the one hand, local practices linked to national arrangements can equalize or limit the differences between services for middle class and affluent residents in different places. On the other hand, tax equalization or nationalization reduces the implications of inequalities for local public finance.

The social and economic structure of communities makes a considerable difference as well. Among the types of middle-class and affluent communities classified in Phase two of the IMO analysis (Sellers and Hoffmann-Martinot 2005), the most affluent ones are likely to face the biggest fiscal advantages and possibly provide more luxury or privatized services. Lower density peripheral suburbs may face more budget pressures for expenditures on services related to infrastructure than denser, more stable counterparts. In many European countries, the biggest concentrations of affluent residents persist and may be growing in central cities themselves. For this reason, it will make sense to compare services in outlying suburban concentrations with those in the urban center, or to analyze local service provision in terms of the types of middle class residents who make up local population (business people rather than public servants, or families with children rather than singles or childless couples).

We expect local political orientations and culture to make a significant difference for the variations in local services. Local Left governments will advocate greater expenditure and more public social services; Local Right governments will opt for lower expenditure levels, especially in relation to tax capacity, and more privatized services.

At the same time we expect that the greater privilege of affluent and middle class communities will affect both their political orientations and, more broadly, the local political and institutional strategies these communities adopt toward cooperation in metropolitan collective goods or redistribution. Further analysis of these communities should examine the kinds of metropolitan institutions, socioeconomic conditions, political configurations and local culture that have encouraged these communities to oppose or distance themselves from cooperative or collective arrangements for services.

4. Have interlocal service arrangements and metropolitan governance overcome or reinforced the differences in services among different types of places in metropolitan areas?

A final question brings together the analysis framed by the previous two questions to bear on the patterns mapped as a part of the first analysis. Through a comparison of the mapped arrangements for metropolitan governance with the patterns of advantage and disadvantage in the patterns of local services, and taxes, we propose to consider whether, how much and under what conditions interlocal arrangements for governance have fostered or reinforced local differences in services. This enables a comparable answer to the question of how metropolitan arrangements affect metropolitan inequalities. The main task here is to separate out the effects from arrangements at the metropolitan level out from those at other levels (either local, regional or national).

The most obvious effect of this kind would come through cooperation in intermunicipal service districts. Depending on the types of communities that adhered to cooperative arrangements of this sort, those arrangements could reinforce or counteract disparities between communities. Other ways that metropolitan institutions could have an effect would come

through equalization or imbalances in the character of services, equalization of tax revenues, or planning arrangements that distribute allocations of new housing and business opportunities on a metropolitan scale.

Metropolitan level institutions may also affect political participation in ways that in turn shape service disparities. Proponents of consolidation argue that intergovernmental fragmentation partitions metropolitan settings in ways that remove fundamental issues of policy from local agendas, and undermine mobilization (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001; Kelleher and Lowery 2004). Public choice theorists have sometimes contended that fragmentation enhances participation (Blomquist and Parks 1995). The lack of party linkages between poor communities and governing majorities at higher levels could also limit redistributive or other expenditures. Through a “natural gerrymander” similar to those other disadvantaged minorities face (Erikson 1972; Gelman and King 1994), spatial concentration could have reduced the representation of the poor in political processes relative to middle class and other groups.

These effects may interact with such other influences as integration into transnational economics or the sociospatial composition of metropolitan areas. Globalization, for instance, may correspond to higher or lower levels of cooperation. The same may hold for alternative hypotheses about, say, the effects of urban social and spatial structures.

C. Methodology: A Preliminary Sketch

The data analysis will build on demographic and electoral data already being analyzed in earlier phases of the IMO Project. The methodology we propose would combine (a) mapping of interlocal and functional as well as general government units for selected metropolitan areas and (b) case studies of local and higher-level budget and tax

data for systematically selected localities and metropolitan areas, and (c) statistical analysis of variations in expenditures and taxation across selected metropolitan areas. Where possible, we would also propose data collection for at least two different time periods (e.g., 1990 and 2000) to take into account trends over time. The sample of metropolitan areas within each country should encompass examples of principal variants in metropolitan governance arrangements (e.g., with and without metropolitan governments). To enable leverage to analyze the consequences of global economic integration, the selection should combine at least one of the metropolitan areas most integrated into translocal economies (often the largest urban region) along with at least one smaller regional center. Further metropolitan selection should sample insofar as possible on regions of relative growth or relative decline. Where sample sizes are sufficient, hierarchical linear modeling can be employed to analyze overall statistical patterns at both the local and the metropolitan levels (Bryk and Raudenbush 2001; Snijders and Bosker 1999). We can outline several related projects as part of the analysis:

Question 1. a. Mapping of functional and other interlocal agreements and functional districts separate from general purpose governments, by sector of policy (e.g., general government, infrastructure, education, security, social services).

b. Comparison of patterns with independent variables (e.g., globalization, social and economic diversity, social and economic segregation, institutional variables).

Question 2. a. Case studies of local expenditures and taxation in selected communities with concentrations of disadvantaged/impooverished residents: expenditures

by category (comparison with selected other towns) for social services, general government, infrastructure, other; and tax capacity, tax effort.

b. Statistical analyses of levels of spending for poverty related services and general government services, with poverty concentration as independent variable.

Question 3. a. Case studies of local expenditures and taxation in selected communities belonging to affluent, middle class and low-density suburban categories: expenditures by category (comparison with selected other towns) for social services, general government, infrastructure, other; and tax capacity, tax effort.

b. Statistical analyses of general government services, with a local indicator of higher status groups (e.g., college graduates) as independent variable.

Question 4. a. Mapping of service areas by types of localities to compare how far cooperation and specialized service districts integrate or separate localities with different social composition.

b. Comparison within the local case studies employed for Questions 2 and 3 of the impact of interlocal arrangements on disparities in service provision.

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